

**“RESPONSE OF SHIROMANI AKALI DAL TO THE
SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES IN
PUNJAB SINCE 1984”**

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Dedicated

to

My

Parents

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ABBREVIATIONS

SAD	Shiromani Akali Dal
PEPSU	Patiala and East Punjab State Union
SGPC	Sikh Gurdwara Prabandak Committee
RSS	Rashtriya Swayam Sewak
CPI	Communist Party of India
MP	Member of Parliament
ICS	Indian Civil Service
BJP	Bhartya Janta Party
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
USSR	United State of Soviet Republic
USA	United States of America
UP	Uttar Pradesh
CRPF	Central Reserve Police Force
PAC	Punjab Armed Constabulary
CPM	Communist Party of Marxist
DMK	Dravida Munnetra Kazagharn
SHSAD	Sarb Hind Shiromani Akali Dal
SC	Schedule Caste
ST	Schedule Tribe
OBC	Other Backward Classes
SYL	Satluj Yamuna Link
NREGP	National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme
MSP	Minimum Support Price
WTO	World Trade Organization
J & K	Jammu & Kashmir
NRI	Non-Resident Indians
VAT	Value Added Tax
MW	Mega Watt

B. Ed	Bachelor of Education
ETT	Elementary Teacher Training
ASI	Assistant Sub Inspector
SI	Sub Inspector
SPV	Special Purpose Vehicle
LTC	Leave Travel Concession
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology
IIM	Indian Institute of Management
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
IT	Information Technology
ROB	Railway Over Bridge
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
DIPR	Department of Information and Public Relation
MP	Madhya Pradesh

CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

Shiromani Akali Dal is one of the oldest regional political party in India. It came into existence in 1920¹ as an organization which meant to protect the interests of the Sikh Community. With the passage of time, it has gained enormous strength and became a ruling party in Punjab. It has often tried to strengthen its regional identity by fighting against the discriminatory policies of the Central Government towards Punjab. At the same time, it has tried to become a part of the national mainstream by joining the coalitions opposition parties against the Congress, both at the Centre and in State. The religious and nationalist posture of the Akali Dal as a regional political party make it a highly interesting subject of study.

Akali Dal came into existence as a body meant to protect the specific interests of the Sikh Community. It was religion oriented organization controlled mainly by the urban Sikhs². At present it has become to be dominated by the land owing Jat's or the rural peasantry. It has also gradually become power oriented. It is to be seen how these changes in the objectives, strategies and tactics of Shiromani Akali Dal have influenced the organization of the Party and its leadership. It is important for understanding its nature and working. This is more for the case of a political Party like the Akali Dal which merges religion with its political ideological posture and has reflected a serious concern with separate religious identity of the Sikh community. Consequently, Akali Dal lays increasing emphasis on separating Sikhs from the Hindu community and claiming special privileges for them on that basis. But after independence ideological posture of the Akali Dal underwent a

¹ Ajit Singh, "Shiromani Akali Dal Religio-Political Study", 1947-90, Arman Publishers, Kapurthala; 2005, p. 4

² Ibid.

change. The Akali Dal began claiming for the creation of separate Punjabi speaking state for protecting the interests of the Sikh Community³.

However, in recent years the Akali Dal has again changed its ideological tradition. It has demanded complete restructuring of Centre-State relations in terms of its Anandpur Sahib resolution and acceptance of some important religious demands of the Sikh Community⁴. It has also demanded a personal law for the Sikh and special status to them in the United Nations. A section of the Akali Dal has gone still further and has demanded creation of Khalistan that is a separate Sikh State. It is to be seen how these changes in the ideological postures of the Akali Dal came about and how they have influenced its organization, strategy and support base. As such the main support for the Akali Dal is likely to come from different sections of the Sikh Community but the Akali Dal cannot keep itself into political power simply by championing the cause of Sikh community. It has to cater to the interests of the non-Sikhs also in order to effectively compete with the Congress. It is to be seen how the Akali Dal has maintained its core support among the Sikhs while at the same time seeking support from the non-Sikhs.⁵

The Akali Dal is mainly a political party of the Sikhs with its area of operation limited to the changing frontiers of Punjab. The party and its issues have played a prominent role in the political development in this region⁶ during the last 9 decades. Practically, all important Sikh leaders of past and present owe their origin to the Akali movement. Hence, a study of the response of Shiromani Akali Dal to socio-political issues in Punjab since 1984 is of vital importance.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Kuldeep Kaur, Akali Dal in Punjab Politics, Splits and Mergers, Deep & Deep Publishers, New Delhi, 1999. p 142-155.

After independence for reconstruction of Indian society the Constitution of India provides clauses for social, legal and independent political system so that a socialistic pattern of society can be realized. But in practice this did not happen because there are so many non-political factors which influence the functioning of the political system. Vice-versa is also true because political system influences the social system to a great extent. So, we can say that social as well as political system influences each other in various ways. The main social aspects which influence the political system are communalism, social inequality, casteism, linguism and regionalism, social tension, illiteracy, population explosion and untouchability. These are the prime social issues which affect the political system.

Similarly, in the political scenario of the State there are main political issues such as greater autonomy to the states, the demand for the merging of Punjabi speaking areas into Punjab including Chandigarh, distribution of Ravi, Beas waters, discrimination against the Sikhs in appointments in the Armed forces on the basis of religion, discrimination against Punjabi language in the adjoining states⁷, etc.

From the above it is very clear that the aforesaid social as well as political issues have great importance in the destiny of the people of the state and in a democratic set up because political parties play a vital role for the fulfillment of the social as well as political goals for the people at large. Akali Dal is the main political force in Punjab and its response towards above listed issues is of great importance for the State of Punjab. And such a study of the response of SAD to the socio-political issue in Punjab since 1984 is of vital importance because during this period the state has gone into various conflicts and turbulence.

⁷ Ibid.

It is generally believed that in a multi-ethnic federal polity, the most important factor governing Centre-State relations is “the structure of the party system.”⁸ It is opined that the centralizing and decentralizing tendencies in a federal system largely depend upon the degree to which the party (or parties) operating at the Central level control the parties operating in the constituent units⁹. In this way, the existence of regional political parties in itself is a factor that reinforces the demand for decentralization of powers and greater autonomy to the states. But apart from the nature of the party system, there may be other socio-economic and political factors which may influence the centripetal and centrifugal tendencies in a federal system.

In order to understand the Akali Dal’s demand in the social, historical and political context, a brief survey of the historical circumstances in which it was initially voiced is essential. The changing socio-economic scene in Punjab and how it has shaped the present Akali leadership and its attitude towards the federal polity of India have to be taken into consideration.

1.1 SOCIAL, HISTORICAL & POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE AKALI DAL’S DEMAND

Paul R. Brass in his path-breaking study, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*,¹⁰ has put forth an interesting theory to explain how an ethnic group develops into a nation or nationality¹¹ and then starts claiming special status or political power to safeguard the legitimate interests of its community.

⁸ William H. Riker, “Federalism Origin, Operation and Significance,” in *American Federalism in Perspective* (ed.) A.W. Wildansky, Little Brown & Co., 1967, p. 59

⁹ Ibid, p. 56

¹⁰ Paul R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, Delhi, Vikas Publishing house, 1975, p. 65

¹¹ Brass does not make a clear distinction between nationality and nation and uses the two concepts as if they were inter-changeable. In fact, his preference for ‘nation-state’, for a nation which achieves political independence and nationality or nation for ethnic groups whose political goals do not necessarily include separate sovereignty. Ibid. p-9

The process whereby the Sikhs achieved self-awareness as a distinct ethnic group and differentiation from the Hindus began in the penultimate decade of the nineteenth century. Until then, the Sikhs were treated as one of the many components of the conglomerate Hindu society. Despite the objective marks of differentiation which the Sikhs possessed, the social and psychological distance between them and the Hindus was minimal. Inter-marriages were quite common. Most Hindus showed as much deference to the Sikh Guru as the Sikhs themselves. Brass refers to the confusion caused by the British census authorities in the nineteenth century when many Hindus declared themselves 'Hindu Sikhs' and several Sikhs wanted to be recorded as 'Sikh Hindus'.¹²

The fear that the Sikhs might be absorbed into the Hindu social system and thus lose their distinct identity, compelled the Sikh leadership to start an institutionalized campaign for the assertion of a separate Sikh identity. The campaign was spearheaded by Singh Sabha Movement and the Chief Khalsa Diwan to promote social mobilization of the Sikhs, to organize themselves as a separate religious community, strengthen internal communications, and define a clear boundary between the two communities. The Singh Sabha Movement among the Sikhs and the Arya Samaj Movement among the Hindus heightened religious consciousness and strengthened communal identity in the two communities.¹³ An acrimonious pamphlet war between Arya Samaj activists and Sikh leaders continued on the issue whether the Sikhs were Hindus. It is clear, as Kenneth Jones has held that by 1990, the Sikhs were less and less willing to class

¹² Since the British saw the two religions as distinct, they expected the believers to see things the same way and they ultimately enforced their concept in the census by refusing to record such ambiguities. Ibid, p. 27

¹³ M.S. Dhami, "Political Parties and State Autonomy Issue: A case study of Akali Dal", In N.K. Bombwall (ed.) National power and State Autonomy, New Delhi: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1977.

themselves automatically with Hindu Community.¹⁴ Educational institutions and vernacular press owned by the two communities carried virulent communal propaganda. These reform movements not only heightened the communal identities of the Hindus and the Sikhs, but also proved to be powerful mobilizing agencies of the two communities. By the end of era, the Punjab was divided into a series of aggressive organizations, each possessing its ideology and each containing a unique sense of identity.

Separatism was promoted by the Britishers under their policy of 'divide and rule' in India. The land Alienation Act of 1901 acted against the urban Hindu traders and money-lenders, benefited mainly Muslim peasants. The Reform Act of 1908-09 created the threat of Muslim dominance in the province. The commercial, money-lending Hindus reacted in a communal way and formed Hindu Sabha in 1908-09. Urban Hindus felt that the Congress was not doing anything to promote and protect their interests.¹⁵ The main effect of these acts was to generate communal contradiction between the Hindus and the Muslims. The overwhelming effect of identity movements created Punjab Muslims League and Chief Khalsa Diwan in early 20th century. In 1920s, the identity movement of the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs were intensified, further sharpening the differences.¹⁶

In order to protect their religious places from corrupt Hindu Mahants, the Sikhs launched a Gurdwara Reform campaign during the 1920s. It was during this reform movement that the Akali Dal and Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee came into existence. The

¹⁴ Kenneth, W. Jones, "Communalism in the Punjab: The Arya Samaj Contribution," *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1 November, 1968, p. 50

¹⁵ T.C.A. Raghavan, "Origin and Development of Hindu Mahasabha Ideology: The Call of V.D. Savarkar Bhai Parmanand," *Economic and Political Weekly*, April 9, 1983.

¹⁶ H.K. Puri, "Akali Agitation: An Analysis of Socio-Economic Basis of Protest", *Economic & Political Weekly*, January 22, 1983.

creation of these two Sikh institutions strengthened the separate identity of the Sikhs.

Apart from the religious differences between the Hindus and the Sikhs, there were some socio-economic cleavages, which influenced the political attitude of the two communities. In the colonial period, there was a cleavage between rural Sikh peasantry and Hindu money-lenders. The conflict of economic interest between the rural peasantry and the urban businessmen heightened the tensions between the Hindus and the Sikhs. The Hindus aligned themselves with the Congress Party and the Sikhs by and large joined Akali ranks to promote their interests.

In this situation of competing religious and economic interests, the Akali Dal wavered between support to a strong National centre and demand for an autonomous Sikh state. Initially, the Sikh sentiments were represented by Sardar Ujjal Singh.¹⁷ Sardar Ujjal Singh came out in support of a strong centre. He wanted all residuary powers to vest in it. He said that in federal polity, the constituent units were “once entirely independent and self-governing states.” In India, they are merely units created for administrative convenience. Ujjal Singh was not opposed to “responsible government for provinces in their own sphere,” but he did not favour schemes which encouraged extreme forms of permanent autonomy which would be showing the seed of disruption and would ultimately prove disastrous to the safety of the Commonwealth of India.¹⁸

In his minute of dissent, Ujjal Singh wrote that “the Sikh community was not in favour of widening the franchise,” nor, Ujjal Singh

¹⁷ Sardar Ujjal Singh was the only Sikh member of the Panjab Reforms Committee (which had been set up to advise the Simon Commission), and as such his minute of dissent is of great importance in understanding of the Sikh problems.

¹⁸ Simon Commission Report, Vol. III, London: Government of Great Britain Publication, 1930, p. 473.

said, were the Sikhs satisfied with the representation they had got under the Montford Report.¹⁹ He demanded that “out of the three principal communities, no single community should have an absolute majority over (the two) other communities combined; secondly, that weightage allowing them (the Sikhs) 30 percent representation in the Punjab Council and the same percentage of Punjab seats in the Central Legislature should be allowed to them, which they feel is only commensurate with their historic and political importance, their economic position and their military strength.”²⁰

At the Round Table conference in the early 1930s, the Sikh representatives refused to accept the federal set-up for India unless the communal issue was settled.²¹ But as soon as the Akalis realized that the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League might ultimately agree to the partition of the country, they moved away from the Congress and started thinking in terms of safeguarding the interests of the Sikh community. The Akalis opposed the Cripps Mission’s proposals which gave the provinces the right of self-determination and secession from the India Union. This was a sop to the Muslim League. The Sikh interests were totally ignored.²² The Congress and the Sikhs rejected Cripps proposals as they took them to be an attempt on the part of British imperials to appease the Muslim League.

It is true that the Akali Dal was opposed to the partition of India as well as of Punjab, but in the event of the creation of Pakistan, the Akali Dal put forward the scheme of Azad Punjab which involved exclusion of Muslim-majority western districts from the State. In the remaining territory no one community in the province was to have a majority and

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 464.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 469

²¹ Khushwant Singh, *history of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966, p. 229.

²² B. Shiva Rao, *The Framing of India’s Constitution: Select Documents*, Vol. I, Delhi: Indian Institute of Public Administration, 1968, pp. 126-129

the Sikhs were to hold the balance of power between the Muslims and the Hindus. However, at the time of Shimla Conference in March, 1945, Master Tara Singh demanded the creation of a separate Sikh state. He said, "If India were divided, the Sikhs would come under the majority of one community or the other. In this case, they would prefer a separate independent Sikh state with the right to federate either with Hindustan or Pakistan."²³ But this demand of the Akali Dal was unacceptable to the Congress and also to the Muslim League. Under the circumstances, the Akali Dal decided to cast their lot with the Congress. However, mutual suspicion and misunderstandings between the two parties continued even during the post-independence period.²⁴

After partition, the Akalis wanted to preserve the special privileges for the Sikhs. The Akali Dal in its memorandum to the Minority Sub-Committee of the Constituent Assembly on Fundamental Rights demanded that the Sikhs be given a separate electorate and fifty percent of the seats in East-Punjab Legislature. They also demanded the same privileges for the scheduled caste Sikhs as were granted to scheduled castes of other religions.²⁵ Being a minority (the Sikhs were 33.4 percent of the total population and the Hindus were 63.3 percent according to 1951 census),²⁶ the Sikh leaders asserted their claim for such safeguards. In order to get these demands conceded, they even went to the extent of joining hands with the Congress and forming a coalition ministry in the state. But in a secular India, such privileges as were based on religious considerations could not be granted. The Minority Sub-committee of the Constituent Assembly rejected the statutory safeguards. The Akali leaders considered this act of the Congress leaders as a betrayal of the Sikhs. As a sequel to it, the Akali

²³ V.P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India*, Bombay: Orient Longman, 1968, p. 244.

²⁴ *Punjabi Suba: A Symposium*, Delhi: National Book Club, New Delhi, p. 147

²⁵ B. Shiva Rao, *The Framing of India's Constitution; Select Documents*. Vol. I, Delhi: Indian Institute of Public Administration, 1968. pp. 126-129.

²⁶ See Census Record.

Dal put forth the demand of Punjabi Suba in February, 1948. Master Tara Singh criticized the Government of India's policy of not referring the question of demarcation of boundaries of Punjab to the Dhar Commission.²⁷ He made it clear that they did not want a separate and independent sovereign state; it would be a part of the federal unit which would have to give financial aid and help in defence matters.

The demand for Punjabi Suba sharpened the existing antagonism between the Hindu and the Sikhs. Then, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru did not fully appreciate the regional and linguistic aspirations. He dragged his feet on the formulation of linguistic states. In the case of Punjab, the denial of formation of a linguistic state acquired communal over tones. The Akalis propagated that a Punjabi-speaking state was being denied because the Sikhs would become a majority in it. This began to sound credible to the Sikh masses. If Partap Singh Kairon²⁸ had campaigned the cause of Punjabi-speaking state, as Y.B. Chavan did for the Marathi-speaking state, he would have sounded a death-knell of communal tendencies among the Sikhs as well as among Punjabi Hindus. But he did not act so.

The Hindu communal leaders not only opposed the demand for Punjabi Suba but also launched a big campaign calling upon Punjabi-Hindus to disown Punjabi as their mother tongue and record Hindi as their mother tongue in 1951 census.²⁹ The inability of the State Reorganization Commission to reorganize Punjab on linguistic basis convinced the Akali leaders of the anti-Sikh bias of the Congress Government. Master Tara Singh, the undisputed leader of the Akalis during this period, raised the slogan "Sikh Panth is in danger". He launched a massive agitation in support of the demand for Punjabi Suba

²⁷ Dhar Commission Report.

²⁸ Ashutosh Kumar, "Electoral politics in Punjab study of Akali Dal Economic and Political Weekly", April 3-10, 2004, p. 1518

²⁹ See, Census Record.

in 1950. With a view to preventing the alienation of the Sikhs, Nehru invited Master Tara Singh for negotiations. This resulted in a compromise in the form of a Regional Formula.³⁰ Under this formula, PEPSU was merged with Punjab and Hindi regions. As a consequence of this, many Akali stalwarts joined the Congress party and the Akali Dal did not contest the 1957 Assembly elections. But after the success in SGPC elections, the Akali Dal again launched Punjabi Suba Agitation in 1960. Against this, Punjabi Hindus launched Hindi agitation led by the Jana Sangh, the RSS and the Arya Samaj and indirectly a section of the Congress party advocated "Maha Punjab".³¹

In this process, the atmosphere of Punjab and issue of Punjabi national aspirations was communalized and communal elements in both the communities became very vocal.³² In order to put pressure on the Union Government, Sant Fateh Singh (a close lieutenant of Master Tara Singh) embarked on a fast unto death on December 18, 1960. On the advice of Master Tara Singh, Sant Fateh Singh broke his twenty-two days fast on January 9, 1961 to negotiate the matter with Nehru. Protected negotiations between Sant Fateh Singh and Nehru did not produce any tangible result, and eventually, Master Tara Singh also undertook a fast unto death from August 15, 1961 to press the demand for Punjabi Suba. He broke his forty-eight days fast on October 10, 1961 on appeal from the Prime Minister which resulted in an agreement to appoint a Commission to enquire into the alleged discrimination against the Sikhs in Punjab.³³

³⁰ See, "Regional Formula".

³¹ What prompted the Union Government to negotiate a political settlement with the Akali Dal was the massive procession of more than one lakh people in support of Punjabi Suba on the eve of Congress Session at Amritsar on February 11, 1956. For details, see Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority Politics in Punjab*, Princeton: Princeton University press, 1966, pp. 221-224.

³² Evidence of Congressmen's support became clear later on from their attitude towards the status of Punjabi language in the area of erstwhile Punjab and the status of Hindi in Punjabi Suba.

³³ Dalip Singh, *Dynamics of Punjab Politics*, Delhi; Macmillan India Limited, 1981, p. 28

1.2 DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE SIKHS

Nevertheless, the main grouse of discrimination against the Sikhs at community as well as individual level, referred to by most Sikh leaders are as under.³⁴

1. The whole of the Sikh community was labeled as lawless and a menace to the peace-loving Hindus of Punjab in a confidential policy circular issued by the Governor of Punjab to the Deputy Commissioner on October 10, 1947. About this circular even a veteran C.P.I. leader Sohan Singh Josh who is generally critical of most stances of Akali Dal, once remarked:

...It was prompted by the India Union Government and especially the Home Minister. It was a circular issued by an imbalanced Home minister and his stooge Trivedi.... It is an embodiment of shame on those who inspired it and those who put it to practice.³⁵

2. A policy document of the same nature of 'guidance' to the top-brass in the armed forces, was said to have been issued around 1954. A Sikh officer, Major Gian Singh protested against it. Hukam Singh, then an Akali M.P. raised this issue in the Lok Sabha through a call-attention motion.³⁶
3. The President's Ordinance of 1950 in respect of Scheduled castes implying that non-Hindu Schedule castes would lose their privileges and reservations would have forced most Sikh Scheduled castes to denounce their faith. Master Tara Singh had to launch a strong struggle to get this wrong rectified.³⁷

³⁴ The Spokesman, September 19, 1951, p. 3

³⁵ M.S. Tej, "State Autonomy: The Sikh Perspective", at a Seminar on Punjab Problem organized by Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar in 1982, p. 15

³⁶ The Spokesman, April 1, 1953, pp. 5-6.

³⁷ Khushwant Singh, A History of Sikhs, Vol. II, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1974. pp 304.

4. The Sikhs alleged that there had been a well-designed policy of discrimination against them in the services, the percentage of the Sikhs in the army had been consistently and systematically reduced and no Sikh had been so far made Chief of the Army Staff.
5. The creation of a Punjabi-speaking state was first denied and then delayed because the Hindu majority was not prepared to become a minority in even one part of the country.³⁸
6. It was alleged that the Union Government and the Hindu leaders had been encouraging Patits (renegades) among the Sikhs, they (Patits) got out of turn promotion, whereas those who remained devout have been discouraged. A veteran Sikh leader, Hukam Singh complained:

Many among them adopted the Hindu way of life so as to please their bosses and get out of turn promotions. In the name of secularism, the Sikhs in the armed forces and para-military forces are encouraged to cut their hair and say goodbye to the basic Sikh tenets. And if any Sikh leader asks the Sikhs in the forces, or the police to be Rahitdhari, he is branded as communal by the masters of the destiny of Hindustan.³⁹

The Sikhs further alleged that even the judicial authorities had been prejudicial against the Sikhs in socio-cultural-political matters concerning the community. A resolution of the Akali Dal in 1966 represented the Sikh psyche in this regard.⁴⁰ It read like this

This emergent meeting of the working committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal... After having carefully viewed the findings, reports

³⁸ Mohinder Singh Tej, pp. 16.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Kapur Singh, Sachi Sakhi (ed. by Ganda Singh), Jullundur: Ram Rup Publication, 1972, p. 98

and judgments of judicial and quasi-judicial Tribunals and Forums that have dealt with matters and cases involving important Sikh interests comes to the conclusion that the entire judicial machinery and the judicial process of the independent India, under the influence of certain sections of political Hindus, is prejudiced and has been perverted against the Sikh people in India in relation to their just and legal rights....

Discrimination against the Sikhs at the individual level, too was alleged. The suspension and later on, dismissal of Sardar Kapur Singh (formerly of the ICS) on allegedly fabricated and flimsy charges, with complete disregard for the administrative procedure and conventions governing the ICS and expulsion of Nirbhai Singh Dhillon, at the passing out parade from the National Defence Academy on instructions from the high-ups because he belonged to a staunch Akali family, were cited as instances.⁴¹

In pursuance of the assurance given by the Prime Minister, a three-member commission under the Chairmanship of S.R. Dass, Ex-Chief Justice of India was appointed to look into the grievances of the Sikhs in 1961.⁴² The Akalis caviled at its composition and terms of reference and asked the Sikhs to boycott the commission. In its report submitted in January 1962, the commission stated that it had no evidence whatsoever to corroborate the allegations of discrimination against the Sikhs.

The Akali demand for greater autonomy for the states took a concrete shape only after the reorganization of the states. It may be recalled that the Akali Dal had expressed dissatisfaction with the distribution of powers between the Centre and the States in early fifties

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

when in a resolution, it had demanded the Centre's sphere to be limited to foreign affairs, defence and communications.⁴³

However, when the Akali Dal came to power for the first time as a result of the changed political complexion of the state, they felt the need for additional powers to the states so that they could play an effective role in the nation-building activities. The attempts of the Union Government to intervene in the day-to-day administration of the state and the efforts of the Congress High command to topple the United Front Ministry compelled the Akali leadership to seek greater autonomy for the states.⁴⁴ In an Akali Conference held at Batala⁴⁵ on September 30, 1968, the Akali Dal passed a resolution seeking changes in Centre-State relations. The resolution stated:

This conference of Shiromani Akali Dal strongly feels that great changes have come in the political field of the country during the past twenty years and as such, new considerations have cropped up, necessitating reconsideration of the centre-state relationship under the changed conditions. Many non-Congress governments have come to power in several states of the country, and the Congress party in power has abused the constitution to the detriment of the non-Congress Governments and uses its power for its party interests. Therefore, it has become necessary, in the light of the experiences gained, that the Constitution of Bharat should be reconsidered and the changes be made in Centre-State relationship to fit in with new conditions. The Shiromani Akali Dal demands that the constitution of India should be on a correct federal basis and the states should have greater autonomy...⁴⁶

⁴³ Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority politics in Punjab*, p. 267

⁴⁴ A.S. Narang, *Storm Over the Sutlej: The Akali Politics*. New Delhi: Gitanjali Publishing House, 1983, p. 214

⁴⁵ See, "Batala Conference".

