

**FACTIONALISM IN THE INDIAN NATIONAL
CONGRESS AND THE SHIROMANI AKALI DAL
IN PUNJAB (POST 1966):
A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

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Chapter-1

INTRODUCTION

Political parties besides acting as an indispensable link between the people and the government also act as instruments of articulation and synthesis of various demands of multiple, competing social groups. It is the political parties that help in raising the political consciousness of the people in traditional societies as also in the formation of government particularly in the parliamentary systems. Thus, political parties while trying to provide a stable government have also to induct new groups into the political arena. At the same time they don't have to lose sight of the political and economic goals of the nation. A political party can be said to act as an organised group that seeks to capture power and control the government. Besides playing a crucial role as instrument of politicisation of the masses and agents of social change they also mobilise and compete for popular support. Most of the political parties have definite ideological orientations, which shape their articulation of social and economic goals and programmes. They also derive support from different segments of the society.

In the adaptation of modern institutions of representative government to traditional societies, political parties play a decisive role. In every modern polity, and in every polity which aspires to modernity, political parties are an indispensable link between the society and the institutions of government. In traditional societies undergoing modernisation and political development political parties have the double task of providing stable government and of bringing new groups of people into the political process while orienting them towards the political and economic goals of the modern state. The ability of former colonial countries to make a successful transition from foreign bureaucratic rule to democratic self-government depends very much upon the capacity of the political parties to perform these tasks. The capacity of the ruling

party in a new state to perform these tasks, in turn, depends upon how successful it is in the years after independence.¹

Burke expounded party more eloquently than any other statesman, defining party as “a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest, upon some particular principle on which they all are agreed”.²

In a democracy, elections provide the basis of people’s choice and representation. Elections help people to crystallize their interests and to give expression to them. In the elections it is decided who shall govern and who shall have the control over government.³ It is through these processes that peripheral groups transcend their regional and caste identities, and acquire, over time, a certain communality of economic interests and political identifications which help establish a political framework of conflict and negotiation among divergent interests within the society.⁴

Laski has viewed party as an organisation, which seeks to determine the economic constitution of the state.⁵ The role of a party often changes as the conditions in a country change. If in the West, political parties are a means of seeing that there is peaceful and regular change of government in the developing countries, they act in such a way that power is generated, mobilized and directed.⁶ Every political party is a coalition of political groups of people with differing shades on economic and development issues. A party is a loose confederation of ‘sub-parties’. Thus, a party can be called a system

¹ Paul R. Brass, *Factional Politics in an Indian State: The Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1965, p. 1

² Quoted in M. Chalapathi Rau, *Indian Drama, Traditional Societies in Transition*, Delhi, Allied, 1982, p. 88.

³ Horst Hartman, *Political Parties in India*, Meerut, Meenakshi, 1977, p. 145.

⁴ D. L. Senth, (ed.), *Citizens and Parties*, Delhi Allied, 1975, p. v.

⁵ B. B. Misra, *Political Parties in India*, Delhi, Oxford, University Press, 1975, p. 1.

⁶ A.S. Narang, *Indian Government and Politics*, Delhi, Gitanjali, 1992-93, p.351.

consisting of parts. The contemporary theory tends also to see political parties as reflections of social cleavages.⁷

As stated above, every political party is a coalition of political groups of people with differing shades on economic and political issues. At times there are differences within a party as to the pace at which the change is to be brought about or the methods by which its policies and programmes are to be carried out. Thus, there is prioritisation of tasks to be implemented and methods or means to be used for this purpose. This gives rise to factions in all the political parties.

A faction is defined as, 'a group of persons forming a cohesive, usually contentious minority within a larger group'.⁸ A political party is a group of people who more or less subscribe to an ideology but there can be a variation in adhering to that ideology. These differences, sometimes, are so sharp that they can lead to a crisis within a party. Thus, faction can be termed as a group which functions within the folds of a political party and wants to control the organisation ultimately so that it can capture the seat of power in the state. Hence, they remain in a state of flux because of constant change in combinations. This leads to, at times, playing havoc with the government programmes, rendering the various laws obsolete and encouraging animosities among the people of the same party.

Besides ideology, there is also struggle for power because of varied experience with the political system and within the party. In this process, the leaders try to out-do each other by mobilising the party cadres in their support. This leads to the alignment of party-workers towards different leaders and thus a faction is born. At times, factions act as intermediaries and can be termed as informal structures and links which act as a chain between the formal institutions of the political system and the bureaucratic agencies and the social institutions of society like caste, family, religion or region.

⁷ Paul R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, Delhi, Vikas, 1975 p. 39.

⁸ *Universal Dictionary*, Reader's Digest Association Ltd., Massachusetts, Houghton Mifflin Company of Boston, 1986.

It is usually believed that factions 'are founded only on the arithmetic of politics with the sole aim of capturing power within a party'⁹. Sometimes government policies provoke factionalism. The decisions made by the government are sometimes purposely made to serve a particular religious, linguistic or regional group or sometimes made for the sake of administrative convenience. In India, the political parties have 'dominant' aspects but 'dissidence' is also prevalent. Factions can be directed towards an individual, it may be the party leader or towards group interests. Edmund Burke who was elected member of Parliament from Bristol in 1774, in his famous address (November 3, 1774) enunciated the doctrine that a Member of Parliament is a representative of the people and not a delegate or ambassador of the constituency which elects him and that, in his actions, he must be guided, above all, by his own judgement and conscience rather than pressure of the people who elected him.¹⁰

Thus, a faction may be a warning to the establishment of the party, it may be against bossism in the party or it may be against those who do not believe in change. However, both the sides are to be blamed, for if one faction is clinging to power because of its interest in maintaining the status quo, the other faction may be demanding power because they believe in change and progress. If one wants to maintain the existing power structure the other may want to build another one that is better for it as well as for the party and the people of the country.

At times, the factions are often a result of temptation or deprivation of power, self, and status. In a country like India, which is a young nation, it is all the more attractive for people to aspire for higher and higher office. For a legislator the office of a minister holds attraction and he wants to be re-elected. Thus, faction arises. The study of factions, therefore, has become so central today that one cannot understand the working

⁹ Parmod Kumar et al., *Punjab Crisis, Content and Trends*, Chandigarh, CRRID, 1984, p. 69.

¹⁰ Quoted in Subhash C. Kashyap, *The Politics of Power: Defection and State Politics in India*, Delhi, National, 1974, Second edn., p. 48.

of a political system unless one understands the nature and character of factionalism prevailing in various political parties.

Factionalism, its rise and its effects have been the focus of attention of eminent authors. Factions as a phenomenon have an important and interesting dimension because different factions are waiting in line to be pushed into new alignments. In the political parties, factions arise either because of personal enmity or temperamental differences or loyalty or sometimes because of distribution of favours and rewards by several scholars. Different studies on factionalism and its dynamic character irrespective of the party have been the focus of study. A review of some of these works is necessary to understand the issues involved in factionalism. Through this study an effort is being made to see whether factionalism grows when there is absence of external threat or when there is absence of authoritative leadership? An attempt is also being made to ascertain the factional character of Indian National Congress (hereafter INC) and the Shiromani Akali Dal (hereafter SAD).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Some of the above stated questions regarding factionalism have already been studied by various Indian and foreign scholars. Subhash C. Kashyap has in his seminal work¹¹ dealt with factionalism in both the INC and the Akali Dal with a deft hand. After tracing the causes of factionalism he concludes that 'there were no principles, no policies involved, all was fair in politics of survival, no force was too high, no humiliation too low, (Kashyap, 1974)¹² to stay in power. He further says that the continuous dissensions and splits in the Akali Dal necessitated a joint Hindu-Sikh government because of the mixed composition of the Punjab population. Referring to the 1960's he painted a dismal

¹¹ Subhash C. Kashyap, *Presence of Regionalism, The Case of Punjab in the Politics of Power, Defection and State Politics in India*, Delhi, National, 1974, p. 48.

¹² Kashyap, p. 443.

picture of factionalism and argues that even the Congress (R) was forced to remain neutral in the show of strength between Badal and Gurnam Singh.

Robin Jeffrey¹³ brings forth the ‘untrammelled factionalism’ in both the INC and the Akali Dal. He describes factions as an essential element of Punjab politics. So crucial is faction that party label and loyalties take second place in them. He asserts that many a times the success of parties is often dependent on the number of factions that temporarily line up within and against the party. He says, ‘Political alliances are fluid, factions join and divide for advantage and the labels of Akali Dal and Congress are often matters of convenience’.¹⁴ In the chapter on ‘factions’ Jeffrey talks about factions in every village. He argues that they are based on personal affections and hatreds and on distribution of favours and rewards. He talks of the advent of electoral legislative politics and the increasing importance of numbers. ‘Legislatures created governments and governments dispensed patronage. To control the government was to tap a great reservoir from which a man could irrigate his followers. The politics of legislatures thus blended well with the long-standing factions of village. Indeed, legislative politics and the expansion of government activity reinforced such factions’.¹⁵ He talks of Chief Ministers – Pratap Singh Kairon, Gian S. Rarewala and Prakash S. Badal for each of whom party ideology was far less significant than power and honour and who came up through this system.

J. C. Anand stresses on Akali Dal’s dependence on charismatic leadership and its neglect towards the more important task of institutionalizing the internal functioning of the party machine.¹⁶ The defiance of the authority of the leader by senior Akali Dal politicians has led to the inability of establishing a viable structure of institutionalized procedures for working the party machine. According to him, the INC too has remained

¹³ Robin Jeffrey, *What’s happening to India? Punjab, Ethnic Conflict and the Test for Federalism*, Hongkong, Macmillan, Second edition, 1994.

¹⁴ Jeffrey, p. 115.

¹⁵ Jeffrey, p. 121.

¹⁶ J. C. Anand, “Punjab: Politics of Retreating Communalism”, in Iqbal Narain (ed.), *State Politics in India*, Meerut, Meenakshi Mudranalaya, 1976.

as faction-ridden in years of its temporary decline as it was in the years of its dominance in the early 1950's and early 1960's. He further states that though factionalism checks authoritarianism inside the party and assists in broadening the area of recruitment of membership, it has grown to a point tending to frustrate national reconstruction.¹⁷

Sushil Kumar talks of Akali Dal members not being a united lot. At the same time he calls the 'INC – A Divided House'.¹⁸ He says that the Congress Party has always been divided between a group in power and a group out of power. Such intra-party dissension has often made the running of the government impossible.

Baldev Raj Nayar projects the INC as a secular, broad-based party that has vast resources at its disposal and is dedicated to economic development and planning.¹⁹ With vast resources, political concessions and patronage at its disposal the INC mobilizes support by the strategy of building coalition by various social groups. He further talks of sub-regional groups divided among them and thus strengthening the hands of the Centre because the latter has always stood above intra-regional conflicts. Though the Shiromani Akali Dal has a strong political appeal it will remain a permanent political minority. He argues that the nationalist leadership of the country wants to disseminate the 'values of political democracy, protection of minorities, safeguarding of liberties, egalitarianism and social change' throughout the entire social and political order.²⁰ (Nayar – 1966) He believes that factionalism, though functional in some respects for the political system, can also lead to contempt for the political system and politics itself.²¹ (Nayar – 1966)

¹⁷ J. C. Anand, "Punjab Politics – A Survey", in Iqbal Narain (ed.), 1967.

¹⁸ Sushil Kumar, "Panorama of State Politics", in Iqbal Narain (ed) *State Politics in India*, Meerut, Meenakshi Mudranalaya, 1976.

¹⁹ Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority Politics in the Punjab*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1966.

²⁰ Nayar, p. 339.

²¹ Nayar, p. 344.

Mohinder Singh underlines factions in 'the traditional friendship' between the INC and the SAD.²² He cites the case of the Akali Dal leadership's ambition to capture power at the provincial level and the INC's inability to come to terms with the Akali Dal's claim for ruling the crucial border state. He compares the SAD party leaders in the past and present and gives credit to the past leadership for rising above petty animosities and working for the community.

Another study which touches on the issue of factionalism is by Anup Chand Kapur. He asserts that factionalism has existed within the Shiromani Akali Dal from its very inception and 'the splintering of the party has been the pattern since 1961'.²³ He further argues that whenever an Akali leader senses his followers dwindling he raises propaganda and that is usually the talk of Panth in danger. He emphasises that all the Sikhs are not Akalis (Kapur – 1985).²⁴ He argues that clash between the ministerial and the organizational wing is not only in the Akali Dal but also in all political parties in India.

Pavate compares the situation in Punjab at the time of Gill Ministry in 1969 with that of the Stuarts in England.²⁵ He says that nobody seems to learn from past history and the new ministry of Sardar Gurnam Singh settled down to work in a spirit of not to 'forget and forgive past happening' (Pavate – 1974).²⁶ He talks of the Akali Dal led by Gurnam Singh trying to have close relations with Dravid Munnetra Kazagham (hereafter DMK) as both were emerging as strong independent parties having nothing to do with the INC ruling at the Centre. He talks of a tendency among Indian politicians to change loyalties very quickly. He says this is a curse for the ruling party because the detractors

²² Mohinder Singh, "Akali agitation over the 'Keys affair': An early victory of Non-cooperation", *Punjab Journal of Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1977), Amritsar, Guru Nanak Dev University.

²³ Anup Chand Kapur, *The Punjab Crisis (An Analytical Study)*, New Delhi, S. Chand and Company Ltd., 1985, p. 188.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ D. C. Pavate, *My Days as Governor*, Delhi, Vikas, 1974.

²⁶ Pavate, p. 98

or adventurers are in quest of money and power. If some of them are accommodated by the ruling party and appointed ministers, discontent spreads among others which has a direct impact on the stability of a government (Pavate – 1974).²⁷

Shanti Swarup in his study of Punjab argues that ‘every society or group has a multiplicity of values and political culture traits. Its seeks to achieve all but it may not be able to do so. It, therefore, arranges its goals or traits, perhaps in its sub-conscious or psyche in some kind of a hierarchical order. (Swarup – 1986)²⁸ He also puts forward the argument that politicians are able to use the caste element more than religious one.

Harish K. Puri emphasises that accommodation and compromise have been the trademark of Punjab politics since Independence. (Puri – 1986)²⁹ He talks of two periods – one in 1948-56 when the Akalis tried to merge with the Congress Party and the inner-factionalism that was always prevalent in the INC always added to factionalism in the Akali Dal. Thus, he says that whenever a crisis emerged in the Akali Party between the so-called extremist group and the so-called legislative group, it is the INC that had some direct or indirect role in this factionalism.

Gobinder Singh’s argument is that though the ruling class has not allowed the extremist element to grow beyond a point, yet it has used it for political gains. He gives the example of Shiromani Akali Dal with its distinct factions of ‘hawks’, ‘moderates’ and ‘doves’ (Gobinder – 1986).³⁰ He also highlights the Akali Dal’s use of the spiritual and material resources of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee (hereafter SGPC) in its favour. The Akali Dal attains the Sikh population’s emotional involvement there.

Gurharpal Singh also highlights the intense factionalism witnessed in the two parties in Punjab. In his view the ‘Non-Sikh specialists are regularly bewildered by the

²⁷ Pavate, pp. 105-106.

²⁸ Shanti Swarup, “Some Reflections on Punjab Politics” in T. R. Sharma (ed.), *New Challenges of Politics in Indian States*, New Delhi, Uppal Publishing House, 1986, p. 82.

²⁹ Harish K. Puri, “The Genesis of Hindu-Sikh Reserve”, in T.R. Sharma (ed.), *Ibid.*, p. 116.

³⁰ Gobinder Sigh, “Classes, Class-Struggle and Politics in Punjab” in T. R. Sharma (ed.), *Ibid.*, p. 130.

extreme factional complexity of Sikh politics' (Gurharpal Singh – 1992)³¹ The leaders all vary in their tactics and strategy towards the pursuit of Sikh demands ranging from regional autonomy within the Indian Union to a separate Sikh state.

Dalip Singh gives a vivid picture of factions, their origin & their role in Punjab politics (1981).³² Factions, according to him, rise within a party, at times, because despite a common vision of the party there are minor differences over issues among the members. Besides this; religion, caste, language or group loyalties of leaders can be a bone of contention. The last can be an important reason for the gain of material benefits. He talks of multi factionalism in the Congress Party.³³ He says that the INC allowed members of various parties to become its members. The latter had joined INC only to fulfill their own interests. This has been the chief cause of factionalism in Punjab. He described the Akali Dal as a 'faction – ridden party'. He traces the rise of factions from the time of liberation of Gurudwaras. He blames the drive for power as the main reason for the rise of factions. He also agrees with the argument that whosoever happens to control the S.G.P.C. has an upper hand in the SAD.

S. Bhatnagar and P.S. Verma³⁴ underline the tussle between a political party when in power and when out of power. When the party is out of power all the discussions are taken by the high command. But once the party is in power the governmental wing resents when the high command wants to assert its supremacy. The latter does not want to play a secondary role and wants to take vital decisions. This leads to in-party fighting and subsequently fall of governments.

³¹ Gurharpal Singh, "Ethnic Conflict Management in India, The Case of Punjab", *Punjab Journal of Politics*, Vol. XVI, Nos. 1-2, 1992, p. 39.

³² Dalip Singh, '*Factional Politics*' in *Dynamics of Punjab Politics*, New Delhi, Macmillan, 1981.

³³ Baldev Raj Nayar in Myron Weiner (ed.), *State Politics in India*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 461.

³⁴ S. Bhatnagar and P.S. Verma, "Coalition Governments (1967-80)" in Paul Wallace & Surindra Chopra (eds.), *Political Dynamics of Punjab*, Amritsar, G.N.D.U., 1981.

Satya M. Rai laments that the Akali Dal today is just a shadow of itself (1981).³⁵ The factions have taken their toll on the party. The author's argument is that the ruling classes will continue to make use of the differences among people whenever it suits them.

M. S. Dhami takes up the role of factions at the village level in two areas – 'the arena of village politics and the arena of state and national politics'.³⁶ He contends that the Jat peasantry is the prominent participant in the village factional structure.

Jaspal Singh differentiates factions from Associations and Organisations.³⁷ While he calls factions as 'machines for grabbing resources in an unorganized society',³⁸ he quotes togetherness as a feature of associations and class organizations as regulated and coordinated structures for goal achievements.³⁹ He asserts that the main function of faction is irrational struggle for power. The faction leaders, he says, run after pragmatic gains.

Joyce Pettigrew argues that factions are based on the mutual protection of each other's area of influence and not just an ideological commitment. She traces the roots of factionalism to the medieval history of Punjab.⁴⁰

Marian Smith puts forward the argument that leaders of various factions try to outdo their rivals by maximizing their own advantages and minimizing benefits of their rivals.⁴¹ All efforts are made to play one faction against the other.

³⁵ Satya M. Rai, "The Structure of Regional Politics in the Punjab" in Paul Wallace & Surendra Chopra (eds.), *Ibid.*

³⁶ M.S. Dhami, "Caste, Class and Politics of the Rural Punjab: A Study of two villages in Sangrur District" in Paul Wallace & Surendra Chopra (eds.), *Political Dynamics of Punjab*, Amritsar, GNDU, 1981, p. 316.

³⁷ Jaspal Singh, "Factionalism in Punjab Politics: Theoretical Framework", *Punjab Journal of Politics*, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, 2002.

³⁸ Jaspal Singh, p. 73.

³⁹ Jaspal Singh, p. 89.

⁴⁰ Joyce Pettigrew – Robber Noblemen, *Political Structure of Sikh Jats*, New Delhi, Ambika Publication, 1978.

⁴¹ Marian Smith, 'Social Structure in the Punjab', in M. N. Srinivas (ed.), *India's Villages*, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1955.

John Dewitt Jr. concludes that factionalism is a way of life for Punjabis. The persistent search for prominence leads them to intense bickering, manipulating, bragging and turning around. The people who lose elections organize themselves into committees to lodge their grievances through public protests. Emphasizing that ideological commitments are not very deep he talks of splits as a common occurrence.⁴²

Scope of Study

The above studies are no doubt very useful in understanding the dynamics of Punjab politics but they touch upon factionalism in the INC and the SAD in a rather general and limited way. The present study is different in so far as it seeks to identify the pattern of factionalism in these two major political outfits in a comparative perspective. The research has aimed at analyzing the factors that intensify the phenomenon of factionalism in these parties. Further, the study has examined the tensions which invariably arise between the organizational and the legislative wings of each of these parties.

The period analysed in the present study is the present state of Punjab as it came into being in 1966. We chose 1966 as the starting point of the study because before 1966, Punjab also included the present state of Haryana and some hilly areas of Himachal Pradesh that were detached from Punjab at the time of linguistic reorganisation. The exigencies of historical circumstances coupled with geographical features have gone a long way in making the people of Punjab daring and demanding. They have faced repeated onslaughts of invaders at various points of time because they were highly conscious of their rights and were at the same time determined to succeed. With all these traits the Partition had more sufferings to offer. Thousands of men, women and children were killed in the transfer of population in 1947. The Partition also resulted in change in Punjab's social demography and economy that led to the shrinking of Punjab's area. The

⁴² John Dewitt, Jr., *Indian Worker's Association in Britain*, London, Institute of Peace Relations, Oxford University Press, 1969.

Partition radically changed the religious composition of the population which earlier consisted of 55 per cent of the Muslims, 30 per cent Hindus and 15 per cent Sikhs. After Partition the Hindus became roughly 60 per cent and Sikhs about 40 per cent in Punjab. It may be noticed that the Sikhs who constituted 15 per cent of the total population of pre-partition Punjab remained in minority even after the partition of the country, though their numerical strength rose from 15 per cent to 40 per cent. The Hindus became a majority community in the post 1947 Punjab with 60 per cent population in Punjab. Thus, the Sikhs still remained a minority.

A section of the Sikh masses were not satisfied to remain a minority forever. In fact, on the eve of the Independence of India they had put up the demand for a Sikh Homeland. They had put forward the argument that before the British established their rule over the country, three religious communities were ruling the country: the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs. Their argument was that while the Hindus and the Muslims were being given their separate Homelands in the form of India and Pakistan, the Sikhs too should get a political space for themselves. However, the British rulers did not accept their demand because unlike the other two communities the Sikhs were not in a majority in any district of pre-partition Punjab. Thus, the Sikhs continued to be a part of Indian Punjab. The majority of the Sikhs, particularly the Akalis or some factions of Akalis were unhappy with this arrangement and wanted to extract some concessions in free India. The leaders of the Congress party who inherited power in 1947 realised the apprehension of the Sikhs and promised to safeguard their interests. But the party was not unanimous on the nature and extent of such safeguards.

When the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) was set up for the linguistic reorganization of the country, a section of Akalis put forth their demand for the creation of a Punjabi speaking state. However, on the SRC's recommendations the whole country was reorganized on linguistic basis except the states of Punjab and Bombay. Dissatisfied with this discriminatory approach of the SRC, the Akalis launched various agitations in the late 1950's but it did not yield the desired result. The agitation was further intensified when Bombay was bifurcated into Maharashtra and Gujarat. A section of Akalis felt that

the Union Government was discriminating against the Sikhs. They continued their marches after 1960 as well. It was India's 1965 war with Pakistan that led to the suspension of all agitations by the Akalis. Punjab was finally reorganized on linguistic basis in 1966. This led to the creation of Haryana. The hilly areas of Punjab like Kangra, Kullu and Lahaul Spiti were transferred to Himachal Pradesh. Even after the creation of Punjabi-speaking state the dissatisfaction among the Akalis continued. Many of them alleged that several Punjabi-speaking areas had been left out of Punjab and had been wrongly given to Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.

Thus, this study of the present day Punjab and how the two parties have shaped it, holds relevance. The issues examined in the present study are whether factionalism is based on ego of leaders of different factions and political parties or whether there is a clash over the question of ideology that each faction within the party professes to follow. It also needs to ascertain whether the differences are over various issues which arise from day to day affairs of the party or is it merely a struggle for power? If the differences among various factions are of ideological nature what are the issues? If it is only a matter of clash of ego and struggle for power what are the manifestations of this in the various organs of the party? Punjab being predominantly an agrarian society where 70 per cent of the people still earn their livelihood from agriculture, the rural areas have their own prominence in all walks of life. So, we have tried to find out whether or not there is a clash between the rural leadership and the urban leadership? In other words, does factionalism in Punjab reflect the rural-urban divide? It was necessary to examine this dimension because many a time the rural and urban leadership have different priorities and cater to different interests.

It has been observed that sometimes factionalism arises because of differences of generational values. The study has attempted to ascertain whether factionalism in Punjab reflects the clash of values and principles between the younger and the older leadership? The older leadership inducts the younger generation into the party and then teaches them about the reins of power. Once the younger recruits learn the tricks of the trade they try to assert themselves. What effect does this have on their relations? Is a rift created

because the older generation does not want to surrender power to the younger recruits or because the latter want to change the power equation by coming to power?

The study also tries to discover whether there is a clash of interests between the different occupational groups in the party? Each leader has his own lobby and support-base: it can be the different trade unions, the industrialists, the landlords, the small and marginal farmers, the professionals, and student groups etc. Each leader has to articulate aspirations of its support-group. The resources are limited in every political system and each occupational group wants to squeeze out larger share of cake to itself. Does this give rise to factionalism among diverse occupational groups? How prominent are the differences between the groups representing the industrialists and those representing the farmers of the state?

Another dimension that is examined is whether the experienced and the emerging leadership are in harmony with each other over important issues? Does the emerging leadership feel that the established leadership is out of tune with the times? Or is that the working styles of the emerging leadership and the experienced leadership are different and it makes it difficult for the two to get along? Is it that the experienced leadership is not ready to change its style of working and does not reconcile with the dynamism and energy of the emerging leadership? Do these differences arise because the basic way of thinking and working of the two are different? Do differences arise because the experienced leadership believes in working with caution while they feel that the emerging leadership is too rash in its actions and acts only on impulse?

The study has examined the differences that arise between the leaders who are traditional in their outlook and those who are modernists in their outlook? The leaders who hold traditional ideas want the status quo to remain; while the modernists within a party may want a face-lift of the party. The traditionalists may not want to experiment as they may benefit or lose in the new pattern. So they would leave no stone unturned to see that the status quo maintained. The radical elements in the party would prefer sweeping changes while the traditional leadership might appear to be conservative. In other words, the differences in the party may be between the liberal and the conservative elements. It

is worthwhile to investigate this question because every party has moderate and extremist elements. The moderates are careful in their approach and think of the long term as well as short-term gains for themselves as well as for the party. The extremists, on the other hand, believe in action and extreme steps. They want a fulfillment of all their interests that may stand them in good stead but may be detrimental to the others. The leaders who are moderate in their approach believe in compromise and accommodation while the extremists do not. Though they face the poll together but after elections these differences manifest themselves in the functioning of the party. How do these differences affect the unity in the party? How do they damage the party's prospects when in power and when out of power? Does the rank and file, particularly the organizational wing take kindly to such in fighting?

Further, the present study explains whether factionalism is more intense when the party is out of power or is it more pronounced when the party is in power? Is there a clash between the Parliamentary and organizational wings of the party? In the case of Congress do the leaders at the Centre interfere in the party's working at the regional level? Do factions arise because of the interference of the Centre in the day-to-day affairs of the party at the state level? Does the process of factionalism intensify with the leaders at the Centre being partial towards a particular faction? Is factionalism beneficial for the central party leaders or does solving conflicts work for the party's advantage?

The study also addresses itself to finding out the nature of factionalism in INC and the S.AD in a comparative perspective. Is factionalism in Congress different in any way from factionalism in Akali Dal? If so, what are the broad differences in the nature of factionalism in the two political parties?

Regional parties are characterized so because they have to push parochial issues in order to survive. Does this lead to factions within the party? In the case of SAD, the SGPC has a major role to play in the Sikh politics. Whichever group is extended support by the SGPC usually comes to power in the party. Once in power, it wants to free itself from the hold of the SGPC and assert itself while the SGPC wants its prominence by having a say in the party functioning. So, the question to be investigated is whether this

leads to factionalism in a party or there are other issues like ego of party leaders, ideology or the regional issues?

Does factionalism arise because of a group that is not in the saddle? Is the group in power asserting itself to such an extent that the other leaders of the party feel sidelined? Does the group in power lack the capability to carry the party forward as a team? What effect does factionalism have on the working of the party when in power and when in opposition?

Thus, the study has attempted to investigate whether factionalism exists because of lack of mutual trust among the leaders or because of the continued rivalry between the legislative wing and the organizational wing over the issue of supremacy? Is it because of the failure on the part of the legislative wing to respect and implement the decisions of the organizational wings of the party? Is factionalism a result of pursuit of power for personal benefit or simply a case of clash of personalities and group loyalties? Are factions at the local, district, state levels linked with each other through? Are factions ever-changing rival informal groups of leaders and their followers? How do factions operate? How do they project themselves? How do they hinder effective functioning of the rival group? Why do they do so? Does this role of factions divide the people and make it easier to rule over them? How different are factions from Associations and Organisations? Do factions cut across caste, kinship and religious boundaries? Do factions flourish only where ideology is weak? Are factions found only traditional societies? These are the questions that the study has aimed to research and find answers.

CHAPTERISATION

The study is divided into five chapters.

Chapter I: Introduction – The chapter deals with the importance of the topic. It also spells out the scope of the study. Further, it contains a review of literature and identifies the gaps in our knowledge about the subject. Finally, it indicates the methodology of the study and source of data used during the course of this work.

Chapter II provides a brief historical perspective on the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Indian National Congress right from 1920's to 1966. The purpose of this chapter is to put the subsequent discussion in proper context.

Chapter III: Factionalism in the Indian National Congress – The third chapter is devoted to the study of nature and pattern of factionalism in the Indian National Congress in Punjab. In what way factionalism in INC at the Centre gets reflected at the state level? What are the issues that give rise to factionalism? In what situations factionalism intensifies and under what circumstances?

Chapter IV: Factionalism in the Shiromani Akali Dal – In the fourth chapter the organisational set up of Shiromani Akali Dal and SGPC is analysed. It examines factionalism in these two important bodies at the state level and how it penetrates to the grass-roots level.

Chapter V: Having discussed the context, nature and patterns of factionalism in both the Indian National Congress and the Shiromani Akali Dal this chapter endeavours to make a comparative study of the nature and pattern of factionalism in the two parties. In what way factionalism in the two parties is different and in what way it is similar? What are the reasons for the similarities and differences? The chapter sums up the finding and present the findings of the present study. It highlights the trends in factionalism and also the positive and negative traits of factionalism.

APPENDIX- Verbatim responses of leaders with whom interviews were conducted.

This is followed by a select bibliography,

METHODOLOGY

A study of factions is fruitful exercise because it is a political activity, which results in certain consequences. Thus, an analysis of this political activity has a direct impact on the structure of the political system as well as on politics. The role of factions in history cannot be denied for they influence the decision-making process of a particular

time. An attempt would be made to find through various sources the role of factions -- whether it has been integrative or disintegrative.

The present work is based on primary source material both published and unpublished as well as secondary sources. Primary sources consist of official documents of the two political parties. This includes proceedings of the state-level organs of the INC and the SAD. This also includes the statements and speeches of State Presidents of the two parties. Sometimes factionalism also gets reflected at the district units of the party. Therefore attempt is made to make use of such material existing at the district level units of the party. Various Seminars organised by the party have also been a source. Besides this the discussions and seminars in which the important leaders of the party participate has also been a source. In Election manifestoes of the party each faction tries to get the agenda of its own faction included and may prove to be of some use. Besides this, the leaders' message to their supporters through conferences is an important source. The interaction of the leaders with the masses through small informal meetings has been used in the present study. Various religious fairs in which the leaders address the masses that have thronged at the religious congregation help us to understand the formation, strength, strategies and tactics of different factions to mobilise people in their favour.

Factionalism acquires an acute form during the allocation of party ticket during elections to the Parliament, Vidhan Sabha and elections to the local bodies where each faction tries to out-do the other in getting ticket for its supporters. Similarly, during the ministry formation various factional leaders try to grasp as many positions as possible at the cost of other factions. Similarly, during the allocation of portfolios various factions begin to dictate their own terms.

The leaders in their communication with their constituents, the way they address the latter's problems has been followed up through interviews with the prominent sections of the people. Personal interviews with leaders and their correspondence has also been used.

In the secondary sources, books, periodicals, journals, other publications and newspapers have been made use of. Works on factionalism done by eminent authors have been an important source of information. The Editorials of various newspapers which highlight factionalism have been relied upon to understand the currents and the cross-currents within a party. Informal interviews and discussions have been held with important leaders to elicit their views about the nature of factionalism in the INC and SAD.

Sometimes, when factionalism reaches a higher pitch the leadership initiates changes in the party organisation and in the Council of ministers. Certain leaders are dropped and some others are included. These reshuffles provide a lot of insight into the nature of factionalism. In a moment of crisis in the party the leadership has to do a delicate balancing act to keep various factions contented. Such balancing acts are subtle indicators of under currents of factionalism in the party.

Sometimes important leaders of the party begin to publicly level allegations against their colleagues that are a reflection of factionalism. There are various other ways in which intra-party feuds come to the surface. An attempt will be made to identify such events in order to gain an insight into the nature and extent of factionalism. Sometimes party leaders hold threats of quitting the party or resigning from various positions that they are holding in the party. Such threats bring the factionalism into open.

The present study is partly historical – analytical and partly empirical.

In the historical analytical method the approach is contextual, institutional and processual. The contextual part will trace the origin of factionalism in the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Indian National Congress from the pre-independence period to 1966 when the state of Punjab acquired its present territorial form. It will help us to put the subsequent discussion in a proper perspective. The institutional aspect of the study relates to an examination of factionalism in specific institutions of the two parties. In the case of the INC the study particularly focus on factionalism in the All India Mahila (women) Congress, Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC), District Congress Committee

(DCC), Congress Legislative Party (CLP) and the state unit of the Indian Youth Congress. In the case of Shiromani Akali Dal it examines the nature and form of factionalism in the state and district level units of the SAD and in the successive Akali legislative wings, Youth Akali Dal and Istri (women) Akali Dal. In addition to it, factionalism in the SGPC is also analyzed.

The processual part examines in comparative perspective the manner in which factionalism actually found expression in the two political parties. In other words, it deals with the *modus operandi* of factionalism in the SAD and the INC.

The present study is empirical in so far as it tries to elicit the views of some important state and district level leaders of both the political parties to identify the major ideological issues that lead to factionalism. In this context the role that power struggle, personal ego and temperamental incompatibilities of different leaders play is assessed.

Chapter II

PUNJAB – A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The first important date in the history of the Sikhs is 1469 A. D. The birth of Guru Nanak gradually led to the formation of a new religion by his successors – Sikhism. His religion became a popular movement than that preached by the earlier reformers like Ramanand and Kabir because Guru Nanak adapted his teachings to the daily needs of human beings. He believed that ‘a religion, if it is to be a living force, must be a practical religion, one that teaches mankind, not how to escape from the world, but how to live worthily in it; not how evil is to be avoided, but how it is to be met and overcome’¹

The Sikhs under the successors of Guru Nanak evolved from a mere religious brotherhood to a strong power which was militarily well-armed. The process of arming oneself was initiated by Guru Hargobind who girded two swords, one symbolizing his spiritual authority and the other his temporal power. Bhai Gurdas “justifies the new measures of Guru Hargobind with the argument that an orchard needs the protective hedge of the hardy and thorny kikar (acacia) trees. In other words, the Panth of Guru Nanak needed physical force for its protection.”² The increasing number of the rivals of the followers of Sikhism led to dissent within Sikhism. It was the Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh who set out to put his followers in order. ‘His aim was to obviate external interference with the use of physical force.’³ And to achieve this he wanted to instill a new zeal into his followers, give a distinct identity to his Sikhs which would distinguish them from Hindus and ‘instill into them a spirit of nationality.’⁴ For this on Baisakhi day, April 13, 1699, he founded the Panth which led to adoption of Unity and equality and initiated an internal tussle between those who accepted the new order and others who did not.

¹ C. H. Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Jullundur, Department of language, Punjab 1970, p. 20.

² Quoted in J. S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, New Delhi, Foundation, 1995, p. 65

³ Ibid., p. 77.

⁴ Payne, op. cit., n. 1, p. 34

In the 18th century new powers like the British and the Marathas rose because of the decline of the Mughal Empire. The Singhs of Guru Gobind Singh too became a power to reckon with. The combination of religious piety and disciplined worldliness that was evolved by Guru Nanak and elaborated by his successors was extended to the realm of politics by Guru Gobind Singh.⁵ The rise of Banda Bahadur saw him become the master of nearly the whole region lying between the Sutlej and the Jamuna and having his own administrative arrangement.

Banda Bahadur's successive defeats and subsequently his death saw the killings of Sikhs in large numbers. To protect themselves they divided themselves into bands under different commanders, all ready to come together in case of necessity. The Sikhs were nearer to nationality than they had ever been.⁶ The Singhs had one element running like a common thread amongst them i. e. not to submit to the Mughal Empire or to the might of the Mughals. The preservation of the Sikh faith and promotion of the good of the Khalsa (the Pure) were the two causes which united them. The Sikhs were divided into a federation of clans each under a Sardar or a military chief. The clans were of different size but all were equal in status as preached by the Tenth Guru. The four institutions which helped the Sikhs annex territories were Rakhi (protection), Gurmata (consensus), Dal Khalsa (group of the Pure), and the Misls (bands). The Sikhs were one people but each clan was independent of the other. As they could not tolerate interference from the others so they could not tolerate interference in the administration of their respective domains. Misls were usually based on Kinship and many Misls combined to form the Dal Khalsa. Based on democracy, being a member of a Misl meant conferring political, social, religious equality and freedom. All decisions were taken by Gurmata (resolution of the Guru). The fruits of a conquest were divided equally by the Sardar amongst those who had participated in the campaign. A man was at liberty to leave one Misl and join another if he was dissatisfied with his position. Besides the 12 Misls there was one other association which was a band of religious devotees who were treated as guardians of the Golden Temple. Employed for the most dangerous services they were known for their bravery. Known by the name of Akalis (the

⁵ Grewal, op. cit., n. 2, p. 82.

⁶ Payne, op. cit., n. 1, p. 47.

immortals) they wore the blue robes and steel bracelets as ordained by the Tenth Guru.

All decisions were taken by the Gurmata which was held twice a year at the Holy City, Amritsar. The tradition of Gurmata held the Sikhs together for a long time but the moment a threat from outside disappeared, the thread of unity broke. So thoroughly had the Sikhs become imbued with the militant spirit that to fight was the very breath of their being and rather than allow their swords to rust in their scabbards, they preferred to turn them against one another.⁷ The chiefs maintained their followers who got a share in the booty of war so on the slightest pretext the Sardars fought with each other in same spirit as they had shown in the fights against the Holkers or the Shah. The Misls were subjugated by Maharaja Ranjit Singh of the Shukarchakia misl in the 19th century. With the rise in the population of the Sikhs during the 19th century there developed social as well as ideological differentiation in the community. In the rural areas there was an increase in the number of peasants and in the urban areas there was an increase in the numbers of commercial class. Within ten years of Ranjit Singh's death his empire was taken over by the Britishers. Infights between the nobility led to factions which led to the involvement of the Army. Though the Sardars were "Sikhs equally with the soldiers and that the 'Khalsa' was a word which could be used to unite the high and the low"⁸ they had got divided into three parties-the army, the court and the Sardars.

The British interference grew because of the growing instability in the region. The Sikhs in their defeat realized that the incompetence and treachery of their leaders had led to their defeat. After the annexation of the Punjab the Sikhs gradually realized that the British recognized their valour. They enrolled themselves in the regiments and thus found an outlet for their military zeal. They, thus, did not allow their absorption back into the Hindu community. The Sikhs loyally supported the British in suppressing the Mutiny of 1857. Singhs were recruited in large numbers and helped the British in all the major wars. In the wake of advent of Arya Samaj in Punjab the Sikhs set up their own Singh Sabhas. The Sri Guru Singh Sabha was founded in 1873. The Lahore Singh Sabha was founded in 1879. Then six Singh

⁷ Ibid. , p. 66.

⁸ Grewal, op. cit. , n. 2, p. 158.

Sabhas were added every year for the next twenty years. The Singh Sabha was regarded as a representative of the whole community of the area. To coordinate the activities of the Singh Sabhas the Khalsa Diwan was established in 1893. The Khalsa Diwan at Lahore was established in 1896.

In 1902, the Chief Khalsa Diwan was founded at Amritsar which gave general direction and control regarding religious matters. All Singh Sabhas, Khalsa Diwans were affiliated to it and they elected members to represent them in the Chief Khalsa Diwan. A representative and an elected body, its aim was to promote the study of the Granth Sahib, to further the moral, intellectual and social development of the Sikhs of the Khalsa and to provide solution to the grievances of the Khalsa. Concerned with religious reforms all these religious associations aimed at stopping conversions of Sikhs into Islam, Hinduism or Christianity. They put forward the demand that they be treated as a separate community and not as a part of Hinduism. The community braced itself and faced attacks from different quarters. For this they published volume of literature regarding their distinct identity. The Chief Khalsa Diwan published in 1915 a comprehensive code regarding the Sikh ceremonies and rites – *Gurmat Parkash Bhag Sanskar*. 'The idea of Guru-Panth became stronger with the increasing importance of Sikh identity.'⁹ The first unrest among the rural people, especially the Jat Sikh peasantry arose because of the Colonization Bill in 1907. This bill apart from, 'altering the earlier agreements made with the settlers about the ownership of the land under the Act of 1893 also provided for higher rates of land revenue and irrigation.'¹⁰ This agrarian unrest was perhaps the first example in Punjab in which the rural masses showed discontent against the British policies. The authorities took stern measures against the agitators but realized the damage done to the Sikh soldiers who had families residing in the canal colonies. The Colonization Bill was repealed but the seeds of unrest had been sown.

Meanwhile the All India Muslim League (AIML) was established in 1906 which aimed at safeguarding and advancing the interests of the Muslims at the provincial as well as the national level. The INC in the beginning was regarded as 'a

⁹ Grewal, op. cit., n. 2, p. 147.

¹⁰ Mohinder Singh, *Baba Kharak Singh and India's Struggle for Freedom*, New Delhi, Bhai Vir Singh Printing Press, 1993, p 7.

gathering of a few holiday makers out of intellectual entertainment'.¹¹ The Sikh Educational Conference established in 1908 tried to spread education. The Singh Sabha Movement opened a number of schools and colleges with the word Khalsa prefixed. The British tried to halt the growing feeling of nationalism by reconstituting the management of the Khalsa College, Amritsar. The College passed into the hands of the government. This led to leaders like, Master Sunder Singh, Sardar Kharak Singh, S. Sardul Singh Caveeshar to protest. They weakened the hold of Chief Khalsa Diwan and provided a nationalist tone to the Sikh politics. One of the main aims of the Chief Khalsa Diwan was to look after the political rights of the Sikhs. It was because of its efforts that the Montford report in 1917 'noted that the Sikhs had remained unrepresented in spite of their services to the empire'.¹²

The first serious conflict between the Sikhs and the government occurred on the issue of the wall of the Rikabganj Gurudwara. The government dismantled a part of the wall to construct a road to the Viceregal Lodge in 1913. The Sikhs were divided on the issue with the Chief Khalsa Diwan and Sunder Singh Majithia trying to accommodate the government. The Komagata Maru affair in July 1914 became one with the programme of the Ghadar Party. The Ghadarites started telling the people openly to rise against the government. They went around galvanizing the Sikh regiments. Fixing Feb. 21, 1915 as the date for rising against the British they called for a revolt. The leak of secrets by the pro-British landed interests among the Sikhs helped the British quell their revolt. Though their movement failed, they succeeded in creating 'a spirit of defiance of authority among the extremists in the Punjab which found expression in the form of Babbar (Lion) Akali Jathas (groups) during the Akali struggle for Gurudwara reform.'¹³ The difference between the Sikhs and the reformers was not indifference to faith but the former believed that 'to fight against tyranny'¹⁴ was the true duty of a true Sikh. The struggle for freedom of the Khalsa Panth was substituted by the love for the country. The end of the nineteenth century

¹¹ Amarjit Singh, *Punjab Divided, Politics of the Muslim League and Partition 1935-1947*, New Delhi, Kanishka, 2001, p 27.

¹² Grewal, op. cit., n. 2, p. 152.

¹³ Mohinder Singh, op. cit., n. 10, p. 9.

¹⁴ Grewal, op. cit., n. 2, p. 156.

saw the Sikhs facing a challenge from Christianity. Moreover it was felt that the respect for the Gurus was on the decline and a large number of Sikhs were following Brahamanical practices. Thus, they launched the various religious reform movements. As Ruchi Ram Sahni wrote, 'The closing decade of the last century was a period of intense searching of the heart in all communities in Panjab. The Sikhs were the last to awaken to a self –consciousness of their glorious heritage. It was a silent process. Slowly and most imperceptibly they felt the new impulse creeping through the younger members of the community. There was a strong stirring of their bones, a tingling sensation in their fibers which they could hardly explain themselves.'¹⁵

The reformers also tried to save the separate identity of the Sikhs from the onslaught of the propaganda by the Arya Samaj. Kahan Singh, a Singh Sabha leader wrote a book titled, 'Hum Hindu Nahin' (We are not Hindus). During the First World War, the Sikhs especially the Chief Khalsa Diwan fully supported the government. But after the War the soldiers were demobilized without any rewards. This dissatisfaction along with economic hardships, i. e. rise in food prices led to discontentment among the community.

When Mahatma Gandhi announced the anti-Rowlatt Act movement in 1919, Panjab became one of the centers of agitation. Though the Sikhs participated in the agitation the number was small because the Chief Khalsa Diwan had decided to remain loyal to the government. Moreover the INC regarded the Chief Khalsa Diwan more as a religious organization than as a political one. Therefore, the Lucknow Pact in December 1916 which led to the reconciliation between the INC and the Muslim League ignored the interests of the Sikhs. Thus, the Sikh leadership, especially the educated Sikh middle class formed a new organization called Central Sikh League on December 29, 1919 in Bradlaugh Hall, Lahore. The main concern of the League was to protest against the inadequate Sikh representation in the Panjab Legislative Council under the Act of 1919. Though expressing its loyalty to the Crown it placed on record, 'its conviction that in the interest of good government and to ensure an adequate improvement in the condition of the people of India, it is essential that the country should be placed on a footing of equality with the self –governing members of the Empire and the people be allowed to work out their political, economic,

¹⁵ Quoted in K. L. Tuteja, *Sikh Politics; 1920-1940*, Kurukshetra, Vishal, 1984, p. 14.

industrial and educational salvation under the aegis of the Crown'¹⁶ The Sikh League wanted that gun licenses should be given to the Sikhs except those who have doubtful character. They wanted the administration of the Gurudwaras especially that of the Golden Temple to be passed on to a representative body of the Sikhs.

The Sikh League supported the Non –Cooperation movement. In October 1920 the Golden Temple was placed under the management of a committee and the League called a meeting of the Sikhs in November. They elected 175 members for the committee which was to manage the affairs of the Gurudwaras. The name of the committee was Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee[SGPC] which aimed to liberate all the Gurudwaras and place them in the hands of the Panth. The management till that time had been in the hands of a manager who was appointed by the government and thus, worked for the interests of the Empire. For example, Arur Singh, the manager of the Golden Temple had announced that Akhand Path (continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib from cover to cover) would be held for victory of the British in the war. He had even condemned the Komagata Maru Sikhs through a commandment from the Akal Takht in 1915. After the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy he had even presented a Saropa to General Dyer in the Holy Shrine. The Gurudwaras had to be freed from the hands of such puppets. Some of the Gurudwaras were under the control of the Mahants who were even appointed, 'as honorary magistrates and members of municipalities. '¹⁷ They squandered the earnings of the Gurudwaras by leading luxurious lives.

The Akali Dal [SAD] was formed on Dec. 1920 with the aim of bringing reforms in the Gurudwaras. A separate body, from the SGPC it resolved to work with the latter to liberate the Gurudwaras. The leadership of the SAD came from the educated middle class of the Sikhs but the vast illiterate Sikh masses became its force ready to fight in the name of religion. Thus, started the third Sikh War in which ' the Sikhs declared a peaceful war against the unjust and immoral laws that governed the management of the Gurudwaras and offered a challenge to the government to do its worst to maintain such laws. '¹⁸ The government was not ready to leave the control of the Gurudwaras and yet not ready to come in direct conflict with the Sikhs. The Sikh

¹⁶ Mohinder Singh, op. cit. , n. 10, p. 22

¹⁷ Tuteja, op. cit. , n. 15, p. 30.

