

Editorial

IS JOURNALISM AS KNOWN TODAY DEAD?

On 28 March 2025, delivering the Rajendra Mathur Memorial lecture at the Editors Guild of India (EGI), JioStar Vice President Uday Shankar made the pithy observation that **"Journalism as we know it is dead."** Media is broadly impacted by three main factors: Technology, Business Model, and Government policies towards media and 'freedom of expression'. Technology has undergone rapid change since the last quarter of the 20th century.

After the Internal Emergency of 1975, India's print media proliferated at a noticeable speed. Newspapers published in English and regional languages saw a sudden rise in circulation as Indians felt politically liberated and more awakened after Indira Gandhi bowed to the public pressure and restored the democratic system. And she held elections in 1977, but her party, Congress, lost. The succeeding Janata government lifted the press censorship and restored 'freedom of expression' that boosted the print media. National News Agencies-Press Trust of India (PTI) and United News of India (UNI) were merged as the "Samachar" news agency during the censorship regime of Indira Gandhi. They gained their independence during the Janata regime. Both News Agencies saw fast growth and secured an increase in their combined share of the news creation to 80 percent in the print media.

In 2000, the era of television dawned with vengeance. Private television networks overpowered Doordarshan / All India Radio and virtually eclipsed the print media. Gradually, print media, particularly News Agencies, lost their primacy, clout, and prerogative as creators and dispersing platforms of news/ views –so far the known version of journalism in India. The print media outlets lost their strength soon

as newspaper subscribers/ readers dwindled. Some TV anchors/ debaters/ presenters like Ravish Kumar emerged as popular faces of the critical media section in India and abroad, with some entertainment serials and operas catching the fancy of middle-class womenfolk.

After 25 years, TV as such is not being watched for news/ views, and entertainment programs. **Virtually, television is dead for Indians, so Journalism as we know it today does not exist.** Television sets are there in Indian homes, but are being used for listening to/ watching social media/ digital media programs through internet links/networks. There are nearly 900 TV networks in India, half of them (450) dispensing news. Of them, only 4 TV channels are not under loss. Usually, TV channels are being financed by the BJP government to secure favorable publicity. According to the latest FICCI report, Indians spend 1127 billion hours watching smartphones, and the per capita time daily devoted to phones has gone up from 2.7 to 5 hours. And Google's share is the highest. But Google monetizes on .9% (less than one per cent) of this time.

Digital Media—a combination of text, audio, images, video, and mixed media- is now the order of the day with 800 million Indians using smartphones and watching the news/ views, and entertainment programs on the Social Media Platforms provided online by the foreign major Seven Digital outlets based in the USA. They included Facebook, Twitter (now X), Google, Amazon, YouTube, Instagram, and Microsoft. Indian media companies have been relegated to sixth seventh position as collectively, these foreign digital companies are worth 16 trillion dollars, reaching near China's GDP of 17-18 trillion dollars.

India's maximum advertisement, worth about 80,000 crores, is now going to foreign digital media platforms, which are not under the control of the Indian government.

U-tubers and users of other social media platforms are getting maximum views by criticizing the government of the day. U-tubers like Ravish Kumar and Indian comedian Kanal Kamra earned millions of views on social media, while the government's rebuttal and its propaganda remained confined to only a few thousand views. Since the government cannot take any action against foreign-based giant

digital companies like Google and X, which spread anti-Modi government news/ views. But the government takes some legal and extra-legal actions against local U-tubers and other website TV operators/ portals. The government is now planning to further tighten the noose against its critics in the media by raising the penalty amount to 150 to 250 crores. There are around 9 lakh small YouTubers who use Facebook, Google, and other digital media platforms to earn a paltry sum of Re 8000 per month. Such small operators often get officially targeted and penalized. The government is helpless to stop the adverse publicity that rides on / spreads through foreign digital media giants acting as software vehicles.

Ellen Musk's AI (artificial intelligence) based new digital app, GROK, has enormous capacity/ space/ formulations to furnish quick and comprehensive text to critics seeking information/ reply for their queries about the BJP/ RSS and the Modi government.

Virtually, GROK has dismantled the image and aura within 15 days what BJP and its governments built in the past 15 years after spending crores of rupees.

ELECTRONICALLY, INDIA HAS BEEN COLONIZED?

Similarly, India proudly launched 'digital banking' without creating its own vehicles/ carriers system and its servers to store the data. The RBI floated the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) for the transfer of money and other banking operations, which uses Google and other foreign digital software networks. Paytm, India's largest digital payment app, has shares of a Chinese company.

Ironically, the government has officially created 1700 apps and 2500 websites for official work and public reach. All of them are operated through Google, Meta and WhatsApp- the foreign digital platforms. Political parties' policy programs and organizational affairs are being disseminated and feed-back collected on WhatsApp through video-conferencing and use of other social media platforms, operated by Facebook, Google and Foreign software vehicles. India seems to have been electronically colonized by these digital mega companies.

On the directions of the authorities, mosques in certain areas of Uttar Pradesh were covered with Tarpaulins ahead of Holi festival on

March 14, 2025 to prevent any incident of communal disharmony as Holi revelers often lose restraint and stain the religious sites.

Similarly, the UP authorities' issued advisories, obviously for Muslims to exercise restraint on Eid to be celebrated on March 31, 2025 and asked them to avoid praying in a public places. Such official directions usually go against the religious freedom, particularly of a minority living in a democratic and secular country as declared by the Constitution. An editorial piece of the Indian Express on 29 March 2025 has made a commentary of the development which is being reproduced for equipping the readers to know which direction, India is politically traversing to:

PRAYER AND PUNISHMENT

Ahead of Eid, Uttar Pradesh Police have issued advisories that fly in face of natural justice and Constitution's principles

Among the many depredations of British colonialism in India, some of whose effects are felt to this day, is the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. An example of gross discrimination, it categorised several communities as "criminal tribes" and their members often bore the brunt of police excesses-their "guilt" an assumption rather than a matter of proof. The Act was repealed soon after Independence. Unfortunately, when it comes to the police apparatus and how it looks at minorities, part of that ethos seems to linger. Ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, the Uttar Pradesh Police have issued advisories that fly in the face of natural justice and the principles of the Constitution.

First, the UP Police have gone beyond their remit. Meerut City SP Ayush Vikram Singh said that people offering prayers in the open on Eid will be prosecuted and have their passports and licences cancelled. Sadly, it now bears repeating that the police are not meant to impart punishment or take suo motu punitive action. The judiciary-not the permanent executive - can pronounce a sentence after a due process. Police forces are not passport-issuing authorities, and threatening to use the process of verification amounts to making a simple process the punishment. Second, and even more disturbing,

the police seem to assume, a priori, that the responsibility for "untoward incidents" lies with the Muslim community. In Sambhal, SP Krishan Kumar Bishnoi said, "People can offer prayers at their house. But they should be careful that there's no untoward incident." Similar statements have been made by several other senior police officers in the state, "going by the advisory of the UP government".

The statement by Union Minister of State and BJP ally Jayant Chaudhary should give the UP government and police cause to rethink their approach to maintaining peace and order during Eid. Moving "towards an Orwellian 1984" does not behove a state that is trying to be-come a destination for investment, both domestic and international. Finally, the justification offered by the Hathras SP, that "we will not be allowing anyone, irrespective of community, to offer prayers on roads or in any public place" also does not inspire confidence. After all, the police rarely talk of cancelling passports during robust celebrations of other festivals and rightly so. The Indian state and Constitution, rather than framing secularism in opposition to religion, saw it as allowing all of them to flourish. Each citizen has the fundamental right to their religion and culture, of course, subject to public order. India's largest state must live by that principle-anything else will make it look weak and prejudiced.

WALLS, CHAINS & CHEAP LABOUR: WEST'S HYPOCRISY ON MIGRATION

CHRISTINE MOLINER*

While right-wing politicians in destination countries reap the electoral benefits of demonising 'illegal' immigrants, their economies are in dire need of a cheap and docile foreign workforce.

Since the first US military aircraft carrying 104 deported Indians landed in Amritsar on February 5, a slew of comments has emerged in the Indian media addressing the inhumane condition of the deportees' transportation and the response (or lack of) of the Indian authorities.

Many heart-wrenching stories have been published about the infamous dunki route taken by the deportees, the sacrifice of their families, including selling land, to send them abroad. Their socio-economic profiles and reasons for migration have also been highlighted.

As a scholar who has worked for 25 years on the Sikh diaspora, I found that though interesting, these stories miss a very important point — migration is not per se a criminal activity. It has been projected as a criminal activity recently in the countries of destination of migrants. In the US, it has been done mainly since 9/11. But in Europe, the process had started earlier in the context of the dismantling of EU's internal borders and the fortification of its external ones.

Indeed, because of the seemingly unstoppable wave of populist anti-immigrant discourse and the resultant increasingly restrictive border regimes, illegality, criminality and a sense of threat have become the dominant lens through which the state in the destination countries sees migrants from the Global South.

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Let me argue here that we should apply a different lens and try to change the narrative around international migration and humanise it.

To start with, we must change our terminology. Many scholars and activists promote the use of 'undocumented' migrants, which is a more neutral term, instead of 'illegal' migrants, which stigmatises and criminalises mobile people.

The lack of humanity and dignity during the horrendous 40-hour journey of the deportees, turbans removed, handcuffed and even leg-chained like criminals is for all to see, except for the Indian government, which seems to find not much wrong with the criminalisation and dehumanisation of its own citizens.

In contrast, Colombian President Gustavo Petro strongly protested against the way the deportations were carried out, stressing the need to treat the deportees with dignity and respect. Initially, he even denied entry to two US flights before backing down, when threatened by Trump of a 50 per cent rise in tariffs on Colombian imports.

Among the reasons for the lack of a strong response by Delhi seems to be a bid to placate the US government and protect H-1B visas for skilled Indian migrants. This narrative of skilled (read 'good', 'wanted') vs unskilled (read 'bad', 'disposable') migrants is used in many destination countries to exploit the latter and deprive them of basic human rights.

In her book on the experience of foreign workers in Qatar (*Does Skill Make Us Human? Migrant Workers in 21st Century Qatar and Beyond*, Princeton University Press, 2021), US scholar Natasha Iskander argues that the notion of skill is a political tool, defining the rights foreign workers have access to.

While right-wing politicians in destination countries reap the electoral benefits of demonising 'illegal' immigrants, their economies — particularly the construction, services and care sectors — are in dire need of a vulnerable foreign workforce. 'Illegal migration' is not a natural category. It is a political construct, an instrument that serves a purpose: of disciplining and coercing a docile and cheap immigrant

labour force into accepting what sociologists call 3 Ds (dirty, dangerous, demeaning) jobs, shunned by the national population.

The hypocrisy of anti-immigrant rhetoric is probably best exemplified by none other than Trump himself. As reported by *The Washington Post* in 2019, his holding company, the Trump Organisation, has employed for nearly two decades dozens of undocumented Latin-American construction workers at several properties owned by the company. And, guess why? Because they are cheap, hardworking and too afraid of deportations to complain about a back-breaking, harassing work.

Here, one needs to understand why ‘unskilled’ men and women from the Global South keep migrating to the Global North despite the increasingly expensive and dangerous journeys they are compelled to take due to the stringent immigration policies enforced by the destination countries.

There are multiple reasons for the life-changing decision that emigration entails. They encompass a combination of push factors (socio-economic or political conditions in the country of origin) and pull factors (what attracts people in the country of destination).

To put it bluntly, one major reason lies with the continuous economic and demographic demand for cheap migrant labour in the Global North despite the anti-immigration rhetoric. Take my own country, France. Who looks after our elderly, who cleans hotel rooms, collects garbage, builds bridges, schools, housing complexes, delivers our orders? Immigrants, of course. And, many of them irregular. They neither come to live on social benefits nor to steal the jobs of the French, as the far-right would have it.

Mobility is not a crime. It is a natural human urge. Crossing an international border shouldn’t mean losing one’s basic rights and dignity. Migrants, whether skilled or unskilled, are not criminals.

A hateful narrative dehumanising immigrants has become all too common in many western countries. In a debate with Democrat candidate Kamala Harris, Trump went as far as to refer to Haitian refugees in Ohio as “eating the pets of the people that live there.”

Many people and advocacy groups oppose this rhetoric in the

West. They argue that border enforcement policies are devastating for migrants, costly for the country of destination and ultimately ineffective because regardless of the risks, people will continue to move as they have done throughout human history.

In the case of Punjabis, mass migration was triggered and organised by the British rule to its own advantage. This colonial engineering created a deeply embedded culture of migration that no deportation, no border regime and no walls will be able to uproot.

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A JOURNEY TO THE ABODE OF GURU NANAK IN KARTARPUR WHERE FAITH AND HISTORY CONVERGE

RAHUL BEDI*

Kartarpur (Pakistan): The Kartarpur Corridor, leading to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan, where Sikhism's founder Guru Nanak spent his last 18 years farming and preaching, was teeming early one morning last month with several hundred eager pilgrims, of which I was one, readying to undertake the celebrated a trip to my ancestor's shrine.

Making my way, on February 23, from my native border village of Dera Baba Nanak, or DBN, in Punjab's Gurdaspur district-named after the Guru, who also lived there in the mid-16th century, we flocked to the Integrated Check Post inside the state-art-Land Port, whose rooftop resembles the sail-like gables of the Sydney Opera House, to complete formalities for our visit.

And though just 4.7 km away, historical animosities, numerous wars, enduring cross-border hostilities between Islamabad and New Delhi had rendered Kartarpur inaccessible for decades, till the corridor opened in November 2019 on Nanak's 550th birth anniversary, following extended bilateral negotiations. According to statistics recently tabled in parliament, over 192,000 Indians, largely Sikh devotees, had traversed the corridor to the Gurdwara between August 2021-24.

On frequent earlier visits to DBN as a youngster, I recalled standing on the dhusi or military mud embankment overlooking the

* Courtesy: The Wire, dated March 2, 2025

barbed-wire enclosed 'No Man's Land' stretch along the border, and gazing quizzically across lush green fields of ripening wheat and paddy on either side, at the glittering domes of the Kartarpur Sahib gurdwara, splendid in its remote isolation.

In recent years, the Border Security Force (BSF) had erected a viewing gallery to observe the Gurdwara that was frequented by an incessant procession of visitors, particularly Sikhs from across Punjab for who Kartarpur, alongside the Golden Temple at Amritsar and Gurdwara Janam Asthan at Nankana Sahib, Nanak's birthplace near Lahore, were highly revered worship spots.

Equally fascinating to me in the 1960s was the sight of a small goods train that frequently plied close to Kartarpur on a narrow-gauge rail line, its steam engine lazily puffing its smoky passage to and from the frontier. It travelled to and from the district headquarters at Narowal in Pakistan's Punjab province, and nearby Shakargarh tehsil, where nearly 50 Pakistan Army tanks were destroyed by Indian armoured columns in the fierce battle of Basantar in the December 1971 war.

Almost a lifetime earlier, my father recalled frequently crossing the now near-dry Ravi River that eventually became the frontier between the newly created countries in 1947, along with other boys from DBN's Dane High School to explore the woods around the Kartarpur Sahib gurdwara. Over the decades after Partition, DBN frequently came alive to the sound of marching army columns, alongside the roar of tanks and the rattle of artillery field guns that camouflaged themselves in scattered mango groves, their barrels aimed across the Ravi in successive wars against Pakistan.

Militarily for India, DBN remains the gateway to the garrison town of Sialkot, some 70 km away and barely 10 km distant as the crow flies, and my parents recalled that just for one day at Independence, their village ended up inside newly created Pakistan, as confusion prevailed over boundary lines drawn by the British Colonial administration. Even today many village elders recall the 1965 and 1971 wars, when all women and children were dispatched to nearby towns for safety and the menfolk stayed behind to tend to their fields and to look after army jawans, lavishing food and Punjabi hospitality

upon them.

Artillery and tank duels raged around Dera for control of the vital bridge over the Ravi, badly damaged in 1965 and never repaired since. The artillery salvos in 1971 were equally fierce, as some of the field guns were secreted in my small ancestral mango grove in DBN, with its century-old open Roman well with crystal-clearwater, relentlessly bombarding the enemy. At the time we all were convinced that Nanak's spirit hovering benignly over DBN would ensure that no harm came to his beloved village.

Back at the DBN Corridor, we were pleasantly surprised to see all crossing-over formalities managed breezily, politely and above all else painlessly by BSF personnel and Intelligence Bureau staff manning the numerous immigration counters. After swiftly checking each pilgrim's Electronic Travel Authorisation-that is free and obtained online relatively easily-and passport – which is compulsorily required but not stamped by either side – Indian visitors were administered polio drops as part of a World Health Organisation's public health initiative as the disease still endures in Pakistan.

We then scrambled aboard electrically operated golf carts, which deposited us a few hundred meters away inside Pakistan, a crossover that evoked instant excitement amongst the visitors, amplifying the overall exhilaration embodying the Gurdwara visit. A bus then transported us to a nearby Pakistani Cambio and immigration centre where, after the mandatory payment of \$20, agreed upon by both countries, the final perusal of documentation was completed with utmost courteousness and civility, peppered, of course, with good-natured Punjabi banter with lanky Pakistani Rangers and immigration personnel.

The final leg of the journey was a 3-km bus ride with the option of walking the short distance, but one that was politely, but firmly declined on that day for unspecified reasons by Pakistani officials – to the steps of the spectacular Gurdwara, where all pilgrims were deposited to freely explore its grandeur till late the same afternoon.

Managed by Pakistan's Evacuee Trust Property Board, with financial assistance from India for its maintenance and running

expenses, the spotlessly serene and spectacular gold-domed white marble Gurdwara was founded as a community centre by Nanak around 1522, on Ravi's right bank for his proliferating band of Hindu and Muslim devotees. They all gathered here to learn, debate and practice the Guru's humanist teachings and his simple, but all-encompassing 'Ik Onkar' unifying message that there is only one God or One Creator for all mankind.

Blending traditional Sikh and Mughal styles, the tastefully and sensitively expanded gurudwara complex by Pakistan is spread over some 42 acres and features large domes, ornate arches, vast courtyards and a central Darbar Sahib prayer hall. However, its total overall area, which includes a tastefully landscaped 'sacred forest' that was added in 2017 alongside facilities for visiting Indian pilgrims, is an estimated 100 acres, or nearly 3.5 times the spread of Amritsar's Golden Temple that encompasses around 28 acres.

A 20-foot-high red brick wall is possibly the sole surviving 16th century structure from Nanak's time, as the original buildings were destroyed twice by floods and rebuilt in 1925. Pakistan renovated the Gurdwara extensively in 1995, and again in 2004 and gradually expanded it thereafter to its grand present-day form. While it was not a gurdwara in the formalised sense of the term in Nanak's time – this institution developed much later – it served the same purpose by providing space for worship, community, langar and the preaching and practice of Sikh principles including equality, sewa or service and absolute devotion to one God.

Following an extended stay in DBN, known then as Pakhoke Randhaw, where his father Mehta Kalu owned land – Nanak settled in Kartarpur after his fourth and final Udasi or spiritual peregrinations, mostly on foot, which took him as far afield as Baghdad, Mecca, Lanka, Nepal and Kashmir, amongst other places.

But it was on around 100 acres at Kartarpur, bequeathed to him by a local devotee landlord that he is believed to have composed several of the Granth Sahib's texts and hymns including the japji sahib, one of Sikhism's foundational texts encapsulating the essence of the new religion's spiritual thought and philosophy. And, till he passed away in

1839, aged 70 years, Nanak also espoused the three enduring fundamental pillars of Sikhism at Kartarpur: Kirat karo, Nam japo and Wand chako or work honestly, meditate in God's name and share one's bounties with others. The latter has, in recent decades proliferated exponentially to globally incorporate the concept of langar for tens of millions of refugees and disadvantaged populations.

Guru Angad, anointed by Nanak to succeed him instead of his two sons Sri Chand and Lakhmi Das/Chand too spent several years of scholarship at Kartarpur under his mentor but left after he passed for Khadur Sahib in Punjab's Taran Taran district near Amritsar. Credited with creating the Gurmukhi (from the mouth of the Guru) script in the 16th century, Angad standardised writing in the Punjabi language, as we know it today to ensure that teachings of the Sikh Gurus, especially Nanak were accurately recorded.

The Kartarpur Gurdwara is believed to have been constructed on the site where Guru Nanak died. According to legend, his grieving followers disagreed on how to perform his last rites; Hindus wanted to cremate his mortal remains and Muslims to bury them, and many fascinating legends and accounts abound over how this dilemma was resolved.

One belief has it that before he passed away, Nanak instructed his disciples to return the next day for his body. Upon doing so, they found a bed of fresh flowers, instead of his physical form under a shroud, which then were equally divided between his grieving devotees from both religions. Most accounts have Nanak's Hindu followers cremating the flowers and building a samadhi or shrine at the site in his memory, whilst his Muslim devotees are said to have buried the flowers in a grave nearby.

Both cenotaphs were worshipped equally by the two communities for centuries, becoming places of pilgrimage that palpably emphasised the unity and inclusiveness Nanak preached by transcending sectarian boundaries and ritualistic differences, particularly the invidious caste system that perpetuated inequality. In later times, the samadhi and the grave are believed to have been washed away by floods alongside the buildings, but the Gurdwara was built later in the same area where

Nanak's memorials were reportedly located.

Nanak's stature amongst Muslims even today, was surprisingly reinforced by scores of Muslims who were present at the Gurdwara as pilgrims last month to fittingly pay him obeisance. Many who this writer interacted with, said they had visited multiple times, firmly believing in the Guru's underlying message of peace and brotherhood in presently turbulent times.

Returning to my recent visit, the delicious langar, served by young boy and girl volunteers from Sindh at the gurdwara's spacious hall capable of accommodating over 3,000 pilgrims, was the final stop before departing. Supervised by Mubashir from nearby Kartarpur town, who said he had directed the Gurdwara's community kitchen for nearly two decades, the delicious fare of soya, channa, rice and 'mitha chawal' or sweet rice, was topped by a revitalising glass of tea. Mubashir even specially made sugarless tea for several diabetic Indian pilgrims.

Meanwhile, the return journey, around 3.30 pm in the afternoon, was merely a reverse replay of the inward-bound crossing, executed as efficiently and effortlessly by border officials on either side. On driving back to Amritsar, the one prevailing thought that persisted was the hope that Nanak's humanity, magnanimity and spiritualism would somehow serve to mitigate mutual animosities on either side of the contentious border, giving way to his fundamental message of eclecticism, brotherhood, peace and benevolence, amply personified by Kartarpur.

NUMBERS BRING OUT SHIFT IN PUNJAB'S DEMOGRAPHY

I.P. SINGH*

Impact of Emigration | Data Shows Drop in Number of Sikh
Children at the Foundational Level In Schools of Punjab

The Sikh community, which is already facing a big leadership, political-structural crisis and finds itself in the middle of diplomatic crisis with Canada and international politics involving India, is now facing a demographic shift in Punjab.

The population growth rate in Punjab has been consistently declining over the last decade, based on statistics of the Civil Registration System (CRS), and this has led to strong apprehensions about demographic shift in the state. As per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 2019-21, total fertility rate (TFR) in Punjab was 1.6, lower than the replacement level of 2.1. Even Akal Takht jathedar Giani Raghubir Singh highlighted this issue in his address last year on Bandi Chhor Diwas, which coincides with Diwali. The jathedar highlighted that Sikhs were getting reduced to a minority in the only Sikh majority state in the country in view of the prevailing trends of emigration of Sikh youths and influx of migrants from other states into Punjab.

The Census, which was scheduled to be conducted in 2021, is yet to be carried out, but the analysis of data from the “Report on Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2023-24” and its juxtaposition with the 2011 Census data reveals that

* Courtesy: The Times of India., IP.Singh@timesofindia.com

Punjab has already undergone a demographic shift. Of all students, Sikh children studying at foundational level — pre-primary to Class II in age group of 3-8 years — are an estimated 49%, which is 8.68% lower than the Sikh population of 57.69% in Punjab in the 2011 Census.

Punjab is the only state in the country, along with Union Territory of Chandigarh, where minority enrolment shows increase from lower to higher classes, highlighting their dropping enrolment at the primary level. This is clearly the result of the two trends visible on the ground young Punjabis, especially Sikhs, are moving abroad and having children in foreign countries while working-aged people are migrating from other states to Punjab, settling here and having children.

UDISE+, which is run by the Union ministry of education, gathers data from all recognised schools that provide formal education from pre-primary to Class XII, and its current data covers more than 14.71 lakh schools, 98 lakh teachers and 24.8 crore children across the country. The report provides the percentage of Muslim minority enrolment and enrolment of minority groups separately. In Punjab, Sikhs remain the biggest contributor to the minority groups' enrolment and any visible trend reflects more about this community only.

The usual trend, which is also visible across other states, is that enrolment is higher at primary level and gradually decreases in higher classes. However, the enrolment of minority groups in Punjab shows the reverse trend – it is high in secondary level and low at foundational level. Interestingly, even in the case of Muslims, this decrease is in the other direction in Punjab from primary level to secondary level, at age 14-18 years.

In Punjab, enrolment of students belonging to minority groups in secondary level (Class IX to XII, covering 14-18 years) is 60.3%; in middle level (Class VI-VIII, covering 11-14 years) is 58.3%; in preparatory level (Class III-V, covering 8-11 years) is 56.2%; and in foundational level (Class Pre-primary to II, covering 3-8 years) is 54.3%.

Among Muslims in Punjab, enrolment in secondary level is 2.1%; in middle level 2.6%; in preparatory 3.2% and in foundational 3.4%.

According to the 2011 Census, Muslim population in Punjab was 1.93%, but there has been a visible increase of Muslim migration from Uttar Pradesh in the last few years, which was confirmed to TOI by the Punjab Waqf Board and Muslim community leaders in Oct 2023. This trend can be a contributing factor for the increased enrolment at primary level. Despite Muslims contributing more students at primary level, overall numbers are lower at this level in enrolment of minority students, reflecting the squeezing percentage of Sikh children at primary level.

When the available Muslim percent age of 3.4% at foundational level and other minority groups' percentage based on their population data of 2011 (Christian 1.25%, Jains 0.16%, Buddhist 0.11%, other religions 0.03%, religion not stated 0.31%) is deducted from total minority enrolment of 54.3%, the percentage of Sikh children works out be around 49%.

When this data and pattern emerging from UDSIE+ is assessed with the statistics from Civil Registration System (CRS), which reflects falling numbers in birth registration in Punjab, more clarity emerges. The last report available on CRS is for 2020. In Punjab, there were 5,11,058 births in 2011 and 3,81,200 in 2020. In comparison, in neighbouring Haryana, which is smaller than Punjab, there were 5,91,914 births in 2020. The biggest reason for such drastic decline in births can be attributed to emigration of young people from Punjab even as migrants from other states are adding to the birth rate in the state. Actual decline of birth rate among Punjabis in Punjab would be even more severe. The decline in birth rate in Punjab is in consonance with decline in enrolment at primary level of children belonging to minority groups.

TOTAL ENROLMENT OF SIKH CHILDREN NATIONALLY IS 1.38%

UDISE+ 2023-24 report mentions that the representation of minorities in total enrolment is around 20%. Amongst the minorities, 79.6 % are Muslim, 10% are Christians, 6.9% are Sikh, 2.2 % are Buddhist, 1.3% are Jains and 0.1% Parsis. This reflects that Sikh students in the country are 1.38%, which reflects a decline against

1.72% of their population share in the country in 2011.

PB'S SHARE IN 3-7 AGE GROUP IN TOTAL ENROLMENT IS 1.7%

Punjab made 2.29% of the total population in the country in the 2011 Census. But, in the "population projection" data in the UDISE+ in the 3-7 age group in 2023, Punjab's share was 1.73% (22,24,108) of total students (12,85,77,060) enrolled in the country in this age group. Haryana, though smaller, had share of 2.13% (27,40,133). Taking into account that they constitute 49% (as explained in story) of their group in Punjab, Sikh children in the state would work out to be 0.85% of the total figure nationally. In the 2011 Census, 76.8% of Sikh population in the country lived in Punjab and the remaining outside the state. Taking this into account, Sikh children in Punjab and rest of India in this group comes around 1.1% of the total figure. As a comparison, in the 2011 Census, Sikh population in the country was 1.72%.

NUMBER OF HINDU KIDS RISE, BUT NOT PUNJABI HINDUS

Though analysis of data from UDISE+ 2023-24 reflects that percentage of Hindu children at foundational level would be 45.7% 7.22% more than the Hindu population share of 38.48% in the 2011 Census this hike would be entirely due to migrant population from other states, as in the last few years there has been significant increase of migration of young people from urban areas, including upper caste Hindus. The trend has also picked up in Scheduled Caste communities too, especially in the better-off sections, making Hindu SCs join the migration trend like the Sikh community.

ARE HINDU MIGRANTS RETURNING TO THEIR HOME STATES?

Comparison of UDISE+ data from 2021-22 and 2023-24 reflects that Punjab has seen a fall of 1.58 lakh in total enrolment and of 2.66 lakh in govt schools despite an increase in enrolment of Muslim children at foundational/preparatory levels. This possibly shows a section of Hindu migrants, especially from UP and Bihar, going back and withdrawing children from Punjab schools.

MUSLIM ENROLMENT TILL CLASS V REFLECTS RISE OF 22% IN 2

YEARS

According to UDISE+ report 2021-22, the percentage of Muslim minority enrolment to total enrolment at primary level (Class I-V) in Punjab was 2.7. According to the UDISE+ 2023-24 report, Muslim percentage at foundational level is 3.4 (up to Class II) and preparatory (Class III-V) is 3.2 and the combined percentage works out to 3.3. This reflects an increase of around 22% in Muslim children till Class V in two years.

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IN DEFENCE OF A MOTHER TONGUE

NISHTHA SOOD*

Hindi displaces Punjabi among urban elites, weakening a deep cultural bond. Nationalism and social pressure push a proud language toward silence.

The International Mother Language Day celebrations reminded me of a conversation sparked by the cricketer R. Ashwin, who mentioned that Hindi is not India's national language. Article 343 of the Indian Constitution designates Hindi in the Devanagari script as an official language for communication between the Centre and the States rather than as a national language. Following protests from South India and West Bengal against Hindi being the sole official language, English was added as the second official language.