⁴⁶ *The Spokesman*, March 13, 1978, p. 5

The adoption of this resolution resulted in the unification of the two rival Akali groups, one led by Sant Fateh Singh and the other by Master Tara Singh. It may be recalled that Akali Dal led by Master Tara Singh passed a resolution in a conference held at Ludhiana in 1965 in favour of Sikh Homeland within the India Union. In order to accommodate these home landers of Master Tara Singh's faction, the merger agreement defined the political goals of the party in the following terms:⁴⁷

The order of Khalsa, ordained by Guru Gobind Singh and in accordance with his commandments, is a sovereign people by birth right and a sovereignty oriented party sui generis... The political goal of the Khalsa Panth, as publicly inscribed on a gate of the Golden Temple in the formula- "All decision-making powers to the Khalsa" is known throughout the world. A sovereign Sikh people within a free India, as the birth-right of Khalsa to be established within the framework of a well-democrated territory, enjoying a constitutional autonomous status, are the very foundation of the organization and constitution of the Shiromani Akali Dal.

The above-mentioned goal of the Akali Dal was not much different from the demand of the self-determined political status for the Sikhs within the Union of India which had earlier been raised by Master Tara Singh. However, the exigencies of the situation and requirements of power politics compelled the Akali Dal to pursue this goal in a moderate manner. The Akalis were interested in strengthening their alliance with the Jana Sangh to keep the Congress away. As such, they not only ignored the Batala Resolution but also went to the extent of excluding the demand for state autonomy from their election manifesto

⁴⁷ Jaswant Singh Mann (ed.), *Some Document on the Demand for Sikh Homeland*, Chandigarh: Manjit Printing and Publishing Company, 1969, p. 75.

for mid-term polls in 1969.⁴⁸ The Akali Dal began to campaign the cause of all Punjabis and stated on their behalf that it “will leave no stone unturned for the inclusion of Punjabi-speaking areas, dams and projects in Punjab. It will also do its utmost to get Chandigarh included.”⁴⁹

Although the Akali Dal resented the interference of the Central Government in the day-to-day administration of the state, it was not prepared to alienate itself from its electoral ally, the Jana Sangh and the Hindus by becoming vocal on state autonomy demand. But the break-up of the Akali Dal-Jana Sangh alliance after 1969 partly because of the language problem and the issue of the jurisdiction of Guru Nanak Dev University removed the constraints of the leaders of the Akali Dal. They again began to voice the demand for state autonomy. The Election Manifesto of the party for the 1971 Parliamentary elections stated:

It is the firm conviction of the Akali Dal that in order to secure the objectives of economic justice and equality, the country's constitution must be given a true federal form. The states ought to have more powers, especially in the field of legislation...⁵⁰

The defeat of the Akali Dal at the hustings added to the bitterness of the Akali leadership and it lost all hopes of getting justice from the Central Government. After the elections, Parkash Singh Badal, former Chief Minister of Punjab, said:

There was rethinking in the Sikh leadership on how and where the Sikhs stand in the slowly growing unitary set-up where minorities have no voice at all... The dark repression let loose against the Akali workers in particular and Punjab Kisans and Sikh employees in general would ultimately awaken this state to launch a bigger struggle for more autonomy

⁴⁸ M.S. Dhama, *Minority Leaders image of the Indian Political System*, Sterling Publishers, Jalandhar, 1975. pp. 155

⁴⁹ Shiromani Akali Dal da Chon Pattar (Election Manifesto), Amritsar: Shiromani Akali Dal, 1969, p. 3

⁵⁰ Shiromani Akali Dal da Chon Pattar (Parliamentary Elections), Amritsar: Shiromani Akali Dal, 1971, p. 3-4

for Punjab... we are absolutely not safe in the hands of so called secular and National Government.⁵¹

The growing frustration of the Akali leadership was further accentuated by the defeat of the Akali Dal in the Assembly elections held in Punjab during 1972. The return of the Congress to power in the state disillusioned the Akalis with the system and they resumed their traditional posture of protecting the Sikh Panth from danger. This danger evidently came from the Central Government, which, in the opinion of Akali Leadership, was to destroy the separate religious and cultural identity of the Sikhs. It believed that at the onslaught of the Central Government on the separate identity of the Sikhs could be checked only if an end was put to the interference of the Central Government in the affairs of the State. In this situation, the Akali Dal became strident about the demand for greater autonomy to the states.

Apart from these political compulsions, certain structural changes in the economy of the state also led to a shift in the Akali Dal's stand on Centre-State relations. During the sixties, Punjab witnessed the Green Revolution and rapid increase in agricultural production. The affluence generated by the Green Revolution brought drastic changes in the traditional Sikh way of life. The younger generation of the Sikhs was not prepared to follow traditional Sikh norms. The Sikh youth fell prey to such vices as drinking, smoking and cutting of beard and hair. The refusal of the Sikh youth to observe traditional Sikh norms alarmed the Sikh clergy. The new development posed not only a threat to the Sikh faith but also a challenge to the position of the Sikh clergy. In this situation, the traditional leadership of the Akali Dal raised the slogan of "Sikh identity in danger."⁵²

⁵¹ The National Herald, August 26, 1971

⁵² Ashutosh Kumar, "Electoral politics in Punjab study of Akali Dal Economic and Political Weekly", April 3-10, 2004

The rapid agrarian development of the State created new tensions in the rural society and accentuated rural urban contradictions. Quick gains in production made during the early period of the Green Revolution could not be maintained on a permanent basis. This created frustration among the upper section of the peasantry, which provided leadership to the Akali Dal. As the benefits of the Green Revolution were mainly shared by the upper sections of the peasantry, it sharpened the contradictions between the poor and rich peasantry. The Akali Dal began to lose support among the lower section of the peasants. Similarly, the contradiction between the land-labour and peasantry also became very sharp. The exploitation of the peasantry in the market economy at the hands of Hindu businessmen set a new edge to the antagonism between the Hindu and the Sikhs. The inability of the rich peasants to invest their surplus capital in industry owing to lack of industrial growth in the State generated bitterness among them and made them raise an accusing finger at the Centre for this state of affairs.

As a result of these socio-economic and political developments, the Akali Dal was compelled to revise its strategy and tactics for gaining political power in the state. As a communal coalition building experiment with the Jana Sangh had already failed, and there was no possibility of reapproachment with the Congress, the Akali Dal decided to lay greater emphasis on the demand for state autonomy.

The Akalis were considerably emboldened by the stand of the Government of India in support of the right of self-determination for the people of East Pakistan against the repressive rule of the western wing. The Akali leaders asserted that if the Central Government wanted the right of self-determination to a linguistic and cultural minority in East Pakistan being conceded to by the West Pakistan, why it could not

grant greater autonomy to the Sikhs within the Indian union as provided for in the Indian Constitution for the State of Jammu & Kashmir.

In the pre and post independence period the Akali mind was dominated by the questions of respectful place for the Sikhs in independent India. After having failed in getting the requisite constitutional safeguards in the Constitution of India, the party decided to launch a struggle for the fulfillment of socio-political demands. The rejection of the demand for special safeguards was considered by Sikh leadership as an act of betrayal⁵³ and thus it resulted in shaping the ties between the Congress and the Akali Dal. The achievement of the Punjabi Suba enhanced the status of the Akali Dal. The fourth general elections of 1967 were a turning point in the history of the Akali Dal when it snatched power from the Congress and it formed a coalition government in the state. The Akali Dal in alliance with Jan Sangh defeated the Congress in the midterm polls of 1969. However, the Akali Dal lost to the Congress in the 1972 elections.⁵⁴

After the imposition of internal emergency on June 25, 1975 the Akali Dal launched a peaceful Morcha against emergency on July 6, 1975 and continued its crusade for 19 months. The sixth general election to the Lok Sabha proved the most auspicious for the Akalis. Again Akali Dal contested the June 1977 Assembly elections and formed a coalition government in the state, which worked till 1980 when President's rule was imposed in the state. Having lost power in February 1980 the Akali Dal launched the Dharam Youdh Morcha and further intensified its agitation through various techniques like Rasta Roko, Rail Roko⁵⁵ and mass resignations of Akali legislators etc. The leadership of the Akali Dal reverted to its agitational tacts and

⁵³ Ajit Singh, "Shiromani Akali Dal Religion-Political Study", Arman Publishers, Kapurthala: 2005

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

demanded the acceptance of demands contained in the Anandpur Sahib resolution. It led to a sequence of events, which ultimately resulted in the installation of Barnala Government in Punjab, which worked till the Centre wanted it. The internal faction in Akali Dal led to a split in it.

Indifferent attitude of the Centre and other events in the state ultimately lead to Punjab crisis. The SAD Badal group had moved out of the regional block by taking the unilateral decision to support the BJP and SAD Badal contested the Punjab Assembly elections held on 7th February 1997,⁵⁶ with BJP alliance and gained independent victory by wining 93 seats, 73 seats for SAD Badal and 8 seats for BJP. Consequently, Badal became Chief Minister of Punjab. Again SAD Badal contested the Punjab Assembly elections with BJP alliance and gained 43 seats and became opposition leader in the Punjab Assembly on June 2002⁵⁷. The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD)- BJP alliance has got 67 seats while Congress has got 44 seats during assembly elections on Feb13,2007.The SAD and BJP breakup is 48 and 19. Five independents have also won in the 116 seats of Punjab Vidhan Sabha and Badal became again Chief Minister of Punjab on February 28, 2007.⁵⁸ Presently, the Akali Dal Badal is a supreme force in Punjab.

1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to find out answers to the following questions:

1. How did the Shiromani Akali Dal change itself after 1967?
2. What was the socio-political background of Shiromani Akali Dal leaders before 1984?

⁵⁶ Kuldeep Kaur: Akali Dal in Punjab Politics, Splits & Mergers, Deep & Deep Publication, 1999, pp. 156.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ The Tribune, Chandigarh, February 28, 2007.

3. To what extent the socio-political conditions assisted the Akali leaders in consolidating their support base to achieve victory in elections?
4. How did the Shiromani Akali Dal respond to the result of 2002-Assembly Elections and how did they modify their strategy to interact with common people while out of power?
5. Response of Shiromani Akali Dal to Socio-Political issues:
 - a) When they are out of Government and
 - b) When they are in the Government.
6. What was the role of Akali Dal in the process of coalition building?
7. Perhaps half a dozen families played an important role in Shiromani Akali Dal. This thesis would examine whether the leadership of Shiromani Akali Dal is hereditary or it has emerged from popular political movements in the region in which the young dynamic people played an active and meaningful role? And to what extent the socio-political issue affected in shaping the Akali leadership?

1.4 HYPOTHESIS

The Shiromani Akali Dal is one of the most powerful and oldest regional political party of India. In addition to this, Akali Dal has emerged as a major political force in Punjab. Therefore, the focus of the present study is to analyse the response of SAD towards the socio-political issues in Punjab since 1984, and this is of vital importance. Moreover; the strategy and tactics of the party have been influenced more by party's support base and the need for adjustment with local environment than by other considerations. Support structure constitutes

a key element in the working of the party. It acts as constraint on the ideology and strategy. SAD mainly draws its support from rural masses.

Therefore, the study would also enable us to describe the nature of recent politics in Punjab based on above constraints. Studying the response of SAD in comparison with Congress Party towards the socio-political issues in Punjab, this study would attempt to answer the above mentioned questions.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology to be adopted for collecting the data for research, keeping in view the nature of the topic under study, would be based on primary as well as secondary sources. For this purpose both field and other techniques would be adopted. Emphasis would be given on documentary evidences, interviews, observations and discussions etc.

A detailed analysis of the available published and unpublished documents of the party viz. (Resolutions, Policies, Programmes etc.) will be taken into consideration to arrive at some conclusion as to what the SAD thinks about the social as well as political issues concerning the state. Moreover study of secondary sources like newspapers, books, articles etc. will be undertaken to see the response of the SAD towards the above said issues.

Above all, the leaders of the SAD will be contacted for the purpose of ascertaining their fair and free views on important issues in the major areas of concern like the ideology, strategy, attitude towards important social as well as political issues concerning the state. Ordinary people in urban as well as rural Punjab will also be contacted to know the response of the SAD towards various issues.

So the information thus collected would be organized, analyzed and reinterpreted to arrive at the conclusion.

1.6 TENTATIVE SCHEME OF CHAPTERIZATION

The study will be divided into six chapters covering major areas of concern and the tentative scheme of chapterization is as follows:

Chapter-I

Introduction

Chapter-II

Emergence of Shiromani Akali Dal as a major regional Political Party.

Chapter-III

Struggle launched by Akali Dal on Socio-Political issues.

Chapter-IV

Socio-Political issues in Punjab after 1984.

Chapter-V

Akali Dal and coalition Government 1997 onwards

Chapter-VI

Conclusion

1.7 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Baldev Raj Nayar in his book, *Minority Politics in the Punjab*,⁵⁹ sought to understand the basis and dynamics of the politics of the Sikh minority in the Punjab with particular reference to its specific demand for the formation of a new state. The study examined the nature of demand for Punjabi Suba; its origins and the strategies employed by the Akali Dal, its security following the tactics of agitation and infiltration in to the ruling Congress party.

⁵⁹ Baldev Raj Nayar, "Minority Politics in the Punjab", Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966

This provides considerably useful information regarding the leaders, intensions and conflicts in Akali Dal. However Baldev Raj Nayar did not squarely raise the question of the quality of Akali leadership and that of Punjab State in general.

Dalip Singh in his book “Dynamics of Punjab Politics 1981”,⁶⁰ has made an attempt to analyze and explain the heritage of state, keeping in mind the cleavages of religion, caste and language. He discussed the socio, political and economic changes in Punjab. Akali Dal’s role as the leading party in the coalition Govt. has also been described. It includes some information on factionalism in Akali Dal, which resulted in two rival Dals. This book is helpful for the information but lacks well formulated framework for analysis of any specific aspect of politics in the Punjab.

Khushwant Singh in his book “History of Sikhs Vol., II”,⁶¹ deals with the genesis and development of the party. The political demands of the Akalis according to him were largely determined by communal situation and the fact of Muslim majority in the formation of Punjab. Khushwant Singh observed that the demand for the Suba infact was for one Sikh state; language was only a sugar coating.

Khushwant Singh’s interesting narrative however, does not focus on issues of interest for a student of Political Science such as those raised for the proposed present study.

Paul L. Brass in his book, “Language, Religion and Politics”,⁶² discussed the language policies and politics of language and their association with religious identity in North India. He elaborated and applied the framework for the study and explanation of nationality formation. One of his important formulations was that political parties, especially in developing societies were dependent forces which

⁶⁰ Dalip Singh, “Dynamics of Punjab Politics”, MacMillian India Limited, 1981, New Delhi.

⁶¹ Khushwant Singh, History of the Sikhs, Vol. II, Princeton University Press, 1966.

⁶² Paul, R. Brass, Language, Religion and Politics, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 1974.

intended to exacerbate existing cleavages, where as religion became the most powerful symbol in the political movement of the Sikh community during pre-independence.

Gopal Singh in his book, "Punjab: Past, Present and Future",⁶³ tries to generate a healthy and constructive debate over understanding about issues affecting and contributing Punjab in past, present and future.

This volume is divided in five sections where first is devoted to the question of nationality and identity. Second, reveals hard-core issues such as terrorism, human rights. The third chapter provides inconclusive debate for reader about religion and politics in Sikhism. Terrorism, violence affecting social and economic law of State has been discussed with related aspects of long, historical roots, Marxism and current crisis and historic perspective as a Punjab problem. In the last section an analysis of election scares and Punjab, Haryana disputes have been drawn.

This book indeed helps one to understand the State and National politics in terms of leadership and socio-political progress of Punjab by Akalis.

Gopal Singh in his book, "Punjab Today",⁶⁴ expresses his orientation of views with a specific aim to ventilate the grievance of Sikh community and establish hold over Gurdwaras. Significant contribution of Akali Dals in freedom struggle and during British regime has been expressed. The problem of Punjab is like trial of river water disputes. Akalis initial role in power and out of power has been shown through this book.

⁶³ Gopal Singh, Punjab: Past, Present and Future, Intellectual Publishing House, New Delhi, 1987.

⁶⁴ Gopal Singh, Punjab Today, Intellectual Publishing House, New Delhi, 1987.

Devinder Pal K. Sandhu in her book, "Sikhs in Indian Politics-Study of a Minority",⁶⁵ has explored many facts of Sikhs as a Minority in Politics and socio-political basis of leadership of State and Nation. Her research concludes firmly that Sikhs as a community played an important role in Indian Politics and they have made their mark over the threshold of a nationality not on the basis of religion, but also by their struggle and suffering since historical phase.

The author deals with the 1978-1990 periods in more confined manner by taking into consideration aspects like green revolution, fundamentalism, terrorism and he explored the Modern Sikh psyche.

Kailash Chandra Gulati in the, "Akalis, Past and Present",⁶⁶ presents a systematic account of the birth and development of the Akali party, which has been claiming to be the fully representative of the Sikh community and has been playing an important role in Punjab politics. The author has dealt with the role played by the Akali Dal, its achievements during the partition days and since partition the growth of sectarian movements among Hindus and Muslims and its repercussions on the activities of Akalis are discussed in detail.

M.S. Dhami in, "Minority Leaders Image of the India political System",⁶⁷ has outplayed the political attitude of the Akali leaders. It discusses the three important aspects. First, it tries to give an account of the Akali leaders views on some of the major issues concerning the Indian political system. Secondly, it presents the viewpoint of a cross section of non-Akali leaders of the State regarding the Akali party and thirdly, the author has included a chapter in which he tries to interpret

⁶⁵ D.P.K. Sandhu, Sikhs in Indian Politics, Study of a Minority, Patriot Publishers, New Delhi, 1992.

⁶⁶ K.C. Gulati, Akalis, Past and Present, Asha Janak Publications, New Delhi, 1974.

⁶⁷ M.S. Dhami, Minority Leaders Image of the Indian Political System, Contemporary Study of Attitude of Akali leaders, Sterling Publishers Pvt., 1975.

the attitude of the Akali leaders in terms of socio cultural and political realities of the Punjab state.

Ajit Singh Sarhadi in, "Punjabi Suba: The Story of the Struggle",⁶⁸ deals with the birth and success of religions and political consciousness in Sikhs, about their role and status in the Indian Society and Indian politics. Basically, this work is a historical survey of the movement for Punjabi Suba starting with the Sikh resurgence as a result of successive reformist movements and revolutionary activities, thereafter and culminating in the reorganization of Punjab in 1966.

"History of the Sikhs"⁶⁹ by Hari Ram Gupta is planned as survey dealing with all aspects- religious, philosophical, political, military, social, economic and cultural and also with the contribution of Sikhism to human rights, principles of liberty, equality and fraternity, democracy, secularism and comprehensive view of the size, growth and development of Sikh thought and action almost in every direction, but in socio-economic and political leadership especially.

Mohinder Singh in his book, "The Akali Movement",⁷⁰ has made an attempt to reassess and re-evaluate the role of Akali Movement and bring to light the contribution in the struggle for freedom in India. He also describes the achievements and failures of the Akali Movement and impact on Congress relationship and future trends in the Sikh religion and politics.

Amarjit Singh Narang's book, "Storm Over the Sutlej",⁷¹ is fairly balanced attempt in understanding the ever increasing silence of parochial and regional interests in India vis. a vis. the process of national integration by making a case study of Akali Movement in Punjab. The linguistic, caste, religion and regional groups found it

⁶⁸ A.S. Sarhadi, Punjabi Suba, The Story of the Struggle, U.B. Kapur & Sons, Delhi, 1971.

⁶⁹ H. R. Gupta, History of the Sikhs, Munshi Ram Memorial Publishers, New Delhi, 1973.

⁷⁰ Mohinder Singh, The Akali Movement, Atlantic Publishers, New Delhi, 1988.

⁷¹ Amarjit Singh Narang, Storm Over the Sutlej, Gitanjali Publishers, New Delhi, 1983.

difficult to adjust their loyalties to the claims of the newly formed nation states. The changing socio-economic conditions in Punjab during the last 90 years are reviewed against the political background of the colonial period and of development since independence.

“Blue Star Over Amritsar” by Harminder Kaur is a narration of the events, which led to the Operation Blue Star in early June 1984. It also tries to give an insight in the working of minds of the major personalities involved in the momentous event. Besides the book examines Congress (i) maneuvers and the murky Akali politics and policies, which ultimately led to the emergence of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala. This book also deals with mindless violence committed by Sikh terrorists and equally mindless state terrorism. It exposes the power politics of Indra Gandhi and the political myopia of Akali leaders. Although the author does not make any value judgments, she is apprehensive of the country’s integrity and sovereignty if the present dithering of the Government and the befuddled thinking among the Akali leaders continue unchecked.

From the above review of literature it is clear that ample research has been done on the Sikh politics. After going through these books and articles we find that the authors have not dealt with the subject in its total perspective. In other words, they have focused only on one or another aspect of the problem. Generally, the socio-political problems have been written and re-written with a focus on their separate identity. The objective socio-political forces have been by and large ignored. In other words, most of the writers have written about the socio-economic or political factors of Akali Dal but a few have dealt with the issues of Akali Dal as a whole which is the main aspect of the problem.

They have not even highlighted the political problems in its totality. They have either taken the historical or economic or social or religious aspect but no writer has ever dealt with these aspects in

relation with one another. Hence, each issue remains segregated from the other. In the present study, the researcher will try to investigate the response of Shiromani Akali Dal to social as well as political issues from the beginning of 1984 including the Blue Star Operation.

CHAPTER-2

EMERGENCE OF SHIROMANI AKALI DAL AS A MAJOR REGIONAL POLITICAL PARTY IN PUNJAB

The Akali Dal is mainly a political party of the Sikhs with its area of operation limited to the changing frontiers of Punjab. The party and its leadership have played a prominent role in the political developments in this region during the last 65 years. Practically all important Sikh leaders of the past and present owe their origin to the Akali movement. Hence a study of the nature of the leadership of the Akali Dal acquires great significance.

2.1 SOCIO-HISTORICAL MILIEU OF PUNJAB AT THE END 19TH AND BEGINNING OF 20TH CENTURY

Punjab's historical roots are very deep. The Harappan civilization flourished here. It acted as a gateway for the entry of the Aryans and every other subsequent group of invaders except the British. It was here in Kurukshetra (now in Haryana) that the legendary epic battle of Mahabharata was fought and where Lord Krishna was believed to have delivered immortal sermons.

During the middle ages, Guru Nanak Dev, other Sikh Gurus and Muslim Sufi saints preached the ideals of universal brotherhood, oneness of God and purity of thought and action. Despite the atrocities perpetuated during the tyrannical rule of particularly the later Mughals, the masses in Punjab lived in perfect communal harmony. These traditions were carried in during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule also. However, after the annexation of Punjab by the British Empire the things started worsening, and communal divisions in major religious

groups emerged as a consequence of historical, social and political factors.

Since the British annexation of the province in 1849, Punjab has undergone major geographical and territorial changes. Many areas which now form parts of the present state of Haryana and Union Territory of Delhi were added to Punjab in 1858. The North-West Frontier Province was added during Lord Curzon's time. Later in 1911, Delhi area was also chopped off to form the new capital of their Indian empire.

With the independence of India in 1947, 13 out of twenty-nine districts of the United Punjab, formed the East Punjab in the Indian Union. In 1956, PEPSU a new state formed in 1948, by amalgamation of erstwhile princely states of east Punjab was merged in the Punjab state. With the reorganization on 1 November 1966, Punjab was again shrunk in area. It was left with only 41 percent of the earlier area and 55 percent of population. It had 11 districts¹ (which has been raised to 20 now) and area of 50,255 square kilometers. Its total population was 11,147,054 which rose to 167.89lakhs according to the census of 1981.

Similar changes have been witnessed in demographic composition of the state. Pre-partition Punjab had a pre-dominance of Muslims i.e.52.88% followed by Hindus 29.79% and the Sikh population 14.62%.² The partition of Punjab completely altered the picture. The migration also resulted in Sikh concentration in certain areas. In 1951, the Hindus constituted 62.28% of Punjab population whereas the Sikhs were 35 per cent.³ After the merger of PEPSU in Punjab in 1956, the

¹ These were districts of Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jalandhar Ludhiana, Ferozepur, Bathinda, Sangrur, Patiala, Ropar. Paul R. Brass, Language, Religion and Politics in North India, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1974, p.299.

² Paul R. Brass, Language, Religion and Politics in North, India, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1974, p. 299

³ Ibid., p. 301

Sikhs become a more compact minority. Reorganization in 1966 converted Punjab into a Sikh majority state.