¹⁸ Sardul Singh Caveeshar, *The Sikh Studies*, Lahore, National, 1937, p. 192.

leadership decided to meet the challenge of the British by sending Jatha after Jatha to go and occupy Gurudwaras and face imprisonment and even death as long as the government did not yield to their demand of liberating Gurudwaras. Thus, started a more serious and a determined struggle between the govt. and the Sikh community. Some of the Mahants voluntarily gave up the control to the SGPC while some resisted. The govt. on the other hand silently encouraged the Mahants to resist the SGPC which led to bloodshed in many places. The first incident was the massacre of Akalis at Nankana Sahib during a direct confrontation with the Mahant of the Gurudwara. The Mahant of Nankana Sahib Gurudwara hired assassins who attacked, killed and burnt a hundred Akalis who had entered the Gurudwara without the intention of taking it over. The Akalis on hearing about the massacre reached Nankana Sahib in thousands and the authorities arrested the Mahants and his associates. The Gurudwara was handed over to a committee which was headed by Harbans Singh Atariwala.

The second episode occurred in October 1921 when the SGPC decided to support the non-cooperation movement of Mahatma Gandhi. The SGPC asked its secretary, S. Sunder Singh Ramgarhia who was also the government nominated Manager of the Golden Temple to hand over the 53 keys to Baba Kharak Singh, the President of SGPC. The Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar sent Lala Amar Nath to collect the keys from Ramgarhia. The latter handed over the keys to him. The SGPC decided to hold protests against this action. When the government arrested the leading leaders on flimsy charges of sedition, the Akalis held meetings everywhere to make the people aware about the 'Keys Affair'. The protests on the part of the Sikhs and the strict measures by the government continued till Jan. 17, 1922 when all the workers were released unconditionally and the keys were delivered to Baba Kharak Singh in a specially arranged Diwan. Mahatma Gandhi's telegraphic message to Baba Kharak Singh said, 'first decisive-battle for India's freedom won'.¹⁹

The Mahant of the Guru- Ka -Bagh Gurudwara who had fallen in line with the wishes of the SGPC was encouraged by the government authorities to work against the Akalis. He did so and declared five Akalis thieves who had cut wood for the langar from the land adjoining the Gurudwara. On the arrest of the men,

¹⁹ Ibid. , p. 160

consecutive jathas reached Guru-Ka –Bagh and got themselves arrested as any gathering at the Bagh, 'was declared to be an unlawful assembly.'²⁰ After a arrest of nearly 5000 volunteers the Mahant sold the establishment to Sir Ganga Ram who handed it to the SGPC on Nov17,1922. The 5000 volunteers were released from the jails in March 1923 because of the impending Hindu-Muslim riots. The SGPC cooperated with the government to quell the riots and worked to restore peace and order.

The Maharaja of Nabha, Ripudaman Singh had to abdicate his throne in favour of his son because of the intrigues of the government officials who collaborated with the rulers of the neighboring state, Patiala . The latter were sworn enemies of the rulers of Nabha. When the Sikhs protested in favor of Ripudaman Singh and held peaceful meetings at Jaito Gurudwara they were disrupted. The Sikhs did not like the interference in their religious ceremonies. They asserted, 'their right of free worship'²¹ Volunteers of jathas were arrested and both the SGPC and the SAD were declared as unlawful bodies.²² The protests continued and 101 Akhand paths were completed on Aug. 6,1925 and 'the right to free worship was firmly established'.²³ Finally an Act (second Gurudwara Act) came into force on Nov. 1, 1925 which made the SGPC the legal authority to manage the Sikh Gurudwaras. 'The Gurudwara was opened to the Sikhs and the Akali jathas walked triumphantly to the temple'²⁴

The Babbar Akali Jatha was formed in August 1922 for to dual purpose – to gain independence and to protect the Sikh religion. Within a year they were declared an unlawful association and their members persecuted. According to Tuteja at this time the Sikhs were divided into three factions.²⁵ The first faction consisted of a few urban educated leaders of the landed gentry. Described as 'moderates' leaders like Sunder Singh Majithia, Harbans Singh Atari they had derived benefits from the British. The second group consisted of nationalists who were from the urban educated middle class. If they were ready to fight for the Panth the freedom struggle

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Caveeshar, op. cit. , n. 18, p. 206.

²² Ibid.

²³ Grewal, op. cit. , n. 2, p. 162.

²⁴ Caveeshar, op. cit. , n. 18, p. 209,

²⁵ Tuteja, op. cit. , n. 15, p. 36.

was of paramount importance to them. The prominent leaders were Master Tara Singh, Baba Kharak Singh and Sardul Singh Caveeshar. The third group consisted of leaders like Prof. Teja Singh, S. Bahadur Mehtab Singh who were religious reformers. Unlike the second group which gave priority to the nationalist objective they believed in keeping their religious movement distinct from the national movement. They gave more importance to their religious movement. The Naujawan Bharat Sabha formed in March 1926 was anti-British but socialist in nature. The Sabha supported the INC in 1928 in its protest against the Simon Commission. 'Lord Irwin observed that the activities of the Sabha and the Congress in the Punjab had been identical'.²⁶

The Hindustan Socialist Republic Association also believed in independence but also believed in 'restructuring of society on socialist principles.'²⁷ Favouring militant nationalism the movement lost its charm after the execution of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru.

Till its dissolution in September 1934, Kirti Kisan Party worked for the workers and peasants. In opposition to the INC it believed in liberating the working class from the shackles of the bourgeois class.

The Nehru report of 1929 further eroded Sikh unity. Baba Kharak Singh refused to participate in the civil disobedience movement more because the Sikh colour was excluded from the national flag. But the SAD and the Central Sikh League decided to participate. The SGPC participated after the Sisganga Gurudwara firing in Delhi. The Sikh leaders opposed the 'communal award'. They formed a Khalsa Darbar but after the first year the nationalist leaders like Baba Kharak Singh disassociated themselves from the Darbar. Before the elections of 1938 the Sikh leaders were divided into the SAD and the Sikhs who supported the Congress.

Baldev Singh, formed a new party under the name of United Punjab Sikh Party in March 1942. He joined hands with Sikander Hayat Khan. In the Quit India Movement of 1942 only a handful of Akalis took part.

When the II World War broke, leaders like Baba Kharak Singh formed the INC and opposed India's participation in the war. Master Tara Singh parted from the congress and recruited Sikhs for the British army. Nationalist leaders like Baba

²⁶ Grewal, op. cit., n. 2, p. 165.

²⁷ Ibid. .

Kharak Singh opposed the partition tooth and nail. He supported the formation and cause of Indian National Army [I. N. A.] of Subash Chander Bose along with the INC. He also appealed to the people to vote for the INC in the elections announced by Lord Wavell in 1946.

To protest against the communal board S. Joginder Singh, one of the leaders of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, proposed to form a unity board of all the Sikh political parties for the election to be held under the new constitution.²⁸ But the SAD and the Khalsa Darbar refused to join the board. The Khalsa Darbar was initially constituted to work for the removal of the communal award. After sometime Giani Sher Singh's group left the Khalsa Darbar alleging that Master Tara Singh had given the neutral Darbar party colour. With their exit Master Tara Singh consolidated his position in the Darbar and merged the Central Sikh League with it insisting that the aim of both the organisations were the same i. e. to protect the political rights of the Sikhs. The Akali leaders did not cooperate with the Chief Khalsa Diwan fearing alienation from the Sikh masses. The Chief Khalsa Diwan formed a new party known as the Khalsa National Party. This party decided to cooperate with the other parties to frame a new Constitution. All the anti-Akali elements joined this party. Sunder S. Majithia was one of the leaders. The Congress Sikh Party was formed to maintain contact with the Sikh masses. It decided to oppose the Communal Award and thus pacified the Sikh masses. The Akali party decided to join the INC to work for complete Independence and also to weaken the Khalsa National Party which had been formed, 'with the object of getting back the influence which the Sikhs of the leading families in the province have lost'.²⁹

Sir Sikander Hayat Khan formed his ministry on April 1, 1937. The Khalsa National Party joined the new government on the promise to safeguard the interests of the Sikhs. Describing them as traitors the Akalis sat in the opposition with the INC. Master Tara Singh, Giani Kartar Singh and Harnam Singh represented the case of the Sikhs to the Cabinet Mission. The Akali leaders later rejected the Mission's proposal as they 'could see nothing but their perpetual subjection to a Muslim majority in Punjab'.³⁰ They formed a Panthic Pratinidhi Board to oppose the dreaded domination

²⁹ Tuteja, op. cit. , n. 15, p. 176.

³⁰ Grewal, op. cit. , n. 2, p. 176.

of Pakistan. With the INC's assurance to protect their interests the Board decided to send its representative to the Constituent Assembly and Baldev Singh joined the interim government as the defence Minister. Master Tara Singh declared that if the country was to be divided the Sikhs who were a nation should not be left 'at the mercy of either Pakistan or Hindustan'.³¹ They placed their demand for a Sikh state. But the word 'Azad' led to opposition of the Sikhs and the Hindus of the western districts thought it excluded them. Master Tara Singh tried to clarify that in 'Azad' Punjab Hindus and Sikhs alike would get rid of the danger of Pakistan. The Akalis decided to fight till the last man if placed under Muslim domination. When Partition seemed inevitable the aim was to get maximum territory from the British province of the Punjab for the Indian Union. The 'East Punjab' became in a sense a gift of the Akalis to the Indian Union.³² But Partition made Punjab Hindu dominated. The Akalis feared for the preservation of their culture, heritage and preservation of their entity. They feared onslaught on their community from the Hindus who were in overwhelming majority not only in Punjab but also at the Center. Resurgence of Hinduism, revival of Sanskrit and assertiveness of the Punjabi Hindus further led to increasing insecurity and uneasiness among the minorities, especially the Sikh community. This led to the SAD raising the demand for a state based on language. This led to further agitations.

³¹ Lakhwinder Singh Sidhu, *Party Politics in Punjab*, New Delhi, Harnam, 1994, p. 29.

³² Grewal, op. cit., n. 2, p. 180.

Chapter III

FACTIONALISM IN THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (INC)

Factionalism Before 1947

The Indian Renaissance took many forms and asserted itself in many ways. If it was Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his Brahma Samaj on one hand, it also reflected itself in the messages of Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his disciple Swami Vivekananda. 'All these moments were really so many threads in the strand of Indian Nationalism and the Nation's duty was to evolve a synthesis so as to be able to dispel prejudice and superstition, to remove and purify the old faith and Vedantic idealism and reconcile it with the Nationalism of the new age. The INC was destined to fulfil this great mission'.¹ The first President of the INC, W.C. Banerjee of Bengal, stressed the representative and constitutional character of the gathering. He detailed the INC's objects as :

- '(a) The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in [all] parts of the Empire.²
- (b) The eradication of direct friendly intercourse of all possible race, creed or provincial prejudice amongst all lovers of our country and the fuller development of consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in their beloved Lord Ripon's ever memorable region.³

¹ P.Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I (1885-1935), Bombay, Padma, 1946, p. 14.

² S.R., Mehrotra, *A History of Indian National Congress*, Volume One (1885-1918), New Delhi, Vikas, 1995, p. 17.

³ Ibid.

- (c) The authoritative record, after this has been carefully elicited by the fullest discussion, of the matured opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing of the [political and] social questions of the day.⁴
- (d) The determination of the lines upon and methods by which during the next twelve months, it is desirable for native politicians to labour in the public interests'.⁵

Refuting the charge that the Congress was 'a nest of conspirators and disloyalists'⁶ the INC had political objectives of its own. Grateful to the British government for doing much for India the first congregation of the Natives believed that much had yet to be done. They wanted to widen the base of the government by giving the Indians their legitimate share of governance. Meeting 'at 12 on December 28, 1885,⁷ in the Hall of the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College, the first INC met to chisel the destiny of a nation which comprised of men and women of different castes, religions, attitudes and regions. It started with a modest goal of redressing grievances but gradually evolved 'into the one accredited organ of the Nation that proudly put forth its demands'.⁸ Opening its doors to people of all hues and shades, the Congress 'focussed the thoughts and activities of the National to a single point'.⁹ The Congress, in Mahatma Gandhi's words in his speech at the second Round Table Congress, 'attempted from its very beginning to be what it has described itself to be, namely, National in every sense of the term'.¹⁰

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Sitarammaya, op. cit., n. 1, p. 18.

⁸ Ibid., p. 19.

⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.21.

This motley group of 100 people met to chart India's future. In the first session, 'the election of W.C. Banerjee as the President of the Congress was widely appreciated in Bengal and assuaged any soreness people in that province might have felt because of the manner in which the Congress was convened and that inadequate representation at it'.¹¹ One of the weaknesses of the INC from its birth was the failure to win the whole hearted support of the Muslims.¹²

The Congress party lived by giving various incentives like offering fares to the Muslim delegates, choosing a Muslim to preside over the third annual meeting, deciding not to adopt any resolution which was objected to by any community etc. A few Muslims joined but the majority of the community remained aloof because of the efforts of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan who wanted the Muslims to take up English education and progress. A leading light of Muslim Renaissance he was suspicious of the Congress's aims. He wrote, 'I am convinced that where the majority vote is the decisive factor in a political system, it is essential for the electors to be united by tree of race, religion, manners, customs, culture and historical traditions. In the presence of these factors representative government is practicable and useful, in their absence, it would only injure the well-being and tranquility of the land'.¹³ His firm anti-Congress view lingered on doubts among the Muslim community which got absorbed during the freedom struggle but asserted in 1947 with the partition of the country.

Even before the INC had taken a definite form signs of conflict and discord were visible. Shri Surendranath Banerjee convened a National Conference of the Indian Association at Calcutta 'almost at the same time when the Conference of the Indian National Union, the precursor of the INC, was scheduled to meet and discuss almost the

¹¹ Mehrotra, op. cit., n. 2, p. 17.

¹² Penderal Moon, *The British, Congress and Dominion of India*, London, Duckworth, 1989, p. 889.

¹³ Ibid., p. 890.

same issues on the agenda'.¹⁴ The Congress's journey from 1885 to 1905 'was one even much based on a firm faith in constitutional agitation and in the unfailing regard for justice attributed to the Englishmen'.¹⁵

The INC had since its birth great hope in the sense of justice of the British people. But public opinion had begun to change since the 1890s. 'A 'new patriotism' had grown up as opposed to the 'old', 'loyal patriotism' of the founders of the Congress'.¹⁶ In 1893-4, Aurobindo Ghose attacked Congress party in a series of articles published in the *Indu Prakash* of Bombay, titled 'New Lamps for the Old'. He criticised the methods of the older generation and charged the Congress party of not representing the mass of the population but representing only a limited class. This was the rise of radical nationalism which was accentuated by the failure of the older Congress party leaders to gain any substantial concessions from the British. Wanting the Congress to become a mass organisation, the 'radicals' who were later known as 'Extremists' clearly asked for the freedom of the country. Denouncing the INC controlled by the new middle class by an oligarchy, they 'accused its leaders of a lack of patriotism and of being interested mainly in the loaves and fishes of office'.¹⁷ These rebels, led by Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lajpat Rai and Aurobindo Ghosh, called themselves the 'New Party', and 'Nationalists' to distinguish themselves from the old loyalist Congressmen. Tilak, since 1896 had been urging the INC to show more courage. He was stopped when in 1899 he wanted to move a resolution condemning the regime of Lord Sandhurst which he claimed had ruined the people. The President R.C. Dutt threatened to resign from the post if Tilak continued.

¹⁴ A. M. Zaidi, "Aloud and straight. Frank talks at party meeting. A Verbatim Account of Major Controversial Debates Inside the Congress Party during the last 100 Years", Delhi, Indian Institute of Applied Political Research, 1984, p. 19.

¹⁵ Sitarammaya, *op. cit.*, n. 1, p. 61.

¹⁶ Mehrotra, *op. cit.*, n. 2, p. 121.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

The Moderates regarded British rule 'as a beneficial necessity'.¹⁸ The Extremists, the radicals believed that any foreign rule was a curse. They thought that loyalty to the British government was incompatible with patriotism. The methods of the Moderates i.e. that of petition and prayer were finally discredited in the first decade of the twentieth century by various incidents. The partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon in 1905 and supported by Morley, the new Secretary of State for India gave an impetus to the claims of the Extremists that new effective methods of agitation had to be adopted. The Moderates believed that India's prosperity was directly linked with the British rule. The Extremists gave priority to political freedom. In the words of Aurobindo Ghose, 'Political freedom is the life-breath of a nation, to attempt social reform, educational reform, industrial expansion, the moral improvement for the race without aiming first and foremost at political freedom, is the very height of ignorance and futility'.¹⁹ The Moderates believed in borrowing from the West in the name of institutions, education etc., on the other hand, the Extremists wanted to build up a national character and retain the distinctiveness of India. The Moderates wanted the INC to continue as an elitist organisation while the Extremists wanted the organisation to be a movement of the masses. The growth of the Extremists made the Moderates uneasy as the British government threatened to cancel all the reforms which they planned to introduce in India. Morley told the Moderates to part ways with the Extremists if they wanted the rewards of their hard work over the past two decades. The British wanted the Moderates to repudiate the Extremists. The Moderates, on the other hand, did not want to weaken the INC by having a split. To avoid this, they persuaded Dadabhai Naoroji to come from England and preside over the Congress party's session in Calcutta in 1906. This was done to counteract the election of Tilak as President of the INC. The election of Tilak as President would have been a clear signal to the Britishers that the Congress was now in the hands of the Radicals. While the extremists did not think of anything but absolute Swaraj, Naoroji proclaimed the Congress ideal to be 'self-government or Swaraj like that

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 123.

¹⁹ Ibid.

of United Kingdom or the Colonies'.²⁰ Gokhale, in a speech at Allahabad on February 4th 1907, frankly admitted his belief that his country could grow in full stature within the British Empire. He believed that there was place for a self-respecting India within the British Empire. Meanwhile, the attack of the radicals on the Moderates became more vehement day by day. The Moderates finally decided to force the Extremists out of the Congress Party. The first step in this regard was to shift the venue of the annual session from Nagpur which was flooded by Tilak's supporters to Surat, 'which was Pheorozeshah Mehta's pocket borough'.²¹ Then they managed to get, Ras Behari Ghose, a Moderate, elected as the President of the INC. The Moderates wanted every delegate to the Congress session to subscribe 'with the objective of the Congress as "the attainment by India of self-government similar to that enjoyed by self-governing members of the British Commonwealth" through "strictly constitutional means".²² The Extremists, at this 23rd session of the Congress party differed from the Moderates in their way of thinking as well as their method. They had thought of attaining absolute 'Swaraj' outside the British Empire. Then the Extremists, according to the Calcutta Convention in 1906 which had given approval to the boycott of British goods wanted boycott from everything that was remotely connected with the British administration. The Moderates did not want to accept the way of thinking nor the radical methods of the Extremists thus instead of handing over the Congress to them, they decided to pressurize the Extremists out of the organisation. The second day of the session i.e. December 27, 1907, ended sine die because of the protests by the Extremists regarding the appointment of the President. The older Moderate leaders met the same afternoon and decided to call a National Convention, the next day, i.e. December 28 of only those 'delegates who subscribed to the ideas of self-government for India on the colonial model and the attainment by strictly constitutional means'.²³ The Congress met in Convention the next day and clearly spoke

²⁰ Ibid. p. 127.

²¹ Ibid., p.128.

²² Zaidi, op. cit., n.14, p. 24.

²³ Mehrotra, op. cit., n. 2 , p. 129.

of its 'two fundamental articles of our creed'²⁴ i.e. to formulate a Constitution for the Congress and to lay down the lines on which the political agitation should be carried out. The Nationalists desired, the INC which was led by the Moderates, to adopt the four resolutions regarding self-government, Swadeshi, Boycott and National Education in the Surat session the same way as they had done in the Calcutta session in 1906. The Moderates claimed that the change of words was unintentional without attempting to change the meaning while the Extremists felt that the change was deliberate and it was a compromise to show the Congress party's continuing loyalty to their British masters. The Moderates had been disappointed with the British bureaucracy but had its faith in the democratic sense which prevailed in United Kingdom. They felt that the Extremists were threatening the thought and beliefs of the older generation and thus, endangering the progress of the nation. Thus, they wanted to disown the recalcitrant Extremists. The Nationalists on the other hand 'decided to weaken the organisation instead of being driven out of it'.²⁵ Thus, the Surat split. Besides factors like British repression, political inactivity in many parts, the national movement had been weakened because of the split in the Congress and disagreement over the methods and goals of the Moderates and the Extremists. The Congress was still under the control of the Moderates but it had not succeeded in becoming a people's organisation. The people, at large, were disgusted with the inactivity of the Congress which the Extremists had highlighted. Efforts to unite the Extremists and the Moderates failed in 1914 and 1915. Tilak was released in 1914 and he started his three-fold programme i.e. (i) the Congress compromise, (ii) the reorganisation of the Nationalist party, and (iii) accelerating the demand for Home Rule. Tilak wanted the sphere to be broadened regarding the election of the Congress delegates. Some Articles clearly stated that the right of election to certain organisations "provided that no such political association or public body shall be recognized unless the said Association or Body, by a resolution of general meeting of its members, expressed its acceptance of the principle embodied in Article I of the Constitution and makes the acceptance of the

²⁴ Zaidi, *op. cit.*, n.14, p. 31.

²⁵ Mehrotra, *op. cit.*, n. 2 , p. 129.

same condition precedent to new membership”.²⁶ The Article talked of self-government through strictly constitutional means. Mrs. Annie Besant tried to reconcile the two wings but her attempts were frustrated by the Moderates who feared the domination of the Congress by the Extremists once they entered the organisation. Gokhale supported Tilak in the amendment of the article initially, but later withdrew support as he did not want the old struggle to be renewed with the help of the obstructionist methods of the Extremists. Tilak proposed he had not talked of reviewing such steps. Gokhale apologised but the damage had been done. Reconstruction was postponed. Tilak and Mrs. Besant then started to organise the Home Rule League to intensify the demand for internal self-government and to bring pressure on the Moderates to re-admit the Extremists into the fold.

Mrs. Besant started her movement with the programmes of Swadeshi, Boycott, National Education and Home Rule. The death of Gokhale on February 19, 1915 ended the clash between the two titans – Gokhale and Tilak. Gandhi’s estimate of the two leaders correctly sums up the magnetic personality of both the sons of India. “Tilak appeared to him like the Himalayas – great and lofty – but un-approachable, while Gokhale appeared like the Holy Ganges in which he could confidently take a plunge. Tilak and Gokhale were both Maharashtrians; they were both Brahmins; they both belonged to the same Chitpavan sect. They were both patriots of the first order. Both had made heavy sacrifice in life. But their temperaments were widely different from each other. Gokhale was a ‘Moderate’ and ‘Tilak’ was an ‘Extremist’ if we may use the language in vogue at the time. Gokhale’s plan was to improve the existing constitution; Tilak’s was to reconstruct it. Gokhale had necessarily to work with the bureaucracy; Tilak had necessarily to fight it. Gokhale stood for co-operation wherever possible and opposition wherever necessary; Tilak inclined towards a policy of obstruction. Gokhale’s prime concern was with the administration and its improvement; Tilak’s supreme consideration was the Nation and its upbuilding. Gokhale’s ideals were love and sacrifice; Tilak’s was service and suffering. Gokhale’s methods sought to win the

²⁶ Sitarammaya, op. cit., n. 1, pp. 120-121.

foreigner, Tilak was to replace him. Gokhale's depended upon others' help. Tilak stressed upon self-help. Gokhale looked to the classes and the intelligentsia, Tilak to the masses and the millions. Gokhale's arena was the Council Chamber; Tilak's forum was the village *mandap*. Gokhale's medium of expression was English; Tilak's was Marathi. Gokhale's objective was self-government for which the people had to fit themselves by answering the texts prescribed by the English; Tilak's objective was Swaraj which is the birth right of every Indian and which he shall have without let or hindrance from the foreigner. Gokhale was on a level with his age, Tilak was in advance of his times."²⁷

Mrs. Annie Besant announced that if the Congress failed to announce a scheme of self-government by September 1, 1916 she would be forced to launch her Home Rule Movement. Getting no response from the Congress, Mrs. Besant launched her All-India Home Rule League on September 3, 1916. Prior to her pledge, Tilak organised an Indian Home Rule League in April 1916 'to attain Home Rule or self-government for India within the British Empire by constitutional means', and 'to educate and organize public opinion in the country towards the attainment of the same'.²⁸ Retaining their separate identities, the two Leagues propagated their programme intensively. The Lucknow Congress in December 1916 saw the re-entry of the Extremists in the Congress. The Home Rulers as the members of the Home Rule Leagues were called demanded self-government while retaining the sovereignty of the Emperor. Emphasising that their demand neither meant anarchy, nor sedition, Tilak said, 'It is an undisputed fact that we should serve our own good under the rule of the English people themselves, under the supervision of the English nation, with the help of the English nation, through the English nation, through their sympathy, through their anxious care and through their high sentiments which they possessed'.²⁹ Desiring a change in the bureaucracy, by appointing Indians in their place, Tilak wanted a beginning to the Home Rule Movement. The Leagues appealed not only to the classes but also to the people. The Home-member

²⁷ Sitarammaya, op. cit., n. 1, p. 99.

²⁸ Mehrotra, op. cit., n. 2, p. 132.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 133.

of the government of India wrote on January 17, 1917: 'The position is one of great difficulty. The moderate leaders can command no support among the vocal classes who are being led at the heels of Tilak and Besant'.³⁰ Mrs. Besant's movement was at its height in 1917. She was elected the President of the Congress in 1917 held at Calcutta. She ushered in a new era by being an active President and taking her responsibilities seriously throughout the year. In this session too the Congress was divided between the Moderates like Surendra Nath Banerjee and the Home Rulers and the Nationalists for whom Calcutta was a vantage point. This group included leaders like I. B. Sen and Jintendralal Banerjee. The announcements on August 20, 1917 by Montague in the House of Commons promising to increase the association of Indians in all the branches of administration and to gradually develop self-governing institutions was a remarkable achievement by the Moderates. But it came with a cost. And it was that the Moderates would oppose the goals and methods of the Extremists and gradually distance themselves from the latter. The Montague-Chelmsford Report published in July 1918 talked of an experiment in introducing democracy in India. The Extremists criticised the report while the Moderates applauded the report. The Congress was virtually split by this time. The Congress met in Bombay in a special session August 1918. The Moderates found themselves in minority and decided to hold a separate conference in the same year. They met in November 1918 and thanked the British government for the reform proposals. But they also warned the government that delaying tactics would only make them loose the Indian support which they, then, commanded. The Congress which met in December 1918 at Delhi with M. M. Malaviya as its President urged the government to grant full responsible government to the provinces. The leading Moderates did not attend the session despite requests by Malaviya. It was clear that the Moderates would never return to the Congress. Moreover, events like inflation, epidemic, scarcity, poverty, mucking uneasiness about Turkey, the Khilafat movement, the Rowlatt Act, the slow response of Westminster and the Jallianawala Bagh massacre threw Moderates in poor light. These events proved that the Moderates' method of functioning was ineffective.

³⁰ Ibid., p.134.

Over the keys of the Toshakhana (Treasury) Baba Kharak Singh won a decisive victory. When Baba Kharak Singh was released, he asked for the release of all the Congress workers connected with the Keys' affair. The keys were delivered to Baba Kharak Singh. With prominent leaders in jail it was because of leaders like Baba Kharak Singh that the non-cooperation movement did not lapse in Punjab. It was because of his efforts that there was a liaison between the Akali Dal and the Central Sikh League on one hand and the Congress on the other. He convinced the Akalis that to have reforms in the Sikh shrines, the Sikhs would have to be involved in the non-cooperation movement for that would compel the Punjab government to stop helping the Mahants.

Baba Kharak Singh was a nationalist who initially believed in the ideals of INC. He cooperated with the INC over its various programmes. One of the pioneers of the Gurudwara Reform Movement he was the first President of old Gurudwara Prabhandhak Committee. He became the President of Punjab Provincial Congress in 1922 and headed the non-co-operation movement in Punjab. Though the government in Punjab tried to win him over by agreeing on the Gurudwara issue, he did not betray the Congress. He moved from one place to another and told the people as to how the British and their bureaucracy were trying to weaken them in the name of religion. Because of him many Sikhs joined the Congress party. He strengthened the bond between the Sikhs and the Congress party. His support to the Congress was proved over the issue of a ban on wearing black turban and Gandhi caps when he was a prisoner in Dera Gazi Khan Jail. Baba Kharak Singh defied the ban. The bureaucracy tried to create differences between the Sikhs and the Congress by allowing Baba Kharak Singh to wear the black turban but refusing to lift the ban on the Gandhi cap. Baba Kharak Singh protested against this policy of divide and rule by refusing to wear any clothes except his short breeches. His was a consistent support to the Congress, but the Nehru Report drove him away from the INC for he felt that the interests of the Sikhs were not looked after. Because of this he kept away from the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Master Tara Singh participated in several Congress activities. Mahatma Gandhi's talks with the former convinced him at the Lahore session that the Congress would look

after the interests of the Sikhs. He played an important role in the Civil Disobedience Movement and encouraged Sikhs to participate in the struggle. Because of his sympathetic attitude towards the Congress he was included in the National Flag Committee which recommended a new translation of the colours of the Flag. He, alongwith Baba Kharak Singh, opposed the Nehru Report.

As a member of All India Congress Committee and Congress Working Committee, Mangal Singh favoured the acceptance of the Nehru report and was imprisoned for two years for his role in the non-cooperation movement. He organised the Jaitu Morcha on Gandhi's techniques. 'He publicly endorsed Gandhi's view that true Gurudwara reform was possible only when India was free and, therefore, the Sikh interest lay in concentrating on the struggle for freedom'.³¹ His views over the Nehru Report led to differences of opinion with a section of the Sikh leadership. He had great regards for Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent technique but not for the latter's programme of Khaddar (khadi). He wrote to Gandhi after a meeting of the All India Congress Committee in which this issue was discussed that he could not follow him in this regard.

Sardul Singh admired Gandhi for his non-violent and non-cooperation techniques. He felt that this technique would deliver India its freedom but he did not adhere to absolute non-violence. When Gandhi withdrew the non-cooperation movement he found fault with Gandhi. He wrote to Gandhi, 'Civil Revolutionaries cannot succeed without attaching utmost importance to non-violence. But we should not be very squeamish about it. Stray aberrations must not upset us very much'.³² He opposed the Swarajists and wanted them to prepare for the Civil Disobedience Movement. He did not believe in the Khadi programme. Over the flag issue he 'realised the danger of giving communal connotation to the colours in the Congress Flag quite early'.³³ He felt that besides the colour, the Charkha (the wheel) represented only a temporary phase of the Indian

³¹ S. L. Malhotra, *Gandhi: An Experiment With Communal Politics, New Delhi*, Shahdara, 1975, p. 182.

³² *Ibid.*, p.184.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

economy. He wanted, a bunch of cotton flowers surrounded by rice and wheat corns would be a better device as cotton flowers would represent our spinning and weaving industry and wheat corns, our peasants and labourers.³⁴

The arrest of Gandhi after the withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement on March 13, 1922 left the Congress floundering. Answers on many questions were to be agreed upon, whether the country was ready for Civil Disobedience, whether the Congress was to enter the Council and paralyse the administration from within. A Committee, comprising of Pt. Motilal Nehru, Vithalbhai J. Patel, Dr. Ansari, S. Kasthuri Ranga Iyengar, Jamnalal Bajaj and C. Rajagopalachari, toured the country to get answers to these questions. Their report clearly stated that the country was not ready for mass civil disobedience but a limited form of it could continue on individual level. The report further stated that elections to the legislative council should be contested and if the contestants returned in a majority they should obstruct the work of the legislatures, by not attending. If returned in minority they should oppose all the measures of the government. So, there was a tussle between those who advocated Council entry and those who didn't. In the All India Congress Committee session which met at Calcutta from November 20 to November 24 1922, it decided that the country was not prepared for mass civil disobedience. About the Council entry decision was to be taken at Gaya Session of the Congress.

At the Gaya session, there was a tremendous battle of arguments between the Pro-changers and No-changers, the cleavage between the two in the meanwhile having become more pronounced³⁵ The Pro-changers who wanted Council Entry were led by intellectual giants like, Pt. Motilal Nehru, Deshbandhu C. R. Das and S. Srinivasa Iyengar. They believed in 'fighting the bureaucracy from within the legislatures and weakening them'.³⁶ But the No-changers won in this session by passing a resolution

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Zaidi, op. cit., n.14, p. 72.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 73.

which showed loyalty to Gandhi by not agreeing to the Council entry. Adherence to the policy reflected Gandhi's popularity as the undisputed leader of India though he was behind the bars.

Not to be defeated, C. R. Das meanwhile drew up a constitution of the New Party- The Swaraj Party. Das had two previous documents in his pocket when he delivered the Presidential address at the Gaya Congress - 'one was the Presidential Address and other his resignation from the Presidentship, together with the constitution of the Swaraj Party'.³⁷ The party was launched the same year (1922). The Delhi session marked a triumph of the pro-changers regarding Council entry. The resolution while appealing to continuance of constructive programme said, "Such Congressmen as have no religious or conscientious objection against entering the legislature are at liberty to stand as candidates and to exercise their right of voting at the forthcoming elections. And the Congress, therefore, suspends all propaganda against entering the councils".³⁸ At the general session at Cocanada in 1923, the previous resolutions on Council entry were confirmed, though non-cooperation was reaffirmed as the confirmed policy of the Congress. After Gandhi's release in 1924, Pt. Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das apprised him of the programme of the Swaraj Party. They wanted his support and wanted the Swaraj Party not work merely as an autonomous wing of the Congress but to make their programme the entire responsibility of the organisation.³⁹ Gandhi blessed them to continue Swaraj Party as a separate entity and if they realised that their efforts regarding Council entry were fruitless to return to the fold by coming out of the Councils. In the elections, the Swarajists were returned with an overwhelming majority. They proved their word by exposing the autocratic and despotic rule of the British in India. In the Central Assembly, they demanded a responsible self-government, an immediate change in the constitutional machinery and release of political prisoners. The differences in views of Gandhi, Nehru and Das disappeared when Gandhi saw the Swarajists' victory and the

³⁷ Sitarammaya, op. cit., n. 1, p. 252.

³⁸ Zaidi, op. cit., n.14, p. 75.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 77.

indifference of his followers regarding his constructive programme. Gandhi gave his blessing to the tactics of the Swarajists. He said, 'I would strive for Swaraj within the Empire but would not hesitate to sever all connection, if severance became a necessity through Britain's own fault'.⁴⁰

In 1924, with Gandhi's release the no-changers hoped to get Congress back on Civil Disobedience. The Swarajists, the pro-changers wanted to consolidate their position. The Swarajists in the All India Congress Committee session which met in Bombay on November 21 and 22, 1924 declared that the Non-cooperation would have to be suspended as a national programme. The Belgaum Congress in 1924 with Gandhi as its President saw the revolt against Gandhism. Gandhi supported the entry to the Councils and kept the balance between the pro-changers and the no-changers. The year 1925 saw the work of the Swarajists in the Councils with their obstructionist tactics. 'Deshbandhu Das's programme of weakening the councils from within was thus a complete success'.⁴¹ At the Faridpur session, Das diluted his demand by saying that 'Provided some real responsibility is transformed to the people, there is no reason why we should not cooperate with the government'.⁴² Gandhi said at the same time that he could see no change of heart for reconciliation. At Patna in the All India Congress Committee meeting on September 21, 1925 all control was handed over to the Swaraj Party.

Deshbandhu Das left for his heavenly abode on June 16 1925. After Das's death Gandhi tried to put the Swarajists at ease. The Swarajists condemned Gandhi's principles on one hand but desired his leadership. When the All India Congress Committee met at Patna on September 21 1925, the Swaraj Party had become the Congress itself. The conflict 'a partition of the Congress between the apostles of the Council and those of Khaddar'.⁴³ Soon after Das's death, schisms rose between the Swarajists over the

⁴⁰ Sitarammaya, op. cit., n. 1, p. 278.

⁴¹ Zaidi, op. cit., n.14, p. 80.

⁴² Zaidi, op. cit., n.14, p. 81.

⁴³ Sitarammaya, op. cit., n. 1, p. 290.

control over the aspirations of the different sections of its members. They included people like Moonji Kelkar who resigned from the Swaraj Party Executive Council as well as the Legislative Council over the propaganda of Responsive Cooperation. The Responsivists carved a new party, 'Indian National Party', to 'accelerate the existence of Swaraj of the Dominion type, by all peaceful and legitimate means (excluding Mass Disobedience and non-payment of Taxes) with liberty to resort inside the legislature to Responsive Co-operation'.⁴⁴ They, the responsivists, wanted to work on the reforms while the Swarajists, led by Motilal Nehru wanted a continuance of the Faridpur resolutions. A reconciliation between the two factions was tried but the relations grew strained. Pt. Motilal Nehru walked out of the Assembly with all the members of his party as the government had ignored Das's ideas of co-operation. Lala Lajpat Rai thought that the walk out was against the progress of the Hindus. Due to clash of ideas between Lalaji and Pt. Motilal Nehru, the former resigned from the Congress Party in the Assembly. In the November General elections in 1926 in Madras, the Congress came out with flying colours. The results justified the policy of the Swaraj Party in the Legislatures.

In United Provinces, the Swaraj Party was routed and Pt. Motilal Nehru blamed the Nationalists for the defeat. The All Parties Conference in 1928, which met in Lucknow in August, declared in favour of Dominion self-government. Others who wanted complete independence declared so and formed an Independence League. Subhash Chandra had his own League of People from Bengal, when they converged for the All India Congress Committee session in Calcutta in December 1928.

At the Lucknow session on September 28, 1929 the representatives were by and large disgusted with the Council members and the party-workers wanted them to resign. The Lahore Congress, which met in 1929 declared complete independence as its goal. Differences which were internal in Bengal became public between Subhash Babu and Pt. Moti Lal Nehru. Mr. S. Iyenger and S. Chandra Bose wanted elections for the Working

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 300.

Committee. When this was not adhered to they walked out and formed the Congress Democratic Party at Lahore.

Meanwhile, after the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia many radical nationalists who were disillusioned with the non-operation movement got attracted to communism. Singaravelu, the leader of the communist group of Madras was the first to declare at Bodh Gaya session of the Congress in 1922 that he was a communist. Some prominent INC members, left-minded intellectuals and members of the British Labour Party encouraged the formation of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC). The first conference of All India Trade Union Congress was held on October 30, 1920 in Bombay. Lala Lajpat Rai, in his Presidential address, said that the Indian protestant was joining “hands and brains” not only to protect its own interests but also to forge a link in the chain of international brotherhood’.⁴⁵ Tilak compared Bolshevik principles with the teachings of the Bhagvad Gita. The Communist Party of India (CPI) was founded at Tashkent on October 7, 1920 to coordinate the activities of the various Communist groups which had emerged in India. The communist movement was given an impetus because of the disillusionment of some nationalists with the Non-cooperation Movement of 1921. The militants had appealed to the masses and thus rallied them but the militants had ‘appealed exclusively to their nationalists and religious feelings because most of these extremists were petty bourgeois or bourgeoisie intellectual who showed little interest in developing the class consciousness of the protestants. And their militancy was practically devoid of a social and economic programme’.⁴⁶ A Manifesto signed by M. N. Roy and Abani Mukherji, on behalf of the Communist Party of India, criticized the efforts of Gandhi on lighter causes like Khilafat. The Manifesto was addressed to the 36th INC held at Ahmedabad. They wanted efforts which would give “land to the peasants and bread to the workers”.⁴⁷ Gandhi was criticised because he tried to put on leash the anti-imperialist mood of the masses through Non-cooperation. On the other

⁴⁵ S. N. Talwar, *Under the Banyan Tree*, Bombay, Allied, 1985, p. 8.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 3.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 12-13.

hand, the Communists led by Dange believed that the nation could be liberated only by the labourers and the peasants and for this the education, organisation and uprising of the peasantry was essential. There was inherent differences regarding the methods by which the Marxists wanted to end the two evils – fast developing capitalism and foreign rule. The Communists thus struggled not only against the imperialists but also against the native vested interests. The suspension of non-cooperation movement was regarded, ‘as a direct betrayal of the forces which were at Gandhi’s command’, the betrayal was inevitable because Gandhi sought to overthrow imperialism, without crushing Indian landlordism and capitalism, a historical impossibility, because the three were bound together.⁴⁸ Leaders like M. N. Roy and EMS Namboodripad, who had at Gandhi’s call joined the anti-imperialist movement, were dismayed at the suspension. M. N. Roy did not help the Socialist Labour Party of Dange but praised Dange’s ‘*Socialist*’, a communist publication. He even asked Dange to organise a conference of all the communists and form a party. Roy advocated an “Action Programme, the goal of which was abolition of landlordism, complete independence, distribution of land to the peasantry and nationalisation of big industries. He got his programme circulated in the Gaya Session of 1922 but it was not accepted. The Convention did not want M. N. Roy to form a new party. Though the Communist Party of India was formed in 1920, it adopted in August 18, 1959 at the Kanpur Communist Conference as the date of its foundation. It was decided so in 1920 that it had no link with the national liberation movement and had neither a constitution nor a programme. Till 1925 the Communist movement in India was weak and scattered. In 1923, efforts were made to organise a centralised party but the conference at Lucknow could not take place because most of the leaders had been arrested in connection with the Kanpur conspiracy case. Besides, being ideologically mature, the British government with its propaganda against the Communists drew a wedge between the communists and the militant left-wingers of the INC. The government appealed to the middle class that the success of Marxism would only lead to

⁴⁸ Tesec, A. Ezekiel, *Swaraj or Surrender* (Bombay, n.d.), quoted by Tilak Raj Sareen, *Russian Revolution and India (1922-1929)*, New Delhi, Sterling, 1978, p.20 quoted by Talwar, *ibid.*, p. 15.

its annihilation for it was a fight to finish the bourgeoisie as a class. In the Kanpur session, itself on December 26, 1925, which was held alongside the session of the Congress, there was a split between Satya Bhakta Mohani, Singaravelu and Muzaffer Ahmed and others in which Satya Bhakta walked out. The Communist Party of India succeeded in orienting the Congress towards radicalisation. The people were disillusioned with the non-cooperation movement of Gandhi. The Madras Congress in 1927 demanded complete independence for India which was vehemently opposed by Gandhi. Besides others, Jawaharlal Nehru was an ardent supporter of Soviet Union because 'communism for whatever its faults, it was at least not hypocritical and not imperialistic'.⁴⁹ In the INC session held in Calcutta in December 1928, Gandhi wanted the resolution that Dominion status should be accepted for India if the British Parliament gave a positive nod to the Nehru Constitution entirely within a year. Others like Bose and Nehru wanted complete independence. Though their resolution was defeated by 973 to 1353 votes, yet it showed the influence of the left-wing. In October-November 1928, the radicals in the Congress like Iyengar, Nehru and Bose had formed the Independence of India League. The dual objects of the League were to achieve complete independence for India and also to reconstruct the society on the basis of social and economic equality. The INC at its annual session in 1928 declared that the struggle of the Indian people for freedom was a part of the general world struggle against imperialism and its manifestations.⁵⁰ In 1929, the INC passed a resolution for 'complete independence' at its Lahore session. In the Meerut conspiracy case which the government started out of the 31 prisoners, 8 were members of the Congress Working Committee. Gandhi was shocked with Nehru's ideas concerning complete independence at the Madras Congress in December 1927. Gandhi thought that 'such resolutions as the one for national independence made the Congress a "laughing stock of critics" and were "ill-conceived"'.

⁴⁹ M.N. Roy, *India in Tradition*, Geneva, J.B. Target, 1922, pp. 20-21, quoted in Talwar, op. cit., p. 43.

⁵⁰ Talwar, op. cit. n. 45, p. 45.

The Congressmen had “almost sunk to the level of school-boys’ debating society”.⁵¹ Later Gandhi won Nehru over and supported his candidature as the President of the Lahore Session in 1929. The Lahore session of the Congress saw the expulsion of all the left-wing elements, including Iyengar and Bose from the Congress Working Committee. Though the Communists worked with the INC on some national movements yet the right-wing leadership of the Congress was dominating and distrusted the communists. The Communists and the left-Congressmen joined on the trade union front. Even in the trade union movement there was distrust between the communist leaders and the INC. The latter remained at the helm of affairs without doing any effective work at the grass root level. Efforts, at this level, were done by the communist workers. The Communists resented this behaviour of the Congress members. The differences were also because the Communists did not want to compromise on the national movement and they wanted the money collected to be used for the activities of the trade union to improve the conditions of the proletariat. The Congress, on the other hand, wanted the funds to go to the general fund. Gandhi disliked the trade union movement and the Swarajists only provided lip service to the movement. It was the communists only who extended support to the workers. They emphasised more on economic rather than political demands.

The year 1930 saw the launching of the Civil Disobedience Movement. The Movement, as decided by All India Congress Committee in the Ahmedabad session which met on March 21, 1930, called the Nation to start Civil Disobedience only when Gandhi violated the salt law himself. Gandhi began his march on March 12, 1930 and it lasted for 24 days. In the Round Table Conference on November 12, 1930 the peace negotiations failed though Sapru and Jayakar tried. Gandhi stated that a constitutional scheme would be acceptable to him only if it allowed India to secede from the Empire and another if a clause gave India the right to deal with his eleven points which included release of prisoners, restoration of properties, repeal of Ordinance etc. The Nehrus wanted consensus on all the vital matters and did not agree to Gandhi’s constitutional scheme ‘for it did not fit in with the position and pledges of the Congress or the realities

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 51.

of the day.⁵² The Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931 failed to take in the interests of the peasants into account. The abrupt suspension of the Civil Disobedience in 1932 and then its resumption in 1932 and again suspension in 1934 filled the peasants with shock against the Congress.

In the Karachi session of 1931 the Congressmen differed from the point on the Bhagat Singh resolution. While the Congress admired the bravery of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Raj Guru, it dissociated itself from and disapproved of political violence in any shape of form.⁵³ Gandhi started his self-purificatory fast of 21 days on May 8, 1933 with the object of increasing the number of workers in the Harijan movement to fulfill their work with a pure and true spirit of service. Gandhi was released the same day and he announced the suspension of Civil Disobedience Movement for 6 weeks. Vithalbhai J. Patel and Subash Chandra Bose issued a statement from Vienna calling the suspension of Civil Disobedience Movement as a confusion of Gandhi's failure as a political leader. They called for the Congress undergoing a change in favour of more radical methods. If this could not be done then a new organisation would have to be formed within the Congress which would comprise of elements which were more radical in nature and in its methods. The Individual Satyagraha was launched. Meanwhile, some Congressmen met at Delhi on March 31, 1933 under the Presidentship of Dr. Ansari. They wanted a new line of action thus, denied to enter the Legislatures and to oppose the government thus enabling those Congressmen to action who were not offering Individual Satyagraha. These men wanted to participate in the forthcoming elections to the Legislative Assembly. They had a dual aim (i) to get all the repressive laws repealed and (ii) to get the national demand passed on the lines decided by Gandhi at the Round Table Conference. Mahatma Gandhi gave his blessings to those leaders though he was against participation. These Congressmen wanted to revive the Swarajist Party. In the Conference convened at Ranchi on May 2 and 3, 1934 a revised constitution of the Swaraj Party was adopted which clearly stated that in all the broad policies, the Swaraj

⁵² Sitarammaya, op. cit., n. 1, p. 422.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 456.

Party would be guided by the INC but in matters of internal administration and party finance the Swaraj Party would be independent. In the Patna session on May 18 and 19, 1934 the All-India Congress Committee passed a resolution concerning the Swaraj Party which appointed Pt. M. M. Malaviya and Dr. Ansari to form a board to run and control elections of members of the Legislature on behalf of the Congress. In the Patna session, the Civil Disobedience Movement was given up and the programme to enter the Councils was geared up. The same month of May 1934 saw the birth of Socialist Party. Holding the first meeting at Patna under the Presidentship of Acharya Narendra Dev on May 17 1934 it made itself clear on the question of Council entry and the textile strike. The Bombay session of October 28, 1934 saw Gandhi retire from the Congress. After the conclusion of the session the nation got busy in the elections. The Congress nationalists under Pt. Malaviya and Mr. Aney supported Congress on all matters except the communal question. Socialism caught the imagination of the people, especially the youth. The Congress Socialist Party which was formed within the INC was gradually overshadowed by the Communist Party.

In the Lucknow Session of the Congress in April 1937, the Liberal thought within the Congress proposed that the Congress should accept office. So the dual programme of preparing the election manifesto as well as shaping the Agrarian programme were left to the All India Congress Committee. The two issues were linked as the latter would be fulfilled if the INC came into office.