This distinction between the official and national language, often misunderstood, has its roots in the historical debates on the Constitution. Professor Pritam Singh, in his paper "Hindu bias in India's 'secular' constitution: probing flaws in instruments of governance" (Third World Quarterly, 2005), recounts how in 1949, a Hindu sanyasin fasted to demand that Hindi be declared the national language and India renamed Bharat. While Hindi never achieved national status, it has gradually diminished the importance of languages of non-Hindi regions. Punjabi is one of its victims.

The linguist Noam Chomsky analyses the evolution of languages and the construction of linguistic hierarchies. While his primary focus is on European languages, his insights resonate in the subcontinent,

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where power dynamics shape linguistic perceptions. In Pakistan, for example, the dominance of Urdu overshadowed Punjabi. However, a growing interest in Punjabi is now emerging in West Punjab.

Although Punjabi has been the official language in East Punjab since 1966, raising the status of the language, Hindi is increasingly being used as a conversational language in some predominantly dominant-caste, Hindu-majority urban areas. This prompted me to explore the intersections of language, culture, and societal flourishing, deepening my understanding of Punjabi's importance.

GRADUAL ERASURE OF PUNJABI

My appreciation for Punjabi grew as I explored how language connects us to our identity, history, and values. As a Punjabi Hindu Khatri woman raised in Dhanbad and worked in Delhi, I have often felt the weight of Hindi's dominance and the gradual erasure of Punjabi in daily life. My friends, relatives, and a minority among my social acquaintances in Punjab, too, increasingly prefer Hindi over Punjabi. When I asked a 10-year-old child in my family living in Zirakpur, a small neighbouring town of Chandigarh, why she speaks Hindi instead of Punjabi, she replied: "*Kyunki main Indian hoon*" (Because I am Indian). This reflects how younger-generation Punjabi Hindus conflate Hindi with national identity, sidelining Punjabi.

The erosion of Punjabi is particularly stark among dominant-caste urban Punjabi Hindus and some Sikhs. In his paper "Globalisation and Punjabi Identity", Prof. Singh provides evidence that Punjabi Dalits in Punjab and the diaspora remain enthusiastic users and supporters of Punjabi. After Independence, urban middle-class Punjabis increasingly replaced Punjabi with Hindi due to its association with nationalism. My 66-year-old mother, educated in Ludhiana, remembers Punjabi being taught for one year, while Hindi was mandatory throughout her schooling. Even today, in some schools in Zirakpur, Hindi is introduced as early as kindergarten, while Punjabi is often relegated to being taught only from the fifth grade onward. These policies, of course, vary over various institutions. Some schools often create an inferiority complex among students about their mother tongue.

“When people abandon their language, they lose their soul as well.”

Rasul Gamzatov

Mera Daghiton (My Dagestan)

Partition and the politics of language further contributed to Punjabi's erosion. Punjabi identity, however, remains central to cultural practices. At weddings, my friends and relatives proudly assert their Punjabi heritage—ironically in Hindi—while performing giddha and bhangra to Punjabi songs. Yet, this cultural pride contrasts sharply with everyday linguistic practices. Wedding cards are printed in Hindi, and conversations do not commonly occur in Punjabi.

Generational shifts further exacerbate this disconnection. Urban millennials, spoken to in Punjabi as children, now primarily use Hindi with their kids, eroding the language's presence at home. One of my close acquaintances in her sixties speaks Punjabi, while her daughter in her late thirties uses Hindi with her children.

Ironically, while proudly asserting their Punjabi identity, people in my inner circle of acquaintances simultaneously look down on people from Bihar, using terms like “Bihari” pejoratively, yet remain reluctant to embrace their own language. This paradox underscores the influence of linguistic hierarchies and societal norms in shaping identity.

HOW DOES A LANGUAGE SURVIVE?

The elite's linguistic preferences further deepen this divide. My teacher, Professor Bhavna Dave at the School of Oriental and African Studies, argues that a language's survival depends on its adoption by the elites. In urban Punjab, a section of the elite and upper middle class involved in business activities do not prefer Punjabi. However, the administrative elite has increasingly taken to speaking Punjabi. This is evident in everyday interactions.

In an upper-middle-class, dominant-caste Punjabi Hindu social gathering, a woman shared her experience: “Mere husband Punjabi bolte hain, par main Hindi bolti hoon, isiliye meri beti bhi Hindi bolti hai” (My husband speaks Punjabi, but I speak Hindi, so my daughter speaks Hindi). While the elites are often encouraged to converse in

English, the middle and lower-middle classes speak Hindi, as they find English challenging to use.

In Chandigarh and Zirakpur, it seems that, unofficially, there is a ban on Punjabi in affluent areas involved in business activities. Hindi is less prominent in Malwa and Majha than in the Doaba region. In Doaba's Jalandhar, many mothers typically speak to their children in Hindi. The strong pro-Hindi campaign launched by the Arya Samaj seemed to have influenced this different linguistic behaviour in Doaba. However, even in some cities of Malwa, such as Ludhiana, the dominance of Hindi is noticeable, particularly among urban Punjabi Hindus. In Ludhiana, the households of some of my close acquaintances receive a Hindi newspaper instead of a Punjabi newspaper.

What is frustrating is the loss of a language and the erasure of a rich legacy. Punjabi is the language of Bulleh Shah, who preached divine love; of Waris Shah, who immortalised Heer, a feminist icon of her time; of Sant Ram Udasi, who challenged caste hierarchies; and of Shiv Kumar Batalvi, the most celebrated Punjabi poet of the 20th century. Yet a section of Punjabis fails to appreciate this richness. They are victims of a larger ideological project—which I term the “Hindi-Hindu-Hindutva” agenda—that equates Indianness with Hindi while disregarding regional languages.

I want to conclude with a profound line from *Mera Daghitan* (My Dagestan), a novel by Rasul Gamzatov in the Avar language, which itself teeters on the brink of extinction: “When people abandon their language, they lose their soul as well.”

I feel pity, anger, and frustration towards some of the people around me who live this rootless life, although I understand that they are victims of this erosion of their mother tongue. If circumstances changed, they would likely adapt. However, although Punjabi's fate depends on active State government policies to promote Punjabi, a collective commitment by the people to reclaim and celebrate its rich heritage is equally important.

AAP'S WAR ON CORRUPTION, DRUGS, AND FARMERS: A GAMBLE FOR SURVIVAL

HARJESHWAR PAL SINGH*

Three years into its tenure in Punjab and reeling from the loss of its Delhi stronghold, the beleaguered AAP government under Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann is making a renewed bid to reset its image, reclaim the narrative, and regain lost ground. With Punjab now the only state under its control, AAP is adopting an aggressive and confrontational approach, hoping to restore its credibility, strengthen its organisational base, and reinforce Mann's leadership.

This strategy revolves around a multi-pronged attack: revitalising its grassroots base, taming the bureaucracy, reasserting its anti-corruption stance, tackling the drug menace, and confronting powerful farmer unions. Bhagwant Mann, whose leadership has often been questioned, is leading this charge with newfound assertiveness, aiming to project himself as a decisive leader.

The recent dramatic arrests of farmer leaders Jagjit Singh Dallewal and Sarwan Pandher, coupled with the forceful removal of agitating farmers from the Shambu and Khanauri borders, mark a significant shift in Mann's governance approach. This crackdown signals a strategic rebranding of AAP under Mann—positioning itself as a tough, no-nonsense government waging war not only on drugs and corruption but now even on farmers, all in pursuit of a “Rangla Punjab.”

1. REBRANDING AAP AND BHAGWANT MANN: “CHHOTA YOGI” OR “BEANT SINGH”

The government's preferred tools in this mission appear to be the

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Punjab Police and the bulldozer, with Mann emerging as a “Chhota Yogi” of Punjab, echoing the hardline governance style of Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath. By adopting this new political avatar, AAP and Mann are clearly eyeing urban and non-agrarian voters—both as part of its short-term strategy to win the Ludhiana West by-poll and its long-term ambition to challenge the BJP on its own turf. Frequent Police encounters and high handedness has also led Bhagwant Mann being unflatteringly compared to the former CM Beant Singh under whose reign in the early 90s Punjab saw police and state excesses.

However, this aggressive and polarising approach, which pits Punjab’s urban and trading class against farmers, risks alienating the rural population, particularly in Malwa—AAP and Bhagwant Mann’s core stronghold—and in Majha, where civil society and farmers’ unions continue to wield significant influence.

2. EXCESSIVE RELIANCE ON POLICE

The government’s hardline stance is also rapidly transforming Punjab into a police state reminiscent of the mid-1990s under Beant Singh. The Punjab Police, once again, appears to be the government’s preferred instrument for silencing critics, suppressing opposition, intimidating the media, manipulating local body elections, staging encounters, and carrying out bulldozer-driven crackdowns.

Excessive reliance on police can not only backfire as demonstrated by the recent attack on an Indian army colonel by policemen coming back from an encounter which has led to a furore in the state but also encourage “renegade” policemen to run roughshod in a state with deep memories of the police excesses of the 80s and 90s.

3. REENERGISING THE BASE: WINNING BACK THE LOYALISTS

AAP’s biggest strength has always been its dedicated volunteers and grassroots workers, who were instrumental in its early electoral successes. However, over time, many of these core supporters became disillusioned due to the party’s preference for political turncoats from other parties, particularly in local elections. The sidelining of loyal workers in favour of defectors from Congress, Akali Dal, and BJP created resentment within the organization.

Learning from the Delhi debacle—where a disenchanted volunteer base contributed to electoral setbacks—AAP has begun efforts to reengage its loyal cadre. The party is incorporating more of its original supporters into positions of influence, particularly in “market committees” and local governance structures. This move is aimed at ensuring that party workers remain motivated and invested in the 2027 assembly elections.

4. TAMING THE BUREAUCRACY: THE BATTLE FOR CONTROL

From the beginning, AAP has faced significant friction with Punjab's entrenched bureaucracy. Unlike Delhi, where governance is largely administrative and the chief minister has limited control over police and land-related matters, Punjab has a traditional bureaucratic structure deeply intertwined with local politics.

AAP has repeatedly accused the state's bureaucracy of obstructing its governance agenda. Complaints from MLAs and local leaders about unresponsive officials—particularly in the police and revenue departments—have fuelled frequent transfers. The government has been reshuffling key officers, including Deputy Commissioners (DCs), Senior Superintendents of Police (SSPs), and Station House Officers (SHOs), in an effort to make the bureaucracy more compliant.

However, this aggressive approach carries risks. Constant reshuffling can disrupt administrative continuity and create uncertainty among civil servants, potentially impacting policy implementation. Moreover, excessive political interference in bureaucratic matters could backfire, alienating government officials and leading to inefficiencies.

5. THE ANTI-CORRUPTION DRIVE: REBUILDING THE “KATTARIMANDAR” IMAGE

AAP's rise was built on the promise of clean governance and its “KattarImandar” (fiercely honest) image. However, multiple allegations of corruption within the party and governance failures in Punjab dented this perception. To counter this, Bhagwant Mann's government has intensified its anti-corruption drive.

The focus has largely been on lower-level government employees—particularly police constables, revenue officers, Tehsildars, and Naib

Tehsildars. The recent high-profile crackdown on corruption in the revenue department, which involved suspensions, transfers, and taking over registration work, was designed to send a strong message.

While these actions help AAP reinforce its anti-corruption credentials, critics argue that the campaign lacks depth. Targeting lower-level officials while sparing higher-ups, or failing to act against political corruption, raises questions about the sincerity of the drive. Moreover, a selective approach could create resentment within the administration, leading to passive resistance against AAP's governance agenda.

6. WAR ON DRUGS: OPTICS VS. GROUND REALITY

The drug menace has been one of Punjab's most pressing social issues, and AAP had promised a decisive crackdown. However, progress on this front has been slow, with many accusing the government of failing to take substantive action. In response, AAP recently launched the "Nashe Virodhijang" (War Against Drugs), a high-profile campaign aimed at projecting itself as tough on drug dealers and peddlers.

The campaign has involved widespread police raids, large drug seizures, and even "bulldozer justice" against alleged drug traffickers. Publicity around these efforts has been intense, with government-friendly media amplifying AAP's actions.

However, there are concerns that this campaign may be more about optics than long-term solutions. Experts argue that while crackdowns and arrests create an immediate impact, the real solution lies in addressing the socio-economic factors driving drug addiction, improving rehabilitation facilities, and targeting the supply chain more effectively.

7. CONFRONTING FARMER UNIONS: A RISKY GAMBLE

AAP's recent confrontation with Punjab's powerful farmer unions marks a significant shift in its strategy. Having initially positioned itself as a pro-farmer party, AAP's government is now taking a harder line against protests and agitations.

The recent walkout from negotiations with Kisan Unions, followed

by the blockade of protesting farmers from entering Chandigarh and the detention of union leaders, along with the crackdown on farmers at Shambu and Khanaur signals a new approach. The government appears to be betting on securing the support of urban and trading communities, which have often been frustrated with frequent farmer protests and road blockades. The govt blames farm unions for blocking investments, trade and development of the state

However, this shift comes with risks. AAP's core strength in Punjab lies in the rural Malwa belt, where farmer unions hold significant sway. The simultaneous crackdown on both SKM and SKM —non political, the two powerful formations in the state is likely to unify them creating severe headaches for the govt. Alienating the decisive, raucous and resourceful farming voter base could weaken the party's position in rural areas and is likely to lead to boycott and Gherao of AAP leaders in villages. Additionally, a prolonged standoff with farmers could allow rival parties, particularly the Congress and Akali Dal, to exploit the situation for political gains.

8. THE SHADOW OF KEJRIWAL AND DELHI

After the Delhi debacle, the long shadow of Kejriwal and Delhi continue to loom around Punjab. Many observers have speculated that the current "authoritarian" phase of AAP has all the imprints of Arvind Kejriwal, the AAP supremo and his quest for a Rajya Sabha seat which can only be fulfilled by a victory in Ludhiana West By elections. This explains the strong arm tactics of "Yogi", "Buldozer" and "Punjab Police" to placate and win urban voters concerned over law and order, drugs and dharnas. The recent appointments in AAP of Aman Arora as state president and Manish Sisodia and Satyendra Jain as Punjab in charge and co-incharge all points to Delhi increasing its control over the Punjab unit. This is also likely to increase Delhi's confrontation with Bhagwant Mann.

9. WILL AAP BECOME "YOGI'S UP" OR "BEANT'S PUNJAB"?

As AAP flexes its authoritarian muscle, the question remains—will this hardline strategy consolidate its power like "Yogi in UP," or will it trigger a backlash like it did for "Beant Singh's Congress"?

Yogi Adityanath's governance model in Uttar Pradesh has found support among a section of urban voters who favour strong action on crime and governance. However, Punjab's political and social landscape is vastly different. The state has a history of resistance against authoritarian rule, and memories of the Beant Singh era—marked by state repression and police excesses—remain fresh in public consciousness.

If AAP's aggressive governance alienates key voter segments, particularly farmers and rural communities, it could erode its political base. For now, AAP is approaching its final two years in power with the urgency of a cricket slogger chasing a tough target. Whether this strategy results in a big electoral win or a political misstep remains to be seen.

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਫੈਡਰਲਿਜ਼ਮ ਦਾ ਅਮਲ ਤੇ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨਿਕ ਲਿਫਾਫ਼ੇਬਾਜੀ

ਸਰਬਜੀਤ ਧਾਲੀਵਾਲ*

ਫੈਡਰਲਿਜ਼ਮ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਦਾ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਫਿਰ ਚਰਚਾ 'ਚ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਸਾਡੇ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਫੈਡਰਲਿਜ਼ਮ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਅਤੇ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਕਿਤੇ ਵੀ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰੀਭਾਸ਼ਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਪਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਹਰ ਸਮੇਂ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦਾ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਹਾਂ, ਭਾਰਤ ਇੱਕ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੀ ਯੂਨੀਅਨ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਫਿਕਰਾ ਹੀ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਦੇ ਫੈਡਰਲ ਸਵਰੂਪ ਦੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਦੇਹੀ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਕਿਸੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਫੈਡਰਲਿਜ਼ਮ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਦੇ ਦਾ ਸੱਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡਾ ਮੁਦਈ ਸ਼ਿਰੋਮਣੀ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਦਲ ਸੀ। ਹੁਣ ਫੈਡਰਲਿਜ਼ਮ ਦੇ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਮੁੱਦੇ ਤੇ ਚਰਚਾ ਦੱਖਣੀ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇਸਦੀ ਵਾਂਗ ਡੋਰ ਤਾਮਿਲਨਾਡੂ ਦੇ ਮੁਖ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਐਮ. ਕੇ. ਸਟਾਲਿਨ ਦੇ ਕੋਲ ਹੈ। ਤਾਮਿਲਨਾਡੂ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖਮੰਤਰੀ ਨੇ ਲੋਕ ਸਭਾ ਹਲਕਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਮੁੜ ਹੱਦਬੰਦੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਮੁੱਖ ਮੁੱਦਾ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਕੌਮੀ ਵਿਦਿਅਕ ਨੀਤੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸਟਾਲਿਨ ਦਾ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਹਿੰਦੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਮਿਲਨਾਡੂ ਤੇ ਠੋਸਣ ਦੀ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਉਸਨੂੰ ਮਨਜ਼ੂਰ ਨਹੀਂ। ਉਹ ਇਸਦਾ ਡਟ ਕੇ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸਦਾ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਫੈਡਰਲਿਜ਼ਮ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਤਾਮਿਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਤੇ ਹਮਲਾ ਹੈ। ਉਸਨੇ ਕੌਮੀ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਨੀਤੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਤ੍ਰੈਭਾਸ਼ੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਰਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਸਿਰਫ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਤੇ ਤਾਮਿਲ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਹੀ ਲਾਗੂ ਰੱਖਣ ਦਾ ਵੱਡਾ ਮੁਦਈ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਹਿੰਦੀ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਮਿਲਨਾਡੂ ਦੇ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਸਕੂਲਾਂ 'ਚ ਲਾਗੂ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਆਪਣਾ ਸਟੈਂਡ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਰੱਖ ਚੁਕਾ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਿਰੋਮਣੀ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਦਲ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਇਹੀ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਹੜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ 'ਚ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਈ ਕਰਵਾਉਣੀ ਹੈ ਇਹ ਸੂਬਾ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਛੱਡ ਦੇਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਸੂਬਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਤਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਸੁੰਤਰਤਾ ਹੋਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਲੋਕ ਸਭਾ ਹਲਕਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਹੱਦਬੰਦੀ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਦੇ ਤੇ ਸਟਾਲਿਨ ਦਾ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੇਕਰ ਇਹ ਤਾਜ਼ਾ ਜਨਸੰਖਿਆ ਦੇ ਅੰਕੜਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਲਾਭ ਉਤਰੀ ਭਾਰਤ ਤੇ ਖਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਮੱਧ ਭਾਰਤ, ਉੱਤਰ ਪ੍ਰਦੇਸ਼ ਤੇ ਬਿਹਾਰ ਵਰਗੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ

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ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਤੇ ਦੱਖਣੀ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਵਕਤ ਘੱਟ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਇਸ ਮੁੱਦੇ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਨਾਲ ਦੱਖਣੀ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਰਾਜ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕੇ ਕਰਨਾਟਕਾ, ਤੇਲੰਗਾਨਾ, ਕੇਰਲਾ ਵੀ ਸਹਿਮਤ ਹਨ। ਆਂਧਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੁੱਝ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਮੁੱਦੇ ਤੇ ਸਟਾਲਿਨ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਨਾਲ ਸਹਿਮਤ ਹਨ। ਉੜੀਸਾ ਦਾ ਸਾਬਕਾ ਮੁਖ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਨਵੀਨ ਪਟਨਾਇਕ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਭਗਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਾਨ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਿਰੋਮਣੀ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਦਲ (ਬਾਦਲ) ਵੀ ਸਟਾਲਿਨ ਨਾਲ ਸਹਿਮਤ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਹੱਦਬੰਦੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਸਟਾਲਿਨ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਮੁੱਦੇ ਤੇ 22 ਮਾਰਚ, 2025 ਨੂੰ ਚੋਂਨਈ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਬੁਲਾਈ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਗਾ ਹੁੰਗਾਰਾ ਮਿਲਿਆ।

ਕਹਿਣ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਰਤ ਯੂਨੀਅਨ ਆਫ ਸਟੇਟਸ ਹੈ। ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਵੀ ਇਹੀ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ। India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States, ਮਤਲਬ ਭਾਰਤ ਇਕ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੀ ਯੂਨੀਅਨ ਹੈ। ਵਿਚਾਲੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਆਲੇ ਦੁਵਾਲੇ ਸੂਬੇ। ਪਰ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਫੈਡਰਲਿਜ਼ਮ ਦਾ ਝੁਕਾਅ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰਾਂ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਵੱਲ ਹੈ। ਤੇ ਹੌਲੀ ਹੌਲੀ ਇਹ ਝੁਕਾਅ ਇਕ ਪਾਸੜ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਘਾੜਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਹੀ ਪਾਸਕੂ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਵਾਲੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਲਾਗੂ ਹੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਨੇ ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਭਾਜਪਾ ਨੇ ਕੇਂਦਰੀਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਅਪਣਾਈ ਹੈ। ਕੇਂਦਰੀਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਪਕੜ ਮਜਬੂਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਸੋਧਾਂ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ। ਹੁਣ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਮੁਕੰਮਲ ਸਰਦਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਪਹਿਰੇਦਾਰ ਹੈ।

ਅਜਾਦੀ ਤੋਂ ਥੋੜੀ ਦੇਰ ਬਾਅਦ ਹੈ ਫੈਡਰਲਿਜ਼ਮ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਦੇ ਤੇ ਸੂਬਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਜੰਗ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿਤੀ ਸੀ। ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੁਨਰਗਠਨ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਮੰਗ ਨੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਫੜਿਆ। ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਮਿਲਨਾਡੂ, ਜੋ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮਦਰਾਸ ਸੀ, ਨੇ ਮੋਹਰੀ ਰੋਲ ਅਦਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ 1956 ਵਿਚ States Reorganization Act ਬਣਾਉਣਾ ਪਿਆ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਵਿਤਕਰਾ ਹੋਇਆ। ਇਸਨੂੰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਸੂਬਾ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ ਸੂਬਾ ਬਣਵਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਲੰਬੀ ਲੜਾਈ ਲੜਨੀ ਪਈ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਲੰਗੜਾ-ਲੂਲਾ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸੂਬਾ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਪਰ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਮੁਕੰਮਲਤਾ ਲਈ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਅਜੇ ਵੀ ਲੜਾਈ ਲੜ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਲੜਾਈ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਮਹਿੰਗੀ ਪਈ ਹੀ ਹੈ, ਇਸਦੀ ਵੱਡੀ ਕੀਮਤ ਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਉਤਾਰਨੀ ਪਈ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਚ ਪਿਛਲੀ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਆਖਰੀ ਦਹਾਕਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਖੂਨ ਵਹਿਆ ਉਸਦੇ ਬੀਜ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸੂਬਾ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਬੀਜੇ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਰੀ ਕੀਮਤ ਤਾਰਨੀ ਪਈ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਜਾਨੀ ਤੇ ਮਾਲੀ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਹੋਇਆ।

ਪੰਡਿਤ ਜਵਾਹਰ ਲਾਲ ਨਹਿਰੂ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ 1964 'ਚ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਚ ਅੰਦੂਰਨੀ ਕਲੇਸ਼ ਛਿੜ ਗਿਆ ਤੇ ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਚ ਟੁੱਟ ਭੱਜ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਗਈ। ਪਾਰਟੀ

ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਹੋ ਗਈ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਸੱਤਾ ਤੇ ਪਕੜ ਢਿਲੀ ਪੈਣੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਤੇ ਸੂਬਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਖੇਤਰੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਉਬਾਰ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਧ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਫੜਨ ਲੱਗ ਗਈ। ਤਾਮਿਲਨਾਡੂ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ 1969 ਵਿਚ ਰਾਜਮੰਨਾਰ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧਾਂ ਦੇ ਜਾਇਜ਼ਾ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਬਣਾਈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਚਾਰ ਸਾਲ ਬਾਅਦ ਸ਼ਿਰੋਮਣੀ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਦਲ ਨੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਧ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਦਿਵਾਉਣ ਲਈ 1973 ਵਿਚ ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਮਤਾ ਪਾਸ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਦੇਸ਼ ਚ ਚਰਚਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਗਈ। ਦੁਵਾਰਾ ਫਿਰ 1978 ਵਿਚ ਲੁਧਿਆਣੇ ਚ ਹੋਈ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਕਾਨਫਰੰਸ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਪਾਸ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਲਾਗੂ ਕਰਵਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਬਾਕਾਇਦਾ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਐਲਾਨ ਵੀ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਜੂਨ 25, 1975 ਨੂੰ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਇੰਦਰਾ ਗਾਂਧੀ ਨੇ ਐਮਰਜੰਸੀ ਲਗਾ ਦਿਤੀ। ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਜਮਹੂਰੀ ਹੱਕ ਖੋਹ ਲਏ ਗਏ ਸਨ ਤੇ ਐਮਰਜੰਸੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ, ਅਗਾਂਹਵਧੂ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਆਗੂ ਤੇ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਨੇਤਾ ਜੇਲਾਂ ਚ ਡੱਕ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਆਗੂ ਵੀ ਜੇਲ ਗਏ। ਐਮਰਜੰਸੀ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਤੇ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿਚ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਤੇ ਜਮਹੂਰੀ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਵੱਡਾ ਮੁੱਦਾ ਬਣ ਗਏ। ਖੇਤਰੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਫੈਡਰਲਿਜ਼ਮ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਡੇ ਮੁੱਦੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਉਥਾਰਿਆ। ਸ਼ਿਰੋਮਣੀ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਦਲ ਨੇ ਐਮਰਜੰਸੀ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਮੋਰਚਾ ਲਾਇਆ ਤੇ ਜੇਲਾਂ ਭਰੀਆਂ। ਮਾਰਚ 1977 ਵਿਚ ਐਮਰਜੰਸੀ ਉਠਾ ਲਈ ਗਈ। ਸਾਰੇ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਲੀਡਰ ਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਆਗੂ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੋ ਗਏ। ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਚੋਣਾਂ ਬੁਰੀ ਤਰਾਂ ਹਾਰ ਗਈ ਤੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਵਾਰ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਖੇਤਰੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਦੱਬ-ਦਬਾ ਕਾਇਮ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਚ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਬਣ ਗਈ। ਕੇਂਦਰ 'ਚ ਰਲੀ ਮਿਲੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਮੁਰਾਰ ਜੀ ਡੀਸਾਈ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਚ ਬਣੀ। ਪਰ ਇਸ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਸਵਾ ਦੋ ਸਾਲ ਬਾਦ ਹੀ ਭੋਗ ਪੈ ਗਿਆ।

ਇੰਦਰਾ ਗਾਂਧੀ ਮੁੜ ਸਤਾ ਚ ਆ ਗਈ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਸਾਰ ਹੀ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਜਾਇਜ਼ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਚੁਣੀਆਂ ਸੂਬਾ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਭੰਗ ਕਰ ਦਿਤੀਆਂ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਤੇ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਟਕਰਾਓ ਹੋਰ ਤਿੱਖਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਇੰਦਰਾ ਗਾਂਧੀ ਨੇ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਐਮਰਜੰਸੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਬਦਲਾ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਬੜੇ ਹੱਥਕੰਡੇ ਵਰਤੇ। ਉਸਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਕਈ ਪਾਸਿਓਂ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਪਹੁੰਚਿਆ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨਾਲ ਦਰਿਆਈ ਪਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਦੇ ਤੇ ਵੱਡਾ ਧੱਕਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਹ ਪਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਦਾ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਲਈ ਕੈਂਸਰ ਰੋਗ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਇਸ ਟਕਰਾਓ ਦੇ ਨਤੀਜੇ ਚੋਂ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਧਰਮ ਮੋਰਚਾ ਨਿਕਲਿਆ। ਹਜ਼ਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਤਾਦਾਦ ਚ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਜੇਲ੍ਹਾਂ ਚ ਗਏ। ਇਥੋਂ ਤਕ ਕੇ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਜੇਲ੍ਹਾਂ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ ਪਿਆ। ਉਸਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਦੇਸ਼ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਕੀ ਹੋਇਆ ਇਸ ਜੱਗ ਜਾਣਦਾਂ ਹੈ। ਸਾਕਾ ਨੀਲਾ ਤਾਰਾ ਹੋਇਆ। ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਤੇ ਫੌਜ ਚੜਕੇ ਆਈ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਤੋਪਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਫੁੰਡ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ।

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਉਬਾਲੇ ਮਾਰਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ। ਕੁਝ ਮਹੀਨਿਆਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਰਾਜੀਵ-ਲੌਂਗੋਵਾਲ ਸਮਝੌਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ। ਪਰ ਇਹ ਸਮਝੌਤਾ ਵੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਤਨ੍ਹਾਪਣ ਨਾ ਲੱਗਿਆ।

ਸਮਝੌਤੇ ਤਹਿਤ ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਮਤਾ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਰਕਾਰੀਆ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ ਸੌਂਪ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਸਰਕਾਰੀਆ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਤੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧਾਂ ਤੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਗਠਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਉਹੀ ਮਤਾ ਸੀ ਜਿਸਨੂੰ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵੱਖਵਾਦੀ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਗਰਦਾਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਸਰਕਾਰੀਆ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਨੇ ਕਾਫੀ ਮੇਹਨਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਤੇ 1988 ਆਪਣੀ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਦਿਤੀ। ਉਸਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ 2007 ਚ ਪੂੰਛੀ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਬਣਿਆ। ਇਸ ਨੇ ਬੜੇ ਵਿਸਥਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਦਿਤੀ। ਆਰਟੀਕਲ 355 ਤੇ 356 ਵਿਚ ਸੋਧ ਕਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਹਾ। ਸੂਬਾ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਤੋੜਨ ਦੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੋਧ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਸੀਮਤ ਕਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਹਾ। ਰਾਜਪਾਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਨਿਯੁਕਤੀ ਰਾਜ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਲਾਹ ਨਾਲ ਕਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਹਾ। ਰਾਜਪਾਲਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਚਾਂਸਲਰ ਲਾਉਣ ਦੇ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਨੇ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਦਿਤੀ।

ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਚੁਣੀਆਂ ਰਾਜ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਰਟੀਕਲ 356 ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਤੋੜਨ ਦਾ ਸਿਲਸਿਲਾ ਨਹਿਰੂ ਸਮੇਂ 1959 ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਨਹਿਰੂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਹੁੰਦੇ 9 ਰਾਜ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਭੰਗ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ। ਇੰਦਰਾ ਗਾਂਧੀ ਵੇਲੇ ਸੂਬਾ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਤੋੜਨ ਲਈ ਧਾਰਾ 356 ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਬੇਸ਼ੁਮਾਰ ਵਾਰੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਹੁਣ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਨਵਾਂ ਤੋੜ ਲੱਭ ਲਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਹੁਣ ਵਿਧਾਇਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ by hook or crook ਤੋੜ ਲਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਲੋੜ ਪਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਏਜੰਸੀਆ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਸਟਾਲਿਨ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਚੋਨਈ ਚ ਬੁਲਾਈ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਿਰੋਮਣੀ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਦਲ ਨੇ ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਦਰਜ ਮੰਗਾ ਦੀ ਤਰਜਮਾਨੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦਾ ਫੈਡਰਲਿਜ਼ਮ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਦੇ ਤੇ ਉਹੀ ਸਟੈਂਡ ਹੈ ਜੋ 1973 ਵਿਚ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਵਾਰ ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਮਤਾ ਪਾਸ ਕਰਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਸੀ। ਪਾਰਟੀ ਨੇ ਚੋਨਈ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਛੋਟੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜ ਸਭਾ ਚ ਵੱਡੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਨਿਧਤਾ ਦਿਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ। ਧਾਰਾ 356, ਜੋ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਭੰਗ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਨੂੰ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਚ ਖਤਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ। ਕੇਂਦਰ ਕੋਲ ਸਿਰਫ ਚਾਰ ਮਹਿਕਮੇ ਡਿਫੈਂਸ, ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਮਾਮਲੇ, ਕਰੰਸੀ ਤੇ ਦੂਰ ਸੰਚਾਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਚਾਰ ਹੋਣ ਬਾਕੀ ਸਾਰੇ ਰਾਜ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਕੋਲ ਹੋਣ। ਸਤਵੇਂ ਸ਼ੈਡਿਊਲ ਵਿਚ ਸੋਧ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ ਤੇ ਯੂਨੀਅਨ, ਸਟੇਟ ਤੇ ਕੌਨਕਰੰਟ ਲਿਸਟ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਦੁਵਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਗੌਰਤਲਬ ਹੈ ਕੇ ਸੱਤਵਾਂ ਸ਼ੈਡਿਊਲ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਤੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਵੱਡਾ ਸਰੋਤ ਹੈ। ਕੁਛ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਹੱਕ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਚ ਸੋਧ ਕਰਕੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਖੋਹੇ ਗਏ ਨੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਪਿਸ

ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ। ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਦਾ ਆਰਟੀਕਲ 162 ਜੋ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਹਾਲਾਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੀਮਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਮੁੜ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ। ਦੇਸ਼ ਚ ਹਰ ਸ਼ੇਭੇ ਚ ਜਬਰਦਸਤੀ ਨੋਸੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਸਮਰੂਪਤਾ ਤੇ ਰੋਕ ਲਾਈ ਜਾਵੇ ਤੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਬਹੁ ਨਸਲੀ, ਬਹੁ ਸੱਭਿਚਾਰਕ ਤੇ ਬਹੁ ਭਾਸ਼ੀ ਪਹਿਚਾਣ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਇਮ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਤੋਂ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਫੁਲਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਹੁਣ ਇਹ ਮੁੱਦਾ ਫਿਰ ਕਿਉਂ ਸੁਰਖੀਆਂ ਚ ਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਕੇਂਦਰ ਵਿਚ 2014 ਚ ਭਾਜਪਾ ਦੇ ਸੱਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਇਹ ਦੇਸ਼ ਲੱਗਣੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਨੇ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਸੰਘੀ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਤੇਜ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ ਪਿਛਲੀਆਂ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀਕਰਨ ਕਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਕਬਜ਼ਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਭਾਜਪਾ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਾਰਵਾਈਆਂ ਇੱਕ ਵੱਡੀ ਤਬਦੀਲੀ ਨੂੰ ਦਰਸਾਉਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਸਟਾਲਿਨ ਵਰਗੇ ਮੁਖ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਨੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੀ ਖੁਦਮੁਖਤਿਆਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਹੱਦ ਤੱਕ ਘਟਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਖੱਬੇ ਪੱਖੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਕਹਿੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਕੇ ਇਹ ਹਿੰਦੂਤਵ ਸੰਪਰਦਾਇਕ ਏਜੰਡੇ ਦੇ ਨਾਲਨਾਲ ਅੰਤਰਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਕਾਰਪੋਰੇਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਦੇਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਹਿੱਤਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਤ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨਕ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਖੋਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਤੇਜ਼ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਦੇਸ਼ ਚ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਿਕ ਜੰਗ ਚਲ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਭਾਜਪਾ ਦਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਏਜੰਡਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਉਹ ਇਸਨੂੰ ਲਾਗੂ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਅਗੇ ਵੱਧ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਲੜਾਈ ਸਮਰੂਪਤਾ ਤੇ ਵੰਨਸਵੰਨਤਾ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਚਲ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਲੜਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਫੈਡਰਲਿਜ਼ਮ ਲਈ ਲੜਾਈ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਹੈ ਜਿਸਦਾ ਸੂਤਰਧਾਰ ਹੁਣ ਦੱਖਣੀ ਸੂਬੇ ਹਨ।

ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਵਿਸ਼ਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦਾ ਦਖਲ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਵੱਧਦਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਆਦਾ ਦਖਲ ਅਮਨ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਮਸਲੇ ਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੇ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ। ਕੁਝ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਹਾਲਾਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ ਦਖਲ ਸੰਭਵ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਹੁਣ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਕੋਲ ਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਇਨਵੇਸਟੀਗੇਸ਼ਨ ਏਜੰਸੀ (NIA) ਰਾਹੀਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਮਿਲ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰਾਂ ਹੀ ਇੰਫੋਰਸ ਡਿਪਾਰਟਮੈਂਟ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਈ ਡੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਕਹਿੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਕੇਂਦਰ ED ਨੂੰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਖਿਲਾਫ ਇਕ ਵੱਡੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਵਜੋਂ ਵਰਤ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਕੇਂਦਰ ਕੋਲ ਸੀ ਬੀ ਆਈ ਤੇ ਆਮਦਨ ਕਰ ਵਰਗੇ ਅਦਾਰੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਸਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੋਲ ਅਥਾਹ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਹੁਣ ਤਾਂ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਨੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਵੀ ਯੂ ਜੀ ਸੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਕਾਬੂ ਪਾ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਰਾਜ ਸਾਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਵੀ ਸੀ ਲਾਉਣ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਤੇ ਲੱਗਭਗ ਕਬਜ਼ਾ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨਕ ਢਾਂਚਾ: ਫੈਡਰਲ ਐਂਡ ਯੂਨੀਟਰੀ

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਛੇਦ 1 ਦੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ, ‘ਇੰਡੀਆ, ਜਿਸਨੂੰ ਭਾਰਤ ਵੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੰਘ ਹੈ।’ ਡਾ. ਬੀ.ਆਰ. ਅੰਬੇਡਕਰ ਨੇ 1948 ਵਿੱਚ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਸਭਾ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਬੋਧਨ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਇੱਕ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਦੀ ਕਲਪਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਾਰਤ

ਵਿੱਚ 'ਕੇਂਦਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਘੇਰੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਾਜ' ਹੋਣਗੇ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਹਰੇਕ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਆਪਣੇ-ਆਪਣੇ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਸੱਤਾ ਸੰਪੰਨ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਣਗੀਆਂ। ਡਾ. ਅੰਬੇਡਕਰ ਨੇ ਵਿਸਥਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਸੀ ਕਿ, ਆਮ ਹਾਲਤਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ, ਭਾਰਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਘੀ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਯੁੱਧ ਜਾਂ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਸੰਕਟ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ, ਇਸਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਇਕਾਗਰ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਵੱਲ ਤਬਦੀਲ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਢਾਂਚਾ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਨਿਯੰਤਰਣ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

1994 ਦੇ ਸੁਪਰੀਮ ਕੋਰਟ ਦੇ ਐੱਸ.ਆਰ. ਬੋਮਾਈ ਕੇਸ ਦੇ ਫੈਸਲੇ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ 'ਤੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਰਾਜ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਸੰਘ ਦਾ ਵਿਸਥਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਨ; ਸਗੋਂ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੋਲ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਸਰਵਉੱਚਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਫੈਸਲੇ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਧਾਰਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਿ ਸੰਘਵਾਦ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਕਤੰਤਰ ਆਪਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਜੁੜੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਇੱਕ ਨੂੰ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਕਰਨ ਨਾਲ ਦੂਜੇ ਨੂੰ ਖ਼ਤਰਾ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਬੋਮਾਈ ਕੇਸ ਦੇ ਫੈਸਲੇ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਦ ਹੀ ਚੁਣੀਆਂ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਸੂਬਾ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜਪਾਲ ਦੀ ਸਿਫਾਰਿਸ਼ ਤੇ ਧਾਰਾ 356 ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਭੰਗ ਤੇ ਕਾਫੀ ਹੱਦ ਤਕ ਰੋਕ ਲੱਗੀ।

ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਮਾਹਿਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਮੰਨਣਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤ ਵਰਗੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਅਤੇ ਵਨਸਵੰਨੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚ, ਕੇਂਦਰੀਕਰਨ ਜਾਂ ਸਮਰੂਪ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ - ਭਾਵੇਂ ਉਹ ਵਿੱਤੀ, ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ, ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਹੋਵੇ - ਆਰਥਿਕ ਤਰੱਕੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਰੁਕਾਵਟ ਪਵੇਗੀ। ਵਧਣ-ਫੁੱਲਣ ਲਈ, ਭਾਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਸੰਘਵਾਦ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੰਘਵਾਦ, ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਤਰੱਕੀ ਤੇ ਸਫਲਤਾ ਲਈ ਇੱਕੋ ਇੱਕ ਸੰਭਵ ਰਸਤਾ ਹੈ। ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਅਕਸਰ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੀ ਖੁਦਮੁਖਤਿਆਰੀ ਦੀ ਕੀਮਤ 'ਤੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਫੁੱਲਤ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਵਿਭਿੰਨਤਾ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਸਮਰੂਪਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਅਕਸਰ ਤਰਜੀਹ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ, ਸੂਬਾ ਪੱਖੀ ਹਿੱਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਕਸਰ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਏਕਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਰੁਕਾਵਟਾਂ ਵਜੋਂ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਕੇਂਦਰੀਕਰਨ, ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਕਬਜ਼ੇ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਵਿੱਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਫੈਸਲੇ ਲੈਣ ਤੱਕ ਫੈਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਰਾਜ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਲਈ ਨੀਤੀਗਤ space ਨੂੰ ਸੀਮਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

1984 ਵਿੱਚ ਆਂਧਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਤੇਲਗੂ ਦੇਸ਼ਮ ਪਾਰਟੀ (ਟੀਡੀਪੀ) ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਬਰਖਾਸਤਗੀ ਦੇ ਜਵਾਬ ਵਿੱਚ, ਜਿਸਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਲੋਕ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਰਾਜਪਾਲ ਦੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਦੁਰਵਰਤੋਂ ਵਜੋਂ ਵੇਖਦੇ ਸਨ, ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ-ਰਾਜ ਸਬੰਧਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਚਰਚਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਦੇਸ਼ ਭਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਈ ਸੰਮੇਲਨ ਬੁਲਾਏ। ਸ਼੍ਰੀਨਗਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੋਏ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ 1984 ਦੇ ਸੰਮੇਲਨ ਵਿੱਚ, ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਡੀਐਮਕੇ, ਟੀਡੀਪੀ, ਅਕਾਲੀ ਦਲ, ਆਰਪੀਆਈ, ਅਸਾਮ ਜਾਤੀ ਦਲ, ਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਕਾਨਫਰੰਸ ਅਤੇ ਖੱਬੇ ਪੱਖੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਸਨ - ਨੇ ਇੱਕ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਸੰਤੁਲਿਤ ਸੰਘੀ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਦੀ ਵਕਾਲਤ ਕਰਨ

ਲਈ ਇੱਕ ਢਾਂਚਾ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤਾ।

ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਦੌਰ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ, ਖਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਖੇਤਰੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ, ਇੱਕ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰ, ਇੱਕ ਚੋਣ (one nation - one election ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਵਿੱਚ ON-OE ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ) ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਸੰਘਵਾਦ ਲਈ ਇੱਕ ਚੁਣੌਤੀ ਸਮਝਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਉਹ ਕਹਿੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਭਾਜਪਾ ਦੀ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਦੀ extension ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਇਕਸਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਰਗਰਮ ਹੈ। ਇਕ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰ, ਇਕ ਰਾਸ਼ਨ ਕਾਰਡ, ਇਕ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ, ਇਕ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਆਦਿ ਆਦਿ। ਖੇਤਰੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਕਿ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਕੋਲ ਵਿਤੀ ਸਾਧਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਘਾਟ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਕਮੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ। ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਦੇ ਯੁਗ ਵਿਚ ਉਹ ਇਸ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਮਾਰ ਖਾ ਜਾਣਗੀਆਂ। ਨਾਲੇ ਲੋਕ ਸਭ, ਵਿਧਾਨ ਸੰਭਾਵਾਂ, ਗ੍ਰਾਮ ਪੰਚਾਇਤਾਂ, ਨਗਰ ਪਾਲਿਕਾਵਾਂ, ਜਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਪ੍ਰੀਸ਼ਦਾਂ, ਬਲਾਕ ਸਮਿਤੀਆਂ, ਨਗਰ ਨਿਗਮਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਇਕ ਸਾਥ ਚੋਣਾਂ ਕਵਾਉਣਾ ਕੋਈ ਸੌਖਾ ਕੰਮ ਨਹੀਂ।

ਇੱਕ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰ, ਇੱਕ ਚੋਣ ਪ੍ਰਸਤਾਵ, ਭਾਜਪਾ ਦੇ 2014 ਦੇ ਚੋਣ ਮੈਨੀਫੈਸਟੋ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਸੀ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਅਗੇ ਤੋਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ 2015 ਦੀ ਸੰਸਦੀ ਸਥਾਈ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੀ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਆਈ। 2017 ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਆਯੋਗ ਨੀਤੀ ਨੇ ਪੱਤਰ ਜਾਰੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ 2018 ਵਿੱਚ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਇੱਕ ਡਰਾਫਟ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਹਾਲ ਹੀ ਵਿੱਚ, ਭਾਜਪਾ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਤਾਵ ਨੂੰ ਭਰੋਸੇਯੋਗਤਾ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਗਠਿਤ ਕੋਵਿੰਦ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਨੇ ON-OE ਦਾ ਸਮਰਥਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਸਿਫਾਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ। ਹਾਲੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮਨ ਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਸੰਕੇ ਹਨ। ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਸਵਾਲ ਹਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਉੱਤਰ ਅਜੇ ਮਿਲਣੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਨੇ।

ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਨੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ-ਰਾਜ ਸਬੰਧਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਤ ਮੁੱਦਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਚਰਚਾ ਕਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਹੱਲ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ, ਜੋ ਸਾਡੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦੀ ਸੰਘੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਦੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਸੰਸਥਾਗਤ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਅੰਤਰ-ਰਾਜ ਪ੍ਰੀਸ਼ਦ, ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਏਕਤਾ ਪ੍ਰੀਸ਼ਦ, ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਪ੍ਰੀਸ਼ਦ (ਐਨਡੀਸੀ), ਨੀਤੀ ਅਯੋਗ, ਵਿੱਤ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ, ਅਤੇ ਆਰ ਬੀ ਆਈ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਵਿੱਤੀ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਬੋਰਡ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹਨ। ਪਰ ਇਹ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾਤਰ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਮਰਜ਼ੀ ਮੁਤਾਬਿਕ ਹੀ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ, ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰੀਕਰਨ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਫਾਰਸ਼ਾਂ (recommendations) ਕਰਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਤਾਂ ਲਗਾਉਂਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ।

ਖੱਬੇ ਪੱਖੀ ਖੇਮੇ ਦਾ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਰੋਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੰਤੁਲਨ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਵੱਲ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰਾਂ ਝੁੱਕ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਖੇਮੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ 2019 ਵਿੱਚ, ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਨੇ ਕੁੱਲ ਟੈਕਸ ਮਾਲੀਏ ਦਾ 62.5 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਲਿਆ, ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮੂਹਿਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਸਿਰਫ 37.5 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਇਆ। ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ, ਰਾਜਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦੇ ਕੁੱਲ ਖਰਚਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ, ਰਾਜ ਖਰਚੇ 62.4 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਤੱਕ ਸਨ। ਇਹ ਵਿੱਤੀ ਅਸੰਤੁਲਨ ਵਧਦਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਖੱਬੇ ਪੱਖੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ

ਨੇ ਵਿਤੀ ਸਾਧਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਤੇ ਟਿਪਣੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਅਧੀਨ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਟੈਕਸ ਟ੍ਰਾਂਸਫਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਗਿਰਾਵਟ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਅਸੰਤੁਲਨ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਵਧ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਚੌਦਵੇਂ ਵਿੱਤ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਰਾਜ ਟੈਕਸ ਵੰਡ ਨੂੰ 42 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਤੱਕ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਸਿਫਾਰਸ਼ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ, ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਸਪਾਂਸਰਡ ਸਕੀਮਾਂ (CSS) ਲਈ ਫੰਡ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਟੌਤੀ ਸੰਘੀ ਸਪਿਰਿਟ ਦੇ ਉਲਟ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਬਜਟਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਵੰਡਣਯੋਗ ਪੂਲ ਦੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਲਈ ਫੰਡਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਲਾਟਮੈਂਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਮੀ ਝਲਕਦੀ ਹੈ: ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ ਇਹ 2017 ਵਿੱਚ 41.1 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਸੀ, ਇਹ 2019 ਵਿੱਚ ਘੱਟ ਕੇ 32.9 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਅਤੇ 2023 ਵਿੱਚ 35.1 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਮਾਲੀਆ ਜੁਟਾਉਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਮੀ ਦਾ ਇੱਕ ਕਾਰਨ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਅਤੇ ਘਰੇਲੂ ਕਾਰਪੋਰੇਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਦੇਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਟੈਕਸ ਕਟੌਤੀਆਂ, ਰਿਆਇਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਛੋਟਾਂ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਪਾਵਾਂ ਨੇ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਵਿਤਰਣ ਲਈ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਫੰਡਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਘਟਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। **ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ, ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦੀ ਗੈਰਵੰਡਣਯੋਗ ਸੈਂਸਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਚਾਰਜਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਵੱਧ ਰਹੀ ਨਿਰਭਰਤਾ** - 2012 ਵਿੱਚ 10.4 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਕੇ 2022 ਵਿੱਚ 18.2 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਹੋ ਗਈ - ਨੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਟੈਕਸ ਮਾਲੀਏ ਦੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਵੰਡਣਯੋਗ ਪੂਲ ਨੂੰ ਘਟਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਟੇ ਵਜੋਂ, ਕੁੱਲ ਟੈਕਸ ਮਾਲੀਏ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਵਜੋਂ ਵੰਡਣਯੋਗ ਪੂਲ 2011 ਵਿੱਚ 88.6 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ 2021 ਵਿੱਚ 10 ਅੰਕ ਘੱਟ ਕੇ 78.9 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਸਪੈਕਟ੍ਰਮ ਨਿਲਾਮੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਅਚਾਨਕ ਲਾਭ, ਨਿਵੇਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਪਤੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਦਰੀਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਆਮਦਨ, ਅਤੇ ਵਨਜ਼ ਮੁਨਾਫ਼ੇ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਂਝਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਮਾਲੀਏ ਦੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਘਟਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿੱਤੀ ਜਗ੍ਹਾ ਅਤੇ ਖੁਦਮੁਖਤਿਆਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੁੰਗੜਦੀ ਹੈ। ਰਾਜ ਸੁਰਚਾਰਜ ਰਹੀ ਇਕੱਠੇ ਹੋਏ ਮਾਲੀਏ ਚ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਮੰਗ ਰਹੇ ਨੇ।

ਸੂਬਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਉਧਾਰ ਲੈਣ 'ਤੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਪਾਬੰਦੀਆਂ ਤੇਜ਼ ਹੋ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ। ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੁਣ ਕੁੱਲ ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰ ਉਧਾਰ ਲੈਣ ਦੇ ਸਿਰਫ ਇੱਕ ਛੋਟੇ ਜਿਹੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ (ਲਗਭਗ 15 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ, ਕੇਂਦਰ 85 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੈ) ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਹੈ। 12ਵੇਂ ਵਿੱਤ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਿਫਾਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ, ਰਾਜਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਵਿੱਤੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇ ਵਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਬਜਟ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਨ ਐਕਟ ਲਾਗੂ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਦਬਾਅ ਪਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ, ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਕੁੱਲ ਰਾਜ ਘਰੇਲੂ ਉਤਪਾਦ (GSDP) ਦੇ 3 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਦੀ ਉਧਾਰ ਸੀਮਾ ਸਵੈ-ਲਾਗੂ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਅਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਸਥਿਤੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਉਧਾਰ ਲੈਣ 'ਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਤਾਂ ਲਗਾਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਚਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਦਾਹਰਣ ਵਜੋਂ, 2020 ਵਿੱਚ, ਕੋਵਿਡ-19 ਮਹਾਂਮਾਰੀ ਦੌਰਾਨ, ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ GSDP ਦਾ 2 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਵਾਧੂ ਉਧਾਰ ਲੈਣ ਦੀ ਇਜਾਜ਼ਤ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਇਸ ਸ਼ਰਤ 'ਤੇ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਇੱਕ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰ, ਇੱਕ ਰਾਸ਼ਨ ਕਾਰਡ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ, ਕਾਰੋਬਾਰ ਕਰਨ

ਦੀ ਸੌਖ ਨੀਤੀ (ease of doing business), ਜਨਤਕ ਉਪਯੋਗਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰੀ ਸੁਧਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਬਿਜਲੀ ਖੇਤਰ ਦੇ ਸੁਧਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲਾਗੂ ਕਰਨ। ਇੱਕ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ, ਖਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਵਿੱਚ, ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਗ੍ਰਾਂਟਾਂ ਦਾ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਸ਼ਰਤ (Untied Grants) ਹਿੱਸਾ ਘਟਦਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। 2009 ਵਿੱਚ, ਇਹ 31.2 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਸੀ, ਪਰ 2023 ਤੱਕ, ਇਹ ਬਹੁਤ ਘੱਟ ਕੇ 17.4 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਤਨਖਾਹ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਮੇਂ-ਸਮੇਂ 'ਤੇ ਤਨਖਾਹ ਵਾਧੇ ਲਈ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਸਿਫਾਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਨੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਦਬਾਅ ਪਾਇਆ ਹੈ।

ਵਿੱਤ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਲਈ ਫੰਡਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਸ਼ਰਤਾਂ ਲਗਾਈਆਂ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਅਕਸਰ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿੱਤੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੇ ਬਦਲੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ-ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ਿਤ ਸੁਧਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲਾਗੂ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਯੋਜਨਾਵਾਂ ਅਕਸਰ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਰਤਾਂ ਰੱਖਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿੱਤੀ ਖੁਦਮੁਖਤਿਆਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੀਮਤ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ-ਪ੍ਰਯੋਜਿਤ ਯੋਜਨਾਵਾਂ (CSP) ਅਤੇ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਖੇਤਰ ਪ੍ਰੋਜੈਕਟਾਂ (CSP) ਦੀ ਇੱਕ ਵਧਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਖ਼ਤ ਸ਼ਰਤਾਂ ਲਗਾਈਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ। ਕੇਂਦਰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਯੋਜਨਾਵਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਖਰਚੇ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਪਾਤ ਨੂੰ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਵਧਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਯੋਜਨਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕਰਨਾ ਅਕਸਰ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਨੀਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਲਾਗੂ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਪ੍ਰੋਜੈਕਟਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਤਰਜੀਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਗੇ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੀਮਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦੇ ਅਕਸਰ ਜ਼ਬਰਦਸਤੀ ਵਾਲੀ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਨੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਅਰਥਪੂਰਨ ਸਲਾਹ-ਮਸ਼ਵਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਘਟਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਕਿ ਵਿੱਤੀ ਸੰਘਵਾਦ ਦੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਲੰਘਣਾ ਹੈ। ਵਿਤ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਫੰਡਾਂ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਅਪਣਾਇਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਫਾਰਮੂਲਾ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਰਗੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਨਿਜੋਯਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਹੀ ਅਰਥਾਂ 'ਚ ਲਾਗੂ ਕੀਤਾ, ਦੇ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਭੁਗਤਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਬਾਦੀ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਫੀ weightage ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਵਸਤੂਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਟੈਕਸ (GST) ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਨੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਪੱਖ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ। ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ GST ਕੌਂਸਲ 'ਤੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਕੋਲ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਵੋਟਿੰਗ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਹਨ, ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਰਾਜ ਦੀਆਂ ਚਿੰਤਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਖੋਂ-ਪਰੋਖੇ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। GST ਨੇ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਧਿਰ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੀ ਕੇਂਦਰ 'ਤੇ ਵਿੱਤੀ ਨਿਰਭਰਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਵਧਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ।

ਵਿਚਾਰ-ਵਿਮਰਸ਼ ਤੇ ਸਹਿਯੋਗੀ ਸੰਘਵਾਦ

ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਤਾਂ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ consultative, cooperative ਤੇ inclusive ਫੈਡਰਲਿਜ਼ਮ ਦਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਇਸਦੇ ਉਲਟ ਹੈ। ਨੋਟ ਬੰਦੀ ਇਸਦੀ ਵੱਡੀ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਹੈ। ਇਸਨੂੰ

ਲਾਗੂ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਮੂਲੀ ਭਿਣਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੱਗੀ ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ ਕੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਤੇ ਇਸਦਾ ਗਹਿਰਾ ਤੇ ਮਾੜਾ ਅਸਰ ਪਿਆ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੋਵਿਡ ਵੇਲੇ ਪਾਬੰਦੀਆਂ ਲਾਉਂਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵੀ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਕੋਵਿਡ ਸਮੇਂ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਤਰਫ਼ੇ ਫੈਸਲੇ ਲਏ। ਅਚਾਨਕ ਲੱਗੀਆਂ ਪਾਬੰਦੀਆਂ ਕਾਰਨ ਕਈ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਾਹਮਣਾ ਸੂਬਾ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਿਆ।

ਯੋਜਨਾ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਨੇ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਗ੍ਰਾਂਟਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸਰੋਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਕਰਕੇ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਸਮੂਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਮਾਨਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਈ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਸਲਾਹਕਾਰੀ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਨੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਫੈਸਲੇ ਲੈਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੁਝ ਹੱਦ ਤੱਕ ਭਾਗੀਦਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਇਸਦੇ ਭੰਗ ਹੋਣ ਨਾਲ, ਰਾਜ ਹੁਣ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਨਿਰਭਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਜੋ ਵਿੱਤ ਮੰਤਰਾਲੇ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਫੰਡਿੰਗ 'ਤੇ ਸਖ਼ਤ ਨਿਯੰਤਰਣ ਵਰਤਦੀ ਹੈ। ਯੋਜਨਾ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਹਿਯੋਗੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਿਰਿਆਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਉਲਟ, ਨੀਤੀ ਆਯੋਗ ਨੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੀ ਦਰਜਾਬੰਦੀ ਸੂਚਕ ਅੰਕ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਰੋਬਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਸਾਨੀ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਵਿਧੀਆਂ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੈਰ ਸਮਾਨਤਾ ਅਧਾਰਿਤ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਨਿਵੇਸ਼ ਆਕਰਸ਼ਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮੁਕਾਬਲਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਦਬਾਅ ਪਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਨਿੱਜੀ ਖੇਤਰ ਦੀ ਭਾਗੀਦਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹਿਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਵਾਲੇ ਮਾਡਲ ਨੇ ਰਾਜ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲਚਕਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਪਾਬੰਦੀਆਂ ਵਧਾ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

12ਵੇਂ ਵਿੱਤ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਨੇ ਵਿੱਤੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਬਜਟ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਨ ਐਕਟ (FRBM) ਲਾਗੂ ਕੀਤਾ, ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਮਾਲੀਆ ਘਾਟੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਗ੍ਰਾਂਟਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਘਾਟੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਮੀ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜਿਆ ਗਿਆ। ਇਸਨੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿੱਤੀ ਘਾਟੇ ਨੂੰ GSDP ਦੇ 3 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਤੱਕ ਸੀਮਤ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿ 14ਵੇਂ ਵਿੱਤ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਨੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਲਾਟ ਕੀਤੇ ਟੈਕਸਾਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤਤਾ ਵਿੱਚ 10 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਵਾਧਾ ਕੀਤਾ, ਇਸਨੇ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਖੇਤਰ ਜਾਂ ਸਪਾਂਸਰਡ ਸਕੀਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਧੀਨ ਗ੍ਰਾਂਟਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਘਟਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਹਾਲ ਹੀ ਵਿੱਚ, ਤ੍ਰਿਵੇਂਦਰਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਰੋਧੀਸ਼ਾਸਿਤ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿੱਤ ਮੰਤਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਇੱਕ ਸੰਮੇਲਨ ਨੇ ਸਰੋਤ ਵੰਡ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਧ ਰਹੇ vertical ਅਸੰਤੁਲਨ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਤਾਵਿਤ ਸੁਧਾਰਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਕੀਤੀ:

1. ਟੈਕਸ ਵੰਡ ਵਧਾਓ: ਟੈਕਸ ਵੰਡ ਦਰ ਨੂੰ ਘੱਟੋ-ਘੱਟ 50 ਪ੍ਰਤੀਸ਼ਤ ਤੱਕ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਨਾਲ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਖਰਚ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੇਵਾਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਯੋਗ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇ।
2. ਸੈੱਸ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਚਾਰਜਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਮੀ: ਸੈੱਸ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਚਾਰਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੀਮਤ ਜਾਂ ਖਤਮ ਕਰਨਾ, ਜਾਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੰਡਣਯੋਗ ਪੂਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕਰਨਾ, ਰਾਜਾਂ ਲਈ ਪਹੁੰਚਯੋਗ ਫੰਡਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਸੁੰਗੜਨ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਕੇਗਾ।
3. ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਸਪਾਂਸਰਡ ਸਕੀਮਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੁਧਾਰ: ਇਹਨਾਂ ਸਕੀਮਾਂ ਲਈ ਸ਼ਰਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੋਧਣ

ਨਾਲ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਲਚਕਤਾ ਮਿਲੇਗੀ, ਕੇਂਦਰ 'ਤੇ ਵਿੱਤੀ ਨਿਰਭਰਤਾ ਘਟੇਗੀ।

4. ਸੁਧਾਰੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਕਰਜ਼ੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਰਤਾਂ: ਰਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਕਰਜ਼ਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਅਨੁਕੂਲ ਵਿਆਜ ਦਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੇਸ਼ਕਸ਼ ਵਿੱਤੀ ਤਣਾਅ ਨੂੰ ਘਟਾਏਗੀ, ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਉਹ ਤਰਜੀਹੀ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਫੰਡ ਵੰਡ ਸਕਣਗੇ।

ਜੇਕਰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਸਤਾਵਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਰਾਜ ਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਦੀ ਵਿਵਹਾਰਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਵਧਾਉਣਗੇ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਘੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਨਗੇ।

AKAL TAKHT'S SUPREMACY UNDER THREAT

SURINDER SINGH JODHKA*

The controversial removal of two Takht jathedars by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) has caused a furore within the Sikh community. At a meeting of its executive committee on March 7, the SGPC decided to terminate the services of Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh for “failing to guide the Panth and address contemporary issues effectively”. The committee also decided to remove Giani Sultan Singh from the post of Jathedar of Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib.