It has been further observed that agriculture has been the mainstay of Punjab economy with trade, commerce and industry having a back seat. The Green Revolution made Punjab agriculture more capital intensive and mechanized. The state has been appropriately described as the food bowl of India with nearly 60% of the food grains in the national stock coming from this state. Punjab had the highest per capita income in India for the last two decades.⁴

From the standpoint of social structure, the caste loyalties in Punjab have been less salient because the brahminical impact on social life of Punjab had been much weaker than in areas beyond the Ghaghar. The means of production are mainly owned by two groups-peasant castes and non-peasant higher castes i.e. Khattris and Arora's, (and Bania's to a small extent) have been almost the sole owners of trade and industry. The latter's dominance over socio-political and economic sectors has, however, been quite significant and it is only after the Green Revolution that the peasant castes made decisive inroads into the areas of economic and political dominance in the state.⁵ The non-peasant trading classes, however, continued to exercise control over agencies of political socialization such as mass media, particularly the press, denominational and educational institutions and their members have continued to dominate political movements and parties.⁶

A significant development in the 1880's related to the beginning of a new self-awareness of a distinct ethnic identity among the Sikhs. Until

⁴ Amarjit Singh Narang, Storm Over Sutlej, New Delhi, Gitanjali Publishing House, New Delhi, 1983, p. 28

⁵ Ibid. , PP, 19-20

⁶ M.S. Dhami, "Changing Support Base of Congress Party", Punjab Journal of Politics, Vol. 8, No.1, January-June 1984, p.71

that time, as Kenneth Jones observed, there was little conscious effort to distinguish the Sikhs from the Hindus. Paul Brass points to the confusion caused by the census by British authorities in 1881 and earlier when many Hindus declared themselves "Hindu Sikhs" and many Sikhs wanted to be recorded as Sikh Hindus.⁷

The trend was reversed by the Singh Sabha Movement and subsequently by the efforts of Chief Khalsa Diwan and the Akali Movement. These movements helped in strengthening the Sikh identity and their "ideological" commitments.

Despite the increasing sense of solidarity among the Sikhs a close affinity between the Hindus and the Sikhs has been the basic characteristics of the society in Punjab. Inter-community marriages and family ties have been common.

The Singh Sabha played a prominent role in the sphere of education in the community. The publishing of Punjabi newspaper was another major activity of the Singh Sabha and the first newspaper to be published under its auspices was the Khalsa Akhbar of Lahore which was started on 25 May 1894.⁸ The Singh Sabhas also took up some activities which impinged the political interests of the Sikhs resulting into the creation of the Chief Khalsa Diwan in 1902. The major aims of the Diwan which was established in 1902 were to safeguard the interests of Sikh community, to fight for adequate representation of the Sikhs in the services and to cultivate loyalty to the crown.⁹ It established several educational institutions of Sikh domination. The body also took up the

⁷ Paul Brass, *op. cit.*, p.27.

⁸ Harbans Singh, "Origin of the Singh Sabha" in Harbans Singh and N. Gerold Barrie, eds., Essays in Honour of Dr. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 274

⁹ Khushwant Singh, A History of the Sikhs, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1953, p. 143.

publication of books, magazines and pamphlets which gave fillip to the development of Punjabi journalism.¹⁰

The Diwan also took up specially political functions on behalf of the Sikh community and played a major role in prompting social mobilization of the Sikh community and demarcating the boundaries between Sikhs and other religious groups.¹¹

2.2 THE GURDWARA REFORM MOVEMENT

The Sikh historic shrines were at that time under the possession of hereditary mahants. They were indulging in practices which were fundamentally opposed to the basic tenets of Sikhism. Since the Diwan leadership could do nothing except passing resolutions and making petitions against the anti-religious practices of the mahants, a considerable section of community elites and the masses were unhappy with the leadership. This, coupled with the activities of the underground Ghadarities, and the impact of nationalist movement spurred the Sikh masses to resort to the methods of non-cooperation and passive resistance.¹² The process started with the formation of local jathas at various places which launch agitation for taking control of the Gurdwaras. A newly created body, the Central Sikh League, spear-headed the movement under Baba Kharak Singh who brought the Gurdwara Reform Movement also to the national movement. Many Congress leaders supported the Sikhs in their cause of reform. It brought the Sikhs into conflict with the British Government.¹³ On 15 November 1920 a Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee was formed for management of all the historic Sikh shrines.

¹⁰ Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

¹¹ Paul R. Brass, *op. cit.*, pp. 309 to 311.

¹² Khushwant Singh, *op.cit.*,p.193.

¹³ *Ibid.*

More radical elements in the movement organized themselves in a corps of volunteers on 14 December 1920 at Amritsar.¹⁴ It was named Shiromani Akali Dal. Jathedar Surain Singh Jhabal was nominated its first President. The Darbar Sahib and Akal Takhat had come under the control of SGPC without any bloodshed. But at Tarn Taran and a fortnight later at Nankana Sahib the Mahants supported by British authorities killed hundreds of non-violent Akali volunteers. Killings were also reported at Guru-Ka-Bagh and Jaito. The courage, perseverance and daring of Akali volunteers forced the government to pass the Sikh Gurudwara Act in 1925 and to release the Akali prisoners.¹⁵

The reform movement created a sense of confidence among the Indians for getting the genuine demands accepted that they could force the British authorities through non-violent mass movement. Further, despite the generation of some differences between the Sikhs and a section of Punjabi Hindus, it brought the leadership of Akali Dal and the Congress closer to each other. When the Akali Dal succeeded in getting the keys of Toshakhana of Golden Temple from Amritsar Deputy Commissioner Mr. C. M. King on 19 January 1922. Gandhi sent a telegram to Baba Kharak Singh the Akali leader, conveying his greetings: "First Decisive Battle for Indian Freedom won, Congratulations." Mahatma Gandhi came to Nankana Sahib to offer sympathies with the Sikhs on Nankana Sahib Tragedy on 3 March 1921. Pandit Nehru got himself arrested in the Jaito agitation.¹⁶ The alliance gave great impetus to freedom movement in Punjab. But the more significant contribution of Akali Movement in relation to the present study has been that the SGPC and Akali Dal provided the

¹⁴ Sohan Singh Josh, Akali Morcha Da Itihas, Delhi, Navyog Press, 1972, p.51.

¹⁵ Mohinder Singh, The Akali Movement, Delhi, Macmillan India, Ltd, 1978, pp.9-15

¹⁶ See Ruch Ram Sahni, Struggle for Report in Sikh Shrine, Amritsar, SGPC, n.d. Ganda Singh, "Some Confidential Papers of Akali Movement", Amritsar, SGPC, 1965), p.11.

institutional structures to respond to the increasing aspirations for participation of the newly mobilized Sikh masses and in the process it acted as a training ground for the emerging Sikh leadership.¹⁷

2.3 SHIROMANI AKALI DAL UNDER MASTER TARA SINGH

The Akali Dal as representative of the Sikhs claimed to protect the religious interests of the Sikh community as also their political interests. It was during this period that nationalist sentiments were taking the form of an upsurge. The Congress response to the Akali Movement, drew an equally positive response from the Akalis and for a time the Gurdwara Reform Movement and the national movement flowed in one stream.¹⁸ The mingling of these two movements has been regarded as a very significant development for the politics and the history of both the Sikhs and the nation.¹⁹ The Akali leadership sought to make the Gurdwara Reform Movement appear as a national movement by playing down the communal or particularist demands. It was under these circumstances that the mantle of Sikh leadership fell upon the shoulder of Master Tara Singh.

Born at Harial, a small village in the district of Rawalpindi in a Hindu Family in June 1885, Tara Singh was attracted towards Sikhism and was baptised by Sant Attar Singh during his student days and named Tara Singh. He graduated from Khalsa College, Amritsar in 1907 and demonstrated qualities of leadership during his stay in college. After graduation he decided to devote his life to the service of his people and soon became the founder the headmaster of the Layalpur Khalsa High School, where he served for about 10 years in an

¹⁷ Khushwant Singh, QQ. cit., pp.193 and 216; Mohinder Singh, op.cit., pp.9 to 15. Also see Ruchi Ram Sahni, The Struggle of Sikhs for Sikh Shrines, Amritsar, SGPC, N.D.

¹⁸ Mohinder Singh, QQ. cit., pp. 35-36.

¹⁹ Paul Wallace, The Political Party System of Punjab, India A study of Factionalism, (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Department of political Science, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1967), p.42

honorary capacity. Thus the prefix 'Master' which stuck to his name for life.

During the First World War days Punjab witnessed great upheavals, the young Master Tara Singh was compelled by the circumstances to take active part in various socio-religious and political moments and came to the forefront during the Akali movement. When Shiromani Gurdwara Committee was founded in 1920, he was appointed the Secretary of this new body. He was one of the founder member of Shiromani Akali Dal of which he was to become the top ranking leader within years.²⁰

As a product of the Gurudwara Reform Movement, he acquired a certain political philosophy and also developed a particular style of leadership which determined the nature of his role as an undisputed leader of the Sikhs for about forty years to come.

The Akali-Congress affinity remained unquestioned till the Nehru Report was published in 1928. The proposals of the Nehru Committee were that in the framework of 'Sawaraj Constitution there would be no communal representation in Punjab and Bengal, but in other provinces the minorities, Muslim and non-Muslim, would be given separate representation in proportion to their population with the right to contest additional seats.²¹ This was considered to be detrimental to the interests of the Sikhs. The Central Sikh league of Baba Kharak Singh rejected the report. Master Tara Singh, on the other hand, claimed that their demand was for a complete abolition of communal electorates. If, however, a concession was given to minorities anywhere else, it must

²⁰ For details of Master Tara Singh life history, Master Tara Singh, Jiwan Sangarsh Te Udesh (Amritsar) author, 1972; Principal Niranjan Singh, Master Tara Singh (Amritsar: Singh Brothers, n. d.); Kawarjit Singh, Master Tara Singh and Punjab Politics; A Study of Political Leadership, unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Department of Political Science, (Amritsar, Guru Nanak Dev University, 1978), p.56

²¹ Cited in K.L.Tuteja, "Sikhs and the Congress: 1930-40" in Paul Wallace and Surendra Chopra, eds., Political Dynamics of Puniab. Amritsar, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1981, p.97.

also be given to the Sikh minority in Punjab.²² It was also alleged that the Nehru Report would establish a permanent Muslim rule in Punjab. One section of the Sikh leadership led by Master Tara Singh explicitly declared that this would not harm their alliance with the Congress against the British Raj.²³

The Akalis were divided over continuing their support to the Congress. There were three different views: Baba Kharak Singh group stood for non-cooperation with the Congress; second group led by Giani Sher Singh wanted 30% of representation for the Sikhs and was willing to cooperate with the Congress on this condition. Master Tara Singh, the then President of Akali Dal did not personally favour a boycott with the Congress and wanted to continue to support Congress in the freedom struggle.²⁴ The Akali leadership declared support for the Congress session at Lahore in 1929 on two conditions: that the Congress should declare complete independence as its ultimate objective and that no constitutional arrangement would be acceptable to the Congress which did not satisfy the minorities. Mahatma Gandhi accepted these conditions and declared that the Congress would satisfy the minorities. A resolution passed to this effect was:

But as the Sikhs in particular, and the Muslims and other minorities in general, Had expressed dissatisfaction at the solution of the communal question proposed in Nehru Report. The Congress assures the Sikhs, Muslims and other minorities that no solution there of in any future constitution will be acceptable to the Congress that does not give full satisfaction to the parties Concerned.²⁵

²² Ibid.

²³ Proceedings to the all parties' convention, Calcutta, December 1920, p. 132

²⁴ Ibid., p. 98

²⁵ Cited in Pattabhi Sitaramayya, The History of the Congress, (Allahabad: Congress Working Committee, 1935), p.610.

Master Tara Singh appealed to the Sikh councilors to resign their seats in accordance with the Congress programme for civil Disobedience.²⁶ So the differences were removed. The Akalis participated in the Independence Day celebrations on 26 January 1930. Master Tara Singh led the Akali Dal to resolve to support the civil Disobedience Movement and placed at the disposal of Gandhi the immediate services of 5000 Akali volunteers.²⁷ He himself led one Akali Jatha to help the "Pathan Satyagrehs" at Peshawar and was arrested.²⁸ Soon after the Gandhi-Irwan pact Master Tara Singh met Gandhi with 17 demands. As a reaction to Mohammad Iqbal's scheme, he proposed a redistribution of the boundaries of Punjab which read as follows:

The boundaries of the Punjab may be so altered by transferring the predominately Mohammedan areas to the frontier province to produce a communal balance. In this reconstituted Punjab, there should be Joint electorates with the reservation of seats.

When Gandhi said that Tara Singh demand was communal, he retorted, "The only way to fight communalism is by the counter elements of the same nature."

On 16 August 1932, the British Prime minister Ramsay MacDonald announced the Communal Award. It was regarded as a measure against the interests of the Sikhs in Punjab. The Congress Party's equivocation on this issue was considered by the Sikhs as a "Stab in the Back." The Award provided the Muslims a permanent statutory majority in Punjab which was not acceptable to the Sikh leadership. And all parties Sikh Conference was held at Lahore on 28

²⁶ K.L. Tuteja, op. cit., p. 98

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 101

July 1932 under Presidentship of Giani Sher Singh, Vice president of Sikh League, wherein the Award was rejected.²⁹

The British Parliament approved the scheme of communal Award by enacting the Government of India Act of 1925. In 1937 elections held under this Act, Master Tara Singh and some other prominent Akalis were opposed to any Sikh candidate contesting on Congress tickets. This led to further split in the Akali ranks.³⁰ However in view of the pressure from pro-Congress Akalis and increasing popularity of Unionist party the Akali Dal ultimately contested the election in cooperation with the Congress. The Congress had its own compulsions in that, it could secure victory only in urban areas. Hence they were in the need of some base in rural areas which the Akalis could provide. The Akalis, on the other hand also required a strong ally to counter the increasing Muslim domination in view of the increasing influence of the Unionist Party among the peasantry. As a reaction to the Sikander Jinnah Pact in 1937 and the fear of Muslim domination the Akalis decided to join the Congress which they later warmly welcomed.

Nevertheless, this cooperation was short lived. The World War started in September 1939. On the issue of supporting the British War efforts the Akalis and the Congress stood poles apart. Tara Singh's priorities were purely communal. The Akali Leadership therefore decided to support the British war by mobilizing the Sikhs for recruitment, as they felt that the boycott of recruitment in army would be against the interest of the community. It was also believed that increased number of Sikh recruits would enhance the bargaining power of the Akali Dal in any future political parleys. The Congress was opposed to this policy. A section of Akalis ranks, and leaders like Udham Singh Nagoke and Partap Singh Kairon did not agree to Master

²⁹ Amarjit Singh Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 61

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 62

Tara Singh's supporting the British in their War efforts. They also opposed his decision not to support the Quit India Movement. Ultimately as a compromise Udham Singh Nagoke and his followers were allowed to cooperate with Congress in their individual capacity.³¹

2.4 PAKISTAN RESOLUTION

Meanwhile the Muslim league passed what came to be known as demand for Pakistan, in which they have demanded a sovereign state for the Muslims of India.³² Master Tara Singh was the first to condemn it forcefully.³³ Many Sikh and Hindu leaders voiced their opposition to this demand. A series of meetings and conferences were held at various places to fight the move for Pakistan. It was also resolved that the Sikhs should demand a Khalistan³⁴ in case of British Government accepted the demand for Pakistan. However, the Congress attitude was that of somewhat indifference to the demand. At the Ramgarh Congress in 1940, the Congress did not appear to take serious notice of the League resolutions. Later, on 23 August 1940, veteran Congress leaders, C. Rajagopalachariya made an offer to appease the Muslim league, to persuade his colleagues in the Congress to accept a Muslim league leader as Prime Minister with a right to nominate persons of his own choice in the national government.³⁵ This attitude of the Congress was considered as unjust, undemocratic, anti-national and detrimental to the rights of the non-Muslim minority communities and betrayal of the

³¹ Amarjit Singh Narang, *op. cit.*, p. 64-65.

³² This resolution was passed in the Muslim League General Session held at Lahore in 1940. The word Pakistan was not used in the resolution but the intentions were amply clear from its phrases. See Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. 11, *op. cit.*, p.241.

³³ A resolution to this effect was passed in Akali Conference held at Attari in 1940. The other Sikh groups also expressed their opposition to the demand and a series of conferences held to oppose this demand.

³⁴ Ram Gopal, *Indian Muslims*, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1959, p. 229.

³⁵ K.C. Gulati, *Akalis Past and Present*, New Delhi, Asha Janak Publication, 1947, p. 89

pledges given by the Congress to the Sikhs and other minorities in 1931.³⁶

2.5 CRIPPS MISSION

The British Government decided to send Sir Stafford Cripps to India to persuade the Indian leaders to cooperate in reaching an agreement on constitutional problem. His proposals conceived of a federal structure for India with the right to all regions to go out of the Union or to have their own constitutional arrangements with a status equal to that of Indian Union. These were totally unacceptable to the Akali Dal. Master Tara Singh pledged that the Sikhs would fight, with all their might against the design to virtually create a Pakistan.

2.6 AZAD PUNJAB DEMAND AND MASTER TARA SINGH

The Azad Punjab Demand was put forward as an alternative to Cripps proposal.³⁷ Master Tara Singh who is considered to be author of the demand said:³⁸

By creating Azad Punjab not only the Sikhs and Hindus of the Azad Punjab will get rid of the specter of Pakistan, but the Sikhs And the Hindus, living in that part of Punjab which will be separated from the present Punjab, will also be in a better position.

However, he had to face opposition from the Hindu as well as the Sikhs of Rawapindi division as they felt that in that case they would be left at the mercy of the Muslim League.³⁹

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ It may be noted here that by that time the communist party of India had also subscribed to the idea of Sikh State. See Amarjit Singh Narang, op. cit., p. 66

³⁸ Baldev Raj Nayer , QQ. cit., p. 83

³⁹ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, Punjabi Suba the Story of Struggle, Delhi, U.C. Kapoor and Sons, 1971, pp. 68-69

2.7 WAVEL PROPOSALS

To find a solution to the confusing and complicated situation in India, Lord Wavell announced his proposals on 14 June 1945 with a declared aim to "ease the political situation to advance India towards the goals of self government".⁴⁰

The proposals included the formation of new Executive Council at the Centre within the framework of the existing constitution wherein the governor general would not exercise unreasonably his constitutional power of control. (i) The council would represent the main communities and would include equal proportions of Hindu and Muslim castes. (ii) It would be entirely Indian council except for the Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief of forces. (iii) The portfolios of External Affairs were to be transferred and Home and Finance members were to be Indians. The main task of the council would be prosecution of war against Japan, "with utmost energy till Japan is utterly defeated." (iv) To carry on govt. with all the manifold tasks of post-war developments until a new permanent constitution commonly agreed upon come into force. (v) To consider the means by which such an agreement could be achieved.

The Viceroy invited 21 Indian leaders including Master Tara Singh to meet him for talks on the basis of these proposals.⁴¹ Master Tara Singh considered the proposals as reasonable but said that everything would depend upon the spirit in which these were to be implemented. He also said that the Sikhs did not identify themselves with the Congress though they supported its demand for freedom.⁴²

Subsequently, the proposals were rejected by the Sikhs at the Akali conference at Gujranwala in September 1946. However, the

⁴⁰ V.P. Menon, Transfer of Power in India, Madras, Orient Longman, 1968, p. 183.

⁴¹ A.C Bannerji . Making of Indian Constitution, Vol.1, Calcutta, A Mukerji and Company, 1948,pp.97-98.

⁴² Amarjit Singh Narang, op.cit., p.66.

Akali Dal decided to contest the ensuing elections, because the new legislature was to form the basis of the proposed constitution making body. Though the above mentioned conference rejected the Wavell proposals, it felt that in the Shimla conference the Sikhs had been recognized as one of the four elements of national life whose consent was necessary for framing any constitution for India,⁴³ Master Tara Singh was authorized to form the strategy for election and to select the candidates.

2.8 1946 ELECTIONS

Master Tara Singh tried to negotiate with the congress however after prolonged meetings, agreement could not be reached over four out of 33 Sikh seats,⁴⁴ in the Punjab. However Akalis were in a dilemma. The Communists had been consolidating their hold on the peasantry which could be detrimental to the interests of the Akalis in view of the coming elections.⁴⁵ Master Tara Singh, therefore, stressed on the need for a separate political existence for Sikh Panth and he was anxious to maintain unity in the Dal even if that meant permitting the pro-Congress group led by Nagoke to retain the formal headship of the Dal. This, according to him, was the only way to dissuade them from openly joining the congress ranks. Nagoke could use the effective rural influence of his group to fight the communal influence.⁴⁶

For the first time the communal division and cleavage pattern of Punjab politics was very much confirmed by the results of the 1946 elections.⁴⁷ Muslim league emerged as the single largest party in the elections for the first time. However, it could not form a government of its own. The Congress could not agree to coalition with the League.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Amarjit Singh Narang, p. 67

⁴⁵ Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchian Da Itihas*, Delhi: Navyug Publications, 1972, p. 190

⁴⁶ Amarjit Singh Narang, *op. cit.*, p.67

⁴⁷ The Congress emerged as the Hindu Party with 40 of the 51 seats, it won among Hindus. The Muslim League won 75 seats and the Akali Dal 22 Sikh seats.

Hence the Congress and Akalis joined hands with the Unionist Party to form the government under Malik Khizar Hyat Khan of the Unionist Party, as the Chief Minister. Muslim League directed all its energies towards defeating the coalition.

2.9 CABINET MISSION PLAN

It was under these circumstances that Cabinet Mission Plan was announced on 16 May 1944. It suggested new Constitutional arrangements i.e. groups of provinces and a very weak centre. Master Tara Singh felt that Muslim League demand for Pakistan had been indirectly conceded. However, under his leadership, the Dal could not decide upon any well considered line of action. He talked of the Sikh state, not as something inherently desirable but simply as a point in argument against Pakistan. Hence the cabinet mission did not take notice of such demand.⁴⁸

Tara Singh held negotiation, on behalf of the Akali Dal, both with Congress and the Muslim League. The negotiations failed. This strengthened the pro-Congress faction of Akali Dal, which prevailed upon Master Tara Singh to meet Sardar Patel. However, since the Congress party had already announced the acceptance of the Cabinet-Mission Plan, the Akalis decided to boycott the elections for the Constituent Assembly and not to participate in the Interim Government. In this decision, they had the support of the Sikh Congress men also. The Sikh problem was discussed in Calcutta Session of the Congress executive. After the meeting Pandit Nehru declared in a press statement:⁴⁹

The brave Sikhs of Punjab are entitled to special consideration. I see nothing wrong in an area and a set- up in the North where the

⁴⁸ Khuswant Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 259

⁴⁹ The Statesman, 7 July 1946

Sikhs can also freely experience the glow of freedom.

The Sikhs were also promised adequate safeguards for the protection of their interests. The declaration had the desired impact and the Dal allowed the Sikh representatives to join both the constituent Assembly and the Interim Government. This appeared to be a new beginning in the Akali-Congress relationship.

2.10 PARTITION

M. V. Dods on in *The Great Divide* states that when partition of the country seemed imminent, M.A.Jinnah appealed to Sikh leaders that Patiala State should become independent and areas from Panipat to Ravi should be merged in it. It was rejected by Master Tara Singh.⁵⁰ The Sikhs leaders in their talks with the viceroy, according to him, insisted upon partition of Punjab despite of warnings from the latter that it would mean division of the Sikh community and denial to them of some of their best lands.⁵¹

They perhaps could not ever imagine the magnitude of havoc that the partition could cause to the Sikhs. The boundary demarcation by Radcliffe Award cut through the heart of most populous region leaving the wealthy colonies and half of the Sikhs concentration in Pakistan. According to Pendra Moon the Akali Dal now made an effort to get the Line of demarcation shifted westwards so that all the rich lands in Lyallpur and Montgomery districts would come into the East Punjab.⁵²

As a result of this migration the Sikh population was concentrated in the North-Western districts of what came to be known as East Punjab. This created a geographically compact Sikh majority area. This development had significant political implication for the time to come.

⁵⁰ Cited in Satya M. Rai, "The Structure of Regional Politics in the Punjab", in Wallace and Surendra Chopra, *op. cit.*, p. 119

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Cited in S.S Sahota, The Destiny of the Sikhs, Delhi, Sterling Publishers, 1971, p.30.

Events immediately after the partition shook the administrative machinery of the state to its foundations and brought in its wake a host of complicated problems that required early and satisfactory solution.⁵³

2.11 AKALI-CONGRESS RELATIONS

The Punjab Congress, before partition, was involved in acute factional fight between Gopi Chand Bhargava and Satya Pal groups. After independence both factions continued to compete for leadership. Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava became leader of the party and included Udham Singh Nagoke, Ishar Singh Majhail and Swaran Singh, the pro-Congress Akalis in its executive. The dominant faction of the Akali Dal led by Master Tara Singh was opposed to merger of his party with the Congress.⁵⁴

Master Tara Singh had the mental reservation that in case the merger did not create the climate and conditions where Sikhs would be able to play an equal and effective part with the Hindus, he would ask them to withdraw.⁵⁵ He, however, agreed to the proposal reportedly for the sake of unity of the panth. On 18 March 1948 all the Akali M.L.A.' merged with the Congress pledging unconditional support to it.⁵⁶

2.12 MOVE FOR KEEPING AKALI DAL'S SEPARATE ENTITY

Master Tara Singh could not reconcile to this development for a longer period. On 30 May 1948, about 300 members of the general body of the Dal met for 6 hours in Teja Singh Samundari Hall of the Golden Temple Complex. Master Tara Singh was elected president of the Dal. He then declared that the separate identity of the Akali Dal would be maintained at every cost.⁵⁷

⁵³ Satya, M. Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 198

⁵⁴ Quoted in H.S. Dilgeer, *Shiromani Akali Dal*, Punjabi Book Company, 1978, p. 208

⁵⁵ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *op. cit.*, p. 161

⁵⁶ Gurrathan Pal Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-42

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

In July 1949, he directed the M.L.A's belonging to the Dal to leave the Congress and return to the Akali fold as according to him the Congress party had failed to appreciate the sentiments and ambitions of the Sikh community. "The Congress is killing the Sikhs. There should be a fight with the Congress and this fight is needed right now. If a little more time is allowed to pass, we'll grow so weak that we will never have the capacity to fight them," stated Master Tara Singh.⁵⁸ It may be noted that only one out of the 23 legislators resigned from the Congress and he too (Jaswant Singh Duggal) was, like Master Tara Singh, a displaced urbanite. None of the Jat agriculturists left Congress.