Meanwhile, the idea of adopting radical ideologies was spreading fast. Socialism seemed to be the answer for economic nationalism, seemed to arouse the people at large. Indian socialism concentrated on masses rather than the classes. Indian socialists have believed in the State and have not preached it's withering away. They have, thus, not propagated violent methods and have given a new dimension to socialism by keeping it within the parliamentary framework. The Swadeshi movement gave further impetus to the socialistic ideas. The First World War resulted in the growth of a small organised class of labour. This had led to the formation of the All India Trade Union Congress in 1928. Moreover, since 1920 representatives of the Labour Party came to attend the

annual session of the INC. The Brussels Conference of 1927 inspired Jawaharlal Nehru to the extent that he introduced Congress to socialism. A number of trade unions, student and youth organisations grew all over the country. But Gandhi's ideas like undeveloped factory – stage civilization in India, faith in religious rituals, were obstacles in the growth of socialism. Liberals like Dadabhai Naoroji, M.G. Ranade , R.C. Dutt and G.K. Gokhale stressed the need to improve the indigenous industries and economic development to meet the growing economic aspirations of the new social ideas mostly composed of the professional middle classes'.⁵⁴ Dadabhai spoke of exploitation of a nation by a nation and talked of 'the moral drain' that the British government was inflicting on the Indian people. Ranade opposed state capitalism and founded the Indian social conference devoted to the socio-economic problems in India. He wanted a social system based on social justice and equity. R.C. Dutt exposed the land policy of the government which led to antagonism between the landlords and the peasants. Gokhale openly asserted that the government had created an economic mess and spoke against the rising salt prices in the country. 1922-32 was an important decade in the growth of socialism and many leaders connected with the INC led the way. Lala Lajpat Rai presided over the First session of the All India Trade Union Congress and critically analysed the evils of the capitalist system and wanted India to have independent labour organisations. The election of Nehru as the president of the All India Trade Union Congress in 1928 initiated the tilt towards Marxian communism. His return in 1927 from Brussels Congress led to the growth of the radical socialist ideology in the Congress as well in the Indian Trade Union Movement. He did not like the moderates for he thought that they did not think in terms of economic, except in terms of the new upper class which they partly represented and which wanted room for expansion.⁵⁵

Subash Chandra Bose supported Nehru in forming the Indian League for Independence. After Nehru's resignation from the All India Trade Union Congress in

⁵⁴ Akhilendra Prasad Rai, *Socialist Thought in Modern India*, Meenakshi, Meerut , 1974, p. 20.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 66.

1929 Bose himself became the President. A left-winger and a radical he wanted a synthesis between communism and fascism. Discarding Gandhism he preferred communism as the former didn't talk of social reconstruction as the latter did. Narendra Deva joined the extremist group led by Tilak, Pal and Ghose rather than the moderates like Pherozeshah Mehta, Gokhale and Surendranath Bannerji. Having a deep insight into the Marxian theories he knew the importance of economic factors in making the social structure. In 1939, presiding over the All-India Kisan Sabha at Gaya, he urged the peasants to organise themselves independently of the Congress. He stressed on 'social revolution', 'economic struggle' and thought that any revolutionary change could be brought about only when the economic struggle is linked with the national movement for independence. He maintained that the Congress Socialist Party was a party which aimed for economic emancipation as well as democratic freedom i.e. social democracy. Disagreeing with Gandhi's techniques of Satyagraha, he thought independence would not be attained through those methods. Jayaprakash Narayan (J. P.) on his return to India in 1929 was asked by Jawaharlal Nehru to organise the Labour Research Department of the INC. He did not join the Communist Party because of its anti-nationalist stand. At the first gathering of the Congress Socialist Party, J.P. was elected as the Organising Secretary of the new party, i.e. Congress Socialist Party. He exhorted every Congressman to adopt socialism. Criticising the non-violent method of Gandhi and INC he 'urged the people to develop a mass movement – comprising the working classes and the peasants against the government'.⁵⁶ In 1934, he became the General Secretary of the Congress Socialist Party at Bombay and in 1936 at Faizpur he was elected the Chairman. When Gandhi announced Individual Satyagraha, J.P. opposed Mahatma Gandhi. J. P. believed in class struggle and insurrectionary methods to achieve both national as well as socialist aims.

Ram Manohar Lohia criticized the constructive programmes of Mahatma Gandhi. One of the founding fathers of Congress Socialist Party, he opposed military recruitment and opposed contribution to the war loans. Opposed to Gandhi's non-violence Lohia

⁵⁶ File No. 36/3/34 Poll. Government of India, Home Department, p. 11.

justified insurrectionary violence. The Congress Socialist Party was formed by those young men who felt the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 and 1932 was a failure along with the failure of the Gandhi-Irwin pact of 1931 and the two successive Round Table Conferences. Though the Congress Socialist Party was organised as a radical group within the Congress, they did not accept parliamentary methods. Disgusted with the soft and compromising methods of the Congress the Congress Socialist Party believed in radical methods of struggle like underground activities, sabotage, arms and insurrection.

In the Faizpur session of December 1936, there was a clash of ideas between Jawaharlal Nehru and Patel. The former talked of India gradually becoming a democratic state, the goal of which would be to have great changes in the political and economic structures. Such a change would 'lead to socialism. For that seems to me the only the remedy for India's economic ills'.⁵⁷ And the latter believed that capitalism could be purged of all its hideousness by weaning away those who are exploiting the masses mercilessly away from this idea.

In 1937, internal dissensions forced the Congress to rethink its strategy. Nehru, as Congress President had differed from Gandhi, by forcing the Congress Ministries to resign and confronting Gandhi regarding the Congress support to Britain in the war. With Patel and Rajagopalachari at his side, Nehru differed with Gandhi regarding non-violence and sympathies with Britain. Gandhi and his lieutenants parted because of ideological differences.

The Congressmen were in the beginning divided among themselves regarding the question of acceptance of office. The group supported by Gandhiji favoured acceptance while the other group led by Jawaharlal Nehru opposed. In March 1937, Jawaharlal Nehru agreed and the group searched for a leader. They found the leader in Subas~~h~~ Chander Bose. A radical, he differed in his views from Mahatma Gandhi. The latter coerced him into accepting office of the President of the INC. Bose presided over the

⁵⁷ P. Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, Bombay, Padma, 1946, p. 34.

session of the Congress at Haripure (Gujarat) on February 19, 1938. He stressed on resisting the unwanted federal scheme because of its undemocratic and anti-national features. It was clear from the beginning that there were differences between him and Mahatma Gandhi. Bose's open propaganda after the Munich Congress in September, 1938 calling the Indian people for a national struggle finally raised a wall between him and the Gandhian wing of the Congress. The election of Bose as the President of INC in 1938 made the Socialists at ease regarding Gandhi's leadership. 'Though no Socialist joined the new Working Committee of the Congress, the Congress Socialist Party felt that its interests were adequately protected by the presence of Subash Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru on the Committee'.⁵⁸

The breach between Mahatma Gandhi's followers and Bose led to the former supporting Pattabhi Sitaramayya for the post of President of INC in the next Congress session in 1939. Bose was re-elected and he exhorted the INC to ask for independence within six months. The speech of Bose was not well-received and Mahatma Gandhi's supporters placed their loyalty and trust to Mahatma Gandhi. Bose resigned from the post to set up a new Party – The Forward Bloc. 'The negotiations between Mahatma Gandhi and writer (Bose) revealed that on the one side, the Gandhians would not follow the lead of the writer and that on the other, the writer would not agree to be a puppet President. There was consequently, no other alternative, but to resign the Presidentship'.⁵⁹ The Forward Bloc had a large number of radical militants and young members of the Congress. Immediately after the outbreak of the Second World War, Bose and his political faction demanded that the British constitute a provisional government of Indians as a pre-condition for India joining the war.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Visalakashi Menon, *From Movement to Government: The Congress in the United Provinces, 1937-42*, New Delhi, Sage, 2003, p. 182.

⁵⁹ Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Volume Four, Ministry of Education, Government of India, New Delhi, Publications Division, 1983, p. 274.

⁶⁰ J. N. Dixit, *Makers of India's Foreign Policy – Raja Ram Mohan Roy to Yashwant Sinha*, Delhi, Harper-Collins, 2004, p. 58.

Gandhi on the defeat of Pattabhi uttered that it was his own defeat. This led to the delegates reemphasizing their support to Gandhi. Bose's new party in September 1939 gained strength with the support of the Youth League who were not satisfied with the Congress's "lack of a militant programme".⁶¹

The War in 1940 offered new faces to the Indian national movement. Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh did not agree with the INC's boycott of Britain. The nationalists had been repeating since 1936 that they would not support Britain as their support in the First World War had fetched them the cruel Rowlatt Act and the innocent massacre in Jallianwala Bagh. The Congress was divided on the issue of supporting the Imperial power. Gandhi and his band of followers were sympathetic to Britain and offered moral support. The Left forces did not want India to participate in the war as it was, according to them, an "imperialist war". They wanted to launch a Civil Disobedience Movement. Jawaharlal Nehru and the majority of the Congressmen had their sympathies with Britain but promised support only if India was promised full independence. This resolution of Jawaharlal Nehru evoked mixed response. The radicals and the Left groups reacted strongly for they felt that in case of a negative reply by Britain a clear call for mass movement had not been given by the Working Committee. Gandhi disliked the idea of supporting Britain in War as it would go against his tenets of non-violence. Difference arose between him and other members of the Working Committee as the former felt that building up an armed strength of India would go against non-violence. The latter thought that this idea was unrealistic. 'Gandhi lamented that he was out of tune with the Congress – that perhaps someone else should assume the reins of leadership'.⁶² The people were ready for Civil disobedience but Gandhi's statement on November 4, 1939 dampened the spirit of many people. Gandhi felt that the people were not ready for civil disobedience as the Muslim League felt that the Congress was an enemy of the Muslims. The launching of the Movement would lead to riots

⁶¹ Visalakshi Menon, op. cit., n. 58, p. 141.

⁶² Gandhi's letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, October 26, 1939, *CWNG*, Vol. 70, p. 297, quoted in Visalakshi Menon, *ibid.*, p. 261.

between the two communities. In Ramgarh, the INC session was addressed by Gandhi after a gap of four years. Gandhi could see factionalism and indiscipline within the Congressmen; so he tried to discipline the Congress members by asking them to become Satyagrahis. The Congress Committees would be converted into Satyagraha Committees and only those members who believed in Satyagraha would be members of such committees, the others could tender their resignation. The members were confused at such steps.

The worsening situation of Britain in war led to panic in India. The people forgot Gandhi's message of non-violence and armed themselves for self-defence. The resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee at Wardha on June 21, 1940 declared its inability to go along with Gandhi and his non-violent methods. Thus it relieved Gandhi of the responsibility of leading the Congress. At an emergency meeting in Delhi, the same year, in July a resolution framed by C. Rajagopalachari was adopted which called 'for an unequivocal declaration of India's independence and the immediate creation of such a provisional National Government as would "command the confidence of all the elected members in the Central Legislature'.⁶³ This further created internal differences among the Congressmen. The resolution stated only if this happened, Congress would be able to effectively organise the defence of the country. Jawaharlal Nehru, Narendra Dev and Patwardhar voted against the resolution while Sardar Patel, Rajaji, Pattabhi Sitarammya voted in favour of the resolution. Jaya Prakash Narain felt that Rajaji had betrayed them and suggested Nehru to leave the Congress and set up his own association. The Congress leadership was torn by serious internal differences. When the All India Congress Committee met at Poona on July 28, 1940, the resolution was again debated and passed. Leaders like Nehru, Prasad, Kriplani remained neutral along with 40 members. After the Poona meeting except four members of the Working Committee, all the members tendered their resignations for they felt India should not take part in the war. Their terms were accepted and the resolution was forgotten. Rajaji's suggestion of accommodation in June-July 1940 had not given the desired results but only given rise to multi-polar

⁶³ Visalakashi Menon, *op. cit.*, n. 58, p. 281.

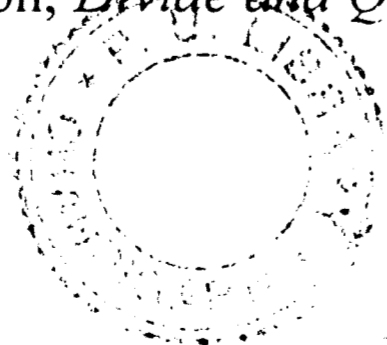
differences among the leaders. When Gandhi called off the second phase of Individual Satyagraha in June 1941, Rajaji, Nehru and Azad rose in revolt against him but Patel remained with his Guru. Gandhi did not want to lose him the second time. In the All India Congress Committee meeting in April-May, Gandhi had trained Patel to make the Congress accept the policy of non-violent non-cooperation. Patel defeated Nehru on a resolution which was drafted by Gandhi and moved by Rajendra Prasad. He rebutted Nehru on the Cripps proposal and Rajaji in regard to Jinnah.

In 1942, the news of the War was discouraging. The leaders were thinking on the action which they were expected to take in the case of Japanese invading India. Nehru wanted India to effectively look after its defence and make the war a concern of the masses. He wanted to fight on the side of the nation which safeguarded democracy. Azad wanted the INC to organise people to resist the Japanese and did not have much faith in non-violence. Gandhi thought in terms of non-violence, non-cooperation and trusting the British sense of justice and could not think of India's supporting the Japanese. Rajaji wanted the acceptance of the Muslim League demand which talked of Pakistan 'and the revival of provincial popular governments which had ceased to function since October – November 1939'.⁶⁴ He did not agree with Gandhi's method of non-violence and wanted to establish a common united front to resist the British. He wanted to reform the Congress Ministry in Madras. Rajaji was against the 'Quit India' demand and said that it would be a crime for the British to leave India 'without simultaneous replacement by another government'.⁶⁵ It 'must involve the dissolution of the state and society itself'.⁶⁶ He also asked the Congress to accept the idea of Pakistan on which he was defeated. On the defeat of the proposal, he resigned from the Congress Working Committee and continued on his agitation. In July on the advice of S. Vallabhai Patel, Gandhi asked Rajaji to resign from the primary membership of the Congress. He did so on July 15, 1942. Jagat Narain Lal's proposal was passed which said that the Congress would not let

⁶⁴ Tara Chand, op. cit., n. 59, Volume Four, p. 368.

⁶⁵ Penderal Moon, *Divide and Quit*, London, Chatto and Windus, 1961, p. 27.

⁶⁶ Ibid.



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or encourage any part of India to secede. The leaders were divided over India's role in the war. The Congress Working Committee which met at Allahabad on April 27, 1942 was conspicuous of Gandhi's absence who advocated negotiating with the Japanese. The Congress leaders did not want to become passive partners of the Axis powers for unlike Gandhi they did not believe that Japan was the lesser of the two evils. This was inconsistent with the policy which the Congress had been following since the past two years.

The Sikhs were divided among themselves regarding their status quo. But till 1942-3, the Akalis hoped that the idea of Pakistan would not materialize. Pakistan would mean leaving two million of their brethren along with important shrines in Pakistan. Due to the efforts of Mr. Short, a British officer, a pact, Sikander-Baldev Singh Pact, was worked upon for a Muslim-Sikh accord. This led to a pact between the Unionists and the Akalis. The latter became a Minister in the Punjab Cabinet. The success of this pact was seen when the Akalis rebelled against Gandhi's programme in August 1942. A majority of the Akalis did not take part in his programme and abstained from any activity which would embarrass the Punjab Government. Sikander's death led to the termination of the pact.

The Sikhs asked the British government to hand over powers to a single authority i.e. the Congress and if this was not to happen, they demanded their own separate state. The British, if it wanted to carry out negotiations with the Sikh community, would have to do this with Master Tara Singh, S. Baldev Singh and Giani Kartar Singh. For them the importance of Master Tara Singh lay in his being "the Sikh leader with greatest personal following", of Baldev Singh because of his "wealth and standing as a member of the Governor General's Council" and to them Giani Kartar Singh was "a typical party boss".⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Shiv Kumar Gupta, "Politics behind partition of the Punjab (1940-47)" in *Giani Kartar Singh, A Commemorative Volume*, (ed.) Jasdev Singh Sandhu Patiala, S. Jasdev Singh Sandhu Foundation, 2001, p. 155.

The elections and the result of 1937 had permanently created a rift between the Congress and the Muslim League. The demand for Pakistan was on the rise. Gandhiji's arrest in the Quit India Movement and his self-purificatory fast from February 10, 1943 to March 3, 1943 evoked worldwide interest to set him and the other leaders free. The government promised to release them only when 'the Congress repudiated its resolution of Quit India, withdrew the Civil disobedience movement and promised to cooperate in the war effort'.⁶⁸ Gandhiji was released on May 5, 1944 and it marked the end of Gandhian era. The Indian nationalists wanted a revision of the Gandhian methods of non-violent non-cooperation. What followed till 1947 was spontaneous revolution by different groups with the INC designing independence first and then solution of communal rift while the Muslim League wanted a clear cut policy of the Congress first and then independence. While Bose waged his own battle, Gandhi's talks with Jinnah continued who was in no mood to reconcile with the INC fearing the latter's dominance. Gandhi's talks with Jinnah did not find favour with Patel. He wrote to Gandhi showing his dissent and his going away from Gandhi. 'Patel seemed to have considered the Gandhi-Jinnah Bombay talks as the 'Munich of India' in so far as Gandhi's spirit of conciliation was interpreted as a gross weakness of the Congress as a Party'.⁶⁹

The year 1945 even saw differences between Patel and Maulana Kalam Azad. In the 1937 elections, Patel had full powers as the Chairman of the Parliamentary Board. In 1945, Azad kept these powers with him. They both differed first on the issue of Congress support to non-party organisations. Patel believed that the Congress would be finished if they let independent organisations have their own Election boards. Patel was approached by Master Tara Singh on the Akali growing discontent and Azad asked them to be referred to him. Patel didn't believe in appeal to Azad by different organisations after the Central Board's decision. This would have led to indiscipline. In 1946, Ministry in Sind had to be formed after the Assembly elections. Patel went to Karachi to defeat Jinnah by not letting him form a League Ministry while Azad dreamt of an Congress-League

⁶⁸ Tara Chand, op. cit., n. 59, p. 391.

⁶⁹ B. Krishna, *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, India's Iron Man*, New Delhi, Indus, , p. 217.

coalition. Had Patel got his way, the idea of Pakistan would have been nipped in the bud. Azad did not let Patel have his way and saw to it that it ended up with a coalition. Even in Punjab, the Patel-Azad differences took its toll. Punjab was the key province of the idea of Pakistan. Azad was opposed to Gopi Chand Bhargava's election as the leader of the legislative party even though the latter enjoyed Khizar's confidence. The biggest strategic mistake of Congress and Azad was the latter's support to the election of Bhim Sen Sachar who had hardly any support. Patel was dismayed at the disunity which showed in the Congress ranks of which the Unionists and the Akalis were taking advantage of. Patel had calculated a win with Bhargava as his trump card which would have thrown Punjab in the Congress's lap but Sachar's weak leadership led to the deteriorating of ties between Khizr and the local Congress leaders. Baldev Singh wrote in a letter to Patel, 'If some collaboration with Malik Sahib (Khizar) is still contemplated, only to keep the Muslim League out, it is most essential now not to encourage anti-Gopichand party men... Malik Sahib has made it plain that, if the Congress do not want his collaboration, he should not be made to accept men on whom he cannot rely. He is quite prepared to have the collaboration of Dr. Gopichand and of such Congressmen on whom Malik Sahib and Gopichand can agree.'⁷⁰

Patel knew that a compromise of the Congress with the Akalis was essential and Unionists were essential to defeat Jinnah in Punjab and for the Congress's own well-being. The differences between Patel and Azad led to Congress failure in Bengal, Punjab and Sind. If Gandhi had asked Azad to step down from the Presidential chair, Patel would have got the desired results in India's favor and Pakistan would have never seen the light of the day. Gandhi made Patel withdraw his name in favour of Nehru for the election of the Congress President after Azad because J. P., the Socialists, Azad and the Nationalist Muslims were all anti-Patel. The repercussions of this disunity were many. In the League there was only one leader while the Congress was infested with many. Sitaramayya has written, 'While the Muslim League spokesman was one single individual leader ... the Congress had more than one leader ... a non-official leader in

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 236.

Gandhi; an official leader in Maulana, a defacto leader in Jawaharlal and a dynamic leader in the Sardar. This four pronged leadership and diplomacy not only stood in glaring contrast with the unity of command in the League, but also seemed to widen the range of possibilities for the Viceroy to excuse his appeals and exhortations on different temperaments, in different ways and to different purposes.⁷¹

The election results in 1945 were completely different than those in 1937. This time the Unionist Party was routed in Punjab and left the way for Muslim League. The election of Labour Party in Britain made it clear that British wanted to leave India and go. But on whom would they thrust this responsibility? The Cabinet Mission in 1946 tried to give the answers. But the Sikh population feared domination by the Muslims, especially after the rout of the Unionist party, in the elections. The Cabinet Mission proved to be a failure because of the last minute intervention of Gandhi. The Cabinet Mission interviewed Sikh leaders to ask them their wishes. Master Tara Singh was for a united India and a coalition government of all communities. He was against the partition of the country. In case of partition he wanted a separate independent state with the right to either attach with Hindustan or Pakistan. Harnam Singh pleaded for more strength for the Sikhs in the Constituent Assembly. Giani Kartar Singh felt that the Sikhs would be insecure in both a united as well as a divided India. He wanted that the Muslims should be given 57 per cent of the Punjab territory and the Sikhs should get a dominant portion in the remainder. Baldev Singh stood for a 'united India with safeguards for minorities in the form of weighted communal proportions in the Legislatures'.⁷² Finally, the Prime Minister of Britain, Mr. Atlee announced their intention of leaving India not later than July 1948. This meant partition. The Mountbatten Plan was accepted by all the parties and India a country of two nations – as asserted by the Muslim League – divided into two – India and Pakistan.

⁷¹ "Sardar Patel's Correspondence", Vol. III, p.314, quoted in B. Krishna, *ibid.*, p. 245.

⁷² Anup Chand Kapur, *The Punjab Crisis, An Analytical Study*, New Delhi, S. Chand, 1985, p. 103.

In all the efforts to win independence and to have a Muslim state by both the INC and the Muslim League respectively, Punjab was the hub of activities with the Hindu Muslim and Sikh population, each equal to the other in some respect. None's wishes and interests could be ignored. The Sikhs opted for the division of India and Pakistan and partition of Punjab. The Muslim League did little to put the Sikhs at ease. To add fuel to fire, Khizar and the Unionist party suffered a crushing defeat in the elections of 1946 and the Muslim League emerged as the strongest party. But they could not form a Ministry because they lacked absolute majority. Their uncompromising attitude did not let them get support from anywhere. Meanwhile, Sardar Baldev Singh asked Khizar to head coalition ministry with the support of Akalis, Congress Hindus and his own nine Muslim followers. He did so and the Muslim League's fears were further strengthened that in an independent India, the Congress would always be able to win over a section of the Muslims and suppress the wishes of their community. Baldev Singh signed a pact with Khizar and this led to an ill-starred coalition. Thus in the end the pact proved a snare.⁷³ Jinnah and Muslim League did not take any steps to placate the Sikhs. They considered the Sikhs 'a bloody nuisance.... Jinnah was well advised to steer clear of the bastards so far as he would'.⁷⁴

During the Simla Conference on July 14, 1945, no conclusive results were reached but Master Tara Singh said, 'he could accept Pakistan only if Muslims agreed to a separate Sikh state'.⁷⁵ After the March 1946 riots, Giani Kartar Singh's demand for separate Sikh state which had been rejected in 1944 as an impossible one became a practical one for the survival of the Sikhs. The SAD formalised it on March 22, 1946.

The Sikh leaders initially did not take part in the elections to the Constituent Assembly. After the announcement of the Mountbatten Plan which talked of division of

⁷³ Moon, op. cit., n. 55, p. 73.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.87.

⁷⁵ Nicholas Mansegh, *The Transfer of Power, 1942-47*, Vol. V, Document 604, p. 1248, quoted in Anup Chand Kapur, *The Punjab Crisis, An Analytical Study*, New Delhi, S. Chand, 1985, p. 87.

India into two Dominions, the Sikhs interests in the divided Punjab were taken into consideration. The community would be cut into two therefore Baldev Singh wrote to Mountbatten requesting that strict instructions should be given to the Boundary Commission to ensure that as large a percentage of the Sikh population as possible was included in the Eastern Punjab.⁷⁶

Factionalism during 1947-1966.

As one can observe, 'the Congress organisation was plagued with internal factions almost from its very beginning. Throughout its long life, it was never free from groupism and dissensions'.⁷⁷ After independence, differences again came to the fore. This time the tussle was between Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel and the latter was identified with the rightist tendencies. Nehru and Patel began drifting apart in December 1947 on two issues – 'first on the issue of Nehru's bypassing the States Ministry under Patel by giving direct to Sheikh Abdullah a loan of Rs. 20 lakhs, followed by the taking away Kashmir from his charge and soon afterwards following Patel's January 6th Lucknow speech in which he was critical of the Indian Muslims' attitude towards the Indian Union'.⁷⁸ While Nehru was an autocrat while functioning, Patel was a democrat who believed in organisation and consensus while maintaining a steel grasp whenever the question of the unity of the Country came to the fore.

Even in PEPSU (It was the result of the Union of States formed by the states in East Punjab-Patiala, Kapurthala Jind, Nabha, Faridkot, Malekotla and States of Nalagarh and Kalsia on May 5 1948), factions reigned supreme. The Congress was aghast at the formation of a first non-Congress Ministry in any State. When all efforts to dislodge the Ministry headed by Rarewala failed exodus from the Congress to the Ministry started.

⁷⁶ Kapur, *ibid.*, p. 123.

⁷⁷ Subhash C. Kashyap, *The Politics of Power: Defections and State Politics in India*, Delhi, National, 1974, p. 574.

⁷⁸ B. Krishna, *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, India's Iron Man*, Delhi, Indus, 1995, p. 498.

Shri Nihal Singh Takshak, Harnam Singh, S. Bhupinder S. Mann resigned and joined the United Front. When the Congress felt it was losing ground, it declared a Presidential Ordinance under Art. 356 on March 16, 1953 and dissolved the PEPSU Legislative Assembly. After a year's spell, in the interim poll of March 1954 the Congress returned with a majority and S. Raghbir Singh became the Chief Minister. After his death Brish Bhan became the Chief Minister. PEPSU was merged with Punjab on November 1, 1956.

The Punjab Congress even before partition was involved in factional fighting between Satya Pal and Gopi Chand Bhargava groups. The former group was now led by Bhim Sen Sachar. After independence, these groups continued the fight to control the reins of power. The factional fights results in the Akali Dal being accommodated by one of the factions. Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava became the first Chief Minister as the Congress Party came to command an absolute majority in the State Legislative Assembly. Gopi Chand Bhargava took over office with the blessings of Sardar Patel who was the Deputy Prime Minister of India. The other factional group was led by Bhim Sen Sachar which had the backing of Jawaharlal Nehru. Instead of sharing power with the Sachar faction, Bhargava took two representatives from the Akali faction. This worsened the relations between the Bhargava and Sachar factions. The Akali Dal was divided between Giani Kartar Singh and S. Udham Singh Nagoke. Bhargava had to resign as the Chief Minister because the Akali Dal which was first supporting it, led by Giani Kartar Singh, shifted its loyalty to the Sachar group. The latter took office on April 6, 1949. He was given instructions by the Patel dominated Congress High Command to constitute a 'composite' Cabinet which he did because he included Bhargava as the Finance Minister. As soon as Sachar took office he launched a campaign against corruption. The Bhargava faction presented a charge sheet against Sachar to the Congress High Command which told the Chief Minister to seek a vote of confidence before October 18, 1949. Nehru was on a visit abroad during these developments. Sachar submitted his resignation on October 18, 1949 and Bhargava, with Sardar Patel's support again assumed office. With Bhargava back in saddle, the Sachar – Partap Singh Kairon faction

again pressed their demand to expand the Cabinet. Bhargava directed all these demands to S. Patel, who warned Kairon of bad consequences if they destabilised the Ministry. It was with Giani Kartar Singh's help that Bhargava became the Chief Minister and isolated Kairon. The mutual differences between the two groups were further intensified when Chief Minister Bhargava accommodated two of Akali Dal representatives in his Cabinet than any of the Sachar group. Patel's death in December 1950 paved clear way for Nehru who established his control both in the legislative and organisational wings of the Congress Party. With Patel's death Bhargava lost the support of the Pradesh Congress Committee and on March 30, 1951 Bhargava was charged by the Sachar-Kairon faction for working under the dictates of the Akali group. Pratap Singh Kairon who had not been included in the Cabinet of Bhargava had got himself elected the President of the Pradesh Committee. Thirty Congress Member of Legislative Assembly's asked permission from the Congress High Command to move a vote of no-confidence against Bhargava, the Chief Minister. The Congress High Command directed Bhargava to reorganise his Ministry by sending in ten names from which six were to be elected by the Congress High Command. The six names announced excluded the names of Akali Dal representatives 'on whom Bhargava was heavily dependent'.⁷⁹ Bhargava resigned under protest on June 16, 1951. Though the Congress High Command tried to put an end to the infighting yet the leaders at the Centre had their protégés in the state whom they supported in times of crisis. This infighting led to the change of three Chief Ministers in the state in a short span of from 1947 to 1951. Though Bhargava, with the help of Akali Dal, survived the vote of no-confidence moved by the Sachar – Kairon combination, yet when he refused to accept the compromise formula of the Congress High Command, Nehru asked him to stop passing orders as the Chief Minister of the State. His resignation led to President's rule being clamped on the state from June 20, 1951 to April 16, 1952 because the Sachar – Karion faction was in a minority and was unable to form a Ministry. The President's rule had been used a political weapon which had led to denying the majority group the right to carry on the administration of the state. Bhargava

⁷⁹ Dalip Singh, *Dynamics of Punjab Politics*, New Delhi, Macmillan, 1981, p. 14.

complained that 'he had become the first victim of the attempt by the High Command, after the death of Sardar Patel, to oust such people as were considered to have been loyal to Sardar Patel'.⁸⁰

The tension over the language problem and the Punjabi Suba was creating problems for both the communities, the Hindus and the Sikhs. The Congress began to mobilize the Hindus against the Punjabi Suba. As a reaction to the demand for the Punjabi Suba the Hindus of the State quoted Hindi as their mother-tongue in the census of 1951. The Sikhs felt that the Hindus of Punjab were disowning their mother tongue which was the language spoken largely in Hindu households. It was amidst this tension that the General elections of 1952 were held. The Akali Dal made the demand of Punjabi Suba its main issue in the elections. The Congress won with a majority. There was an environment of mutual distrust among the two communities. The Hindus argued that the demand of the Sikhs for a Punjabi Suba was basically an attempt to establish Sikh hegemony and also a Sikh theocracy in Punjab. The Hindus for the first time in the post-independence India had got majority in the province and any change would lead to losing it. The Sikhs, on the other hand, aspired for political power in Punjab and felt that this was possible only in a Punjabi Suba.

On April 4, 1952, Bhim Sen Sachar assumed office of Chief Minister by popular vote. Nehru at this point encouraged Sachar, though the Kairon Jagat Narain group was in majority. In these elections too, the Congress was divided into factions. Though Kairon Jagat Narain faction had a dominant majority yet Sachar was appointed the Chief Minister. He included both Kairon and Jagat Narain in his Cabinet. In July 1953, the Sri Ram group revolted against the leadership of Bhim Sen Sachar. Two senior ministers – Sri Ram Sharma and Lala Jagat Narain fell out with each other. Lala Jagat Narain had the support of Kairon and Sachar joined them. Sri Ram Sharma accused Sachar of sending a baseless CID report to the Prime Minister against him and Lala Jagat Narain of misusing the funds of his Newspaper, '*Hind Samachar*'. Even at this point, Kairon had

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.15.

the support of 50 out of 96 Congress legislators yet because of Nehru and Maulana Azad, Sachar was elected as the Chief Minister. There was again a rift in the Congress Legislative Party. Sachar survived this crisis with the help of Congress High Command and dropped the dissident leader Shri Ram Sharma from his Cabinet who went to form the Gandhi Janata Party which rejoined the present party in 1956.

In the meantime, Kairon as a minister in the Sachar Ministry developed good rapport with Jawaharlal Nehru. Kairon faction gradually obtained full control of both the organisatioal and legislative wings of the Party. Sachar was inducted as the Chief Minister as a protégé of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. As Pt. Mohan Lal says, 'The final election is, thus, made by the Congress High Command at Delhi and the Legislators whether at the Union or in the states are their approved nominees The truth of the matter is that these legislators have to run time and again to the same High Command for tickets in every election, and do not, therefore, have the guts to defy its superimpositions. And yet their political ego feels immensely hurt. A grievance takes root and gradually starts sprouting. Groupism is generated and leads in course of time to an ultimate revolt'.⁸¹ Thus, there was a revolt brewing up among the ranks and this finally manifested itself in 1953 with the exit of Sharma. In 1954, while Kairon was consolidating his position, the supporters of Sharma levelled serious allegations against Lala Jagat Narain. Sachar looked into the charges himself and reported Lalaji's innocence. Lalaji became a firm supporter of Sachar for it was rumoured that Kairon had encouraged those allegations. Sachar and Lalaji got together to plan Kairon's fall.

But Sachar's fall came abruptly. The demand for Punjabi Suba was on the rise and Sachar imposed prohibitory orders on meetings and Morchas. The Akalis protested against this order and the SAD decided to challenge this order. The supporters of SAD poured into Amritsar and then the government decided to raid the buildings in the neighbourhood of Shri Darbar Sahib. The raid occurred on July 4, 1955. Tension mounted in the city and the SAD aroused the sentiments of their masters. Sachar

⁸¹ Mohan Lal, *Disintegration of Punjab*, Chandigarh, Sameer, 1984, pp. 16-17.

withdrew the ban on July 12, 1955. His party took this act as a betrayal for he had surrendered without taking the party into confidence. Opinion started building against him and Congressmen from the state went to the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru time and again, to make him aware of the State politics and their disenchantment with Sachar. The Prime Minister snubbed them and discouraged them on protesting against their Chief Minister. But when Sachar decided to drop Kairon from his Cabinet and sought the permission of the High Command, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad rejected his demand and asked him to resign. Sachar resigned in January 23, 1956. The differences between Kairon and Sachar had gone from bad to worse at this juncture. The exit of Sachar paved the way for Sardar Partap Singh Kairon who assumed office on January 23, 1956. Kairon took office at a time when the state was besotted with too many problems. Morchas and agitations were the order of the day and the refugee problem had not been fully solved.

The Regional formula announced in 1956 divided Punjab on linguistic basis because it wanted to safeguard the interests of the two language groups. The plan was accepted by SAD after a lot of deliberations. The Formula was not accepted by the people of the present Haryana because they felt that it did not fulfill the aspirations of their aspirations. The Hindi agitation demanded a separate Hindi – speaking area. There was vehement opposition from the Maha Punjab Samiti and Jana Sangh. The former was a newly created party to counteract the Punjabi Suba movement. On the other hand, a few Akalis left the Akali Dal and joined the Congress where a new faction emerged. The Jana Sangh condemned the Punjab Congress as pro-Sikh and anti-Hindu. The Hindi-Punjabi issue divided people within the parties too. The Punjab Congress was no exception. The first group emphasised that Punjabi should not be imposed on unwilling people while the second group headed by Giani Kartar Singh stressed that adopting any other alternative than the Regional Formula would lead to agitation from the rival parties. Fourteen prominent members of the Congress Legislative Party resigned from the Congress Party membership over this issue. This group consisted of Suraj Bhan, Vaid Ram, Shrimati Sita Devi, Sher Singh and Jagat Narain, the last being one time general secretary of the

Punjab Pradesh Congress and Minister in the Punjab Cabinet. The Congress Members of Legislative Assembly representing the Haryana region too supported the Hindi agitation. 'This disruption did incalculable harm not only to the Congress prestige in the state but also further complicated the Punjab issue'.⁸² Giani Kartar Singh's entry into the Congress after Independence made him move away from the Panthic stand and he became a nationalist Sikh. He was influenced by Sardar Patel and Baldev Singh and therefore urged the Sikhs to give up the demand for communal elections and reservation of seats and thus give complete support to the Congress. In the deliberations of the Minority sub-committee of the Constituent Assembly he opposed the demand of special safeguards for the Sikhs.⁸³ When the Akali – Congress unity broke down in post 1956 Giani Kartar Singh even denounced the demand of Punjabi Suba and in the process dethroned Master Tara Singh from the Presidentship of the SGPC. He realised his mistake and supported the demand of Punjabi Suba in 1965. In the 1957 general elections S. Hukam Singh and Giani Kartar Singh rejoined the Congress and on their recommendation many more from the Akali Party were accommodated.

Kairon saw to it that his faction had control over the organisational as well as the legislative wings of the Party, thus crushing all opposition against him. He had Nehru's blessings. Kairon dismissed S. Gian Singh Rarewala on the excuse of the sale of a tube-well belonging to him to the Irrigation Department on June 22, 1959. General Mohan Singh, Member of Parliament had a faction in the area so he helped in the ouster Rarewala. Owing to his close access to Kairon, Gen. Mohan Singh helped him. The next victim was Rao Birender Singh who had close relations with Ch. Devi Lal. The latter was opposed to Kairon. When Kairon asked Birendra Singh to tender his resignation because of some inconsistencies regarding his land tenancy, the latter refused and Kairon dismissed him. Kairon also faced factionalism in his Party during his tenure with various

⁸² V. D. Chopra, "Place of Giani Kartar Singh in Punjab History", in *Giani Kartar Singh, A commemorative Volume* by Jasdev Singh Sandhu, Patiala, Jasdev Singh Sandhu Foundation, 2001.p. 213.

⁸³ J.S. Brar, "Political Perspective of Giani Kartar Singh" in *Giani Kartar Singh, A commemorative Volume*, *ibid.*, p. 265.

factions presenting chargesheet against him. The first instance was in 1958 when the Bhargava - Prabodh Chandra faction accused Kairon of malpractice. In this year Shri Prabodh Chandra who was the Chief Parliamentary Secretary on 'Sachar Ministry spearheaded the tirade against Kairon by presenting a chargesheet to the Congress President against Kairon. The Congress President, U.N. Dhebar inquired into Kairon's conduct and warned the latter of consolidating and managing the affairs of the party. Kairon could not pay heed for he was misled by people close to him. After the verdict of the Parliamentary board, the Congress Legislative Party was summoned and a secret ballot was conducted. Kairon survived this crisis with the help of Nehru. Before the actual voting, Nehru in a press conference dismissed charges against Kairon. In 1959, the dissidents against presented a fresh chargesheet against Kairon. Preparations were made to meet at Ludhiana but the dissidents were discouraged in October 1959 by Mrs. Gandhi who had become the Congress President in place of U.N. Dhebar. On April 8, 1959, dissidents led by Giani Zail Singh and Musafir submitted a chargesheet against Kairon to the Congress High Command. By September 1959, it was clear that the Congress High Command would not take any action against Kairon. His control over the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee and Congress Legislative Party along with the protective hand of Nehru saved him. In November 1959, the dissidents included Mool Chand Jain Prem Singh, Prabodh Chander. Abdul Ghani, Balwant Rai Tayal and Com. Ram Chandra met at Patiala and while blaming Kairon for corruption kept themselves away from the organisational elections. Prabodh Chandra, Musafir and other dissidents again met at Bawal and then at Amritsar and demanded the dismissal of the Kairon ministry. The Congress High Command was entirely unconcerned with these activities. In the process of selecting candidates for the Congress tickets for the 1962 general elections, Chaudhry Dev Lal, Rao Birinder Singh and Giani Kartar Singh, as members of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Election Commission were against Kairon and had the support of the important people in the Congress High Command i.e. Shri Reddy and U.N. Dhebar. They combined to give vent to their common grievance against Kairon. Mr. Dhebar who had once been against Devi Lal and had him removed from the

Presidentship of Punjab Pradesh Congress committee now rued as to why Kairon had parted company with Devi Lal. The announcement of the election list led to a fall out between Darbara Singh, the President of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee and Kairon. While Darbara Singh felt that Kairon wanted to finish him politically, Kairon felt threatened that the former was building his own support group.

Nehru supported Kairon and the latter came out unscathed. Again, on April 8, 1959, 122 dissident Congressmen led by Giani Zail Singh and Gurmukh Singh Musafir submitted a charge to the Congress High Command. Day by day the number of Kairon's political opponents grew inside the Congress. In 1962, Kairon led the Congress to elections and won with a successful majority. But charges of corrupt practices during elections bruised Kairon's reputation. He formed the Ministry with 31 members because he had succumbed to pressure. Kairon reduced his Ministry during the Chinese war when Emergency was declared on January 1, 1963. He dropped stalwarts like Brish Bhan and Giani Kartar Singh. Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri wanted Kairon to retain Com. Ram Kishan, but his advice went unheeded. Ram Kishan was later rewarded by Lal Bahadur Shastri, by making him the Chief Minister of Punjab when the latter became the Prime Minister.

Kairon faced the devil of factionalism to the maximum. 'Too much of factionalism dominates merit and independence are casualties. Such a situation cannot last long. The political parties, nay, the nation shall have to ponder seriously over it and put only deserving persons on important public jobs'.⁸⁴

In the 1962 elections, Kairon was given instructions by the Central High Command and Neelam Sanjiva Reddy to let Giani Zail Singh contest for an Assembly seat. Kairon wanted to confine Giani Zail Singh to the upper house of Parliament. It was only with the help of the Congress High Command that Giani Zail Singh could contest from the Faridkot constituency. After the elections many central leaders who did not like Kairon widened the rift between Kairon and Darbara Singh. In 1963, Kairon made

⁸⁴ Mohan Lal, *op. cit.*, n. 81, p. 41.

Darbara Singh resign as the President of Punjab Pradesh Congress as he could not retain ministership as well as the presidentship. Kairon got his candidate – Pt. Bhagwat Dayal Sharma elected as President of the Punjab Pradesh Congress . In the 1963 Congress elections, Kairon got the withdrawals of Darbara Singh etc. and got his nominees on various Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee offices. Darbara Singh's two close associates and members of Congress Legislative Party, Chaudhry Darshan Singh and Trilochan S. Riasti left the Congress and went to the opposition. Darbara Singh got them back and his differences with Kairon were eliminated but on a superficial level. The Chinese war led to a cut in the size of the Cabinet. Kairon bade goodbye to all the State and Deputy Ministers and even full Ministers – Darbara Singh, Giani Kartar Singh, Shri Brish Bhan and Comrade Ram Kishan. Kairon retained Darbara Singh despite State Congress leaders like Giani Zail Singh, Gen. Mohan Singh and Shri Hans Raj Sharma wanting him to drop him. Kairon dropped all except Darbara Singh.

Kairon's acute rival – Prabodh Chandra was accommodated by Kairon by installing him as the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in 1962. Even in that office he continued to oppose Kairon and in fact, worked against the government by encouraging the opposition. He had to resign after a decision by the Congress High Command and became a member of the House where he continued his open and vehement opposition to Kairon. In 1963, rumours were afloat that Kairon would be relieved of Chief Ministership and would be involved in organisational work. 108 Congress legislators and 148 members of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee met Mr. Nehru and urged him not to relieve Kairon as a non-Jat replacement would be exploited by the Akalis. In the same year on July 13, Devi Lal, Master Tara Singh met the President of India, Dr. Radha Krishnan and presented a chargesheet against Kairon. It was signed by Lala Jagat Narain, Yagya Dutt Sharma besides others. The President observed that all those politicians were disgruntled elements. Nehru held same views. On Nehru's death, Kairon supported Morarji Desai in the tug of war between Morarji Desai and Lal Bahadur Shastri. The latter never forgave Kairon for that. The Dass Commission submitted its report and Kairon had to resign on June 14, 1964. The people whom he had helped to

come to power moved away from him. In March 1953, he had got Devi Lal elected as the President of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee as against Prabodh Chandra and later Devi Lal led the Dass Commission inquiry against him and presented a memorandum to the President of India on July 13, 1963 charging Kairon with abuse of power. Kairon believed that Pt. Nehru would come to his rescue but unfortunately the latter died on May 27, 1964. S. Gurbachan S. Bajwa moved a motion against Kairon fearing the law and order in the state to be at stake. An ex-Minister he spoke against Kairon because he had not been accommodated in the Cabinet in 1957. He had the support of Prabodh Chandra, another dissident who had not been made a Cabinet Minister. 'The Dass Commission on 1st November 1963, under the Enquiry Act of 1952, which held Kairon guilty on two counts,⁸⁵ using his position for personal gains and abuse of authority' led to Kairon's resignation as the Chief Minister of the State on June 14, 1964. Kairon initiated the name of Giani Zial Singh to stop Darbara Singh. The Congress High Command got inklings that Kairon's hold over the party had to be loosened so they adopted a new strategy. Kairon was then persuaded to send the name of S. Swaran Singh for the Chief Ministership of Punjab. If this name was not acceptable to the Congress High Command, Gopi Chand Bhargava or S. Kapoor Singh would be accepted as compromise candidates. If these names would not be accepted then G. Zail Singh would be the choice. After the Dass Commission report, Kairon submitted his resignation and Gopi Chand Bhargava became the caretaker Chief Minister. Congress was divided into two groups – one the Kairon group and the other anti-group which supported the candidature of S. Darbara Singh, the later group consisted of Brish Bhan, Ram Kishan, Prabodh Chandra and Narain Singh. The Kairon group consisted of S. Ajmer Singh and Bhagvat Dayal Sharma. Finally, instead of an open contest, Kairon decided to accept the decision of the Congress High Command. In a meeting on June 30, 1964, Ram Kishan was unanimously elected the leader. The name was proposed by S. Darbara Singh and seconded by Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava. Ram Kishan was Shastri's man and suited Swaran Singh because the latter felt that with a non-aggressive Chief

⁸⁵ Dalip Singh, *op. cit.*, n. 79, p. 18.

Minister like Ram Kishen he could rule Punjab by proxy. The other faction had, meanwhile, approached the Congress President – Shri U.N. Dhebar to stop Kairon from fielding his candidate who told Kairon not to do so. Kairon's supporters met Pt. Nehru and Dhebar and convinced them that Kairon was right in fielding Darbara Singh. In the election, Darbara Singh won against Brish Bhan who was supported by Kairon's rivals – Bhargava, Gurmukh Singh Musafir, Giani Zail Singh, Giani Kartar Singh and Co. Ram Kishan. U.N. Dhebar never forgot this incident and Kairon had to pay for this after Nehru's death for the latter had supported him. 'Politicians are even otherwise slippery and unscrupulous, with exceptions which only prove the rule'.⁸⁶ Sardar Darbara Singh fell out with Kairon because Kairon's rivals and leaders from the Centre wanted Kairon's downfall. He formed his own ginger group. Even after an argument between Kairon and Darbara Singh, the latter refused to co-operate because of personal unfulfilled ambitions. Gurdial Singh Dhillon, Rarewala, Chaudhry Hardwari Lal left the Congress in 1963 to form a new party called 'Praja Tantar Party'. Others like Virendra and K.L. Sharma, circulated a charge-sheet against Kairon. All these members were expelled from the party on December 29, 1963 by the decision of the Disciplinary Action Committee of the Punjab Pradesh Congress. After Kairon's resignation, all were not only admitted to the Party on September 21, 1964 but were duly rewarded. This shows the connivance of the Central party leaders in the working of the affairs of the state. Kairon's resignation and later his assassination on February 6, 1965 led to the end of one of the dynamic leaders of Punjab.

After Karion, S. Darbara Singh tried to consolidate his position. S. Swaran Singh was given the charge to tackle the Punjab problem and he was against Darbara Singh thus he sidelined the latter. This spoiled the latter's chances to become the Chief Minister of the State. Ram Kishan was made the Chief Minister on July 6, 1964 and later he tendered his resignation on the advice of the Congress High Command to enable the bifurcation of the state on linguistic basis. President's rule was imposed in Punjab on July 5, 1966. His was an uneventful term as he had no support group of his own. 'After

⁸⁶ Pt. Mohan Lal, op. cit., n. 81, p. 41.

Kairon's resignation and then his death in 1965, the Punjab Congress split into a number of factions and lacked the will or the leadership to oppose the Punjabi Suba demand'.⁸⁷ Factionalism within the Congress increased to such extreme ends that various ascriptive political groups came into the limelight. Giani Kartar Singh, Rarewala etc., many Akali Congressmen wanted a compromise with the Akali Dal. In late 1965 some Sikh Congress Members of Legislative Assembly requested the Union Government to accept the demand of Punjabi Suba. When the Parliamentary Committee asked Punjab Pradesh Congress to submit a memorandum in regards to Punjabi Suba, various voices raised varied demands. 'Though the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee submitted a memorandum supporting an undivided bilingual Punjab with Himachal Pradesh merged into it, it was clear from the proceedings of the meeting of the state Congress Legislative Party's executive committee that the real reason why the party was opposing the Suba demand was that it feared that if the demand was accepted it might lose the position and influence in the state'.⁸⁸ So weak was the position of the faction-ridden Congress that the Central leadership was forced to look elsewhere to maintain its position. Indira Gandhi's decision on Punjabi Suba after meeting of the Congress Working Committee with the Chief Ministers and other influential leaders, displeased many Congressmen.