Though they both continue to be in service of the SGPC, their removal is being described by many observers as a ‘black day’ in contemporary Sikh history. It has saddened and dismayed Sikhs across the globe. However, not many would have been surprised by these decisions. A month ago, another Jathedar, Giani Harpreet Singh, had been sacked by the SGPC on ‘flimsy’ charges.

The present turmoil in Sikh institutions has its origin in the happenings of December 2, 2024, when the SAD leadership appeared before the Akal Takht to atone for its ‘misdeeds’. The Sikh clergy awarded them religious punishment. The Badals (father and son) were presumably considered the main culprits. Besides awarding tankhah to Sukhbir Singh Badal, the clergy withdrew the title of Panth Rattan Fakhr-e-Qaum (pride of the Sikh community) that had been conferred on then Punjab CM Parkash Singh Badal by the Akal Takht in 2011. The jathedars also directed that all factions of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) be dissolved and appointed a committee to oversee the process of the party’s revival through a fresh enrolment of members.

* Courtesy: The Tribune, Mar 10, 2025

While this was a bitter pill to swallow for the SAD leadership, the Sikhs at large were jubilant. They saw in it a ray of hope, a possibility of a return to politics with a moral fibre and one that was accountable to the Akal Takht, the highest temporal seat of the Sikhs.

There have been instances in Sikh history when the Akal Takht has summoned powerful Sikh rulers, including Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and awarded them severe punishment. However, the present-day Akali leaders would not have expected the jathedars to be so harsh on them. They tend to see them as mere employees of the SGPC. And the SAD leadership has had near-total control over the affairs of the SGPC for the past several decades. Their decision to appear before the Akal Takht was an attempt to reclaim legitimacy among the Sikhs following a decade-long rule during which some steps widely perceived to be anti-Sikh were taken. While the SAD leadership nominally underwent a part of the awarded tankhah, the dominant section also saw the punishment as a challenge to its authority. Hence, the reprisal.

While a section of the SAD leadership might see the removal of the two jathedars as a victory, it is likely to further erode the party's credibility among the Sikh masses. Besides widespread condemnation of the executive committee's latest decisions, members of the Sikh civil society have also pointed to the fact that the SGPC no longer has the mandate of the community. Its term expired a long time ago. It continues to be in place by default because no elections have been held since 2011.

What explains such dissonance and discord within Sikh institutions? What could be the way forward for the Sikhs? For over a century, Sikh religious institutions and Akali politics have been inseparable. It was during the popular mobilisation for the liberation of historic gurdwaras in the 1920s that the SGPC was born. The Akali Dal was formed by leaders of this reform movement as its political wing, which had to be subordinated to the religious establishment, the SGPC and the Akal Takht. Over the years, this relationship has reversed. The political class, with a specific family at its helm, has come to control various institutions. The SAD has also come to function like other parties, conforming to the prevailing political

culture. It has changed its mandate from being a party representing Sikh interests and aspirations to being a party of all Punjabis, representing their regional interests.

With the formation of a separate gurdwara management committee in Haryana, the SGPC's sphere of influence has shrunk and become confined to Punjab. Likewise, Delhi has a separate gurdwara committee. Besides, there are a large number of important gurdwaras, including in Punjab, which are outside the purview of the SGPC.

Even more importantly, over the past 100 years, the social profile of the Sikh community has seen many changes. With growing urbanisation and occupational diversification, the community's aspirations and perspectives have become far more diverse. Sikhs today are spread across the world, with a sizeable number of them in Europe and North America. However, they all look up to the Akal Takht as the supreme authority of the faith.

Given that the SGPC does not represent the aspirations of all Sikhs, it should not have the sole right to appoint or remove jathedars. The time has come to separate the institution of the Akal Takht both from the SGPC and the regional politics of the SAD. In the long run, such a separation may prove to be beneficial for everyone. But it is unlikely to be an easy task. Such a change would require extensive popular mobilisation. On the positive side, Sikhs today have vibrant civil society organisations in several nations and resources of their own to make such a change possible.

Centenary Anniversary

JAITO DA MORCHA: VICTORY OF SIKHS AFTER UNDERGOING GRUESOME TORTURES

DR AMRIT KAUR

The initial cause of Jaito Morcha was that on 9 July 1923, Maharaja Ripudaman Singh (1883-1942) who had ascended as Maharaja of the Nabha state on 24 January, 1912 after the demise of his father was forcibly abdicated. His four-year old son Prince Partap Singh, born on 22 September 1919 was proclaimed ruler of Nabha who being a minor, the state was placed under a British administrator. The Britishers, however, proclaimed that Maharaja Ripudaman Singh had himself relinquished his gaddi (throne) voluntarily. Maharaja Ripudaman Singh was sent to a jail in Dehradun, which presently falls in Uttarakhand state of India but later on in 1926 he was sent to a jail in Kodaikanal in Tamil Nadu, where he died in 1942.

The Britishers abdicated Maharaja Ripudaman Singh because (i) he had pro-Akali sympathies (ii) in 1921 had donned a black turban as a protest against the massacre of Sikhs at Nankana Sahib, the sacred birth place of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji, which now falls in the Nankana Sahib District of Pakistan and (iii) in 1922 had vehemently supported the morcha of Guru Ka Bagh in village Ghukkevali which is at a distance of about 20 kms from Amritsar in District Amritsar, Punjab. The Britishers were disturbed at his activities and were determined to

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The references used in this write-up include (i) Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, Vol. I, II, III and IV published by Punjabi University, Patiala, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998 (ii) Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha's book Mahan Kosh, 1930 and (iii) Bhajan Singh's book Sade Shaheed (Our Martyrs), 1991 although reference has not been indicated at each place.

take vengeance by abdicating him.

As a protest against the abdication of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh and to get him reinstalled a Committee was set up by the Sikhs which fixed 29 July, 1923 to be observed as a day of prayer for the re-installation of the Maharaja in all the main towns of Punjab.

On 2 August, 1923 the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) sent a telegram to Lord Reading, the then Viceroy of India wherein (i) they challenged the Government's proclamation that Maharaja Ripudaman Singh had relinquished his gaddi voluntarily and (ii) demanded an independent enquiry into this matter. On 5 August, 1923 the SGPC passed a resolution to organize a peaceful campaign to have Maharaja Ripudaman Singh re-installed. Ignoring the demands of the Sikhs, the Nabha State authorities passed an ordinance prohibiting public discussion of this issue.

On 25 August, 1923, a divan (congregation) was held by the Sikhs at Jaito (a small market town) which fell in the jurisdiction of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh's Nabha state wherein resolutions were passed condemning the government action. The divan was followed by a peaceful public march. On 27 August, 1923, Nabha State authorities arrested the organizers of the divan. This divan which was started on 25 August, 1923 was to be continued for three days. But the arrest of the organizers provoked the Akalis so much that they decided to continue it indefinitely. It was also decided that in Gurudwara Gangsar Sahib Patshahi Dasvin, Jaito a series of Akhand Paaths should be carried on. Akhand Path is an uninterrupted recitation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib the holy scripture of the Sikhs. This Holy Scripture consists of 1430 pages and its uninterrupted recitation takes about 48 hours. On 14 September, 1923 the police occupied Gurudwara Gangsar Sahib Patshahi Dasvin and the Nabha State authorities interrupted the Akhand Paath which was being recited in this Gurudwara to express sympathy for Maharaja Ripudaman Singh. The paathi who was reciting the hymns from the Holy Scripture was almost dragged from his place and in his place the Nabha State authorities introduced their own paathi named S. Atma Singh. Also, all the Sikhs numbering more than 100 who were present there were arrested. The interruption of Akhand Paath is considered a sacrilege by the Sikhs. This sacrilege

further enraged the Sikh community. The morcha started on 9 July, 1923 to get Maharaja Ripudaman Singh re-installed enhanced its momentum. To express their agony the Sikhs decided to intensify the morcha and start a series of divans at Gurdwara Gangsar Sahib Patshahi Dasvin, Jaito.

On 15 September, 1923 the first Sikh jatha consisting of 25 Sikhs reached Jaito which was to be followed by jathas of equal strength for about 6 months continuously. In the meantime the Secretary of State directed the Viceroy "to put an effective stop to the Akali operation by the arrest and prosecution of all the organizers as abettors". As a result, the Punjab Government declared SGPC and Shiromani Akali Dal as unlawful organizations. All the 60 members of the interim committee of the Shiromani Committee were arrested on charges of treason against the King Emperor.

On 29 September 1923, the SGPC condemned the official action and declared that the Sikhs were determined to get their right to free worship reaffirmed.

As per orders of the British authorities all the jathas were stopped on entering the Nabha state territory and all the members of jathas were beaten mercilessly, tortured and then imprisoned. Due to lack of space in the jails, after some time these Sikhs were left in remote jungles where no food and water was available.

After six months the Sikhs decided to intensify the morcha by increasing the number from 25 to 500. On 9 February, 1924 the first jatha consisting of 500 Sikhs left Akal Takht Sahib, Amritsar for Jaito. This jatha was given a cordial reception by the Sikhs in all the villages and towns through which it passed. S. Zimand, a New York Times correspondent who witnessed the jatha marching towards Jaito stated that "The Jatha was moving in perfect order and non-violence with large crowds of public on its right and left, five Nishan Sahibs in the front and Guru Granth in the middle." On 20 February 1924 this jatha reached Bargari, a village on the Nabha-Faridkot border about 10 kms short of Jaito. In the meantime at Jaito, the Nabha Administrator Wilson Johnston was stationed near Gurdwara Tibbi Sahib which is at a distance of about 200 yards from Gurdwara Gangsar

Sahib Patshahi Dasvin, with large contingents of army with a view to crush all the Sikhs in the jatha. On 21 February 1924 thousands of Sikhs had come out and reached Gurdwara Gangsar Sahib Patshahi Dasvin to have a darshan (holy glimpse) of this shaheedi jatha.

Thus, when this peacefully marching jatha was at a distance of about 200 yards from Gurdwara Gangsar Sahib Patshahi Dasvin the British Administrator Wilson Johnston ordered that the jatha should stop further movement. Ignoring the demand of the British Administrator the jatha neither dispersed nor stopped and continued to march forward towards the Gurdwara. The British Administrator ordered the army to open fire. In two volleys of fire lasting about five minutes the bodies of the Sikhs were crushed to pieces and there was blood everywhere. A doctor was present in the jatha but he was not allowed to undertake first aid. What astonished the British Administrator was that even in the face of bullets, the surviving Sikhs continued to march forward reciting 'Satnam' 'Waheguru'. The bullets did not deter even a single Sikh. So much so that when a child being carried by her mother got killed with a bullet, the mother laid down the dead body of the child on the ground and continued to march forward alongwith her companions. However, soon thereafter she was also killed through a gunshot.

As per Government proclamation 22 Sikhs had died, 29 had gotten injured and 450 had been imprisoned. But the Shiromani Committee announced that 100 Sikhs had been martyred and 200 had been injured. The Government did not allow the surviving members of the jatha to lift the dead bodies of their fellow members. In addition to these 100 Sikhs about 50 Sikhs died during the morcha in accidents and tortures inflicted upon them in jails. The Sikhs in the Nabha jail were killed after inflicting severe tortures upon them wherein their flesh was pulled with pliers.

On the night of 21 February, 1924 the Government loaded the dead bodies of the martyrs in a specially requisitioned train and drowned them in the river Sutlej. The dead bodies of only 22 Sikhs were handed over to the Sikhs for cremation. The dead bodies of these 22 martyrs were cremated near the market of Jaito, which is at a distance about

1D 2 km from Gurdwara Gangsar Sahib Patshahi Dasvin. To commemorate the martyrs, at the place of their cremation Gurdwara Angitha Sahib has been established. The Shiromani Committee was able to identify the names and addresses of only 17 out of these 22 martyrs which are given below. No information could be traced about the remaining shaheeds.

Name	Village	District*
1 Jas Singh	Cheecha Bhakna	Amritsar
2 Sunder Singh	Karamgarh	Patiala
3 Surain Singh	Lubhwali	Faridkot
4 Fumman Singh	Vander	Ferozepur
5 Sunder Singh	Cheeda	Ferozepur
6 Dewan Singh	Sangarwal	Hoshiarpur
7 Hari Singh	Namoli	Hoshiarpur
8 Harditt Singh	Kaleke	Ferozepur
9 Wariyam Singh	Bagha Purana	Ferozepur
10 Fumman Singh	Smalsar	Ferozepur
11 Magh Singh	Rode	Ferozepur
12 Kapur Singh	Rode	Ferozepur
13 Ghulla Singh	Bhalur	Ferozepur
14 Natha Singh	Moga	Ferozepur
15 Acchar Singh	Matkar Kalan	Jalandhar
16 Bishan Singh	Mangat	Jalandhar
17 Wadhawa Singh	Charrik	Ri Kalsia

* Those names of the districts have been indicated which existed at that time.

This gruesome incident caused resentment among the Sikhs not only in India but also in some foreign countries. In addition to one jatha from Calcutta, one jatha including 11 Sikhs came from Canada, two jathas came from China, one from Shanghai and the other from Hong Kong,

Inspite of the atrocities waged by the Britishers 13 more 500-strong shaheedi jathas reached Jaito and courted arrest.

On 28 February, 1924 another shaheedi jatha consisting of 500 Sikhs started from Akal Takht Sahib, Amritsar and reached Jaito on 14 March where it was arrested. The British Government did not attack this jatha and only arrested it because they were upset that even machine guns had not deterred a single Sikh to withdraw from the jatha. The Jaito March was continued for two years, each jatha consisted of 500 Sikhs.

By the time 16 jathas consisting of 500 Sikhs had reached Jaito the British Government had to bow. Feeling helpless the Governor of Punjab Sir Malcolm Hailey cunningly created a paralled Sikh Sudhar Committee wherein a 101-strong jatha was allowed to recite Akhand Paath at Gurdwara Gangsar Sahib Patshahi Dasvin, Jaito. This act of the Governor further infuriated the Sikhs. Thus the government was forced to initiate steps for reconciliation with the Sikhs with the help of Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya and Bhai Jodh Singh. But this bore no fruit because the British Government was not willing to re-install Maharaja Ripudaman Singh in his state. In the meantime the Punjab Government introduced Sikh Gurdwara Bill which was passed unanimously on 7 July, 1924 by the Legislative Council. After the Bill was passed the Governor of Punjab in his speech in the Punjab Legislative Council announced that the Administrator of Nabha would permit bands of pilgrims to proceed to Gurdwara Gangsar Sahib Patshahi Dasvin for religious worship. As a result of which most of the Akali prisoners were released. The police was withdrawn from Gurdwara Gangsar Sahib Patshahi Dasvin and the Gurdwara was handed over to the Sikhs who now had got the freedom to start an Akhand Paath. Thus the Sikhs finally emerged as conquerors of Jaito Morcha.

In the whole country the word got spread that in the Jaito March even the machine guns of Britishers could not stand in the face determination steadfastness and bravery of the Sikhs. The tradition of martyrdom initiated by Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji, the fifth prophet-teacher of the Sikhs strengthened by Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib the ninth prophet-teacher of the Sikhs, and further followed by the

martyrs of the 18th and 19th centuries was still in its full bloom in the 20th century.

The Britishers who were trying to abdicate the Maharajas of all the princely states had to bow finally. The agitation which was started on 9 July 1923 lasted for two years until the Sikhs attained victory on 21 July, 1925. This victory was celebrated by the Sikhs by holding 101 Akhand Paaths in batches of 25, starting from 21 July, 1925 and concluding on 6 August, 1925.

It may be added that in the Jaito Morcha Bibi Kishan Kaur (1860-1952) played a fearless role wherein she helped in arranging rations for the shaheedi jathas as well as the Sikh Sangat which accompanied them.

With a fear still lurking in the minds of the Britishers, in 1926 Maharaja Ripudaman Singh was shifted from Dehra Dun Jail to a jail in Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu where he died on 13 December, 1942.

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH'S LEGACY: INTEGRITY, DIPLOMACY, AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

DR DEVINDER PAL SINGH*

ABSTRACT

Dr. Manmohan Singh, India's 13th Prime Minister, is a beacon of resilience, wisdom, and selfless service. From his humble beginnings in a refugee family to his transformative role in shaping India's economic and global stature, his journey is a testament to perseverance and visionary leadership. As the architect of India's 1991 economic liberalization, he dismantled bureaucratic constraints, paving the way for sustained economic growth. His tenure as Prime Minister witnessed landmark initiatives in economic stability, diplomacy, and social welfare, including the Indo-US nuclear deal and MGNREGA. Despite political challenges, Dr. Singh's integrity and humility remained unwavering, earning him global respect. Deeply rooted in Sikh values, he exemplified ethical governance and inclusive leadership. His life offers invaluable lessons, resilience in adversity, knowledge as power, diplomacy for progress, and leadership as service. In a world where loud rhetoric often overshadows action, Dr. Singh's quiet yet profound impact inspires future generations.

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Manmohan Singh, India's 13th Prime Minister, is widely regarded as one of the most visionary and principled leaders in modern Indian history. A man of exceptional intellect, unwavering integrity, and quiet resilience, his leadership has left a lasting impact on India's economic and political landscape [1-10]. From his humble beginnings

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in a small village in Gah (now in Pakistan) to becoming the architect of India's economic liberalization and a globally respected statesman, his journey is one of perseverance, wisdom, and selfless service.

Dr. Singh's tenure as Finance Minister in 1991 was marked by bold economic reforms that opened India's economy to global markets, setting the stage for decades of growth. As Prime Minister (2004-2014), he played a crucial role in strengthening India's international relations, steering the country through the 2008 financial crisis, and implementing key social welfare programs. Despite political challenges, he remained a leader of integrity, humility, and dedication to public service.

This article explores the defining qualities of Dr. Singh's leadership: his resilience in adversity, commitment to knowledge, ethical governance, and strategic decision-making. By examining his life and contributions, we uncover invaluable lessons for leaders and aspiring change-makers in today's world.

1. RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

Born in 1932 in a modest household in Gah (now in Pakistan), Dr. Singh faced hardships early in life. The Partition of 1947 forced his family to migrate to India, where they struggled as refugees in Amritsar. The tragic killing of his grandfather in the riots during Partition was a significant personal loss [8-9]. Despite these hardships, he remained steadfast in pursuing education and excellence.

Instead of allowing his difficult circumstances to define him, he used them as motivation to succeed. His resilience saw him graduate with top honours from Punjab University before securing a scholarship to Cambridge and later earning a doctorate from Oxford. His perseverance reminds us that challenges are stepping stones to success rather than barriers.

Lesson: No matter how difficult the circumstances, resilience and determination can help one rise above adversity.

2. THE POWER OF EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE

Dr. Singh's academic journey was exceptional. His education at Cambridge and Oxford exposed him to renowned economists like Joan

Robinson and Nicholas Kaldor, who influenced his views on balancing capitalism with a state-aided approach. His expertise in international trade led to his selection by the United Nations for the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1966 [9].

His deep knowledge of economics became the foundation of his career. Whether as Chief Economic Advisor, Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, or Finance Minister, his ability to apply economic theories to real-world policies made him a transformative figure in Indian politics.

Lesson: Investing in knowledge and continuous learning can open doors to impactful leadership and innovation.

3. INTEGRITY AND ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

Dr. Manmohan Singh exemplified honesty and ethical governance throughout his career. Despite being in politics for decades, he remained untouched by corruption scandals. His reputation for personal integrity was so strong that even his political opponents respected him.

A notable example of his ethical leadership was when, as Finance Minister, he deposited the notional profit from devaluing the Indian Rupee into his foreign currency account, refusing to benefit personally from policy decisions. Similarly, he returned a cash contribution made to his brother by author Khushwant Singh for his election campaign in 1999, demonstrating his unwavering principles [9].

Lesson: True leadership is built on integrity and ethical conduct, which earn trust and respect.

4. VISIONARY ECONOMIC REFORMS

Perhaps Dr. Singh's most defining contribution to India was his role in the 1991 economic liberalization. When India faced a severe financial crisis, he, as Finance Minister, introduced landmark reforms that opened India's economy to globalization. His policies included:

- Dismantling the 'license-permit raj'
- Encouraging foreign direct investment (FDI)
- Reducing trade barriers
- Privatizing state-owned enterprises

These reforms set India on a path of rapid economic growth,

making it one of the world's fastest-growing economies. Within a decade, India was recognized as a key emerging market, and by 2008, the country had become part of the G20.

Lesson: Visionary leadership requires bold and strategic decision-making that ensures long-term benefits despite short-term resistance.

5. DIPLOMATIC EXCELLENCE AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

As Prime Minister, Dr. Singh played a crucial role in strengthening India's global ties. One of his most significant achievements was securing the Indo-US nuclear deal, which ended India's nuclear isolation and recognized it as a responsible nuclear power.

He also worked towards building peaceful relations with neighbouring countries, particularly Pakistan. Although his vision for a lasting peace agreement did not materialize due to political opposition, his efforts demonstrated his commitment to regional stability.

Dr. Singh's global economic stature was evident in his handling of the 2008 financial crisis, where his policies shielded India from the worst effects. His expertise was so widely respected that world leaders, including US President Barack Obama, acknowledged that "when Dr. Manmohan Singh speaks, the world listens"[11].

Lesson: Diplomacy and strategic global engagement enhance a nation's position on the world stage and foster international cooperation.

6. HUMBLE AND SELFLESS LEADERSHIP

Unlike many political figures, Dr. Singh never sought power for personal gain. His leadership style was rooted in humility and quiet efficiency. He was known for listening to different perspectives and making informed decisions without engaging in unnecessary political theatrics.

His humility was evident when he was appointed Prime Minister in 2004. Despite being an accomplished economist and statesman, he always attributed his success to teamwork and collective effort. He led by example, showing that one does not need to be loud to be effective.

Lesson: Leadership is about service, not self-promotion. The most impactful leaders lead with humility and purpose.

7. COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC WELFARE

Dr. Singh's government introduced several transformative social welfare policies, including:

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) – providing employment to millions of rural Indians.
- National Food Security Act – ensuring food for vulnerable populations.
- Right to Education Act – making education a fundamental right for children.

These initiatives reflected his deep commitment to improving the lives of the common people, particularly the underprivileged sections of society.

Lesson: Leadership must prioritize the well-being of the masses and ensure inclusive growth.

8. A TRUE SIKH AND HUMANITARIAN

Dr. Singh remained a devout Sikh, embodying Guru Nanak's teachings of honesty, humility, and service. His contributions to the Sikh community include developing the Guru Granth Centre at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, and his instrumental role in improving Hazur Sahib, Nanded, during Guru Gobind Singh's centenary celebrations [8]. He proudly represented the Sikh community on a global platform, proving that faith and governance can coexist harmoniously.

Lesson: Upholding one's cultural and ethical values strengthens leadership and inspires people.

9. OVERCOMING POLITICAL CHALLENGES WITH GRACE

Dr. Singh led a coalition government, which required him to navigate multiple political challenges. Despite opposition and constraints, he managed to pass crucial legislation and maintain economic stability. His tenure saw both praise and criticism, but he never engaged in personal attacks or political vendettas.

Lesson: A leader should focus on progress rather than getting entangled in political conflicts.

CONCLUSION

Dr. Manmohan Singh's life and leadership exemplify resilience, wisdom, and selfless service. From overcoming early hardships to shaping India's economic future, he has demonstrated that true leadership is not about personal ambition but about making a lasting impact on society. His bold economic reforms in 1991 transformed India into a global economic powerhouse, while his tenure as Prime Minister strengthened international ties, promoted social welfare, and navigated the nation through financial crises with prudence and foresight.

Despite political challenges and criticism, Dr. Singh remained steadfast in his principles, never compromising on integrity and ethical governance. His leadership, marked by humility and quiet efficiency, contrasts today's rhetoric-driven politics. He showed that progress is best achieved through strategic vision, knowledge-based decision-making, and unwavering commitment to public welfare.

As the world faces new economic and political challenges, the lessons from Dr. Singh's journey remain relevant. His legacy is a testament to the power of intellect, perseverance, and moral leadership. For aspiring leaders, his story serves as a blueprint for effecting meaningful change with dignity and wisdom. Dr. Singh's contributions will continue to inspire generations, reminding us that authentic leadership is about service, not self-interest.

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## **GENERAL ZORAWAR SINGH: A STRATEGIC MILITARY LEADER OF THE SIKH EMPEROR**

**DR JASBIR SINGH SARNA\***

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General Zorawar Singh, a celebrated commander of the Sikh Empire under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, played a pivotal role in the northern expansion of the empire. His military career is distinguished by his campaigns in Ladakh, Baltistan, and Tibet, which extended the empire's reach into high-altitude territories of immense geopolitical significance.

Zorawar's campaigns reflected unparalleled strategic vision and military resilience. In 1834, he successfully annexed Ladakh, overcoming geographical and climatic challenges. His subsequent expedition to Baltistan in 1840 further demonstrated his prowess, as he navigated the treacherous Karakoram range to subdue local rulers. However, it was his 1841 invasion of Western Tibet that highlighted his reputation as a daring commander. Crossing the Pangong Tso Lake and reaching Mount Kailash and Mansarovar, Zorawar's forces captured 550 miles of Tibetan territory within months.

General Zorawar Singh's military career is closely intertwined with the expansion and consolidation of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Sikh Empire. Serving under Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu, a vassal of the Sikh kingdom, Zorawar Singh played a pivotal role in extending the empire's frontiers into the Himalayan territories, including Ladakh, Baltistan, and western Tibet. Appointed as a key military commander, Zorawar Singh was entrusted with the task of securing and expanding the northern territories. His disciplined leadership, innovative strategies, and ability to adapt to harsh terrain enabled him to annex vast and

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strategically vital regions, further cementing the Sikh empire's dominance. His campaigns brought under control remote and challenging regions that had previously eluded centralized authority, demonstrating his unparalleled military prowess.

Zorawar Singh's successes were instrumental in not only strengthening Raja Gulab Singh's position within the Sikh Empire but also in bolstering the empire's northern boundaries. His achievements earned him



recognition and admiration as one of the most dynamic military leaders of his time. General Zorawar Singh's life and achievements are intricately linked with the rise of the Sikh Kingdom under Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the Dogra dynasty of Jammu, led by Raja Gulab Singh. His military exploits, particularly in the challenging terrains of Ladakh, Baltistan, and Tibet, remain unparalleled in the annals of Indian history.

The Sikh Kingdom and Jammu Raj were shaped by the political upheavals following the decline of Mughal and Afghan rule in the 18th century. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Dev of Jammu in 1782, the principality disintegrated due to internal strife and conflicts with the neighboring Sikh Misls, including the powerful Sukerchakia Misl, led by Mahan Singh and later his son, Maharaja Ranjit Singh. These turbulent times saw frequent raids and territorial disputes, with the Jammu Raj losing its autonomy until it was annexed by the expanding Sikh Empire in 1812.