On 2nd November 1949, Master Tara Singh stated that he wanted Punjabi Suba and autonomy similar to that given to Jammu and Kashmir, drawing the attention of the leadership to various facts of discrimination against the Sikhs in services and administration.

2.13 LANGUAGE ISSUE AND DEMAND FOR PUNJABI SUBA

Official language of the state and the medium of instruction in educational institutions now became the major issues in the Punjab politics. The elites of both the communities started expressing their abundant caution on the issue of mother-tongue, Hindus supporting Hindi and the Sikhs championing the cause of Punjabi. A resolution passed by the Jullundur Municipal Committee in February 1948,⁵⁹ sparked of the controversy. The committee resolved that Hindi in Devanagiri script would be the medium of instruction at the primary level in the schools run by the committee. There was a strong reaction from the Sikhs and ultimately Bhargave, the Chief Minister had to declare on 1 June 1948 that Punjabi was admittedly the mother tongue of the

⁵⁸ Jaswant Singh (ed.), Master Tara Updesh(Amritsar,1972),p.244. Singh, Jeewan Sangharash to Updesh (Amritsar, 1972), p. 244

⁵⁹ Baldev Raj Nayar, op. cit., p. 44

people of East Punjab.⁶⁰ However, in the same month the circular on education policy of the State government allowed the use of both Punjabi and Hindi as medium of instruction at primary level throughout the state.⁶¹ This led to the widening of the rift between Hindu and Sikhs and in particular the Hindu elite and the Sikh leadership. Consequently the Punjab government decided to take the initiative in the matter and submitted the "Sachar Formula" on language on 1 October 1949.⁶²

According to the formula the State was divided into two regions: Punjabi and Hindi ones. In the Punjabi speaking zone Punjabi written in 'Gurmukhi Script' and in Hindi zone: Hindi written in 'Devanagri Script', were to be the medium of instruction. The area was to be demarcated by the government. It was obviously a great achievement of the Akali Dal.⁶³ But, on the other hand, the disowning of the mother-tongue by a large section of the Hindus gave a fillip to the struggle for Punjabi Suba. The Hindu reaction at the time of 1951 Census⁶⁴ was taken by the Sikhs as a political tactic to resist the demand for creation of a unilingual Punjabi speaking state.

By that time Andhra Pradesh was created in 1953, The government had announced the appointment of the States Re-organization Commission.⁶⁵ The Akali Dal submitted its memorandum to the commission asking for the creation of a Punjabi speaking state

⁶⁰ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *op. cit.* p. 163

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Niranjana Singh, "Papers Relating to Hindi Agitation" in Punjab, Chandigarh Public Relations Dept., 1947, P. 22. The proposals were signed by Bhim Sen Sachar (the then Chief Minister) Gopi Chand Bhargava and Ujjal Singh And Giani Kartar Singh, Satya M. Rai, *op. cit.*, p.221.

⁶³ Gurratan Pal Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-51

⁶⁴ Balraj Puri, "Understanding Punjab", in Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 19, No. 29, 21 July 1984, p.126.

⁶⁵ The creation of the Commission was announced by Prime Minister Nehru in the Lok Sabha on 12 January 1953. The Commission consisted of Mr. Fazal Ali, the then Governor of Orissa as its Chairman, Pandit Hriday Nath Kinnzru member Rajya Sabha and K.M. Pannikar, the Indian ambassador in Egypt as its members. The main objectives of the Commission were to make recommendation for the reorganization of the States on the language basis. Dhirendranath Sen, A Case for Linguistic States, (Calculate: Uttrayan, Ltd., 1954), p.3.

consisting of Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Jullundar, Ludhiana, Ferozepur, Ambala and parts of Karnal and Hissar districts, Ganaganagar district of Rajasthan and the PEPSU area with the exclusion of Jind, Mohindergarh and Nalagarh. The proposed state would have an area of over 35,000 square miles and a population of about 13 million, of which the Sikhs formed 40%.⁶⁶

On the other hand, Hindu political organization and the All Parties Maha Punjab Samiti (Greater Punjab Committee) in their joint memorandum, opposed the Akali demand and demanded instead the creation of a Maha Punjab (Greater Punjab) by merging the territories of Punjab, PEPSU, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and some districts of Uttar Pradesh.⁶⁷ These Hindu Organisations were quick to point out that the Punjabi Suba was the demand of communal minority (the Sikhs) anxious to achieve political supremacy, and that 70% of the people of Punjab were opposed to it.⁶⁸

The States Reorganization Commission in its report rejected the demand of Punjabi Suba on two grounds: one that the Punjabi language was not sufficiently distinct from Hindi and second, that not much support was found in favour of Punjabi speaking state...⁶⁹

Obviously Master Tara Singh and the Akali Dal were bitter over the SRC report and threatened to launch an agitation against it. Keeping this development in mind the Akalis contested the SGPC elections on the following issues. (i) removal of discrimination against the Sikhs (ii) the creation of Punjabi Suba (iii) the rights of the Sikhs to discuss and express the issues inside the Gurdwara premises etc.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Satya, M. Rai, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-43

⁶⁸ Baldev Raj Nayar, *op. cit.*, p. 43

⁶⁹ Sarhadi, *op.cit.*, p. 239

⁷⁰ Amarjit Singh Narang, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-24

The Akali Dal succeeded in securing an overwhelming majority of seats in the SGPC elections as against the Congress which had organized a 'Khalsa Dal' to contest the election.⁷¹

In order to curb the Punjabi Suba agitation, Sachar ministry imposed a ban on the Punjabi Suba slogan on the plea that it was endangering communal harmony in the state. Ultimately this ban was withdrawn on 12 July 1955 and the government released over 12000 Akalis arrested during the agitation. This was interpreted as surrender by Sachar and a victory for Akalis.⁷²

The end of Punjabi Suba slogan agitation created an atmosphere where an understanding between the Akali Dal and the Central government was possible. The Akali leaders had realised that they could gain power only by entering into coalition arrangements with the Congress itself. The Congress high command too was keen for ending the chronic instability that plagued Punjab State.⁷³ This feeling was given by Pt. Nehru when a deputation led by Master Tara Singh met him at Delhi.⁷⁴ And the realization led to the "Regional Formula." A political compromise having been reached between the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Congress, the Regional Formula was welcome by the Akalis. Welcoming the Regional formula, Master Tara Singh emphasized the need for Hindu Sikh unity which was to be the important outcome of the formula. He stated that Hindu Sikh conflict had assumed oceanic proportions which would have influenced both the communities. In that situation none could be the gainer.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *QQ. cit.*, p.239. Khalsa Dal contested 132 seats and won only 3. The Shiromani Akali Dal contested 112 seats and won all.

⁷² Baldev Raj Nayar, *op. cit.*, p. 244

⁷³ Amarjit Singh Narang, *op. cit.*, pp. 129

⁷⁴ Master Tara Singh, *Jiwan Sangharsh Te Udesh*, p. 28

⁷⁵ Master Tara Singh's article published in *The Akali*, reproduced in Jaswant Singh, *op.cit.*, p.279.

But this Congress-Akali merger (1956) and the Master's feeling over Hindu Sikh unity proved to be short lived again. There was a conflict over the allocation of seats in the 1957 elections, and soon Master Tara Singh gave a call to the Akali legislators to come back to their parent organization. At that time only seven out of 23 responded to the Tara Singh's call.⁷⁶ The Akali leadership under Master Tara Singh condemned the government of having backed out of its settlement with the Akalis, and justified their demand for the creation of Punjabi Suba.

As mentioned earlier, the Akalis again became critical of the Congress, because they felt that the government was not working up to the terms of compromise.⁷⁷ And after a few days, Master Tara Singh declared that as far as he was concerned there was no Akali - Congress agreement. As against the compromise by the Congress, that the government would not interfere in the management of the Gurdwaras, the Congress Government had allegedly increased its interference same was the case of the allocation of assembly tickets to Akali nominees.⁷⁸ Giani Kartar Singh, the Congress nominee defeated Master Tara Singh in 1958 annual Presidential elections of the SGPC by raising the issue of Jats versus non- Jats.⁷⁹

The defeat of Master Tara Singh in SGPC elections was applauded by a section of vernacular press as a vote against Punjabi Suba. Master Tara Singh, however, announced, that he would contest January 1960 SGPC elections on Punjabi Suba issue. In the meantime Congress high command declared the bifurcation of the State of Bombay into Gujarat and Maharashtra which gave further impetus to the Akali Demand. In the ensuing SGPC elections in 1960, Akali Dal led by Master Tara Singh further politicized the demand for Punjabi Suba

⁷⁶ Baldev Raj Nayar, *op. cit.*, p. 125

⁷⁷ The Spokesman Weekly, 16 June 1958

⁷⁸ The Tribune, 6 October 1958

⁷⁹ Baldev Nayar, *op. cit.*, p. 198, For Master Ji's full statement see, Master Tara Singh, Jiwan Sangharsh Te Udesh, p. 287

which formed the main plank of its election manifestos. Master Tara Singh won 132 seats, thereafter he declared the Akali Dal would launch a massive agitation for the achievement of the Punjabi Suba.⁸⁰ In order to mobilize the support from other parties, the Akali Dal convened a 'Punjabi Suba convention' on 22 May 1960, at which the members of Swatantra Party, Socialist Party and Parja Socialist Party and veteran freedom fighters like Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlau and Pandit Sunder Lal justified the demand for the creation of Punjabi speaking State.⁸¹ The Akali Dal under the leadership of Master Tara Singh launched its agitation from 29 May 1960. He was arrested and his nominee Sant Fateh Singh, a devoutly religious person and little known in politics, was appointed dictator of the morcha. Tara Singh hardly ever sensed that his own nominee would sooner than later decisively become the most formidable alternative to him in Akali politics.

In order to put pressure on the government Sant Fateh Singh went on a fast unto death on 18 December 1960.⁸² Master Tara Singh was watching with apprehension the almost meteoric rise of Fateh Singh. As soon as he was released from jail he prepared the ground to persuade Sant Fateh Singh to break his twenty two days fast. This it was argued was done on assurance given by Nerhu and to negotiate the matter with the Prime Minister.

However, the meeting between Sant and Nerhu could not bring any tangible result. Then Master Tara Singh himself undertook a fast unto death to press his Punjabi Suba demand. Master Tara Singh broke his twenty eight days fast on September 1961, on an appeal from the Prime Minister which resulted in an agreement to appoint a commission to enquire into the alleged discrimination against the Sikhs in Punjab. There was no assurance given with regard to Punjabi Suba. The Das

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Sant Fateh Singh, Abhul Yadaan, Amritsar, Gurdwara Printing Press, 1962, p. 20

⁸² Ibid.

Commission,⁸³ appointed for the purpose, stated in its report that, "no evidence was found to substantiate the allegation of discrimination". The failure of the Akali Dal to gain any thing positive led to the split in Akali ranks. It is widely believed that State Congress played an active role in engineering the split.⁸⁴ The popularity of Master Tara Singh was pushed to its lowest ebb and Sant Fateh Singh emerged as the leader of the dominant Jat faction enjoying the support of the rural peasantry. Fateh Singh was elected the President of rival Akali Dal in July 1962.

Thus we find that Master Tara Singh held sway on the Sikh politics and in particular the Akali Dal, ever since his emergence as one of the top leaders during the Gurdwara Reform Movement till his decline in 1961 apparently because he did not fulfil his pledge and broke the fast unto death without achieving the objectives. The factors which contributed to his sway on Sikhs politics can be summed up as under:

Firstly, he emerged on the public front immediately after doing his graduation and joining the Khalsa School at Layallpur. He successfully projected himself as a committed and enduring leaders of the Sikhs.

Secondly, during that time the peasantry was generally a very poor lot without the time and resources to indulge in the game of politics. The top leadership of all communities of Punjab was either from the urban middle class or landed peasantry or chieftains. Master Tara Singh being educated and devoted young man could easily attain the position of power.

Thirdly, he was able to use the socio-religious symbols which appealed to the Sikh masses in a most skilful manner and he knew and

⁸³ It was appointed on 31 October 1961, with Mr. S.K.Dass, Former Chief Justice of India its Chairman and Mr.M.C.Changla and C.P.Rama Swami Ayyar as its members. The Akali Dal boycotted the Commission on the plea that Master Tara Singh was not consulted. The Commission submitted its report on January 1962, Baldev Raj Nayar, QQ.cit.,p.113.

⁸⁴ Joyce Pettigrew, "A Description of Discrepancy Between Sikh Political Ideals and Sikh Political Practice", in Myron J. Aronoff (ed.), Political Anthropology Year Book, Vol. I (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1980), pp. 151-192.

successfully used the art of exploiting the mass sentiments to the desired ends.

Fourthly, he could project himself as a devoted and unfailing Sikh and thus a strong charismatic appeal.

Lastly, it may be said that at times he demonstrated distinctively democratic traits in submitting to the will of the majority in the party when he could not take them along.

However, such a towering and colourful personality had to face a very fast decline despite his immense charismatic quality.

Therefore, with the decline of Master Tara Singh, Sant Fateh Singh emerged as the most important leader of Akali Dal who gave a touch of moderation and secularism to Akali Politics. At that point of time the support base of Sant Fateh Singh was of a class support of a section with strong economic muscles, the Jats and other land owning castes. The results of 1962 general elections reflected the wide support for a new political orientation in the party leadership⁸⁵. Under the leadership of Sant Fateh Singh the demand for Punjabi Suba i.e. reorganization of Punjab on linguistic basis was being supported by almost all parties of Punjab except the Congress and the Jan Sangh. Sant Fateh Singh made language instead of religion his main basis of the political struggle. The resolution passed on July 22, 1962 after the split said:

The convention unequivocally reiterates the demand for the formation of Punjabi Suba on a purely linguistic basis completely free from communal virus with the full cooperation and coordination of other communities residing in the area. To achieve this end, the convention

⁸⁵ Amarjit Singh Narang, *Storm Over the Sutlej*, Delhi, Gitanjali Publishing House, 1983, pp. 154.

strongly appeals to the Sikh community in particular and other Punjabis in general to rally around Sant Fateh Singh in this noble task⁸⁶.

This found ready acceptance and support not only in a large section of Sikhs but also among sections and groups of other communities and other political parties.

The newly formed Akali Dal under Sant Fateh Singh claimed to be progressive. It called for the nationalization of the banks and insurance companies and also tried to emerge as the spokesman of the peasantry and protector of the rural Sikhs.

That Sant Fateh Singh emerged as the supreme leader of the Akali Dal and that the Sant Akali Dal was in fact the real Akali Dal was amply proved by the results of 1965 SGPC elections and later on the state assembly elections in 1967⁸⁷.

After that under the leadership of Sant Fateh Singh, Punjabi Suba a Punjabi speaking state was achieved by the Akali Dal. It was in fact a Sikh majority state although many Punjabi speaking areas were not included in it. The parties keenness to acquire a share in a political power in the state became evident when it strove vigorously to forge some kind of electoral alliance with one party or the other. It contested the 1967 elections in collaboration with the leftist parties especially the CPI. Its election manifesto promised urgent land reforms, state trading in food grains and support for nationalization of banks and foreign trade and curbing of monopolies.⁸⁸ Therefore, from 1967 onwards, the dal's election manifestoes and its political activities, particularly because of compulsions of collision-building, reflected a deliberate effort to live down its rather sectarian burden of the past. The party became instead a champion of economic development of Punjab to make Punjab "A

⁸⁶ Ajit (Punjabi), 23 July 1962.

⁸⁷ In the SGPC elections, Master group got only 36 seats as against 95 seats of the Sant group and in the assembly elections, Master group got 2 seats only and Sant group got 24 seats.

⁸⁸ Akali Dal's Election Manifesto, 1967.

model province which would be an object of envy... for others.”⁸⁹ The emergence of Akali Dal as an important political force in Punjab in 1967 may be traced to the overall anti-Congress wave and its inner party factionalism which led to the success of regional parties in a large number of states in north India. Though the Gurnam Singh led United Front ministry was toppled after eight months of its formation, the very emergence of Akali Dal as a formidable alternative to the Congress substantially altered the Political scenario in Punjab.

⁸⁹ Sada Chone Manorath (Amritsar, S.A.D, 1967). Cited in H.K. Puri, “Akali Politics: Emerging Compulsions,” Paul Wallace and Surendra Chopra, op. cit., p. 41.

CHAPTER-3

STRUGGLE LAUNCHED BY AKALI DAL ON SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES

Ever since its emergence, the SAD started expressing resentment against the congress for not providing respectable place to the Sikhs in independent India. However political compulsions did not permit the Akalis to come in the direct confrontation with the Congress except for raising voice for the creation of a Punjabi speaking state. After a long struggle, the SAD succeeded in achieving this goal and the creation of Punjabi speaking State brought about dramatic socio-economic and political changes. The newly created State become a Sikh dominated province with Sikhs constituting 60.22 percent of the total population.¹ Since the Akali Dal claims to be the champion of the interests of Sikh community the political prospects of Akali Dal were bound to improve. As a result, the SAD emerged as an important political force in the state. But in 1980 Assembly elections SAD reiterated the previous long standing demands such as the issue of the inclusion of the left out Punjabi speaking areas in Punjab, the set up of true federal system, restraints an unlimited discretionary power with the centre to dissolve state assemblies, establishment of autonomous commission for the settlement of inter-state dispute.²

The analysis of SAD's ideology during 1972-84 reveals that there have been changes in the party ideology. The changing socio-economic circumstances and especially the political compulsions made Akalis to bring such shifts in their ideology. To begin, the famous and the most controversial Anandpur Sahib Resolution became the main basis of

¹ Ajit Singh, *Shiromani Akali Dal Religio-Political Study 1940-90*, Arman Publications, Kapurthala, 2005.

² *Ibid.*

Akali Dal ideology which advocated the establishment of a true federal polity in India. There was a marked shift in its ideology after Lok Sabha and assembly elections in 1977.³ The party became more issue-oriented than socio-centered. The language of the party became moderate because of its alliance with Janta Party at the centre and at the state level. The emphasis shifted from, "Discrimination against Sikhs, domination of Hindus and Sikh Homeland" to secure justice for Punjab, better deal for Punjab and more autonomy to Punjab especially in financial sphere.⁴

Later on the ideology of SAD centered on the principle of 'Sikhs are Nation'. The party tried to remove the misgivings, allegedly created by the Congress for its political purpose about Akali's demand for a separate Sikh State.⁵

The fourth phase of Akali Dal's strategy started in 1984 after the Operation Blue Star and Anti-Sikh riots after the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. These incidents hurt the Sikh psyche very badly and completely alienated the Sikhs from mainstream. It was Rajiv Gandhi's personal initiative to solve Punjab tangle that a memorandum of settlement was reached between Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on July 24, 1985. The non-implementation of the Accord, because of certain reasons, led to the emergence of a new thinker among the Akalis the Shiromani Dal Mann raised the demand for self-determination. Agitated by the postponement of June 1991 Assembly, by the newly formed Congress I government at the Centre the SAD decided to boycott the Feb. 1992 elections. This was the first time in the history of Akali Dal that the party resorted to this extreme step.⁶

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

It has been observed that though there have been considerable shifts in the ideology of the Akali Dal it basically and fundamentally stuck and adhered to the ideology of inseparable religion and politics. The Sikhs whatever and whenever were basically ADOPTED in the pursuit of political power which was supported to be the stepping for their ultimate goal that is the dominance of Sikhs in the Punjab. Further, the pursuit of political power has been the guiding principle in determining the ideology of the SAD. Now we begin with the famous and most controversial Anandpur Sahib Resolution which become the main basis of Akali Dal ideology which advocated the establishment of a true federal polity in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution are as under.

In October 1973, the Akali Dal Working Committee passed the historic Anandpur Sahib Resolution on State autonomy. It is pertinent to point out that the Shiromani Akali Dal at its meeting of the working committee held on December 11, 1972 constituted a 12 member sub-committee⁷ under the Chairmanship of Surjit Singh Barnala which held eleven sittings to formulate the policy programme of the party. To formulate the policy resolution, the sub-committee, no doubt sought advice of legal experts, doctors, political thinkers, experienced politicians, eminent army generals and religious leaders. But the fact remains that the legal acumen of Surjit Singh Barnala coupled with political vision and farsightedness of veteran Akali leader, Gurcharan Singh Tohra went a long way in giving proper shape to the aspiration of the Sikh community and worked the historic resolution to promote the interests of the Sikhs in particular and Punjab in general. The report of the sub-committee was adopted at another meeting of the working committee of the Akali Dal at its meeting held at Anandpur Sahib on

⁷ The Sub-committee for drafting the policy programme of the Akali Dal consisted of Gurcharan Singh Tohra, Jiwan Singh Umranangal, Gurmil Singh, Bhagat Singh, Balwant Singh, Gian Singh Rarewala, Prem Singh Lalpura, Jaswinder Singh Brar, Bhag Singh, Major General Gurbax Singh Badhni and Amar Singh Ambalvi.?

October 16-17, 1973, and was approved by the 18th All-India Akali Conference held at Ludhiana on 28th August 1978.

This resolution has two distinctive aspects. Firstly, it emphasizes religious fundamentalism. It makes Sikh religion the basis of nationality. The first postulate states: "The Shiromani Akali Dal is the very embodiment of the hopes and aspirations of the Sikh nation and is fully entitled to its representation."⁸ The first two aims of the Akali Dal are listed below:

1. Propagation of Sikhism and its code of conduct and denunciation of atheism. 544400
2. To preserve and keep alive the concept of distinct and independent identity of the panth and to create an environment in which the national sentiments and aspirations of the Sikh panth will find full expression, satisfaction and growth.⁹

For attainment of political goals, the Akali Dal is determined to

'Have all those Punjabi-speaking areas, deliberately kept out of Punjab... merged with Punjab to constitute a single administrative unit where interest of Sikhs and Sikhism are specially protected.'¹⁰

There are various versions of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. To some Sikhs, it is a charter for a separate and sovereign Khalistan. To others, the Resolution calls for the creation of a predominantly Sikh state within a loose confederal state. To the moderates, it simply means a lovely capital (Chandigarh) and more water for their field and more territory. There is no reference of Khalistan in the English version of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution issued on 1st August 1977 over the signature of the Akali Dal Secretary, Ajmer Singh. But it states that the

⁸ Giani Ajmer Singh, The Draft of New Policy Programme of Shiromani Akali Dal, Anandpur Sahib Resolution, Jaspal Printing Press, Amritsar: 1977, p. 16.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 20

Akali Dal is the very embodiment of the hopes and aspirations of the Sikh nation.

It may, however, be noted that Anandpur Sahib Resolution aims at securing more autonomy to the state. It not only demanded restricting of jurisdiction of the Union Government to only four subjects namely defence, foreign affairs, communication and foreign affairs, but also raised once again the issue of discrimination against the Sikhs related to the recruitment policy of the Government which had reduced the percentage of the Sikhs in the armed forces from 11 to 3.¹¹ It also demanded that Sikh religion was not safe without sovereignty. As such, it lays down that the Akali Dal would work to secure a state in which Sikhs would be in a commanding position of power. Ever since its passage, the Anadpur Sahib Resolution has become the main theme of the Akali Dal's demand for State autonomy.

But before Akali Dal could seriously think of getting the Anandpur Sahib Resolution implemented, national emergency was imposed in the country on 26th June 1975. The Akali Dal become the most vociferous and militant supporter of J.P. movement and opponent of emergency regime of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The Akali Dal launched an agitation against the emergency for the restoration of democracy. It is estimated that 40,000 Akali Dal workers were arrested including the President of the Akali Dal and eighteen Akali legislators. Taking advantage of the emergency wherein opposition was silenced, the Congress party adopted 42nd Constitution Amendment which virtually damaged the federal scheme and many scholars dubbed it as a betrayal of the democratic faith.¹² The Akali Dal strongly 'opposed the proposed amendment and stated that these were most dangerous and

¹¹ The Spokesman, October 10, 1977, p. 2

¹² Dalip Singh, "42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, A betrayal of Democratic Facts", Journal of Government and Political Studies, Panjabi University, Patiala: Vol. I. No.2, March, 1977, pp. 125 - 145.

detrimental to the interests of the minorities and other subnationalities. It also stated that these amendments were repugnant to the federal and democratic principles.¹³

The emergency proved beyond doubt that centralization could not be a solution to the political problems of India. It also showed that anti-democratic and anti-federal attitudes merely choked the means by which solutions could be made possible.

Finally, it demonstrated the insensitivity of the national political elite towards the genuine aspirations of a democracy which was beginning to come of age. The people proved this proposition by voting against the authoritarian rule of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1977.