Soon differences arose between Ram Kishan and Home Minister, Darbara Singh, the latter not ready to play a second fiddle to somebody who was imposed on the State by the Congress High Command. Darbara Singh was made Irrigation and Power Minister which was the Number six position in the Cabinet, so he was dissatisfied. Thus, Ramkishan's large-sized ministry of 20 members could not appease the different members of the party. It was alleged that Darbara Singh had got Kairon murdered. It was reported that Sucha Singh, one of the accused in the murder had visited Darbara Singh a few days before the incident. Ram Kishan did not get co-operation from the Punjab

⁸⁷ A. S. Narang, *Storm Over the Sutlej, The Akali Politics*, New Delhi, Gitanjali, 1983, p. 170.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

Pradesh Congress Committee led by Pt. Bhagwat Dayal Sharma who was at loggerheads with the Chief Minister.

The Karionites were sidelined and the attitude of the Ministerialist group was abrupt and callous towards the Darbara Singh group, therefore the Dardara Singh group started consolidating themselves. The conflict between the two intensified and the two looked at the Karionites for support. Darbara Singh had teamed up with Prabodh Chandra to oust Ram Kishan. The Congress High Command meanwhile had realised its mistake of imposing a weak Chief Minister. In the very first session in 1964 the Congress Party emerged in a weak light because of infighting. Prabodh Chandra openly criticised and refused to cooperate with the Chief Minister. The Kaironites esteem grew and Lala Jagat Narain – an opposition Member of Parliament and Virendra founder of the Praja Tantar Party feared the comeback of the Karonites . So they managed a truce between Ram Kishan, Darbara Singh and Prabodh Chandra. This interference by two non-Congressmen in the affairs of the party came under a lot of criticism and further tarnished the image of the Ministry. By end of March 1965, the differences between Ram Kishan and S. Darbara Singh deteriorated from bad to worse. While the supporters of the former said that the latter was involved in the murder of Kairon and the latter's supporters started a signature campaign against the former. The signature campaign was rebuked by the Congress President, Kamraj. It was a victory for Ram Kishan who depended on the Congress High Command for every decision. He had the full support of Lal Bahadur Shastri, the Prime Minister of India and Kamraj. His main clash was with the Kaironites who were in control of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee and who blamed him for embezzlement of Rs. 3 lakh collected for party funds. Slowly the Congress High Command started rethinking of giving support to Ram Kishan. The Chief Minister's own actions led to people like Dr. Gurdial Singh Dhillon, Brish Bhan etc. being disillusioned with him. After a year's existence, Mr. Gulzari Lal Nanda, Union Home Minister was sent by Prime Minister Shastri to see the demonstration of strength of both the parties. Nanda failed to suppress the opponents of the Chief Minister. Initially, Ram Kishan was against Punjabi Suba but he fell in line with Swaran Singh who wanted Punjabi Suba The

government finally decided to bifurcate the state and the process started in April 1966. The Shah Commission was appointed on April 23, 1966 to recommend the bifurcation. The members of the Commission were Justice J.C. Shah, S. Dutt and M.M. Philip. Com Ram Kishen was made to resign on June 22, 1966 and the Punjab Assembly was suspended. The Kaironites came closer to S. Darbara Singh and S. Swaran Singh tried to form a rival group to oppose S. Darbara Singh.

Factionalism after 1966

In 1966 the reorganized Punjab had a bifurcated 87 members Legislative Assembly in which two seats were lying vacant, Sarhali in Amritsar district and Bhagapurana in Ferozepur district. The Congress formed a majority with 57 members.

The Congress High Command decided that elections to the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee would be held before the election of the leaders of Legislative Party. First Giani Gurmukh Singh Musafir was promoted as the candidate to be supported by the Prime Minister for the post of the President of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee. The other group (Darbara Singh – Mohan Lal) put forward the name of Pt. Mohan Lal for President of the Punjab Pradesh Congress. The Congress was once again divided and with the help of Swaran Singh, Musafir won. For the election of the leader of the Congress Legislative Party, Maj. Harinder Singh, Giani Zail Singh, Gurbachan Singh Talib, Prabodh Chandra, Brish Bhan all joined the Musafir camp. Musafir was elected as the leader of the Congress Legislative Party and became the Chief Minister of Punjab on November 1, 1966. The decision to install him as the Chief Minister was taken by the Congress High Command i.e. by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Party President, K. Kamraj. The Congress High Command got Pt. Mohan Lal and Darbara Singh included in Musafir's cabinet. Musafir continued to lead his group rather than his party and factionalism flourished. Darbara Singh was disgusted with the affairs in Punjab and when Musafir was chosen over him he thought that he had no future in the state. It was under these conditions that the Congress party went to the

polls in February 1967. Sant Fateh Singh's fast and Musafir's false commitment to the Sant had placed him in an awkward situation with the Centre leadership who did not encourage him to have a decisive role in the party in the long run. Because of this infighting, Congress lost its absolute majority in the general elections of 1967. The Congress High Command did not encourage Musafir as the Chief Ministerial candidate, thus a new candidate had to be found. Musafir sponsored the name of Brish Bhan and Prem Singh Prem. On the other hand Giani Zail Singh opposed both the names and favoured either the Maharaja of Patiala or Gian S. Rarewala. The Congress High Command did not say 'yes' to the Maharaja, therefore Giani Zail Singh accepted the candidature of Rarewala. Darbara Singh was opposed to Rarewala. S. Swaran Singh supported Brish Bhan and then went along with Giani Zail Singh to support Rarewala. At this, Darbara Singh joined Musafir to oppose Giani Zail Singh and S. Swaran Singh. Darbara Singh–Musafir group put up Brish Bhan while Rarewala was put up by Zail Singh-Swaran Singh group. Later Darbara Singh withdrew his support to Brish Bhan and thus, Rarewala became unanimously the leader of the Congress Legislative Party in 1967. Giani Kartar Singh fought the 1967 elections on the Congress ticket, but lost. Later, he joined the Akali Dal at the instance of Sant Fateh Singh and Justice Gurnam Singh became the first Akali Chief Minister of the State.⁸⁹ The Congress party emerged as the largest party with 48 seats and needed only five more members to support it to form the Ministry. Musafir lost the elections by 10,000 votes. The party was divided and leaderless. The factionalism led to the unity of all the opposition parties who came together under the name of United Front. The Congress remained out of power for the first time after independence. The in-fighting had taken its toll on the performance of the Party. 'The Congress High Command on account of the various acts of omission and commission must share its responsibility. The political pigmies of the Punjab Congress, who placed their self interest, over a higher pedestal, than that of the organisation or the

⁸⁹ Roopinder Singh, "A Perceptive and Pragmatic Politician" in *Giani Kartar Singh, A Commemorative Volume*, by Jasdev Singh Sandhu, Patiala, Jasdev Singh Sandhu Foundation, 2001.p. 199.

state, played havoc.⁹⁰ 'The Punjab Congress was, thus, made to lick dust by its petty-minded and self-centered leaders'.⁹¹

When the United Front Ministry fell, the Congress gave support to Lachhman Singh Gill for nine months. While the majority in the Congress wanted Lachhman Singh Gill as the Chief Minister, Musafir and Rani Mohinder Kaur. M.P. from Patiala were influencing the Congress High Command to sponsor the name of Shri Brish Bhan for Chief Ministership. Lachhman Singh Gill wanted to be the Chief Minister at any cost but he was not on good terms with the Jana Sangh. Thus, while in Akali Dal Sant Fateh Singh did not encourage him. He had, in the past, organized the extremists elements in the Akali Dal on communal lines. When Gurnam Singh was made the Chief Minister of Punjab leading the United Front Ministry, Lachhman Singh Gill had taken offence. He was not happy with his subservient position in the government. The Congress supported Lachhman Singh Gill and he defected with 16 SAD members on November 22, 1967 and floated the Janata Party. Rarewala told the Governor that the Congress would support Lachhman Singh Gill. Thus, Lachhman Singh Gill became the Chief Minister on November 25, 1967 and fulfilled his long standing ambition. The Congress had a tactical understanding with Lachhman Singh Gill that his Ministry would include all those defectors of the Congress who had earlier deserted it to join the United Front ministry. The Congress was divided into two factions on the issue of supporting Lachhman Singh Gill. While Rarewala favoured withdrawal of Congress support, the group led by Prabodh Chander stood for continuing support. Rarewala left no stone unturned to oust the Gill Ministry from submitting memorandums to the Congress President to arranging defections from the other parties to secure an absolute majority in the Legislature so that he could form his own Ministry. The Congress High Command preferred to wait and did not accept his suggestions. On the other hand Lachhman Singh Gill went against the basic Congress policies. He raised the ceiling of land holdings from 30 to 40 acres and denationalized the road transport by issuing fresh transport permits to private company.

⁹⁰ Mohan Lal, op. cit., n. 81, p. 340.

⁹¹ Ibid.

He liberalized the excise policy which was against the prohibition policy of the Congress. Thus, Lachhman Singh Gill's erratic behaviour and his not being under the influence of the Congress led the Congress to withdraw its support on August 23, 1968. President's rule was imposed on the same day which lasted till February 17, 1969. The Congress split in 1969 at the national level, with a majority of the Congressmen supporting Indira Gandhi and her Congress (R). In Punjab, Giani Zail Singh headed the Punjab Pradesh Congress and did not see eye to eye with S. Rarewala, leader of the Congress Legislative Party. The latter did not want to continue giving support to Gill and wanted to form the government by including defectors from SAD. Giani Zail Singh was in favour of continuing support to the Ministry till further orders of the Congress High Command. Rarewala had no faith in Giani Zail Singh so he wanted an ad hoc committee to be set up regarding selection of candidates for the mid-term election. Rarewala's suggestions regarding his candidates were rejected and he left the Congress and joined the Akali Dal. After Rarewala's exit Gianiji consolidated his position and developed an excellent rapport with Mrs. Indira Gandhi. During Badal's stay in office as the Chief Minister from March 27, 1970 to June 14, 1971 there was a coalition ministry of the Akali Dal and the Jana Sangh. On June 30, 1970 the Jana Sangh withdrew the support. The Badal government was reduced to a minority and they thought of negotiating with other smaller parties like the Communist Party of India(M) and Swatantra etc. Such support would add to its 49 members. The Congress had 28 members and it stood a better chance to win over the smaller parties. The Vidhan Sabha had been adjourned indefinitely on March 30, 1970 and was to meet in September. The Congress leadership thought of having an alliance with the Akali Party. A section led by Swaran Singh wanted to support the Ministry while the group led by S. Darbara Singh and Major Harinder Singh was against any accommodation with the Akali Dal. According to them any alliance with a communal party like the Akali Party would mean sacrificing the secular ideology of the Congress. They wanted to chalk out some minimum programmes with the Akali Dal before having any coalition. This group led by Darbara Singh recollected the bitter experience they had in the past with Gill. They wanted the Akali Party to prove their

secular character in profession and in practice. S Swaran Singh wanted the Akali Dal to fall in line with the economic programme of the Congress. Major Harinder even met the Governor, D.C. Pavate to immediately ask for the resignation of the Ministry or to convene a special session of the Legislative Assembly so that the ruling party could prove its majority. Giani Zail Singh had helped in winning the Congress support for Badal for which the latter supported him when the former fought the bye- election from Anandpur Sahib. Zail Singh was the President of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee. Meanwhile Gurnam Singh announced that he would unite with the Sant Akali Dal for the sake of Panthic Unity. This led Badal to stop looking at the Congress for support.

In the 1971 Lok Sabha elections with the help of Gianiji, Darbara Singh, Prabodh Chandra and Gurdial Singh Dhillon the Congress Party won. This enabled Gianiji to consolidate his position for which the Congress High Command chose him the Chief Minister of Punjab over Darbara Singh who had a faction which was supported by Swaran Singh, Umrao Singh and Capt. Rattan Singh. When Gianiji became the Chief Minister on March 17, 1972 some senior members of the Party like Brish Bhan were left out. 'It was well known that there was groupism in the party. A feudalist-rightist reactionary lobby in the Party could hamstring the Ministry....'⁹². Gianiji continued in office till April 30, 1977. During his term Indira Gandhi declared Emergency and the term of the State Legislative Assembly was extended from five to six years. He became the Home Minister of India in 1980 after his election to the Lok Sabha from the Hoshiarpur Parliamentary constituency.

Giani Zail Singh got his candidate - Niranjn Singh Talib – elected as the President of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee. They had to face opposition from three different quarters from the groups led by Mohinder S. Gill, Harcharan S. Brar and S. Swaran Singh. With Talib's sudden demise, Giani Zail Singh's plan suffered. Mohinder Singh Gill became the President of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee. Again, a tussle started between the organisational wing and the ministerial wing, the

⁹² Manju Verma, *The Coalition Ministry in Punjab*, Patiala, Shivalik Printing House, 1978, p.113.

former led by Mohinder Singh Gill, the latter by Giani Zail Singh. Gianiji won Indira Gandhi's blessings by continuously proving his loyalty and weakening the hold of Mohinder Singh Gill by involving some of the supporters of Mohinder Singh Gill in land-grabbing cases after an inquiry by Harchand Singh Committee. D. C. Pavate has observed that 'The possibility of some ambitious Congressmen trying for a change of leader could not be ruled out altogether, but they are not likely to succeed for their good reasons',⁹³ because he was shrewd, he can sense trouble and nip it in the bud and Mrs. Gandhi could not tolerate any indiscipline in the party. With the defeat of the Congress in the 1977 Assembly elections, the Congress was relegated to the background. The Congress split into two in Punjab. One faction comprising of Giani Zail Singh, Darbara Singh and Gurdial Singh Dhillon, Balram Jakhar went with Mrs. Gandhi and the other constituting of Swaran Singh, Mohinder Singh Gill, Khushal Behl and S. Umrao Singh went to Congress (R) which was later known as Congress (U). With S. Darbara Singh as the party chief, the President of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee since 1978, the leaders were able to garner support for Mrs. Gandhi. As soon as the mid-term elections to the Lok Sabha were announced, Mohinder Singh Gill and his supporters joined the Congress (I). The winning of Congress in the Assembly elections held on May 31, 1980 led to infighting amongst the Congressmen. While the supporters of Giani Zail Singh and Darbara Singh worked upon the Prime Minister to get their respective candidate selected, six new aspirants rose to claim the office of the Chief Ministership. But Darbara Singh became the Chief Minister on June 7, 1980 because of his loyalty to Mrs. Gandhi. He became the Chief Minister after having missed the bus in 1964, 1966 and 1972, because of factional conflicts. The clash between Giani Zail Singh and Darbara Singh led to many unfortunate incidents in Punjab. There was indiscriminate killings of the Hindus which led to an ever-widening gulf between the two communities. The killing of innocent Hindu passengers near Dhilwan, Ludhiana is an apt example of political tussle between the two leaders. The Akalis stated that the killing was part of the political tussle between the two leaders. 'Their wranglings were well-known and much

⁹³ D.C. Pavate – *My Days as Governor*, New Delhi, Vikas, 1974, p.231.

of the trouble in Punjab could be connected with their maneuvers against each other. From the first day Zail Singh was unhappy over the installation of Darbara Singh as Chief Minister. And Darbara Singh, a Congressman from the day he entered politics, did not accept Zail Singh, once an Akali, as his leader.⁹⁴ While Darbara Singh did not want Zail Singh to meddle in the affairs of the State, the latter did not like Darbara Singh pushing out all his supporters from the government as well as from the party organisation. Thus, it becomes evident that political ambitions and personality clashes have been the key reasons for the continued game of factionalism in the Congress Party during the period under review.⁹⁵ It is suspected by political analysts that Gianiji had a hand in encouraging the rise of Bhindranwale. When Baba Gurbachan Singh, the Nirankari Chief was murdered on April 24, 1980 at Delhi many suspected the hand of Bhindranwale. But Gianiji who was the Home Minister of India declared in the Parliament that Bhindranwale was not responsible for the killing. Similarly after the murder of Lala Jagat Narain, a Hindu leader and editor of Hind Samachar group of newspapers was shot dead near Ludhiana on September 9, 1981. Bhindranwale was given enough time to escape and was even allowed to choose his time, manner and place of arrest. He was able to reach his Headquarters, Gurudwara Gurdarshan Prakash at Chowk Mehta. He was arrested on September 20, 1981 amidst a standing ovation from thousands of his followers gathered. During the Bhog ceremony of Jatheedar Santokh Singh, Bhindranwale was greeted by Gianiji and Buta Singh, both Sikh Ministers in Indira Gandhi's Cabinet. Bhindranwale made derogatory remarks about Gianiji of which the latter took no notice. After the killing of A.S. Atwal, D.I.G. Police on April 25, 1983 when he was coming out of the Golden Temple, Darbara Singh wanted the police to enter the Golden Temple the permission did not come from the government of India. From the beginning whichever group was numerically stronger in the organisational wing, succeeded in controlling the ministerial wing. During Zail Singh's tenure and his

⁹⁴ Kuldip Nayar and Khushwant Singh, *Tragedy of Punjab, Operation Blue Star and After*, New Delhi, Vision, 1984, p. 77.

⁹⁵ Dalip Singh, *op. cit.*, n. 79, p. 222.

clash with Mohinder Singh Gill, caste and religion played an important role in fuelling factionalism. Again the clash between Zail Singh and Darbara Singh was partly because of caste differences. “Mrs. Gandhi never allowed a chief minister or a governor to come so close to her. She operated a system of checks and balances on all her colleagues.”⁹⁶ Gianiji was elected to the office of the President of India on July 15, 1982. But the non-acceptance of each others status, among Gianiji and Darbara Singh led to an increase in factionalism in Punjab. The loss was political as well as economic. “Mrs. Gandhi had been only too happy to see Darbara Singh and Zail Singh fighting over Punjab because it prevented either of them dominating over the Congress Party in the State. She found Bhajan Lal a convenient pawn to play when she wanted to drag out negotiations.”⁹⁷

Because of the infighting among the Congressmen, the Congress High Command got opportunities to interfere in the affairs of the party at the regional level. The Congress High Command’s choice counted for a candidate to be made the Chief Minister of Punjab. Sachar, Kairon, Zail Singh and Darbara Singh became the Chief Ministers because of the blessings of their benefactor at the Centre – the Prime Minister. The control of the Congress High Command had let factionalism simmer and not erupt like a volcano in Punjab. Such is the effect of elections that it is said that the defeat of Harcharan Singh Brar and Gurdial Singh Dhillon in the Assembly elections of 1980 was because of the factionalism rampant in the Congress at that time. “Mrs. Gandhi believed in dividing and ruling her opponents just as much as she believed in dividing and ruling her own party. She had always seen the tension in the Akali leadership as a factor in her favour.”⁹⁸ Darbara Singh resigned from the post of the Chief Minister of Punjab on October 6, 1983 and President’s rule was imposed on the state on October 10, 1983 which lasted till September 29, 1985. Unfortunately, this period was marked by some tragic incidents. The first was Operation Bluestar which was an endeavour by the government of India to flush out militants and terrorists from the Golden Temple, the holiest shrine of the Sikhs. The Operation took place on June 3, 1984. The sentiments of

⁹⁶ Tully and Jacob, op. cit. p.220.

⁹⁷ Ibid, p.221.

the Sikh community were greatly hurt. Operation Wood Rose was launched simultaneously in 37 Gurudwaras and many terrorists were taken into custody along with arms and ammunition. Then, Mrs. Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards on October 31, 1984. Rajiv Gandhi became the Prime Minister of India and decided to solve the Punjab problem. He released the top leaders of the Sikhs like Harchand Singh Longowal, Badal, Gurcharan Singh Tohra and Surjit Singh Barnala in March 1985. There was anti- Congress wave in the Punjab, thus factionalism took a backseat for some time. The Centre leaders were taking direct interest in the affairs of the state which left the regional leaders with no chance to manipulate the political system. Rajiv Gandhi invited Longowal and Barnala for talks. Even Badal and Tohra were not told about the talks. These talks led to the Rajiv- Longowal Accord signed on July 24, 1985. Longowal was assassinated on August 20, 1985 at Sherpur village and Barnala was elected the Acting President of the Akali Dal (Longowal). To bring normalcy to Punjab elections were held in Punjab in September 1985.

The trinity of Rajiv Gandhi, Arjun Singh and Arun Nehru decided that the people who had vested interests in Punjab would be excluded in the search of a settlement for the State. 'They(the vested interests) were the President, Zail Singh, the former Chief Minister of Punjab, Darbara Singh and the Chief Minister of Haryana, Bhajan Lal. The Akali Dal (Longowal) decided to fight the 1985 elections and won 73 seats in the Vidhan Sabha. Barnala became the Chief Minister on September 29, 1985. He remained in office till May 11, 1987 when President's rule was imposed on the State which continued till February 25, 1992. During this time the politicians did not have much role to play. The Governor who took the help of bureaucrats was ruling the State. The Congress was leaderless and no one was ready to come and take over the reins of power in the strife torn state. There were no spoils of power to be shared so factionalism and vested interests took a back seat. This was the longest stint of President's rule in the state. Elections during this time were announced to be held on May 23, and May 26, 1991 which were postponed to June 21, 1991 due to the murder of Rajiv Gandhi on May 21, 1991. When

⁹⁸ Ibid, p.221

elections were again postponed on June 21, 1991, the Governor of Punjab resigned on the same day in protest against the postponement of the elections. The elections were postponed to September 25, 1991 and then again postponed. Finally, elections were held on February 17, 1992 and the Congress came to power by winning 87 out of 117 Assembly seats and 12 out of 13 Parliamentary seats. Sardar Beant Singh was elected the Chief minister on February 25, 1992. Beant Singh was a man of the masses. He was a party worker who knew the pulse of the people. During the militancy period he was elected the President of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee when no Congress leader was ready to take the responsibility. He visited the houses which were affected due to militancy and consoled the people. He stood by the people and realised that they too wanted an end to the turmoil. So, he decided to take firm measures to control the militant activities. The party edifice in the state collapsed but Beant Singh stood against all odds. Thus, there was no factionalism in the party as no leader could stand upto Beant Singh. There was no other leader who could be firm and strong enough to meet the problem head –on. All the politicians rallied behind the Chief Minister whose aim was to bring normalcy in the State and help the Congress to get re-established. He brought militancy under control, rehabilitated the militants, banned meetings of the Akali leaders who protested against the alleged state repression and initiated mass contact programmes. He held polls to the local bodies after 13 years and to the Panchayats after 9 years He challenged the militants and put an end to the rule of terror in Punjab. Tragedy struck when Beant Singh was assassinated on August 31, 1995 at the State Secretariat in Chandigarh. After him Harcharan Singh Brar was chosen as the interim Chief Minister till September 7, 1995. After the state mourning he was elected the regular Chief Minister on September 8, 1995 as the Congress High Command was in his favour. Beant Singh in his lifetime had built up a group of 60 firm loyalists to curb dissidence who tried to block Brar's appointment. The discontent of the legislators of the party had stated during the time of Beant Singh but nobody spoke openly for Beant Singh had tackled the Punjab problem well. Brar got rid of all the tainted ministers and tried to keep all his party legislators with him. But he had to succumb to the political realities and had to

accommodate politicians of all hues and shades. Though he initiated a lot of reforms his government was not functioning well. Factional feuds were rampant and party discipline was at its lowest. He had a complacent attitude which worried the Congress High Command. He did not see eye to eye with Ambika Soni, the Acting President of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee.

The Congress put up a dismal performance in the Lok Sabha elections of 1996. Rajender Kaur Bhattal was made the Deputy Chief Minister of the State by Pranab Mukherjee who was a Central Cabinet Minister and incharge of the Congress party affairs of Punjab on August 6, 1996. Brar and Bhattal were at daggers drawn against each other. They had differences of opinion and differences over running the administration. The clash between the two state leaders led to ever widening factional feuds. After 14 months of rule Brar stepped down from office on November 21, 1996 and Bhattal was made the Chief Minister on November 23, 1996. Brar blamed the differences in the party high command for his removal. He did not appreciate the way the members of the state Congress Party pulled each other down. Congress High Command wanted the Congress to be rejuvenated in Punjab so they placed their hopes on Bhattal. She had earlier had a confrontation with Beant Singh for sometime as she was an ambitious lady. Later their differences were ironed out and she became one of the staunch supporters of Beant Singh. Brar had not made her a minister and she had, in the past, become one with the intervention of the central leaders. Bhattal became the Chief Minister and swore to live by the ideals of Beant Singh. Her main task was to end factionalism in the party therefore she tried to bring all the party men together. She knew that putting up a united front could only curb the growing popularity of the Akali-BJP combine. She worked hard to get all the disgruntled elements together in the party. The Congress High Command replaced Ambika Soni with Santokh Singh Randhawa as the new Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee President. It was under Bhattal's leadership that the Congress Party went to the polls in February 1997. The party performed badly and Bhattal became the leader of the opposition from March 1997. She was the President of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee from May 1997 to July 1998. She was replaced by Chaudhry Santokh Singh

who was elected the leader of the Congress Party in Punjab Vidhan Sabha. This was done by Capt. Amrinder Singh, President, Punjab Pradesh Committee who called all the Punjab Congress Legislators to Delhi. All the District Congress Committee chiefs who were appointed by her were replaced by Capt. Amrinder Singh. Two factions had emerged, one led by Bhattal and the other led by Capt. Amarinder Singh. Each tried to build up a band of supporters and at the same time influence leaders at the Centre. Amidst all this Jagmeet Singh Brar a former Akali who had defected to the Congress created his own one man faction. He wanted to emerge as a leader in his own right. A rebel he has his perceptions of the political system and how the problems should be handled. He believes in handling the party affairs on his own lines which are not appreciated by the other Congress leaders in Punjab who are leaders in their own way. This infighting between the leaders has led to the performance of the party taking a back seat.

Chapter IV

FACTIONALISM IN THE SHIROMANI AKALI DAL

Factionalism Before 1947

Punjab, situated in northwest India, is an important state. Strategically, it is bound on the west by Pakistan and on the northeast by China, a Communist giant. Besides these two countries, it has Jammu and Kashmir and a part of Himachal Pradesh on north, Uttar Pradesh on its east, and Rajasthan to the south. Known as the gateway of India, it is a prized state. The Punjab, which we see today, is the result of partition of India into two countries in the name of religion – India and Pakistan. Often referred to ‘as, the shield, spear and sword-hand India’,¹ initially it was referred to as East Punjab, now it is known as Punjab.

In post 1947 Punjab, the society was divided into two religious communities. The Hindus comprised of 63.7 percent of the populations while the Sikhs comprised of 33 percent. The Hindus were divided between the sects of the Araya Samaj and the Sanatan Dharam, the former being the reformist and the latter being the orthodox; the Sikhs used the term ‘Khalsa’ to show their solidarity as a religious community. Besides this trend, there was also a basic conflict in the rural areas between the high-caste landowners who belonged to the tiller class and the Scheduled castes combined with the backward classes. In the rural areas amongst the Sikh community, the Jats were predominant.

A social and educational body of the Sikhs, the Chief Khalsa Diwan was founded in 1902. It enjoyed the patronage of the British to such an extent that it called upon the Sikhs to stay loyal to the government. It even supported the ruthless measures which the

¹ Reginald Coupland, *The Indian Problem: Report on the Constitutional Problem in India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), Part I, p.116, quoted in Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority Politics in the Punjab*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1966, p. 11.

British took against the Ghadar Party members in 1915. Confining itself to conferences, adopting resolutions, it made appeals to the good sense of the British rulers. It even encouraged Duleep Singh, the exiled son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh to remain loyal to the Britishers. Dominating the Sikh arena from 1890-1914, the Chief Khalsa Diwan lost prestige among the Sikh masses. The Sikhs wanted a political organisation that would protect their economic and political interests. The Central Sikh League was formed on December 27, 1919. Slowly, its leadership passed into the hands of the nationalist Sikhs. In its second session in 1920, Baba Kharak Singh, who was a nationalist leader, was elected the President. The League passed a resolution that the British had shown complete disregard for the interests of the Sikh community. Sewa Singh and Bhai Jodh Singh, who were pro-British Sikh leaders, tried to speak against the resolution of Non-cooperation, but were ignored and insulted. Soon, the League was overshadowed by the Akali Dal that had emerged as a religious-political organisation. The Sikh landed aristocracy inherently nurtured different interests from the Hindus who were a communal class. Moreover, the Arya Samaj had started the purification of non-Hindus and their induction into Hinduism. 'This fear of assimilation into Hinduism imparted strength to the revivalist-fundamentalist tendencies in the form of founding of Singh Sabha and Chief Khalsa Diwan'.²

The Sikhs trace their origin to Guru Nanak and his teachings and down the line to the Nine Gurus who succeeded Guru Nanak. The Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, created the 'Khalsa' to oppose the tyrannical and oppressive rule of the Mughal rulers. Later the Sikhs got divided into twelve Misls, which were under different chiefs. The Misls had their respective territory over which they had full sovereignty. They fought with each other and also made alliances to protect their territory. Maharaja Ranjit Singh succeeded in uniting these Misls under him by subjugating them. After his death, intrigues and disunity led to the British invading Punjab and subsequently annexing it on March 18, 1849. Ranjit Singh did not discriminate amongst his populace. 'However, the British, who pursued the policy of 'divide and rule', did create differences between the three communities (Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs) by playing one community against the

² Gopal Singh, "Hindu Communalism in Punjab" in T.R. Sharma (ed.), *New Challenges of Politics in the Indian States*, New Delhi, Uppal, 1986, p. 139.

other. But the people of Punjab dissolved their religious differences, in their struggle for the freedom of India'.³ 'The character of some of the Sikh priests was no better than that of the Abbots and monks whom Henry VIII had to turn out from the medieval monasteries. The life in Sikh temples was often of as scandalous a type as that of the English monasteries before the Reformation. The priests drank and gambled like publicans; they robbed and bullied the pilgrims like highwaymen and dishonoured women and children like rogues of the worst type'.⁴

The Sikhs have been divided amongst themselves on the basis of caste. The Gurus, especially the First Guru being a Khatri, that section of the Sikhs, who were once at the helm of affairs, were gradually overshadowed by the Jats – the rural peasantry who had martial tendencies. Gradually the Jats came to comprise the innermost decision-making by the time of the Tenth Guru – Guru Gobind Singh. 'For their virtue of courage and sincerity they were starkly different from the Khatri. Their preponderance in the Panth, especially in its higher positions provided conditions under which the Sikh community adopted militant and democratic values. On account of his increasing military reliance on them the Tenth Guru considered it prudent to democratize power in the Panth.'⁵ The Adi Granth was thus bestowed the Guruship and the authority to take decisions was vested in the Gurupanth which was again based on the Panchayat of the Jats.

The Gurudwaras, their role and their control have been a part of the Sikh political culture. 'A gurudwara is more than just a place of worship. It is also a school, a meeting place and a rest house'.⁶ The SAD and the SGPC have always claimed to safeguard the interests of the Sikhs and the Gurudwaras. Prior to the SAD and SGPC, the Udasis were revered and had a free hand in the management of the Gurudwaras. Revered by the people, their decline started when they developed vested interests in the Gurudwaras

³ Dalip Singh, *Dynamics of Punjab Politics*, New Delhi, Macmillan, 1981, pp. 4-5.

⁴ Sardul Singh Caveeshar, *The Sikh Studies*, Lahore, National, 1937, pp. 189-190.

⁵ Gobinder Singh, *Religion and Politics in the Punjab*, New Delhi, Deep and Deep, 1986, pp. 51-52.

⁶ Partap Singh Giani, "Gurdwara Sudhar", *The Akali Lahar*, Amritsar, Singh Bros., 1951, p. 24.

during the British rule when the latter constructed canals and improved the agricultural facilities. Transferring Gurudwara land to their name in connivance with the British officials, they, then, gave scant regard to the 'Sangat'. The Mahants demanded money from the devotees and even married to have their heirs who would succeed to all the wealth and lands of the Gurudwaras.

The Singh Sabha was formed to secure the future of the community, to defend its traditions and customs and to represent the cause of the Sikhs to the British. The first session was attended overwhelmingly and the first participants were Baba Khem Singh Bedi, Bhai Amar Singh, Giani Hazara Singh, and Kamar Bikrama Singh etc. But within five years of its formation, the Sabha was exhausted. 'A collective of leading Sikh chieftains, landed gentry and their dependents, it was prone to intense factionalism and frequent contests for supreme leadership'.⁷

It was the Sikh intellectuals in the 1880's who started the 'Tat Khalsa' (the staunch sikh) once again. Meaning, 'Pure Sikhs', these Sikhs initiated steps to make Gurudwaras a symbol par excellence for the Sikhs. They stopped idol worship and seasonal fares in the Gurdwaras and they insisted that the management of the Sikh shrines would only be in the hands of Sikhs. They stopped anything, which went against the Sikh doctrine. The aim was not to let Sikhism be absorbed in the sea of Hinduism and also to have a control over the Sikh shrines and the resources. In 1886, Thakur Singh Sandhanwalia, founder of the Amritsar Singh Sabha exhorted the Sikhs to favour Duleep Singh, the youngest son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh to restore Punjab to him again. But with the death of Thakur Singh, the Tat Khalsa leadership of the Lahore Singh Sabha broke ties with the Amritsar Singh Sabha. Thirty Singh Sabha's representatives did the same and joined the Khalsa Diwan, which was formed under the Lahore Singh Sabha.

Encouraging idol worship by the Mahants was the last straw as it was against the basic tenets of Sikhism. It was then that the Gurudwara Reform Movement was initiated which is also known as the Akali Movement as the volunteers who participated in the

⁷ Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries, Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 279.

movement were called 'the Akalis' (immortal). Prior to this movement, the Singh Sabha was founded in 1873, at Amritsar to stop the conversion of Sikhs into Christianity and also to stop the gradual absorption of the Sikh community into Hinduism, which had seen an upheaval because of the efforts of Arya Samaj.

The Singh Sabha was encouraged by the landed gentry and the urban educated people. The Singh Sabhas amalgamated in 1899 under the Chief Khalsa Dewan. 'It strove to pursue its own group interests in the name of general interests of the Sikhs and sought to achieve its goals by performing loyalty to the British government'.⁸ Thus, the economically weaker groups of the Sikh community were neglected. The objectives of the Diwan were to revive the classical tradition and restore the glory of Sikhism, to encourage various historical publications regarding the Sikh Gurus, to encourage the use of Gurumukhi script and to start various educational institutions to eliminate illiteracy among the Sikh masses. But the positive impact was that the Singh Sabha Movement gave a separate identity to the Sikh community for it could not look after the political interests and inspirations of the Sikhs. Thus, on the eve of Gurudwara Reform Movement the elitist sections of the Sikh community, comprising mainly the landed interests were performing the functions of integration, social mobilisation and political representation for their community, through its communal organisations'.⁹

The last week of December 1919 saw the inauguration of a new party known as the Central Sikh League 'The immediate and long-term objectives of the new party were put forth in the first issue of its organ - The Akali, to rebuild the demolished wall of the Rakabganj Gurudwara, to bring the Khalsa College at Amritsar, under the control of the representatives of the Sikh community, to liberate Gurudwaras from the control of the mahants, and to inspire the Sikhs to participate in the struggle for the country's freedom'.¹⁰ The first two aims were fulfilled quickly and to meet the third goal the Central Sikh League called a meeting of Sikhs in November 1920. The Congregation of more than 10,000 Sikhs elected a 175-member body to liberate and then look after the

⁸ Gobinder Singh, *op. cit.*, n. 5, p. 59.

⁹ *Ibid*, p.60.

¹⁰ J. S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab: The New Cambridge History of India*, New Delhi, Cambridge Foundation Books, 1995, p. 157.

management of the Gurudwaras. This was the birth of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandhak Committee (SGPC), a body that took on itself the onus to liberate all the Gurudwaras. The SGPC was assisted by the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), which was formed on December 14, 1920. 'Akali Dal has since then functioned as a full-fledged religion based political party. The task of the SAD was to coordinate the activities of the local volunteers (Akali Jathas) so that there would not be a gap or lull in the movement that would liberate the Gurudwaras from the Mahants. The formation of the SAD gave a unique political dimension to the happenings in Punjab. The formation of the Akali Dal marked the transfer of political leadership from the landed aristocracy to the Sikh middle classes'.¹¹ The Gurudwara Reform Movement led to the birth of SGPC – 'a permanent institutional base for religious and political activities of Sikhs'¹² which is also known as an elected religious parliament of Sikhs' and its political arm, the SAD'.¹³

The body (SGPC) affixes the seal of approval upon the religious -political nature of Sikh polity i. e. the inseparability of religion and politics.¹⁴ Though factions existed in the pre-independence era, the factions never deviated from the 'mainstream national politics'.¹⁵ The INC could not make inroads into Punjab because of the pro-British Unionist Party led by Sir Chotu Ram. Thus, it supported the Akali Dal and its Gurudwara Reform Movement. During the course of Gurudwara Reforms Movement the Akalis also began to collaborate with the INC and supported its Non-cooperation movement'.¹⁶ The INC's efforts to include the Sikhs has even led to the setting up of the Central Sikh League (CSL) on December 8, 1919 which supported the Congress-led national movement. "In fact, the Central Sikh League and the INC were so close that many Sikhs

¹¹ Nayar, *Minority Politics in the Punjab*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1966, p. 67

¹² Gopal Singh, *Politics of Sikh Homeland, (1940-90)*, Delhi, Ajanta, 1994, p. 47.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Surjit Singh Narang, "SGPC Elections –The Ecclesiastical Aspect of Akali Politics", *Punjab Journal of Politics*, Vol. XXIII, No.1, 1999, p. 143.

¹⁵ Ibid., n. 144.

¹⁶ T. R. Sharma, "Akali and the National Movement in Asghar Ali Engineer (ed.), *The Role of Minorities in Freedom Struggle*", Delhi, Ajanta, 1986, p. 138.

were simultaneously the members of both”.¹⁷ Some Sikhs were members of all the three Central Sikh League, INC and Akali Dal. For example, Sardul Singh Caveeshar was Secretary of all the three; Baba Kharak Singh was president of Central Sikh League, the Akali Dal and the provincial committee of the INC. The Central Sikh League was marginally interested in the affairs of the Sikhs while the Akali Dal was. The passage of Gurudwara Bill divided the Dal leadership into two groups. The group led by Mehtab Singh and Baba Harkrishan Singh supported the Bill while it was opposed by Master Tara Singh, Master Shyam Singh, S. Gopal Singh Qaumi and S. Bhag Singh. The latter group won the SGPC election on this note and supported the INC’s programme of boycotting the Simon Commission along with the Central Sikh League.

“Since its very inception, the Akali Dal has been faction-ridden. During the movement (1920-25) itself, there were quite a few factions, at times working at cross-purposes”.¹⁸ At that time the Akalis were divided into the ‘extremists’ and the moderates. K.L. Tuteja asserts that the leadership was divided into three factions.¹⁹ The first group comprised of stalwarts who were from the landed aristocracy like Sunder Singh Majithia and Bhai Jodh Singh etc. These people did not want to agitate against the government. Described by the British government as ‘moderates’ the leadership of the Akali movement slipped from their hands when the movement became anti-government.

The extremists meant leaders like Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Baba Kharak Singh, Master Tara Singh etc., who were nationalists who participated in the freedom movement of the country and were ready to fight for the cause of the Panth. Many of them associated with the INC. The third faction, which Tuteja says, comprised of those people who were mainly concerned with reforms in the Gurdwaras. Hailing from the urban educated class, leaders like Prof. Teja Singh, Sardar Bahadur Mehtab Singh etc. refused to participate in the Non-cooperation movement call given by Mahatma Gandhi as they believed that the government would help them solve their Gurudwara problem. Indifference from the government’s side forced them to rethink their strategy. They

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 140.

¹⁸ Gopal Singh, “Factional Politics in Akali Dal and the Homelanders,” *Punjab Journal of Politics*, Vol. XIV, Nos. 1-2, 1990, pp.47-62.

¹⁹ K. L. Tuteja, *Sikh Politics; 1920-1940*, Kurukshetra, Vishal, 1984, pp. 35-40..

joined the 'extremists' in the movement of Non-cooperation. Gopal Singh refuses to accept Tuteja's classification of the third faction. Gopal Singh talks about "a real third faction which emerged during the Akali movement and which can be safely termed as militants".²⁰ Often called 'Babbar Akalis' the members comprised of ex-Ghadarites, Akali reformers, youth and army men who were demobilised. They came into prominence when the Gurudwara Reform Movement was progressing gradually and peacefully. The massacre of Akalis at Panja Sahib, Tarn Taran and at Nankana Sahib are examples. Angry at the Imperialist power's methods of suppression, the Babbar Akalis were unhappy with the INC and particularly Mahatma Gandhi's idea of passive resistance. On the other hand, the Mahants were getting support from the British. The Akalis with their peaceful methods did not go well with the thinking of Babbar Akalis. They parted company with the Akalis and initiated a militant movement. Creating terror among the British officials, their supporters and the Mahants the Babbar Akalis were denounced as 'misguided patriots' by Mahatma Gandhi. Even the SGPC issued 'hukamnamas' (communiqués, edicts) to the Sikh community to disassociate themselves from the misguided youth. Consequently, the British set out to eliminate the Babbar Akalis and by June 1924 the British government had achieved its goal by killing all the leading militants. The formation of SGPC led to more repercussions as it gave a political dimension to Sikhism and created a permanent rift between the Hindus and the Sikhs. The Reform Movement led the Sikhs to stop the idol-worship, which was being encouraged by the Mahants in the holy shrines. It took about five years for the Sikhs to liberate their Gurudwaras after many sacrifices with the volunteers paying for their lives in the Nankana Sahib Tragedy, at the Morchas of Guru Ka Bagh and at Jaito. The control went from the hands of the Sahajdhari Sikhs into the hands of the Keshdhari Sikhs. The first signs of disunity among the Akalis was seen after Mahatma Gandhi discouraged the mixture of the religious issue with a political one i.e. the forcible abdication of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha in favour of his minor son in 1923. Ripudaman Singh sympathised with the Sikh reformers so the SGPC decided to take up his case and they condemned the government interference in a meeting held at Jaito in the State of Nabha. The organisers of the meeting were arrested. Morchas were sent one after the other and

²⁰ Gopal Singh, *op. cit.*, n. 8, p.49.

Jawaharlal Nehru, who came to pay respects, was also arrested. Malcolm Hailey, the Punjab Governor decided to split the Akali leadership. An Act on November 1, 1925 recognized the SGPC as the legal authority to manage the Gurudwaras. The British wanted an undertaking by the Akalis not to participate in agitations. The SAD felt this could not be acceptable to any self-respecting Sikh. Mehtab Singh and Giani Sher Singh who had been arrested in the Ripudaman case agreed and were released with twenty other leaders. Master Tara Singh and Baba Kharak Singh refused to come out of the jail. This created differences in the Akali party. When the SGPC met, leaders like Jaswant Singh Jhabal, Mangal Singh etc. walked out because some leaders were still in jail. They formed an Akali Party electing Bhag Singh Canadian as the President in a preliminary meeting on Feb 1, 1926. The SGPC elected Mehtab Singh as its President after the walk out. Soon, arbitrations were held and “after this both the factions joined hands to work jointly for the welfare of the Panth. The Akali Dal, became a new force to reckon with”.²¹ “The national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru ignored the religious character of the moment and extended full support to it. This tactic was probably meant to enhance the influence of the Congress in the Punjab countryside”.²² The question here was Sikh identity, which the INC was supporting. The incident of Komagata Maru in 1914 in which a shipload of Indians, primarily Sikhs, attempting to migrate to Canada, were turned back and fired upon in Calcutta was seen as a discrimination against the Sikhs. The newly formed Ghadr or Revolutionary party highlighted this incident.

This reflected the political designs of the SGPC. This Act led to the SGPC being one step ahead of the Chief Khalsa Diwan in voicing the opinion and demands of the Sikh masses. So, “the SGPC is a body corporate created by statutory provisions of the Sikh Gurudwara Act of 1925”.²³ The membership is obtained through elections, which are held periodically based and contested on party lines. Thus, there is a close interaction

²¹ K.C. Gulati, *The Akalis, Past and Present*, New Delhi, Ashajanak Publications, 1974, p. 32.

²² J. S. Brar, “Sikh Separatism in the Punjab: A Study of the Political Strategies of the Akali Dal since Independence” in T. R. Sharma (ed.), *New Challenges of Politics in the Indian States*, New Delhi, Uppal, 1988, pp. 95-96.

²³ Gobinder Singh, *op. cit.*, n. 5, p. 79.

between this institution and the political system. The large funds at its disposal are used to help political parties and thus have a control over the political system. This usage of funds has led to charges of embezzlement against the SGPC from time to time. 'The Akali Party ... is trying to do its utmost to get hold of the Gurudwara and to use the Gurudwara funds. The only achievement that this party has to its credit is corruption and embezzlement of Gurudwara funds for the party purposes... The correctness of the fact that I am submitting can be amply borne out by the recommendations of the Akali Party itself'.²⁴

The SAD has evolved as a para-military political organisation in the course of the Gurudwara Reform Movement. Besides acting as a pressure group it also channelised the demands of the Sikh community. The emergence of two opposing groups among the Akalis followed the enactment of the Sikh Gurudwaras Act in 1925. The Akalis have been divided among themselves, "the Panth emerged from the struggle victorious, but divided against itself".²⁵ The SAD associated itself with the Congress till 1939 when differences arose between the two premier bodies.

One of the earliest conflicts between the different factions for the SGPC's control could be seen in the first elections of the SGPC held on June 18, 1926. There were two factions of the SAD i.e. "the Akali Party and the Sardar Bahadur Party, and a group of pro-government Sikhs called Hailey's Sudhar Committee".²⁶ The last one was a party floated by Malcolm Hailey, the then Governor of Punjab to acquire the government's control over the SGPC. All the pro-government elements like the Honorary Magistrates; Nambardars etc. were members of this party. The Sardar Bahadur Party, a group of moderate, affluent Sikhs desired to remove the Mahants from the control of the Gurudwaras. Once the purpose was achieved they faded into oblivion. Moreover, after the Sikh Gurudwara Act, 1925, the Government had offered to release the jailed leaders of the Akalis provided they would give written or verbal assurance that while accepting

²⁴ Statement of Uttam Singh Duggal, *Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. XXII, (Lahore, Superintendent, Government Printing Press. 1944), p. 79.

²⁵ Harbans Singh, '*Sikh Political Parties in Delhi*', New Delhi, Sikh Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., p. 3.

²⁶ Gobinder Singh, *op. cit.*, n. 5, p. 111.

the Act they would not restore to agitation. The Akali Party, on the other hand, was nationalist in approach and because of its close links with the Central Sikh League and the INC wanted 'Swaraj'. Thus, their active participation in the SGPC. The Sardar Bahadur Party was led by Mehtab Singh and Sher Singh while Kharak Singh and Master Tara Singh led the Akali party which represented the non-agriculturist urban interests.

Post 1925 factions have continued to exist till date in the SAD in some form or the other. Till independence, 'there were several occasions and many issues over which different types of factions emerged in the Akali Dal. These issues were broadly and basically three – Akali attitude towards Muslim League's demand for Pakistan in 1940, Akali attitude towards the British government and Akali attitude towards the Congress'.²⁷

The Nehru Report of 1929 created factions among the SAD members. As K.C. Gulati asserts that the first faction was led by Baba Kharak Singh of the Central Akali Dal who did not want to associate with the INC. Baba Kharak Singh told the Sikhs to throw the Nehru report in the waste paper basket because it had a positive attitude to Dominion status. The second faction was led by Giani Sher Singh who demanded thirty per cent representation for the Sikhs in Punjab and the third faction was represented by Baba Gurdit Singh and Mangal Singh who wanted to extend unconditional support and co-operation with the INC. To solve this problem of factions, Master Tara Singh organised a committee of fourteen people who would bring about a solution to the factional conflict. In the session of the Central Sikh League, no unanimous resolution could be adopted about the Lahore Congress session. Baba Kharak Singh was fuming at the Congress for ignoring the Sikhs. He gave permission to Master Tara Singh to attend the next Congress session in the personal capacity and not as a representative of the Panth. Baba Kharak Singh was joined by Sardar Bahadur Mehtab Singh and Amar Singh. In this process, Master Tara Singh became the undisputed leader of the Sikhs, especially of the urban Sikhs. Soon, Baba Kharak Singh's importance started declining because of his association with Bhupinder Singh, Maharaja of Patiala. Isher Singh Mujhal and Udham Singh Nagoke, whom Master Tara Singh managed to outmaneuver, challenged Master Tara Singh. Baba Kharak Singh, Master Tara Singh and Gyani Sher Singh

²⁷ Gopal Singh, *op. cit.*, n. 8, p.51.

criticised the Nehru report as it overlooked the Sikh interests. But Mangal Singh representing the Sikhs signed the report and was criticised by Master Tara Singh.²⁸

Because of the Nehru Report, the Central Sikh League decided to boycott the INC's session, which was to be held at Lahore. Moti Lal Nehru, Ansari and Mahatma Gandhi assured Master Tara Singh and Baba Kharak Singh that the Congress Working Committee had adopted the goal of 'complete independence' as proposed by Baba Kharak Singh instead of Dominion status. The Sikhs cooperated. But Baba Kharak Singh refused to associate with the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930 till the Sikh colour was included in the national flag. However, the SAD and the Central Sikh League joined the Civil Disobedience Movement. The Akali Dal kept away from the First Round Table Conference held on November 12, 1930. S. Ujjal Singh and S. Sampuran Singh who attended the Conference were not the authorised representatives of the Akali Dal.