Ranjit Singh consolidated his power by subduing rival Sikh chiefs, defeating the Abdalis, and extending his kingdom from the Sutlej River in the east to the Indus in the west. By 1820, he granted Jammu and

surrounding territories to Gulab Singh, who had risen through the ranks of the Sikh army, distinguishing himself in battles and administrative prowess. Gulab Singh's ambitions and strategic acumen laid the foundation for the Dogra state, with General Zorawar Singh as a key architect of its military conquests.

### **FOUNDATIONS OF A MILITARY GENIUS**

General Zorawar Singh, famed for his strategic brilliance and military conquests, was born in the late 18th century, probably in the Kangra region, into a Rajput family of modest means. Born in September 1784, he belonged to a Chandravanshi Kahluria Rajput family from Ansar village in Haripur tehsil of Kangra district. His father, Thakur Harji Singh, was likely a relative of the Raja of Kahlur. Harji Singh had three sons: Sardar Singh, the eldest; Zorawar Singh, the second; and Dalel Singh, the youngest. A family tradition preserved among the descendants of Thakur Sardar Singh, Zorawar Singh's elder brother, recounts that Zorawar met his demise in Tibet at the age of 57 during the battle of December 1841. Based on this account, his birth year can be reasonably established as 1784. His upbringing in this rugged, martial terrain profoundly shaped his character, instilling a sense of resilience and a natural aptitude for military leadership. The sociopolitical context of the time, defined by the weakening hill principalities and the growing influence of the Sikh Empire, provided an environment ripe with opportunity for ambitious warriors.

Zorawar Singh's early promise as a soldier attracted the attention of Raja Gulab Singh, the formidable Dogra leader serving under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. His appointment under Gulab Singh marked the beginning of a meteoric rise, driven by his loyalty, discipline, and strategic prowess. These early years in the volatile and faction-ridden landscape of Jammu prepared him for the challenges that awaited as a commander in the service of the Sikh kingdom.

The formative phase of Zorawar Singh's career, spent in the service of Gulab Singh's administration and military, was critical in honing his skills as a tactician and administrator. His early experiences in maintaining order and addressing rebellion in the Jammu region

provided a foundation for the military achievements that would later define his legacy, including his celebrated campaigns in Ladakh and Tibet.

### **MASTERY OVER LADAKH: A LANDMARK CONQUEST**

General Zorawar Singh's conquest of Ladakh (1834–1835) stands as a remarkable feat in the annals of military history, showcasing his strategic acumen and ability to overcome formidable geographical and political challenges. Tasked by Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu, Zorawar Singh embarked on this ambitious campaign to expand the Dogra



dominion into the high-altitude regions of Ladakh, a Buddhist kingdom of considerable strategic importance due to its position on ancient trade routes and its proximity to Tibet.

The campaign began with meticulous planning, as Zorawar Singh gathered a well-equipped force of approximately 5,000 soldiers, comprising Dogra troops, Pahari recruits, and Ladakhi irregulars. The challenging terrain of the Himalayas, characterized by treacherous passes and extreme weather, was a significant obstacle, but Zorawar's leadership ensured the army's steady progress. His forces advanced through Kishtwar and crossed the Zaskar region, taking advantage



of the element of surprise to swiftly defeat local Ladakhi forces. Zorawar Singh demonstrated not only military might but also political astuteness in consolidating his victories. He respected local customs, reinstated traditional governance under Dogra supervision, and levied taxes to secure revenue for Jammu. His decisive victory at the Battle of Sanko sealed the conquest, compelling Ladakhi rulers to accept Dogra suzerainty. By 1835, Ladakh was integrated into the Dogra kingdom, with a garrison established to maintain control.

This conquest significantly enhanced the territorial extent of the Sikh Empire, of which the Dogra kingdom was a vassal state, and demonstrated Zorawar Singh's capacity to conduct high-altitude warfare. His success laid the groundwork for subsequent campaigns into Baltistan and Tibet, earning him the sobriquet "Napoleon of the East" for his audacity and military genius.

### **THE STRATEGIC VICTORY IN BALTISTAN**

General Zorawar Singh's Balti campaign (1839–1840) marked a pivotal episode in the expansion of the Dogra Kingdom, showcasing his military brilliance and determination to consolidate control over the Himalayan regions. Baltistan, a predominantly Shia Muslim territory governed by semi-autonomous rulers, had long maintained its



independence. The strategic significance of Baltistan, located on the trade routes connecting Ladakh to Central Asia, made it a key target for Dogra territorial ambitions under Raja Gulab Singh.

Zorawar Singh launched his campaign in 1839, advancing into Baltistan through the rugged and snow-laden mountain passes of Ladakh. The campaign was fraught with challenges, including extreme weather conditions and resistance from the local rulers. Undeterred, Zorawar Singh employed a combination of military force and diplomatic negotiation. His army, composed of Dogra regulars and Ladakhi levies, overwhelmed the scattered forces of the Balti chiefs.

The campaign's most significant battle occurred near Skardu, the stronghold of the region. Despite fierce resistance from Balti forces under the leadership of Raja Ahmed Shah, Zorawar Singh's superior strategy and relentless pursuit led to the eventual capitulation of the Balti rulers. Skardu was captured, and the Dogra forces imposed their authority, compelling local rulers to accept Dogra suzerainty and pay tribute. Zorawar Singh's success in Baltistan not only expanded the Dogra Kingdom's territory but also established a direct link between Ladakh and the Gilgit-Baltistan region, further solidifying Dogra control over the western Himalayas. His effective governance in the newly conquered territories, marked by respect for local traditions and administrative reforms, ensured stability and long-term integration into the Dogra polity.

The Balti campaign underscored Zorawar Singh's ability to adapt to diverse environments and maintain discipline among his troops, solidifying his reputation as one of the most accomplished military leaders of the 19th century.

### **EXPANSION INTO TIBETAN TERRITORIES**

General Zorawar Singh's campaign into the Tibetan plateau (1841) remains a landmark in the annals of Himalayan military history. This audacious expedition was an extension of the Dogra Kingdom's policy of territorial expansion under Raja Gulab Singh, aimed at consolidating its dominance over trans-Himalayan regions. The





campaign not only tested the strategic and logistical acumen of Zorawar Singh but also underscored the complexities of operating in a harsh, high-altitude environment.

Following his successful conquests of Ladakh and Baltistan, Zorawar Singh turned his attention towards the territories of western Tibet. This move was motivated by strategic considerations, such as securing trade routes and countering Tibetan claims over Ladakh. Zorawar Singh led a well-prepared force comprising seasoned Dogra soldiers, Ladakhi auxiliaries, and Gurkha recruits. The army traversed treacherous mountain passes, including the challenging Demchok route, to enter the Changthang plateau of Tibet.

The initial stages of the campaign were marked by rapid success. Zorawar Singh captured key Tibetan fortresses, including Gartok and Taklakot, effectively extending Dogra control over the region. His army encountered resistance from Tibetan forces and local chieftains, but his strategic brilliance and superior battlefield tactics enabled decisive victories. Tibetan troops, unaccustomed to organized warfare at such altitudes, were often outmaneuvered and overwhelmed. By late 1841, Zorawar Singh had penetrated deep into western Tibet, consolidating control over significant portions of the Ngari region. However, the onset of winter proved to be a formidable adversary.

Severe weather conditions, coupled with logistical challenges, strained the Dogra forces. Tibetan forces, reinforced by the Qing Empire, mounted a counteroffensive. In the decisive battle near Taklakot in December 1841, Zorawar Singh fell in combat, and his army was defeated.

While the campaign ultimately ended in a Tibetan victory, Zorawar Singh's conquest of Tibetan regions remains a testament to his unparalleled military leadership. His foray into the Tibetan plateau highlighted the geopolitical stakes of the region, setting the stage for future interactions between Dogra rulers, Tibet, and the Qing Empire.

### **HEROISM AND SACRIFICE IN THE FINAL CAMPAIGN**

The final chapter of General Zorawar Singh's illustrious military career unfolded during his ambitious expedition into western Tibet in 1841. This campaign, undertaken at the behest of Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu, marked the zenith of his conquests but also culminated in



his tragic demise. The campaign was driven by a desire to consolidate Dogra territorial gains, secure vital trade routes, and extend dominion into strategically significant Tibetan regions.

In the months following his successful conquests in Ladakh and Baltistan, Zorawar Singh assembled a formidable force composed of Dogra infantry, Ladakhi auxiliaries, and Gurkha troops. His objective

was to penetrate the Ngari region of western Tibet, a territory dominated by inhospitable landscapes and severe climatic conditions. Despite logistical challenges, Zorawar Singh displayed exceptional strategic foresight, leading his army across the arduous passes of the Himalayas.

The initial stages of the campaign witnessed remarkable victories, including the capture of Gartok and Taklakot, key Tibetan strongholds. However, the onset of winter brought unprecedented hardships. Freezing temperatures, dwindling supplies, and unfamiliar terrain began to erode the morale and physical endurance of the Dogra forces. Taking advantage of these vulnerabilities, Tibetan troops, reinforced by Qing forces, launched a counteroffensive. The decisive encounter occurred near Taklakot in December 1841. Zorawar Singh, displaying characteristic valor, led his troops into battle despite overwhelming odds. In a fierce engagement marked by close combat and strategic maneuvers, the Dogra forces were ultimately encircled and overwhelmed. Zorawar Singh fell in battle, and his death marked the end of the Dogra campaign in Tibet.

While the Tibetan forces emerged victorious, the campaign underscored Zorawar Singh's indomitable spirit and strategic brilliance. His audacious attempt to extend the boundaries of the Dogra state into the Tibetan plateau remains unparalleled in the history of Himalayan warfare. His death symbolized not just the loss of a great general but also the limits of expansionist ambitions in the face of extreme environmental and logistical challenges.

Despite initial successes, Zorawar's campaign faced setbacks due to strategic miscalculations, particularly underestimating Tibetan forces' ability to exploit the Matsang Pass in winter. In December 1841, his army, unprepared for severe weather and relentless Tibetan resistance, suffered heavy losses. Zorawar himself was mortally wounded during the Battle of Taklakot. His severed head was later displayed in Lhasa as a symbol of Tibetan resistance, yet his valor was immortalized through the "***Singh ba Chorten***" or the Cenotaph of the "***Singh Warrior***". "***Singh ba Chorten***" as called by Tibetans, translated as "***Cenotaph of the Singh Warrior***", Taklakot, Tibet.

About the soldiers who were taken into captivity, Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, who served as Tibet's Secretary of Finance from 1930-1950, writes in his book, *TIBET - A Political History*: "Over three thousand Sikhs were killed in the course of the foray. Seven hundred Sikhs and two Ladakhi ministers were taken prisoner. The remainder of the defeated army fled.... Those prisoners wishing to return to their country were allowed to do so..... One third of the Sikhs and Ladakhi prisoners elected to remain in Tibet. The Sikhs were resettled in warmer regions of Southern Tibet by the government and many married Tibetan girls. The Sikhs are known to have introduced the cultivation of apricots, apples, grapes and peaches into the country."

## BUNGAS AT SRI DARBAR SAHIB AMRITSAR

GURDEV SINGH ROOPRAI\*

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The word “Bunga” is derived from the Persian language. “Bunga” in Persian means a place to rest, a rest house, or a dwelling place. In Sikhism, we can equate it to a “Yatri Niwas” or a rest house for pilgrims. The building made for this purpose is called a Bunga.

According to Rattan Singh Bhangu, these buildings, or Bungas, were erected during the Guru period when the work on the Sarovar (Holy Tank) was in progress. Dr. Madanjit Kaur suggests that these were merely hutments near the Sarovar, not specifically called Bungas.

Other historians believe that when invaders from Afghanistan began attacking Hindustan, they had to pass through Punjab. In Punjab, the brave Sikhs offered strong resistance. Although the primary targets of invaders like Nader Shah and Abdali were Lahore and Delhi, the Sikhs posed a significant challenge. Despite the heavy casualties inflicted on them, the Sikh population continued to grow. This compelled the invaders to investigate the cause. They discovered that the Sikhs had a supreme historical place of worship in Amritsar, called Sri Harimandir Sahib. There was a pool of nectar, where Sikhs would bathe and become stronger. This pool (Sarovar) was believed to possess special powers. This diverted the attention of Mughal and Afghan invaders towards destroying the Sikhs and their Harimandir Sahib.

The Sarovar was desecrated and the Harimandir damaged several times. Each time, the Sikhs repaired it. However, in 1762, Ahmed Shah Abdali attacked, blowing up the Harimandir with gunpowder and desecrating the Sarovar by filling it with cow blood, bones, and

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flesh. After this destruction, when Abdali left for Afghanistan, the Sikhs gathered at Sri Darbar Sahib to discuss the security of Sri Harmandir Sahib. It was decided to construct a row of houses (Bungas) around the Parikarma of the Sarovar. All Sikh Sardars who could afford to contribute were encouraged to come forward. S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, S. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, S. Kanahiya, and the Bhangi Sardars took the lead in encouraging others to build these Bungas. These Bungas would serve a dual purpose: providing accommodation for pilgrims and ensuring the security of Sri Harmandir Sahib. The person in charge of each Bunga, acting as a manager, was called a "Bungai." Soldiers would also reside in the Bungas for security purposes. History indicates that most Bungas came into existence in the eighteenth century.

Giani Gian Singh Ji states that the first Bunga, Akal Bunga, was established on the western side of the Sarovar, opposite Darshani Deodhi, in Bikrami 1663 (1606 A.D.). The Sixth Guru, Sri Guru Hargobind, founded it and created a plinth (small platform) where the Fourth Guru, Sri Guru Ramdas, used to sit under the Ber Tree and observe the progress of the work. This Bunga was completed later at a cost of Rs. 2,73,000/- (two lac seventy-three thousand). There were 69 Bungas on the four sides of the Parikarma of the Sarovar: West side = 28 Bungas, North side = 9 Bungas, East side = 10 Bungas, and South side = 22 Bungas, totaling 69.

Giani Gian Singh Ji also mentions that an earlier Bunga was built by Majhbi Sikhs on the east side of the Sarovar, a single-story structure costing Rs. 5,000/- in Bikrami 1634 (1577 A.D.). However, S. Karam Singh, a historian, claims it was a two-story building constructed in Bikrami 1839 (1782 A.D.). This discrepancy requires further research.

S. Karam Singh, the historian, writes that the total number of Bungas was 74. According to him, the distribution was: West side = 28 Bungas, North side = 14 Bungas, East side = 10 Bungas, and South side = 22 Bungas, totaling 74.

Dr. Madanjit Kaur provides details stating that, according to old historical manuscripts, the total number of Bungas was 84, but a proper account is available for only 74.



Baron Charles Hugel (1844) writes during his journey in Punjab that he visited Sri Harmandir Sahib. He notes that the Sarovar (Holy Tank) was surrounded by considerably good houses. Each house had windows opening towards Harimandir Sahib, allowing a view of Darbar Sahib. Most houses had stairs leading into the Parikarma. All entrances to Darbar Sahib were secured with gates.

The Territory Gazetteer of the East India Company (1854) mentions that Amritsar city was a walled city with narrow streets and buildings made of kiln-fired (Pucca) bricks. The city was famous for a holy place of the Sikhs called Harimandir and its Sarovar (Holy Tank). The water of the Sarovar was crystal clear, and priests and Akali Sardars had built their houses around it.

Giani Gian Singh Ji recounts that the earliest Bungas built around the Sarovar were three, with others coming later. Firstly, the Kanhya Sardars built their three-story Bunga on the western side of the Sarovar in Bikrami 1809 (1752 A.D.). The other two Bungas were constructed on the eastern side in Bikrami 1812 (1755 A.D.). One was Bunga Akhara Santokh Dass, a six-story structure costing Rs. 31,500/-. The second was Bunga S. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, a four-story building costing Rs. 2,75,000/-. However, Giani Ji states that this Bunga was only two stories. He does not clarify whether he is referring to the two upper stories or the two lower basements. This Bunga had one story at ground level and three underground basements.

Karam Singh, the historian, acknowledges that the Ramgarhia Bunga was the largest among all the Bungas and featured two watchtowers (minarets). (A separate detailed article on this Ramgarhia Bunga is forthcoming.)

For the present, it is important to note that S. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia's foresight recognized the need for surveillance to ensure security. To watch for enemies or invaders from a height, high watchtowers were built. A drummer was stationed on one tower 24 hours a day to keep watch. Upon spotting anything abnormal, he would beat the drum, signaling Khalsa to be alert.

Some people mistakenly believe that these watchtowers are the Bungas. However, the minarets were solely for surveillance from a

height. Bunga Ramgarhia is the only Bunga with two minarets. The watchtower (minaret) at Darbar Sahib Sri Tarn Taran Sahib was also built by S. Jassa Singh Ramgarhia for security reasons. Other Bungas were built later by other Sikhs.

Most Bungas were constructed after 1755 A.D. These Bungas served not only as security posts for Sri Darbar Sahib and dwellings for pilgrims but also contributed to the development of social, educational, musical, literary, and artistic fields. Akal Bunga (Akal Takhat) holds a prominent place in the Sikh community, serving as the supreme administrative seat of Sikhism. All major Gurmatas, Hukamnamas, etc., on behalf of the Sikh Sangat, are issued from here. During the Misl era, all decisions regarding trade, religion, politics, and administration of the Misls were made at Akal Bunga.

Bungas Around the Parikarma of Sri Darbar Sahib, According to Giani Gian Singh Ji (Tawarikh Sri Amritsar)

**Bungas on the West Side:**

Bunga Jalliyan Wala: 3 stories, Samat 1830, Rs. 11,000/-  
 Bunga Shah Badian: 3 stories, Samat 1830, Rs. 8,000/-  
 Bunga Majithian: 3 stories, Samat 1870, Rs. 11,000/-  
 Bunga Singh Purian: 2 stories, Samat 1860, Rs. 5,000/-  
 Bunga Singh Purian: 2 stories, Samat 1865, Rs. 4,000/-  
 Bunga Gadowalian: 1 story, Samat 1850, Rs. 4,500/-  
 Bunga Khushal Singh: 3 stories, Samat 1871, Rs. 9,340/-  
 Bunga Ghanaya: 3 stories, Samat 1809, Rs. 9,000/-  
 Bunga Raja Dhyani Singh: 3 stories, Samat 1881, Rs. 6

**Bungas on the West Side:**

1. Bunga Barandari: 2 stories, Samat 1827, Rs. 4,000/-  
 2. Akal Bunga: 3 stories, Samat 1663, Rs. 2,73,400/-  
 3. Bunga Jodh Singh Chhapa Wala: 1 story, Samat 1850, Rs. 2,500/-  
 4. Bunga Dewa Singh Shaheed: 2 stories, Samat 1822  
 5. Bunga Bhag Singh: 2 stories, Samat 1822  
 6. Bunga Ragi Dhanpat Singh: 2 stories, Samat 1830, Rs. 700/-  
 7. Bunga General Mihan Singh: 4 stories, Samat 1871, Rs. 9,000/-  
 8. Bunga Giani Gurdas Ji: 2 stories, Samat 1861, Rs. 1,250/-  
 9. Bunga Abhey Singh: 2 stories, Samat 1858, Rs. 700/-



10. Bunga Nakai Sardars: 2 stories, Samat 1847, Rs. 3,000/-
11. Bunga Barki Sardars: 2 stories, Samat 1836, Rs. 5,000/-
12. Bunga Ghadialian: 3 stories, Samat 1841, Rs. 4,900/-
13. Jhanda Bunga: 3 stories, Samat 1840, Rs. 6,000/-
14. Bunga Chumari Sardaran: 2 stories, Samat 1841, Rs. 5,000/-
15. Bunga Gadwaian: 2 stories, Samat 1837, Rs. 2,500/-
16. Bunga Siyalkotian: 2 stories, Samat 1848, Rs. 2,000/-
17. Bunga Gondwalian: 1 story, Samat 1850, Rs. 2,500/-
18. Bunga Chichi Sardaran: 2 stories, Samat 1850, Rs. 1,200/-
19. Bunga Shukarchakiya: 3 stories, Samat 1840, Rs. 18,000/-

#### **Bungas on the North Side:**

1. Bunga Ladwe Wala
2. Bunga Kunwar NouNihal
3. Bunga Rani Sada Kaur (Haveli)
4. Bunga Dadu Puria Sardars
5. Bunga Sant Nirmala
6. Bunga Maharaja Sher Singh

(All these six Bungas were demolished in 1850. A police chowki was established. In 1863, the police chowki was also demolished, and a clock tower was constructed, which took 12 years to complete and cost Rs. 1,75,000/-.)

2. Bunga Sodian of Anandpur: 2 stories, Samat 1850, Rs. 12,000/-
3. Bunga Sant Kahan Singh: 3 stories, Samat 1882, Rs. 3,000/-
4. Bunga Kahan Singh Ragi: Samat 1864, Rs. 3,000/-
5. Bunga NurMahalya: 2 stories, Samat 1870, Rs. 2,200/-
6. Bunga Ahluwalia: 3 stories, Samat 1860, Rs. 26,000/-
7. Bunga Malwaiyan: 4 stories, Samat 1835, Rs. 50,000/-
8. Bunga Bhaikiyan Kaithal: Samat 1844, Rs. 5,000/-
9. Bunga Jalehwaiyan: 5 stories, Samat 1860, Rs. 28,000/-

(Giani Gian Singh Ji counted Bungas 1 to 6 as one. If we count all these Bungas in serial numbers, it makes 14, and the total of 74 Bungas is confirmed instead of 69.)

#### **Bungas on the East Side:**

1. Bunga Akhada Mahant Santokhdas: 6 stories, Samat 1812, Rs. 1,50,000/-

2. Bunga Goiani Ram Singh: Samat 1835, Rs. 1,800/-
3. Bunga Jassa Singh Ramgarhia (Biggest): Samat 1812, Rs. 2,75,000/-
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4. Bunga Budiyewala: 2 stories, Samat 1828, Rs. 3,000/-
5. Bunga Jethuwalia: 2 stories, Samat 1835, Rs. 2,000/-
6. Bunga Majhbi Singhan: 2 stories, Samat 1839, Rs. 5,000/-
7. Bunga Bhai Basti Ram: 3 stories, Samat 1870, Rs. 25,000/-
8. Bunga Jwala Singh Bdhana: 3 stories, Samat 1865, Rs. 18,000/-
9. Bunga Mahant: 3 stories, Samat 1807, Rs. 30,000/-
10. Bunga Tek Singh: 2 stories, Samat 1860, Rs. 1,800/-

#### **Bungas on the South Side:**

1. Bunga Solanwala: Samat 1842, Rs. 3,000/-
2. Bunga Budh Singh: 1 story, Samat 1847, Rs. 1,500/-
3. Bunga Suyian Wala: 2 stories, Samat 1863, Rs. 2,000/-
4. Bunga Shaheedan Wala: 2 stories, Samat 1821
5. Bunga Kesgarhia: 2 stories, Samat 1822, Rs. 2,800/-
6. Bunga Anandpur Sodhian: 2 stories, Samat 1850, Rs. 2,500/-
7. Bunga Dasoudha Singh: 1 story, Samat 1824, Rs. 3,000/-
8. Bunga Sujaleh Wala: 2 stories, Samat 1845, Rs. 2,300/-
9. Bunga Kaliyan Wala: 1 story, Samat 1852, Rs. 2,000/-
10. Bunga Tara Singh Gaiba: 2 stories, Samat 1822, Rs. 2,000/-
11. Bunga Tara Singh Maan: 2 stories, Samat 1821, Rs. 4,700/-
12. Bunga Thanessian: 2 stories, Samat 1823, Rs. 2,500/-
13. Bunga Teja Singh Sahnewal: 2 stories, Samat 1819, Rs. 2,800/-
14. Bunga Shaloudi Wala: 3 stories, Samat 1821, Rs. 2,200/-
15. Bunga Miran Kotia: 1 story, Samat 1841, Rs. 2,900/-
16. Bunga Sham Singh Atari: 2 stories, Samat 1855, Rs. 6,000/-
17. Bunga Jassa Singh Nirmala: 3 stories, Samat 1821, Rs. 2,500/-
18. Bunga Lakha Singh: 3 stories, Samat 1841, Rs. 3,000/-
19. Bunga Chadat Singh Ragi: 3 stories, Samat 1850, Rs. 2,600/-
20. Bunga Jodh Singh Sedia: 2 stories, Samat 1821, Rs. 5,000/-
21. Bunga Bhadaniyan: 2 stories, Samat 186

## REINCARNATION – GURU NANAK'S PHILOSOPHY

BALJEET SINGH

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Reincarnation, as per Oxford dictionary means rebirth of a soul in a new body. It is a religious or philosophical belief that the soul or spirit, after biological death, begins a new life in a new body that may be human, animal or spiritual depending on the moral quality of previous life's actions.

According to Indian Journal of Psychiatry ([www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)) the concept of reincarnation is a mystery puzzling human mind, since the origin of mankind. As the civilizations evolved, beliefs got discriminated and disseminated into various religions. The major division was 'East' and 'West'. The eastern religions have been more philosophical and less analytical, have accepted reincarnation. However, different eastern religions like Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism have differed in their faith on rebirth. Further, Islam and Christianity, having its origin in the west, have largely denied reincarnation. Discussions on the subject appear in the philosophical traditions of India and Greece from about 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. What exactly is reincarnation? It simply means that we leave one life and go into another; it is for the sole purpose of soul development and spiritual growth. The soul may take the form of human or animal, depending on the moral quality of the previous life's actions. This doctrine implies that the person remains essentially the same, while occupying a new body.

Hinduism also believes in this philosophy of reincarnation, that this cycle of death and rebirth is governed by 'Karma', which may be good or bad. Based on the Karma one does, he/she chooses their next birth. Even 'Devtas' (holy souls) may also die and be born again.

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Bhagavad Gita states that never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be. As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from childhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A sober person is not bewildered by such a change and worn out garments are shed by the body, worn out bodies are shed by the dwellers within the body. New bodies are donned by the dweller, like the garment.

A person desires to be born again because he or she wants to enjoy a body, which can never bring deep, lasting happiness or peace (Ananda). After many births every person becomes dissatisfied and begins to seek higher forms of happiness through spiritual experience. When after spiritual practice (Sadhna), a person realizes that the true 'self' is the immortal soul rather than the body or the ego, all desires for the pleasures of the world will vanish since they will be seen insipid, as compared to spiritual 'Ananda'. When all desires have vanished, the person will not be born again. When the cycle of rebirth thus comes to an end, a person is set to have attained liberation (Moksha).

In Jainism, the soul and matter are considered eternal, uncreated and perpetual. There is a constant interplay between the two, resulting in bewildering cosmic manifestations in material, psychic and emotional spheres around us. This led to the theory of transmigration and rebirth. Changes but not total annihilation of spirit and matter is the basic postulate of Jain philosophy. The life as we know, after death therefore moves on to another form of life based on the merits and demerits in its current life. The path to becoming a supreme soul is to practice non-violence and be truthful. 'Karma' is the root of birth and death and the souls bound by Karma go round and round in the cycle of existence. Whatever suffering or pleasure that a soul may be experiencing in its present life is on account of choices that it has made in the past. Each soul is responsible for its own predicament, as well as its own salvation.

Buddhism concept of reincarnation differs from others in the way that, there is no eternal 'soul', 'spirit' or 'self', but only a 'stream of consciousness' that links life with life. The actual process of change from one life to the next is called 'Punarbhava', meaning becoming again. The early Buddhists texts discuss techniques for recalling previous births, predicated on the development of high level of

meditative concentration. Buddha reportedly warned that this practice can be misleading and should be avoided. In Buddhism also, transmigration is basically the effect of Karma.

Islam rejects the concept of reincarnation, though it preaches the existence of soul. The principle belief in Islam is that there is only one birth on this earth. The Doomsday comes after death and will be judged as to one has to once for all go to hell or be unified with God.

The Bible also doesn’t teach reincarnation. As a result, there is no mainstream Jewish or Christian group that affirms reincarnation. On the contrary, the Bible teaches several ideas that stand in opposition to Eastern religions doctrine of reincarnation; such as that a person lives only once; the spiritual essence of a person goes to another place immediately after death, etc.

All over the world, psychiatrists are studying the phenomenon of reincarnation and have come out with concrete and positive results as regards birth and rebirth of human being. It would be pertinent to mention here-in, the study conducted by an American psychiatrist Dr. Brian Weiss, published in his book, *Many Lives Many Masters*; the story of his patient, who remembered her-86- previous births, in different parts of the world, going as far as, may be 4000 years back. The facts narrated by his patient, a young girl, about her previous births, were so strong, truthful and reliable that it required no further corroboration. This particular psychiatrist thereafter, studied the previous births of more than four thousand patients. All the scientific theories came crumbling down in just one stroke, with the practical report of Dr. Weiss. Further, Dr. Weiss has reported that many psychiatrists have studied the cases of previous births, establishing beyond doubt, the fact that the soul takes many births. In India also, Dr. Satwant Kaur Pasricha of National Institute of Mental Health, Bangalore, has done extensive research in the subject and published a book narrating -500- cases of rebirths.

Since the subject is highly perplexed and complicated, with more questions than answers, we will like to discuss as to what Gurbani says on the subject; as it will not only erase any iota of doubt, rather clarify very convincingly and philosophically as to what reincarnation is all about. What scientists, scholars and philosophers can’t explain;

Gurbani explains, but we need to have trust and faith, as Gurbani has come from God, as Guru Nanak says:

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਤਿ ਸਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਣਹੁ  
ਗੁਰਸਿਖਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪਿ ਮੁਹਹੁ ਕਢਾਏ ॥

*O GurSikhs, know that the Bani, the Word of the True Guru, is true, absolutely true. The Creator Lord Himself causes the Guru to chant it.*

Now, coming back to the subject, Gurbani says:

ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਭਏ ਕੀਟ ਪਤੰਗਾ ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਗਜ ਮੀਨ ਕੁਰੰਗਾ ॥

*In so many incarnations, you were a worm and an insect. In so many incarnations, you were an elephant, a fish and a deer.*

ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਪੰਥੀ ਸਰਪ ਹੋਇਓ ॥ ਕਈ ਜਨਮ ਹੈਵਰ ਬ੍ਰਿਖ ਜੋਇਓ ॥

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 176)

*In so many incarnations, you were a bird and a snake. In so many incarnations, you were yoked as an ox and a horse.*

ਕੋਟਿ ਜਨਮ ਭ੍ਰਮਿ ਆਇਆ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਅਨਿਕ ਜੋਨਿ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਇ ॥

ਸਾਚਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਵਿਸਰਿਆ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਬਹੁਤੀ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਜਾਇ ॥

*After wandering in doubt for millions of incarnations, he comes into the world, O Beloved; for uncounted lifetimes, he has suffered in pain. He has forgotten his True Lord and Master, O Beloved, and so he suffers terrible punishment.*

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 640)

ਜਨਮ ਜਨਮ ਭਰਮਤ ਫਿਰਿਓ ਮਿਟਿਓ ਨ ਜਮ ਕੇ ਝੁਲਾਸੁ ॥

*Mortals wander lost and confused through countless lifetimes; their fear of death is never removed.*

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1428)

ਜੰਮਣੁ ਮਰਣਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੈ ਭਾਣੈ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇ ॥

*Birth and death are subject to the Command of the Lord's Will; through His Will we come and go.*

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 472)

It is amply clear from the above quotes that the soul is wandering for a very long time and has been through various births and the process is continuing. Gurbani teaches us that, we have to get rid of this cycle of death and birth, once for all, otherwise we are going to suffer and suffer only.