The Janata Government upon whom the task of dismantling the centralized system fell was also slow to take the cue. This was evident from the fact that it dismissed nine Congress State Governments. The dismissals at the time were not inconsistent with the mood of the people. But they were not strictly within the bounds of constitutional propriety and betrayed a desire to capture as much of unitary national power as quickly as possible.

The Akali Dal captured power in the State in 1977 and formed a coalition Government with the Janata Party. The Akali leadership realized that it was the best opportunity for them to get the Anandpur Sahib Resolution implemented. The 18th All-India Akali Conference held at Ludhiana on October 28-29, 1978 approved the Anandpur Sahib Resolution and clarified the stand of the Akali Dal on the issue of State autonomy. Gurcharan Singh Tohra, President S.G.P.C., who moved the resolution on the autonomy for the States, re-affirmed the Akali Dal's commitment to the demand as spelled out in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. While moving the main political resolution on "autonomy for

¹³ The Tribune, September 13, 1976.

the States”, he said,¹⁴ the restructuring of the Centre-State relationship and decentralization of power accordingly" was essential for:

- a) Preserving and safeguarding the being and self-identity of nation's and nationalities that collectively make the Indian People.
- b) Protecting the rights and interests of the minorities.
- c) Realizing the imperative and demands of democracy, democratic system and functioning, and
- d) Removing impediments in the way of economic growth and progress caused by lop-sided over-centralized, monopolistic planning.

In other words, what needed is the basic change in the organizational pattern of political power, that is, a radical transformation of the system as a whole. According to Gurcharan Singh Tohra,

If we really seek genuine national integration, conditions must be created wherein our nations, minorities and nationalities would get woven into the national fabric while keeping intact their identity and essence. The requisite conditions can be created only in the form of a pluralistic society which by its very nature demands a federal framework. It is only in such a federalized set-up that the Sikh community (which is a nation, sui generis, as well as a national minority) and other nations, nationalities and minorities including our tribal groups can hope to keep their identity intact and inviolate... This historical experience of other countries shows that federal polity ensures unity, integrity and progress on an enduring basis... The concept of autonomously strong states is in no way opposite of the notion of a strong centre. Both the centre and the states have to grow in strength in a coordinate manner and not at the cost of each other. So federalizing our polity

¹⁴ Gurcharan Singh Tohra, Federal Polity: the question of Autonomy: Its Meaning, Necessity and Framework, Shiromani Akali Dal, Amritsar: 1978, p-1.

would provide a natural and genuine basis for a strong centre.¹⁵

Tohra's contention was that "India is a multinational society with a variety of nations, nationalities and minorities living in it. In such a situation national integration was possible only through maintaining and strengthening the pluralist character of society which demanded a truly federalist character. Autonomy, it was argued, was not merely a question of more powers to the State. The crux of the matter is that of sharing political sovereignty..."¹⁶

The important point is that Tohra presented a Soviet federal model. He finds that Soviet Constitution is the most truly federal as it contains provisions whereby a constituent unit is not only "autonomous but sovereign also", with the right to secede and enter into independent diplomatic relations with other countries. According to his belief, "it is only in such a federalized set-up that Sikh community (which is a nation, sui-generis, as well as a national minority) and other nations, nationalities and minorities can hope to keep their identity intact and inviolate."¹⁷

Thus, Akali Dal viewed Anandpur Sahib Resolution as a close approximation of the Janata Party's commitment to political and economic decentralization. According to Gurcharan Singh Tohra, India is "pluralistic society" with different religious, ethnic groups and languages. Such a society requires a polity which would "ensure oneness of the country so that they can flourish according to their ethos, preserve their identity... Unity in diversity."¹⁸ Without actually demanding the right of secession for the states, he referred approvingly to the provision for this right in the Constitution of USSR and in that context maintained that "historical experience of other countries shows

¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 6-8

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 12

¹⁷ Ibid., pp 6-7

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 6-8

that federal polity ensures unity, integrity and progress on an enduring basis...”¹⁹

Apart from it, there are fifteen other specific measures suggested for federation of Indian polity.²⁰

After the establishment of the present state, Sikh scholar politician, Kapur Singh declared the Sikhs to be "sui-generic a free and sovereign people",²¹ and asserted that it was a birth right of the Sikh people to claim and establish a sovereign political status for themselves,²² by creating a 'Sikh Homeland'²³ He, however, made it clear that sovereign territorial integrity of India.²⁴ Gurcharan Singh Tohra, redefined Kapur Singh's concept of Sikhs as a free and sovereign people, by contending that 'Sikhs are a nation sui generis as well as a national minority'.²⁵

In October, 1973, "a report was current", says Avtar Singh Malhotra that "the Anandpur Sahib Resolution was drafted by Kapur Singh."²⁶

¹⁹ The Tribune, November 13th 1982

²⁰ Some specific measures suggested for 'federation of Indian polity' were: amendment of the preamble to include a recognition of the multi-national character of the Indian States, direct election of the members of the Rajya Sabha on the principle of equality of States "as autonomous units" so that diversity of nations, nationalities and minorities should be reflected in it", restriction of Center's power to impose emergency only in exceptional circumstances such as foreign aggression, to end its power to dissolve State Governments and Assemblies, independent source of revenues for States to ensure real and effective autonomy, decentralization of planning to end Center's power of issuing directive to the States. Quoted in Hari Hara Das, S. Mohapatra, Centre-State Relations in India: A Study of Sub-National Aspirations, Ashish Publishing House. Delhi: 1986. p. 241.

²¹ Jaswant Singh Mann, Some Document on the demand for the Sikh Homeland, A.I.S.S.F., Chandigarh:1969

²² Ibid., p. 90

²³ Ibid., p. 91

²⁴ Referring to a resolution passed by the Akali Dal (Master Tara Singh) working committee on July 20, 1966, Kapur Singh stated that a new Punjab should be given an autonomous constitutional status on the analogy of Jammu & Kashmir. Ibid., p.36. The position was reiterated at the Akali Dal Conference held on December 11, 1966 after the formation of Punjabi Suba, Ibid., p. 39

²⁵ Gurcharan Singh Tohra, Federal Polity: the question of Autonomy: Its Meaning, Necessity and Framework, Shiromani Akali Dal. Amritsar, 1978, p-9.

²⁶ Avtar Singh Malhotra, "Sikhs- A Nation Theory), The Anandpur Sahib Resolution & Sarkaria Commission", Party Life, Journal of C.P.I., August. 1984, p.12.

The Resolution almost went unnoticed by the general public and the leaders of other major political parties in India. However, it became a subject of public debate when the Akali Dal launched a Dharam Yudh Morcha on August 4, 1982 to get it implemented. It greatly influenced the course of political events during the past seven years, both in the state as well as at the national level. There has been a continuous debate on its positive aspects and its short-comings as well. The critics have spared no words to malign it and its supporters have defended it vigorously. The debate has not remained confined only to the leaders of political parties, but also drawn the attention of academicians and public at large. In order to understand its real implications and true significance, we shall have to refer to some of the important points raised in the country-wide debate on this Resolution.

There are three versions of the Resolution—the one of 1973, another of 1981 called the 'The Talwandi version' and the 1983 authenticated version of Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, the then President of the Akali Dal. No one can deny the fact that the original resolution is said to be in Gurmukhi script and various versions that have been presented to the public are its translations into English.

Inevitably, the political aspects of the various versions of the Resolution have received most of the attention and generated a controversy. Thus the political goal of the Akali Dal is defined as achieving "the pre-eminence of the Khalsa" (Khalsa Ji Da Bolbala). There is also a reference to "Panthic Azad Hasti" which has been translated to mean "distinct and independent identity of the Panth". Finally, there is a word "Qaum" which has been variously translated as "community" and "nation". But a different version was put forth by the Akali Dal (The Talwandi Group) at a World Sikh Convention held at

Anandpur Sahib in April, 1981 by advocating an autonomous State. The resolution passed at the convention stated:

An autonomous region in the north of India should be set up forthwith wherein the Sikh interests are constitutionally recognized as of primary and special importance, and the Sikh autonomous region may be conceded declared as entitled to frame its and own constitution and basis of having all powers to and from itself except foreign relations, defence and general communications.²⁷

In this resolution, no mention is made of how the interests of non-Sikhs are to be safeguarded in such a set-up.

Significantly, in the 1983 Longowal version of the Resolution, "Panthic azad hasti" and "Khalse Ji De Bolbale" have been omitted.²⁸ The Anandpur Sahib Resolution demands cannot be reviewed in isolation but these must be studied in the perspective mentioned above. The religious and revivalist overtones are dangerous. A section of Opposition parties have taken a one-sided position in favour of the Akali Dal and its demands. Others in the opposition had adopted a hostile posture towards the Akalis denouncing them as separatists and Khalistanis. The Press has not deemed it fit enough to print the full text of the Resolution.

3.1 IMPLICATIONS OF ANANDPUR SAHIB RESOLUTION

3.1.1 Akali Dal's Viewpoint

The chief demand of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution is State autonomy. It is the most authoritative statement of the Akali Dal so far as Centre-State relations are concerned. It not only demands "Special Status" and privileges for the Sikhs but also discusses in detail the

²⁷ A.C. Kapur, The Punjab Crisis: An Analytical Study, S. Chand & Co., Delhi: 1985, p. 203.

²⁸ Rahul Singh, "The Contentious Resolution", in Spokesman, Vol. XXIII, No. 35, April 27, 1985, p. 8

changes which the party envisages in the federal set-up of the country so as to make it genuinely federal in character. The most important theme discussed in this Resolution relates to restructuring of Centre-State relations and decentralization of powers. Such a re-structuring is imperative not only for giving greater autonomy to the States but also to protect the linguistic, religious and cultural rights of the minorities. Such a re-organization of Centre-State relations is in conformity with democratic traditions and will pave the way for economic progress. The framers of the Indian Constitution wanted to establish a federal set-up in the country but successive Congress regimes have made the Centre highly powerful through various amendments of the Constitution. The process of centralization of powers has resulted in complete subordination of the State to the Central Government. In such a situation, it is not possible to preserve the distinct linguistic and cultural identities of the religious minorities and this has posed a serious danger to the unity and integrity of the country. The Resolution, therefore, demands re-casting of the constitutional structure of the country on real and meaningful federal principles... to enable the States to play a useful role for the progress and prosperity of the Indian people in their respective areas by meaningful exercise of their power.²⁹

The Resolution contains some definite proposals for restructuring the Centre-State relations in order to make the Indian Constitution truly federal. It proposes that Centre should have only four departments-communications, currency, defence and foreign affairs. All other powers should be vested with the States. Punjab will contribute funds to the Centre for running the four departments in the proportion of its representation in the Parliament. In relation to all matters except the

²⁹ Ajmer Singh Giani, "The Draft of the New Policy Programme of the Shiromani Akali Dal adopted by its working committee in a meeting held at Anandpur Sahib on 16th - 17th October, 1973, to be approved by General Rtouse of Akali Dal Act its session on 28.8.1977, Shiromani Akali Dal, Amritsar; 1977.

four departments mentioned above, Punjab will have the right to frame its own constitution.³⁰ The Resolution seeks complete legislative, financial and administrative autonomy to the State by limiting the authority of the Union Government to only four essential subjects. It would thus enable the States to raise greater financial resources for their development of the country and thus strengthen the unity and integrity of the of the nation. It would also protect religious minorities against all kinds of discrimination. Like the federal system of the U.S.A., and the U.S.S.R., the Resolution also demands equal representation to all States in the Upper House of Parliament.

In order to ensure greater financial autonomy to the states, the Resolution lays emphasis on the need to shatter the monopolistic grip of the capitalist system foisted on the Indian economy by 42 years of Congress regime in India. It stresses re-drafting of the taxation structure of the country in such a way that the burden of taxation is shifted from the poor to the rich classes and equitable distribution of national income is ensured.³¹ In order to safeguard the interests of Punjabi farmers, the Resolution urges upon the Union Government to bring about parity between the prices of agricultural produce and those of industrial raw materials so that discrimination against such States as lack of these materials may be removed. It wants to put an end to exploitation of the producers of cash crops like cotton, sugarcane and oil seeds, at the hands of the traders. In order to ensure remunerative prices to the farmers, it advocates the purchase of major crops by the Central Government agencies. In order to make farming increasingly remunerative, it demands perceptible reduction in the prices of farm machinery like tractors, tubewells and other agricultural inputs. Keeping in view the peculiar agrarian economy of the State, the Resolution

³⁰ Satya Pal Dang, "Punjab Problem and Solution", Secular Democracy, September 1984, p. 4

³¹ Ajmer Singh, No. 29, p. 10

demands the setting up of medium and heavy industries in Punjab. With a view to strengthening the support base of the Akali Dal among the peasants of the State, it demands complete exemption from wealth tax and estate duty on the land of farmers. It strongly advocates that the growing gulf between the rich and the poor in the rural and urban areas should be bridged but it is of the firm opinion that for such a purpose, the first assault would have to be made on the classes that have assumed the reins of economic power in their hands. The lever of economic power continues to be in favour of big traders, capitalists and monopolist.³² The Resolution recommends raising of ceiling limit of land from the present 10 acres to 30 acres per family.³³

There are some purely regional demands in the Resolution. For instance, control over headworks should be transferred to Punjab. Gross injustice and discrimination against Punjab should be stopped. An international airport should be set up in Amritsar to boost the economy of the State. Moreover, sugar and textile mills should be increased in Punjab for improving its agro-based economy.

A perusal of the demands contained in Anandpur Sahib Resolution makes it clear that it is concerned with the protection of the religious and cultural identity of the Sikhs by creating a congenial atmosphere. It is based on the assumption that for the protection of independent identity of the minorities it is essential to have greater decentralization of powers. It is only through greater independence and more autonomy to the States that one can make the minorities willing partners in the task of nation-building. In view of the problems that the Sikh community as a minority is facing at present, the Resolution demands a total re-structuring of Centre-State relations and re-

³² Pritam Singh. "Anandpur Sahib Resolution: A Comment," Dignity, March 17, 1985, p.5

³³ Rahul Singh, No. 28, p. 8

organization of boundaries of the State with a view to establishing "pre-eminence of the Sikhs.

The Resolution also contains some demands which are concerned with the protection of linguistic and cultural identity of the Sikhs as a minority. Besides, it also demands the enactment of an All-India Gurdwara Act, representation to the Sikhs living in other States, in Government services, local bodies and State Legislatures, installation of broadcasting station at the Golden Temple, Amritsar for the relay of Gurbani Kirtan, and second language status to the Punjabi language in adjoining States of Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir. It also demands that "by suitable amendment in the relevant clause of the Hindu Succession Act, a woman should be given right of inheritance in the properties of her father-in-law instead of the father".³⁴ It also wants to halt the eviction of Punjabi farmers in the Terai region in Uttar Pradesh and equality of treatment to the Sikh and Hindu Harijans in the country.

However, the most controversial part of the Resolution relates to the political objectives of the Shiromani Akali Dal. The Resolution states that the political aims of the Panth are definitely ingrained in the order of the Tenth Guru in the pages of Sikh history and in the perspective of the Khalsa Panth, the purpose of which is the pre-eminence of the Khalsa. To give this birth-right of the Khalsa, a practical shape, creation of congenial environment and achievement of a political constitution are necessary steps.³⁵ For this purpose, it advocates a re-organisation of the boundaries of Punjab by including those Punjabi-speaking areas which are at present in Rajasthan.³⁶ All these areas, put together should

³⁴ Vasudha Dhagamwar, "Anandpur Sahib Resolution, in whose Interest?" Mainstream, Vol. XXII, No. 32, April 6, 1985, p.6.

³⁵ Indian Backgrounder Service, Vol. VIII, No. 44 (388), January 30, 1984, p. 2

³⁶ The territories demand in the Resolution include: Dalhousie in Gurdaspur District, Chandigarh, Pinjore, Kalka and Ambala Sadar in Ambala District, Una Tehsil of Hoshiarpur District, the 'Desh' area of Nalagarh, Shahabad and Gulha blocks of

form one administrative unit where the interests of Sikhism and the Sikhs should be protected. It is only through the creation of a suitable environment and a political set-up that the interest of "Sikh nation" could be safeguarded.

3.2 CRITICISM OF ANANDPUR SAHIB RESOLUTION

The opponents of the Resolution have criticized it on various grounds. In the first instance, they have condemned it for giving birth to a new theory that "Sikhs are a separate nation". In common parlance, the term 'nation' is understood as a community which has a separate history, culture and language and enjoys sovereignty over a definite area. By describing the Sikhs as a 'nation' and by demanding a specific area where their self-identity could find full expression, the Resolution lays the foundation of a separate Sikh State. Emasculation of the Centre and augmentation of the autonomy of the States to near independence, with the Centre helplessly dependent on them, along with the propositions about Sikh nation and Sikh pre-eminence take it to the very threshold of Khalistan.³⁷ They further maintain that the objective of Anandpur Sahib Resolution is to establish the "pre-eminence of the Khalsa" (Khalsa ji ke Bolbala) was the surest way to disintegration of India. It is argued that in a democratic country, all political parties and religious communities have an equal right to share political power. On the contrary, the Anandpur Sahib Resolution which demands a new political set-up where interests of the sikhs and Sikhism are specifically to be protected and where pre-eminence of the Khalsa is ensured goes beyond the limits imposed by the Constitution.

Karnal District, Tohana Sub-Tehsil, Ratia block and Sirsa Tehsil of Hissar District and six Tehsils of Ganganagar District in Rajasthan. For details, see Ajmer Singh, p. 40, p.20.

³⁷ Avtar Singh Malhotra, Save Punjab, Save India, Communist Party Publication, New Delhi: May. 1984, p. 15

Some critics have found fault with the federal framework proposed to be established in India in terms of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. The Resolution leaves only foreign affairs, defence, currency and communication with the centre and demands that the residuary powers should be vested with the states. The states should have their own constitution and they would be liable to contribute to the Central finance in direct proportion to their representation at the Centre. Such a federal scheme, if accepted, would lead to disintegration of the country. In a situation of uneconomic development and growing regional pulls in the country, a strong Centre is needed to protect the country from centrifugal forces. The opponents of Anandpur Sahib Resolution maintain that a strong Centre is essential in India to safeguard the country from the intrigue of imperialists who are interested in destabilizing and balkanizing India. The critics of the resolution, thus, conclude that instead of demanding genuine decentralization of powers, it is likely to strengthen the forces which are interested in disintegration of the country. It will not be possible for the centre Government to protect the unity and integrity of the country by exercising only limited powers as are envisaged in the Resolution.

The opponents of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution also do not accept the argument that autonomy to the states is needed for preserving separate cultural, linguistic and religious identities of the minorities in India. They maintain that in spite of reorganization of the states on linguistic basis, there continue to exist numerous minorities which have their distinct language, religion and culture. The interests of such minorities can be adequately protected by a strong Centre and not by making the Centre totally weak and unimportant. Moreover, the Resolution, according to its critics, talks about linguistic, cultural and religious right of the Sikh community only and has nothing to offer to other minorities of India.

A few scholars have found contradiction in different parts of the Resolution. For example, the Resolution wants to establish the pre-eminence of the Khalsa by carving out a new state which would include all those Punjabi-speaking areas which have been left out of Punjab at the time of re-organization of the states in November, 1966. But it is difficult to understand how such a step would help the Shiromani Akali Dal to get a more effective share in power in the state (i.e. to ensure the *bolebaala* of the Sikhs), they would then be reduced to a minority. In the enlarge State, demanded by the Resolution, a purely Hindu party should be able to win a majority of seats and come to power without even the marginal aid of the Sikhs. If such a state gets more autonomy, it would give additional constitutional sanction to Hindu domination over the Sikhs.³⁸

Critics opine that Anandpur Sahib Resolutions brings out the glaring opposition between (i) the slogan of reduction of inequalities and improvement of the lot of the poor and the oppressed and (ii) the actual interests that aimed to be served by various demands.

The demands for cheap inputs and modernization in agriculture will largely serve the interests of middle and rich farmers, since technological innovations are scale biased. There is a demand in the Resolution for complete State trading in food grains and other agricultural produce by State Government and other Government agencies. It is also demanded in the Resolution that all types of food zone be abolished. The whole country should be treated as a single food zone. The critics point out that the Resolution does not think about the plight of the food deficit States. Here, too the interests of big farmers are envisaged who can afford to take food to where prices are higher, whereas the small farmers can take their food grain only to a nearby

³⁸ Balraj Puri, "Understanding Punjab", in Abida Samiuddin (ed.), Punjab Crisis: Challenges and Response, Mittal Publication, Delhi: 1985, p.619.

Mandi.³⁹ Moreover, it is not possible for the Central Government to make purchase of food grains from the farmers of Punjab under the federal scheme envisaged in the Resolution.

The demand for higher remunerative prices of agricultural produce would ensure returns to those who have a marketable surplus. It would bring stability to the returns of small farmers, but it is the rich and middle farmers having a large marketable surplus who could capitalize on this measure by way of increased net profits. Moreover, such a movement in prices would be severely disadvantageous to poor consumers,⁴⁰ including non-cultivating landless labourers and petty and marginal farmers, all of them spend the greater portion of their income on food. Such a demand would be at variance with the proclaimed slogan of upliftment of the poor.

The critics point out that none of these demands meet the welfare of the poor or the oppressed. The resolution proclaims that greater per capita income and increase in growth rates will lead to such welfare, unfortunately such indicators by no means ensure distributive justice. The economic policy resolution shows evidence of a discriminatory stand in relation to agriculture and industrial workers.⁴¹ It argues for the nationalization of all industry with the exception of agro-based industries, while it does not argue the same for agriculture. It proposes to give priority to agro-based industries, which may well benefit the rich farmers both through linkage effects and by opening opportunities from investing their surplus.⁴² Moreover, it emphasizes credit facilities for medium-scale industries. The rural rich constrained from investing in large-scale industry by various factors like entrepreneurship and competition from the national bourgeoisie for market would benefit from

³⁹ Rahul Singh, No. 28, p. 8

⁴⁰ Please note that coupled with this is the fact that the commodity terms of trade have been rather favorable to agriculture.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

the development of investment possibilities in medium-scale industries.⁴³ The Resolution is further markedly discriminatory in its demand that industrial workers should be given needbased wages and a proper share in the profit. It is, however, ambiguous regarding the worker's agrarian counterparts and merely states that the wages of agricultural workers should be re-assured as and when required.⁴⁴

Another contradiction that exists in all the versions of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution is that the Akali Dal has not given sufficient thought while drafting the document. On the one hand, foreign policy is left to the Centre in the proposed federal set-up, but on the other hand Shiromani Akali Dal feels that the foreign policy of the Congress Government is wrong and harmful for the country the nation as a whole. Shiromani Akali Dal will extend its support only to that foreign policy of India which is based on the principle of peace and national interests. It strongly advocates a policy of peace with all neighbouring countries especially those inhabited by the Sikhs and incorporating their sacred shrines. The Akali Dal is of the firm view that India's foreign policy should in no case play second fiddle to that of any other country.⁴⁵

On the one hand, Akali Dal is happy to leave out foreign affairs and on the other; it gives advice on how that policy should be conducted. The phrase 'where their religious shrines are found' can only mean Pakistan. Hence what the Akali Dal is actually saying is that it will struggle for better relations with Pakistan which are quite uncalled for and open to mischievous interpretations.

The demands contained in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution are not only tailor-made for the benefit of the wealthy farmers but also anti-

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ajmer Singh, No. 29, p. 21

women.⁴⁶ The Resolution demands an amendment to the relevant clauses of the Hindu succession Act so as to enable women to have rights of inheritance in the property of the father-in-law instead of the father. In 1993, Akali Dal demanded a separate personal law for the Sikhs. In early 1984, Article 25 of the Constitution was burnt at several places in Punjab because it included the Sikhs among the Hindus. The demand for a separate personal law for the Sikhs reportedly included a specific demand for making it compulsory for a Sikh widow to marry her late husband's younger brother and make it compulsory even if he was already married.⁴⁷

The Resolution has also been criticized because of its ambiguities and the inspiration that it gives to separatist and secessionist elements. Taking advantage of the slogan that Sikhs are a separate nation, Ganga Singh Dhillon demanded associate status for the Sikhs at the United Nations. Similarly, some protagonists of Khalistan like Dr. Jagjit Singh Chauhan have interpreted and used the Resolution for the achievement of a separate Sikh State. Ganga Singh Dhillon who ignited the slogan of Khalistan at the Sikh Educational Conference at Chandigarh in 1981 admitted in an interview with the daily *Nawa-i-Waqt* of Lahore,⁴⁸ that the real aim of Anandpur Sahib Resolution was an independent Sikh state, although it was not openly demanded in the Resolution.⁴⁹ The critics of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution point out that it may not be the intention of the Akali Dal to demand a separate Sikh state, but the Resolution can be misinterpreted by anyone who wants to work in that direction.

⁴⁶ Kamlesh Kumar Wadhwa, "Minorities safeguards in India, Constitutional Provisions and their implementations, Thomas Press, Delhi; 1975

⁴⁷ Vasudha Dhagamwar, "Anandpur Sahib Resolution on whose interest, mainstream", Vol. XXII, No. 32

⁴⁸ Nawa-i-Waqt interviewed a number of Khalistan activists residing in Canada, USA, Britain and other European countries when they came to Pakistan in November 1984, in connection with Guru Nanak Dev Birthday celebrations. Quoted in A.C. Kapur, No. 59, p. 197

⁴⁹ Times of India, December 6, 1984.