The Communal Award announced by Ramsay MacDonald retained separate electorates and stressed on reservations. The Sikhs did not want it to be implemented so in September 1932, they formed a 'Khalsa Darbar' to oppose the Communal Award. The Akali Dal was critical of the Award because it gave the Sikhs only 19 per cent representation as against 30 per cent to the Hindus and 51 per cent to the Muslims. The Akali Dal opposed the Award. A Council of 17 members was formed to oppose it. 'But it failed to launch an effective agitation because of factionalism in the Dal'.²⁹ Differences arose between Master Tara Singh and Baba Kharak Singh and the former left the Dal and joined the INC. Gyani Gumukh Singh Musafir, S. Mangal Singh, S. Sardul Singh, Master Sunder Singh Lyallpur, S.G.S. Qaumi, all left the Dal because they did not support the Dal's agitation against the Communal Award. The organisation of Central Akali Party weakened the Dal's agitation against the Communal Award. But in 1933, Baba Kharak Singh and his followers parted ways from it. The Central Sikh League was merged with the Darbar. Near the elections of 1938, the Darbar was further divided into the SAD and the Congressite Sikhs. The Central Sikh League gradually faded in the

²⁸ *The Tribune*, Chandigarh, August 25, 1928.

²⁹ K. R. Bombwall, "The Nation-state and Ethno-Nationalism", *Punjab Journal of Politics*, Vol. VII, No. 2, July-December, 1983, p. 167.

process. The Akali leaders' anti-imperialist attitude gained for them the sympathy of national leaders. 'It is important to note that the mixture of religion and politics by the Akali Dal was legitimized during this movement'.³⁰ Another party, the Khalsa National Party was established by Sir Sunder Singh Majithia and Joginder Singh during the elections of 1937. It comprised of anti-Akali and pro-British elements. In 1937, Sunder Singh Majithia, of the Khalsa Nationalist Party, which was a dissident pro-government faction, collaborated with the Unionist Party, which was headed by Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan. The Khalsa Nationals included people like Majithia, Ujjal Singh, Dasaundha Singh and Joginder Singh. Opposing them were Akalis like Giani Kartar Singh, Kairon, Baldev Singh and Kapur Singh. He was criticised by the SAD and called an 'enemy' and a 'traitor'.³¹ The death of Sunder Singh Majithia saw the end of this party. Even in the mid-thirties factional conflict continued. "Afterwards, however, it became more politically oriented".³² Differences arose among the Akalis over the 1937 Assembly elections. Master Tara Singh's group did not permit the Sikh aspirants to contest the elections on the INC ticket. After a compromise 'the Akalis agreed to contest 15 out of "the 25 seats allotted to them and left 10 seats for the Sikh Congressmen".³³ With the SAD asking the Sikhs to join the INC in 1937 the Congress-Akali Party was formed by the Pro-Congress Akalis like Giani Kartar Singh, Partap Singh Kairon, and Gurmukh Singh Musafir.

In the 1939 Gurudwara elections the SAD of Master Tara Singh was supported by the INC. The Unionist Party gave support to the Central Akali Dal led by Baba Kharak Singh and Sunder Singh Majithia's Khalsa National Party. The interest in the Gurudwara elections had been enhanced because of the Gurudwara resources.

In 1940, the Akali Dal came close to the British government. Master Tara Singh resigned from the INC and came closer to the Unionist Party. Udham Singh Nagoke's

³⁰ T. R. Sharma, "*Akali Dal and the National Movement*" in Asghar Ali Engineer (ed.), *The Role of Minorities in Freedom Struggle*, Delhi, Ajanta, 1986, p. 144.

³¹ Nayar, op. cit., n.19, p. 84.

³² Gobinder Singh, op. cit., n. 5, p. 113.

³³ Dalip Singh, op. cit., n. 3, p. 224.

faction wanted to support the INC thus, it differed from Master Tara Singh. When Nagoke became the President of the SGPC, Master Tara Singh resigned.

In 1942 when the Quit India movement was launched the Akali Dal was split into two factions – one was headed by Giani Kartar Singh. It was all for active cooperation with the British government, the other faction was led by Udham Singh Nagoke. This faction wanted to extend support to the nationalist movement and the nationalist party – the Congress Party. Master Tara Singh did not participate in the Quit India Movement. Later, the SAD joined hands with the Muslim League and one of the Akali Dal members, Ajit Singh Sarhadi, even became a minister in the League's ministry in the North West Frontier Province.

Though the Cripps Mission had failed, yet their proposals were the first official acceptance of the British government of the idea of Pakistan. The Sikhs felt it was a death – blow to them. In June 1943, under the Presidentship of Master Tara Singh, the SAD gave the 'Azad Punjab' scheme, which would comprise of Ambala, Jullundur, and Lahore Divisions and out of the Multan Division Lyallpur district, some portion of Montgomery and Multan District

When the Second World War broke out, a faction led by Giani Kartar Singh hoped that the Akalis should support the British in their war efforts. The faction led by Udham Singh Nagoke wanted the Akalis to join in the freedom movement of the country with the INC. They initially heeded the advice of Master Tara Singh, the Dal President, who did not support the INC's programme of total non-co-operation. He accepted INC's idea of complete independence of an undivided India but encouraged the Sikhs to get recruited in the Army. This created differences between the pro-Congress elements and the pro-Master elements in the SAD. The pro-Congress faction was the Nagoke faction which replaced Master Tara Singh in 1944. The Nagoke faction, which comprised of leaders like Kairon, Darshan Singh Pheruman and Musafir, participated in the Quit India Movement and went to jail. The Sikander-Baldev Pact signed on June 15, 1942 saw the faction of Giani Kartar Singh join the Unionist Government in Punjab. Master Tara Singh assured the Congress that the Akalis would continue to fight against the Unionist

Party or any other party on political issues like the complete independence of India or the demand for the creation of Pakistan',³⁴

Infighting among the Akalis again started when the Muslim League demanded Pakistan in 1940. Master Tara Singh gave the 'Azad Punjab' scheme. Master Tara Singh elaborated on the scheme in June 1943.

'In this connection, the Shiromani Akali Dal hereby declared that in the Azad Punjab the boundaries shall be fixed after taking into consideration the population, property, land revenue and historical traditions of each of the communities... if the new demarcations are affected on the above-mentioned principles then the Azad Punjab shall comprise of Ambala, Jullundur, Lahore Divisions and out of the Multan Division Lyallpur District, some portion of Montgomery and Multan Districts. The Shiromani Akali Dal shall make its demand of these demarcations and shall fight for the same'.³⁵

The Quit India call of Gandhi in 1942 had further divided the Akali Dal. Nagoke, Musafir, Pheruman etc. joined the Movement while the group led by Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh did not participate. Differences arose on the question of Azad Punjab. While the nationalist Sikhs and the Central Akali Party opposed the demand, others supported the demand. Master Tara Singh resigned from the Dal in protest because of the activities of Baba Kharak Singh who denounced the scheme of Pakistan and Azad Punjab as it would lead to the vivisection of India. He asked the Sikh community to extend support to the INC. On the other hand, very few Akali leaders took part in the Quit India Movement of 1942. For them, the Second World War meant supporting the British for India's freedom. Baldev Singh formed his new party in the Assembly in March 1942 called the United Punjab Sikh Party, comprising of a few Akali and independent legislators. He also joined the Ministry of Sikander Hayat Khan.

Factionalism during 1947-1966

In post-1947 politics, it is the Akali Dal which has become a force to reckon with. 'In Punjab, the Shiromani Akali Dal dominated the scene right since 1920 and it launched

³⁴ K. C. Gulati, op. cit., n. 26, pp. 91-2.

³⁵ Nayar, op. cit., n.19, p. 83-4.

a series of morchas (agitations) to free the Gurudwara (Sikh shrines) from the clutches of corrupt practices of Mahants (priests). The Indian National Congress made some significant headway here but it leaned on these Akali movements to gain a foothold in the State. It drew its strength and sustenance from the Akali movement. It participated in their agitations with a view to win their support in its struggle for national liberation.³⁶ Thus, a considerable number of leaders in the Congress are those from SAD.

India got her independence on August 15, 1947. 'On July 15, 1948, Patel referred to the Patiala and East Punjab states Union (PEPSU) as 'a Sikh Homeland' when he inaugurated the new state'. It was formed by merging the states of Patiala, Nabha, Faridkot Kapurthala, Jind, Kalsia, Malerkotla, and Nalagarh. Gian Singh Rarewala headed the caretaker government.³⁷ The Akalis were divided among themselves after the fall of Gian Singh's ministry when they contested for elections. In the Akali Dal, the left wing group known as Raman group disagreed with the leadership of Master Tara Singh who were heading the Akali Dal. The bickering of these two factions became quite intense that the 1954 elections were fought by them in PEPSU on separate tickets. This split the Akali vote and the INC came to power in the state and Raghubir Singh became the Chief Minister. After his death in January 1956, Brish Bhan took over the reins of the government. Many stalwarts of the Akali Dal joined the INC in 1956. Master Tara Singh's leadership was under threat as factions were prominent within the Akali Dal. 'Akali politics started becoming caste and class oriented as the Jat peasantry became political and realised its overwhelming majority.'³⁸ The Majhail group, which had emerged with Udham Singh Nagoke and had leaders like Isher Singh Majhail, Mohan Singh Nagoke, Teji Singh Akarpur etc. exploited this situation and made efforts to dislodge Master Tara Singh. Described by these people as a 'Bhapa', a non-Jat representing the urban Sikhs they used the resources of the SGPC to dislodge the Master from the leadership of the Dal. In a desperate move, Master Tara Singh merged Akali Dal with the INC in 1956 and thus, weakened the hold of Nagoke. After the merger of the

³⁶ T. R. Sharma, *Introduction, New Challenges of Politics in the Indian States*, New Delhi, Uppal, 1986, p. 13.

³⁷ Crewal, op. cit., n. 10, p. 184.

³⁸ Gopal Singh, op. cit., n. 11, p.53.

Akali Dal with the Congress, the Akali Dal worked as a faction within the INC and kept forming and toppling ministries till 1951. When the INC did not adopt a satisfactory and reciprocal attitude towards giving constitutional safeguards to the Sikhs, Master Tara Singh asked the 23 Akali legislators who were in the INC to leave the INC. But only one legislator resigned. The faction led by Giani Kartar Singh and Nagoke remained within the folds of the INC despite Tara Singh's mandate.

In 1956, Gian Singh Rarewala who had joined the Congress and a former Chief Minister of PEPSU urged the SAD to leave the political realm and see to the Sikh affairs in the social, cultural, religious and educational fields. He desired that the SAD should join in reconstructing the country. His aim was to join the INC. Gian Singh was condemned by Master Tara Singh and Hukam Singh who branded him as a traitor. Rarewala issued a statement contesting the SAD claim that it represented all the sections of the Sikh community. He added that its agitations when all its demands had been met would only lead to disaster for the community. Rarewala was expelled from the SAD alongwith four of his followers. Though the SAD desired to join the INC, they did not express it openly for it would have reduced their bargaining power with the INC. Rarewala had spoiled their chances and with his large following in that area (PEPSU) had deprived the SAD of its majority. Gradually, the SAD joined the INC by amending its constitution. At first the INC did not accept their demand of the SAD members retaining the membership of both the SAD and Congress, as the SAD members believed that religion and politics were inseparable. Finally, in 1956, they advised their followers to join the INC and said it would confine itself to betterment of the community in the religious, social, educational, cultural and economic spheres. It was in the process of weakening his opponents that Master Tara Singh raised the demand of Punjabi Suba. He brought to the forefront, Sant Fateh Singh, a Sikh saint who could woo over the Jat Sikh peasantry and gradually emerge as their leader while Master Tara Singh had the support of the urban Sikhs. Gradually, Sant Fateh Singh made his own political base within the Akali Dal and even threatened Master Tara Singh's position. In 1962, Master Tara Singh tried to weaken the Sant's position by expelling the latter's supporters from the executive committee. Sant Fateh Singh set up his own SAD calling Master Tara Singh's faction as 'bogus' The Sant was able to monopolise the Akali Dal and his faction became the real

one as he being a rural Jat-Sikh got support from the rural Jat Sikh peasantry . The result of this split had far-reaching consequences which can even be felt in the politics of the state even today. 'First, the Panth came to be divided on a caste basis. Sant Fateh Singh became the leader of the Akali Dal dominated by the ruralites and the Jat-Sikhs while Master Tara Singh retained the leadership of the urban Sikhs, mainly Bhappas. Secondly, the educated Sikh leadership made way for the Jathedars to play an equally effective role'.³⁹ Sant Fateh Singh further tightened his hold on Akali politics by defeating the group led by Master Tara Singh in the 1965 SGPC elections. 'Therefore, the politics of factionalism in SAD in post-1966 period is the politics of factionalism among Sikh Jats'⁴⁰ as the urban Sikhs were slowly edged out from the SGPC and the Akali Dal.

Shanti Swaroop contends that caste variable effects the Indian political behaviour and effects Indian politics most. He argues that 'the Akali leadership during the fifties did not succeed in getting the whole-hearted support of the Sikhs in the countryside. Voicing, as it did, the aspirations of the nascent Sikh bourgeoisie, it failed to make a powerful impact on the Sikh masses. The reason perhaps, was that there was a real hiatus, between the leadership and the support structure. While the leadership was in the hands of the Khatri and the bhappas (for whose interest it basically worked), its principal support structure was the jats in the countryside (to whom it appealed on communal and religious basis).⁴¹ He further asserts that the Congress under Kairon tried to win over many Jat Sikhs and this trend could be reversed when the leadership passed into the hands of Sant Fateh Singh. Nehru and Kairon could resist the demand of a Sikh Suba only till they had the support of the rural Sikhs. But as the influence of the bhappas and khatri decreased in the Akali Dal and the influence of the Jat Sikhs increased, the demand for a Sikh state could not be avoided.⁴² In fact, the Akalis lost control of the SGPC in 1958 and could recapture it only in 1960 when the 'Sadh Sangat board'

³⁹ Dalip Singh, op. cit., n. 3, p. 226.

⁴⁰ Gopal Singh, op. cit., n. 11, p.54.

⁴¹ Shanti Swaroop, "Some Reflections on Punjab Politics" in *New Challenges of Politics in the Indian States*", in T.R. Sharma (ed.), Delhi, Uppal, op. cit. n. 36, p. 88.

⁴² Ibid.

sponsored by the Congress was defeated.⁴³ The factionalism among the Master and the Sant brought about far-reaching changes. 'It ended the hegemony of the urban higher caste leadership which had continued practically since the party's birth.'⁴⁴

Factionalism after 1966

In the 1967 Assembly elections, though the Master's group lost badly they maintained their separate identity but joined coalition ministry. Meanwhile, Harcharan Singh Hudiara and Hazara Singh were expelled in May 1967 as they had helped the INC topple the coalition ministry. Thus, leaving the Akali Dal, Hudiara Group formed a new party.

In 1967, Justice Gurnam Singh formed a coalition government as the leader of the United Front which comprised of the Akalis, the Jana Sangh and the Communists. The Congress had 48 seats and could have formed the government with the support of four or five independents. So, they wanted to topple the Ministry. They found their card in S. Lacchman Singh Gill who aspired to be the Chief Minister. Lacchman Singh Gill had been the right hand man of Master Tara Singh but then the INC connived with him. Sant Fateh Singh tried to iron out their differences but to no avail. Sardar Lacchman Singh Gill formed a new party, 'the Punjab Janta Party' with 16 Members of Legislative Assembly who parted with the United Front. It promised to bring, a clean public life and administration and to root out corruption, to give security of life and prosperity to the people, to strengthen communal harmony and to concentrate on the growth and development of the state.⁴⁵ The new ministry of S. Lacchman Singh Gill was sworn in on November 25, 1967.

He included 13 members in his Ministry. But gradually he found it difficult to depend on them without extending patronage to them in one form or the other. He extended his Ministry again within a week. The SAD led by Sant Fateh Singh was

⁴³ Harkishan Singh Surjeet, *Lessons of Punjab*, New Delhi, National Book Centre, 1985. p. 18.

⁴⁴ Harish K. Puri, "Akali Politics: Emerging Compulsions" in Wallace and Chopra (ed.), *Political Dynamics of Punjab*", p. 39.

⁴⁵ D.C. Pavate, *My Days as Governor*, Delhi, Vikas, 1974, p. 129.

annoyed with Lacchman Singh Gill for leaving the party as well as toppling the United Front government. The Sant group decided to expel Lacchman Singh Gill from the party while the Working Committee led by Master Tara Singh decided to fully cooperate with Lacchman Singh Gill. L.S. Gill and Master's group, both were desirous of eliminating Sant's influence in the SGPC which was the caretaker of the vast resources in the Gurudwaras. The amazing fact is that the Master's group which was demanding a Sikh Homeland was supporting Lacchman Singh Gill whose main supporter was the INC which was resisting the demand of the Sikh Homeland. All that Lacchman Singh Gill and the Congress wanted was the wiping out of the factions led by Sant Fateh Singh and Sant Channan Singh. Lacchman Singh Gill knew that the INC could pull out support anytime, thus, the only way he could consolidate his position was by smashing Sant Fateh Singh and winning the Master group. For this he took the help of the Akali Dal of Hudiara . Embezzlement charges were levelled against the Sant. Finally, after nine months of Lacchman Singh Gill's leading a government the INC withdrew support. President's rule was imposed under Art. 356 and the State Assembly was dissolved on August 21 , 1968. President's rule continued till the mid-term elections which were held on February 11 , 1969. The SAD emerged as the largest party with 43 seats including 6 of the Master group. The credit for the victory went to Sant Fateh Singh and Justice Gurnam Singh.

Sant Fateh Singh had ensured the Akali candidates' loyalty by administering oaths to them at the Akal Takht. Justice Gurnam Singh was invited to form the government by the then Governor, D. C. Pavate. As soon as he came to power, Justice Gurnam Singh ordered inquiry into the allegations in the memorandum of the United Front against Lacchman Singh Gill. When S. Lacchman Singh Gill arrived to attend the Budget Session, he was arrested for misusing his powers regarding transferring procurement work from the Co-operative Marketing-cum-Processing Society to the Grain Syndicate at Jagraon. This was in retaliation for S. Lacchman Singh Gill trying to arrest Sant Channan Singh when the former was in power as the Chief Minister. Soon differences arose in the Akali Dal between the Master group with S. Atma Singh and S. Kapur Singh who wanted a Sikh homeland while Gurnam Singh had a secular attitude. S. Kapur Singh often attacked the leadership of Sant Fateh Singh. Confrontations between

the two groups were on religious and language usage and practices. Gurnam Singh was initially from the Master group which had sponsored the Homeland demand but now political exigencies had linked him with the Sant group.

S. Kapur Singh alongwith the INC planned to make Sant Fateh Singh answer to the public as to why he broke his December 1966 fast unto death which was to be followed by self-immolation on December 27, 1966 if demand for a Punjabi Suba was not fulfilled. The demands had been rejected by the Prime Minister but the Sant had not completed his vow. In the past, Master Tara Singh had taken a vow on August 15, 1961 and when the objective had not been met the Panth had asked him to clean utensils in public. The Master's career had then finished. The opponents of the Sant too planned his political end. For the Akali extremists and the Congress members the Sant proved too powerful though the two sides had nothing in common, they both joined hands. Pheruman's death further tarnished the image of Justice Gurnam Singh and Sant Fateh Singh. But the latter retained his hold over Akali politics.

Pettigrew's study of Jat Sikhs explains the causes of factionalism among the community in great detail. She says the two typical features which lead to factionalism in the Akali Dal are uncompromising loyalty to one's group and enmity to the rival group. If the leader of a faction does not extend patronage, unqualified support, favours etc. to his followers they would take no time to shift their loyalty elsewhere.⁴⁶ Famous for pulling one another's leg a leader does not need to invent enemies. The followers who have been kept out of power would become his enemy to confront a 'third enemy' of the Panth.

'The Master era in the Akali politics was closing and the Sant age was about to dawn. The main differences between Master Tara Singh and Sant Fateh Singh was one of approach. The Master was given to harsh words and indecisive acts. The Sant was the very embodiment of sweet reasonableness, soft, sweet words and self-immolatory acts.'⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Joyce Pettigrew, *Robber Noblemen: A Study of Political System of Sikh Jats*, Ambika, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 63-218.

⁴⁷ Gulati, op. cit., n. 26, p. 171.

The elections in 1969 made the two Akali Dals merge on October 7, 1968. But despite the façade of unity, criticisms and dissension's were there in the Akali Dal. Sant Fateh Singh had become a dominating figure in the Akali Dal so after the death of Darshan Singh Pheruman, Dr. Jagjit Singh formed a new Akali Dal, called the Darshan Singh Pheruman – Akali Dal to pose a challenge to Sant Fateh Singh. Meanwhile, differences arose between Gurnam Singh, the Chief Minister and Sant Fateh Singh. Gurnam Singh had saved the Sant's life by accepting the decision of letting-go the rich cotton growing area of Fazilka to get Chandigarh and the grant of Rs. 10 crores to Haryana to build a new capital. Though there were widespread agitations in Punjab and Haryana yet Gurnam Singh went ahead with the Union government's decision. After this Gurnam Singh started acting without the advise of the Sant. He felt that the Akali Dal needed him more and he became friendlier with the leaders of the Master factions. Sant Fateh Singh wanted to retain the Upper House (The Legislative Council) but on the Chief Minister's recommendation it was abolished. '...the Sant had to eat humble pie'.⁴⁸ The senior Vice-President of Akali Dal and Chairman of SAD's central parliamentary board, Giani Bhupinder Singh was member of the Master faction. There were three vacancies in the Rajya Sabha. Sant Fateh Singh was asked by the working committee of the Akali Dal to nominate any two candidates. The Sant selected Jathedar Santokh Singh and Sardar Gurcharan Singh. One candidate was put up by the Congress. The Master faction showed its annoyance on the Sant's decision by nominating Bhupinder Singh as the third candidate. Bhupinder Singh was suspended from primary membership by the Akali Dal. Gurnam Singh declared that he was not supporting Bhupinder Singh and had excellent relations with the Sant. But the polling results on March 25, reflected something else. Gurnam Singh had supported Bhupinder Singh, but Giani Bhupinder Singh won defeating the Sant's candidate – Jathedar Santokh Singh. It was a big blow to Sant's image; rumours were rife about a split in the SAD. The Sant took his revenge the same day. When the Appropriation Bill was to be moved in the House, Gurnam Singh's own Finance Minister, Balwant Singh refused to rise. Gurnam Singh himself moved the Bill that was defeated. He had to resign from the government. The Akali Dal expelled him from the party for working against the interests of the party. It is argued that

⁴⁸ Pavate, op. cit.,n.45, p. 129.

Gurnam Singh was defeated because he dared to go against the two Sants who were in control of the reins of both the Akali Dal and the SGPC. 'Thus, Gurnam Singh was dislodged from the throne as a result of 'palace revolution''.⁴⁹ The clash of Gurnam Singh was with Sant Chanan Singh who controlled the legislative and organisational wing. Generally, governments are toppled by the opposition, but here a Chief Minister had been toppled by his own Party'.⁵⁰ The Ministry fell on March 25, 1970. After he was expelled from the Party, Gurnam Singh formed his own party – Gurnam Singh-Akali Dal. Giani Bhupinder Singh, a Rajya Sabha member elected in the biennial elections held on March 25, 1970 set about to revive the Master Tara Singh – Akali Dal.

The Akali Dal legislature elected Parkash Singh Badal as their leader who staked his own claim to form the government. According to 'The Tribune' the factional conflicts among Akali leaders were based on power struggle rather than on any ideological differences'.⁵¹ Gurnam Singh in the meanwhile tried to form the Ministry with the help of the Congress but was unable to do so. 'A. S. Narang, S. Bhatnagar and P. S. Verma are of the view that the dissatisfied dominant Akali faction alongwith the support of the Jana Sangh and Communist Party of India (Marxist), finally outvoted the Gurnam Singh ministry on March 25, 1970 and elected in its place a new government headed by Parkash Singh Badal'.⁵²

Parkash Singh Badal was with the Sant faction but Gurcharan Singh Tohra was in favour of Surjit Singh Barnala so he proposed the latter's name. But Badal was elected the leader of the Akali Legislative Party on March 25, 1970. He was administered the oath of office on March 27, 1970. Badal announced an eleven-point programme for the welfare and upliftment of the people of the state. The Ministry was expanded on April 15, and then on June 5, 1970 to please all those people who had shown their loyalty to

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 132.

⁵⁰ *The Hindu*, June 19, 1971.

⁵¹ Kuldeep Kaur, *Akali Dal in Punjab Politics – Splits and Mergers*, New Delhi Deep and Deep, 1999, p. 53.

⁵² Ibid, A. S. Narang, *Storm Over Sutlej: The Akali Politics* (New Delhi Gitanjali, 1983, pp. 186-87); Bhatnagar and Verma, *Coalition Governments (1967-80)*, quoted in *Political Dynamics in Punjab*, pp. 177-192.

Sant Fateh Singh. By June 9, 1970, the Ministry had been expanded in total four times and out of 56 party Members of Legislative Assembly, 29 had ministerial posts. Soon the Jana Sangh withdrew its support and Justice Gurnam Singh introduced a no-confidence motion against the Badal government. The Government survived because of an understanding of the Congress with the Akali Dal (Sant). Justice Gurnam Singh was let down by the Congress again. Gian Singh Rarewala had left the Congress around the 1969 mid-term poll and was hoping to lead the Akalis in the government formation. So, he was busy organising his own faction. But he was defeated in his own constituency. Pheruman's fast provided him the opportunity to quit the Akali Dal.

After Sant Fateh Singh's heart attack in September 1970, Badal brought Rarewala back to Akali Dal. Tohra was against Rarewala, their animosity dating from PEPSU politics days so he called for Panthic unity and persuaded Gurnam Singh to return to the Akali Dal. He was appointed Chairman of the Akali Dal Parliamentary board. In the Lok Sabha elections in March 1971 the Congress tried to have adjustment of seats with the SAD. The rivals of Badal decided to field his brother, S. Gurdas Singh Badal as the candidate in Fazilka Assembly Constituency. The Congress's candidate S. Iqbal Singh was a friend of Prakash Singh Badal. The rivals of Badal insisted that the Akali Dal would contest seriously. If Badal would oppose this move, it would be used against him to show his sympathies to the Congress. The Akali Dal rejected the INC's offer of an electoral alliance. In the results, the Congress got an overwhelming majority over the Akali Dal. Only the Chief Minister's brother emerged victorious. The factions in the SAD had taken their toll as the Congress secured a majority support in 77 State legislative constituencies. After the rout in the elections infighting in the party intensified. Allegations flew against each other each side blaming the other for inaction and corrupt practice. 'Political parties in Punjab are not known for their loyalty to principle even during their heyday. When disaster overtakes them infighting gains momentum among them'.⁵³ Some legislators were conspiring to challenge the leadership of Badal. When the general secretary of the Akali Dal issued notices against 2 Members of Legislative Assembly who had criticised the government and the party,

⁵³ Pavate, op. cit., n.45, p. 176.

minority. The Badal-Tohra group pressurised for a change of leader of the Panthic Assembly Party so the Sant appointed Badal as the leader of the Assembly Party. Sant Fateh Singh's death on October 30, 1972 and subsequently, Sant Chanan Singh's death on November 23, 1972 paved the way for new factionalism in Akali politics.

The alliance of the Akalis with the Jana Sangh led to shrinkage of its support base among the Sikhs. Moreover, the green revolution had resulted in new problems. The affluence generated by the revolution made the youth follow the Sikh tenets less. The Akali Dal came under fire from the Sikh clergy. The upper section of the peasantry was disenchanted and discontented as it felt that the gains from the green revolution had not been equally distributed. As Prof. Sharma states, 'While the gains of rich peasants are maximum, the poor peasants have gained only little in gross terms and have in fact, lost in real terms'.⁵⁴ Disparities have widened between the rich, middle and poor peasants on account of the uneven gains of the Green Revolution. Further, gains depended as to where the villages were situated and when the innovative technologies were adopted. The early adopters, who were near the vicinity of cities and towns gained more than those rich peasants, who were situated in the remote villages, as the techniques⁵⁵ reached them late and they adopted them afterwards. This led to the peasants asking their leaders to protect their economic interests. This led to the passage of Anandpur Sahib Resolution by the Akali Dal in 1973 adopted at Ludhiana in 1978 which talked of greater autonomy for the state. It also asked for redrawing the boundaries of Punjab to transfer to Punjab those Punjabi-speaking areas which had been left out and were in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh or Rajasthan. It raised the controversial demand of making territorial arrangements in such a way that the Sikhs are pre-dominant in the state. 'The growth of trade and industrialization has given birth to a new class of Hindu and Sikh urban bourgeois and the green revolution has created a class of Jat-Sikh rural bourgeois'.⁵⁶

The disparities in Green Revolution have showed differences among Jat Sikhs themselves. If on one hand the clash is between Jat Sikhs and the Central government, on

⁵⁴ T.R. Sharma, "*Political Implications of the Green Revolution*", in Paul Wallace and Surendra Chopra (ed.), p. 285.

⁵⁵ Ibid, pp. 286-87.

⁵⁶ Gopal Singh, *op. cit.*, n. 2.

Gurnam Singh, Chairman of the Akali Parliamentary Board questioned it. Badal had to please them by offering ministerial posts. The general secretary, Dr. Jagjit Singh demanded more autonomy for Punjab. The Chief Minister made efforts to clarify that these thoughts did not represent the thinking of the Akali Dal but were his individual views.

But Justice Gurnam Singh and the Tohra factions failed in this attempt. The Akali Dal was ridden with factions. The Sant-Badal faction did not support Justice Gurnam Singh's nominees and vice-versa. With a poor electoral verdict, the Akali Dal tried to approach Jana Sangh for rapprochement but again the groups led by Justice Gurnam Singh and Tohra stopped it. An understanding grew between Justice Gurnam Singh and the Congress and they refused any kind of support to Badal government with the result that Badal submitted his resignation and the Governor imposed President's rule on June 13, 1971. Despite Badal's efforts to have a coalition with the Congress in the interest of the people of the Punjab he had to tender his resignation. The ruling Akali Dal was divided even on this issue. While Badal was ready to work with the Congress, Sant Fateh Singh ruled out any co-operation with the Congress.

After the Indo-Pak war in 1971, Punjab Assembly elections were held on March 11, 1972. The INC emerged victorious with Giani Zail Singh as the Chief Minister. Gurnam Singh's Akali Dal disillusioned the people because of its alliance with the INC against the Akali Dal (Sant). Meanwhile, Sant Fateh Singh's position became challengeable after the poor performance of SAD in the 1972 March Assembly elections. Badal sided with Tohra in weakening the Sant's position as the Sant had appointed Jaswinder Singh as the leader of the Akali Assembly Party. The Sant resigned from the Presidentship of the SAD on March 25, 1972. He appointed Mohan Singh Tur as the acting President and Badal as the senior Vice-President of SAD. But in the Panthic convention held in Amritsar on September 17, 1972 elections were held for the organisational wing of the Party. The general body of Akali Dal elected Mohan Singh Tur as its President whose name had been proposed by the Sant and seconded by Tohra. The Sant was elected to the post of Chief Patron of the Party and his guidance and leadership was sought in all the tasks of the party. The Working Committee of the SAD was constituted in such a way that the Badal-Tohra supporters were reduced to a

the other, it is between the Jat Sikhs themselves. The Akali Dal leaders since mid-1960's have come from the richer districts of the Malwa region while the majority of the militants have come from Majha, i.e. the Gurdaspur and Amritsar districts. Thus, if Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale was from the Malwa region, the Damdami Taksal and his supporters were from the Majha region, an area where the gains of green revolution have not been many. 'On the measure of average farm income the farmers of Gurdaspur and Amritsar drop far down, ranking eighth and ninth out of twelve respectively, while the six districts of the Malwa occupy the top six positions'.⁵⁷

It led to the rejuvenation of the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) which was formed in 1943 but was passive till it got the support of Bhindranwale and Bhai Amrik Singh. The AISSF has always demanded more political power for the Sikhs. 'Thus, it is clear that the AISSF has always been on the militant end of the Akali spectrum'.⁵⁸ Harminder Singh Sandhu, Amrik Singh's secretary-general claimed in an interview that the Sikh youth had turned away from Sikhism because of the Akali leadership being passive. Sarbjit Singh Jammu blamed Badal, Tohra, Longowal, Barnala and even Mann of betraying the Sikh nation. The AISSF stands midway between the Akali Dal and the secessionists, 'it disassociated itself from the demand for an independent Khalistan and yet it refused to condemn that demand outright'.⁵⁹ AISSF's revival placed a lot of pressure on the Akali Dal because being a party of the youth the leaders are well educated and are located in the Majha region.

Badal, Jagdev Singh Talwandi and Tohra were the contestants for the leadership of the SAD. The imposing of emergency by the President on June 25, 1975 made the opposition parties decide to launch a struggle. Akali Dal's Working Committee met at Amritsar on July 5, 1975. There was a deadlock between the Badal and Tohra factions, the former wanted to participate in the agitation against Emergency while the latter felt that the Emergency was not only against the minorities. Finally, on July 7, 1975 all

⁵⁷ Hamish Telford, "The political economy of Punjab, Creating space for Sikh militancy", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXII, No. 11, November 1992, p. 977.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 982.

⁵⁹ Andrew Majoi, "From Moderates to Secessionists: A Who's Who of the Punjab Crisis", *Pacific Affairs*, 60:1 (1987), p. 50.

opted to launch 'Save Democracy' Morcha. Tohra led the first morcha on July 9, 1975. Tur was persuaded by Badal, Tohra and Talwandi to resign from his post. He did so on the condition that the Majha region would be adequately represented. Talwandi was appointed the Acting President of the SAD on April 23 1977. The Akali Dal got an overwhelming majority in the elections to the Punjab Legislative Assembly. Badal became the Chief Minister. He assumed office on June 20 , 1977. The SAD formed a coalition with the Janata Party but the latter was troubled by the attitude of the extremist wing of the SAD. The Akali- Nirankari clash of 1978 created a rift between the two coalition parties. The extremist group wanted the Chief Minister to curb the activities of the Nirankaris. While the organisational wing, led by Jagdev Singh Talwandi wanted to end the partnership with the Janata Party, the ministerial wing wanted to continue the coalition. Badal disagreed with the viewpoint of Talwandi and Tohra that their permission should be sought regarding the affairs of state. 'Again the conflict between ecclesiastical organisational axis led by Gurcharan Singh Tohra and Jagdev Singh Talwandi and the ministerial group led by Parkash Singh Badal arose over the issue of relationship between religion and politics'.⁶⁰

Other factors increased the factional fight between the two wings. Mahant Sewa Das had undertaken a fast-unto-death demanding the transfer of Chandigarh and three Canal headworks to the Punjab. The Nihangs supported their cause and so did Tohra and Talwandi and demanded Badal to take up the issue with the Central government. Badal's visit to a Hindu shrine, Vaishno Devi was taken up as an example of idol-worship which is forbidden by the Sikh tenets. At the Centre, Chaudhry Charan Singh was challenging the leadership of Morarji Desai for the post of Prime Minister. Badal wanted to support Desai but Akali Dal wanted to remain neutral. Surjit S. Barnala and Dhanna Singh Gulshan, the two Akali ministers, resigned to show the SAD's neutral position. The Charan Singh-Raj Narain faction wooed the Talwandi-Tohra faction with the result that the faction extended support to Charan Singh. Badal's advice of supporting Desai went unheeded as the Talwandi-Tohra faction wanted to undermine his prestige. Charan Singh

⁶⁰ Kuldeep Kaur, op. cit., n. 51, p.64.

failed to win the vote of confidence which only intensified the struggle between the two Akali factions.

Gobinder Singh says that members of the Sikh clergy started a crisis- 'extreme fundamentalism' when they felt that they had been unassociated with the SGPC.⁶¹ They could not make inroads into the institution. They started presenting radical interpretations of Sikhism before the masses. Their aim was to touch the lower strata of the Sikh peasantry and those who had been hard hit by the economic pressures. He says, 'The Sikh fundamentalism, though a child of the unfolding contradictions of the capitalist path of development, has been reared by exploitative class forces in the liberal environment of the bourgeois democracy. It was initially fostered by monopoly bourgeois ruling class in the initial stages as a prospective tool of non-issue politics in the state against the unification of peasant force under the Akali Dal and then was adopted by the agricultural bourgeois itself for effective mobilization of the Sikh masses during its active class struggle against the former. But when it outgrew the contentment of both and acquired independent existence for itself, it was decried by both.'⁶²

Besides these factions, the Congress (I) encouraged the formation of the Dal Khalsa and the rise of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. This was done to split the SAD and to create an alternative centre of power. Talwandi and Tohra submitted a petition on September 26, 1979 before the Akal Takht against Badal alleging that he had harmed the cause of the Sikh Panth. Sadhu Singh Bhaura summoned Badal and Sant Harchand Singh Longowal. Badal appeared before the Akal Takht on October 1, 1979. The Jathedar called a meeting of Tohra, Talwandi, Longowal and Badal on October 4, 1979. Due to Tohra and Talwandi's absence the meeting could not take place but it took place on October 5, 1979. The verdict was given on October 6, 1979 and Talwandi and Tohra withdrew their resignations. But dispute arose over the jurisdiction between the seven-member committee and the President of Akali Dal. The Jathedar issued a statement on November 2, 1979 stating that the seven-member committee would be responsible to decide about seat adjustment, alliances etc. Talwandi refused to accept this or any

⁶¹ Gobinder Singh, op. cit., n. 5, p. 131-132.

⁶² Ibid., p. 132.

decision of the committee. The committee members were Ajit Singh Sarhadi, Longowal, Sukhjinder Singh and Prem Singh Lalpura. The supporters of Talwandi argued that Longowal did not have any authority to function as the Chairman of the committee as all the members were equal in status. Talwandi was ordered to clear the utensils in the langar for seven days and to attend the meeting of the seven-member committee.

The ecclesiastical authority i.e. the SGPC and the organisational authority both maintain a constant pressure on the ministerial wing and the example of the Talwandi-Tohra combine's pressure on Badal's ministerial wing is a prominent one. Besides, not agreeing to support the Janata government in 1979 the Tohra-Talwandi combine resigned from their respective presidential positions to pressurise Badal to do the same. When Badal failed to oblige the Sikh priests sent for him and he had to 'acknowledge the superordination of the ecclesiastical authority'.⁶³ On the question of screening of the Akali delegates to the presidential elections for the Akali Dal held on October 10 1979, the Badal group had been accusing Talwandi of interfering with the list. When they proposed the names of three eminent members of the Sikh community who would do their job fairly, Talwandi-Tohra group got three head priests also included on whom they would exert pressure as Tohra was the President of the SGPC. 'The ecclesiastical organisational axis at times conspired to publicise or sectarianize even a complete issue to exert popular pressure on the Badal government.'⁶⁴ For example, the visit of Badal to Vaishno Devi, a Hindu shrine in June 1978 was taken up and he was condemned as idol-worship is banned in the Sikh religion. Badal resented the interference of the Akal Takht in the affairs of the State while Talwandi and Tohra felt that since they were the chiefs of the party and the SGPC, they possessed a legitimate authority to control the affairs of the party'.⁶⁵

Jiwan Singh Umranangal campaigned for a Janta Party candidate. He was ordered to present 'Karah Prasad' worth Rs. 11 and donate Rs. 51 in the service of Darbar Sahib.

⁶³ J. S. Gandhi, "System, Process and Popular Ethos: A Study in Contemporary Politics in Punjab" in *Political Dynamics of Punjab*, p.55.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 56.

⁶⁵ S. Bhatnagar and P. S. Verma, "Coalition Governments (1967-80) in *Political Dynamics in Punjab*, op. cit. n. 52, p. 188.

He too had disobeyed the verdict of Takht. The factional fights led to the defeat of the SAD in the 1980 Lok Sabha elections. This led to Longowal's resignation as the senior Vice-President of the SGPC. He urged for holding the elections for the Akali Dal's Presidentship but owing to factionalism this was not possible. Again a seven-member committee was formed to manage the affairs of the SAD as the Executive committee of the SAD had been dissolved. Factional fights continued till the Ministry was dismissed.

Elections were held in May 1980 and the Congress came to power. On August 9, 1980 Badal, Sarhadi, Longowal and Atma Singh expelled Talwandi from the party for six years. The Talwandi group too expelled Badal, Ravi Inder Singh, Prakash Singh Majithia on the same day for their anti-party activities. The crisis was further intensified when the faction led by Tohra separated itself from the Talwandi group. Thus, there was a split in the organisational wing also. Tohra and Sukhjinder Singh supported Longowal as the candidate for the Presidentship of the SAD. Talwandi's faction convened the World Sikh Convention on August 19, 1980 and formalised the split. Tohra, the Chief of SGPC supported Longowal and the Badal group elected Longowal as the President of the Party on August 20, 1980. The Talwandi group was reduced to a minority, with only four members of the Legislative Assembly. 'Jagdev Singh Talwandi described this split as a fight between the 'haves' and the have-notes'.⁶⁶

After the defeat in the elections of 1980, Longowal said that the SAD failed, "not because the voters were against us, but because several Akali leaders actively canvassed support for the Congress (I) candidates in Bhatinda, Faridkot and Tarn Taran. Many others did not extent support to the candidates put up by the other parties either in alliance or in adjustment with us'.⁶⁷

After the August 19, 1980 split of the Akali Dal into Akali Dal (Longowal) and Akali Dal (Talwandi), Tohra was re-elected as the President of the SGPC on November 19, 1980. He defeated Nirlep Kaur of Akali Dal (T) and thus the dominance of the Akali Dal (Sant group) was assured. 'The second magic split in a period of eighteen years (third since the inception of the Party in 1920) is to be understood not in terms of any

⁶⁶ Dalip Singh, op. cit., n. 3, p. 229.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 230.

ideological differences but as a clash of personalities.⁶⁸ Besides these two groups there were many dissatisfied leaders who formed their own small groups. They failed to be effective. Jathedar Santokh Singh of Delhi tried to revive the Master Tara Singh's group but because of its Congress stand had a very small following, which was confined, to the urban areas of Punjab.

Both the Akali Dal – Longowal's and Talwandi's agitated for more autonomy to Punjab. By passing resolutions and holding Morchas they supported the demand on religious and political grounds. The Talwandi group faced a set back when Bhagwant Singh Danewalia who was its advisor left to form his own party, 'Federal Shiromani Akali Dal'. He declared that the leadership of new party would continue to work for the confederation of Akali factions in order to attain social and economic objectives of greater autonomy for Punjab.⁶⁹

The internal conflict between Longowal, Tohra and Talwandi groups was one of the reasons why the Akali Dal could not negotiate strongly with the Central government. Moreover, this intra-Akali conflict was further complicated when the militant section, entered the political picture which believed in violence. The latter were in minority but the moderates failed to disassociate themselves from the militants again because of conflict among themselves. Even the Akali movement from 1981 to 1984 suffered because of confusion of goals among the leaders of the Akali Dal. The central government again took advantage of this confusion.

The rise of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale is attributed to the connivance of Sanjay Gandhi who wanted the break-up of the Punjab coalition. In this venture, he was helped by Giani Zail Singh who had been the Chief Minister of the state from 1972 to 1977. Punjab was dominated by Badal, Longowal and Tohra, was each in his own way a force to reckon with Sanjay wanted to play one against the other but Zail Singh told him that weakening one would only lead to the other two emerging stronger. So, they looked for a new Sant and found him in Bhindranwale. They needed a cause of bring him forward. The Nirankaris, a heretical sect of Sikhs were given permission to hold a

⁶⁸ *The Tribune*, January 14, 1980.

⁶⁹ *Ib. d.*, June 22, 1981.

convention in Amritsar. The Sikh congregation was angry but Umranangal tried to pacify them as the Nirankaris had close connection with the Hindu traders who were supporters of Jana Sangh which was a coalition partner of the SAD. Bhindrawale shouted that they would not let the Nirankari convention take place. He marched with Fauja Singh, an agricultural inspector, leading a procession shouting slogans against the Nirankaris. The police made no attempt to stop them. At the spot, Fauja Singh cut off the head of Baba Gurbachan Singh, the Nirankari Guru. The Guru's bodyguards shot dead Fauja Singh. A battle broke out in which 12 Sikhs and three Nirankaris were killed. The INC projected Bhindranwale as a hero. A new party, the Dal Khalsa was formed on April 13, 1978, a week before the attack on the Nirankaris. 'The inaugural meeting was held in the Aroma Hotel, Chandigarh, and, according to the staff of the hotel, the bill of 600 rupees was paid by Zail Singh'.⁷⁰ Zail Singh was actively involved in giving prominence to the activities of the Dal Khalsa.

Jagjit Singh Chauhan who raised the demand for Khalistan in United Kingdom in 1977 came to India accepting Badal as his leader but the Akalis rejected him. The Congress took him under its umbrella and Zail Singh and Sanjay Gandhi formed a trinity with Chauhan. Chauhan even tried to get Congress-I tickets for his two supporters in Hoshiarpur district but the Congress could not accommodate them as some of the old partymen would desert the party. Chauhan was not arrested even when he hoisted the flag of Khalistan at Anandpur Sahib in March 1980.

In 1979 elections were held for the SGPC. But Bhindranwale could not emerge victorious as his candidates won only four out of the 14 seats. The majority yet remained with the SAD. Zail Singh used Bhindranwale to curtail the powers of his rival, Darbara Singh who had been appointed the Chief Minister of Punjab by Mrs. Gandhi. When Bhindranwale was arrested on September 20, 1981 for the murder of Lala Jagat Narain, the proprietor of a chain of newspapers, Zail Singh got him released, as he was the Home

⁷⁰ Mark Tully and Satish Jacob, *Amritsar, Mrs. Gandhi's Last Battle*, New Delhi, Rupa and Co, 1985, p. 60.

Minister. His arrest had led to a spate of violence in Punjab. His release made him a hero 'who had challenged and defeated the Indian government'.⁷¹

Bhindranwale fell out with his patron, Zail Singh, because during his arrest the police had burnt all his sermons which his secretary used to note down. Zail Singh tried to pacify Bhindranwale but by that time the SAD had decided to adopt him seeing his increasing following. The Akalis, on the other hand, tried to retrospect as to what went wrong and why had the Sikhs not voted for them? 'They believed that their 'secular' image during the coalition with Janata had damaged their equation with the Sikhs, who thought that 'their own' government did little for them. They came to the conclusion that to get a better image, they must woo the Sikhs, they must rely on the traditional stand of combining religion with politics'.⁷² They could not have any other better card than Bhindranwale himself. Longowal even decided to launch a Civil Disobedience Movement from October 17, 1981 if Bhindranwale was not released unconditionally.

On the eve of 1980 elections to the Parliament the SAD was driven with factionalism and indecisiveness. The group led by Badal, the Chief Minister wanted the President of the SAD, Jagdev Singh Talwandi, to be replaced. Talwandi was the leader of the rival group. Badal wanted to have the support of the 23 members of the Janata Party in the Assembly and wanted to have an alliance with it in 1980. On the other hand, Talwandi wanted the SAD to make all the adjustments as it was the supreme body. By this statement, Talwandi asserted the supremacy of the organisational wing. The two rival parties involved Akal Takht and its Hukamnamas(edicts) to resolve these internal difficulties. 'The Talwandi group by aligning with the left and democratic front composed of the Lok Dal Communist Party of India (Marxist), Communist Party of India and CFD was out to 'defendatise' the party'.⁷³

Meanwhile, the Jathedar of Akal Takht made efforts to unite the various factions of SAD i. e., Akali Dal (Master), Akali Dal (Longowal) and Akali Dal (Talwandi) and

⁷¹ Tully and Jacob, op. cit., n. 70, p. 71.