ਹਉਮੈ ਏਈ ਬੰਧਨਾ ਫਿਰਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਜੋਨੀ ਪਾਹਿ ॥

*This is the bondage of ego, that time and time again, they are reborn.*

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 466)

ਬਹੁਰਿ ਹਮ ਕਾਹੇ ਆਵਹਿਗੇ ॥

ਆਵਨ ਜਾਨਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਤਿਸੈ ਕਾ ਹੁਕਮੈ ਬੁਝਿ ਸਮਾਵਹਿਗੇ ॥

*Why should I come into the world again?*

*Coming and going is by the Hukam of His Command; realizing His Hukam, I shall merge in Him.*

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1103)

ਅਉਗਣ ਕਟਿ ਮੁਖੁ ਉਜਲਾ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮਿ ਤਰਾਏ ॥

ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਭਉ ਕਟਿਓਨੁ ਫਿਰਿ ਜੋਨਿ ਨ ਪਾਏ ॥

*One's faults are eradicated, and one's face becomes radiant and bright; through the Lord's Name, one crosses over.*

The fear of birth and death is removed, and he is not reincarnated again.

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 966)

ਭ੍ਰਮੁ ਭਉ ਕਾਟਿ ਕੀਏ ਨਿਹਕੇਵਲ ਜਬ ਤੇ ਹਉਮੈ ਮਾਰੀ ॥

ਜਨਮ ਮਰਣ ਕੋ ਚੂਕੋ ਸਹਸਾ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਤਿ ਦਰਸਾਰੀ ॥

*My doubt and fear have been taken away, and I have been made pure, since my ego was conquered.*

*My fear of birth and death has been abolished, beholding Your Blessed Vision in the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy.*

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 207)

Gurbani not only establishes the fact regarding reincarnation, beyond any doubt, but also explains the remedy thereof, which is beautifully expressed in the Gurbani quotes hereunder:

ਫਿਰਤ ਫਿਰਤ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਜੁਗ ਹਾਰਿਓ ਮਾਨਸ ਦੇਹ ਲਹੀ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਕਹਤ ਮਿਲਨ ਕੀ ਬਰੀਆ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਕਹਾ ਨਹੀ ॥

*Wandering, wandering around for so many ages, he has grown weary, and finally, he obtained this human body.*

*Says Nanak, this is the opportunity to meet the Lord; why don't you remember Him in meditation?*

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 631)

ਬਹੁਤ ਜਨਮ ਬਿਛੁਰੇ ਬੇ ਮਾਧਉ ਇਹੁ ਜਨਮੁ ਤੁਮ੍ਹਾਰੇ ਲੇਖੇ ॥

ਕਹਿ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਆਸ ਲਗਿ ਜੀਵਉ ਚਿਰ ਭਇਓ ਦਰਸਨੁ ਦੇਖੇ ॥

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 837)

*For so many incarnations, I have been separated from You, Lord; I dedicate this life to You.*

*Says Ravi Daas: placing my hopes in You, I live; it is so long since I have gazed upon the Blessed Vision of Your Darshan.*

ਪ੍ਰਭ ਜਨਮ ਮਰਨ ਨਿਵਾਰਿ ॥ ਹਾਰਿ ਪਰਿਓ ਦੁਆਰਿ ॥

*God, please release me from birth and death. I have grown weary, and collapsed at Your door.*

ਭਈ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਦੇਹੁਰੀਆ ॥ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਮਿਲਣ ਕੀ ਇਹ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਰੀਆ ॥

*This human body has been given to you. This is your chance to meet the Lord of the Universe.*

ਅਵਰਿ ਕਾਜ ਤੇਰੈ ਕਿਤੈ ਨ ਕਾਮ ॥ ਮਿਲੁ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਤਿ ਭਜੁ ਕੇਵਲ ਨਾਮ ॥

*Nothing else will work. Join the Saadh Sangat, the Company of the Holy; vibrate and meditate on the Jewel of the Naam.*

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 12)

The objective of human birth is to get out of this cycle of transmigration of souls. A human being, who has performed good deeds in his life is transmigrated to a better and higher life form in the next birth, until the soul of the human being becomes God-like. By reciting 'Naam', remembrance of God, and following the teachings of Gurbani, the soul ultimately merges with God; (Atma with Paramatma) thus ending the cycle of death and birth and the pain and miseries attached thereto. This is the ultimate objective, when the soul becomes one with God, from where it has originated.

ਸੂਰਜ ਕਿਰਣਿ ਮਿਲੇ ਜਲ ਕਾ ਜਲੁ ਹੂਆ ਰਾਮ ॥

ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਰਲੀ ਸੰਪੂਰਨੁ ਥੀਆ ਰਾਮ ॥

*The rays of light merge with the sun, and water merges with water.*

*One's light blends with the Light, and one becomes totally perfect.*

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 846)

Gurmukhs, (God oriented souls) reach that stage, in this very birth. Seeks God's blessings to follow Gurbani's teachings so as to reach that level; to get rid of transmigration & achieve communion with God.

~ ~ ~

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## LIVE WITHOUT LONGING

DR KULWANT SINGH PHULL\*

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Change is the law of nature. Over time, change happens everywhere, whether in a worldly or natural society. Significant changes have occurred during the preceding four-five decades in how we live, eat, drink, and behave. Due to ever-expanding human desires, the load of work, rapid technological advancements in social engineering, mobile phones, and internet systems, cut-throat competition, and urbanization, the joint family system has been replaced by the single-family system. Burgeoning population burden, excessive demand, rising prices, swift mechanization, and privatization have led to a decline in the purchasing power of money but pushed up the people's run for more money. Entire families including husband and wife have been compelled to work to support the family properly, and even pushed more for migration abroad. The eating habits of people, especially youth, have significantly changed. Instead of simple home-cooked food, pizzas, burgers, noodles, maggies, cookies, pastries, soft drinks, McDonald's, Subway, KFC, etc., oily, sugar-rich, and fatty attractively packed food has taken place. Thanks to aggressive advertisements, mushrooming of eateries, fast-food bazaars, restaurants, shopping malls, mobile phones, and the entrance of home supply service companies like Zomato, Swiggy, Blinkin, etc., such food has entered the common homes. Due to the single-family system and working couples, most youths have started preferring market-based fast food instead of preparing the same at home. Irregular and untimely eating along with scurrying and scrambling for work has

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become the cause of numerous diseases like indigestion, constipation, obesity, stress, high blood pressure, diabetes, etc. According to the Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN) Hyderabad, established in 1918, about 56.4 percent of the total disease burden in the country is due to unhealthy dietary habits. And, because of this, nearly 25 percent of Indians are overweight or obese [1]. Even though most of the young generation is aware and addicted to social media, they deliberately play havoc on their health just for the taste of their tongue. Carelessly, owing to sheepish behavior or out of compulsion or social status, sometimes even elderly people too have started opting for market-cooked fast food instead of home-cooked. Even at several places, people including religious leaders have begun serving such fast food as a community langer. The Gurbani lines of Bhagat Kabeer Sahib seem to be perfectly applicable here: -

ਕਬੀਰ ਮਨੁ ਜਾਨੈ ਸਭ ਬਾਤ ਜਾਨਤ ਹੀ ਅਉਗਨੁ ਕਰੈ ॥  
ਕਾਹੇ ਕੀ ਕੁਸਲਾਤ ਹਾਥਿ ਦੀਪੁ ਕੂਏ ਪਰੈ ॥ ੨੧੬ ॥

*Kabeer, the mortal knows everything, and knowing, one still makes mistakes  
What good is a lamp in one's hand, if one falls into the well.*

(SGGS, p. 1376)

There is no denying that healthy food and drink is a basic human right for fulfilling one's stomach. A man wanders for all this from door to door, from place to place, and even from country to country facing numerous difficulties and hardships. But instead of having a nutritious diet and lifestyle as the Guru Sahibs and Gurbani prescribe, we mortals follow our own will or tongue-taste. Omnipotent Almighty Akal Purakh Waheguru, infinite and boundless, has created and spruced the human and arranged food and drink for him. Even before an infant is born, during pregnancy, the Almighty arranges milk for the newborn child through the mother's breast, considered the most nutritious, healthy, and balanced food in the world even though the newborn baby does not have any teeth in the mouth. Regarding this, Pancham Patshah Guru Arjan Dev ji enlightens us in the Sukhmani Sahib in the first stanza of the third *Ashtapadee*: -

ਰਮਈਆ ਕੇ ਗੁਨ ਚੇਤਿ ਪਰਾਨੀ ॥ ਕਵਨ ਮੂਲ ਤੇ ਕਵਨ ਦ੍ਰਿਸਟਾਨੀ ॥  
ਜਿਨਿ ਤੂੰ ਸਾਜਿ ਸਵਾਰਿ ਸੀਗਾਰਿਆ ॥ ਗਰਭ ਅਗਨਿ ਮਹਿ ਜਿਨਹਿ ਉਬਾਰਿਆ ॥

ਬਾਰ ਬਿਵਸਥਾ ਤੁਝਹਿ ਪਿਆਰੈ ਦੂਧ ॥

*Think of the Glory of the All-Mighty Lord,  
O Mortale what is your origin, and what is your appearance?  
He who fashioned, adorned, and decorated you in the fire of the womb,  
He preserved you in your infancy,  
He gave you milk to drink in the flower of your youth,  
He gave you food, pleasure, and understanding*

(SGGS, p. 266).

Even, the third lord Satguru Guru Amar Das ji too has expressed similar views about this idea in the 28th verse of AnandSahib: -

ਮਾਤਾ ਕੇ ਉਦਰ ਮਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਲ ਕਰੇ ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮਨਹੁ ਵਿਸਾਰੀਐ ॥  
ਮਨਹੁ ਕਿਉ ਵਿਸਾਰੀਐ ਏਵਡੁ ਦਾਤਾ ਜਿ ਅਗਨਿ ਮਹਿ ਆਹਾਰੁ ਪਹੁਚਾਵਏ ॥  
*He nourished in mother's womb, why forget Him from the Mind  
Why forget from the mind such a Great Giver, who gave sustenance in  
the fire of Wombe.*

(SGGS p. 920)

Gurbani nowhere forbids anyone from eating good, healthy, and nutritious food, albeit cautions us about eating best, little, and moderately as per one's need. According to the famous Sikh Scholar Bhai Sahib Bhai Kahn Singh ji Nabha's magnum opus **Gurmat Martand**, Volume I, scholars have described five types of food and drinkables: - 1. **Eatables** or *Bhakhy* (type of food to be eaten with the help of teeth or molars, like roti, puri, kachori, etc.) 2. **Feast** or *Bhojay* (to be eaten only with the help of molars such as grains, buckwheat, almonds, etc.) 3. **Glutinous** or *Leahy* (food that can be licked with the tongue like lassi, sauce, etc.) 4. **Drinkables** or *paey* (like milk, curd, juice, syrup, etc.) 5. **Raspor Chosey** (suckable fruits like mango, sugarcane, berries, etc.). While using these, superstitious beliefs, illiteracy, illusion-based impurity, and pure sins are not acceptable in Gurumat, as outlined in the scriptures of Hinduism. Healthy and pure eating, drinking, and dressing up have been enacted keeping the health of the body as the main point so that one can live in moderation and always be blissful both in mind and body [4]. You can eat only if you are very hungry but never overeat. The 'Khatkarmis', i.e., those who follow six-fold duties prescribed by the Hindu philosophy, say that this or that food should not be eaten, are delusional. As per

Gurumat, all grains are pure. The food, prasad, and drink are all pure, for whom the sustenance which has been obtained by dusting, where its sustenance has been mixed, falls on the ground and without remedy [4]. That means there should be no superstition about it. The founder of the Sikh way of life Guru Nanak Dev Ji says in the third sloka recorded with the 18th verse of Asa's War:-

ਜੰਮਣੁ ਮਰਣਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੈ ਭਾਣੈ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇ ॥  
 ਖਾਣਾ ਪੀਣਾ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰੁ ਹੈ ਦਿਤੋਨੁ ਰਿਜਕੁ ਸੰਬਾਹਿ ॥  
 ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਨੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਬੁਝਿਆ ਤਿਨਾ ਸੂਤਕੁ ਨਾਹਿ ॥  
*All impurity comes from doubt and attachment to dualitye*  
*Birth and death are subject to the command of the Lord's will*  
*Through His will, we come and goe*  
*Eating and drinking are pure since the Lord nourishes alle*  
*O Nanak, the Gurmukhs, who understand the Lord, are not stained*  
*by impurity*

(SGGS p. 472-73)

However, in actual life, most people often follow the taste of their tongue unaware of the Gurbani directions, and eat unnecessary and disorderly food, which often becomes painful for the human body. Consequently, bad disorders/thoughts directly rooted in the person's mind begin to arise. About which Guru Nanak Patshah described in Siri Ragu:-

ਬਾਬਾ ਹੋਰੁ ਖਾਣਾ ਖੁਸੀ ਖੁਆਰੁ ॥  
 ਜਿਤੁ ਖਾਧੈ ਤਨੁ ਪੀੜੀਐ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਲਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰ ॥  
*O, Baba, the pleasures of other foods are falsee*  
*Eating them, the body is ruined, and wickedness and corruption enter*  
*into the mind.*

(SGGS p. 16)

So Gurbani always motivates us to relish a simple, healthy, and blissful life and for that guides us on what should be eaten or what should not be eaten. Regarding choosing to eat right, Guru Nanak Patshah warns us in the 'Vaar Suhi' that we should not eat any such food at all or should not indulge in any activity that causes belly fat or obesity:-

ਸਉ ਓਲਾਮੇ ਦਿਨੈ ਕੇ ਰਾਤੀ ਮਿਲਨਿ ਸਹੰਸ ॥  
 ਸਿਫਤਿ ਸਲਾਹਣੁ ਛਡਿ ਕੈ ਕਰੰਗੀ ਲਗਾ ਹੰਸੁ ॥  
 ਫਿਟੁ ਇਵੇਹਾ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜਿਤੁ ਖਾਇ ਵਧਾਇਆ ਪੇਟੁ ॥  
 ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੇ ਨਾਮ ਵਿਣੁ ਸਭੋ ਦੁਸਮਨੁ ਹੇਤੁ ॥

*He receives hundreds and thousands of reprimands, day and night  
The swan-soul has renounced the Lord's Praises and attached itself  
to a rotting carcass*

*Cursed is that life, in which one only eats to fill his belly.*

*O Nanak, without the True Name, all one's friends turn to enemies.*

(SGGS p. 790)

Dashmesh Pita Guru Gobind Singh ji too has written in Raga Ramkali in Sri Dasam Granth Sahib while recommending to eat and sleep little: -

ਅਲਪ ਅਹਾਰ ਸੁਲ ਪਸੀ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਦਯਾ ਛਿਮਾ ਤਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ॥

ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਦਾ ਨਿਰਬਾਹਿ ਬੋਹੈਬੋ ਤ੍ਰਿਗੁਣ ਅਤੀਤ॥

(ਸ੍ਰੀ ਦਸਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਅੰਗ ੨੦੯)

*Eat less and sleep less, cherish mercy and forgiveness | |*

*Practice gentleness and contentment and remain free from three modese*

(Sri Dasam Granth Sahib, p 709)

Thus, one should eat less, sleep less, and love kindness and mercy. Patience should be maintained with satisfaction. One should live a life by overcoming the three qualities of Rajo, Tamo, and Sato. Dietary guidelines issued by the country's nearly 106-year-old National Institute of Nutrition too confirmed that unhealthy eating leads to an increase in diabetes, constipation, hypertension, and heart attacks in the country. Taking a healthy diet along with getting more physical activity can largely prevent these diseases [2]. Nutritionists also suggest people eat good food and follow the advice that *'Eat like a bird, but work like an animal'*, that is, instead of eating to your contentment, one should eat little by little as per one's need. But nowadays it can often be seen that how people behave in marriage palaces or hotels or even religious places on the occasion of weddings or parties or religious functions is exactly opposite of this saying, i.e. most people eat and drink like animals but live a lazy luxurious life in cars and air-conditioned homes/palaces/hotels. Many times, while relishing such food and drinkables, people don't even bother about the fact that of course the same does belong to others, but the stomach is their own. There in a day, while relishing people even madly like to overeat unaccounted food despite thereafter being compelled to take much more costly medicines for

numerous days along with a painful life.

Perhaps, owing to this, Guru Nanak Dev ji cautioned us against eating delicious food in Malaar raga and stated that just like worms of maggots (Vishta) are born in manure and die again in manure. Unfortunately, the more people enjoy the taste, the more diseases spread to them.

ਬਿਸਟਾ ਕੀਟ ਭਏ ਉਤ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਉਤ ਹੀ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਇਆ ॥  
ਅਧਿਕ ਸੁਆਦ ਰੋਗ ਅਧਿਕਾਈ ਬਿਨੁ ਗੁਰ ਸਹਜੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਆ ॥

*And so, he becomes a maggot in manure, and in that, he is absorbed.  
The more he tastes, the more he is diseased; without the Guru, there is  
no peace and poise ||2||*

(SGGS, p. 1255)

Even, famous Sufi Saint Sheikh Farid Sahib also warned us regarding a good diet in his 28th sloka and said that one should relish 'rukhi-missi' i.e. plain bread which one has earned with one's own hands and one's hunger is salted or bhaji with bread. Those who relish 'chopri' i.e. buttered bread/delicious things suffer a lot of pain means make people sick by drinking:-

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਰੋਟੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਕਾਠ ਕੀ ਲਾਵਣੁ ਮੇਰੀ ਭੁਖ ॥  
ਜਿਨਾ ਖਾਧੀ ਚੋਪੜੀ ਘਣੇ ਸਹਨਿਗੇ ਦੁਖ ॥

*O' Fareed, my bread is made of wood, and hunger is my appetizer e  
Those who eat buttered bread will suffer in terrible pain. ||28||*

(SGGS, p.1379)

People who eat home-cooked meals consume fewer calories than those who rely on commercial market-based fast food. Home-cooked food is commonly low in carbohydrates, fats, and sugar because when one cooks the same at home with control over the ingredients, and can consume them as per one's need. Fresh produce, low protein, and whole grains can be chosen for a healthy diet. Home-cooked meals can be enriched with nutrients by including a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and lean proteins. While market-based fast food, on the other hand, is full of saturated fat, sodium, and empty calories [2]. Regular consumption of such food can create health problems like indigestion, constipation, obesity, heart disease, etc. However, it is believed that sharing and enjoying home-cooked food with family

members increases mutual love, harmony, and communication, which contributes significantly to the mental and physical well-being of children. A study published in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics showed that family meals can help reduce childhood obesity.

So, in brief, simple home-cooked food is much better, healthier, and more nutritious than market-processed fast food. One should eat fresh seasonal fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and fat according to one's pocket, need, body structure, and weight to avoid market junk/fast food and take simple nutritious home-cooked food and maximize physical activity to keep oneself fit, fine and healthy [3]. In this way, everybody can pleasantly relish his precious life by meditating on the Almighty Lord Akal Purakh Waheguru while remaining in the ascendant spirits. In his 29th sloka, Sheikh Farid Sahib advised us to maintain good health and said, O man! Akal Purakh Waheguru, who blesses the rough-dry plain dal roti, eats it, drinks cold water, is patient, and thanks the Supreme Father for this gift. Don't feel yourself sad by seeing other people eating well:-

ਰੁਖੀ ਸੁਖੀ ਖਾਇ ਕੈ ਠੰਢਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਪੀਉ ॥

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਦੇਖਿ ਪਰਾਈ ਚੋਪੜੀ ਨਾ ਤਰਸਾਏ ਜੀਉ ॥ ੨੯ ॥

*Eat dry bread, and drink cold water.*

*O'Fareed, if you see someone else's buttered bread, do not envy him for it.*

(SGGS p. 1379)

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JAPUJI
ENGLISH TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION OF
PAURIS/ STANZAS 35-38 AND SALOKA

PROF KULWANT SINGH*

JAPUJI

ਧਰਮ ਖੰਡ ਕਾ ਏਹੋ ਧਰਮੁ ॥
ਗਿਆਨ ਖੰਡ ਕਾ ਆਖਹੁ ਕਰਮੁ ॥
ਕੇਤੇ ਪਵਣ ਪਾਣੀ ਵੈਸੰਤਰ ਕੇਤੇ ਕਾਨ ਮਹੇਸ ॥
ਕੇਤੇ ਬਰਮੇ ਘਾਤਤਿ ਘੜੀਅਹਿ ਰੂਪ ਰੰਗ ਕੇ ਵੇਸ ॥
ਕੇਤੀਆ ਕਰਮ ਭੂਮੀ ਮੇਰ ਕੇਤੇ ਕੇਤੇ ਧੂ ਉਪਦੇਸ ॥
ਕੇਤੇ ਇੰਦ ਚੰਦ ਸੂਰ ਕੇਤੇ ਕੇਤੇ ਮੰਡਲ ਦੇਸ ॥
ਕੇਤੇ ਸਿਧ ਬੁਧ ਨਾਥ ਕੇਤੇ ਕੇਤੇ ਦੇਵੀ ਵੇਸ ॥
ਕੇਤੇ ਦੇਵ ਦਾਨਵ ਮੁਨਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਕੇਤੇ ਰਤਨ ਸਮੁੰਦ ॥
ਕੇਤੀਆ ਖਾਣੀ ਕੇਤੀਆ ਬਾਣੀ ਕੇਤੇ ਪਾਤ ਨਰਿੰਦ ॥
ਕੇਤੀਆ ਸੁਰਤੀ ਸੇਵਕ ਕੇਤੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਅੰਤੁ ॥੩੫॥
Dharam khand kaa ayho Dharam.
gi-aan khand kaa aakhhu karam.
kaytay pavan paanee vaisantar kaytay kaan mahays.
kaytay barmay ghaarhat gharhee-ahi roop rang kay vays.
kaytee-aa karam bhoomee mayr kaytay kaytay Dhoo updays.
kaytay ind chand soor kaytay kaytay mandal days
kaytay siDh buDh naath kaytay kaytay dayvee vays.
kaytay dayv daanav mun kaytay kaytay ratan samund.
kaytee-aa khaanee kaytee-aa bantee kaytay paat narind.
kaytee-aa surtee sayvak kaytay naanak ant na ant. ||35||

ਗਿਆਨ ਖੰਡ ਮਹਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਪਰਚੰਡੁ ॥
ਤਿਥੈ ਨਾਦ ਬਿਨੋਦ ਕੋਡ ਅਨੰਦੁ ॥
ਸਰਮ ਖੰਡ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਰੂਪੁ ॥
ਤਿਥੈ ਘਾਤਤਿ ਘੜੀਐ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਅਨੂਪੁ ॥
ਤਾ ਕੀਆ ਗਲਾ ਕਥੀਆ ਨਾ ਜਾਹਿ ॥

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TRANSLATION

Mental, disciplining of self is the hallmark of a devout seeker;
 At this stage of spiritual pathway known as *Dharam Khand*.
 Similarly, experiencing luminous knowledge about Divine creation;
 Is devotee's major occupation at a stage known as *Karam Khand*.
 In Dharam Khand, he may feel presence of myriads of elements.²²
 As well as the presence of myriads of Krishnas and Maheshas.
 Here he may also feel the presence of myriads of Brahmas.²³
 Cast and shaped in their multiple forms and shapes.
 He also observes the presence of myriads of earthly planets;
 Together with Sumer²⁴ mountains for the delivery of Sages' sermons.
 He may also notice the presence of myriads of Indras²⁵ moons and suns.
 Together with their myriads of planetary systems and orbits.
 There he feels the presence of myriads of Sidhas, Budhas²⁶, Nath, Yogis.
 Together with myriads of goddesses in their multiple dresses.
 He may observe presence of myriads of gods, demons and sages.
 Together with myriads of oceans full of rare gems indeed.
 He may observe the presence of myriads of creation and their expressions.
 Together with the presence of myriads of ruling royal dynasties.
 He may experience the existence of myriads of devotees in deep concentration.
 Nanak, the number of all these entities is innumerable indeed. || 35 ||

In the state of luminous knowledge called *Gian Khand*;
 It is the spiritual enlightenment that blazes forth.
 It is replete with the sound of symphonic melody together;
 With the sense of cosmic joy, wonder play and bliss.
 In the next state of spiritual endeavour called *Saram Khand*;

ਜੇ ਕੋ ਕਹੈ ਪਿਛੈ ਪਛੁਤਾਇ ॥
 ਤਿਥੈ ਘੜੀਐ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਮਤਿ ਮਨਿ ਬੁਧਿ॥
 ਤਿਥੈ ਘੜੀਐ ਸੁਰਾ ਸਿਧਾ ਕੀ ਸੁਧਿ ॥੩੬॥
 gi-aan khand meh gi-aan parchand.
 tithai naad binod kod anand.
 saram khand kee banee roop.
 tithai ghaarhat gharhee-ai bahut anoop.
 taa kee-aa galaa kathee-aa naa jaahi.
 jay ko kahai pichhai pachhutaay.
 tithai gharhee-ai surat mat man buDh.
 tithai gharhee-ai suraa siDhaa kee suDh. ||36||

ਕਰਮ ਖੰਡ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਜੋਰੁ ॥
 ਤਿਥੈ ਹੋਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰੁ ॥
 ਤਿਥੈ ਜੋਧ ਮਹਾਬਲ ਸੂਰ ॥
 ਤਿਨ ਮਹਿ ਰਾਮੁ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰ ॥
 ਤਿਥੈ ਸੀਤੋ ਸੀਤਾ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਮਾਹਿ ॥
 ਤਾ ਕੇ ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਕਥਨੇ ਜਾਹਿ ॥
 ਨਾ ਓਹਿ ਮਰਹਿ ਨ ਠਾਗੇ ਜਾਹਿ ॥
 ਜਿਨ ਕੈ ਰਾਮੁ ਵਸੈ ਮਨ ਮਾਹਿ ॥
 ਤਿਥੈ ਭਗਤ ਵਸਹਿ ਕੇ ਲੋਅ ॥
 ਕਰਹਿ ਅਨੰਦੁ ਸਚਾ ਮਨਿ ਸੋਇ ॥
 ਸਚ ਖੰਡਿ ਵਸੈ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ॥
 ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਲ ॥
 ਤਿਥੈ ਖੰਡ ਮੰਡਲ ਵਰਭੰਡ ॥
 ਜੇ ਕੋ ਕਥੈ ਤ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਅੰਤ ॥
 ਤਿਥੈ ਲੋਅ ਲੋਅ ਆਕਾਰ ॥
 ਜਿਵ ਜਿਵ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਤਿਵੈ ਤਿਵ ਕਾਰ ॥
 ਵੇਖੈ ਵਿਗਸੈ ਕਰਿ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਕਥਨਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਾਰੁ ॥੩੭॥
 karam khand kee banee jor.
 tithai hor na ko-ee hor.
 tithai jodh mahaabal soor.
 tin mehraam rahi-aa bharpoor.
 tithai seeto seeta mahimaa maahi.
 taa kay roop na kathnay jaahi.

It is the sense of beauty with which it radiates.
 In this state, human mind is transformed into a sphere,
 Which is marked by a sense of incredible beauty.
 So unique and rare is this spectacle of its beauty;
 That it is beyond the limits of human description
 Whosoever makes an attempt to describe this State;
 he is bound to regret and repent about it later on.
 There occurs a complete transformation of all the human faculties;
 Which consists of heart, mind, intellect and consciousness.
 Which culminates into a consciousness so Supreme
 That it is at par with the Consciousness of gods and mystics. || 36 ||

In the realm of Divine Grace called *Karam Khand*;
 The defining statement is one of spiritual predominance.
 It is inhabited by none other than those alone;
 Who wield and command a lot of spiritual power;
 In this realm dwell so many mighty warriors;
 Along with those who are brave and chivalrous.
 All of them being invested with Divine Grace;
 They are suffused with a sense of Divine consciousness.
 It is a realm full of Sita²⁷ like icons of perfect character;
 Whose integrity deserves the highest levels of veneration.
 Impossible it is indeed to describe the resplendent glow;
 Which radiates an aura of spiritual beauty around them.
 Immortal indeed are these iconic spiritual giants;
 Since they are beyond the limits of morality and vulnerability
 In perfect communion with the Divine Lord do they remain;
 Since Divine consciousness is deeply entrenched in them indeed.
 In this spiritual realm of overwhelming Divine consciousness;
 Live devout meditating devotees from several continents.
 In their absolutely clean, purified and steadfast consciousness;
 Do they experience a sense of perfect bliss indeed.
 In the highest realm of truth called *Sach Khand*;
 The formless Divine Lord prevails and abides indeed.
 With a benevolent gaze of grace does He look upon;
 At his own creation with an interminable repetition;

naa ohi mareh na thaagay jaahi.
 Jin kai raam vasai man maahi.
 tithai Bhagat Vaseh ke loe.
 karhi anand sacha man soi.
 Sach khand vasai nirankaar.
 kar kar vaykhai nadar nihaal.
 tithai khand mandal varbhand.
 jay ko kathai ta ant na ant.
 tithai lo-a lo-a aakaar.
 Jiv Jiv hukam tivai tiv kaar.
 vaykhai vigsai kar veechaar.
 naanak kathnaa karrhaa saar. || 37 ||

ਜਤੁ ਪਾਹਾਰਾ ਧੀਰਜੁ ਸੁਨਿਆਰੁ ॥
 ਅਹਰਣਿ ਮਤਿ ਵੇਦੁ ਹਥੀਆਰੁ ॥
 ਭਉ ਖਲਾ ਅਗਨਿ ਤਪ ਤਾਉ ॥
 ਭਾਂਡਾ ਭਾਉ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਤਿਤੁ ਢਾਲਿ॥
 ਘੜੀਐ ਸਬਦੁ ਸਚੀ ਟਕਸਾਲ ॥
 ਜਿਨ ਕਉ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰਮੁ ਤਿਨ ਕਾਰ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਨਦਰੀ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਲ ॥੩੮॥
 jat paahaaraa Dheeraj suni-aar.
 ahran mat vayd hathee-aar.
 bha-o khalaag an tap taa-o.
 bhaaNdaa bhaa-o amrit tit dhaal.
 gharhee-ai sabad sachee taksaal.
 Jin ka-o nadar karam tin kaar.
 naanak nadree nadar nihaal. || 38 ||

ਸਲੋਕੁ ॥
 ਪਵਣੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਾਣੀ ਪਿਤਾ ਮਾਤਾ ਧਰਤਿ ਮਹਤੁ ॥
 ਦਿਵਸੁ ਰਾਤਿ ਦੁਇ ਦਾਈ ਦਾਇਆ ਖੇਲੈ ਸਗਲ ਜਗਤੁ ॥
 ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ ਬੁਰਿਆਈਆ ਵਾਚੈ ਧਰਮੁ ਹਦੂਰਿ ॥
 ਕਰਮੀ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇ ਨੇੜੈ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ ॥
 ਜਿਨੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ ਗਏ ਮਸਕਤਿ ਘਾਲਿ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਤੇ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲੇ ਕੇਤੀ ਛੁਟੀ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ ੧ ॥
 pavan guroo paanee pitaa maataa Dharat mahat.