Some scholars have denounced the Anandpur Sahib Resolution because the demands that it makes cannot be met within the framework of the Indian Constitution. For example, some of the religious demands such as the proposed enactment of an All-India Gurdwara Act and the relay of Gurbani from the Golden Temple by All India Radio implicitly contradict the preamble to the Constitution. The Constitution ensures protection to all religions but it is not meant to promote any one of them. Thus, it is argued that there are certain basic features of the Constitution which cannot be altered by anyone. The Constitution has denied this right even to Parliament. The federal scheme envisaged in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, if accepted, would violate the basic postulates of the Constitution and as such, is untenable.

The critics argue that there is no consistency in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. The Akali Dal resolutions are a tirade against the Congress Party. The Anandpur Sahib Resolution has demanded amendment of U.P. land-ceiling law. Under the existing Constitution, agrarian relations are a state subject. The Akali Dal itself violated the concept of state autonomy by asking the Centre to intervene in the agrarian Legislation of U.P.⁵⁰ The Anandpur Sahib Resolution has also raised a voice against injustice and discrimination against the Sikhs and other minorities. Such forms of injustice cannot be curbed without strong Central authority. The Muslim minority demanded the posting of C.R.P.F in place of local P.A.C during the communal disturbances in U.P. Such an intervention will not be possible if total autonomy is given to the States. The Anandpur Sahib Resolution has also demanded that the centre should intervene and enforce the "claims of the refugees who had migrated to Jammu & Kashmir."⁵¹ In order to do this, the Resolution demanded an amendment in Act 370 which embodies the autonomy of

⁵⁰ Ajmer Singh, No. 29, p. 8

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 12

the Kashmir State. Most of our cities and towns are inhabited by people belonging to different religions and languages. Any encouragement to parochialism can only make life insecure for the minorities. If the Centre intervenes to protect these minorities, it will be construed as an encroachment on the rights of the States and their autonomy in terms of Akali Dal's Anandpur Sahib Resolution.

The demand for state autonomy as embodied in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution is a part of the theory of 'Sikh nationhood'. The preamble to Anandpur Sahib Resolution became with a reference to 'Sikh nation'. Similarly, the concluding portion speaks of "grooming the Sikhs into a strong and sturdy nation." It went on record that philosophers, poet, writers, artists belonging to 'Sikh nation' were "its most prized assets".⁵² From this, says Harkishan Singh Surjeet, "it is one step towards the demand for Khalistan."⁵³

The original resolution did not contain any demand for the amendment of Article 25 of the Constitution. This provision was included at the behest of the Sikh members of the Constituent Assembly and East Punjab Assembly. Sardar Patel gave a "Characteristically candid explanation" of the position:

"... Unfortunately in this country, the Hindu religion is suffering from the evil effects of certain customs and prejudices that have crept into society... The reformed community of the Hindus, called the Sikhs have also in course of time suffered from degeneration to certain extent... I urged upon them strongly not to lower their religion to such a pitch as really to fall to a level where for a mass of pottage you really give up the substance of religion. But they did not agree. Therefore, the utmost that we can do is to advice those people in their

⁵² A.C. Kapur, *The Punjab Crisis*, S. Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1985, p. 153

⁵³ Harkishan Singh Surjeet, "Development in Punjab", People Democracy, October 4, 1981

community who were wanting the safeguards to go into the classification of scheduled castes; not a very good thing for the Sikh community, but yet they want it, and we feel for the time being we would make that allowance for them... in the long run it would be in the interest of all to forget there is anything like a majority or minority in the country and that in India, there is only one community.”⁵⁴

Article 25 of the constitution was designed not to absorb the Sikhs into the Hindu religion but to protect their rights. Article 25(a) gave power to the State to regulate certain activities which might be associated with the practice of religion. Explanation I of the Article protected the Sikh's right to wear Kirpans. Article 25(b) gave the State powers to provide for social welfare and reform while explanation it gave an inclusive definition of the word 'Hindu' in so far as Scheduled castes were concerned. This enabled the State to implement the demand that the Sikh backward classes, namely the Mazhabis, Kabirpanthis, Baurias, Seligars etc. should be given the same privilege in regard to the representation in the Legislature and political concessions as had been conferred on the Scheduled castes within the Hindu fold.⁵⁵

3.3 JUSTIFICATION OF ANANDPUR SAHIB RESOLUTION BY ITS PROTAGONISTS

However, the protagonists of Anandpur Sahib Resolution have refused all arguments of their opponents and tried to prove that the Resolution is basically a document which is concerned with the restructuring of Centre-State relations and giving more powers to the State. The demand for greater autonomy has been raised not only by

⁵⁴ Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VIII, Delhi: Government of India Publication, 1949, p. 330

⁵⁵ B. Shiva Rao, "The framing of India's Constitution; Select Documents", Vol. I, 11PA, 1968, New Delhi, pp. 126-129

Akali Dal but also by other political parties like C.P.I., C.P.M., D.M.K., Telgu Desam and National Conference. Much of the confusion about the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, in their opinion is the result of false propaganda of the Congress party which has resulted from its political calculations. A dispassionate discussion on the Resolution would prove that most of the criticism raised against it is unfounded.

It is pointed out by the supporters of the Resolution that there is nothing wrong in calling the Sikhs a 'nation'. A 'nation', according to the dictionary meaning, is a group of people having a common language, history, race and culture who are sovereign in their areas. As such recognition of the Sikhs as a 'nation' in Anandpur Sahib Resolution has led to the fear that if the Resolution is accepted, the Sikhs might ask for the formation of a separate State. But such a contention is not acceptable to those who support this Resolution. The idea of Sikh nationhood has been frequently projected from different perspectives. The main theme of Cunningham's book "History of the Sikhs" is the growth of the Sikhs from 'a sect to a people' under Guru Gobind Singh and 'from people to a nation' under Maharaja Ranjit Singh.⁵⁶ Khushwant Singh has also viewed the heroic Sikh resistance to the British and in particular the second Anglo-Sikh war of 1848, as a 'national war of independence.' Paul Brass maintained that the term 'nation' or 'nationality can be applied to an ethnic group whose political aims do not necessarily include separate sovereignty.⁵⁷ Kapur Singh made it clear that sovereign political status and Homeland were possible within the sovereign and territorial integrity of India. It is pointed out that the words 'Sikh Qaum' (Sikh Nation) have been used right from the 18th century where Maharaja Ranjit Singh carved out an independent Sikh

⁵⁶ Joseph Davery Cunningham, History of the Sikhs from Origin of the Nation to the Battles of the Sutlej, New Delhi.

⁵⁷ Paul R. Brass, "Ethnic cleavages and the Punjab Party System, 1952-72", in *Electoral Politics in Indian States*, by Myron Weiner and John Osgoodfield (ed.), Vol. IV, Manohar Book Service, Delhi, 1975.

state.⁵⁸ The nationhood of the Sikhs was openly recognized by the All-India Congress Committee in 1927 at Lahore when President of the Congress party, Jawaharlal Nehru, declared in his Presidential address that 'the brave Sikh nation, which has made immense sacrifices for the attainment of independence from the British rule, and prior to that from the Mughal and Afgan invaders, deserves full rights to take part in the governance of free India'.⁵⁹ The word 'nation' has been used here so as to emphasize the community-based concern of the people. This fits in well with the clear declaration of Sant Harchand Singh Longowal that Sikhs are a 'nation' like the Hindus, Muslims and other people of the country.⁶⁰ Even the Britishers had recognized the nationhood of the Sikhs. They went to the extent of offering a separate state to the 'Sikh nation' on the lines of Pakistan but the Sikh leaders denied the offer and joined hands with the Congress with full confidence that all promises made in 1929 and thereafter would be fulfilled. It is, thus urged that the use of the word 'Sikh nation' in the Resolution is based on historical precedents and does not necessarily imply carving out of an independent Sikh state. The Sikhs want recognition of their nationhood within the federal set of India.⁶¹

The protagonists hold that there is nothing wrong in the political goals of the Shiromani Akali Dal. The Akali Dal desires to preserve and keep alive the concept of distinct and independent identity of the Panth and to create an environment in which national sentiments of the Sikh Panth will find full expression, satisfaction and growth.⁶² It seeks to establish 'pre-eminence of the Khalsa'. These objectives cannot be interpreted as a deliberate attempt on the part of the Akali Dal to carve

⁵⁸

Ibid.

⁵⁹

Ibid., p. 7

⁶⁰

Ajit Singh Sarhadi, "Anandpur Sahib Resolution: A Demand within the Limits of the Constitution", The Spokesman, March 4, 1985

⁶¹

Ibid.

⁶²

Ajmer Singh, No. 29, p. 16

out a separate Sikh State. The phrase 'pre-eminence of the Khalsa' connotes effulgence of the aspirations of the Sikh people to remain in the forefront in every sphere and the words 'Khalsa Ji Ke Bolbale' have formed part of the daily Sikh prayer (Ardas) for over 300 years.⁶³

Similarly, the supporters of Anandpur Sahib Resolution stress that the reference in the Resolution to the fact that "the Akali Dal stands for the creation of a congenial environment and a political set-up does not overtly or covertly advocate the creation of a sovereign independent state out of the existing boundaries of the Republic of India. As the Sikhs are an important religious minority in India, the Resolution only visualizes arrangements in the political set-up of the country where their interests are protected. These aspirations of the Akali Dal are fully in keeping with the promises made by the Congress leaders to the Sikhs before independence. The Akali leaders often quote Jawaharlal Nehru's statement to the Press in Calcutta in 1946 where he declared, "The brave Sikhs of Punjab are entitled to special consideration. I see nothing wrong in providing an area and a political set-up in the North wherein the Sikhs can also experience the glow of freedom fully, for they richly deserve it."⁶⁴

The advocates of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution point out that there are many parts of the Resolution amply proving Akali Dal's commitment to the unity and integrity of the country. True to that commitment, a demand has been made for decentralization of powers which contain an in-built provision regarding the powers of Parliament and the State's contributions to the Central funds. The Resolution itself states that the recasting of Centre-State relations is essential "to obviate the possibility of any danger to the national unity and integrity of the country and further, to enable the States to play a useful role for the

⁶³ Ajit Singh Sarhadi, "A Resolutin in dispute", The Tribune, February 25, 1985
⁶⁴ Jawaharlal Nehru cited in d.P. Mankekar, "High States in Punjab", Mainstream, Vol. XXI, No. 4, June 4, 1983, p. 16

progress and prosperity of the Indian people in their respective areas by the meaningful exercise of their powers.⁶⁵

On the basis of these arguments, the supporters of this Resolution believe that there is not a single word or even an oblique hint in the entire Anandpur Sahib Resolution which could denote it as secessionist or separatist.⁶⁶

In 1984 Lok Sabha elections, Rajiv Gandhi used the Anandpur Sahib Resolution as a political tool in order to elicit Hindu votes in favour of the Congress party and described it as "anti-national" and "unconstitutional", something which would lead to "disintegration of the country." Through poster, advertisements and campaign speeches, an atmosphere of anti-Sikh patriotism was generated. In fact, Rajiv Gandhi made this Resolution his pet theme in his election speeches and lambasted the Akalis for producing it and the Opposition parties for supporting it.

Those who back the Resolution assert that its main stress is on greater autonomy to the States by restructuring the whole federal framework and as such, there is nothing adverse in this demand. The C.P.M., the D.M.K. and some other Opposition parties have also made similar demands. The founding fathers of the Constitution had envisaged a federal set-up for the country, but simultaneously given wide powers to the Centre keeping in view the special circumstances prevailing in the country on the eve of Independence. However, with the passage of time, the situation had completely changed. At present, the State have become totally dependent on the Centre and have been reduced to the "status of municipalities". In order to reverse this trend and to give the State their rightful place in the federal set-up, it is

⁶⁵ Ajmer Singh, No. 29, p. 7

⁶⁶ Anandpur Sahib Resolution, neither anti-national nor unconstitutional", The Spokesman, Vo1.34, No.

essential to re-structure the existing pattern of Centre-State relations without further delay.

Similarly, the champions of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution believe that the territorial demands in the Resolution are in consonance with the Resolution of the Indian National Congress which had committed that in free India, the Congress Government would reorganize the provinces on linguistic basis. This principle was implemented in some parts of India and the provinces were re-organised on lingual basis by State Re-organisation Commission in 1956. In November, 1966, Punjab was reorganized on linguistic basis but Punjabi speaking areas of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan were not included in it. If the Resolution seeks the transfer to Punjab of all the left-out Punjabi-speaking areas on the basis of contiguity and village as a unit, there is nothing objectionable in it.⁶⁷

The supporters of the Resolution plead that all the demands made in the Resolution are within the limits of the Constitution. The Resolution, it is observed, is an "inarticulate expression" of a regional party speaking for the Sikh community. It seeks greater autonomy for the State of Punjab as well as for other States. At the same time, the Resolution demands special status for the Sikhs and certain specific territorial and other facilities for the people of the region.⁶⁸ The federal formula in the Resolution it is argued is based on the Simon Commission Report of 1930. The idea of an Indian federation was too liberal and unacceptable to the British Parliament. So, the British Government introduced the scheme of restricted distribution of powers between the Centre and the province under the Government of India

⁶⁷ Narinder Singh Bhuller, "Anandpur Sahib Resolution debated: Honor National Commitments," Dignity, April 28, 1985, p.5.

⁶⁸ K.S. Grewal, "Anandpur Sahib Resolution: An Inarticulate Expression of a Regional Party Speaking for Sikh Community," The Spokesman, January 7, 1985, p. 5

Act, 1935.⁶⁹ But, this was much less than the demand of the Congress party for greater amount of self-government for the States.

The Cabinet Mission plan of 1946 reiterated the earlier formula of a huge federation as visualized in the report of the Simon Commission, but the Constituent Assembly opted for the status-quo in Centre-State relations and stuck to the restricted scheme laid down in the Act of 1935. In other words, the Anandpur Sahib Resolution is a continuation of an age-old demand for a true federation and cannot be termed as a separatist or secessionist movement simply because it is sponsored by the Akali Dal.⁷⁰

The subscribers of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution underline that the demand for special status for the Sikhs in the Indian federal set-up is also within the limits of the constitution and, can be included in Part XXI of the Constitution which lists a number of special provisions. These were introduced in 1950's to accommodate various religious and linguistic aspirations. Many special privileges are enjoyed by Maharashtrians, Gujaratis, Telugus, Nagas, Assamees, Manipuris and Sikkimese under Article 371 and 371A to 371F.⁷¹ Article 370 accords a special status to the States of Jammu & Kashmir within the Indian Union.

The pleaders of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution opine that if everyone or every region is equal under the Indian Constitution, there should not be anyone or any area more privileged than others. IF IT IS NOT possible as are guaranteed to other communities should also be removed from the present Constitution of India.

The supporters of the Resolution point out that its importance lies in the fact that it exposes many constitutional drawbacks in the working

⁶⁹ Demand for special status for Sikhs not unconstitutional, The Spokesman, Vol. 34, No. 20, January 14, 1985, p. 2

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

of the federal polity and suggests a meaningful scheme for restructuring the federal system of the country. If Anandpur Sahib Resolution sets the people thinking about constitutional reforms and future regional developments, Indian statesman in the years to come may acknowledge its positive contribution in this respect.⁷²

Some upholders of the Resolution say that much of the criticism against the Anandpur Sahib Resolution would become meaningless if one takes into consideration the fact that Anandpur Sahib Resolution is only a working paper for restructuring Centre-State relations and not an absolute thing with a finality of its own. If any portion of Anandpur Sahib Resolution is unacceptable to the Union Government, improvements in it can be suggested keeping in view the greater interest of the nation at large.

In order to get the Anandpur Sahib Resolution accepted by the central Government, the Akali leaders approached Morarji Desai (the former Prime Minister). But he was not in favour of the demand for greater autonomy for the States and thus cold-shouldered the Akali leaders. The Janata Government at the Center favoured a strong Centre and supported the theory that a strong Centre is a binding force for the country. Morarji Desai clearly stated that the Centre could not be strong if the States were not strong because he believed that a strong Centre with weak States could lead to dictatorship.⁷³ In order to make this theory clear, he gave an illustration that States are like pearls and the Centre is a thread, which turns them into a necklace. If the thread snaps, he added, the pearls are scattered.⁷⁴

The downfall of the Janata Government at the Centre ended all hopes of the Akali Dal of getting the Anandpur Sahib Resolution accepted by the Union Government. The dismissal of Akali-Janata

⁷² K.S. Grewal, "The Resolution and the Constitution", The Tribune, December 26, 1984.

⁷³ Statesman, August 1, 1977

⁷⁴ The Hindu, September 25, 1978

coalition Ministry in the State after mid-term Lok Sabha elections in 1980, further convinced the Akali leaders that the Centre would not allow them to exercise political power in the State. The defeat of the Akali Dal in the Assembly elections in the State during 1980, compelled the Akali Dal to adopt a radical posture on the demand for re-structuring Centre-State relations. The Akali Dal's radical postures on Centre-State relations led to the rise of terrorism in Punjab. It ultimately resulted in Operation Blue Star in June, 1984.

The State was virtually put under army rule. Administrative failures and political mishandling were then covered by appeal to the emotions of the Hindu community in Punjab and outside. The Sikh community was pushed further into alienation and left to suffer between the blackmail of extremist secessionism on the one hand and State oppression on the other. However, the basic design of electoral campaign had been formulated. The Congress leadership launched a massive campaign against 'anti-national' forces which were portrayed as emanating from regionalism. The campaign was given an added bite by suggesting that these forces were being added by foreign powers.

The tragedy of Punjab spilled over the whole nation with the assassination of Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984. The assassination of the Prime Minister was seen as an attack by the forces of secessionism on a symbol of national authority. The atmosphere of communal division which had been building up over Punjab took a violent turn even as her body lay in state. Countrywide killings of the Sikhs continued over days. For the first time in independent India, an occasion of national mourning was converted into one of indiscriminate aggression against a community. The feeling of aggression remained long after the riots were over. And the catching slogan of 'unity and integrity' which had been put to the nation by the slain Prime Minister became a rallying point for the majority community.

In December, 1984, Parliamentary elections, the Congress created an atmosphere of anti-Sikh patriotism through posters, advertisements and campaign speeches. This strategy coupled with an appeal for stability caught the pseudo nationalistic sentiments of the majority and fetched the Congress party with a massive victory.

The Prime Minister tried to bring the Sikhs in national mainstream by signing Rajiv-Longowal Accord in July, 1985. But the non-implementation of the Accord and the dismissal of Barnala Ministry again brought the situation back to square one. Surprisingly, the Prime Minister has again started campaign of vilification against Anandpur Sahib Resolution. He often equated it with Jinnah's Fourteen Point which ultimately led to the creation of Pakistan. It appears that Rajiv Gandhi again wanted to use the Sikh card in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections.

From the foregoing account, it is evident that the demand for State autonomy on the part of Akali Dal has a historical and socio-economic context.

It has risen out of compulsion of Akali Dal as a spokesman of Sikh community. Initially, it appeared that reorganization of Punjab on linguistic basis would satisfy the political, religious, social-economic and cultural aspirations of the Sikh Community but repeated attempts on the part of the central government to dislodge the Akali Dal from power in the state led to the demand for greater autonomy to the states. It was in this context that the Akali Dal passed its historic Anandpur Sahib resolution for restricting Centre state relations. The Anandpur Sahib resolution has been interpreted in various ways. No doubt, there are some sentences in the resolution which could be misinterpreted but much of the propaganda is based on political consideration. The ruling Congress party has deliberately interpreted it as something very dreadful and anti national only to win Hindu votes in December in 1984 a Lok-Sabha elections which were clear from the fact that later on Rajiv

Gandhi as P.M agreed to refer it to the Sarkaria commission. This way, it shows this resolution perhaps contain some suitable guidelines for reforming the federal framework in India. The major opposition parties did not find much objections in it and but support to the Akali's during negotiations between the Union Government and the opposition parties.

It has observed through years, that the Union Government has become more and more powerful. But this is a universal phenomenon in almost all democracies because as the business of Government *becomes* more complex, more urgent and more specialized, the decision-making process becomes concentrated in an ever smaller group. The United States of America, whose Constitution envisages a weak Centre and strong States, has a President who is far more powerful than were George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson.

What bothers the political pundits is the high-handed, regular and sometimes irregular interference by the Centre in the affairs of the States at all levels. The fault surely lies in the men who man the system. Unless they imbibe some principles and stand upon them and unless they recognize that politics of grace and favour is no substitute for a political base acquired by long and hard-working in the constituency, no amount of tinkering with the constitution will make the centre stay within the certain limits, compulsions of Akali Dal as a spokes man of Sikh community. Initially, it appeared that reorganization of Punjab on linguistic basis would satisfy the political, religious, socio-economic and cultural aspirations of the Sikh community but repeated attempts on the part of the central government to dislodge the Akali Dal from power in the state led to the demand for greater autonomy to the States through Anandpur Sahib resolution for restructuring centre-state relations.

CHAPTER-4

SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES SINCE 1984

Although the demand for the Sikh homeland, which was based on the notion of Raj Karega Khalsa or Khalsa Ka Bolbala, found expression in the Akali movement for Punjabi Suba, the Akalis found that a sectarian majority does not ensure electoral majority. As Table-1 shows, the Akali Dal¹ failed to get a majority in the newly created Punjab state. In the 1967 assembly elections, the Akali Dal could get only one fifth votes and 24 seats in the Assembly of 104². Thus, after a strident and conscious effort to assert the Sikh identity, the Party could actually come to power only by aligning with the Jan Singh. This alliance set the pattern of sharing of power between the representatives of the two communities to strike a social balance, which neither could establish on its own. Perhaps, the failure to win power on its own allowed the Akalis to sustain the politics of sectarian identity even after the formation of the state³.

Table-4.1

Akali Dal in Assembly Elections (1952-2004)

Year	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Vote Share (Percent)
1952	48	13	12.4
1957	Not Contested	Not Contested	Not Contested
1962	45	19	11.9
1967	59	24	20.5
1969	65	43	29.4
1972	72	24	27.6
1977	70	58	31.4
1980	73	37	26.9
1985	100	73	38.0
1992	58	3	5.2
1997	92	75	37.6
2002	90	41	30.5

Source: Economic and Political weekly, April 3-10, 2004, Data CSDS unit.

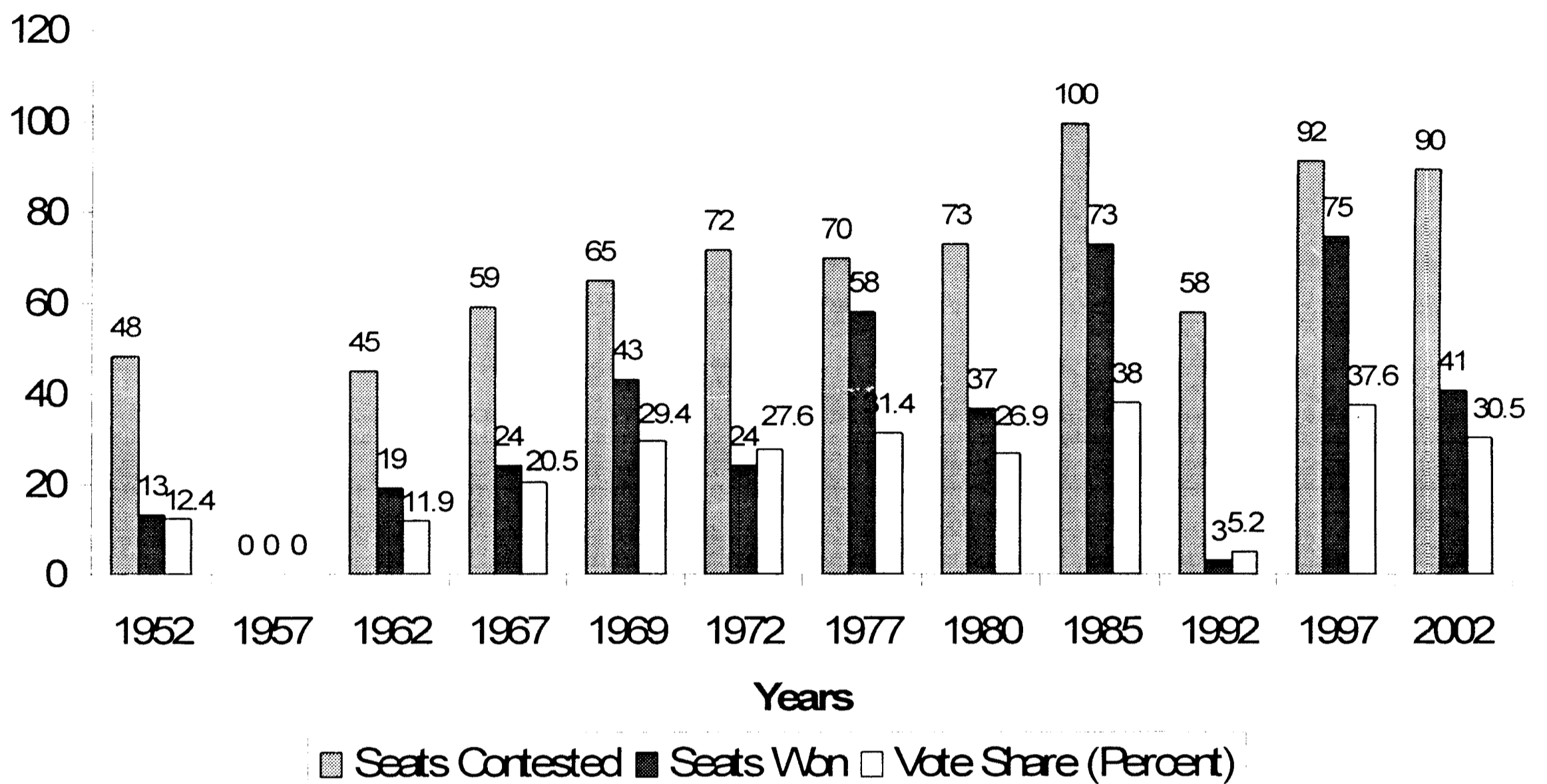
¹ Ashutosh Kumar, "Electoral Politics in Punjab: Study of Akali Dal" *Economic and Political weekly*, April 3. 10. 2004.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Figure- 4.1

Akali Dal in Assembly Elections (1952-2004)



The steamroller majority of the Congress in the 1972 Assembly further contributed to this sense of hurt and stoked the fires of identity politics. The Akali’s continued to project themselves as protectors of the Punjabi language as well as the Sikh religion as against the deliberate pursuit of the policy to assimilate the language and culture of a minority group⁴.