⁷² Khushwant Singh and Kuldip Nayar, *Tragedy of Punjab: Operation Blue Star and After*, New Delhi, Vision Books, 1984, p. 38

⁷³ Surjit Singh Narang, "Elections and the Shiromani Akali Dal – A Socio-Psychological Approach in Political Dynamics of Punjab, in op. cit., n. 22, p. 152.

the Federal Shiromani Akali Dal. 'Jathedar Santokh Singh of Akali Dal (Master) agreed for Panthic unity on the condition that Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale be made its leader'.⁷⁴ Longowal and Tohra, the former President of Akali Dal and the latter, President of SGPC started a Dharam Yudh (religious war). Gurnam Singh Tur, leader of Akali Dal (Talwandi) too joined them. Bhindranwale too united with them. As Talwandi declared. 'there is complete unity in the Panth now'.⁷⁵

Longowal had negotiated with Mrs. Gandhi but she had backed out over and over again. Thus, his hands were not strengthened vis-à-vis Bhindranwale. As Harkishan Singh Surjeet told to Mark Tully, 'Three times in six months an agreement was reached and three times the Prime Minister backed out. Each time the interests of the Hindus of Haryana weighed more heavily with her than a settlement with the Sikhs'.⁷⁶ Tohra wanted to use the Dharam Morcha (religious agitation) to weaken Badal and be the leader of the political wing of the SAD and thus field his candidature for the Chief-Ministership. Bhindranwale was highly critical of Longowal's non-violent tactics. Longowal criticized the killing of unarmed, innocent people. The supporters were openly divided between pro-Longowal and pro-Bhindranwale factions. Tohra tried to unite them but to no avail. 'For Longowal non-violence was a matter of faith; for Bhindranwale it was mere rhetoric and had outlived its use'.⁷⁷

Thus, we can categorise the factions of Akali Dal into four according to Gurharpal Singh⁷⁸:

1. The moderates included Akali Dal (Badal), Akali Dal (Longowal), Akali Dal (Kabul) and Akali Dal (Panthic) who supported the Rajiv-Longowal Accord of July 24, 1985 and were committed to parliamentarism and the Anandpur Sahib resolution (Amritsar) which talked of transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab, settlement

⁷⁴ *Ajit*, October 4, 1981.

⁷⁵ Abida Samiuddin (ed.), *The Punjab Crisis: Challenges and Response*, Delhi Mittal Publications, 1985, p. 707.

⁷⁶ Tully and Jacob, op. cit., n. 70, p. 91.

⁷⁷ Nayar and Singh, op. cit., n. 73, p. 74.

⁷⁸ Gurharpal Singh "The Punjab Elections 1992, Breakthrough or Breakdown", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXII, No. 11, November 1992, p. 989.

of the Ravi-Beas water dispute with Haryana and Rajasthan, prosecution of 1984 anti-Sikh riots, rehabilitation of 1984 Sikh army deserters, release of political detainees, enactment of an all-India Gurdwara Act and the Centre's power to be restricted to defense, currency, communications and foreign affairs.

2. Akali Dal (Mann) and Akali Dal (Baba) were the radicals who displaced the moderates in the 1989 Lok Sabha elections who accept the Anandpur Sahib Resolution but stress the Sikh's right to self-determination.
3. The democratic militants were the AISSF (Manjit), Damdami Taksal, Panthic Committee (Manochahal), Khalistan Commando Force, Bhindranwale Tiger Force and the Dashmesh Regiment who talk of parliamentarism alongwith an armed struggle for a separate state of Khalistan.
4. The armed militants who have pursued the armed struggle for Khalistan and condemn the use of parliamentarism as a tactic. They include Panthic Committee (Dr. Sohan Singh), Khalistan Liberation Force, Babbar Khalsa International and Akali Dal (Babbar).

The AISSF of the SAD became active saboteurs. Many people from the Longowal camp started visiting Bhindranwale. The latter hated Badal and Longowal for advocating Hindu-Sikh unity. The merger of Akali Dal (Longowal), Akali Dal (Talwandi) and the militant faction of Bhindranwale in 1982 had run into trouble. Tohra was re-elected the President of SGPC on November 30, 1982 for the 11th consecutive term. He was trying to maintain good relations both with Longowal and Bhindranwale. When Bhindranwale wanted to move to Akal Takht, Longowal resisted and so did the head-priest, Kirpal Singh. But Tohra persuaded them to let Bhindranwale move. December 14, 1983 saw Bhindranwale move to the Akal Takht. The AISSF called a convention in which Longowal was not invited and Bhindranwale criticised the former for betraying the cause of the Sikhs. The differences were clear between Sant Longowal and Talwandi. Finally, pro-Bhindranwale members declared Bhindranwale as their leader on April 27, 1984.⁷⁹ They claimed that Longowal's supporters had called Bhindranwale

⁷⁹ *The Tribune*, April 28, 1984.

and his followers 'traitors' and 'agents of the Congress' but the Sant had taken no action against them. Sant Longowal decided to launch a non-co-operation movement on June 3, 1984 but that day the central government ordered the enemy to flush out militants from the Golden Temple complex. Bhindranwale, Shabeg Singh and Amrik Singh were killed and other leaders of all the factions of SAD were arrested.

The Akali Jatha alongwith its President, Harbhajan Singh Sandhu, who was close to Longowal was dissolved by the five High Priests on November 7 , 1984 and Surjan Singh Thekedar was appointed as the convener of the new ad-hoc committee. The factional fight had become severe. Tohra was elected the President of the SGPC for the 13th term despite the opposition from Akali Dal (Talwandi) which had fielded Atma Singh. 'Moreover, Dial Singh, Secretary of Akali Dal (Talwandi) claimed that Atma Singh was also supported by the Badal faction of Akali Dal (Longowal).⁸⁰

Baba Joginder Singh, father of Bhindranwale, acquired prominence as leaders like Longowal, Tohra etc. asked him to bring all the factions together for Panthic unity. He became a leader of Akali Dal (J) and he played an important role for two years. He appointed a nine member adhoc committee and also announced the merger of All Akali factions on May 1 , 1985 at Amritsar. The very next day, Longowal condemned and subsequently denounced the committee and announced its dissolution. He revived his own Akali Dal (L). Longowal had Tohra's support. Badal, Barnala, Tohra, Balwant Singh and Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa rallied behind Longowal and told him to go ahead with any agreement with the Central government. The 'Punjab Accord' was signed by Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India and Longowal, President of SAD. Longowal was helped by Surjit Singh Barnala and Balwant Singh. The Accord led to a split in the Akali Dal with Barnala and Balwant Singh on one side and Badal and Tohra on the other. Longowal's death led to this factionalism coming into the open. Kuldip Nayar says that , 'the process of negotiations with the government that resulted in accord has split them into two groups; Badal and Tohra on one side and Balwant Singh and Barnala on the

⁸⁰ Kuldip Kaur, *op. cit.*, n. 51, p. 87.

other'.⁸¹ Tohra and Badal had a popular base and their relationship is too of convenience as Tohra wanted to continue as the SGPC chief so as to command the Gurdwaras and their funds. '...the distance between him (Tohra) and Balwant Singh and Barnala is not easily bridgeable because at one time both of them had sided with Badal against Tohra. Even the combination of Badal and Tohra is one of convenience; in their thinking and outlook they stand poles apart'.⁸² So, at this time there were three factions, one led by Badal and Tohra accord, led by Barnala and Balwant Singh and the third known as 'United Akali Party' led by Baba Joginder Singh.

There has been a competition to control the SGPC amongst Sikhs who owe their allegiance to the other parties. The Akali Dal, thus, got the element of competition besides being divided into those who represented the Sikh peasantry and those representing the commercial classes. 'At present times the Akali Dal is perhaps faced with the greatest crisis of all time with the emergence of a new and powerful faction within the Akali also drawing support from the common peasant base (Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and Baba Joginder Singh factions)'.⁸³ Hamish Telford argues that Bhindranwale was 'a rational actor with the own goals. His first concern was to rejuvenate Sikhism and establish himself as a leader of the Sikh panth (spiritual way)'.⁸⁴ Many believe that he was a creation of Giani Zail Singh as a foil to the Akali government. Bhindranwale, Telford says, tried 'to overcome the hegemony of the Akali Dal, he exploited first the Congress (I) and then the Akali Dal itself'.⁸⁵

During Operation Blue Star, President of the AISSF, Bhai Amrik Singh was killed and its General Secretary, H. S. Sandhu surrendered to the Indian Army. Bhai Manjit Singh, brother of Amrik Singh was rounded up by the Army and the Senior Vice-President, Bhai Atinder Pal Singh escaped to Pakistan. The AISSF supporters started

⁸¹ Kuldip Nayar, *After the Accord*, quoted by Amrik Singh (ed.), *Punjab in Indian Politics: Issues and Trends*, Ajanta, Delhi, 1985, p. 395.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Partha N. Mukherji, "Akali and Violence, An Inquiry into the theory and Practice of Non-Violence in Punjab" in Amrik Singh (ed.), p. 114.

⁸⁴ Hamish Telford, "The Political Economy of Punjab, Creating Space for Sikh Militancy", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXII, No. 11, November 1992, p. 974.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

regrouping in 1984. They connived with the supporters of Sant Bhindranwale. In March 1985 the AISSF formed an adhoc committee with Harinder Singh Kahlon as the convener. Atinder Pal Singh was trying to revive AISSF in Pakistan. Gurjit Singh was also trying to revive AISSF in Pakistan and factional rivalry existed among the two groups. 'The difference between the two factions stemmed basically not from any deep ideological or conceptual variations but from their attempts to strengthen their respective position and emerge as the dominant militant group in Pakistan'.⁸⁶ The faction led by Gurjit Singh was rustic, illiterate but deeply religious while the one led by Atinder Pal Singh was urban and educated. Gurjit Singh was married to the niece of Sant Bhindranwale who harped on the cause of 'Khalistan'. For the President of the AISSF Gurjit Singh's faction got the name of Bhai Manjit Singh elected because of the sacrifice of his brother, Amrik Singh. Atinder Pal Singh lost the battle of leadership. In a meeting held in India from July 5 to July 8 1985, Manjit Singh was elected as the President and Harminder S. Sandhu as the General Secretary of the AISSF. Both were in jail. Harinder Singh Kahlon was named the convener. The AISSF condemned the Punjab Accord and the announcement of the Assembly elections in Punjab. The AISSF decided to honour the assassin of Indira Gandhi, Beant Singh. H. S. Kahlon, the convener asked Baba Joginder Singh of the Akali Dal (J) to extend financial help in organising the function. The latter provided only Rs. 10,000 and help was given by Baba Thakur Singh, Acting Head of the Damadami Taksal. Differences between Kahlon and Joginder Singh grew when Bhindranwale's wife and two sons were invited for the convention. After this convention of October 31, Kahlon openly levelled charges against Baba Joginder Singh for misappropriating funds. One of the supporters of Baba's camp, Satwinder Singh was asked by Kahlon to leave Akali Dal (J) and join them. Satwinder Singh with a delegation met Bhai Manjit Singh and Harminder Singh Sandhu who were lodged in the Jodhpur Jail and apprised them of the growing differences. When Manjit Singh and Sandhu criticised H.S. Kahlon's way of functioning Kahlon declared on February 26, 1986 that the AISSF had no links with Baba Joginder Singh. Kahlon was eager to get close to Damdami Taksal. Amarjit S. Chawla who was in Jodhpur jail was shifted to Amritsar Jail to appear in the B. Sc. examinations. Members of the AISSF met him and listed their grievances

⁸⁶ D. P. Sharma, *The Punjab Story*, New Delhi, Asia Publishing House, 1996, p. 89.

against Kahlon. On the basis of his report, Manjit Singh relieved Kahlon of his duties. Kahlon criticized Manjit Singh and raised his own faction. Thus on April 22, 1986 there was the AISSF faction of Manjit and Kahlon.

The Babbar Khalsa was financed from abroad. Having 8 – 10 dreaded members it consisted of Amrik Singh, Subhan Singh, Surinder Singh and Manmohan Singh. Besides the Babbar Khalsa, Sukhdev Singh Sakhira formed his own group. He pressurised Bhai Mokham Singh of Damdami Taksal to have an agreement with the SGPC on the issue of 'Kar Seva' (voluntary religious service). He met Baba Thakur Singh, acting Head of Damdami Taksal to reach a compromise between the Taksal and the SGPC/Akali Dal (L). The AISSF (Kahlon faction) and the Damdami Taksal blessed Manbir Singh Chaheru of Village Chhaheru to form the Khalistan Commando Force (KCF). Tarsem Singh Kohar, a polytechnic student who was sentenced to life imprisonment and later released, formed the Khalsa Liberation Army (KLA). Jarnail Singh – Baba gang masterminded the assassination of Longowal in 1985.

Longowal could have brought round Badal and Tohra to accept the Punjab accord as they wield a lot of influence among the Akali cadre. They had opposed the accord in late July in the party's conclave. With Longowal's assassination they have re-established links with the "United" Akali Party led by Baba Joginder Singh that vehemently opposed the accord. Badal and Tohra were annoyed with Longowal that he had failed to take them into confidence during talks with the Centre while Balwant Singh, a former Finance Minister of Punjab and Barnala, a former Union Agriculture Minister were. Longowal's death has split them with Badal and Tohra on one side and Balwant Singh and Barnala on the other. Tohra supported Badal to continue being the President of the SGPC so that he would have control of the Gurudwaras and its funds. Moreover, Balwant Singh and Barnala had sided once with Badal against Tohra. 'Even the combination of Badal and Tohra is one of convenience in their thinking and outlook they stand poles apart'.⁸⁷

After Operation Blue Star, the Akali leaders became silent and the militants took centre stage. The Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi announced elections to the Punjab Assembly on September 22, 1985. The Akali Dal (Longowal) decided to contest all the

⁸⁷ Kuldip Nayar, *op. cit.*, n. 82.

state Assembly as well as Lok Sabha seats in a meeting held on August 19, 1985. Tohra and Badal did not attend the meeting but were persuaded by Longowal to unite in the name of Panthic unity. They did but the next day Longowal was assassinated. A succession squabble followed with the supporters of Barnala declaring him to be Longowal's political heir while the other group wanted Sardar Ajit Singh from Ropar to be the heir. The central government here played a prominent role by getting elected Barnala as the President of the Akali Dal (Longowal) and Ajit Singh as head of the party's Parliamentary Board.⁸⁸

Barnala became the Chief Minister on September 29, 1985 and he included some supporters of Tohra in his Cabinet and ignored the Badal faction. This issue led to a split in the SAD. Satya M. Rai feels that Badal refused to co-operate and the differences were over the non-implementation of the Punjab Accord.⁸⁹ The Damdami Taksal organised a Sarbat Khalsa on January 26, 1986. Even the Jathedar of the Akal Takht, Giani Kirpal Singh, was replaced by Bhai Jasbir Singh. The trinity of Badal, Barnala and Tohra did not attend this meeting. They organised their own Sarbat Khalsa in which Tohra resigned as the President of the SGPC. Barnala accepted his resignation and appointed Kabul Singh, his close associate as the acting President. This led to further factionalism between the Akali leaders.

Sikh struggle for the creation of Khalistan was announced on April 29, 1986. Consequently, the Punjab Police entered the Golden Temple complex on April 30, 1986 under 'Operation Search' and cleared the complex of all militants. This led to criticism against Barnala. Badal, Tohra and Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa resigned and announced their separate party under the leadership of Badal. These 27 Akali leaders 'applied to the Speaker (Ravi Inder Singh) of the Assembly to recognise them as a separate group. Next day, the Speaker issued a notification of recognising the new group'.⁹⁰ Bhartiya Janta Party and the Congress (I) supported Barnala but Tohra and Badal had popular support. According to Sharma the exclusion of the Badal faction from the Akali Ministry and the

⁸⁸ *India Today*, September 15, 1985.

⁸⁹ Satya M. Rai, *Punjab Since Partition*, Delhi, Durga, 1986, p. 352.

⁹⁰ *The Tribune* May 9, 1986.

ouster of Tohra from the Presidentship of SGPC were the root cause of the dissension. The ruling SAD split on the question, finally, of police entry during 'Operation Search' into the Golden Temple in April 1986.⁹¹

Tohra defeated Kabul Singh for the post of Presidentship on November 20, 1986. Tohra had Akali Dal (Baba) and Akali Dal (Talwandi)'s support. The SGPC relieved Giani Kirpal Singh, Jathedar of Akal Takht and Giani Sahib Singh, Head Granthi of Darbar Sahib from their posts. The SGPC appointed Darshan Singh Ragi as Jathedar of Akal Takht and Giani Puran Singh as Head Granthi of Darbar Sahib. Soon the other three priests, supporters of Barnala, were removed and it appointed its own supporters. These Five Sikh Priests issued an appeal to all the Akali factions to dissolve their differences and come together to form a new United Akali Dal. The appeal was also to Barnala who explained his position and duties towards the Indian Constitution. Barnala was ex-communicated and declared a 'Tankhaiya'. Jathedar Rachpal Singh, leader of Akali Dal (Master) met the same fate for he too hadn't submitted his resignation. Darshan Singh, the Jathedar of Akal Takht, formed a new Akali Dal, uniting all the factions except Akali Dal (Longowal). The merged factions consisted of Akali Dal (Badal), Akali Dal (Talwandi), Akali Dal (Baba), AISSF and Damdami Taksal. Simranjit Singh Mann was made the President of Unified Akali Dal. Their aim was to get the Centre to accept the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. Subsequently, Prem Singh Chandumajra who was a Cabinet Minister in Barnala ministry dissolved the youth wing and Inderjit Singh Bagi dissolved the Akali Dal (Longowal), Barnala's ministry was reduced to a minority for he believed that the various factions had come together against his government on the plank of Panthic unity. Some political thinkers argue that Barnala did not cooperate with the idea of Akali unity because of instructions of Rajiv Gandhi. 'Moreover, the ego problem of Sikh ministers and Panthic leaders was also responsible for their non-involvement in the Panthic unity'.⁹² All the factions of Akali Dal i.e. Akali Dal (Badal), Akali Dal (Talwandi), Akali Dal (Baba), Damdami Taksal and AISSF united and set up the United

⁹¹ T. R. Sharma, "Post Election Punjab: Some Trends", quoted by Kuldeep Kaur, op. cit., n. 51, p. 102.

⁹² Partap Singh Gill (ed.), "There is no alternative except Panthic Unity", *Ajit*, March 25, 1987.

Akali Dal on February 5, 1987. Barnala who led the Akali Dal (Longowal) did not join the United Akali Dal as he said the United Akali Dal was in favour of Khalistan that was 'harmful to the interest of the Sikhs'.⁹³ Barnala's Ministry was dissolved on May 11, 1987 and President rule was imposed in Punjab.

The police atrocities were condemned by the both the United Akali Dal and the Akali Dal (Longowal) yet they did not unite. Within the United Akali Dal differences arose between the Badal faction and the supporters of Akali Dal (Baba) each demanding a larger share in the election of the district jathedars. While the former claimed that they had more representation in the Assembly the latter faction claimed that it had made more sacrifices for the cause of the Panth. Elections to the SGPC were held separately by United Akali Dal and Akali Dal (Longowal). The former faction held elections on October 16, 1987 and elected Tohra as its President and its own 11 member executive committee. Akali Dal (Longowal) held its own elections and elected Harcharan Singh Hudiara as the President of its own 11-member executive committee.

Factional fight grew within the United Akali Dal when Ranjit Singh, the General Secretary of United Akali Dal, of Badal faction challenged the appointment of the acting President Ujjagar Singh Sekhwan. Meanwhile, Capt. Amrinder Singh who was the leader of the legislative wing of the United Akali Dal decided to launch a Civil Disobedience Movement from January 26, 1988 onwards. Badal announced his own 'five-point formula'. All these announcements were aimed at meeting the various grievances of the Sikh community. Jasbir Singh Rode was made the Jathedar of Akal Takht who appealed to the various Akali factions for Panthic unity on March 7, 1988. The leaders of United Akali Dal courted arrest on May 20, 1988. Then the SGPC appointed Harcharan Singh Delhi as the Jathedar of Akal Takht after the removal of Bhai Jasbir Singh Rode. The fresh appointments led to differences between the Badal and Baba factions. The Baba faction expelled Manjit Singh Calcutta, the General Secretary for six years from the party on July 26, 1988. Again, Bhai Jasbir Singh was made the Jathedar of Akal Takht. Simranjit Singh Mann, who was the President of United Akali Dal and still in the Bhagalpur Jail dissolved the 13-member council. The Badal faction refused to accept this

⁹³ *India Today*, March 15, 1987, p. 25.

decision of Mann and asked clarification from Professor Darshan Singh who had appointed Mann as the President. Darshan Singh was appointed as the Jathedar of Akal Takht on August 13, 1988.

The United Akali Dal finally split on August 25, 1988 with the Badal (faction) electing Talwandi as President in place of Mann. Baba's faction showed its faith in the leadership of Mann. 24 members of the Akali Dal (Longowal) joined the Akali Dal (Talwandi) and extended support to Tohra, President of SGPC. Barnala resigned from the Presidentship of Akali Dal (Longowal) on December 5, 1988 on the question of Panthic unity. He was given authority to negotiate with Talwandi and other Akali factions. A leader of Akali Dal (Longowal), Balwant Singh criticised Barnala over his anti-Panthic activities. Tota Singh was made the acting President of Akali Dal (Longowal). This faction called Balwant Singh a traitor.

Akali Dal (Longowal), Akali Dal (Mann) and Akali Dal (Talwandi) merged under the banner of SAD on March 12, 1989 and elected Jagdev Singh Talwandi as its President. Mann was made a patron. Capt. Amrinder Singh was behind this unity and the Baba's faction alleged that the Capt. was working under the dictates of the centre. Problems arose when Barnala and Tota Singh said that Akali Dal (Longowal) would continue to exist as before. Jagdev Singh Talwandi removed Manjit Singh Calcutta from the Secretaryship of SGPC because of their personal differences that led to Tohra's resignation. Barnala was re-elected President of Akali Dal (Longowal) on July 17, 1989.

Elections to the Lok Sabha on November 26, 1989 saw all the three factions contest independently. Talwandi faced rebellion from his supporters – Sukhjinder Singh and Surjan Singh Thekedar on the issue of distribution of tickets and alongwith these leaders Basant Singh Khalsa, Hire Singh Sabria and Gurdip Singh Bhaini were expelled from the party and they accepted the leadership of Badal on November 15, 1989'.⁹⁴ The Badal and Barnala factions fared badly in the elections. Akali Dal (Mann) supported by AISSF and the Damdami Taksal won 9 out of 13 Parliamentary seats.⁹⁵ The independents too extended their support to the Mann group. Consequently, the Mann

⁹⁴ *The Tribune*, November 16, 1989.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, December 2, 1989.

group was recognised as the real representative of the Sikhs. Simranjit S. Mann was released by the then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi as goodwill gesture. Mann resigned from Lok Sabha for he was not allowed to carry his sword inside the Parliament House. All the factions decided to hold a convention for safeguarding the rights of the Sikhs on November 25, 1990 at Anandpur Sahib. The government took precautions by arresting the leaders on the way to Anandpur Sahib. This made the Akali factions stand on the same platform on December 26, 1990 at Fatehgarh Sahib. Tohra conducted the proceedings and Mann presided in which it was declared that any dialogue would have to include the militants. Later the militants threatened that any dialogue without the militants would lead to destruction. All the three factions, Akali Dal (B), Akali Dal (Mann) and Akali Dal (Longowal) accepted Mann as President of SAD on January 12, 1991. 'The three Dals were dissolved in this meeting.'⁹⁶ Some political analysts contend that a non-Congress government at the centre i.e. the Chandra Shekhar government led to the unity of various Akali factions. This unity, unfortunately, lasted only for two months i. e. till March 2, 1991.

Mann, the President of SAD tried to reorganise the district and circle units of Akali Party. All the factions condemned this action as an arbitrary one. Elections to the Lok Sabha as well as the Assembly were announced on June 22, 1991. Mann decided to contest the elections to secure independence for the Sikhs. Badal, Tohra and Barnala were not allowed to address the congregation so they stayed away.⁹⁷ Badal separated from Mann on April 23, 1991. The charge was that Mann had not provided effective leadership. On April 24, 1991 the Longowal faction parted ways with Mann for they felt that there was no clear-cut political goal of the party. On the other hand, the Badal faction received a severe jolt when a faction led by Capt. Amrinder Singh, floated his own Akali Dal (Panthic) on April 28, 1991. The Captain alleged that Badal had failed to take the workers of the party in confidence when he joined and then split with Mann's group.⁹⁸ Mann faced a crisis on May 3, 1991 when Harcharan Singh Rode revolted and

⁹⁶ Ibid., January 13 , 1991.

⁹⁷ Ibid., April 14, 1991.

⁹⁸ Ibid., April 29 , 1991.

encouraged Baba Joginder Singh to take control of the party and thus the Akali Dal (Baba) was formed on June 30, 1991. The Rode faction expelled Mann from the party and relieved him from the Presidentship of the Party. Baba Joginder Singh was elected the President of Akali Dal (Baba).⁹⁹

The Election Commission postponed the elections from June 22, 1991 to September 25, 1991. The Akali factions came together for a meeting on August 11, 1991 at Gurudwara Keshgarh Sahib (Anandpur Sahib) and decided to boycott the elections in February 1992. Mann faced an exit when in the SGPC elections held on November 13, 1991, Tohra was elected the President with the support of Akali Dal (Badal). Mann's group supported Harchand Singh Delhi and the group could not find representation in the 11-member working committee.

On December 20, 1991, the Akali Dal (Longowal) and Akali Dal (Panthic) merged to contest the February 1992 elections together. Their party was to be known as Shiromani Akali Dal.¹⁰⁰ However, the AISSF, Akali Dal (Badal), Akali Dal (Mann), Akali Dal (Baba) and Akali Dal (Babbar) decided to boycott the elections for they felt that till a permanent solution to Punjab problem was found, elections were meaningless. Kabul Singh, member of Akali Dal (Longowal) revolted against his party's decision to contest the election and formed his own Akali Dal (Kabul), Sukhjinder Singh, the senior Vice-President of Akali Dal (Badal) revolted against his party's decision and he decided to contest the elections. He formed his own party, Akali Dal (Sukhjinder) on January 25, 1992. A senior Akali leader, Jiwan Singh Umranangal formed the Shiromani Jagat Akali Dal (S.J.A.D.) on January 21, 1992 with Baba Ajit Singh Nihang, the chief of the Taruna Nihang Dal. Their aim was to contest elections.¹⁰¹ The Akali Dal (Pheruman) decided not to contest elections. The Party President, Mahant Sewa Das Singh, announced that the party was not contesting the elections because the Central government had failed to fulfill the demands of the Sikhs and the Punjab state, especially the transfer of Chandigarh into Punjab for which their leader, Pheruman, had sacrificed his life. The Party was against

⁹⁹ Ibid, July 1, 1991.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, December 2, 1991.

¹⁰¹ The *Hindustan Times*, January 22, 1992.

the supporters of Khalistan to getting into the Vidhan Sabha. S. Jagdev Singh Talwandi formed his own party, Akali Dal – T and decided to boycott the elections and follow the policies of the militants. The All India Sikh Conference (Babbar's) General Secretary Gurcharan Singh Babbar appealed to all the Akalis to contest the elections. He said that the Badal and Mann factions of the Akali Dal should not approach the Akal Takht for issuing an appeal to the people of Punjab to boycott the February 19, elections. It would result in a serious rift among the Sikh community, he said.¹⁰²

In the elections the Congress (I) secured majority and Sardar Beant Singh was made the Chief Minister in February 1992. After the elections all the factions Akali Dal (T), Akali Dal (S) and Akali Dal (Panthic) urged Tohra to become the leader of SAD and unite all the Akali factions. But Mann was not ready to give up the Presidentship of the Dal and Tohra did not want to clash with Badal. Meanwhile, Akali Dal (B), Akali Dal (M), Akali Dal (Baba) and Damdami Taksal emphasised the need for Panthic unity. The common demands were scrapping of all black laws, withdrawing the Army from Punjab and the need to fight anti-Sikh repressive policies. Then AISSF floated a new party Akali Dal (Manjit) on August 25, 1992 with Bhai Manjit Singh as the President for three years. Government repressions again made the different factions talk of unity. Leaders of all the factions attended baba Joginder Singh's death on November 18, 1993. They talked of Panthic Unity but could not agree on a common candidate for the bye-election of Jalandhar Lok Sabha seat. The result of this factionalism led to the winning of the INC's nominee and Badal's candidate came second. Capt. Amrinder Singh of the Panthic Akali Dal talked of uniting the factions of Talwandi, Barnala and his own. Tohra was the consensus candidate in the elections of the executive committee of the SGPC on October 31, 1993 Tohra was again elected the President. Again, talks of unity started and Mann even agreed to give up the Presidentship of Akali Dal. All the leaders sought the intervention of the Akal Takht to bring unity among the Akali factions. Badal requested the acting Jathedar of Akal Takht Prof. Manjit Singh, not to interfere in the political affairs. This provocation of Badal led to a split in his party on April 19, 1994 for the supporters of Tohra walked out. Sukhjinder Singh, Tohra's close confidant who said

¹⁰² J. C. Aggarwal and S. P. Aggrawal, *Modern History of Punjab*, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 1992, p. 169.

that 'Badal had defied the supreme religious-cum-temporal seat of the Sikhs', led the group that walked out.¹⁰³ After winning the bye-elections in Ajnala and Gidderbaha Badal in June 1995 Badal said it was not only a verdict against the Congress but also an eye-opener to his Akali friends who had propagated against him and his party. By the Akali friends he meant the six Akali factions which had been brought together by the acting Jathedar of the Akal Takht, Mr. Manjit Singh. Known as the Akali Dal(Amritsar) Badal had refused to join the group and was castigated by for challenging the authority of the Akal Takht. The Akali Dal(Amritsar) had been formed at the behest of Tohra who criticized Badal. Talwandi called Badal a traitor who was only interested in capturing power. Badal stood firm and refused to join the Akali Dal (Amritsar). Badal then resigned from the Presidentship of the Party. All the leaders except Badal consented for unity and the leaders were directed to perform "seva" in the Golden Temple for five days. After doing seva for five days – Amrinder Singh, Mann, Manjit Singh, Jagdev S. Talwandi and Barnala performed Bhog. Tohra, his supporters in the Akali Dal (Badal), Basant Singh Khalsa, Surjan Singh Thekedar and Sukhjinder Singh participated. The six Akali factions merged into SAD on May 1, 1994 at Akal Takht and announced the Amritsar Declaration which was controversial as it demanded greater autonomy and was anti-Centre. The Declaration involved emotive panthic issues. Badal rejected it and emphasized on consolidating all Punjabis and not only all Sikhs. Badal termed the Declaration as anti-national. Tohra was elected the President of the Akali Dal(Amritsar). Analysts like Kuldip Nayar and Dang contend that this was a clever move by Tohra to become the Chief Minister and keep Badal away from power. But Badal with his moderate stand had not only given a serious jolt to the Congress but had won the support of parties like Bhartiya Janata Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, Bhartiya Kisan Union, Communist Party of India and Communist Party of India(Marxist). Badal's party soon became popular and gradually the other Akali groups started joining his party. A majority of the members of the Akali Dal (Longowal) under the leadership of Capt. Kanwaljeet Singh joined the Akali Dal (Badal) on June 18,1994. Gradually, leaders like Talwandi, Tohra, Barnala etc. joined Badal. Finally, the acting Jathedar of Akal Takht managed to get all the leaders of Akali Dal (Badal) and Akali Dal (Amritsar) together in January 1995.

¹⁰³ Kuldip Nayar, *op. cit.*, n. 82, p. 134.

In the SGPC elections in 1996 the contending parties were Akali Dal (Badal) which was dominating the SGPC, SAD (Panthic), SAD (Amritsar) led by Simranjit Singh Mann, Bahujan Samaj Party led by Sohan Singh Phalianwala, Akali Dal rebels like Kuldip Singh Wadala, Sukhjinder Singh, Senior Vice-President of Akali Dal (Badal) and a former President of SGPC, Prem Singh Lalpura, a close associate of Tohra and General Secretary of SGPC – Darshan Singh Jesapur, Mohan Singh Bhatia, Tarlochan Singh Tur, Baba Sarbjit Singh Bedi of Sikh Sidhant Parcharak and Baba Thakur Singh of Damdami Taksal.¹⁰⁴ All the contending parties formed a united front against SAD (Badal). The group was joined by Jagmeet Singh Brar who had given a tough fight to Sukhjinder Singh Badal in 1996 in the parliamentary elections.¹⁰⁵ Their main line of argument was the growing corruption in the Gurudwaras. The alliance “would single out Badal labelling him the chief ‘villain’ of the piece”.¹⁰⁶ But Akali Dal (B) came under fire mainly because of its alliance with the Bhartiya Janta Party and then softening its demand on state autonomy. In the ultimate analysis, it (the SGPC elections) boiled down to a conflict between the two combinations of political parties – “Panthic and Bahujan Samaj Party alliance supported by Congress Party, United Front and Chandra Shekhar’s Samajwadi Janata Party and Akali Dal (B) supported by Bhartiya Janta Party”.¹⁰⁷ Badal declared Tohra as the Presidential candidate of the SGPC and they both hoped on first gaining political power and then tackling the religious issues. They argued that SGPC elections would pave way for the Akali government. The role of Congress was assessed and the harm it did to Punjab. Badal faction was returned with a thumping majority which saw it getting 158 seats out of 170 and the Front was routed by getting only 7 seats. After four months in the Assembly elections, Akali Dal (B) was again with a big lead.

When the Akali Dal faced defeat in the Adampur Assembly bye-election, Tohra made a suggestion to Badal that the latter should hand over the Presidency of the Party to

¹⁰⁴ *Ajit*, August 29 1996.

¹⁰⁵ *Panjabi Tribune*, September 19, 1996.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ S. S. Narang, “The SGPC Elections – The Ecclesiastical Aspect of Akali Politics”, *Punjab Journal of Politics*, Vol. XXIII, No. 1, 1999, pp.151-152.

some reliable person.¹⁰⁸ Badal suggested the name of Gurdev Singh Badal which had Tohra's consent. As it is the local leaders and members of the Akali Dal were dissatisfied with the organisational set-up as the party was losing control with the masses. 'But violent reaction to Tohra's statement and virulent propoganda against him which he referred to as Toofan-i-Badtamizi (a storm of uncouthness), showed that Badal had found the much sought after scapegoat'.¹⁰⁹ Meeting of District Jathedars was called and then an offensive was launched 'against Tohra who had a sixty years standing in Akali Dal and record breaking twenty five years presidency of SGPC behind his back...'¹¹⁰ A split was imminent in the party because Badal wanted to break the parallel power centre of Tohra. Even Gurdev Singh Badal condemned Tohra and eulogized Badal and his contribution to the progress of the state. Tohra was targeted and criticised for conniving with the Congress, for the defeat at Adampur, working against Panthic Unity, promoting divisive tendencies, misusing the SGPC and having no concern for the propagation of Sikh Dharma. He was blamed for going back on his statement from the Akal Takht and Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib in 1991 in which he had declared that he would not accept the Presidentship of SGPC. But later he became the President as well accepted the membership of Rajya Sabha. Out of 15 members, 10 executive members in the SGPC asked for Tohra's resignation. He was condemned by Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia, Chairman, Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, Jagdev Singh Talwandi, Dhindsa, Bhunder, Tota Singh etc. But when Badal tried to bring SGPC under the Akali Dal, there was vehement opposition. Some historians stated that SGPC had nurtured the Akali Dal. 'It was created as a force to fight for SGPC, argued Jaswant Singh Kanwal.¹¹¹ In the Badal-Tohra controversy, even the Akal Takht being involved was resented. The Jathedar of Akal Takht had been appointed by Badal so, he, being the highest temporal authority would be a drawback to Tohra. But the Jathedar, Bhai Ranjit Singh issued a Hukamnama to the warring factions to conciliate. The Badal group appointed an acting Jathedar which

¹⁰⁸ *Ajit*, December 11, 1998.

¹⁰⁹ Surjit Singh Narang, "Factionalised Akali Politics: Salience of Ecclesiastical Dimension" in *Punjab Journal of Politics*, Vol. XX, Nos. 1-2, 1996, p. 4.

¹¹⁰ *Itid.*, p. 5.

¹¹¹ Jaswant Singh Kanwal, "Open Letter to Parkash Singh Badal", *Khandedhar*, Vol. 21, 1999, No. 3, p. 29.

was condemned by Tohra as it was setting up a wrong precedent 'for future non-Akali governments by interfering in the religious affairs of the Sikhs, capturing Akal Takht by misusing government machinery and denigrating Sikh institutions'.¹¹² He attacked the SGPC members who had done this all to protect an editor of a Punjab daily who was called to Akal Takht for publishing blasphemous remarks against the Sikh Gurus. Tohra called the editor a traitor, a 'Dhian Singh Dogra'. The 10 SGPC members accused Tohra and vice-versa. Allegations flew in the air as both the sides accused the other of misusing their respective powers. Tohra's group continued to regard Bhai Ranjit Singh as the Jathedar of Akal Takht and the latter held the masses in sway by leading the procession at Holi Mohalla at Anandpur Sahib on March 2, 1999 where the Badal group was absent. Tohra's group ignored Prof. Manjit Singh, Jathedar of Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib and Bhai Kewal Singh, Jathedar Takht Sri Damdama Sahib. Elated, Tohra, called Bhai Puran Singh, acting Jathedar of Akal Takht as 'Circuit House' acting Jathedar. Even on April 14, 1999, the masses turned out for the march to Anandpur Sahib with Bhai Ranjit Singh which was a support to the Sikh traditions. Badal blamed Tohra for instigating terrorism in the state and blamed him for the widespread factionalism in the Akali Dal.¹¹³ March 2, 1999 saw Tohra's group set up a separate stage at the Holi Mohalla celebrations at Anandpur Sahib. He came under Gurdev Singh Badal's, Capt. Kanwaljit Singh's, Sewa Singh Sekhwan, all ministers and Rajya Sabha members, Balwinder Singh Bhunder and Sikhdev Singh Dhindsa's ire for they supported Badal. Sukhbir Singh Badal's statement, 'it is not going to be halfway battle. It is a fight to the finish which means Tohra's expulsion from the party and the SGPC',¹¹⁴ showed the mood of Badal's supporters and the SGPC members. But Badal too came under attack. In 1994, Badal hadn't joined the unity more initiated by Bhai Manjit Singh arguing that religion should not interfere in politics. Now, Badal, by appointing a Jathedar was doing exactly the same. Moreover, he was accused of doing nothing to fulfil the issues of the Sikhs which he had raised at the 1996 Moga Akali Conference which was celebrating the 75th anniversary of Akali Dal. In the conference he had talked about the rights of the minorities, blatant human

¹¹² S. S. Narang, op. cit., n. 110, p. 13.

¹¹³ *Hindustan Times*, March 5, 1999.

¹¹⁴ *India Today*, December 29, 1998.

rights violations, arrest of Sikh youth under TADA internal autonomy to the state, and the Delhi riots in November 1984. Tohra's group charged Badal of being anti-Sikh as his alliance partner had done nothing to please the Sikhs. Tohra supported the People's Commission set up by Justice Kuldeep Singh while Badal condemned it as did Bhartiya Janta Party. Tohra condemned the attack on Guru Ram Das Academy at Dehradun and Bhartiya Janta Party's role in it. Pages of the Holy Book had been torn and the Gurdwara flag had been thrown out. On the question of Art. 356 to be imposed on Bihar, Badal supported the Bhartiya Janta Party and issued a whip to the Party MP's to support the Bhartiya Janta Party. The chief Whip Prem Singh Chandumajra 'condemned Badal for changing the stand on Art. 356'.¹¹⁵ Badal's loyalists argued that the Jathedar and Akal Takht are two separate things.¹¹⁶ While Tohra supporters say that there are synonymous. Tohra claimed that his Sarb Hind Akali Dal would struggle for the restoration of the glory of the Akal Takht and its Jathedar.¹¹⁷ 'Tohra's Dal was the outcome of the split perpetrated by Badal by throwing Tohra out of the party. Ironically, the political differences caused the split, but split has thrown up big ideological issues, enhancing the salience of ecclesiastical dimension'.¹¹⁸ Badal had stopped believing in consent and dialogue and believed in majority and representative character. So, if he was called a moderate and a democrat because of majority element he was called a dictator too .

The SAD was finally merged on April 14, 1995 with the merger of seven Akali factions. Badal was installed as the President of SAD. The façade of unity continued till the Akalis, would come to power in 1997. Badal's victory in the Delhi Gurdwara elections and the victory of Manpreet Singh Badal in the Gidderbaha bye-elections made the people feel that the Akali Dal (Badal) was the dominant one. In the subsequent elections, i.e. the eleventh Lok Sabha, elections in Punjab, in the SGPC elections, Badal's group won. In the February 7, 1997 Assembly elections, the Akali Dal (B) won and formed the government. Badal became the Chief Minister of Punjab. In the 12th Lok Sabha elections, Akali Dal (B) won all the 13 seats and became a coalition partner with

¹¹⁵ The *Hindustan Times*, March 5, 1999.

¹¹⁶ Giani Bachittar Singh Advocate, *Punjab Today*, Vol. 9, No. 5, May 1999, p. 23.

¹¹⁷ *Des Punjab*, June 1999, p. 23.

¹¹⁸ S. S. Narang, op. cit. n. 110, p. 27.

the Bhartiya Janta Party. Barnala and Sukhbir Singh Badal were included in the Vajpayee's Cabinet. In the bye-election of Tarn-Tarn and Sham Chaurasi, Akali Dal (B)'s candidates came out victorious on June 3, 1998. Badal and Tohra emerged as the popular leaders and the other factions were nearly eliminated.

Thus, some trends are seen in the leadership pattern in the Akali Dal. As Sharma argues that the leadership of the Dal has shifted from the Doaba and Majha regions of the state to the Malwa region. Then, the second feature is that the share of the rural Sikh Jats has steadily increased since the decline of the urban based Bhappa Sikhs in the 1960's. This trend which began with Sant Fateh Singh has slowly become more pronounced. The third feature is that the SGPC has become more important and the group which controls the SGPC, controls the Akali Party.¹¹⁹ Further Sharma says that 'a distinct radical and extremist group has emerged in the party and it has begun to pose a serious challenge to the deeply entrenched moderate leadership of the party.'¹²⁰ Harish K. Puri argues that, 'whenever the crisis emerged in the Akali Dal between the so called extremist group and so-called legislative group, it is the Congress Party that has some role direct or indirect in this factionalism.'¹²¹ Gobinder Singh says that within the Akali Dal, the different strata of peasantry stand separately with different faction of 'hawks', moderates and doves. He says, 'the way all sections of peasantry and a large portion of the rural working class responded to the Akali Dal call for Dharam Yudh Morcha shows not only a powerful influence of religious ideology on the mobilization of the agrarian classes but powers that antagonism between agriculture and industry has unified all sections of the peasantry – landed and landless against the dominance of the monopoly bourgeois.'¹²² Singh asserts that the rich farmers lobby has its highest concentration in the Akali Dal and it has to compete not only with the rival political parties but also with the refractory forces within its organisation to expand its support base so as to carry on its struggle against the ruling

¹¹⁹ T.R. Sharma, *Introduction*, op. cit. n. 2, pp 33-34.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*

¹²¹ Harish K. Puri, "The Genesis of Hindu-Sikh Reserve" in *New Challenges of Politics in the Indian States*, op. cit., n. 2, p. 116.

¹²² Gobinder Singh, "Classes, Class Struggle and Politics in Punjab", in *New Challenges of Politics in the Indian States*, op cit. n. 2, p. 126.

classes at the centre. He says that in order to win over the less privileged sections it resorts to invoking religious tenets and ideology. The material resources as well as the spiritual once are used to mobilise the Sikh masses. Gopal Singh argues that the urban Sikh have become bitter because political power in Punjab is controlled by the rural Jat-Sikhs and they were displaced from control of Akali Dal and SGPC in the early 1960's by the Jat Sikhs.¹²³ 'They, therefore, adopt extremist postures and encourage revivalist – fundamentalists – extremist communal groups to dislocate Hindus from centres of trade and industry in Punjab. These internal contradiction in Sikh politics have further aggravated communal tempers -----.'¹²⁴ SGPC is inextricably linked with Punjab politics. It is a political system for the wide ranging Sikh affairs. 'Internally, the dynamics of the system have revolved around the relations between the contending political parties and groups.'¹²⁵ It is argued that whenever any group is out of power it takes up an extremist stand and rakes up ethnic issues. Moreover, Mark Juergensmeyer's study shows that poor sections are developing "their own distinct, cultures of deprivation" as the Akali Dal has usually identified itself with the landlord Jat Sikhs.¹²⁶ So, we may see a new pattern of factionalism with leaders representing them asserting their demands to safeguard their identity. Thus, the tussle between the organisational and the ministerial wings is not a new development. The Gurnam Singh Ministry and the Badal government had fallen as a result of this tussle. The line dividing religions and politics is blurred so the SGPC has to have a say in the political affairs of the state. 'The Gurudwara-based Jathedars must have a role to play.'¹²⁷ C.P. Bhambri argues that every movement has its internal dynamics and if accommodation is not arrived at a particular time, the rank and file enact pressure on the leaders which the latter find hard to resist for the former see no results coming out of the negotiations. In this instance, the delaying

¹²³ Gopal Singh, "Hindu Communalism in Punjab" in *New Challenges of Politics in the Indian States*, op. cit. n. 2, p. 141.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Paul Wallace, "Religious and Secular Politics in Punjab: The Sikh Dilemma" in Wallace and Chopra (ed.) *Political Dynamics of Punjab*, op. cit., n. p. 12.

¹²⁶ Mark Juergensmeyer, "Cultures of Deprivation: Three case studies in Punjab", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Annual number 1979, vol. 14, Number 7 and 8, pp 255-262.

tactics of the Government of India created problems for the Akali Dal leadership. If demands of the Akali Dal were not met in reasonable time, the 'factional rivalries and competition among the Akali Dal leadership would complicate the situation.'¹²⁸

The Akali Dal (Badal) group split on the eve of the 1999 Parliamentary elections because Tohra, the President of SGPC revolted against the leadership of Badal with the help of the Akal Takht Jathedar. On May 30, 1999, Tohra formed the Sarb Hind Shiromani Akali Dal (SHSAD). 'It formed an electoral alliance with Akali Dal (Mann), Akali Dal (Panthic), Akali Dal (Democratic).'¹²⁹ The Akali factions fought the elections separately in 1999 and 2002 and failed dismally. Akali Dal (Badal)'s ascent can be calculated because of his control on the SGPC as well the Akal Takht. Gradually, the Akali Dal factions started talking of Panthic unity in 1999 after the stand off between Badal and Tohra. 'Tohra was made the President of SGPC on July 27, last year (2003) replacing Kirpal Singh Badungar, a close associate of Badal. Tohra remained the President of SGPC for over 25 years. Based on past experience, there is nothing unusual as being out of power Akalis have always come together in the name of Panthic unity.'¹³⁰ But while in power they refused to pursue the politico-economic issues vigorously and get entangled in the ethno-religious issues. This is the tragedy of the Akali Dal which gets split into factions spoiling its chances of consolidating its position. 'Further factionalism and decline await Akali Dal, Ashutosh Kumar warns, if it continues to be a party of the Jat Sikhs and Khatri and refuses to understand the aspirations of the lower castes because in the rest of country the latter's demands are being articulated vociferously.'¹³¹

In Punjab, politics makes strange partners. For e.g., for the 1997 Punjab Vidhan Sabha elections there was an alliance of Bahujan Samaj Party-SAD (A), SAD (Panthic), SAD (Wadale) and SAD (Sukhjinder). While the Bahujan Samaj Party is not concerned

¹²⁷ Bhatnagar and Verma, *Coalition Government (1967-80)*, op. cit., n. 52, p. 190.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ashutosh Kumar, "Electoral Politics in Punjab, Study of Akali Dal" in *Economic and Political Weekly*, April 3-10, 2004, p. 1517.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 1520.

¹³¹ Ibid.

with issues of Chandigarh being included in Punjab etc. the others, Mann, Rode, Wadala and Sukhjinder Singh are the ones who vouch for Khalistan. In the 1997 elections, Badal gave tickets to his loyalists (72/93) for he wanted to remain the head of Akali Dal and Akali-Bhartiya Janta Party Government. He supported 23 Tohra's loyalists. Capt. Amrinder Singh and his 33 party leaders revolted against the leadership alleging dictatorial attitude of Badal and Tohra. 'Thus he (Badal) banked upon the old guards loyal to him and sidelined ambitious partymen like Captain Amrinder Singh who was denied the party ticket.'¹³² The Akali Dal (Amritsar) decided to contest for 52 sets. The main aim of the Bahujan Samaj Party and Akali Dal (A) was not to allow Akali Dal (B) – Bhartiya Janta Party combine and the Congress to form a government.

¹³² Sukhjinder Singh Tiwana, "Punjab Vidhan Sabha Elections 1997: An Analysis" in *Punjab Journal of Politics*, Vol. XXIV, No 1, 2000, 6, p. 89.

CHAPTER V

NATURE OF FACTIONALISM IN INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND SHIROMANI AKALI DAL: A COMPARISON.

The INC and the SAD have been faction-ridden but the intensity and pattern have undergone change with the passage of time. If in the INC there were clashes on principles and methods of working, before Independence, these and other factors like participation and demand of allocation of values etc. became the cause of factionalism after independence.