There do exist under His continuous, benevolent gaze;
 Innumerable planets, their planetary orbits and Universes.
 If one attempts to make an inventory of these regions;
 Uncountable indeed is the numerical strength of these.
 Thus, in this realm marked by Divine benediction;
 There exist worlds and continents of various sizes.
 All these continents of varying sizes move and abide;
 By the dictates of the Divine command as it directs them.
 The Divine Lord rejoices and feels elated indeed;
 As He looks upon and thinks about His creation.
 Nanak, it is as much difficult to describe this realm's beauty;
 As it is difficult to describe the exact hardness of steel. || 37 ||

A Spiritual devotee needs to cultivate the habit of continence;
 And acquire perseverance of the level of a goldsmith.
 He needs to make his consciousness as inflamed as goldsmith's anvil;
 And feed it with fuel of knowledge from scriptures.
 He needs to ignite it with the bellows of God's awe;
 And lit the fire of inquisitiveness with meditation.
 He needs to fill the crucible of his consciousness with God's love;
 And blend it with the elixir of His sacred Name.
 Thereafter, he needs to mould his consciousness;
 By casting it in the holy mint of His sacred word.
 They alone are engaged in this meditational activity;
 Who have been blessed with the Divine grace
 Nanak, truly blessed are they indeed;
 Who have become worthy of Divine grace || 38 ||

Salok

Air being creation's/ humanity's mentor, water is its father.
 The earth is the great mother of entire humanity.
 Days and nights are the caregiving nurses;
 Which keep fondling and nursing humanity day and night.
 Human deeds, good and bad, done during one's life time;
 Are evaluated and judged by the righteous judge
 His judgment is based upon the merit of human deeds;

divas raat du-ay daa-ee daa-i-aa khaylai sagal jagat.
chang-aa-ee-aa buri-aa-ee-aa vaachai Dharam hadoor.
karmee aapo aapnee kay nayrhai kay door.
Jinee Naam Dhi-aa-i-aa ga-ay maskat haal.
naanak tay mukh ujlay kaytee chhutee naal. ||1||

Which is delivered in each case sooner or later;
Those who have meditated along this pathway;
Truly have they struggled relentlessly indeed.
Nanak, their faces shine radiantly with Divine grace;
Even as they have liberated so many others along with themselves. || 1 ||

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## REFERENCES

22. Elements such as Earth, water, air, fire, sky, galaxies, planets, solar systems.
23. Trinity of three Hindu gods – Krishnas (Vishnu) Maheshas and Brahmas symbolizing sustenance, destruction and creation.
24. Sumer – The abode of Shiva or meditating sages.
25. Indras – Hindu gods symbolic of great spiritual powers.
26. Budhas – Symbolic of a perfectly enlightened person.
27. Sita – iconic figure from Hindu mythology who stands for absoluteness of human integrity.
28. Ibid.

## INTERPRETATION OF PAURIS/ STANZAS 35-38 OF GURU NANAK'S JAPUJI

Finally, as every devout seeker of truth and enlightened reader of the entire Japji verse would have realized, this verse is a brilliant, systematic, comprehensive and highly communicative expression in a highly fluent verse of a distinct spiritual voyage undertaken by Guru Nanak himself over his life time. It has subsequently been laid down as a spiritual pathway to be followed by his followers. After differentiating and distinguishing it from the existing contemporary oriental, semitic, Hindu, Islamic and yogic spiritual pathways and highlighting the monotheistic, invisible but simultaneously immanent and transcendental nature and all pervasive nature of the sovereign, Divine cosmic power and its universally indiscriminate and compassionate outlook towards its creation, Guru Nanak stresses upon the utmost human need for seeking communion with the ultimate Divine cosmic power. The spiritual pathway for seeking such a communion has been laid down in the Japji Verse. In these concluding four Pauris / Stanzas (35-38), the easily identifiable road signs, markers landmarks during the final leg of this spiritual pathway have been established by Guru Nanak himself. Alternatively, this is the gradually devolving / expanding state of mind of spiritual seeker of truth or a devout Sikh pilgrim traversing this laid down spiritual pathway. These are the five realms/stages of *Dharam Khand*, *Gian Khand*, *Saram Khand*, *Karam Khand* and *Sach Khand*, very appropriately phrased by Guru Nanak. As the pilgrim proceeds on this meditative spiritual pilgrimage, he passes through these realms and the experiences associated with each realm. The first of these five realms is the stage of *Dharamkhand* described in pauri 35. It is identified with the emergence of an awareness about the presence of myriads of divinely created spiritual entities consisting of gods, spiritual savants and sages, elements of nature, planetary systems, oceans replete with gems, variety of creative forces and unheard symphonic melodies and their exponents. All these are the cosmic powers. What is unique about them is their meticulous, almost error free functioning and movement according to the prescribed cosmic laws created by their Divine creator. They are bound



by their sense of duty to follow the Divine command continuously without any let or hinderance. The Word *Dharam* used here in this verse to define this realm symbolizes and refers to this meticulous sense of duty rather than to any codified religion or ideology. The spiritual pilgrim, as he enters this realm or state of mind, learns and acquires and adopts this kind of self-discipline and streamlined way of life. All his thoughts and deeds shed their wildness and erratic behavior. He acquires a transformed persona of his own suffused with spiritual awareness of cosmic laws. This transformation leads to a wonderful sense of bliss and happiness as this new born awareness provides luminous knowledge about the mystical relationship between the Divine creator and his entire creation. Traversing along this meditative spiritual pathway laid down by Guru Nanak, the spiritual pilgrim graduates and enters this realm of luminous knowledge. That is why; it has been appropriately termed as *Gian Khand*. Spiritual ecstasy, born of experiencing unheard symphony of spheres (Naad) and sense of bliss, are a hallmark of this state of mind. The newly acquired sense of discipline and luminous knowledge by a devout spiritual pilgrim does not make him sit on his laurels. These acquisitions prod him further to carry on his spiritual voyage. Endeavour, continuous endeavour during the meditative spiritual journey leads to further chiseling and polishing of his entire psyche. It leads to the complete purification of all his human facilities of heart, mind, intellect and soul. It invests them with virtues such as concentration and wisdom which elevate his status at par with the Status of Gods and Sidhas. It is for this relentless struggle and continuous endeavour of the spiritual pilgrim during this stage. That realm has been termed *Saramkhand*. It is a state of human perfection and holistic metamorphosis of a state of human psyche. Whatever was to be achieved within human jurisdiction during this voyage has been achieved. Whatever lies beyond lies in the Divine jurisdiction. Entry to it can come only through Divine Grace and divine command. For now, it is a moment to wait and watch expectedly.

This waiting period does not last long. The spiritual pilgrim by virtue of acquiring and imbibing the virtues of self-discipline luminous knowledge and continuous spiritual endeavour during his spiritual

voyage, has become worthy of Divine Grace. And Divine grace dawns upon him with the full force of Divinity and grant of communion with the Divine cosmic power. It is a state of close affinity and intimate integration of the devout spiritual pilgrim with the Divine. This realm has been most appropriately termed as *Karam Khand* by Guru Nanak in Pauri / Stanza 37. In this realm inhabit / exist perfect spiritual and moral icons such as mighty mythological warriors and chaste woman as sacred and chaste as Sita.<sup>28</sup> They are perfectly impregnable and invulnerable to any physical attack or moral lapse. They remain filled with consciousness of the Divine presence in themselves each and every moment of their existence. Henceforth, they will remain in a state of perpetual emancipation and communion with the Divine.

Beyond this realm of Grace and communion lies the abode of the Divine Lord where He lives and prevails in his resplendent glory. It is impossible to describe its majesty and royal grandeur. Being the abode of the formless Divine, it has been termed as *Sach Khand* by Guru Nanak in Pauri / Stanza 37. It is as much an abode of the blessed, approved and stamped devout spiritual pilgrims who have successfully arrived at their destined destination as of the Divine himself. It is marked by the perpetual benevolence and grace of the Divine and enjoyment of State of blissfulness. The whole creation is governed from this vantage location which abides by the Divine Will and command. Thus, a tiny, inquisitive but devout and faithful spiritual pilgrim traversing along the meditative spiritual pathway laid down by Guru Nanak has become an inseparable, integral / Integrated part of the grand design.

Finally, in the concluding 38<sup>th</sup> Pauri/ Stanza, Guru Nanak repeats the conditionalities which needs to be fulfilled or some of the tools with which a spiritual pilgrim need to be equipped with and the purificatory process through which he has to pass in order to reach his destination of uniting with the Divine. Borrowing an analogy from the art of making ornaments by a goldsmith and metallurgical operations of casting alloys and minting and stamping coins for making them as authorized currency for financial transactions, a devout seeker of truth or spiritual pilgrim must be equipped with the virtues of

continence, preservance, an inquisitive, planned mental attitude and uncompromising faith and devotion towards Divine cosmic power. Equipped with these virtues, a spiritual pilgrim becomes eligible to undertake such a spiritual voyage. However, success in this spiritual expedition is subject to the conferment of Divine Grace upon such a devout and steadfast pilgrim. In the Concluding line, Guru Nanak provides an indication bordering on guaranteed dawning of Divine grace due to the universally benevolent nature of the Divine. Thus, the spiritual mission envisioned by Guru Nanak in Japji verse is collaborative venture of the endeavouring, meditating human devotee and the benevolent, complementing Divine.

In the three concluding rhyming couplets called Saloka which may be regarded as an epilogue to the Japji verse, Guru Nanak sums up the gist of the physical, moral and spiritual components of his vision as elaborated in the Japji verse. The message given in this concluding verse is a befitting climax to the step by step argument built up in the preceeding japji verse. It provides a universal dimension to the individual pilgrimage under laid down spiritual pathway. It makes this verse eligible for a prayer of the whole mankind.

## GHADAR MOVEMENT AND THE SIKH PARTICIPATION

D.S. MANGAT\*

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“Rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God”

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)

Ghadar is an Urdu word, derived from Arabic which means, ‘Insurrection’, ‘Revolt’, or, ‘Rebellion’. ‘Ghadar’ was a plan to initiate a rebellion in the British-Indian army to over-throw the British-Raj in India, in the month of February 1915. The plot was hatched at the beginning of the World-War I. The major participants were the Ghadar Party in the United States, the Berlin-Committee in Germany, the German Foreign Office through its Consulate in San Francisco and the Indian Revolutionary Underground in British India. It derives its name from the North American Ghadar Party, whose members were Punjabi Sikhs from Canada and the United States. The Punjabi Sikhs played a significant role in shaping up the direction and scope of the movement. According to some estimates, the North-American, (Punjabi Sikh) participation in the Ghadar Movement, was considered to be the, more effective than the, much larger ‘Hindu-German Mutiny’ conspiracies, hatched between 1914 and 1917. Punjab and Bengal remained the hotbeds of anti colonial activities, within India and abroad. Militancy in Bengal was closely linked with unrest in Punjab. From the beginning of the world war I, the Indian diaspora, notably, from the United States, Canada and Germany was headed by the ‘Berlin Committee’, and the ‘Ghadar Party’. They tried to trigger uprisings in India on the same lines as the 1857 mutiny with Irish Republican, German and Turkish help in a massive conspiracy which came to be

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called Hindu-German Mutiny. This conspiracy also tried to involve Afghanistan against the British India. A number of failed attempts were made at mutiny, out of which, February Mutiny Plan and the Singapore Mutiny have a special place in the history of struggle for freedom in India. This movement was suppressed by a massive international Counter-Intelligence Operation and by bringing in Defence of India Act 1915.

Indians started emigrating to the Western countries as well as to the other Asian countries around 1895 onwards. Wherever they went they started organising themselves. Ghadar was the result of the gradual growth or, more accurately, the evolution of the awareness of the Indian diaspora, as soon as they were exposed to the mature democracies of Asia, Europe and North America.

Due to the adverse economic conditions in Punjab in the early 1900s, the Punjabis started going to other countries to seek employment. Indian Nationalism in the United States dates back to the first decade of the twentieth century. Following the example of London, India House, similar organisations were established in the United States and in Japan through the efforts of the growing population of Indian Students. Founder of the India House, Shyamji Krishna Varma, (1857-1930) had established close relations with the Irish Republic Movement. The first Nationalist organisation was the Pan-Aryan Association. It was on the similar pattern of Shyamji Krishna Varma's Indian Home Rule Society, established on February 18, 1905, through the Indo-Irish efforts of Abdul Hafiz Muhammad Barkatullah (1854-1927), S.L. Joshi (Samuel Lucas Joshi, 1878-1940) and George Freeman. Madame Cama and Maulvi Muhammad Barkatullah were, both, very close to Krishna Varma. In January 1908 an 'India House' was established in Manhattan, in New York with financial help from Myron Henry Phelps, (1856-1916), a wealthy lawyer of Irish descent, who was sympathetic towards the Indian freedom cause. In New York, Swami Abhedananda's influence was notable. He was considered a threat to the British Colonial Rule. Indian students and ex-residents of the London India House took advantage of the lax press laws to circulate 'The Indian Sociologist' and other nationalist literature. New York became an important centre for the Global Indian Nationalist

Movement. In 1908, Tarak Nath Das, moved his Political revolutionary Journal, 'Free Hindustan' from Vancouver and Seattle to New York. 'Free Hindustan' had to be shut down in 1910 under the British diplomatic pressure. With the help of George Freeman, Tarak Nath Das collaborated with the 'Gaelic American'. After 1910, the Indian Nationalistic activities, on the American East coast declined and the movement headquarters were moved to San Francisco. At about that time, with the arrival of Lala Har Dayal, the gap between the intellectual agitators and the predominantly Punjabi labour workers and migrants narrowed, laying the foundations of the "Ghadar Movement".

In the 1900s, the West coast of North America witnessed large scale Indian immigration, especially from Punjab, which was facing an economic down turn. Up to that time, the Punjabi community had been a significant loyal force for the British Empire and the Commonwealth in their Colonial adventures. The community had expected, the British and the Commonwealth, to honour its commitment, of equal rights, similar, to honour and welcome extended to the British and the white immigrants. The Canadian government started to limit the entry, of the South Asians, into Canada, with a series of new legislations aimed at restricting the political rights of those already in Canada. These legislations generated discontentment, protests and anti-colonial sentiments within the Punjabi community. The community started organising itself into political groups to face the difficult times. From British Columbia, Canada, large number of Punjabis also moved to the United States, where they met with, similar, social and political problems. In the mean time, the Nationalist activities among the Indians, on the East Coast started gaining momentum from 1907-08 on wards, as the Indian students like P.S. Khankhoje (Pandurang Sadashive Khankhoje, (1883-1967), Pandit Kanshi Ram Marauli, (October 13,1883-March 27,1915) and Tarak Nath Das, (1884-1958).Tarak Nath Das discussed his nationalist activities with Leo Tolstoy, (a Russian writer and philosopher), founded the Indian Independence League in Portland, Oregon. P.S. Khankhoje's activities brought him closer to the other nationalists in the United States like Tarak Nath Das. P.S. Khankhoje was considered to be one

of the founding fathers of the 'Pacific Coast Hindustan Association' and helped found the 'Ghadar Party' later. He was considered to be, one of the most influential members of the Ghadar Party. He came in contact with Lala Har Dayal, (1884-1939) in 1911. The ground work for the Ghadar Movement seemed to have started with the efforts of all the Indians whenever and wherever they settled in foreign countries. Some of the examples are 'India House in London' started as Indian student residence in 1905, Paris-Indian Society, Pan-Aryan Association, Indo-Japanese Association, Indo-American National Association was established by Myron Henry Phelps on September 5, 1907 at Maine. Society for the Advancement of India was established in November 1907 in New York. It had its links with Irish Revolutionary Society, and the Berlin Committee. All these organisations provided much needed experience to the new Indian immigrants and honed their skills for the progress of the Indians everywhere they went. All those organisations helped promote unity and the Nationalistic feelings among the diaspora. Out of all the initial efforts made by the pioneers, eventually, evolved into a much bigger movement, which had adopted the shape of the Ghadar Movement. The Ghadar Movement was the result of a gradual growth, (Evolution) among the Indians as they were exposed to mature democracies of Europe and North-America.

The Ghadar Party, emanated from the Pacific Coast, Hindustan Association, which was established in 1913. In the United States, it was established under the leadership of Lala Har Dayal as General Secretary, Sohan Singh Bhakna, (1870-1968) as its President and Pandit Kanshi Ram Marauli as Treasurer. It became very popular among the members from the Indian immigrants, mainly from Punjab. Quite a few of its members were from the University of California at Berkeley, including Lala Har Dayal, Tarak Nath Das, Kartar Singh Sarabha, (1896-1915) and V.G. Pingley, (Vishnu Ganesh Pingley, (1888-1915). The Ghadar Party became extremely popular among the diaspora from the United States, Canada and Asia. Its meetings used to be held in Los Angeles, Oxford, Vienna, Washington, D.C. and Shanghai. The Ghadar Party's goal was to overthrow the British Rule in India, with the help of an armed rebellion. It considered the Congress-led main stream movement for Dominion status, as too modest. Ghadar Party's strategy

was to prepare the Indian Soldiers for a revolt, for which it established the 'Yugantar Ashram' in San Francisco.

The incident of the S.S. Komagata Maru, added insult to injury and helped justify the Ghadar Party's cause. By the end of 1913 the Ghadar Party was successful in establishing contacts with revolutionaries like Rash Behari Bose, (1886-1945). Political unrest gripped Punjab and Ghadar Party publications were banned by the British Indian Government. In view of these events, along with the evidence of instigation of Ghadar in the Lahore and Delhi conspiracy of 1912, the British Government started putting pressure on the American State Department to check the Indian revolutionary's activities in San Francisco, California. During World War I, the British Indian Army contributed heavily to the British War effort. Consequently, a smaller force of around 15000 troops, was stationed in India in 1914. With this scenario in mind, the Ghadar Party made plans to organise uprisings in India. In September 1913, Dr. Mathura Singh, (1883-1917), a Ghadar Party member went to Shanghai and helped promote the Ghadar cause among the Indian community there. In 1914 Dr. Mathura Singh came back to India and continued to circulate Ghadar literature among the Indian soldiers. He was appointed a Minister in the Indian Government-in-exile of which, Maulvi Muhammad Barkatullah was the Prime-Minister. Dr. Mathura Singh made secret trips to Iran, Russia and Germany. While returning from Russia, he was arrested at Tashkent, on November 2, 1916. He was brought to India and was tried in the third supplementary Lahore Conspiracy case and was sentenced to death. He was, secretly, hanged on March 27, 1917 in Lahore Central Jail and his body was cremated on the jail premises.

In May 1914, the Canadian Government, out of 376 passengers on board the 'SS Komagata Maru', only 22 were permitted to stay. Rest of the passengers were forced out of the Burrard Inlet on July 23, 1914, with the help of HMCS Rainbow. It returned to India to face the Bullets of the British Indian Government, where another 18 passengers lost their lives and 25 were wounded. Rest of them were forced by the security forces to board the trains to Punjab under the 'Defence of India Act'. The Ghadar Party used this tragedy to further promote



their Nationalistic cause, to free India from the British control. By October 1914, large number of Ghadar Party members had started arriving in India and distributing Ghadar literature among the masses. They were also trying to smuggle arms from the United States with German help. First group of 60 Ghadarites boarded steamship 'Korea' from San Francisco for Canton, on August 29, 1914, led by Jawala Singh. Jawala Singh, Sohan Singh Bhakna and Pandit Kanshi Ram Marauli offered their services for revolutionary activities in India. Lala Hardayal escaped to Switzerland for fear of re-arrest. To fill the void of leadership at the Ghadar Party at San Francisco, Ram Chandra Bhardwaj, a Brahmin from Peshawar became President of the Ghadar Party from 1914-1917. At Canton another 90 Ghadarites joined and sailed for Calcutta on a Japanese Ship. In the following two months another 300 Indians left, aboard several ships like SS Siberia, Chinyo Maru, China Manchuria, SS Tanyo Maru, SS Mongolia and SS Shinyo Maru. On their arrival at Calcutta, the SS Korea, passengers were searched and arrested. With this incident, the Ghadarites raised their consciousness to higher level. They created a secret network between United States and India through Shanghai, Swatow and Siam. Tehal Singh, a Ghadarite from Shanghai, is believed to have spent quite a bit of money (\$30,000) for the revolutionaries to reach India undetected. Bhai Bhagwan Singh, Kartar Singh Sarabha, Pandit Kanshi Ram Marauli, Vishnu Ganesh Pingley, Satyen Bhushan Sen and a batch of Sikh revolutionaries sailed from America in the second half of October 1914, by the 'SS Salamin'. On their arrival in Calcutta, Satyen Bhushan Sen introduced Vishnu Ganesh Pingley and Kartar Singh Sarabha to Jatin Mukherjee (Jatindera Nath Mukhopadhae, (1879-1915) who sent them to Rash Behari Bose in Benaras with some necessary information, during the third week of December 1914. Jatin Mukherji and Satyen Bhushan Sen infiltrated into the '93 Burmans' and contacted some Sikh troops trying to woo them for inciting a rebellion. The battalion was dispatched to Mesopotamia, seemingly, a preventive measure to avoid further exposure to the Ghadarites.

Since the early 1900s, inspired by Lokamanya Tilak, (1856-1920), the Indian Nationalists turned Benaras into Seditionist-Cantonment. Sundar Lal, (1885-1987), Sri Aurobindu, (1872-1950) and Lala Lajpat

Rai, (1865-1928) delivered inflammatory speeches which caused quite a bit of stir in the Imperial Government circles. At the end of November 1914, Jatin Mukherji informed Pingley through a letter that 4000 Sikhs of the Ghadar Party had already reached Calcutta and 15000 more were waiting to come and join the rebellion. Rash Behari sent Sachin Sanyal and Pingley to Amritsar to discuss the situation with Mula Singh, who had come from Shanghai. Baba Gurmukh Singh, (1888-1977) contacted Atul Krishna Ghosh, (1890-1966) and Satish Chakravarti on September 29, 1914, two very close associates of Jatin Mukherji. Letters from US based Punjabi Indian leaders clearly indicated that they were in touch with the Bengal Revolutionary party. In response to that information, Pingley arrived in the Punjab in December 1914, assuring the Punjabi revolutionaries of Bengali co-operation in their struggle for freedom. Rash Behari prepared the village folks for rebellion. In view of the outbreaks at Lahore, Ferozepur and Rawalpindi, the ones at Dacca, Benaras and Jabalpur were postponed. For some unknown reasons, priority was given to Punjab rising or Punjab took the lead, (May be the Punjabis were more passionate and preferred action, to idle talk, grew impatient). Ghadar Party programme included making bombs to use them to attack British Government establishments all over India. The Sikh revolutionaries had no knowledge of manufacturing explosives. They knew from back in California, Professor Surendra Bose, an associate of Tarak Nath Das, used to talk about making explosives. The Sikh revolutionaries decided to seek help from Bengali explosive experts. At a meeting in Kapurthala (Punjab), at the end of December, 1914, Pingley assured the gathering that a Bengali expert would be ready to help in this regard. On January 3, 1915, Pingley and Sachindra Nath Sanyal, (1893-1942) received Rs. 500 from the Ghadar Party members and returned to Benaras with a promise to find Explosive expertise.

In response to Rash Behari's invitation to the Jugantar Leadership to meet him in Benaras, Pingley returned to Calcutta. In early January 1915, Jatin Mukherji, Atul Krishna Ghosh, and Narayan Bhattacharya, went to Benaras. In the meeting, Rash Behari announced the rebellion. He shared with the gathering that the 16<sup>th</sup> Rajput Rifles at Fort Williams (Calcutta) was approached through Havildar Mansha Singh. Due to

the impatience of the Ghadarites, Rash Behari and Pingle went to Lahore to discuss plans and Sachin made some inroads to 7<sup>th</sup> Rajputs at Benaras and the 89<sup>th</sup> Punjabis at Dinapore. Vinayak Rao Kapil smuggled material for making 18 bombs from Benaras to Punjab on February 14, 1915, undetected. By mid January, Pingle was back in Amritsar with Rash Behari, the Bomb expert. In a fortnight, to avoid being detected by the British intelligence, Rash Behari was moved to Lahore. In Lahore he requested a foundry owner to make 80 empty shells for the bombs which he refused out of suspicion. They had to use inkpots and other containers instead. Eventually the operation was uncovered by the security forces. Rash Behari Bose escaped. In the attempted mutiny of February 1915, Pingle was the main co-ordinator along with Kartar Singh Sarabha, Rash Behari Bose and Sachin Sanyal. Under the guidance of Rash Behari Bose, from December 1914 onwards, Pingle assumed fake identities, to spread the message of revolution like Shayam Lal, a Bengali name, and a Punjabi name, Ganpat Singh. Eventually a well-knit communication network was established between the Ghadarites (who Came from abroad) and the Revolutionaries under the guidance of Rash Behari Bose. The Plans for mutiny were maturing fast. The initial plan was that on February 21, 1915, during the Roll-call hour, 23<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry soldiers were going to seize arms and kill their officers. 26<sup>th</sup> Punjab would follow next, indicate an uprising to start and advance towards Lahore and Delhi. There was a positive communication between the Sikh troops in the Dacca Cantonment and the Lahore (Mian Mir cantonment). The Bengal activists were to wait for Punjab Mail entering the Howrah Station the following day, (it would be cancelled in the event of successful uprising in the Punjab), they would strike immediately.

Going through these incidents of the History of the Ghadarites and the Revolutionaries, a Punjabi couplet by Munir Niazi, seemed intriguing that may reflect the dedication, zeal and excitement of the martyrs of the Ghadar Movement, seemed like having an emotional relationship with Ghadar.

Punjabi version:

*Kujh inj vi raban aukhian sann, Kujh gall wich gaman da tauk vi si,  
Kujh shehar de loak vi zalim sann, Kujh sanu maran da shauk vi si.*

English version;

*The passages of life we adopted were hard, even harder was to bring  
them to conclusion,*

*The society around us was undoubtedly heartless, we, too, had a frenzy  
to kiss the gallows first.*

*William Wordsworth had a similar expression at the beginning of  
the French Revolution;*

*Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,*

*But to be young was very heaven.*

By early 1915, in response to the call for rebellion, a large number of Ghadarites arrived in India from abroad, (by some estimates 8000 of them in Punjab alone), but all of them were not gainfully deployed. Some were arrested by the security forces on suspicion and many others tried to establish contact with Garrisons in cities like Rawalpindi, Lahore and Ferozepur. Several plans were made to attack the Garrison at Mian Mir near Lahore, one on November 15, 1914, and another attempt was made by the Majha Jatha, to initiate an uprising in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry at the Lahore Cantonment on November 26, 1914. On November 30, 1914 at Ferozpur, under Nidhan Singh. The Bengal Jugantar intruded the Garrison at Fort William in Calcutta, through Jatin Mukherji. Jatin Mukherji's men seized a large consignment of guns and ammunition in August 1914, from the R.B. Rodda, a major arms manufacturer in India, in those days. Jatin Mukherji communicated with Rash Behari Bose through Kartar Singh Sarabha and Vishnu Ganesh Pingle. It was decided by the leadership to launch a united general uprising rather than several small ones on February 21, 1915.

British counter-intelligence were aware of the Indian revolutionary activities before and during World War I, which grew out of its initial discontent of the Punjabis and the Bengalis from the British Government in India. It spanned from late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the end of World War I. It extended from Asia through Europe to the West coast of the United States and Canada. British Counter-Intelligence was successful to effectively putting down several attempts by the

Ghadarites and the Revolutionaries in India and abroad. The secret service agencies like Punjab CID intercepted the conspiracy at the last moment through Kirpal Singh, a cousin of trooper Balwant Singh (23<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry). Kirpal, the spy had returned from the United States and on February 15, 1915, Kirpal attended the meeting at Rash Behari Bose's Headquarters near the Mochi Gate in Lahore which was attended by a dozen leaders including Vishnu Ganesh Pingle. Kirpal informed Police, of the plans of the Ghadarites. The leaders, sensing the plans compromised moved the date of the mutiny, two days ahead, to February 19, 1915. The Punjab CID had an active network covering the activists, found out about the changed date as well. Kirpal again brought it in the notice of Liaqat Hayat Khan, (later became head of the Punjab CID). In Bengal, the Counter-Intelligence against the activities of the Jugantar was led by Charles Tegart, who is believed to have shot and Killed Jatin Mukherji on the banks of river Burha Balang. By the timely intervention of the British Counter-Intelligence the revolt by the 130 Baluchi Regiment stationed at Rangoon on February 21, 1915, could be prevented. On the afternoon of February 15, 1915, the 5<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry, stationed at Singapore, was one of the few units that revolted along with about 100 men of the Malay States Guides. The Mutiny lasted seven days and cost the lives of 47 British soldiers and civilians. The mutiny was put down with the help of the French, Russians and the Japanese reinforcements. 126 mutineers were tried in Court Martial in Singapore out of whom 37 were shot in public execution, 41 were given transportation for life and the rest were awarded, jail terms, ranging from seven to twenty years. Plans of revolt in the 26<sup>th</sup> Punjab, 7<sup>th</sup> Rajput and 24<sup>th</sup> Jat Artillery and many other regiments did not materialise either. Revolts in Lahore, Ferozpur and Agra were also put down. Kartar Singh Sarabha escaped from Lahore but was arrested in Benaras. Vishnu Ganesh Pingle was arrested from the 12<sup>th</sup> Cavalry at Meerut on the night of March 23, 1915. Ghadarites were arrested in Punjab and the Central Provinces (Madhya Pradesh). In May 1915, Rash Behari Bose escaped from Lahore and fled to Japan. Giani Pritam Singh, Swami Satyananda Puri and some other leaders fled to Thailand and other sympathetic and safe havens.