4.1 MILITANCY AND FACTIONALISM

It was such sentiments that found expression in the form of the Anandpur Sahib resolutions of 1973 and 1978 and later in the form of the autonomist / secessionist movement in the decade of the 1980s⁵. The core of Akali demands relating to the political, economic and social relationship between the centre and the state of Punjab is to be found in

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Anandpur Sahib Resolution of Akali Dal in 1973 and 1978.

the Anandpur Sahib resolution adopted by the working committee of the Akali Dal in October 1973. The resolution incorporated seven objectives aimed to establish the “pre-eminence of the Khalsa through creation of a congenial environment and a political set up. These were: the transfer of the federally administered city of Chandigarh to Punjab; the readjustment of the state boundaries to include certain Sikh majority Punjabi- speaking territory, presently out side but contiguous to Punjab; demand for autonomy to all the states of India with the centre retaining⁶. jurisdiction only over external affairs, defense, currency and communications; introduction of land reforms as well as the subsidies and loans for the peasantry as well as the measures to bring about heavy industrialization in Punjab⁷; the enactment of an All-India Gurudwara Act to bring all the historic Gurudwaras under the control of the SGPC; protection for the Sikh minorities living outside the State; reversal of the new recruitment policy of the centre under which the recruitment quota of Sikhs in the armed forces fell from 20 per cent to 2 per cent. The working committee of Akali Dal added two new demands to the Anandpur Sahib resolutions in February 1981 after which a set of 45 demands were submitted to the centre in September in the same year. These included, among others, the halting of allocation of available waters of riparian Punjab to a non-riparian state. Under the federally regulated arrangements, 75 per cent of the river waters of Punjab⁸ were being allocated to other states.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Table- 4.2

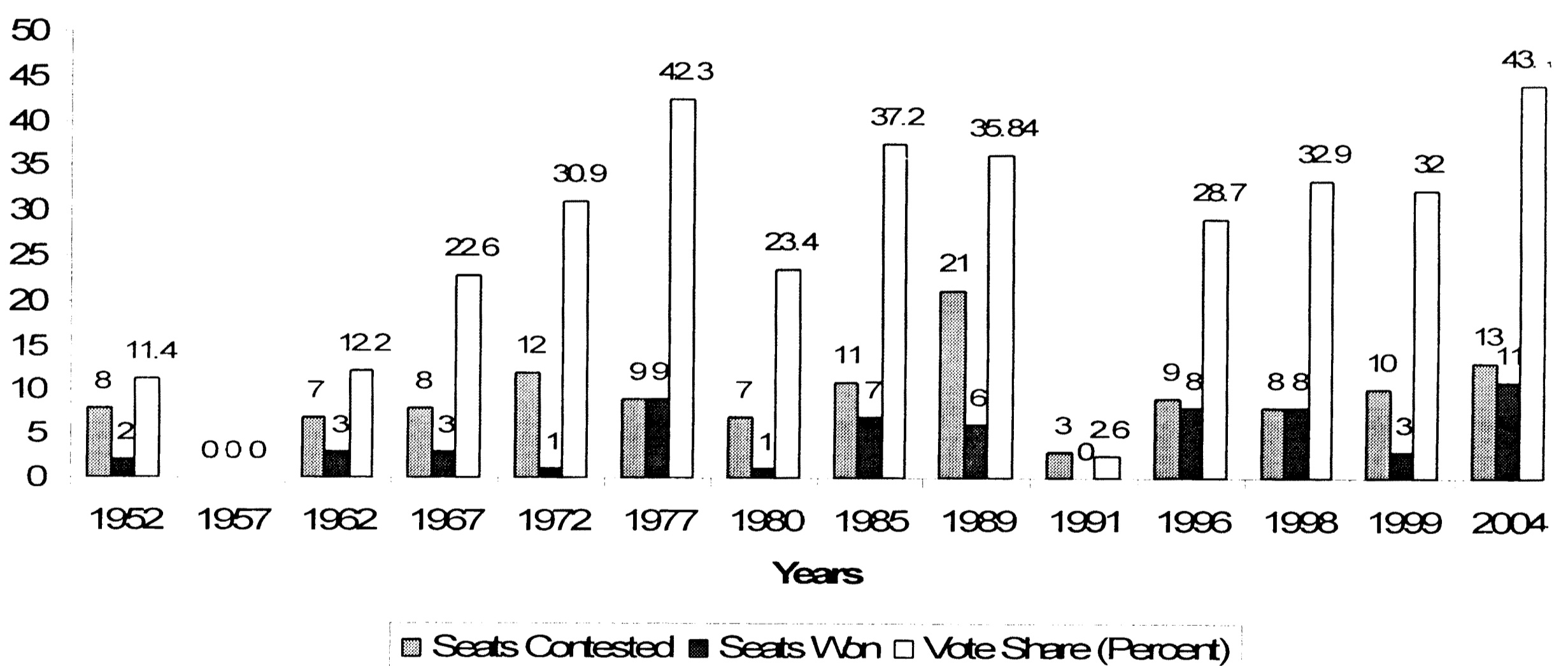
Akali Dal's Performance in Lok Sabha Elections (1952-2004)

Year	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Vote Share (Percent)
1952	8	2	11.4
1957	Not Contested	Not Contested	Not Contested
1962	7	3	12.2
1967	8	3	22.6
1972	12	1	30.9
1977	9	9	42.3
1980	7	1	23.4
1985	11	7	37.2
1989	21	6	35.84
1991	3	0	2.6
1996	9	8	28.7
1998	8	8	32.9
1999	10	3	32.0
2004	13	11	43.42

Source: *Economic and Political weekly*, April 3-10, 2004, Data CSDS unit.⁹

Figure- 4.2

Akali Dal's Performance in Lok Sabha Elections (1952-2004)



⁹ Ashutosh Kumar, "Electoral Politics in Punjab study of Akali Dal" *Economic and Political weekly*, April 3-10-2004 pp. 1516.

4.2 AKALI DAL AND DHARAM YUDH MORCHA¹⁰

The Akali Dal launched its Dharam Yudh Morcha from the Golden Temple, Amritsar from August 4, 1982 for the acceptance of the long pending demands of the Akali Dal (including the acceptance of Anandpur Sahib Resolution)¹¹. The Akali Dal submitted a memorandum of 45 demands to the Union Govt. for acceptance on 8th September, 1981. These demands were later on reduced to fifteen. Prominent among them included immediate transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab and other Punjabi speaking areas, allocation of more river waters according to Riparian Law, vesting of control of river headwork's in the hands of Punjab Govt; stoppage of toppling of Akali government; denial of second language status to Punjab in neighboring states, installation of heavy industry in Punjab, restoration of previous quota for the Sikhs in the Indian Army, installation of high powered transmitter at the Golden Temple for the relay of Shabad Kirtan. It may be pertinent to point out that more than two lakh Akali volunteers were arrested and more than 200 Akali workers were killed during Morcha due to insincere efforts in resolving the issue for variety of reasons. It is alleged that the situation was deliberately allowed to be deteriorated. In the process, it led to the Operation Blue Star¹², assassination of the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Anti Sikh riots in Delhi and other parts of India. The repeated failures in the negotiations with the Central Government that began in October 1981 led to the intensification of the second phase of Akali agitation that ultimately led to the Operation Blue Star followed by Operation Woodrose.¹³

Militancy in Punjab that was already simmering in the form of the rise of Bhindranwala received further impetus after these repressive

¹⁰ See, Dharam Yudh Morcha, Report, August 4, 1982.

¹¹ Ashutosh Kumar, "Electoral Politics in Punjab" Study of Akali Dal, n. 1 pp. 15-17.

¹² Punjab Government, facts about Punjab, 1980-85, Director Information and Public Relations, Punjab 1985, Chandigarh.

¹³ See, "Operation Woodrose", Report, Punjab Government Chandigarh.

acts of the centre. The Anti-Sikh riots that followed in Delhi and other parts of India further led to the alienation of the Sikh community. The Akali Dal leaders, most of whom were released only in March 1985 after spending months in jail during the post Blue Star period made an attempt to save Punjab from rise of religious fundamentalism and militancy in the form of the Rajiv-Longowal accord on July 24, 1985. In the face of stiff opposition from Haryana and the assassination of Longowal, the accord proved to be a failure¹⁴.

4.3 RAJIV LONGOWAL ACCORD

The Akali leaders viz Parkash Singh Badal, Surjit Singh Barnala, Gurcharan Singh Tohra, Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa and Balwant Singh accepted the leadership of Harchand Singh Longowal and authorized him for any sort of agreement with the Central Government. Later on Sant Harchand Singh Longowal expressed his desire for negotiations with the Central Government on the ground of some preconditions¹⁵. He emphasized the continuation of Sikh struggle until the implementation of Anandpur Sahib resolution. A meeting was materialized by the then Governor of Punjab, Arjan Singh between Akali Leaders and the Prime Minister on July 23, 1985¹⁶. According to the scheduled meeting, Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India met Sant Harchand Singh Longowal President of the Akali Dal¹⁷. The latter was assisted by Surjit Singh Barnala and Balwant Singh. As an aftermath of this meeting, written document known as "Punjab Accord" was signed by two parties on July 24, 1985¹⁸.

¹⁴ Indian Express Oct. 1985.

¹⁵ See, "Punjab Accord".

¹⁶ See, "Indian Express" on July 23, 1985.

¹⁷ See, "Punjab Accord".

¹⁸ See, "Indian Express" on 24 July 1985.

4.3.1 Center –State Relations

The Shiromani Akali Dal states that the Anandpur Sahib Resolution is entirely within the frame work of Indian constitution, that it attempts to define the concept of centre state relations in a manner, which may bring out true federal characteristics of our unitary constitution, and that the purpose of the resolution is to provide greater autonomy to the state with a view to strengthening the unity and diversity, integrity of the country forming the cornerstone of our national¹⁹ entity.

4.3.2 Sharing of River Waters

The farmers of Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana will continue to get water not less than what they are using from the Ravi, Beas system as on 1.7.1985 Water used for consumptive purpose will also remain unaffected. Quantum for usage claimed shall be verified by the tribunal referred to para 9.2. below²⁰.

- a) The claim of Punjab and Haryana regarding the share in the remaining waters will be referred for adjudication to a tribunal to be presided over by a Supreme Court judge. The decision of this tribunal will be referred within six months and would be binding on both parties.
- b) The construction of SYL shall continue. The Canal shall be completed by 15th August, 1986.

4.3.3 Representation of Minorities²¹

Existing instructions regarding protection of interests of minorities will be reallocated to the State Chief Minister.

¹⁹ S.R. Bakshi, "Contemporary Political Leadership In India P.S. Badal. Chief Minister of Punjab", Publishing corporation, New Delhi, 1998 pp. 130-131.

²⁰ See, "Tribune on sharing of river water."

²¹ Kuldeep Kaur, "Akali Dal in Punjab Politics, splits and mergers" Deep Publication, Delhi 1999.

4.3.4 Promotion of Punjabi Language

The Central Government may take some steps for the promotion of the Punjabi language²².

4.3.5 Territorial Claims²³

- a) The Capital Project area of Chandigarh will go to Punjab. Some adjoining areas which were previously part of Hindi and Punjabi regions will be included in the Union Territory. With the Capital regions going to Punjab, the areas which were added to the Union Territory from the Punjab region of the erstwhile state of Punjab will be transferred to Punjab and those from the Hindi region to Haryana. The extra Sukhna Lake will be kept as part of Chandigarh and will thus go to Punjab.
- b) It had already been mentioned by Smt. Indira Gandhi that when Chandigarh is go to Punjab some Hindi speaking areas in Punjab will go to Haryana. A commission will be constituted to determine the specific Hindi speaking areas of Punjab which should go to Haryana Contiguity and linguistic affinity, and the village as a unit will be the basis of such determination. The commission will be required to give its findings by 31st Dec. 1985 and these will be binding on both sides. The work of the commission will be limited to this aspect and will be distinct from the general boundary claims which the other commission referred to in para 7.4 will handle.
- c) The actual transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab and Hindi speaking areas of Punjab in lieu to Haryana will take place simultaneously on 26th January 1986.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

- d) There are other claims and counter claims for readjustment of the existing Punjab, Haryana Boundaries. The government will appoint another Commission to consider these matters and give its findings. The terms of reference will be based on a village as a unit, linguistic affinity and contiguity²⁴.

4.3.6 All India Gurudwara Act

The Govt. of India agrees to consider the formulation of an All India Gurudwara Act. Legislation will be brought forward for this purpose in consultation with the Shiromani Akali Dal and others concerned and after fulfilling all relevant constitutional requirements.

4.3.7 Army Recruitment

All citizens of the country have a right to enroll themselves in the Armed Forces and merit will be the main criteria for selection.

4.3.8 Inquiry of November 1984 Incidents²⁵

The jurisdiction of Justice Ranganath Mishra Commission inequiring into the November riots of Delhi could be extended to cover the disturbances of Bokaro and Jodhpur also. The Notification applying the Armed forces special powers Act to Punjab will be withdrawn.

The Punjab Accord prepared the ground for a split in Akali Dal which surfaced in April – May 1986. Some opinion makers have observed that the Punjab Accord was manipulated by the Congress the then ruling party at the centre. Rajiv Longowal Accord created the dissensions inside the Akali Dal which ultimately led to split. Where as Kuldeep Nayer is of the opinion that Punjab Accord as well as the death of Sant Harchand Singh Longowal was responsible for the split in Akali

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

Dal in 1986²⁶. G.S. Tohra and P.S. Badal condemned the Accord publicly on the ground²⁷ that the army deserters and Sikh youth, who sacrificed for the sake of the Panth were not recognized in the Accord and were still “ Languishing” in Jails. Jagdev Singh Talwandi was most vociferous in opposing the Accord. The United Akali Dal led by Baba Joginder Singh described the Punjab Accord as a total sell out. He accused Sant H.S. Longowal of cheating the Sikh Panth and described the Accord as anti-Sikh²⁸.

J.S. Grewal observes that Sant Harchand Singh Longowal’s mantle fell on Surjit Singh Barnala because he was taken into confidence by the Sant for signing the Accord and that he was more acceptable to New Delhi than the other senior leaders²⁹.

After the Punjab accord, the elections to Punjab Vidhan Sabha were held in 1985 and Akali Dal got the resounding victory which is clear from the Table 4.3 and 4.4 below.

Table- 4.3

Punjab Vidhan Sabha Election 1985³⁰

Total Votes Polled	72,45,497
Invalid Votes	3,24,952
Valid Votes	69,20,545
Total Seats	117
Results Declared	115
Countermanded	02

²⁶ Kaur Kuldeep n. 21.

²⁷ See, “Punjab Accord”.

²⁸ Ashutosh Kumar, n. 1.

²⁹ Punjab Accord, The Times of India, August 26, 1985 p. 8.9.

³⁰ Government of Punjab, Report on the Vidhan Sabha Election 1985, Chief Electoral officer.

Figure- 4.3

Punjab Vidhan Sabha Election 1985

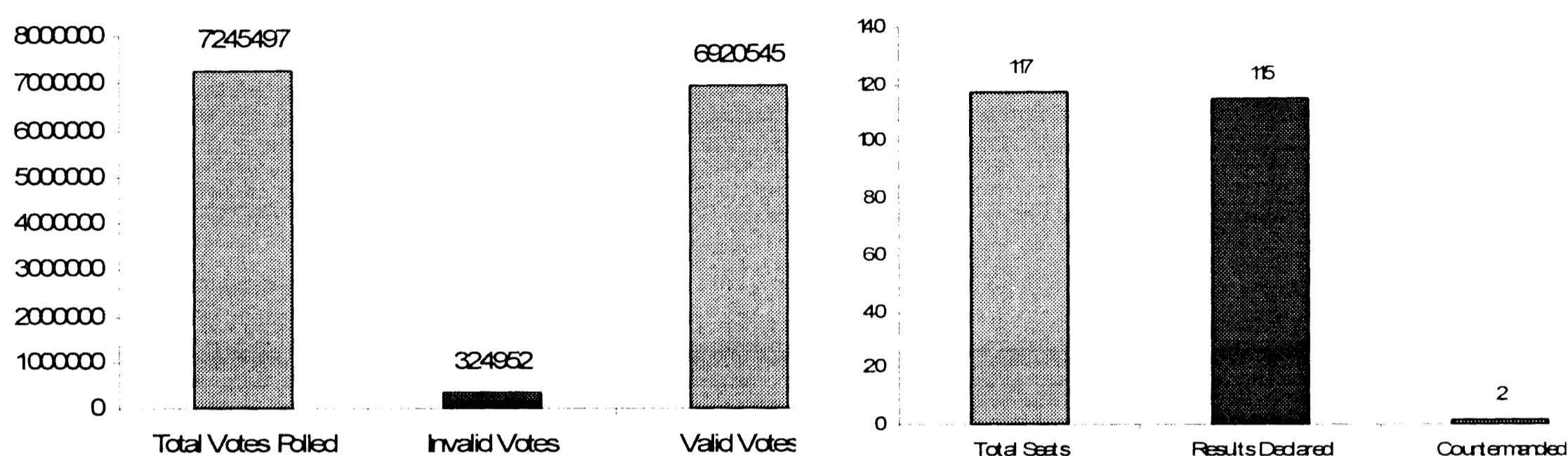


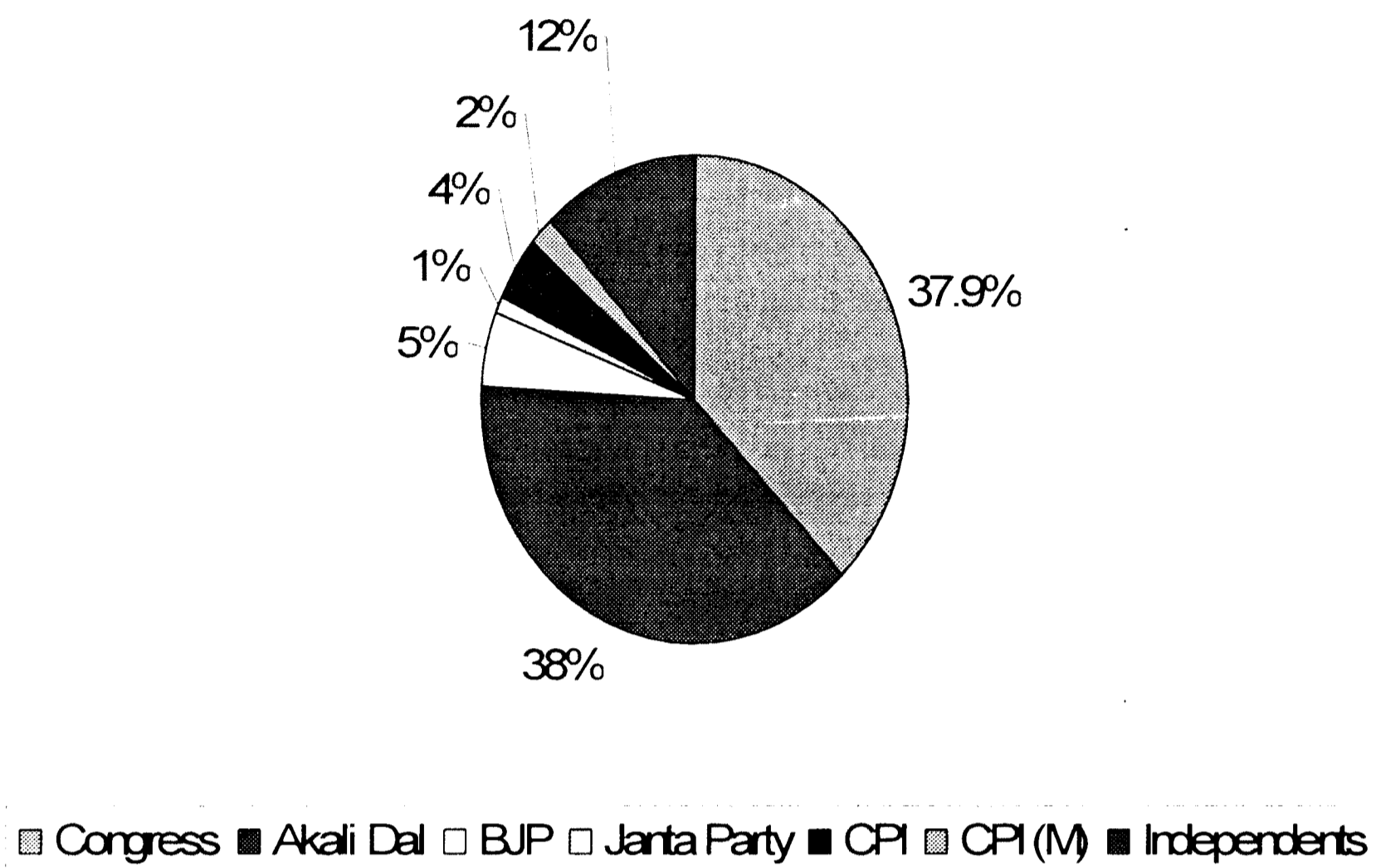
Table- 4.4

Party wise Position in Punjab Vidhan Sabha Election 1985

Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Percentage of Votes Polled
Congress	117	32	37.9
Akali Dal	100	73	38.0
BJP	26	04	5.0
Janta Party	5	1	1.1
CPI	37	1	4.2
CPI (M)	28	-	1.9
Independents	543	4	11.9
Total	856	115	100

Figure- 4.4

Party wise Position in Punjab Vidhan Sabha Election 1985



After the resounding victory in the Punjab Assembly Elections Akali Dal Longowal elected Surjit Singh Barnala the co-architect of Rajiv-Longowal Accord as leader of the legislature Party and he was sworn as Chief Minister on September 29, 1985. Immediately after the formations of Ministry the differences in Akali Dal³¹ came to the surface.

It is clear from the above description that the Central Government managed the 1986 spilt in Akali Dal through Punjab Accord. Another important factor was the death of Sant Harchand Singh Longowal the cementing force between Surjit Singh Barnala, Balwant Singh, G.S.Tohra, and P.S.Badal. Moreover the unilateral decision on the part of Surjit Singh Barnala regarding sending Police entry into Harmandir Sahib was responsible for the parting of the ways of Akali leaders in May 1986.

³¹ Ibid.

4.4 AKALI DAL AS A RULING PARTY

For putting an end to the era of confrontation, the Akali Dal (Longowal group) negotiated a political deal with the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The Rajiv–Longowal accord, no doubt, made a good beginning but it remained in cold waters as no effort was made to honour it³². Surjit Singh Barnala assumed office as Chief Minister as the Akali Dal had won a massive victory having 73 out of 117 seats in the Assembly elections held on September 25, 1985³³. The failure on the part of Barnala for not getting general amnesty for the arrested youth, release of Jodhpur detainees and re-instatement of the Army deserters had disillusioned the rank and file of the Party. The raid on the Golden Temple on 20th April, 1986 by Police and Paramilitary forces on the order of Chief Minister Barnala resulted in the split of the Akali Dal³⁴. Three ministers resigned on protest against the Police entry into the Golden Temple on May 11, 1987³⁵. The Barnala ministry was dissolved from office due to the alleged failure of his govt. to curtail terrorism in Punjab State. As a result, the Akalis, who had an absolute majority in the State legislature, witnessed growing militancy and increasing communal polarization. These developments led to heightened acrimony between the moderates and the extremists within Akali Dal.

The continued efforts to create divisions within the different factions of the Akali Dal by the centre further weakened the support base of the moderates leading to the subsequent dismissal of Barnala government in 1987. Akali Dal came under the firm control of the extremists and the elements supportive of militancy. The situation remained the same even after the victory of Akali Dal (Mann) in November 1989, Parliamentary elections having 6 out of 8 seats

³² See, “Rajiv Longowal Accord”.

³³ The Times of India, September 25, 1985.

³⁴ The Times of India April 21, 1986.

³⁵ The Tribune May 11, 1987.

contested securing 29.19³⁶ per cent of the votes. The party now clearly stood for the formation of Khalistan under the Presidentship of the Simranjit Singh Mann that subsequently found the expression in the form of Amritsar declaration³⁷. The marginalization of the two moderate factions of the Akali Dal led by Parkash Singh Badal and Surjeet Singh Barnala was evident as the two put together managed to win only 6.65 Per cent of the votes and could not win a single seat.