After Independence, the people, at large, wanted a share in the power structure. Universal Adult Franchise had strengthened their hands and gradually they came to know the power of 'one man, one vote'. Moreover, the leaders cutting across various party lines had not only promised the people of India adequate food, clothing and shelter but also liberty, equality, fraternity and justice. The last was the most potent of all, for which the masses were hankering. The INC understood that it would have to expand its base, it would have to carve a niche for itself in the hearts of the people. And this would have to be done quickly as there were, then, other political actors who were as interested in power play as the INC. New actors were emerging, at the national as well as regional level. The gains of acquiring freedom for the country had to be consolidated quickly so that the INC could cash on it and have a head start over its political competitors.

After Partition of India, there was an influx of refugees who wanted to and had to be settled. They had been forced to leave their home and hearth and thus, tempers were running high. Independence that had promised them better social, economic and political life had, they felt, only brought chaos, disorder and frustration in their lives. They had been uprooted from West Punjab, their home, and had to think of their

livelihood and means of settling. The expectations from Independence, 'the glow of freedom', were high but partition had added an entirely new dimension. On the other hand, people living in East Punjab were reluctant to share the meager resources with their brothers from West Punjab. The resources were limited, the demands were many. There was a demand for allocation of values from all sides, which put tremendous pressure on the administration. The leaders had not expected problems of this magnitude and were caught unawares. Moreover, with the passage of time the people started asserting for their rights. The fight for Independence had taught them the meaning of democracy. They had been awakened from their slumber by the speeches of the leaders who had told them in clear words the benefits of living in a democracy. They had been roused to the meaning of 'liberty, equality and fraternity' so wanted their fulfillment. The people wanted satisfaction of their demands but were ignorant about the scores of problems which had emerged as a result of Partition. The administration's problems were too many. The people were ignorant, illiterate, divided on the basis of caste and religion and were infested with poverty. There was concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, while the teeming millions lived knee-deep in poverty. Hospitals, schools, colleges, orphanages etc. had to be built but the rich landlords and industrialists were not ready to part with their property even when they were given compensation. Any compensation seemed less to them. How could land be acquired to fulfill the Directive Principles of State policy which were a solemn promise to the people of India. How could the goal of a welfare state be achieved? How could the inequalities between the rich and the poor be minimised? How could relief be provided to the people? If the Directive Principles were fulfilled, the Fundamental Rights of the people were likely to be infringed upon. If the Fundamental Rights were safeguarded, the idea of Welfare state seemed far away. How could the minimum available resources be distributed among the maximum? How could the frustration of the people be minimised? The people had been promised freedom from poverty and want after Independence. Now they wanted the promises to be fulfilled. If reforms were not initiated quickly, the dissatisfaction and frustration of the people would simmer and could, possibly turn into a revolution. As it is, after partition, the people felt that independence had got them only poverty, fear and deprivation. The people were in a hurry, each wanting his gains to be the

maximum. If people were divided among the 'haves' and 'have nots', they were further divided on the basis of caste and religion. There was also the rural-urban divide. The rural people added a new dimension to the situation by asserting themselves. There was vast scale exploitation in the countryside and it was made worse because of the policy of untouchability followed against the Scheduled Castes. The people from the rural areas had migrated to the cities where again they were exploited. Migration had created its own set of problems. The cities were overcrowded, unemployment was on the rise and the factor of exploitation was always there. In the urban areas it was a clash between classes. And Partition had, forever, put the idea of religion in the hearts and minds of people. Every exploitation, every fight ended on the same note – religion. Every household had either lost a life, or some property or their women had been molested, so they had become sensitive. Everything took a backseat when religion came into question. The people were divided on the basis of religion but did not want another partition. This made them defensive to such an extent that they became offensive. The majority, the Hindus, blamed the government for appeasing the minorities (the Sikhs, Muslims and the Christians) and doling out too many benefits to them. They complained that there were just too many Articles in the Constitution in the list of Fundamental Rights for the benefits of the minorities, Articles 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30. The minorities, on the other hand, felt apprehensive because of this attitude of the majority. The administration was hopelessly caught in this web of religion and vested interests. The selfish interests of each religion fanned the communal –flames. It only added to the existing problems.

Besides this, the problem of difference in language had come up. Different language speaking people wanted the states to be divided on the basis of language. In the North, there was a demand for a Hindi-speaking state and the demand by the Sikhs for a Punjabi –speaking state. The regional leaders who were a non-existent entity found this opportunity to emerge as leaders. They cashed on this frustration of the masses by giving a political turn to it. They couched the demand in political terms, which led to further differences between the people. The Union government had to face a new problem and its attention turned from development to solving petty problems. The ego of leaders manifested itself through various problems. Indifferent

to the larger cause of the nation's development they diverted precious resources for their petty, personal gains.

The effect of these clashes of leaders and ego conflict had an adverse effect on the leadership in the states. The regional leaders in the states, each looked to some Central leader for support. They knew that only if they had the required support and blessings from some powerful leader at the Centre could they survive in the political arena. Each leader was hankering after power and they invented devices to gain power and stay in power. One of the earliest examples is that of Gopi Chand Bhargava and Bhim Sen Sacher, both regional leaders within the INC. The party at the state level was divided into two factions, each led by these two leaders. If Gopi Chand Bhargava had the support of S. Patel, then Bhim Sen Sacher had the blessings of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. The clashes of the leaders at the Centre had a direct impact on the regional leaders not only in Punjab but throughout the country, in every state. In the INC factionalism was horizontal, there was interference from the Congress High Command. In the SAD factionalism was vertical, every Jat was a leader in his own right.

As we have already argued factionalism has been quite rampant both in Indian National Congress and the Shiromani Akali Dal. In fact, it can be seen as a phenomenon in nearly all the political parties in India. The nature of factionalism though differs from one party to the other. It also differs from time to time depending on a host of other factors. Sometimes the Sikh leadership consisting primarily of the Jat Sikhs clashes among itself, while at other times the clash is between the different castes and occupational groups within the Sikh leadership. A Jat Sikh leader may not find opposition only in another Jat Sikh but may feel his position threatened by a Ramgarhia (artisan) Sikh or from a Majhabi (Schedule caste) Sikh. This is ironical as the first Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Nanak Dev started the new religion to eliminate casteism which was prevalent in Hinduism. But with the passage of time the caste factor has emerged as a major factor in the politics of the state. The idea of Pangat (sitting in a row and eating from the common kitchen) and Sangat (a religious congregation of the Sikhs in one place) as introduced by the Gurus has been relegated to the background or is confined to the Gurudwaras only.

The Sikhs, on the basis of their profession are divided into three prominent castes- the Jat Sikhs who are the peasant community and who dominate the rural areas. But with increasing mobilization the Jat Sikhs are spreading to the urban areas which is changing the demography of the cities. This also has an effect on the political health of the state and the people of the urban areas feel threatened as they would be under represented in the long run. The second group consists of the Ramgarhia Sikhs who comprise of the artisan castes. The carpenters, the blacksmiths etc. form this group. The third group demanding its share in political power consists of the Majhabi Sikhs who are equivalent to the Schedule Castes. The Sikhs are further divided into other castes and sub-castes too but those are not influential from the view of power politics. It is the above mentioned groups who compete to be one up against each other to attain power in the state. The arm-twisting also goes on between the parliamentary and the organisational wings of the party.

In the Indian National Congress, for example, once the party is in power there is a clash over ministerial berths and for the post of the Chief Minister of the state. As Paul Brass says that in the Indian National Congress when there is absence of external threat and absence of authoritative leadership, conditions are ripe for factional politics.¹ A majority of the leaders are less interested in ideological issues and more eager to derive maximum benefits for their local supporters. This enables them to build up their strength so that they can have an authoritative say in the organisational affairs of the party. In the process of building up their support group at the local level there is the clash of interests with the leaders at the helm of affairs. Control over the organisational wing is so important that the party leader or the party worker endeavours to have control over local administration. They distribute favors to their supporters and oblige their constituencies nurturing them for use in the long-run. In the Indian National Congress, the local, district and state factions form alliances to fight the elections. The alliance or this grouping is at its weakest once danger from external sources decreases. Thus, the Congressmen are more concerned at the local level to extract maximum benefits for their followers. They feel that the support-group, more than the ideology will take them forward in the long run. They

¹ Brass, *Factional Politics in an Indian State*, p. 232.

accommodate the interests of their followers with their own interests harmonising their ascent to power. In the Indian National Congress once a dissident group succeeds in gaining majority support the process of factionalism starts all over again. The new majority group wants to replace the leadership. We have the example of the infighting between Bhim Sen Sachar and Gopi Chand Bhargava. In the Indian National Congress along with local politics it is the Congress High Command which also influences the nature of factionalism in the party. Bhargava became the Chief Minister because he had the blessings of Sardar Patel who was then the Home Minister at the Centre. So intense was factionalism that Bhargava accommodated two representatives from the Akali faction instead of reconciling with Sachar who had Pandit Nehru's support. Factionalism leads to strange alliances. In this case one faction which was in control of the reins of power could work with people from other parties (the Akali faction) but not with its own party men. Sachar never forgave Bhargava for this act of his. When Bhargava had to resign as the Chief Minister because the Akali faction shifted its loyalty to the Sachar group, the latter became the Chief Minister. As soon as he took office he launched a campaign against corruption. The infighting among the Congressmen received the blessings of the Congress High Command with the Sardar Patel group supporting Bhargava and Nehru supporting the Sachar faction. Sachar had to resign as the Chief Minister soon after and Bhargava became the Chief minister with Sardar Patel's support. Pandit Nehru could not help his disciple as he was on a visit abroad. With Bhargava's accession to the post of Chief Minister, Sachar and Partap Singh Kairon united to topple him down. The Sachar- Kairon duo was warned by Sardar Patel to abstain from any mischief of destabilising the Bhargava Ministry. Sardar Patel's death in 1950 saw Nehru consolidate his position in the Congress Party both in the legislative and organisational wings. The Sachar- Kairon group accused Bhargava of working against the interests of the Congress party and having a conciliation approach to the Akali Dal. Bhargava had lost his mentor with the death of Sardar Patel and later lost the support of Pradesh Congress Committee of which Kairon was the President. It can be inferred from this that right from the beginning the Indian National Congress has been divided into two factions. Pt. Nehru was considered a liberal leader with secular credentials who had been influenced by the Ox-bridge orientation. Thus, he

encouraged leaders of all hues and shades irrespective of their caste, creed or religion. He was the embodiment of the liberal thought in India, so he had no qualms of encouraging leaders like Sachar or Kairon who were Sikhs. The other faction comprised of leaders like Sardar Patel and Rajendra Prasad who were conservatists and deemed rightists and more or less supported the Hindu leadership. This may have been a factor which led to Sardar Patel to support Gopi Chand Bhargava. So before 1966 factionalism in the Indian National Congress had strong religious overtones. Besides the example of the clash between Sachar and Bhargava we also have the case of Sachar and Brish Bhan. Later on the open clash between Kairon and Prabodh Chandar lends further weight to the argument. Pt. Nehru supported the former irrespective of the fact that he belonged to the Jat Sikh community.

The Congress High Command asked Bhargava to send ten names from which six would be selected by the Congress High Command in the reorganisation of the Ministry. The Congress High Command excluded the names of the Akali Dal representatives and Bhargava resigned in protest. His resignation led to President's rule because the Sachar- Kairon faction was not in a position to form the Ministry. The supporting of their own proteges by the Congress High Command led to more infighting among the Congressmen. In this case no ideology was involved, no principles were involved, it was mere clash of egos of the regional leaders who got encouragement from various quarters of the Congress High Command. It was a struggle for power for personal prestige between the national leaders of the party, Sardar Patel and Pt. Nehru, which filtered down to the regional level.

The President's rule lasted up April 4, 1952 when Sachar became the Chief Minister with Pt. Nehru's blessings. Kairon by this time had aligned himself with the Jagat Narain group which was Hindu dominated. This group was in majority so it took offence when Sachar was made the Chief Minister. When Sri Ram Sharma fell out with Sachar and the former left the party, Kairon had the support of 50 out of 96 Congress legislators. But Sachar was made the Chief Minister because of Pt. Nehru and Maulana Azad's support extended to him. This again led to a rift in the Congress Legislative Party. Sachar could see himself through the crisis only because of the Congress High Command supporting him.

Sardar Partap Singh Kairon observed the role of Congress High Command in the State politics and thus, developed a good rapport with Nehru. This led to Kairon's total control over both the organisational and legislative wings of the Party. Anything for power and personal prestige. This was obvious when Sachar and Lala Jagat Narain came together to plan Kairon's fall for it was rumoured that Kairon had encouraged allegations against Lala Jagat Narain which were pursued by Sri Ram Sharma. The interference of the Congress High Command in the regional politics of Punjab was personalized when Sachar decided to remove Kairon from his Cabinet and the former was told to resign by the Congress High Command. Because of Kairon's good relations with the Congress High Command, he was made the Chief Minister of one of the prosperous states of India.

Sometimes, principles and ideologies lead to factionalism within the party. The Regional Formula which wanted to safeguard the interests of the two linguistic groups was a case. Many Congressmen resigned from the Congress Party membership as they felt that the Congress was anti-Hindu and pro-Sikh. The secular, liberal thinking of Nehru was not relished by a majority of the Congressmen.

Kairon gradually consolidated his position. In politics of collaboration and accommodation Kairon got rid of all his opponents and other strong leaders in the party. He did not want anybody who could challenge his position in the party. Kairon, a Jat Sikh had the support of Nehru thus, when the Bhargava – Prabodh Chandra faction accused Kairon of malpractices, he came out unscathed because of Pt. Nehru's support. After the Chinese war when Lal Bahadur Shastri asked Kairon to include Ram Kishan in his Cabinet and the latter refused, Shastri took offence. Lal Bahadur Shastri later made Ram Kishan the Chief Minister of Punjab when he became the Prime Minister of India. Kairon survived the 1958 crisis which Prabodh Chandra had presented against him in the form of a memorandum to the Congress President because of Pt. Nehru's support. Kairon survived crisis after crisis because he had Pt. Nehru's support and he had full control over the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee and Congress Legislative Party.

The 1962 elections saw Kairon trying to confine Giani Zail Singh to the Upper House. Despite his opposition Giani Zail Singh could contest from the

Faridkot constituency only because of the Congress High Command's support. Again the politics of the Central leaders, each supporting a regional leader led to the widening of gulf between Kairon and Darbara Singh.

After Pt. Nehru's death, forces against Kairon doubled their efforts, as the Prime Minister of India, Lal Bahadur Shastri could not forgive Kairon as the latter had not accommodated Ram Kishan in his Cabinet earlier and had also supported Morarji Desai for the post of Prime Ministership against him. S. Gurbachan S. Bajwa and Prabodh Chandra were also against Kairon as they had been refused ministerial berths by the latter.

Partap Singh Kairon after his resignation because of the Dass Commission report in 1963 supported Darbara Singh as a candidate for the post of Chief Minister. Darbara Singh fell out with Kairon because some leaders at the Centre wanted the ouster of the latter. The Congress High Command decided to take the final decision and installed Ram Kishan as the Chief Minister. Thus, a new phenomenon was seen after the death of Nehru. There arose differences within the Sikh leadership. For example the differences between Kairon and Darbara Singh and then between Darbara Singh, Giani Zail Singh and Mohinder Singh Gill. Later on there was clash between Capt. Amrinder and Rajinder Kaur Bhattal. The reason behind this change in the nature of factionalism was that after the division of Punjab there was a change in the social demography of Punjab. Before 1966 the Hindus were in majority and the Sikhs were in minority. But with the formation of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh the Hindus were reduced to a minority in Punjab. The Sikhs being in majority led to a number of Sikh leaders coming forward which led to differences among the Sikh leadership. For the first time the State had a Sikh Chief Minister for a party to remain in power. Because the State became a Sikh dominated one there arose a need by each party to put forward a Sikh leader.

When President's rule was clamped in the State in 1966 factionalism was at its peak. The fall out was that there was nobody to oppose the Punjabi Suba demand. The support of the Kaironites, who had been sidelined with his demise of Kairon, was sought after by both the factions – one led by Ram Kishan and the other by Darbara Singh. The Kaironites were in the control of the Punjab Pradesh Congress

Committee and fearing their comeback a truce was declared between Ram Kishan, Prabodh Chandra and Darbara Singh. Ram Kishan was supported by the Congress High Command which rebuked the supporters of Darbara Singh on starting a signature campaign against him. Thus, danger from one faction led to the other factions dissolving their differences for some time. With the resignation of Ram Kishan in 1966, the Congress in Punjab was again factionalised. The Kaironites came together with S. Darbara Singh as their leader while S. Swaran Singh tried to form a rival group against him.

For the elections of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee, the Congress was again divided in 1966. The local leaders looked at the Congress High Command for directions as to whom it should support. Gurmukh Singh Musafir won as he was supported by the Congress High Command. He went on to win the election of the Congress Legislative Party and thus became the Chief Minister of the present Punjab in 1966. His candidature to the office of the Chief Minister was supported by the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi and the Party President K. Kamraj. Musafir could not rise above party politics and factionalism intensified during his tenure. Because of factionalism, the Congress lost its absolute majority in the Assembly elections held in 1967. The Congress High Command withdrew its support to Musafir because of his dismal performance. The Congress High Command made the final decision of choosing Gian Singh Rarewala as the candidate for the post of Chief Minister. Again, the Congress camp was divided with Darbara Singh and Musafir opposing Rarewala. On the other hand, Giani Zail Singh and S. Swaran Singh supported Rarewala for the leadership of Congress Legislative Party. The Congress remained out of power in 1967 because of infighting. Even when out of power, the petty-minded leaders kept influencing the Congress High Command on selecting a leader. So, shortlived are alliances that Giani Zail Singh who had supported Gian Singh Rarewala for the post of leader of Congress Legislative Party turned against the latter. Gian Singh Rarewala left the Congress and joined the Akali Dal. Giani Zail Singh consolidated his position and developed an excellent rapport with Mrs. Gandhi. When Giani Zail Singh became the Chief Minister he got his own man, Niranjana S. Talib elected as the President of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee. With the demise of Talib, Mohinder Singh Gill became the President of Punjab

Bhargava was removed as the Chief Minister and Sachar, a protégé of Pt. Nehru was elevated to the post. Every regional leader has a mentor in the Congress High Command in Delhi which is one of the survival strategies of the regional leader. With factionalism rampant in the party, the leaders try to outdo each other and they know that the Congress High Command can be a crucial partner in this game of political power. As long as Pt. Nehru's blessings were with Sachar, a Sikh, the latter remained the Chief Minister of Punjab, but once Pt. Nehru's blessings shifted to Kairon, another Sikh, Sachar was left alone to search for his identity in the political jungle. Kairon as Chief Minister was defended by Nehru who rebutted all charges of Partap Singh Kairon indulging in corruption. Even when the legislators complained to Pt. Nehru about Partap Singh Kairon's political misdeeds, Pt. Nehru turned a deaf ear. The Congress High Command is the final authority, which gives the final verdict when factionalism is at its maximum and starts affecting the performance of the party. For example, when Kairon did not want Giani Zail Singh to contest for an Assembly seat, it was only with the Congress High Command's support that the latter could contest from the Faridkot constituency.

Again, it was because of Lal Bahadur Shastri that Ram Kishan became the Chief Minister. Kairon had refused to include Ram Kishan in his cabinet and had also not supported Lal Bahadur Shastri in the struggle for the office of the Prime Minister. Lal Bahadur Shastri saw to it that Kairon paid a heavy price for this. Again, the Congress President, U. N. Dhebar who had once removed Devi Lal from the Presidentship of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee, now helped the regional leaders to weaken Kairon's position. Devi Lal led the Dass Commission inquiry against Kairon which finally led to the latter's resignation. Ram Kishan took all the decisions with the Congress High Command's advise. He looked to the Centre for all acts. Again, the role of the leaders at the Congress High Command is proved. Swaran Singh who was at the Centre was happy with Ram Kishan's elevation for he thought he could rule Punjab by proxy. Ram Kishan's accession led to opening of a fresh chapter of factionalism in the state. Darbara Singh could not pull along with Ram Kishan who he felt was super-imposed by the Centre. The lure of power led to the Kairon group being in the Centre of politics again. The Darbara Singh group and the group led by Ram Kishan both sought the help of the Kaironites to consolidate

Pradesh Congress Committee. But this led to a tussle between the ministerial and the organisational wings of the party. Giani Zail Singh emerged stronger because of his loyalty to Mrs. Gandhi.

Darbara Singh too became the Chief Minister of Punjab because of his loyalty to Mrs. Gandhi. But the clash between Giani Zail Singh, at the Center as Home Minister and Darbara Singh, as the Chief Minister of Punjab led to differences persisting in the Congress Party in Punjab. The clash was because of caste differences. The Sikh leadership had been divided and these two leaders only helped to enlarge the differences.

The interference of Congress High Command only helped factionalism to flourish. The Congress High Command is intimately involved in the regional politics. Within the state, in the Congress Party, differences are not only due to ideology and principles of functioning but also because of caste. The real politics involves the Jat Sikh masses for whose attention the Congress leaders vie with each other along with the Akali Dal. On the other hand, the leaders who are not Jats but are Sikhs too claim or aspire for political power. In the Akali Dal only a Jat Sikh can hold on to power. In fact, being a Jat Sikh and an Akali worker are a pre requisite to step on the first rung of the ladder to power. On the other hand, the Congress is an amalgamation of interests where not only the Jat Sikhs but Sikhs of other castes along with the Punjabi Hindu clamour for power. This adds a completely new dimension to factionalism in the Congress Party in Punjab unlike any other state in India. The Congress High Command faces a greater dilemma in Punjab.

In Punjab, Congress factionalism is the result of many factors. As mentioned above, if sometimes it is the result of a clash between the leaders of different castes, at other times it is because of the Congress High Command encouraging one or the other leader at the regional level. The leaders at the Centre are also involved in their own petty game of political power. Each wants to emerge as an influential leader and so builds up his rank and file not only at the Center but also at the regional level. They try to muster maximum support from all possible quarters. They, then use their position to influence regional politics. We have the example of Sardar Patel supporting Bhargava and Nehru supporting Sachar. As soon as Sardar Patel died

their position. This led to mud-slinging between the groups each blaming the other for Partap Singh Kairon's murder. It was the Congress High Command which put an end to this infighting by rebuffing the Darbara Singh's group of starting a signature campaign against the Chief Minister.

Once the Congress High Command decided to withdraw its support from Ram Kishan, the latter could not survive. The Congress High Command was unhappy at the dismal performance of Ram Kishan in Punjab politics. Ram Kishan had to resign for he could not continue without the Centre's support.

Caste differences also fuel the fire of factionalism in the State and the main clash when it comes to caste is between the Jat Sikhs and the Sikhs of the other castes. Now, the Jat Sikhs claim to be Sikhs of a superior variety, they claim that they are the real protagonists and that they are the ones who are capable of holding afloat the banner of Sikhism. Thus, the Congress as a party needs Jat Sikhs within its folds to counter the attack of the Shiromani Akali Dal who also vie for the support of the rural Jat Sikh masses, of course, Jat Sikhs belong to different economic categories.

The Congress faces a unique crisis of factionalism where groupism among leaders takes place not only on issues, ideologies, principles and egos but also because of caste differences. At a point of time the Congress Party faced factionalism between Bhargava and Sachar, because of being proteges of Sardar Patel and Pt. Nehru respectively, the party later saw differences between Kairon and S. Darbara Singh, both belonging to the Jat Sikh peasantry. When one talks of factionalism in the Punjab Congress, again we see the caste differences come to the fore between Giani Zail Singh and Darbara Singh. The Congress High Command offers its support to the different sections of the Sikh masses according to the alignment of forces in the State. When Kairon resigned and an alternative to him was sought the leaders pleaded with the Congress High Command not to replace Kairon as the situation would help the Akali Dal to exploit the issue of the ouster of a Jat Sikh with that of a non-Jat being installed. It would strike at the base of the party's rural vote-bank.

Horse-trading goes on because besides the Congress High Command, a leader is successful if he has control of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee and the Congress Legislative Party.. When Giani Zail Singh became the Chief Minister he

made his own man – Niranjan S. Talib, the President of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee. With Talib's sudden demise, Mohinder Singh Gill became the President of the body, which led to clash between the organisational and the ministerial wings. The clash on one hand was between a Jat and a non-Jat Sikh and on the other between two wings – each wanting to control the other. Factionalism is all the more prominent when a leader is refused a ministerial berth. The example of Prabodh Chander who was even accommodated as the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly by Kairon is a case in the point. He worked against his own party because of rivalry with one man – Partap Singh Kairon.

Besides this, there has been a clash between those Congressmen who have come up gradually as party-workers and those who have joined the Congress after leaving their parent-party. The case of Darbara Singh and Giani Zail Singh is an example. Darbara Singh was a Nationalist Sikh who had been with the Congress through thick and thin. He never considered Giani Zail Singh a Congressman as Giani Zail Singh had been an Akali who had later joined the Congress. None of the leaders like Giani Zail Singh who moved on to the Centre wanted to let go of the reins of power in a prosperous state like Punjab. Thus, even after his departure to Delhi, he kept meddling in the affairs of the state which was not liked by Darbara Singh. When one leader from the Centre tries to encourage his protégé in the region, the other regional leaders of the Congress are bound to look elsewhere to consolidate their position. Thus, there is the involvement of the Congress High Command in the affairs of the State. Bhargava, Sachar, Kairon, Ram Kishan, Giani Zail Singh and Darbara Singh, S. Beant Singh became Chief Ministers of the State only because of the blessings of the various Prime Ministers and prominent leaders at the Centre. So this precedence, this tradition, i.e. the regional leaders of the Congress having no qualms of looking to the Centre for directions persists in the Congress. The Party also uses the various Jat Sikh leaders to its advantage as and when required. It tries to appease the various supporters from time to time. Capt. Amrinder Singh, who had once resigned from the Lok Sabha because of Operation Blue Star and had joined the Akali Dal, has been chosen as the Chief Minister because of his being a Jat Sikh over Mrs. Bhattal. The Congress wanted to appease the Sikhs so though Capt. Amrinder Singh and Mrs. Bhattal are Jat-Sikhs yet the former was chosen because of his protest

against Operate Blue Star. The party wanted to rectify its mistake and wanted to win back the lost Jat Sikh rural support which is its crucial vote-bank in the State. Thus, besides the ego differences in Punjab the Congress High Command's ever-interfering nature in the politics of the State also lends a new dimension to the nature of factionalism.

Besides, pursuit of power, pelf and status are the factors which makes a leader align himself with one or the other faction or build up a new faction himself. If Kairon and Lala Jagat Narain worked together against Sachar at a point of time Lala Jagat Narain collaborated with Sachar for weakening Kairon's position. If Kairon supported Darbara Singh against Brish Bhan, Darbara Singh turned against Kairon because of personal unfulfilled ambitions. If Darbara Singh supported Ram Kishan in 1964 for the office of the Chief Minister, the former turned against the latter because he wanted to become more powerful than the leader who had been imposed on them by the Congress High Command. This led to both the groups, Darbara Singh and Ram Kishan groups woo the Kaironites. The people who were once daggers drawn against the Kaironites now looked for support, from that very quarter. Strange indeed! First, Swaran Singh supported Brish Bhan and then went on to support Gian Singh Rarewala with Giani Zail Singh. Darbara Singh joined Musafir to support Brish Bhan only because of Giani Zail Singh leading the other group. Later on, there was a tussle between Darbara Singh and Buta Singh again based on caste differences, the former was a Jat Sikh while the latter was not a Jat Sikh. A personality clash between the two led to more interference from the Congress High Command for both wanted to become the Chief Minister of Punjab. Thus, pursuit of power between the two leaders led to groupism and factionalism in the party.

The Shiromani Akali Dal has also been faction-ridden but the problem of factionalism is different from that persisting in the Indian National Congress. The SAD and its control is directly linked with the leadership in the SGPC. The Shiromani Akali Dal is a party of the rural masses, of the rural area with the leadership in the hands of the elite Jat Sikhs. The followers who comprise the rank and file of the Shiromani Akali Dal belong to the rural peasantry. They are the real strength of the party and it is this Jat psyche which leads to factionalism within the

party. The Jat Sikhs are a valour class and are united only when there is some external danger to the 'Khalsa'. As soon as the crisis is over, they get down to settling scores which never seem to end. This was the case when the Sikhs were divided into twelve Misls until Maharaja Ranjit Singh united them. At first the Sikhs rose as one because they had factors like kinship and religious faith which bind them. Religion was not only a faith but a motivating force which made them rise for military conquests. It was the common kinship factor which united them and ironically it was the same factor which divided them into convenient territorial combinations when the Singhs grew in power. The Singhs, as mentioned in the earlier chapters, evolved four institutions i.e.- Rakhi, the Dal Khalsa, the Misl and the Gurmata. It was the last one which extended equality and freedom to the followers of the faith which further gave them strength. Each misl was led by a Sikh chieftain who tried to surpass the others in valour. In crisis two or more misls could come together and then share the spoils of the war. The conditions of fighting were decided before the conquest with the help of the Gurmata. But after the crisis was over the same misls could be expected to fight amongst each other. Prominent and powerful chiefs like Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Charhat Singh Shukarchakiya, Jai Singh Kanhaiya, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Hari Singh Bhangi could be expected to fight amongst each other. The Chiefs were independent of each other in matters of governance and administration. The common factor of Guru- Panth and Guru – Granth united them. But in matters of principle there could be differences which could be resolved either through a battle or amicably through a Gurmata. The Chieftains were very firm about their suzerainty and took measures to safeguard their territory and their influence. Each chief was a suzerain in his own way. There were twelve misls – the Bhangis, the Nishanias, the Shahids, the Ramgarhias, the Nakkais, the Ahluwalias, the Kanhayas, the Feizulapurias, the Sukerchakiyas, the Dallehwalaas, the Punjgurhias and the Phulkias.² This basic trait of the Sikhs, i.e.- that of valour and of asserting one's supremacy, has infiltrated into the future generations. No Jat Sikh wants to be a follower, each is a leader in his own right. The yearning to be a leader has led the outer forces to divide the Jat Sikhs and

² Joseph Davey Cunningham, A History of the Sikhs, Delhi S. Chand and Co, 1955, pp96-97

make them fight among themselves. The misls corroded the power of the Sikhs and this division in its ranks presently still leads to weakening their effect. Considering themselves to be superior to Sikhs of the other castes there is also a clash because of caste differences. The clash arises from the fact that though none of the Guru was a Jat Sikh, yet the latter have come to dominate over the affairs of the Sikh masses. They claim to be the guardians of the interests of not only the Sikh masses but also the Gurudwaras. On the other hand, the Khatri, the urban trading class trace their roots to the Gurus and vie to control the Sikh affairs. The clash leads to differences in the political arena. The Jat Sikhs overshadowed the Khatri by the time of the Tenth Guru because of their valor traits. A recent report by K.S. Chawla in The Tribune asserted this point that the non- Jats feel alienated from the Akali Dal. It said, ‘ Non- Jats are feeling distanced from the mainstream of the Sikh Panth. For the last three decades no notable second rung leader from among the non-Jats has surfaced in Akali politics.’ It further said that the Ramgarhias formed a bulk of the population in the towns yet they were ignored. Elaborating further it said that the urban Sikhs had been with the Akali Dal till the ascendancy of Master Tara Singh.³

Factionalism has always been prevalent among the Sikhs. In fact, the Singh Sabha was also infested with this disease. It could not grow as a movement because of infighting among its leaders. In Punjab politics, at that time, the landed people because of their common interests had got together for political representation. The propertied classes fought for Sikhism but under the garb of looking after its own interests. Even with the formation of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee and Akali Dal the devil of factionalism could not be wished away. The SAD consisted of some moderates who didn't believe in anti-government activities; there were the extremists who believed in the cause of the Panth as well as the struggle for freedom and there were others who initially didn't believe in fighting the British and rather believed that the government would help them in the reforms in the Gurudwaras. The last group, later joined the extremists when the British refused to help them. But it was very difficult for a common man to see the difference between a moderate and an extremist leader for many a times the cause of the country and that

³ K.S. Chawla, "Non Jats feel alienated from Akali Dal," The Tribune, Chandigarh, Dec 2 ,2004

of the Panth overlapped. But the leaders were divided not only on the basis of the cause they were upholding but also because of the caste and class differences. Each leader had some interest to defend and thus, factions. Another faction, that of the militants differed from the peaceful methods of the Akalis. They found the peaceful and gradual movement stifling and thus framed their own course of struggle which led the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee to denounce them. Even during the time of the British, the government created factions so that it could keep control over the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee. The 1926 elections of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee is a case in this point. The, then Governor of Punjab, Malcolm Hailey floated a Sudhar Party which tried to win and guarantee a control of the Governor on the Sikh politics. The divide between the urban and the landed gentry could be seen in these elections. The landed interests claimed to defend not only their interests but also that of the rural masses while the group led by Kharak Singh and Master Tara Singh represented the non-agriculturist urban interests. It was because of factionalism that the Sikhs could not take a decision regarding their attitude towards the Muslim League's demand for a separate state.

The dilemma during the freedom struggle for the Sikhs was whether to align themselves with the Shiromani Akali Dal or the Indian National Congress. The former body was confused whether to support the cause of the Panth or to join the freedom struggle. The dilemma was whether they should take part in politics to protect religion or use the latter to involve the rural masses in the freedom struggle. Thus, the divide between the Sikh leaders into SAD workers who limited themselves to the cause of the Panth and the other Sikh leaders who were a part of the larger picture of that of the nation. That is why in 1925 with the British recognising the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee's legal authority to manage the Gurudwaras, the ruler asked the Akalis not to participate in any agitation for the freedom of the country.

This led to differences among the Akali leadership with Master Tara Singh and Baba Kharak Singh refusing to come out of the jails. Other leaders like Mehtab Singh, Giani Sher Singh agreed and were released. Though, the factions joined hands soon after, yet we can see the causes of differences at various points of time in the

Akali leadership. Even at this time the Indian National Congress was approaching the Shiromani Akali Dal because it wanted to reach out to the rural Sikh masses and this could be possible only by being one with Shiromani Akali Dal. The Indian National Congress ignored the religio-political identity of the Shiromani Akali Dal because it wanted to cash on the popularity of the Shiromani Akali Dal. Later on, the Indian National Congress, the Shiromani Akali Dal claimed, ignored the interests of the Sikhs in the Nehru Report of 1929. Because of the Nehru report, differences were created among the Shiromani Akali Dal for there were some who did not want to associate with the Indian National Congress while there were others who wanted to support the Indian National Congress unconditionally. The faction led by Baba Kharak Singh was not with the Congress. The second faction led by Giani Sher Singh demanded 30 per cent representation for the Sikhs. The third faction led by Baba Gurdit Singh and Mangal Singh wanted to give unconditional support to the INC.

Master Tara Singh mediated between the different factions. Alongside, the issues generated there were crosscurrents flowing, which were basically a clash between the urban Sikhs and the rural Sikhs. Till then the leadership had been confined to the urban Sikhs while the rural Sikh masses formed the force of the agitation. The latter were difficult to ignore and gradually they realised their contribution to the activities of the Shiromani Akali Dal. Thus, amongst them rose leaders who wanted not only to be a part of the agitation but also to plan it and execute it. This led to an increase in factionalism in the Shiromani Akali Dal – the clash between the leaders and the once-upon-a-time followers who were eager to emerge as leaders or men of prominence. During the Quit India Movement Giani Kartar Singh wanted to support the British government while the group led by Udham Singh Nagoke wanted to extend co-operation to the programme of the INC.

The first obvious clash was between Master Tara Singh and Sant Fateh Singh. The former was the undisputed leader of the Sikh masses and inducted the Sant, a social worker, into politics who later shifted the attention from the urban area to the rural masses. The Sant and his followers worked on the fact that Master Tara Singh was a Khatri, a non-Jat and the reins of the Shiromani Akali Dal were in the hands of the urban Sikhs while the real force to reckon with were the rural masses. They

highlighted the control of the urban Sikhs on the Gurdwaras, its resources and gradually dislodged the Master from his position. The Master in a hurry to consolidate his lost position committed mistakes which were further manifested and made prominent by the lobby consisting of Jat Sikhs.

Whenever the Shiromani Akali Dal has merged with Indian National Congress temporarily, further factions have arisen because of vested interests. For example, in 1956 when the Indian National Congress did not give adequate constitutional safeguards to the Sikhs, Master Tara Singh asked the 23 legislators of his party to leave the Indian National Congress though only one resigned. The rest continued their alliance with the Indian National Congress and remained within the folds because of vested interests though they gave their own arguments to counter the claims of Master Tara Singh.

The clash between the urban and the rural masses has led to consequences which effect the events today too. The Panth, the Shiromani Akali Dal and Punjab politics have come to be divided on caste basis. Moreover, the control of the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee has slipped into the hands of Jathedars, semi-literate people from the hands of the educated people as in the past. These people cannot think beyond caste. For them politics is linked with religion. Fanaticism rules as religion tells them to deal with the affairs of the state. For them democracy, party politics, elections, campaigning all revolves around caste. The influence of caste is obvious because factions are formed on these basis and so are alliances and alignment. Now they don't talk of Punjabis, they talk of Punjabi-Hindus, Khatri and Jat Sikhs. As long as the Shiromani Akali Dal represented the interests of the Sikh bourgeoisie, it failed to attract the masses. Only when the support structure, the Jat Sikhs were actively involved, could the party widen its base. The Indian National Congress also realises the power of this vote bank i.e. the Jat Sikhs, thus, installs Jat Sikh Chief Ministers from time to time. S. Partap Singh Kairon is a case in this point. With his elevation to the office of the Chief Ministership, the Indian National Congress managed to woo over many from the Jat Sikh masses. The demand of a Sikh state was put on the hold by Nehru and Partap Singh Kairon till they had the support of the rural masses. As soon as Sant

Fateh Singh assumed the leadership of the Sikh masses, the Indian National Congress had to give an ear to the demand of the Sikh state.

Besides caste, pursuit of power also leads to factionalism. We have the example of Lachman Singh Gill who left Master Tara Singh to become the Chief Minister of the state with the support of the Indian National Congress, a party which he had once criticised. Later on Lachman Singh Gill and Master Tara Singh worked together to weaken the position of Sant Fateh Singh. The Master's group was demanding a Sikh Homeland, a communal demand and working with Lachman Singh Gill who was supported by the Indian National Congress which was resisting the demand of the Sikh Homeland. The rivalry between Jat-Sikhs leads to factionalism. To counter their enemy, they make an alliance with a third party. If they are uncompromising in their loyalty, they are uncompromising in their rivalry too. When S. Gurnam Singh started ignoring the political experience of Sant Fateh Singh, the latter eliminated the former politically.

The leaders who are in power refuse to be ignored while there are others from his caste, his clan with the same traits who are anxious to come to power and become destiny-makers or breakers. Justice Gurnam Singh's clash with Sant Channan Singh, the leader of the legislative and organisational wing, cost the former his seat. The former was an educated person, one from the elite strata while the other was a 'Sant', a spiritual person who headed the spiritual organisation of the Sikhs which made the latter more powerful. This is the result of the leadership passing into the rural hands. After Gurnam Singh, the Shiromani Akali Dal elected Parkash Singh Badal as its leader.

From then onwards, only that leader has come forward who may be educated but should understand the pulse of the people living in the villages, in the rural areas. The leader should be able to understand the problems of the rural masses, he should be able to talk about the sacrifices of the Gurus and his interests should be one with that of the farmers. The leader can be a landlord, one from the bourgeoisie class but should be a 'son-of-the soil'. The SAD comprises of such people and is led by a leader by these qualities so that the rural masses do not sway towards the Indian National Congress or any other party. In this game of naked politics, each Jat Sikh

wants to emerge as the leader. The qualities, the traits all are the same for they belong to the same valour class. The crucial point is as to how to exploit any situation well which will make each of them emerge as a leader. Sant Fateh Singh announced self-immolation to remain the undisputed leader of the Sikh masses.

With the emergence of Parkash Singh Badal and Tohra, a new kind of factionalism emerged. Till Sant Fateh Singh and Channan Singh there was no clash between the leader of the SAD and that of the SGPC. They acted together to curb the power of the leader of the legislative wing. After their exit from politics, a tussle started for the control of one person over the office of the Chief Minister, leader of the SAD and leadership of the SGPC. The proof of this can be seen in the various alliances and fights between Badal and Tohra. If the Shiromani Akali Dal captures and gives vent to the grievances of the people, i.e. the vote bank, the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee controls the resources, the Gurudwaras which are used by the Shiromani Akali Dal during elections. The Gurudwaras are the foundation of the support struggle for the SAD, so control has to be maintained over it. This means a crisis with the leader of the Shiromani Akali Dal desiring control over the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee and vice-versa. To be the undisputed leader, one has to be in control over the legislature as well as the organisational wings of the party otherwise the position can be challenged anytime. In the Sikhs there is a unique problem of factionalism arising because of the existence of the SAD which is a political body and the SGPC which is a religious body. The Akali Dal is the political arm of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee. The former gets its infrastructure from the latter and yet wants to hold sway over the affairs of the latter. The Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee commands over the hearts of the Sikhs around the world and thus, is influential. It wants that its dictate should be the final word as it makes available the infrastructure to the Akali Dal. The Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee has started asserting itself in the recent past. This leads to clashes in the form of factionalism which could be seen in the infighting among Parkash Singh Badal and Gurcharan Singh Tohra. In the Akalis factionalism can also be the result of the differences between the moderates and the extremists within the party. The extremists, once in power, would not want to include the other communities for power sharing. They would stress on Punjab, Punjabi and the

Sikhs being the major force in the state hierarchy. We have the example of leaders like Lachman Singh Gill, Simranjeet Singh Mann who are fanatically connected to their religion. Their ethos is still rooted in the concept of, 'Raj Karega Khalsa.' (Sikhs will rule) And they are not ready to forget the atrocities committed on the Sikhs at any point of time. But they forget that in a democracy this phenomenon does not work. In a democracy it is numbers that count. On the other hand we have the moderates in the party who believe in their religion but are liberal enough to follow the policy of, 'live and let live.' They try to hammer out a harmonious equation with the people of other castes as well as other religions. This would help them to abstain from political suicide. Once in power their ministry would be headed by a Jat Sikh but would give some position of importance to leaders of other religions like Hindus, Muslims and even Christians. This has led leaders like Badal to lean towards the Hindu leadership. The party cannot have an alliance with the Congress as that would lead to political suicide so they have combined with the Bhartiya Janata Party. It suits both the parties because their vote-banks are different, the former's base is in the rural area while the latter's is in the urban areas. This can lead to clashes between the two factions of the moderates and the extremists. Factionalism, in fact, is not a bad phenomena as it shows the political health of the state. It reflects that free thinking and free exchange of ideas is possible in that state. Factionalism is healthy if there are differences in matters of detail but agreement in matters of principle.

Factionalism has its repercussions. On the basis of this it would be appropriate to argue that there are primarily four major aspects that distinguish factionalism in the SAD from that in the INC. Firstly, the Congress and the SAD present two divergent patterns in regard to their membership, ideology and support structure. The Congress Party's membership is all inclusive, it claims to represent 'the legitimate interests of all communal, linguistic, economic and sub-regional groups in the state'.⁴ The membership is wide and open to all. '...the Congress party claims to be at once the spokesman of all the social and economic segments of the state's

⁴ T.R. Sharma, "Defusion and Accommodation: The Contending Strategies of the Congress Party and the Akali Dal in Punjab", *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 4, Winter 1986-87, p. 640.

population'.⁵ On the other hand, the membership of the SAD comes mainly from one community – the Sikhs. 'Akali Dal claims to be the sole spokesman of the Sikhs – particularly of the relatively well-off rural Jat Sikhs'.⁶ Ideologically, also the two parties are poles apart. The Congress party claims to be a secular party while the SAD is a religion-based party. The latter draws its support on the basis of religion and fights for the protection and promotion of Sikh religion. Consequently, the nature of factionalism in the two parties is vastly different. The INC is a national party while the SAD is a regional party. The leaders of the Congress party at the State level look to the leaders at the Centre for guidance. They compete among themselves and have to have the blessings of some leader at the Centre. Thus, in the Congress party, factionalism is double-edged, it is two sided. It emanates from top to bottom as well as from bottom to top. Blessings of leaders from the Centre to some individuals or groups in the State lead to factionalism.

On the other hand, the SAD is a regional party. Hence, factionalism emanates only from below. It is one-edged. The rural Jats compete against each other to emerge as leaders. Factionalism starts from the villages and travels right upto the higher echelons of the party at the State level. The Jat temperament is such that everyone considers himself a leader and does not want to be a follower. He does not want to be subservient to somebody belonging to his caste. He considers it as an insult to work or stay under the shadow of another Jat Sikh. The Jat Sikh considers the SAD, his domain, his personal fiefdom over which he must have total control. One reason for this thinking can be a reason, which not many have investigated. The Jat Sikhs are the only community as a whole who got converted into Sikhism. Among the Khatri, the Bhatras there are within the same family, some members who are Hindus and others who are Sikhs. On the other hand, one does not find this phenomenon among the Jat Sikhs in the whole of Punjab, the Jat Sikhs have adopted Sikhism enbloc. This leads them to think that they have a superior claim over the SGPC, the SAD and the State of Punjab.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

SAD is a regional party but it is vastly different from other regional parties in the country. The basic difference, is in regard to its membership. If we compare it with the Dravid Munnetra Kazagham of Tamil Nadu, again this basic difference comes to the fore. Hence, factionalism in Dravid Munnetra Kazagham (DMK) or All India Dravid Munnetra Kazagham (AIDMK) is different from factionalism in the SAD. The Dravid Munnetra Kazagham is a regional party but it draws its membership from all sections of the society. Membership is open to all Tamilians irrespective of caste, class or religion. On the other hand, the SAD opens its arms to the Sikhs only. It represents the interests of the rural peasants and farmers. All its demands are based on religion and the interests of the community. The issues of the SAD are, thus, vastly different from the issues confronting the other regional parties. If we compare the SAD with the Telugu Desam of Andhra Pradesh again the same difference emerges. The factions in the Telugu Desam have emerged because of different family members clamouring to capture the party apparatus. Its membership is open to all; the accession to power is open to all. On the other hand, in the SAD, it is the Jats who constitute the majority of membership and it is only a Jat Sikh who can aspire to lead the party. The major space given to non-Jats is very minimal. Thus, because of its composition, factionalism in the SAD is vastly different from the other regional parties.

The Congress party is a secular party and its rank and file consists of people from all sections of the society all castes, all communities, and all strata's. Thus, the Congress party does not feel the need to have a tie up with "third" political parties as junior partners in the consociational/governmental "club".⁷ The membership of the INC is drawn from all religions and all castes so the nature of political alignments within the party is qualitatively different from the nature of political alignments in the SAD whose membership is limited primarily to one community. The Congress feels that it can come to power on its own so does not believe in accommodation of other political parties. 'The defusionist strategy of the Congress party is essentially aimed at warding off threats that other political parties, singly or jointly, are capable of posing

⁷ Ibid., pp. 635-36.

to it'.⁸ Concessions are doled out in such a way that they cut down the support base and narrow down the base of the other political parties. The concessions are doled out in such a way that the Congress party broadens its own support base and narrows down the base of the other parties. The INC is not dependent on any other party for handing out concessions. Alliances with any other political party is not political compulsion for the INC. In formulating its policies it need not consult other political parties. It is the sole judge for determining the content or timing of concessions, or the mode and pace of their implementation'.⁹

The SAD because of its composition has to make an alliance with some political party. It is a political necessity for having legitimacy. The Akali Dal represents the Sikhs and it cannot radically change or modify its membership pattern. It cannot open its doors to the Hindus and Muslims. If it does bring about this change the Jat Sikh community will turn its back to it. The Akali Dal will lose its unique feature. It can change its composition only at the risk of eroding its Sikh membership. This would be damaging to its image. However, it has to find a way out keeping in mind all the options to keep the Sikhs with it and somehow win the Hindu electorate or a section of them. So, it must carve out an alliance with a party which represents the Hindus preferably, the urban Hindus only then it will have legitimacy. But it has only a limited choice, for example, going in an alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) is unlikely because the Bahujan Samaj Party has its own ambitious plan. Moreover, the membership of the Bahujan Samaj Party mainly comprises of the Scheduled Castes who have since ages been exploited by the Jat Sikh in the rural side. The latter form the main membership of the SAD so this option is virtually closed. The Akali Dal could think of an alliance with the Communist parties or with one of them but again it would not be a happy marriage. This can happen only in some exceptional circumstances because the basis of the Akali Dal is religion and the Communist parties condemn religion. Their very stand is against religion while the Akali Dal's is rooted in religion. The SAD cannot move a step without quoting

⁸ Ibid., p. 636.