### THE SIKH PARTICIPATIONS

In the early years of the twentieth century, Indians started going abroad to Philippines, Hongkong, Malaya, China and other countries. Some more aggressive Indians started reaching Canada and the United States of America. 99% of these new emigrants were Punjabis, and 90% of the Punjabis, were Sikhs. Wherever the Sikhs went they built Gurdwaras, a place of worship for the devotees and the social gatherings. The very first such Gurdwara was established in 1907, in Vancouver, BC under the name of Khalsa Diwan Society, followed by branches in Abbotsford, Victoria, New Westminster, Fraser Hill, Duncan Coombs and Ocean Falls. These places became the rallying points and for their social gatherings also helping the new-comers. Similarly, the first such Gurdwara was established in Stockton, California, in the United States. Once in the West they started realising the difference between political freedom and political slavery. They soon realised the discrimination towards them from their newly adopted country's public and the Governments. They started organising themselves to fight against the injustice meted out to them. They started to educate the new comers through the print media, which helped them organise against the abrasive attitude of the British towards their Indian subjects.

The first such organisation was, the 'Hindustan Association' in 1909, with Bhai Bhag Singh as president. 'Savadesh Sevak Home', on the line of "India House", was renamed in 1911, 'United India League'. In 1912, 'Hindustan Association of the Pacific Coast' was established, with Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna as President. In 1913, the same Organisation, decided to open a 'Ghadar Ashram' (Yugantar Ashram) at Portland, Oregon. It decided to establish a 'Ghadar Party' with headquarters in San Francisco, California with its branch offices at various places in United States and Canada. The objective of this party was; "Today there begins in foreign lands... a war against the British Raj.... What is our name? Ghadar (Insurrection, Rebellion). What is our work? Ghadar (Insurrection, Rebellion). Where will Ghadar break out? In India. The time will soon come when rifles and blood will take the place of pen and ink. (Encyclopaedia of Sikhism by Dr. Harbans

Singh). The party opened its offices all over the world, where ever the Indian population had settled. The party launched a weekly named 'Ghadar' with a subscription of \$1 a month.

Punjab and Bengal were on the forefront of the movement, to free India from British domination. Punjabis were the first to initiate the 'Ghadar Movement', outside of India. Lala Hardy, dropped his studies in England and sailed to America. He got a job as a lecturer in Stanford University, in America. He joined hands with some energetic young Sikhs, and started a paper, 'The Ghadar', in 1913, and later in 1914, its Punjabi version also came out. Through the two papers they continued to condemn the British rule in India. Early in 1913, it became clear to the Ghadarites that the war between Germany on one side and England and France on the other was imminent. They shifted their activities from London and Paris to Berlin. By then Ghadar party had matured, and it had 10,000 active members. The "Berlin-India" committee succeeded in persuading the German Foreign Minister, Mr. Zimmerman, to send instructions to the German ambassador in the United States to provide arms to the Ghadarites and help them financially. German foreign offices in San Francisco, Shanghai and Bangkok were instructed to help the Ghadarites. In short, Germany, was the only country that was prepared to help the Indian Ghadarites financially as well as with arms. The Germans made several attempts to smuggle arms to India for the Ghadarites on board the 'Henry S.' the 'Annie Larsen', and 'Maverick', but all failed. In the mean time, quarrels broke out among the members of the Ghadar Movement. When the Germans found out about that, they parted ways with the Ghadarites. Most of the money given by the German Government agencies to the Ghadarites went no further than their own pockets. According to Khushwant Singh in his 'History of the Sikhs' Vol. II, p. 188, states, "The rank and file, who had staked everything including their lives, were left with nothing. The have-not group was entirely Sikh; the other almost entirely Hindu. Thus, the religious differences further accentuated the rift,"

Some of the people, who had joined the 'Ghadar Movement', abroad, came to India to inspire the public against the atrocities of the



British Government in India. But the spirit for independence had not matured yet, among the mainstream Indians. In the mean time, the 'World War I' had broken out, and the Sikhs owed their allegiance towards the British, in order to win their favour. The Ghadarites were trying to seduce the armed forces personnel to acquire weapons for Mutiny. They had their eyes on Ferozepur Cantonment where 26<sup>th</sup> Punjab, had been stationed and the Mian-Mir cantonment near Lahore where 23<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry was posted. It did not materialise. Still the lovers of freedom did not loose heart and went on trying their level best. Eventually, they were able to muster some support and the date of the mutiny was set, February 21, 1915. Due to the breach in secrecy by, Kirpal Singh, the date was moved ahead by two days to February 19, 1915. The mutiny had failed due to the lack of experience, and misinformation on the part of the leaders of the 'Mutiny'. The cases against the mutineers were libelled in different courts of the country and mass hangings were carried out. From 23 Cavalry alone 12 servicemen were sentenced to death at Dagshai and hanged in Central Jail Ambala on September 3, 1915. In all 291 persons were tried and 42 were sentenced to death, 114 were given transportation for life, 93 were given various terms of imprisonments and 42 were acquitted. Soldiers from other units were sentenced as under:

|              | Death | Transportation for life |
|--------------|-------|-------------------------|
| 12 Cavalry   | 4     | 0                       |
| 130 Baloch   | 4     | 59                      |
| 128 Pioneers | 1     | 0                       |

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**CONTD IN THE NEX ISSUE**



## ON THE ISC FRONT

COL JAGTAR SINGH MULTANI

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(16<sup>th</sup> December 2025 to 15<sup>th</sup> March 2025)

During this period ISC was busy in organizing various meetings and seminars besides monitoring and managing its HWTCs running in rural areas.

**Seminar on Manipur State disturbance:-** On 26th December, 2024 and 27<sup>th</sup> February, Brother Peter, a missionary from Kerala visited ISC Hqrs along with Yuvsatta convener Sh. Parmod Sharma to chalk out a strategy to establish peace in Manipur state where communal riots have devastated the life of its peoples for the last 2 years. Brother Peter delivered a talk sharing his experience after visiting Manipur when he informed that several churches of Kuki community and many homes have been burnt by the miscreants and they have looted sizable number of weapons from the Police. Thousands of people are living in camps under miserable conditions. Manipur state has two gurdwaras also- one in Imphal and other in Churachandpur. On this occasion, Col Multani suggested that the only way-out to resolve the crises is that some Peace delegation of reputed organizations should visit and act as a mediator between the two communities to bring peace. In this regard, Col Multani also talked to S. RS Rathore of Rashtriya Sikh Sangat who assured to facilitate the visit.

On 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2024, ISC also participated in a seminar organized by Kendri Singh Sabha where Muslim community from different parts of India gathered to share their feelings about suppression of human rights and how minorities can unite together to raise their voice against divisive policies of the state to have liberty of life in the

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country.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2025 ISC along with IFFCO organized a joint function where 150 blankets were distributed to poor and needy people.

### **VISIT TO JALNA, HAZOOR SAHIB AND HYDERABAD**

From 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> February, a two member team of ISC comprising Col. JS Multani accompanied by S. Sher Jagjit Singh visited Jalna(Maharashtra)Sri Hazoor Sahib and Hyderabad to initiate steps to open new HWTCs there for Vanjara community & to review the working of existing Sikligar School managed by S. Hardev Singh and Happy Learning Play School in Hyderabad and Computer Centers working there. During this tour, they met prominent Sikh Businessmen to request for donation to our organization along with Ex-DGP of Telangana State, Mrs. Tejdeep Kaur who has deep interest in promoting Sikh martial arts like Gatka and Punjabi folk dances -Giddha and Bhangra and is also working for upliftment of poor sikh community there.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> February, Dr. Didar Singh a prominent Sikh from Babarpur village, Ludhiana visited ISC HQ and expressed deep desire to open 5 HWTCs in his area. ISC needs to survey the area as early as possible to start the centers.

### **SEMINAR ON “INDIAN DIASPORA IN CANADA”**

On 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2025, ISC along with Yuvsatta jointly organized a seminar on “Indian Diaspora in Canada” in which about 100 students of leading schools participated. Prominent speakers having vast experience of world affairs presented their views about the prevailing living conditions in foreign countries like Canada where Indians especially Punjabi students go after doing IELTS after matriculation. They are unable to find even part time jobs due to influx of immigrants and insufficient no of jobs there. Then after expiry of their visas, they continue to live there illegally and sometimes indulge in crimes like theft/burglary and get caught by police and then get deported. Sikh community gets a bad name in this situation. Recently USA has deported illegal people in batches even though they entered USA after

paying hefty sums to fraudulent agents. In view of these circumstances, the students were stressed upon to work hard and get higher education especially Skill development to get good jobs in India itself. If at all they want to go abroad, they should go after Graduation to get white collar /respectable jobs there so that they earn suitable respect in society and also don't get threat of deportation.

On 26<sup>th</sup> February, Major General Mohan Singh Ji visited ISC HQ and evinced keen interest in opening a few HWTCs in Chunni Kalan (Sirhind). He agreed to finance these centers also. ISC needs to survey the area and start the centers if feasible.

From 28<sup>th</sup> Feb to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2025, ISC was instrumental to financially help Manipur Students Association for their Sports Meet.

On 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2025 ISC held its Executive Committee meeting in which 23 members participated. Col. Multani highlighted the work of education being done by ISC. Mrs. Sarabjit kaur informed about the working of various HWTCs including 6 newly opened centers. General Secy. S. Sher Jagjit Singh read out the minutes of last year meeting and got the same confirmed. S. GS Jaura anchored the program and S. Sukhinder Singh proposed vote of thanks.

## SIKHS' POGROM RECORDED AS STATE- ORGANIZED CARNAGE

A REVIEW BY JASPAL SINGH SIDHU\*

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**About the author:** Along with her husband, the late Supreme Court advocate Hardev Singh, Manjit H. Singh has over the four decades, documented and untiringly pursued the cases of victims and survivors of the 1984 anti-Sikh pogrom.

The author is passionate about reading and social work. Her library holds over 6000 books including rare titles. For over 20 years, she worked to support marginal farmers in Punjab adversely impacted by Green Revolution. She continues to support the widows of the 1984 carnage who live in abject poverty and neglect in the 'Widows' Ghetto', Tilak Vihar, Delhi.

### REVIEW

The book, "*Documenting A Pogrom—The Anti-Sikh Violence of 1984*", hit the book stalls only towards the end of 2024. It is a collection of reliable/ authenticated documents telling a pithy tale of the first ever state-sponsored pogrom of a minuscule religious minority on an India basis in the first week of November 1984.

Of its 27 chapters, 22 go to searching and analyzing victims'/

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survivors' stories and events, covering all parts of Delhi and its surroundings. The remaining 5 chapters give details of attacks on the Sikhs in Bihar's Bokaro Steel City, jotting down the main features of the killings in Kanpur and in other Uttar Pradesh cities. Occurrences of tragic happenings in Haryana, Patna, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Orissa, and West Bengal have also been noted down and documented.

### **DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE SIKHS' CARNAGE:**

The book underlines that the killings and destruction of the Sikhs, their houses, and establishments were well-planned and executed with precision and ease.

1. There was clear state complicity of the highest authorities in planning and execution right from the forenoon of 31 October 1984 itself.
2. Police-politicians-local lumpen nexus played havoc and executed the massacre.
3. Even fewer knew that the pogrom and later the 'Operation Cover-up' was successfully enforced to mask the face of the kingpin of the pogrom and the hidden collaborators.
4. Much propagated myth of "spontaneous violence" exploded soon after it was planted.
5. Slumlords of the "secular" Congress and the stormtroopers of the Hindu Right (RSS) had worked in unison in many trapped colonies.
6. Selectively enforced curfew and media kept away for three days but the lone state-owned media- television and radio played soothing dirge to the slain leader, Indira Gandhi.
7. Over 10,000 to 15,000 adult male Sikhs were burnt alive in bloody ambushes by Congress and RSS cadres all over the country.
8. Large-scale killings took place in Congress-ruled states and particularly in Delhi, the seat of the central government.
9. Only killings occurred in those trains that passed through areas, dominated by the Hindu Right (RSS-Hindutva forces)
10. Attacks all over India were sudden, swift, and sickeningly similar and lasted for three days.
11. Top RSS leader Nanaji Deshmukh in a document titled

'Moments of Soul Searching' circulated on 8 November 1984 (just three days after the massacre) JUSTIFIED the genocide. That article was published by the Hindu weekly, 'Pratipaksh' on 25 November 1984, titled 'Indira Congress-RSS Collusion'.

12. Indira Gandhi's Congress adopted the Hindutva ideology in early 1980 as Arya Samaj and a host of Sangh Privar-RSS organizations were working hand in glove with Indira Gandhi to polarize Hindus and Sikhs and prepare the people for the inevitability of an attack on the Golden Temple. That is why, Nanaji Deshmukh also justified the army attack on the Golden Temple in June 1984.
13. In 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave Nanaji Deshmukh the highest civil award 'Bharat Ratna' and described him as the 'nation's true jewel'.
14. Majority communalism (indoctrination of Hindutva ideology and communalism) was yet in its infancy in the 1980s. So was neo-colonialism. British colonialism was gradually replaced by neo-colonialism of the ruling Brahmanical Indian elite beginning in the early 1980s and assumed gargantuan proportions in the next two to three decades. It established a frightening collusion of Economic Right (pro-corporate) and Religious (Hindutva) Right. Economic Right always encourages the corporate, promotes crony capitalism, and supports a few blue-eyed corporate owners.

The book says the origin of the massacre was in Calcutta. Rajiv Gandhi had gone to West Bengal to address a public meeting. The Sikhs were attacked first on 31 October at 11 AM there. Congress workers and volunteers ran amuck in different parts of now Kolkata. But Jyoti Basu, the chief minister called in the army and the violence was contained.

Sikh President of India, Giani Zail Singh went straight to AIIMS hospital on his arrival to Delhi from abroad. On 31 October evening, his cavalcade came under attack and his bodyguards sustained injuries. '*Giani Murdabad*', '*Sardar gaddar hai*', and '*khoon ka badla khoon*' slogans ranted the air as a small crowd began brick-batting on the President's

cavalcade. Later, the violence built up and spread all over Delhi and adjoining areas.

**The Book raises salient points:** How did the state in independent India, on its route to economic development, create rural distress that, over time, millions would be pushed to suicide? And how did the state make such vast armies of urban unemployed lumpen that each successive regime would find it expedient to use them as its crime arms? Yesterday, Delhi's lumpen from the slum dwellers were for Congress; today, they are the lumpen as the Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) and work for the BJP. She leaves these queries unanswered and open for the Indian thinkers to analyze.

Similarly, the author also quotes carnage victims/ survivors in Delhi's refugee camps who are seeking answers to the queries they made :

Why did this happen to us (Sikhs)? Why is an entire community (Sikhs) supposed to be taught a lesson for the acts of two? And why does the lesson have to be tattooed on their bodies so the living may die many times after the death of their loved ones?

Did dispensing 'collective retribution' for a supposedly 'collective sin' succeed in teaching a lesson to the community?

These are the pertinent questions that made the author pour strenuous efforts over a long period of four decades. She collected the legal papers, and scanned reports of Ranga Nath Mishra and Nanavati commissions and of other that of several committees constituted purportedly to probe the killings of innocent Sikhs. She also studied bundles of victims' affidavits and scrutinized various reports of citizen committees, civil and human rights organizations, and individual observations.

**The author concludes that all official probing into the massacre of the Sikhs was designed to hush up the mayhem and prolong the façade of the legal process and investigations to inflict forgetfulness among the people.**

Of course, the Sikhs will not forget the massacre, which they had already equated with the earlier two genocides in terms of

‘ghallughara’ (ruthless massacre of the unarmed, non-combatant, and innocents by ruthless attackers). But the unduly prolonged process of law sustained the Sikhs’ search for justice, which they would never get from the Indian state, as the massacre itself was planned and organized by the authorities for political motives. **The prolonged legal exercise was/is aimed at projecting/ presenting the Indian state as ‘democratic and law-abiding’.**

Of course, the Hindutva politics flowed from the Sikh carnage gave quickly rich political dividends to Congress as Rajiv Gandhi won a thumping majority (404 Lok Sabha seats) in the Parliament polls that followed soon in December (1984) – a few weeks after the November massacre. Election results affirmed the ascendancy of Hindutva politics and put a ‘stamp of justification’ on the genocide of the Sikhs. The ‘Ghost of Hindutva’, thus unleashed, has been prowling around in public since then, targeting minorities and their religious places.

In her search for ‘why genocide took place’, the author analyzes 19th-century history to present the British as the earlier culprits who divided Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs along religious lines as their policy of ‘divide and rule’. And, she notes down that the Arya Samaj was inimical to the Sikhs from the beginning of the last half of the 19th century. Since then, Vedic forces have campaigned to smear/dismantle the Sikh identity, their religious ethos, and principles.

However, the author’s arguments do not fully explain why, during pre-independence days, the Sikh leaders went whole hog with the Hindu-dominated Congress and why they actively participated in the violence along with Hindus during Partition days in 1947. And why did the Sikh leadership choose to join India and spurn the overtures of the Muslim league? Why did Congress ignore the Sikh identity and separateness just after the independence and attempt to pamper Punjabi Hindus to polarize Punjab on communal lines and ignore/segregate/target the Sikhs instead of accommodating the minority community politically?

Actually, during the last phase of the freedom struggle, top Congress leadership had developed a clear understanding that on



achieving independence, they would build an Indian state on the pattern of European type of 'nation-state' governance with a strong New Delhi center. The outgoing British had already laid down a framework of parliamentary set-up for the united India. **Just before independence in 1947, Congress leaders had (thoughtfully) accepted the "Partition Plan" to raise a stronger power center at Delhi and to do away with the Muslim majority (by the creation of Pakistan) which they perceived as a big hurdle for creating a strong Center (New Delhi).** Thus Congress went for 'Divided India' instead of 'Federal India and sowed the seeds of majoritarian rule (call it Hindutva political ascendancy) Here lies the catch which even Left intellectuals tend to ignore. Since India of the sub-continent expanse was/is having a lot of regional/ ethnic/ religious diversity and pluralism, the projection of "secularism" during the Nehru regime came in handy for keeping India united during the early 1950s. The same façade of 'secularism' became Indian rulers' successful conspiracy against the minorities.

After the genocide, the Sikhs lost their earlier political clout, not to be gained again shortly in the country. The Sikhs, thus, virtually got disenfranchised and the larger Muslim minority has, too, been pushed out of the Indian power structure and also facing disenfranchise.

**THE TRAGEDY OF KOMAGATA MARU**  
**(THE SIKH CHALLENGE TO CANADIAN IMMIGRATION**  
**POLITICS (1897-1920))**

**A REVIEW BY DR. DEVINDER PAL SINGH\***

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*Book Title :The Tragedy of Komagata Maru*

*(The Sikh Challenge to Canadian Immigration Politics (1897-1920))*

*Author : Dr. Puran Singh, Vancouver, B. C. Canada*

*Published by : Canadian Sikh Study & Teaching Society, Vancouver, B. C. Canada*

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Dr. Puran Singh, the author of *The Tragedy of Komagata Maru*, is a distinguished writer and journalist based in Vancouver, B.C., since 1976. Dr. Puran Singh's expertise is exceptionally well-suited to the topic of *The Tragedy of Komagata Maru* due to his extensive academic background, professional experience, and personal involvement in the Sikh community. His dual master's degrees in history and political science, along with his Ph.D., provide him with a deep understanding of historical events and political dynamics, both of which are crucial for analyzing the Komagata Maru incident and its implications. His professional experience as a Lecturer in Political Science has equipped him with the skills to critically evaluate and explain complex socio-political issues. Furthermore, his long tenure as a Library Assistant at the Asian Library and Library Processing Center at the University of British Columbia demonstrates his proficiency in research and access to a wealth of academic resources, which is essential for conducting thorough historical research.

Dr. Singh's journalistic roles, including his editorship of *The Western Sikh Samachar* and *The Canadian Punjab Times*, highlight his ability to

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communicate effectively with the public and his deep connection to the Sikh community. This involvement ensures that he brings a well-rounded perspective to the book, combining scholarly rigour with a profound understanding of the community's experiences and sentiments. Currently editing *Sikh Marg*, a quarterly magazine, further emphasizes his ongoing engagement with issues pertinent to Sikhs, ensuring that his work remains relevant and informed by current discourses within the community. All these aspects of Dr. Singh's background make him uniquely qualified to write a comprehensive and insightful account of the Komagata Maru tragedy.

*The Tragedy of Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canadian Immigration Politics (1897-1920)* by Dr. Puran Singh is a meticulously researched and thought-provoking exploration of a pivotal moment in Canadian and Sikh history. Published by the Canadian Sikh Study and Teaching Society in Vancouver, B.C., the book delves into the complex interplay of immigration, politics, and racial dynamics that culminated in the infamous Komagata Maru incident of 1914.

Dr. Singh's introduction sets a comprehensive foundation, articulating the book's purpose to illuminate the historical and socio-political context of Sikh immigration to Canada from 1897 to 1920. The scope of the book is clearly defined, promising an in-depth analysis of not only the Komagata Maru tragedy but also the broader implications and aftermath of this event on Canadian immigration policies and Sikh communities.

The first Chapter, "History of Indian Immigration (1897-1920)," provides a historical overview of Indian immigration to Canada, focusing on the Sikh community. Dr. Singh traces the early waves of immigration, highlighting the economic contributions of Indian immigrants and the burgeoning racial tensions that they faced. This chapter serves as a critical backdrop, helping readers understand the precursors to the Komagata Maru incident.

Chapter 2, "Komagata Maru Tragedy (1914)" is the pivotal part of the book, offering a detailed narrative of the Komagata Maru incident. Dr. Singh vividly recounts the ship's journey and its passengers, the political maneuverings, and the hostile reception they received upon arrival in Vancouver. The author's use of primary sources, including government documents and personal testimonies, brings a

poignant immediacy to the tragic events.

The third Chapter, “Legal Battles,” delves into the legal battles that ensued following the Komagata Maru’s arrival. Dr. Singh examines the court cases, legal arguments, and the broader implications of these battles on immigration law. This section is particularly insightful in illustrating the discriminatory legal framework that was used to justify exclusionary policies against Asian immigrants.

In the fourth Chapter, “Aftermath of the Tragedy” Dr. Singh explores the aftermath of the Komagata Maru incident. He discusses the long-term impact on the Sikh community in Canada, the shifting immigration policies, and the political awakening and activism that the tragedy spurred. This chapter underscores the resilience and determination of the Sikh community in the face of systemic injustice.

The “Conclusion” ties together the themes and insights from the previous chapters, reflecting on the legacy of the Komagata Maru incident. Dr. Singh emphasizes the importance of remembering and learning from this historical episode to foster a more inclusive and equitable society. The book is well-supported by extensive appendices, a comprehensive bibliography, and a detailed index, which enhance its utility as a scholarly resource. These sections provide readers and researchers with additional context, source material, and easy navigation.

Dr. Puran Singh’s work is commendable for its thorough research and balanced analysis. However, the book could benefit from more personal stories and interviews with descendants of the Komagata Maru passengers to add a more intimate dimension to the historical narrative. Additionally, while the legal analysis is robust, it might be challenging for readers without a legal background to fully grasp the intricacies of the court proceedings.

*The Tragedy of Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canadian Immigration Politics (1897-1920)* is an essential read for anyone interested in Canadian history, immigration policy, and the experiences of the Sikh diaspora. Dr. Puran Singh provides a comprehensive and engaging account of a dark chapter in Canadian history, highlighting the enduring struggle for justice and equality. This book significantly contributes to the discourse on immigration and multiculturalism in Canada.

## NEWS & VIEWS

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### LECTURE ON THE RECOVERY OF THE ORIGINAL TEXT OF GURU GOBIND SINGH JI'S ZAFARNAMA

Chandigarh, March 23, 2025 - Today, under the ongoing lecture series at the Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, a lecture dedicated to the memory of the late Dr. Gurbhagwant Singh Kahlon (former Milk Commissioner, Punjab) was organized. The topic of today's lecture was "Confrontation with the Empire: Recovery of the Original Text of Guru Gobind Singh Ji's Zafarnama." The lecture was delivered by Dr. Harpreet Singh, a Sikh scholar from Harvard University, and presided over by Dr. Kuldeep Singh, a Sikh scholar from Khalsa College, Amritsar.

Dr. Harpreet Singh presented various manuscripts of the Zafarnama to the audience, highlighting their significance in understanding the text. He used his profound knowledge of the Persian language to demonstrate how a comparative study of all the manuscripts reveals the true intention behind its composition. Dr. Harpreet Singh explained the Zafarnama in a comprehensive and easily understandable manner, emphasizing how Guru Sahib penned it in a way that shook the very soul of Aurangzeb.

In his presidential address, Dr. Kuldeep Singh further elaborated on Harpreet Singh's interpretation within the context of Islamic theology and the Quran. He drew a parallel between the Islamic belief of reckoning one's deeds before Allah on the Day of Judgment (Roze Hashar) and Guru Sahib's presentation of Aurangzeb's actions in light

of the Quran. He highlighted Guru Sahib's effective use of the literary ideology found in the works of classical Persian scholars within the Zafarnama.

Both lectures were highly appreciated by the audience as they significantly contributed to the understanding of Sikh philosophy. There was also a call for making the essence of the Zafarnama accessible to children in a simplified form.

S. Gurbir Singh Machaki adeptly performed the role of stage secretary. He shed light on the Institute's ongoing seminars and articulated the organization's core objectives to the audience. Lieutenant General R.S. Sujana, President of the Institute, welcomed the scholars and attendees. He emphasized the Institute of Sikh Studies' commitment to fostering serious academic discussions on Sikhism. Professor Harpal Singh and Dr. Paramjit Singh, Secretary of the Institute, also addressed the audience. A vote of thanks was delivered by S. Baljit Singh.

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SGPC SEEKS INPUTS FROM SIKH GROUPS ACROSS THE WORLD ON FRAMING RULES FOR JATHEDAR APPOINTMENT, SERVICE

Amritsar: In the wake of the growing demand for clear and standardised rules regarding the appointment and removal of Jathedars, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) has issued a call to all Sikh organizations to submit their suggestions on the qualifications, appointment process, jurisdiction, responsibilities, and retirement rules of the Jathedar of Akal Takht by April 20.

The call has been issued to Damdami Taksal, Nihang Singh Jathebandis, global Sikh Institutions, Singh Sabhas, Diwans, Societies, Scholars and intellectuals, both in India and abroad, and more.

SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhami said on Saturday that given the respect and significance associated with the status of Jathedars, the Sikh community has long been demanding the establishment of service rules for the position. In response to this

demand, a resolution to approve the service rules in principle was passed during the SGPC's General House meeting held on Friday, he said.

According to the resolution, he said, inputs from all Sikh organizations, institutions and intellectuals were essential in shaping the service rules for the Jathedar, particularly regarding their appointment, tenure, and retirement. To facilitate this process, he said SGPC has called for suggestions by April 20 to ensure the formulation of these rules reflected a collective consensus from the Sikh community.

Dhami clarified that suggestions can be submitted to the SGPC either in person, via the official email at info@sgpc.net, or through the WhatsApp number 7710136200. (*Courtesy: Times of India, March 30, 2025*)

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### **IN MAHARASHTRA, A GRAM SABHA HAS ILLEGALLY PASSED A RESOLUTION TO BOYCOTT MUSLIM TRADERS**

The Madhi village, known for a 700-year-old shrine held sacred by nomadic communities of many religions, is now home to unrest over a blatantly unconstitutional move.

Mumbai: On February 22, a special Gram Sabha meeting was called at Madhi village in Ahilyanagar's Pathardi taluka. Its agenda was clear – to discuss the newly-released list of those eligible for housing under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana in the village.

The meeting was held on a Saturday, an unusual choice because most villagers and even Gram Sabha members would be away at work. The meeting concluded, and a few attendees who could be present signed the day's agenda.

These signatures were later allegedly misused for another resolution – this one, to “boycott” Muslim traders who would soon be gathering in the village for the grand annual Madhi fair at the ancient Kanifnath shrine. The shrine, located 50 kilometres from Ahilyanagar

(what was earlier called Ahmednagar), is an important place of worship for several nomadic communities. Over the past several decades, with the growing influence of radical Hindutva outfits, it has acquired visual markers that help with the claim that it is a “Hindu” shrine.

The 700-year-old Kanifnath festival at Madhi sees substantial footfall, especially from the nomadic communities, from across the country.

This move, initiated by the village sarpanch Sanjay Markad, has led to unrest in the village. It is illegal and unconstitutional for a Gram Sabha to adopt such a resolution in India. Many individuals whose signatures appeared on the resolution have now accused Markad of using their signatures without their knowledge. But a few claim that they were aware of the move and support the resolution.

As the controversy erupted, the district administration directed Shivaji Kamble, the block development officer (BDO) of the village panchayat, to look into the matter. Kamble confirmed to *The Wire* that the meeting was indeed called to discuss the housing scheme and that the boycott of a community was never on the agenda. “Before such meetings, the agenda is explicitly set and notified to the members and villagers. But that didn’t happen in this case,” Kamble said, adding that these were his preliminary findings.

Article 243 (b) of the Indian constitution gives Gram Sabhas significant power to both govern and run the day-to-day administrative work of the village. The resolution adopted at Madhi is thus unconstitutional and is liable to be a criminal case. So far, however, no legal action has been initiated against sarpanch Markad or anyone else involved in passing the resolution. *The Wire* contacted district collector Siddharam Salimath to inquire about the action initiated against the villagers but didn’t get any response. This report will be updated as and when Salimath responds.