⁹ Ibid.

religion and religious issues. The Gurudwaras and its audience are the Akali Dal's starting points. SAD's going with the left parties is virtually ruled out. The only option left for the Akali Dal is to have an alliance with the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). These two parties do not cross each other rather they are complementary. The Akali Dal's electorate consists of the rural peasantry while the BJP's membership consists of the Hindus from the urban areas. The Akali Dal represents the agriculturists while the BJP represents the industrialists, the shopkeepers and the businessmen. The Akali Dal does not feel danger from the BJP as the latter does represent the Hindu electorate but so do the Congress, the Communists and the Bahujan Samaj Party. The BJP's presence can be felt in the state only with the help of the Akali Dal. It can be the minor partner yet an indispensable partner in the alliance with the SAD. Thus, both need each other for survival in the political arena.

However as soon as the alliance between the SAD and the BJP is worked upon, factionalism brews up in the Akali Dal. In the SAD, as in every other party, there exist the hard-core and the soft-core groups. In the Akali Dal too we have the hard-core who are committed to maintain their separate identity by harping on religious issue and the use of the party to safeguard the interests of the Sikhs. Their plank is to maintain their special position as caretakers of the community. On the other hand, we have the soft-elements within the party who try to carry with them the Hindu elements and others. If the Akali Dal tries to appease the alliance partner, i.e. the Hindu electorate, the hard-core elements within the party expresses discontent and frustration and it generates factionalism. If the demands of the BJP are not accommodated, the soft core gets alienated and there are chances of the alliance breaking up. Thus, it is a very uneasy alliance yet the compulsions of political arithmetic force the Akali Dal to have an alliance with a political party which is primarily a Hindu party. The hard-core elements are not against the Hindus but have to appease their supporters by harping on the issues, which ensures them the people's support. They cannot move away from their communal ideology. We have had a Tohra or a Talwandi who would argue and take a stand on the question of the party safeguarding the interests of its members – the Sikhs. The SAD needs some pre-poll alliance with a non-Sikh political party to give it legitimacy. But such an alliance itself leads to factionalism between the hard-core and soft-core within the Akali Dal

disagree on it. The Congress, because of its secular credentials is under no such obligation; hence the factionalism in the INC is of quite a different order. In its intra-party affairs the Congress Party has been accommodating all communities and castes. 'It has always been a divided house'.¹⁰ Since Independence the party has always had at least two factions, each reflecting some definite interest. Unlike the Akali Dal, the Congress party has not split because each group is confident that it would be accommodated in the changing power equations. The Congress party has skillfully managed to harmonise the interests of both the communities -- the Sikhs and the Hindus. The Congress party tries to accommodate the interests of both by giving them representation in proportion to their share of the population.

The Akali Dal, instead of accommodating the various interests, forces them either to merge with the party or leave the party completely. The differences also arise in the SAD because there are three major seats of power – the SGPC, a powerful Sikh religious organisation having control over the Sikh shrines, the legislative-ministerial wing controlling the government when the party is in power and the organisational wing of the Akali party. 'One major reason for frequent splits in the Akali Dal is that each of these three (wings) tries to become more powerful than the other two in the system. The three wings rarely work in harmony.'¹¹ The Akali Dal has always been the political arm of the SGPC. After the Gurudwara Reform Movement, the SGPC tried to control the SAD, which is a political wing, by its religious authority. The Akali party too tries by various means to have control over the SGPC. The tussle goes on. It leads to intense factionalism within the Akali party. The Akali Dal being uncommunal, i.e. the power struggle within one community only intensifies factionalism. The Akali Dal cannot accommodate the Hindus because of its this character for it professes to consist of membership exclusively of Sikhs. The Akali Dal unlike any other regional party in any other state of India has this composition because of the demographic realities of Punjab. Moreover, 'some foreign

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 643.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 649.

anthropologists like Joyce Pettigrew have tried to ingrain in the minds of Sikh elites that they are a chosen people meant to rule not to be ruled over.’¹²

The demographic changes which have occurred since Independence have led to other changes also. The Sikhs who were a minuscule minority (about 2 per cent) in the country were afraid of being absorbed by the Hindus who are a minority in Punjab but a preponderant majority (83%) in the country. The Sikh elite in the Akali Dal finds it easier to whip up communal sentiments on this basis and gain power. They, at times, place unreasonable demands before the Hindu dominated federal authority, which when unfulfilled is exploited as discrimination against the region and particularly against the Sikh community. Within the Sikh leadership there are differences between the rural Jat Sikh peasantry and the urban Sikh leadership. The latter have been marginalised by the former. The urban Bhappa leaders were once at the helm of affairs of the SAD and have been sidelined now which has, invoked in them feeling of alienation within the Akali party.

As Gopal Singh says,¹³ “in the Akali Dal, factionalism starts at the grass root level and goes up the party while in the INC the clash start at the Centre and gradually seeps at the regional level. The conflicts at the Centre has its repercussions at the regional level. In the Akali Dal, factionalism arises because the society is divided into various castes which compete with one another to wield power. The Jat Sikhs have control over the means of production; they are the owners of land so they want to continue with that power. In fact, they do not want it to slip away from their hands so they try to consolidate it further. The conflict is between those who wield power and those who don’t. Within the Akali party there is conflict between the people of the same caste. The Jats do not enjoy seeing somebody from their own caste as a

¹² Quoted in T. R. Sharma, “Multicultural Challenge and the Changing Contours of Punjab Politics” in *Rule of Law and Organisation of the State in Asia, The Multicultural Challenge*, Institut Du Fédéralisme Fribourg Suisse, Helbing and Lichtenhahn, Munich 2000, p.157.

¹³ Gopal Singh, Lecture on ‘Factionalism in Punjab’, Department of Correspondence Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh, March 31 , 2005.

leader. They put in all efforts to see his fall. They can even have an alliance with somebody from the other caste and community to bring about his downfall”.

Thus, factionalism, at times, arises because of traditional loyalties, interests and at other times because of traditional rivalries. Though sometimes ideology and principles are involved, it usually stems from a desire for political power and not for advancement of interests of the Community. The latter reason is quoted to justify one's protest against the dominant group. As P.P.S. Gill says, “Akalis are like Amoeba. The Congress has taken advantage of factionalism in the Akali Party. The Akalis are good at spoiling their own chances of coming to power.”¹⁴ However, both the parties suffer because of the evil of factionalism . The infighting takes its toll on the performance of the parties and they cannot function effectively when they are in power or functioning as the opposition.

¹⁴ Interview with Mr. P.P.S. Gill, Former Chief of Bureau, The Tribune, at his residence in Sector16, Chandigarh.

APPENDIX

To get a clearer picture of the nature of factionalism in the state we have held informal talk with leaders of both the parties and prominent academicians. The interviews were not structured but were conversational which taken together will give us a balanced picture. So in addition to our findings these interviews are verbatim responses and are affixed.

Interview with S. Harcharan Singh Brar, former Chief Minister of Punjab, at his residence, House No-19, Sector-4, Chandigarh on October 14, 2004.

The former Chief Minister and a senior Congress leader of Punjab, Mr. Brar says that in the beginning the Indian National Congress was confined to the cities, to the urban areas. It was S. Pratap Singh Kairon who took the party to the people in the villages. Prior to Kairon the Arya Samajists had control over the Indian National Congress. The Jat Sikhs who were disgusted with the uneducated leadership of the Shiromani Akali Dal got inclined towards the Indian National Congress. He contends that in the 1950's and 1960's there was a rural-urban divide but no longer now as education has spread to the villages. Talking about the geographical, he talks of the Malwa-Majha divide and says it doesn't exist now. Factionalism is all about gaining power. In fact, educated people indulge in more leg-pulling because of jealousies rampant. Mr. Brar feels that factionalism is not a question of being negative or positive, it is purely positive. Every man wants to be at the top, thus, inclination towards a particular group.

He says every man wants his importance so manipulation of power takes place. About the interference from the Congress High Command he says it all depends on the leadership at the regional level. So is the case with Punjab. If a leader keeps running to the Congress High Command for directions there is bound to be interference which is not good for healthy, regional politics. He says "I know more about Punjab politics than somebody from Madras. I know the pulse of the

people, their demands, their aspirations for I have been born and brought up here”. If the leadership keeps looking towards the Congress High Command they are at fault not the Congress High Command who have to see the well-being of the party when in-fighting among the leaders is taking its toll on the party’s performance. The party is not dependent on the Congress High Command for funds as it can garner enough from the region itself.

Talking about his role as the Chief Minister, he says, “I personally never believed in factions or factionalism so I didn’t encourage any . I never indulged in petty politics of factionalism . So I resigned from the post of the Chief Minister of Punjab. A Congress party worker from my school days I have served the party whenever called to do so.” Telling about the caste- divide in Punjab he does not attach much significance to it these days, especially in the Indian National Congress. He says the differences between Giani Zail Singh and Darbara Singh, for example, were personal, both happened to belong to different castes so the issue of caste was noticeable. Egos were involved more than caste . Giani Zail Singh felt that the Jat Sikh would never consider him a leader because of his caste even if he had reached the highest office of the land. The feeling of casteism is there but not amounting to factionalism. Factions arise because of personal ambitions.

Mr. Gopal Singh, Personal Assistant to former Chief Minister, Harcharan Singh Brar for the past 19 years and also a party worker says factionalism is nothing but pursuit of power. He says, “ A majority of our leaders lack far-sightedness . They think only of their own interests and that is why the state of affairs is so bad. The leaders kept harping on a Punjabi- speaking area and washed their hands off Chandigarh. Because of their this demand they could not think of retaining a hill district so that electricity could be produced. The result is that we are paying Rs. 4to 5 per unit while the electricity in Himachal Pradesh is about . 40 paise per unit. And with the creation of a new state the problem of water- shortage and division of waters came along. So, it is not issues or ideologies, which make or break alliances but vested interests which leads to loose, floating alliances. In the process issues come up

and are dealt with according to how they will affect the leader's interests. Everything revolves around power and how to acquire it."

Bhag Singh, an ex-Member Legislative Assembly, residing in Roopnagar says, "Factionalism is a natural phenomenon in any party, so it is with the Indian National Congress. factions are based on personalities. There is no division between the rural and the urban areas but the Indian National Congress does give priority to the rural areas as the real India resides in the villages. Factionalism is based on competition between different groups formed on different needs so there is no discrimination between the literate and the illiterate. The Schedule Castes support the Indian National Congress as the party framed policies for the betterment of these people."

Mrs. Sarbarinder Kaur , daughter of late Chief Minister of Punjab, Partap Singh Kairon, in her interview at her residence on Pakhowal road, Ludhiana says, "During my father's time factionalism was as not as rampant as it is these days. With people like Lala Jagat Narain and Prabodh Chandra there were petty jealousies which is human nature. My father was a man of principles, he had a vision for he was a statesman. For him politics was the progress of Punjab and not power politics. He didn't believe in differences between Jat and non Jat Sikh. He had the support of his people and did not believe in personal vendetta. Regarding the Punjabi Suba he said the people who are asking for the Suba and the people who will give it will both repent in the long run. He gave impetus to educated people. He made his own decisions and did not believe in running to Delhi for every small pretext and that is why Pt. Nehru respected him. They admired each other. The Arya Samajists were hostile to him but he had overwhelming support of the people. Factionalism is the result of personal animosities and ego."

S. Mohinder Singh Gill, former President of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee and a senior Congress leader says that Giani Zail Singh and S. Darbara Singh became Chief Ministers of Punjab because of their closeness to Mrs. Indira

Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi. He says, “Had I not parted ways with Mrs. Indira Gandhi, I would have been made the Chief Minister of Punjab that time i. e. in 1980. There was a personality clash between Giani Zail Singh and Darbara Singh. So much so that they were in the same village at the same time when Darbara Singh was told that Giani was also there, the former refused to meet the latter . S. Buta Singh was made the Home Minister by Mr. Rajiv Gandhi because of the 1984 riots”.

Bir Devinder Singh, presently the Deputy speaker of the Punjab Legislative Assembly and a Congress Member of Legislative Assembly from Kharar, in an interview at his residence in Chandigarh, says, “In the Indian National Congress before 1962 the leadership comprised of taller leaders who had a global vision. One of them was Pt. Nehru who did not involve himself in state politics. Leaders like him allowed the provincial leadership to grow and didn’t want the state leaders to run to the Centre for every task. With Mrs. Gandhi the scenario changed. She started pruning the provincial leadership and did not want them to grow beyond a certain point. She discouraged the taller leaders and encouraged the dwarf leaders which led to factionalism. Thus, she encouraged the threat perception among the different leaders. So you had people like Comrade Ram Kishan and Gurmukh Singh Musafir became Chief Ministers of the state. They were rootless leaders and were Non-Jats. Because of this policy the Indian National Congress lost the 1967 elections as the taller leaders like Gian Singh Rarewala, S. Darbara Singh and Major Harinder Singh were ignored. The Congress knows that it cannot come to power without the Jat leadership. The Jats are dominant in the rural sector. But there are leaders like Darbara Singh who were acceptable to all the Sikhs. Giani Zial Singh tried to push the Jat Sikhs further back with the result that the Jats tilted to the Akalis. After Gianiji the rift between the Jat and the non-Jats grew and only became wider. Mrs. Gandhi made two factions in every Suba for she wanted to keep the balance of power in her own hands. They divided the Sikhs for all times to come. Factions arise because the expectations of the elites are many. It is only 15% of the Jats who are politically active and you will find them to be the beneficiaries of all the schemes of the government irrespective of which party is in power. They are the ones who do not

remain with a party for more than two years. Once their all expectations are not realized they switch sides and encourage the other leader. The Indian National Congress knows that it cannot come to power without the Jat Sikhs as the latter are dominant in the rural sector. The main cause of factionalism is the Jat psyche which is egoistic. In fact, the Jat psyche can be seen in the song, 'Mirza'. The Jats are a pampered lot, they cannot accept leadership of anyone than besides themselves. In the Akali party again the Jats are a dominant lot. Factionalism arises because of pursuit of power. This was the clash between Tohra and Badal. The former nursed an ambition of becoming the Chief Minister of Punjab but the latter manipulated to keep him away, that is why Tohra was the longest serving nominated member of the Rajya Sabha. Tohra used to create circumstances for the other leader that the latter used to try to negotiate. The relationship between the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee is that the latter's infra-structure is used by the former. The Shiromani Akali Dal uses religion to get Raj, it exploits the devotion of the people to acquire power. The Shiromani Akali Dal gets a readymade audience which believes in the Panth. The Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee is an accepted platform which the people readily identify with. The Indian National Congress can never get that audience. Gurudwara is a medium of the Shiromani Akali Dal to gain power. They do not have to put in efforts to get an audience. Now the era of the Sant is over. The rift between the Jat and the non-Jats was created to gain power by certain elements. All factionalism is the result of pursuit of power, wealth and opportunities. The Indian National Congress benefits from the factionalism of the Shiromani Akali Dal. The Indian National Congress factions are at times created by the Centre. The Centre inspires the dissidents and have no respect for the state leaders. They treat the party as accompany. On the other hand there is a mad race between the Members of Legislative Assembly to become leaders of prominence. It is easy to become a Member of Legislative Assembly but very difficult to emerge as a leader, so they have to cultivate and mobilize their supporters. The Centre does not value leaders for they count heads. It is through leaders that the stature of the party grows and not vice-versa."

In an interview at his official residence in Chandigarh, S. Surjit Singh Barnala, present Governor of Tamil Nadu and a senior Akali Dal leader says, "Factionalism is basically because of pursuit of power. In every party there is internal power struggle. The Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee does not interfere in the affairs of the Shiromani Akali Dal. Master Tara Singh's time saw the divide between the Jat and the non-Jats. He was an accepted leader of the Sikhs but some people to attain political mileage created this divide which dwindled after his death. The Master did not accentuate this divide. During Gianiji's time again this divide was prominent which has its repercussions till today. The Shiromani Akali Dal is the political arm of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee. The Shiromani Akali Dal cannot use a single penny of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee as there is an audit. The Shiromani Akali Dal has gained prominence because of the elections of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee. The latter is a Sikh Parliament in which elections are democratically held so the elections are fought with the help of the Shiromani Akali Dal. The Shiromani Akali Dal is a political body while the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee is a religious body in which Universal Adult Franchise was the first to be implemented in the world. There is not much ideology involved in factionalism. My aim was to keep the Sikhs together so I tried to carry forward the legacy of Sant Longowal. But the leaders are not clear about what they desire as they all are after power and aim to be in the limelight. Even on the Sikh Homeland demand they are not clear. They raise it only to gain some political benefits. The clash between Tohra and Badal was a personal one which was encouraged by their supporters. Later on they reached a tactic understanding."

In an interview with Simranjeet Singh Mann, an Ex Member Parliament and President Shiromani Akali Dal on October 20, 2004, at his village Quilla S. Harnam Singh, District Fatehgarh Sahib, Punjab, he talks of his factionalism. His factionalism is confined to ideology. He says, "My party's differences with the other Sikh party's is purely based on ideology. It is not based on promoting relatives. Mr. Badal has surrendered and given up on the basic Akali declaration which is reflected in the Moga declaration. He has dropped the words, 'Sikh', 'Panth', and the 'Anandpur

Resolution' from his party's programme. The Akali Dal was formed in 1920 to protect the social and political interests of the Sikhs. Badal has aligned himself with the bitterest enemies of the Sikhs- the Bhartiya Janata Party, though we are marginalized yet we maintain our ideology- that of a separate Sikh state. This state will fulfill the aspirations of the Sikh people. Geo-politically it will be an important state as it will be a buffer state between two warring civilizations-India and Pakistan. It was Guru Gobind Singh who propagated the idea of a Nation-state and it was Banda Bahadur who formed it in the early 18th century on the principles propagated by the 10th Guru. So if the French Revolution founded the Nation- state in 1789, the Sikhs had done it by 1710. They struck their own coins, abolished feudalism and distributed land to the cultivators. The second attempt in making the Nation-state was made by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1809 which lasted till 1849. The Akalis made feeble attempts to take back the power which had been taken away by the British Treaty. The Akalis were illiterate people who were lost in the control of the Gurudwaras. The Muslim and the Hindu leadership were enlightened, thus could walk away with benefits. The Akalis confused their movement with the National Movement, thus, relegating the interests of the Sikhs at the background. The 20th century is the age of Democracy where numbers are important. The Sikhs didn't realize this thus fell from the fire to the frying pan. They gave up British Sovereignty for Hindu Sovereignty. Jinnah realized that the Hindus were in no mood to share power with the minorities so they didn't want a United India as the number of Muslims would interfere with their plan of monopolizing power. The Hindus have never let foreigners maintain their identity so the Muslims were a challenge, thus they threw them out into Pakistan and Bangladesh as they had done with Buddhism and Shankarcharya. So our party is very serious about a Sikh State and after Ranjit Singh this was tried to be establish by Sant Bhindranwale. Our party has gone beyond the traditional Akali thought, it has gone to international level. The other Akali Dal's have no morality, no principles, no ideology, no idealism and no perspective . They are out for naked power. It is a misnomer that the Jat Sikhs are divided. A majority are with me because they know my faction stands for ideology. The traditional Akalis have sold the Sikh character to foeticide, female infanticide and molestation of women. My faction doesn't make deals out of power as Tohra used to and Badal

does. They have lost the ethos of the religion that is why four major Gurdwaras, i. e., Goindwal Sahib, Khadoor Sahib, Bir Baba Buddha and Tarn Taran are showing a loss. Where is all the money going? Jatism is ripe in the present Shiromani Akali Dal. It believes in casteism, the very ill against which our Gurus were. We encourage the Dalits to participate in the Gurudwara management. Our force comprises of young people from the peasantry and down trodden people from all walks of life. Our Akali Dal is the only parallel Akali Dal which has managed to survive and we have managed to do so because of our ideology. We have managed to survive even without the patronage of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee. It is because of the support we get from the Sikh Diaspora. The Hindus are systematically erasing the minorities with the help of the power of the State. The Shiromani Akali Dal has sold itself in the hands of the enemies thus, my party cannot operate with it. I believe in the democracy of the Sikhs. I believe in the Sikh ideology and my party is against the ritualism and ceremonies which have cropped up which are not included in the Sikh tenets”.

Interview with Capt. Kanwaljeet Singh, former finance minister of Punjab and senior Akali leader on October 16,2004 at his residence, Sector-9, Chandigarh.

Capt. Kanwaljeet Singh replying to a question whether there is factionalism in the Shiromani Akali Dal and to what extent says “Certainly, there is factionalism in the Shiromani Akali Dal. Initially there was a struggle for power between Master Tara Singh and Sant Fateh Singh which led to some overtones. These events and the Green Revolution changed the social and political scene in Punjab. They pushed the Jat Sikhs to a decision making level for the first time. With the accession of the Sant the leadership of the Akali politics slipped from the hands of the Urban Sikhs into the hands of the rural Jat Sikhs. So as a political party it began to reflect the basic Jat character- aggressiveness, ego, factionalism and tribal instinct. These traits overshadowed politics so issues took a backseat . This continued during the period of Sant Fateh Singh, Tur, Jagdev Singh Talwandi right up to Sant Longowal. Till 1977 the offices of the leader of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, the Shiromani Akali Dal and that of the legislature worked in harmony. In 1977 two

dominant leaders emerged – Tohra as the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee leader and Badal as the leader of the Legislature. The President of the Shiromani Akali Dal became a peace maker between the two. Tohra represented the old Jathedar lobby as well as Panthic oriented politics which professed that religion is supreme. Badal, on the other hand, represented pure power politics. This uneasiness continued till the arrest of Sant Longowal in 1984. When he came out of the jail, especially after Operation Bluestar, he and his policies were endorsed by the Sikh Sangat. Till 1985 he overshadowed both Badal and Tohra. After his assassination Badal and Tohra emerged as the senior leaders. They could not reconcile with the fact that Barnala became the Party President and then the Chief Minister of the State. Barnala proved to be a weak Chief Minister and succumbed to the pressure of the Centre and of Rajiv Gandhi who was not eager about the Punjab Accord signed with Longowal. On January 26, 1986 all was set to transfer Chandigarh to Punjab when Rajiv Gandhi backed out at 4 a. m. Barnala did not resign and that was the beginning of the end. With this the game went out of the moderate's hands and into the hands of the militant leaders. The Indian National Congress encouraged the militant leaders at this time, thus, encouraging factionalism. With militancy the moderate leaders as well their moderate policies were marginalized. Simranjeet Singh Mann emerged as the leader from 1989 to 1992 as sentiments were against the traditional leadership. But because of his inexperience and because he didn't enjoy a power base in his constituency he could not consolidate his gains. So there was a revival of the traditional leadership with Badal and Tohra coming together and Barnala with his group on the other.

He further says, "after the militancy in 1995 the Jathedar of the Akal Takht called for a reconciliation between the different Akali leaders. Except Badal all leaders, i. e. Tohra, Barnala, Capt. Amrinder Singh, Simranjeet Singh, Talwandi joined and formed the Akali Dal (Amritsar). The Amritsar Declaration was announced which promised to create a separate Sikh state. So for the first time in many years there was an issue in place of the bullet. The choice was between unity and separation, the people wanted to give peace a chance. Badal utilized this chance and emerged as the leader. In 1996 Badal and Tohra came together and the Shiromani Akali Dal came into being'. Then there was a clash between the two over

succession as Badal was diagnosed of suspected cancer and Badal wanted his son, Sukhbir S Badal to succeed him. Thus, there was a split in 1999.” Regarding Caste based factionalism in the Shiromani Akali Dal, Capt. Kanwaljeet Singh says, “By and large the Jat Sikhs are dominant in the Shiromani Akali Dal because the following comprises of the Jat Sikhs. But others can also come up”. About the geographical factor in factionalism he says, “The Malwa is the largest area in Punjab so the following here is also large, thus, there are more chances of a leader consolidating his position from this area. A leader from this area has an advantage over the others because of sheer numbers involved.” About education making an impact on the party leaders Capt. Kanwaljeet reveals an amazing development, “As of now and from the last five to ten years a healthy transformation is taking place, i. e., educated youth are joining the party. So the Old Guard comprising of jathedars is feeling threatened and sidelined. And this trend will fructify. Prior to 1966 the party represented and protected Sikh interests and now it is purely a political body seeking power”. About the role of the Schedule Castes he says, “The Shiromani Akali Dal has a marginal support from the Schedule castes as there is a feeling of discrimination against them in the villages by the Jat Sikhs. The Jat Sikhs own the means of production and the labour comprises of the Schedule castes. The internal conflict is there.” Regarding the rural-urban divide he says, “the Shiromani Akali Dal is a party of the rural masses so the urban voter does feel alienated from the party. Now the Sikh voter does not find the Indian National Congress untouchable as was after Operation Bluestar. The feelings of the Sikhs regarding the Indian National Congress is again turning towards pre-1984. Then, the Shiromani Akali Dal’s alliance with the BJP and especially the RSS factor has led to some Sikhs joining the Indian National Congress. After 1984 the Party could not consolidate the Sikh community thus, the reversal.” About the nexus between the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee he replies, “the Shiromani Akali Dal is a party of the Sikhs and thus it hasn’t been able to break away from the Panthic mould. The survival of the Shiromani Akali Dal is dependent on carrying the Panthic sentiments. The Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee is the guardian of the Panthic sentiments so the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee provides that platform. On the other hand the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee

requires the Shiromani Akali Dal to carry the message to the people. So Shiromani Akali Dal does not get funds from the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee but there is a dependency on each other for patronage and platform. The position of the President of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee is awesome, he is the President of the Sikhs of the world. The control of any one person on the three posts that of the President of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, the president of the Shiromani Akali Dal and the leader of the Legislature wing is not healthy for the community. This manipulation of power is personal. Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee and Shiromani Akali Dal's tasks are different. The former aims to propagate the Sikh religion and see to the management of all the historic Gurdwaras in Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh while the latter is a political body which aims to capture political power."

Former Education Minister in Akali Government, Tota Singh, in an interview at his residence in Sector-18, Chandigarh, says that factionalism is prevalent among senior leaders for the post of Party Presidentship or for the post of Chief Ministership. He has been serving and participating in the Akali politics since 1957. Working upwards from the grassroots. According to him, the clash between the SGPC President and the Chief Ministership has been a phenomenon since the 1980s. He refutes the allegations that the SAD uses the funds of the Gurdwaras for its political purposes. He says, "Every penny spent is audited by the government. By government, I mean the Central as well as the Punjab government. So where can you have misappropriation of funds? Yes, SAD cannot disassociate itself from the Gurdwaras because our 6th Guru had given the idea of Miri and Piri, of religion and politics together. So, how can we give up the Gurdwaras or let the Congress have control over them? The SAD took birth because of the Gurudwara movement, so the Gurdwaras are our base for we are there to protect the interests of the Sikhs who are a minority in this country. If we hold a congregation of 1000 Sikhs in the Gurudwara each Sikh offers Rs. 50 which leads to accumulation of Rs. 50,000 and all the participants have food in the 'langar' which hardly costs Rs. 1000. So how are we using the Gurudwara funds?" He further states, "It is the INC which encourages

factionalism in the SAD. They are constantly on the lookout for a weak point in the SAD and then exploit it to weaken one of the strong regional parties in the country”.

About the infighting between Badal and Tohra, S. Tota Singh says, “Tohra was very clear that there should be no interference in his district. He had nurtured it and wanted it to be his domain”. As a party worker, Tota Singh was a witness to Justice Gurnam Singh becoming the Chief Minister in 1967. He says that, “Justice Gurnam Singh was Sant Fateh Singh’s choice though even the latter knew that the party workers wanted S. Lachhman Singh Gill to be the Chief Minister as Gill had also risen from the grassroots. Gill was a people’s man, he met people, sat and had food with them and was available to them anytime. Justice Gurnam Singh never went to the jail, never sacrificed his comforts and was not a party worker. Sant Fateh Singh, on the other hand, had worked hard to get all the partners together so Gurnam Singh was the only consensus candidate. But Gurcharan Singh Nihalsinghwala was against Gill thus, the choice on Gurnam Singh. Gill’s only condition was that Nihalsinghwala should not be given a ministerial birth because the latter had scuttled his chances of being the Chief Minister by threatening to join the Congress if Gill was the Chief Minister. Gurnam Singh made Nihalsinghwala the Chief Parliamentary Secretary which led to Gill being angry. Nihalsinghwala misused the powers to an extent that the Station House Officer (SHO) of Jagraon, Bahal Singh did not listen to S. Gurnam Singh as he had the support of Nihalsinghwala. Moreover, S. Gill was the one who had brought Sant Fateh Singh into politics. Thus, small incidents kept piling up with the result that the leaders parted each other’s company and Gill rallied with the Congress and became the Chief Minister of Punjab.”

S. Tota Singh concludes that, “Before 1979-80, there was no clash between the SGPC President and the SAD President. Sant Fateh Singh and S. Channan Singh lived as brothers. After Sant Fateh Singh’s death, when I went to meet S. Channan Singh, the latter told me that he would not live for long as his elder brother, Sant Fateh Singh had expired. And it is true, after some days, Sant Channan Singh breathed his last”.

Mahesh Inder Singh Grewal, senior Akali leader in an interview at his residence in Model Town, Ludhiana, says, "In every party there is a sense of insecurity so it is with the leaders of Shiromani Akali Dal. The Akali Dal never dreamt of capturing power till 1967. But factions have always existed in the party. The reasons have varied. If at one time it has been regionalism at other times it has been to gain supremacy within politics. At times it has been genuine when there has been differences of opinion. After 1967 when the leaders tasted power for the first time then it was for power struggle. The Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee is a Gurudwara management body and it needed a protector, thus, the Shiromani Akali Dal is the sword of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee. Factionalism became prevalent when Master Tara Singh broke his fast and Sant Fateh Singh took over the movement. Here some principle was made to show a difference of opinion. Then there was a parting of ways between the Sant and Justice Gurnam Singh. The latter had become the Chief Minister courtesy the Sant. The Chief Minister did not want to work according to the dictates of the Sant. The Sant wanted to have a direct control on the affairs of the State. This led to differences between the two. Then Gurnam Singh went for an official visit to Tamil Nadu and saw the Chief Minister, Karunanidhi, as the Chief Minister as well as the Party President. Gurnam Singh also started nurturing these ambitions but Tohra opposed this concentration of powers in one person as the Chief Minister has to act under the Indian Constitution while the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee has to act under the Panthic agenda. Then there was parting of ways between Lachman S. Gill who left the party because of his personal ambitions. After this fall out there were differences between the Sant and Gurnam Singh and S. Badal came into the limelight because of the Sant's blessings. There was a clash of egos between the Sant and Badal with the result that the Sant brought one Jaswinder S. Brar. But soon there was a reconciliation between the Sant and Badal. So, during the Sant's time factionalism was the result because one leader did not want any other to emerge. The link between the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee and the Shiromani Akali Dal cannot be denied and it is an essential one. S. Tohra related an incident with Mrs. Gandhi when she told the former that the Akalis were misusing the Gurudwaras. He replied, 'The Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee gives a

platform to the party and no one can deny that platform to the Shiromani Akali Dal. Even if the management of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee passes into the hands of the Indian National Congress it cannot stop the Akalis from using the durries (mats), the speaker, the stage and the langar (common kitchen)". Factionalism in the party can be because of differences among the people interests of different regions. The Majha-Malwa divide is there and it is reflected in the party. The Shiromani Akali Dal is stronger in the Malwa as the region has more Assembly seats and in a democracy numbers matter as the rule is of the majority. Regarding the cadre the Party is a rural based party and to attract the urban voter the seats are left for the urbanite leaders. Women participation is a creation of circumstances. Being a male-dominated society women are not able to play a very active role in politics. Education plays a vital role in factionalism. Formerly, the party's command was in the hands of the semi-literate but now the youth are drawn into the party in large numbers. Some are committed to the cause of the party and the state while others are power-seekers. These reasons will lead to factionalism in the long run. The Jat-Sikhs are the leaders of the first rung but the Schedule Castes play an active role in the affairs of the party though they are of the second rung."

Kiran Jyot, an executive member of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee and the grand-daughter of Master Tara Singh blames power-politics for the increased factionalism. She said in an interview with this researcher during the veteran Akali Party worker, Surjan Singh Thekedar's bhog (prayer ceremony to pray for the departed soul), "During the time of Master Tara Singh there was no talk of Jat-Sikh and non Jat-Sikh. In fact, the issue was created by vested interests to overthrow Masterji. That time politics derived its values from religion. There was the concept of Miri-Piri, religion supreme than politics. The interest was the welfare of the Sikhs, the well-being of the community. He was not into power politics. Now regionalism within the Sikhs is also prevalent again it is created thus division between the Majha, Malwa, Doaba Sikhs. These days because of power politics you have to show your loyalty so sycophancy has grown. So you have to be with a group. Thus,

the initial goal of Akali Dal that of value oriented party goes through change now and then.”

Bibi Jagir Kaur, the President of Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, in an interview at her Dera at Begowal, Punjab, talks about factionalism. “Everybody in politics cannot be dedicated to a cause. In any party there can be thinking differences among the members. Each party has its own ideology, principles and issues and the Party’s President has to guard those principles. So any worker who doesn’t fall in line with the party’s plan, disciplinary action has to be taken against him which leads to factionalism. Each worker desires some or the other post, if that is not fulfilled then seeds of discontent are sown. If the aspirations are not fulfilled then you have factionalism. The main differences arise when tickets are to be distributed during elections. Now each leader thinks that he is the best man for the job so he deserves the ticket from a particular constituency. But there are three more people thinking on the same lines, so the party President has to take a decision. He thinks in the Party’s interests and gives the ticket to that candidate who, he feels, can serve the Party best. This leads to differences. The Indian National Congress has always tried to weaken the Akali Dal by dividing the Sikhs among themselves. So, the Shiromani Akali Dal has to work hard to overcome this strategy of the Indian National Congress. The Akali Dal is a party of the rural masses so it wants 100% Of the rural votes. The Indian National Congress on the other hand wants to wrest as many votes as it can, be it 10% or 20%. The Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee is the protector of the Sikh community and the Sikh religion. It is the highest Sikh Parliament and the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee stands as its guard. The Shiromani Akali Dal supports the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee in its endeavour. The Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee is the defender of Faith while the Indian National Congress is against faith. The former’s membership is opened to all and it sermonizes on the bases of religion. It talks of religion and it believes in religious advocacy. Regarding differences between leaders sometimes the workers and their own supporters create misunderstanding between the leaders as was between Tohra and Badal. But such differences are soon cleared when

the leaders believe in a cause. I am encouraging women because I feel women are more attached to a cause. They are sacrificing by nature so they do not believe in asking for a return. With women in politics I feel there will be less of factionalism in the party.”

Jagdev Singh Jassowal a senior politician who has held important posts in both the INC and SAD , in an interview at his residence, House No. 3256, Gurdev Nagar, Ludhiana, Punjab, sheds light on the nature of factionalism, “Factionalism is the pillar of politics. It is a step, a foundation of a party. You can find factionalism in any party around the world in every age. The degree can vary from one party to another but this phenomenon is prevalent anywhere where power politics is present. In the Akali politics there was no aspiration to come to power before 1966 and they never came to power. After attaining Punjabi Suba they realized that they too could get Raj. The Akalis are emotionally attached to the word, ‘Raj’, as it finds a mention in the Ardaas. So, every man got conscious of power and wanted to have a share. Thus, then onwards there was no ideology, no principles involved. In 1966 Akali politics was divided into two factions of Master Tara Singh and Sant Fateh Singh. The Sant introduced the element of caste into Sikh politics and temporarily came into power but divided the Sikhs forever. This led to the might of the Sikhs being divided and mentally the Sikhs started thinking separately. The clash between the Sant and Justice Gurnam Singh was that of de-facto and de-jure sovereign. The former wanted to assert his authority which the latter did not appreciate. The Congress has always encouraged factions in the Akali Dal and at this point they supported Gurnam Singh. Political parties vie for power with each other. Once out of power they miss it as a fish without water. Thus, the various leaders compete with each other within the party. Later on Hudiara formed his own group and Lachhman Singh Gill formed the govt. with the support of the Congress. In all this personal ambition to attain power was involved. The Hudiara group gradually lost its influence and faded. Gill meted out bad treatment to Gian Singh Rarewala so the latter formed his own faction which was supported by Jagjit Singh Chauhan. With the death of the Sant and Channan Singh, ‘jatgardi’ was at peak. The second ranking leaders came forward and

Talwandi with the support of Tohra overthrew Tur and became the President himself. In the history of the Akali Dal it is a record that whoever has become the President has not been given a Farewell Party. He occupies the chair with respect but is thrown out at last because once they come to power they forget the masses and the struggle. In Akali Dal factionalism arises because the leaders forget the workers. This is the only party which does not honour its workers. In the Punjabi Suba movement I was sent to the prison for three years and fined Rs. 11,000. When the Akalis came to power I had served one year in jail and the rest was let off but till date I have not got the fine which the Akalis in power could have returned to numerous people like me who had served the cause. Punjab politics is Akali politics and Akali politics is Gurudwara politics and the Gurudwara politics is Jat politics and Jat politics is 'danda' (stick) politics. The Akali party is a party of the rural masses, of the peasantry so they have to talk of regional aspirations. If we talk of the World War or the Iraq crisis the people will not buy the argument. So we have to promise them a school, clean drinking water, tubewells etc. So a leader has to win people by hook or crook, thus this race leads to competition and then factionalism. Politics is now a game of conviction and convenience these days because in the party factionalism is at its lowest ebb for they can see their own qualities and the faults of the others. The Party members want to weaken each other, that is why Badal couldn't become the Chief Minister. His own men betrayed him. Every Jat wants to be an Member of Legislative Assembly and then the Chief Minister. It is Jat instinct to pull each other down. Politics is a game of scoundrels and because the elite join the services politics becomes the domain of the semi-literate and the illiterate. Even during militancy the second rung leadership came forward because the first-rung leaders had died. Every man entered the race, deserving and non-deserving and the political have-nots benefited the most. The man to benefit was Simranjeet Singh Mann because thought gave way to weapons. The political haves like Tohra and Badal were pushed to the background. Regarding the relationship between the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee and the Shiromani Akali Dal the latter uses religion and its men, money, material and resources. Instead of religion having a positive effect on politics Gurudwara politics is everywhere. The Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee should try to implement whatever is mentioned in the daily Ardaas but if

you analyse their deeds, each is against every word of the Ardaas (the Sikh prayer). Lack of propaganda about the Sikh religion and the rigidness of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee is keeping away the Sehajdari Sikhs from the affairs of the community. The Gurudwara has become a political platform which has divided the Sikhs. Unfortunately the Sikhs have not learnt a lesson and they continue to be divided despite losses. They are worried about their faction and not about the community. There are more Akali Dals at any point of time than the hair of Shivji. The reasons for factionalism are not difficult to trace. They are lack of experience, lack of education, prevalence of ego and old taboos. This infighting is in the blood. A common saying in Punjab says, 'A Jat does not know the meaning of duty, for him debt is of no importance at all, feels a little pain but for him ego matters the most, ego is of utmost importance. They don't think beyond their nose, for the leaders the party is a stepping stone for success, to further their own interests. The leaders want to safeguard their and their family's interests so they try to create a dynastic lineage which leads to differences among the leaders. The workers of the party feel alienated from the party when a youngster is handed over the reins of the party just because he is related to some leader. This leads to politics of the lowest kind in which the leaders hit each other below the belt. Thus, saner elements have now chosen to sit at home and the field is left free for muscle and money power. In any Church around the world violence is not resorted to but in the Gurudwaras lathis, swords, punches and bullets are freely resorted to. A Jat with all his faults considers himself and none other a Sikh. So it is Jat politics and not Akali politics. It is a clash of personalities so they live upto their faith - 'nit lare Khalsa' (A true Sikh should fight everyday). The Akalis capitalize on the 'Vote for Panth' slogan. Over the years the horse has changed but the baraatis (the bridegroom's party) have remained the same. Women have not been a success in politics because they cannot pull strings like men. The women stop at a limit and are not opportunists like the men. The SC's were attracted to the Indian National Congress but have either come back to the Akali Dal or have joined the BSP. The role of the Indian National Congress is negative in the Akali Dal. They have always tried to weaken the Sikhs by encouraging the dissidents. In the Indian National Congress factionalism results because the leaders feel that the people sitting in Delhi have given them power so they are answerable to them and not to the people.

For every small thing they keep running to Delhi with the result that not much work is done. This means advantage to the Akali Dal as they are closer to the people and to the roots. In the Indian National Congress chauvinism is the root cause of trouble while in the Akali Dal it is pulling at each others' leg which is the main cause."

Dr. Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon, a prolific writer and a professor of History who takes keen interest in Punjab affairs, in an interview at his residence in Chandigarh, author of, 'India Commits Suicide' says, "Factionalism is the result of personal ambitions and ideology. The latter is the main cause for everybody aspires to be the Chief Minister of the state. In fact, ideology is a pedestal to go higher in the political circles. When the party is out of power they talk of a, 'Sikh Homeland'. No one is purely committed to ideology. When the party is in power the group which does not get the best piece of the cake raises the demand. Once the leaders come to power they forget the original demands. Bhindranwala's faction was one which really took up the grievances of the Sikhs. The real pitfall in Sikh politics arose with the emergence of the Akali Dal in 1920. The command slipped from the educated Sikhs hands into the hands of illiterate and semi-literate people. The Chief Khalsa Diwan comprised of elites in the positive sense who never confronted the British. This principle was used by Gandhi in the long run and the Akalis followed him forgetting that Gandhi could be a leader only of his community. A people, a community which does not have its elite class to lead it can never win at the negotiating table. The Akalis confronted the British and were totally alienated from the British as well their own countrymen. This led to clashes among themselves which weakened them further. The effect can be seen till today in the infighting among the Akalis. During militancy the traditional leadership was pushed aside and they waited bidding their time. In Punjab true representative leadership will never be allowed to come to power, only those who salute the Centre can stay in power. Such leaders are not responsible to the people but to their bosses in Delhi. The Centre plays a negative role in encouraging factions at the regional level. Bhindranwala was killed because he refused to toe the Centre's line. Sant Longowal was a puppet in the hands of the Center so was released from jail

after Operation Bluestar. The main cause of Factionalism in Shiromani Akali Dal and Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee is that religion salutes the Flag.”

Interview with S. Surender Singh Viridi, a senior Congress leader and related to a former President of India, on October 18, 2004 at his office in Sector-22, in Chandigarh.

Replying to a question regarding factionalism in Indian National Congress he says, “Factionalism in the Indian National Congress is purely personal. Egos, vested interests, pursuit for power, status are involved which leads to factionalism. Whenever there is a split or differences between the leaders at the Centre the repercussions are felt in the state. There is interference of the Congress High Command in the day to day affairs and we have the example of the relationship between S. Kairon and Pt. Nehru. Giani Zial Singh and Darbara Singh became the Chief Ministers of the state only because they had the blessing of Mrs. Gandhi. A leader at the regional level can survive only if he has the support of the leadership at the Centre. The Congress High Command has to see to it that its ardent supporter is at the helm of affairs in the state because it needs that person’s support and work for the election of the President and the Prime Minister. Factionalism is not caste-based. The clash between Gianiji and Darbara Singh was not caste-based as it is made out to be. When Gianiji became the Home Minister there were two leaders aspiring to be the party president – M. S. Gill and Darbara Singh. There was a tacit understanding between Gianiji and Darbara Singh that the former would support the latter if the latter supported Gianiji. Darbara Singh became the party president and consequently the Chief Minister. As Chief Minister he rebuffed and pushed back the supporters of Gianiji like Basant Singh, Avtaar Brar, Sant Ram Singla etc. Thus, the conflict between the two. It is basically the rich people who come into politics now as money power is needed to fight elections. So this is the real cause not caste etc About the position of women, I believe the Punjabi society is a male dominated society and this trend has filtered into politics. Any woman who enters into politics is because she is connected to some political family.”

He says, 'In Shiromani Akali Dal there is more caste- based factionalism . The Jat farmer lobby is dominant. The Centre tried to remove Tohra with the help of Atma Singh but couldn't succeed because Tohra had control over the funds of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee. Badal could challenge Tohra because the former is a party worker, nobody understands the Sikh masses as well as Badal. Thus, he has been able to consolidate his position. About women the picture is as dismal as in other parties, Jagir Kaur has been able to come up because of Dera politics.'

S. Gurbaksh Singh Shergill, one of the founder members of the All India Sikh Students Federation and Principal of Khalsa College , Amritsar in an interview at his residence in Sector-27, Chandigarh, deals in great length with factionalism. He says, 'There has always been factionalism in the villages of Punjab . There are clashes based on property and on egos. Punjabi Sikh is basically egoistic. He has a feeling of being more important than the others, so you have clashes between the Jat Sikhs of Malwa with those of Majha and Doaba. This leads to factionalism . For example it is said about the Majhail leader that for him, faction is more important than religion. Factionalism is the result of ego, feeling of importance. During the time of the Tenth Guru there was no distinction between the Jat and the Non Jat Sikh. Now it is more prominent because caste is used as the basis for securing benefits, for furthering one's interests. Though the leaders are more educated there are more factions emerging because they fight over the posts of office-bearers. When the people were less educated there was less corruption for there was no price economy. Now because of elections there is a competition for more power. Money power has come in which leads to control over resources. The link between the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee and the Shiromani Akali Dal is also one which concerns money. The Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee provides a captive audience and finance to the Shiromani Akali Dal so there is a supremacy of politics over religion. Udham Singh Nagoke and Giani Kartar Singh clashed with each other over the management of Gurudwaras. The Centre has a negative role to play in Sikh politics. It sends money to create factions to weaken the strength of the Sikhs and the Sikhs play into their hands. The Centre is anti-Sikh, anti-Punjabi and anti Punjabi Suba. When Lachhman. S. Gill was made the Chief Minister the message went out to

the regional politics that whosoever gets the support of the Centre would be rewarded. The rest of the problems are created by the Sikh leadership themselves. For example Sant Fateh Singh interfered in the affairs of the then Chief Minister, Gurnam Singh. The latter did not like it and there arose a clash between the two leaders. The Sant used to say publicly that even a dog can become a Member of Parliament because of the tag of the Akali Dal. The uneducated leaders wanted to keep the educated leaders from overshadowing it. Thus, factions flourished.”

According to Mr. N. S. Parwana, an independent journalist who has worked in the past with Hind Samachar which was started by Lala Jagat Narain and caters to the Hindu readership, ‘Giani Zail Singh was a Sikh oriented politician while Darbara Singh was a nationalist Sikh. The clash of these two giants was also on the basis of non-Jat and Jat Sikh identity. Gianiji was a non-Jat who believed in Sikh scriptures and even made inroads into the SAD’s stronghold by constructing the Guru Gobind Singh Marg which connects 91 religious places which were connected with the Gurus Shastras and formed the Dal Khalsa in Punjab to counter the SAD’s claim of representing the Sikhs. S. Darbara Singh was a staunch Congressite who believed in nationalism. He was the one who put an end to the militancy which had torn the Punjab state apart. He deflected the separatist tendencies’.¹ We have the example of the murderer of Lala Jagat Narain. Bhindranwale, travelled from Bombay through Haryana to Punjab unhindered and unarrested. He was arrested on S. Darbara Singh’s instructions, in Punjab. Gianiji had discouraged the then Chief Minister of Haryana, Bhajan Lal from arresting Bhindranwale.’

In an interview P. P. S. Gill, Former Chief of Bureau, The Tribune, at his residence in Sector-16, Chandigarh, says,

“Regarding the Congress it has always been a divided house. The factionalism in the Congress is more dangerous for the Punjab. The politicians and leaders in the party are all opportunists and there is no common thread running through them. The factionalised is more personalized in which nōnē cares for the

State but for one's own interests. There was little or no factionalism during Beant Singh's time because the politicians were scared and there was nothing much to share the spoils. He came at a point when the Central leadership wanted to re-establish itself in Punjab. Prior to that factionalism went into hibernation during the President's rule. The politicians had no control in their hands for the Governor ruled the roost. He governed with the help of his advisors so the bureaucracy was in full control. Politicians, in fact, became jobless. In the Akali Dal factionalism is rampant. Akalis are like Amoeba. The Congress has taken advantage of factionalism in the Akali Party. The Akalis are good at spoiling their own chances of coming to power. They do not have a centralized office, literature etc. It is not an organized party at all. They are divided into groups for their vested interests. The consequences of factionalism is that none other than Punjab suffers. Punjab will become a frozen tear in the years to come. There will be nobody to cry for it. Because of factionalism the officers, the media, the resources and the people get divided. How is it possible that in the past there was a Congress government at the Centre, in Punjab and in Haryana but the SYL problem did not get solved. Due to factionalism, Punjab is not well armed for the future. There is no Information Technology, no heavy industry, and no module for the future. This evil has polarized the people and development of Punjab. There is no political will to solve the problem because vested interests are involved. Factionalism in both the main parties in Punjab has fractured the State. The Congress has failed to learn from its past mistake. They encouraged Bhindranwale as parallel to the Akalis who proved to be a Frankenstein who terrorized them. Factionalism is leading to ruin in all fronts yet no party wants to tackle it."

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