4.5 BOYCOTT OF THE FEBRUARY 1992 ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS³⁸

The Akali Dal has been insisting for settlement of Punjab crisis. The six Panthic organization namely the Akali Dal (Mann), Akali Dal (Babbar), Akali Dal (Baba Joginder Singh) All India Sikh Student Federation (Manjit Group) and A.I.S.S.F. (Mehta–Chawla group) boycotted assembly elections. However, only one faction Akali Dal (Kabul group) contested the Assembly Election and could win only three seats. Factionalism among the Akalis is a matter of habit particularly on the eve of elections. Though there were many factions, but the Akali Dal (Badal) had emerged as the most powerful and may be termed as the real Akali Dal in SGPC elections held in October, 1996. Thereafter Akali Dal (B) emerged as a single largest Party in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha Elections held in Feb. 1997³⁹. It won 75 out of 117 Assembly seats in Punjab and ruled in Punjab under the Chief Ministership of Parkash Singh Badal. Though March 2002 assembly elections were lost by Akali Dal (Badal). It still managed to win 41 seats, while no other Akali Dal succeeded in winning a single seat⁴⁰.

³⁶ Ashutosh Kumar n. 1.

³⁷ See, "Amritsar Declaration".

³⁸ Ashutosh Kumar n. 1.

³⁹ See, Election Results of Punjab Vidhan Sabha on February 1997.

⁴⁰ See, Election Results of Punjab Vidhan Sabha on March 2002.

4.6 AKALI DAL—A DIVIDED HOUSE

The Akali Dal stands divided into various factions and all these factions are caught in a whirlpool of proving their legitimacy with the people of Punjab. The rise of militant movement in the wake of the Operation Blue Star has made several factions as totally irrelevant during the Punjab problem started in 1980s⁴¹. The Indian state treated the entire issue in the frame work of law and order problem whereas the Akali Dal and prominent non-Congress opposite parties emphasized on the Indian state for the need to apply the healing touch by offering political package to Punjab. These parties believed that only a political solution to the agony of Punjab could find lasting peace. It is highly desirable that about dozen Akali factions during that time namely the Akali Dal (Badal), the Akali Dal (Mann), the Akali Dal (Kabul), the Akali Dal (Baba Joginder Singh), the Akali Dal (Panthic), the Akali Dal (Sukhjinder Singh), the Jagat Akali Dal (Jiwan Singh Umranangal), the Akali Dal (pheruman) and Akali Dal (Master Group) etc. should have forged unity. The latest position is that three main factions of Akali Dal are operating - Akali Dal (Mann) Sarab Hind Shiromani Akali Dal (SHSAD) and Akali Dal (Badal).⁴² From the foregoing analysis, it becomes evident that Akalis are a force to be reckoned in the politics of Punjab. One can't overlook the heroic role which the Shiromani Akali Dal has played in the freedom struggle of India. After the attainment of independence the Akali Dal continued to play its part as defender of the interests of Sikh community and Punjab as a whole. To Akali Dal goes the credit of creating Punjabi speaking State. For achieving this objective, the Akali Dal had carried on a crusade (from 1946 till 1966). The Akali Dal was in the forefront of the Indian Politics and it carried on a banner as defender of the rights of the Indian People and raised its

⁴¹ Ashutosh Kumar n.1.

⁴² Kaur Kuldeep n. 21.

voice against the Oppression and excesses of emergency. The Akali Dal carried on its Morcha "Save Democracy" (Anti-Emergency Morcha for full nineteen months till emergency was revoked). Like other opposition parties (D.M.K., C.P.M., C.P.I) the Akali Dal demands more autonomy to the states so that regional governments are in a position to play proper role in the nation-building activities in their respective states. The Akali Dal is opposed to the centralization of power and wants that monolith centre should function within its bounds respecting the autonomous functioning of the states.

As a ruling party in Punjab, it has introduced many development schemes like the network of Rural link roads; Model village scheme; Integrated Rural development programme; remission of Land Revenue upto 5 acres of land; lowering the rates of electricity and Co-operative Bank Loans; Revision of pay scales of the state employees and sanction of DA at Central Govt. rates, Shagun scheme for S.C & S.T families etc. Free electricity and water to farmers for agriculture were given during the last 5 years (1997- 2002).

The Akali Dal also demands ending the discrimination and injustice done to Punjab by de-linking of many Punjabi Speaking areas including the city of Chandigarh. It wants that all demands listed in the Anandpur Sahib resolution should be accepted so that Punjab is able to have more water, more electricity and installation of heavy industries, which will go a long way in increasing the prosperity of Punjab.

4.7 AKALI DAL IN PUNJAB POLITICS SPLITS AND MERGERS

SGPC plays a significant role in the Akali factionalism as well as unity. Pritam Singh maintains that only that faction generally emerges as dominant in Akali Dal which has comparatively a sound material base in terms of ownership of land and other economic resources. But

the power prospects remained the basic factor for unity in Akali Dal from time to time. Besides, the other parties such as CPI (M) and DMK were also involved in the unity of Akali Dal in 1968 because these parties supported Akali Dal (Sant) at Batala conference held on September 28, 29, 1968. The death of the President of one of the factions of the Akali Dal was also responsible for the unity of two Akali Dal's in 1968⁴³.

Thus, the Party has faced split in the years 1962, 1980, 1986, 1989, 1991 and the estranged factions managed to merge in 1968, 1982, 1985, 1987, 1990 and 1995⁴⁴.

Thus the study presents an overview about the dominance of Jat Sikhs in Akali Dal in 1962 and the merger of the two factions over Batala Resolution in 1968. The clash of Personalities between Sant Fateh Singh, The President of Shiromani Akali Dal and the Chief Minister Gurnam Singh was evident. Again we discuss the role played by the Organization and Ministerial wings of Akali Dal and their unity over Dharam Yudh Morcha in 1982 was significant. Lastly our focus is shifted to the process of formation of the militant Akali Groups and the leaders of these groups who got united under the direction of Akal Takht. Last but not the least the police entry into Harmander Sahib (Golden Temple) in 1986 and the intervention of Akal Takht Jathedar with a view to unite the Akali faction in 1987. Later on, three factions of Akali Dal i.e. Akali Dal (Mann), Akali Dal (Badal) and Akali Dal (Longowal) merged and accepted Simernjit Singh Mann as president of Shiromani Akali Dal on January 12, 1991⁴⁵.

The above analysis makes it clear that the argument of sacrifice for Sikh Quam as a criteria for leadership remained powerful in the Akali

⁴³ Kaur Kuldeep n. 1.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

split in 1988–1989 as well as merger in 1991⁴⁶. The confrontation erupted as unified Akali Dal made fresh appointments giving greater representation to the Badal faction by ignoring the Baba faction. Besides not accepting the decision of Simranjit Singh Mann regarding the enlargement of 5 members Presidium contributed to the split in the Party “The Badal faction, who was supported by SGPC, reappointed Prof. Darshan Singh as Jathedar of Akal Takht in place of Jasbir Singh Rode. The factional fight within the unified Akali Dal reached the breaking point over the dissolution of 13 member Council when the Badal and Baba group selected Jagdev Singh Talwandi and Simranjit Singh Mann as their leaders respectively. The above analysis reveal that the role of central Government was the main factor responsible for this split and merger. Moreover the congress I and militant Groups were involved in the factionalism and split in Akali Dal (Longowal) and unified Akali Dal.⁴⁷

The non-Congress leadership at the Central level i.e., Sh. Chander Sekher, the then Prime Minister (Samajwadi Janta Party) facilitated the merger of Akali Dal (Badal), Akali Dal (Longowal) and Akali Dal (Mann) because all Akali factions authorized Simranjit Singh Mann to talk with Centre on the basis of his invitation. The favorable popular mood played an indispensable role for the unity of various Akali factions. In brief, we can say that change of Political climate in the state and lack of skilled leadership on the part of Simranjit Singh Mann were responsible for the frequent splits of Akali Dal (Mann). The announcement of Lok Sabha and Assembly elections of June 22, 1991 played significant role in a number of splits during this period. In spite of police repression the various Akali factions viz, Akali Dal (Badal), Akali Dal (Mann), Akali Dal (Baba), could not unite for the Punjab Assembly

⁴⁶ See, Akali Dal Splits and Merger of 1988-89 and 1991 in Kaur Kuldeep n. 119-120.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

elections held on February 19, 1992.⁴⁸ Later on two Khalsa Marches organized by the Jathedar Akal Takht and latter's direct intervention made the unity of various Akali faction. The Badal factions stand against the unity move was supported by BJP and the communists. But ultimately the intervention of the Acting Jathedar of Akali Takht succeeded in bringing unity between Akali Dal (Badal) and Akali Dal (Amritsar).⁴⁹

4.8 AMRITSAR DECLARATION⁵⁰

The goal of the new Party was announced in the 'Amritsar Declaration' issued on the eve of its birth. Amritsar Declaration viz on the basis of sovereign Sikh state announced by Col. Jasmer Singh Bala and endorsed by S.S. Barnala. The Congress Party ruling in the Centre as well as in Punjab condemned the historic Amritsar Declaration, "The Union Home Minister Chavan termed it a very serious issue and said," it is very unfortunate that in the name of unity they may have come together and issued the Amritsar Declaration. The other parties such as Janta Dal, BJP, Samajvadi Janta Party, Communist Party of India (Marxist) totally rejected the Akali Dal Amritsar Declaration for separate state. Satya Pal Dang further observed, "Tohra is reported to have revived his old ambition of becoming Chief Minister Punjab after the next elections, which was possible in case of his leadership of united Akali Dal. He further laid that the Akali leaders, such as S.S. Mann, Jagdev Singh Talwandi, S.S. Barnala, and Amrinder Singh had apparently undressed Tohra's design of keeping Badal away from power. It was with this objective that they had worked out the Strategy of downgrading P.S. Badal to revive their own electoral ambitions. Surely, a section of Jan Sangh observed that G.S. Tohra played the unity drama with a view to be the Chief Minister of Punjab which was

⁴⁸ Ashutosh Kumar, N.1.

⁴⁹ Kaur Kuldeep, n.1.

⁵⁰ See, "Amritsar Declaration".

possible only by removing Parkash Singh Badal from his way.” Captain Kanwaljit Singh dubbed the Amritsar Declaration as anti Sikh, anti Punjab, anti People and violated the spirit of the of Guru Granth Sahib⁵¹. He charged the Pro unity Akali leaders of disintegrating the country. He alleged that the declared intention of few Akali leaders to lead a movement for the creation of sovereign state and this process will lead to disintegration of the nation and will pose a challenge to the unity and integrity of the country where as the Sikh intellectuals justified the Amritsar Declaration being a historic decision with a view to raise the image of the Sikhs.

Our study indicates that so far as the role of Akal Takht is concerned it has intervened in the factional fights of the Akalis only when the dominant faction of SGPC so desired. The success or failure of unity moves at the behest of Akal Takht depends on a number of factors, the popular perception of the impartiality of the clergy seeming the main factors. The Jan Sangh, BJP and the communists have always supported that faction of the Akalis which took a stand against the intervention of the Akal Takht in Political Affairs. To conclude we can say that in a situation the success or failure of unity depends mainly on the Political assessment of the dominant leadership. If it thinks that it can capture power without the support of the rebel Akali party it may keep the facade for party unity but may not be serious about it. But in case the unity is considered to be necessary for the purpose then requested sacrifices are made to accommodate the claims of the adversaries. Though the process of disintegration of the nation based a challenge to the unity and integrity of the country where as the Sikh intellectual council justified that the Amritsar Declaration announcing it a historic decision with a view to raise the image of the Sikhs of the

⁵¹ Ibid

country. They alleged that the declaration reveals the intentions of few Akali leaders to a movement for the creation of the sovereign state.

4.9 RECENT DEVELOPMENT IN AKALI POLITICS⁵²

Many important events occurred on the political scenario of Punjab after April 1995, which has proved that the Shiromani Akali Dal under the leadership of P.S. Badal is supreme power in Punjab. The then acting Jathedar of Akal Takht intervened in Akali politics for the unity purpose and after this unity P.S. Badal declared the 'Anandpur Sahib resolutions' to be the basis of the policy and programme of the Akali Dal in the beginning of August 1995. But S.S. Mann expressed different opinion when he favoured the idea of Khalistan. Later on the victory of Akali Dal (Badal) in the Gurudwara election of Delhi and victory of Manpreet Singh Badal in the Gidderbaha byelections made it clear that the Akali Dal Badal is the real Akali Dal. In November 1995, P.S. Badal called on the political parties of the country to launch a National Campaign for autonomy to the states. The centre should retain only defence, Foreign affairs, currency, Railways and communications. On December 18, 1995 he emphasized that the Akali Dal was committed to resolving the long pending issues such as the river waters disputes, transfer of Chandigarh and other Punjabi speaking territories to Punjab, the status of Punjabi in the adjoining states and a true federal system.

During mid term Lok Sabha poll on March 1998.⁵³ The Akali Dal Badal created History by capturing all the 13 Lok Sabha seats of Punjab in the 12th Lok Sabha elections and the Shiromani Akali Dal was also a participant in the 12 Party coalition government ruling at the centre under leadership of A.B. Vajpayee. A very latest step towards the supremacy of ruling Akali Dal Badal in Punjab during 2007 Assembly

⁵² Kaur Kuldeep n.l.

⁵³ See, mid term Lok Sabha Poll during March 1998.

elections,⁵⁴ Badal again became Chief Minister of Punjab with BJP alliance partner. On the political front P.S. Badal is now more mature following decades of political isolation. He faces no threat from any other faction of Akali Dal. Moreover the presence of his nephew, son in law and brother in law of his son in the state Assembly will provide him with the always required strength in case of any crisis. Under the Vajpayee leadership Akali Dal Badal emphasized to review the Indian constitution and delete Article 356. He further emphasized to implement the Sarkaria Commission report for appointment of Governor with the consultation of state CM and 73rd amendment in Indian constitution and true federal structure of Indian Constitution should be retained. However the ticklish issue before the SAD-BJP combine government is a revision of Indian Constitution for more power to states, Centre should retain only five subjects, a true federal structure abolishing Article 356, river water disputes, transfer of Chandigarh and other Punjabi speaking territories to Punjab, the status of Punjabi in the adjoining states, the change in the principle of recruitment to the army and a true federal system⁵⁵.

⁵⁴ See, Punjab Assembly Election during 2007.

⁵⁵ See, Akali Dal manifesto before Punjab Vidhan Sabha Elections 2007.

CHAPTER-5

AKALI DAL AND COALITION GOVERNMENT FROM 1997 ONWARDS

Parliamentary and Assembly elections since 1996 have continued to reflect a shift in the electoral politics of Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD)-politico-economic issues have replaced ethno-religious ones. Also discernible is the shift from an anti-centre stand to cooperative federalism and from a politics of confrontation to peace and Hindu-Sikh unity.¹ However, it needs to adopt a new social profile moving beyond its images as a party of Jat Sikhs and Khatri.

The Akali Dal in Punjab is an illustration of a party trapped at the crossroads of region and religion. The policies and political positions of the Akali Dal are always constrained by this peculiar location of the party. Electoral politics also frequently forces the Akali Dal to look beyond the regional sectarian interests and projects it as a party of the ordinary 'people' of Punjab. Similarly, the party has also to live with the fact that even after state reorganization and the creation of a Sikh majority state; the party has to take into consideration the interests of the non-Sikh population of the State. A convoluted way adopted by the Akalis for doing this has been the alliance with 'Hindu' forces in the state for electoral and government purposes.

The Akali Dal has undergone many periods of crisis and these have tested the tenacity of Akali policies.² During the pre-independence period, the Akali policies were engaged in the battle for 'representation' through the mechanism of either sectarian representation or of self

¹ Ashutosh Kumar, Electoral politics in Punjab, study of Akali Dal, Economic and Political Weekly April 3, 2004.

² Ibid.

determination. With the partition of India, this dual strategy receded into the background and the Akalis got busy with the demand for statehood within the Indian union. This brought it in sharp confrontation with the 'Hindu' lobby and in the process, communalized its approach to Punjab politics. After statehood was attained in 1966, Akali Dal was involved in routine electoral politics and issues of governance. The 1980s saw the Akali Dal getting involved in and fragmented by the militant movement for autonomy and nationhood. It took some time for the Akalis to overcome the tumult and turmoil of these events and even after the Rajiv-Longowal pact; the Akali Dal could not get its act together for next five years or so. Only in the 1990s, normal politics appeared to be making a comeback in Punjab. In the post-1992³ phase, the politics of Akali Dal has been shaped by the emergence of a sharp and shrill politics of Hindutva as also the electoral compulsions of aligning with the Hindutva political forces.

As Table-5.1 shown on next page, the Akali Dal failed to get a majority in the newly created Punjab state. In the 1967 Assembly elections, the Akali Dal could get only one-fifth votes and 24 seats in the assembly of 104.⁴ This, after a strident and conscious effort to assert the Sikh identity, the party could actually come to power only by aligning with the Jan Sangh. This alliance set the pattern of sharing of power between the representatives of the two communities to strike a social balance, which neither could establish, the Akalis to sustain the politics of sectarian⁵ identity even after the formation of the state.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Source: Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, www.wikipedia.com

⁵ Ashutosh Kumar, Economic and Political weekly April 3-10, pp. 1516.

Table-5.1**Akali Dal in Assembly Elections (1952-2002)**

Year	Seats contested	Seats won	Vote Share (percent)
1952	48	13	12.4
1957	Not Contested	Not contested	Not contested
1962	45	19	11.9
1967	59	24	20.5
1969	65	43	29.4
1972	72	24	27.6
1977	70	58	31.4
1980	73	37	26.9
1985	100	73	38.0
1992	58	3	5.2
1997	92	75	37.6
2002	90	41	30.5

The steamroller majority of the Congress in the 1972 assembly further contributed to this sense of hurt and stroked the fires of identity politics. The Akalis continued to project themselves as protectors of the Punjabi language as well as the Sikh religion as against the deliberate pursuit of the policy to assimilate the language and culture of a minority group.⁶

⁶ Ibid.

Table-5.2
Akali Dal's Performance in Lok Sabha Elections⁷ (1952-2004)

Year	Seats contested	Seats won	Vote Share (percent)
1952	8	2	11.4
1957	Not Contested	Not contested	Not contested
1962	7	3	12.2
1967	8	3	22.6
1972	12	1	30.9
1977	9	9	42.3
1980	7	1	23.4
1985	11	7	37.2
1989	21	6	35.84
1991	3	0	2.6
1996	9	8	28.7
1998	8	8	32.9
1999	10	3	32.0
2004	13	11	43.42

It was such sentiments that found expression in the form of the Anandpur Sahib resolutions of 1973 and 1978⁸ and later in the form of the autonomist/secessionist movement in the decade of the 1980s. The core of Akali demands relating to the political, economic and social relationship between the centre and the state of Punjab is to be found in the Anandpur Sahib resolution adopted by the working committee of the Akali Dal in October 1973.

⁷ Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, www.wikipedia.com

⁸ See Anandpur Sahib Resolution.

The repeated failure in the negotiations with the Central Government that began in October 1981 led to the intensification of the second phase of Akali agitation that ultimately led to the Operation Blue Star followed by Operation Woodrose.⁹ Post blue Star period an attempt was made to save Punjab from rise of religious fundamentalism and militancy in the form of the Rajiv-Longowal accord on July 24, 1985.¹⁰ In the face of stiff opposition from Haryana and the assassination of Longowal, the accord proved to be failure. As a result, the Akalis, who had an absolute majority in the state legislature, witnessed growing militancy and increasing communal polarization.

These developments led to heightened acrimony between the moderates and the extremists within Akali Dal. The continued efforts to create divisions within the different factions of the Akali Dal by the centre further weakened the support base of the moderates leading to the subsequent dismissal of Barnala Government in 1987. The situation remained the same even after the victory of Akali Dal (Mann) in November 1989 parliamentary elections on winning 6 out of 8 seats contested securing 29.19 percent of the votes. The party now clearly stood for the right to self determination under the presidentship of Simranjit Singh Mann that subsequently found expression in the form of Amritsar Declaration. The marginalization of two moderate factions of Akali Dal led by Prakash Singh Badal and Surjit Singh Barnala was evident as the two put together managed to win only 6.65 percent of the votes and could not win a single seat.¹¹

In 1992 both Akali Dal factions led by Mann and Badal boycotted the parliamentary as well as the Assembly elections that took place one

⁹ Ashutosh Kumar, Economic and Political weekly April 3-10, 2004. pp. 1517.

¹⁰ See Rajiv-Longowal accord on Punjab July 24, 1985.

¹¹ Punjab Assembly Elections results. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, www.wikipedia.com.

year after the 1991 general election under president's rule thereby undermining the legitimacy of the victory of Congress.¹²

The resurrection of traditional Akali Dal under the leadership of Badal was also helped by the fact that by the end of 1993 militancy has been wiped out. Shiromani Akali Dal (United) came in to existence in 1994 uniting as many as six factions of Akali Dal in the name of panthic unity primarily due to the efforts of Bhai Manjit Singh, then acting Jathedar of Akal Takht, the seat of the temporal power for the Sikhs. However, the Akali Dal (Badal) remained separate. Gradually however as the urge for peace was made Akali Dal (Badal) emerged as the dominant faction being able to integrate almost all the constituents of United Akali Dal with the notable exception of Akali Dal (Mann). Akali Dal (B) was split again on the eve of the 1999 parliamentary elections as Gurcharan Singh Tohra, the president of the SGPC for close of two decades raised banner of revolt against Badal with the help of Akal Takht Jathedar. The Sarb Hind Shiromani Akali Dal (SHSAD) was formed under the leadership of Tohra on May 30, 1999. It formed an electoral alliance with Akali (Mann), Akali (Panthic) and Akali (Democratic). The different factions fought both the Lok Sabha and the Assembly elections separately in 1999 and 2002 respectively, contributing to the dismal performance of Akalis in both elections. Congress that had a poor run in 1996, 1998 parliamentary and 1997 Assembly elections, were able to make electoral gains. But the ascendancy of Akali Dal (Badal) can be explained in terms of Badal's control over both SGPC and the Akal Takht, the highest temporal and religious seats of the Sikhs community respectively.

The rise of the Akali Dal as the main competitor to the Congress may be explained in terms of the following factors: decline of Congress after the fourth general elections, radical change in terms of social

¹² Ibid.

demography over time, control of the Akali Dal over the SGPC, and the economic empowerment of the Jat-Sikhs rich landed peasantry in the aftermath of the green revolution. The electoral bipolarity veering around the two parties is evident in terms of the vote share the two parties have received. As the data reveals the Akalis have received on an average a vote share of 30.23 percent in the eight assembly elections since 1967 elections. Congress average vote share in all the nine assembly elections that have taken place in the same period has been 38.13 percent.¹³

The figures for Akali Dal in the last five general elections for the Lok Sabha and the assembly elections has been 24.4 percent and 27.64 percent respectively.¹⁴ Despite holding the Centre stage of Punjab electoral politics the two parties interestingly have always been looking for the electoral alliances.¹⁵ This is more so in case of Akali Dal. Why should this be so? The possible answer lies in the limited social support base of Akali Dal that has made electoral alliances or the united fronts a matter of political compulsion for the Akali Dal. Given all the above factors it has always been a very difficult task for the Akali Dal to secure majority of their own. Aware of the fact the Akali Dal succeeded in forming a coalition government led by Sardar Gurnam Singh as Chief Minister in an alliance with the Jan Sangh and the Communist Party after the first two assembly elections in the reorganized Punjab 1967 and 1969, notwithstanding the fact the Jan Sangh regarded “the Sikhs as part and parcel of the Hindu society”.¹⁶ The Akali Dal and Jan Sangh even agreed to have a three-language policy in 1969 replacing Sachar formula under which both Hindi and Punjabi had been given parity. Punjabi was made the first compulsory language and medium of instruction in all the government schools whereas Hindi and English as

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ashutosh Kumar, *Economic and Political weekly*, April 3-10, pp. 1517.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

second and third language were to be implemented from the class 4 and 6 respectively. This realization that the Akali Dal will always find it difficult to come to power on its own even after the Punjab state re-organization bill created a Punjabi speaking state with nearly 54 percent Sikh and 44 percent Hindu has led the party to “appeal to the Hindus in order to broaden its electoral base or has to seek electoral alliance with other political parties”. In 1997 again the Akali Dal formed government¹⁷ under Prakash Singh Badal in alliance with Janta Party primarily consisting of the erstwhile Jan Sangh party members despite difference over the autonomy issue.

The chances of Akali Dal coming to power on its own are mostly in exceptional situations like when the voting takes place on sharp communal line as was the case in the 1985 Assembly elections. In the 1997 Assembly elections for the first time the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) choose to have a coalition government.

Table-5.3

Summary of Assembly Elections in Punjab (1952-2002)¹⁸

Year	Total Seats	Turn Out	INC		BJP (BJS 1952-72)		CPI		State Party-I		State Party-II			
			Seats	Vote	Seats	Vote	Seats	Vote	Party	Seats	Vote	Party	Seats	Vote
1952	126	55.3	96	36.7	-	5.6	4	3.9	SAD	13	12.4	ZP	2	7.5
1957	154	58	120	47.5	9	8.6	6	13.6	SCF	5	5.4	PSP	1	1.3
1962	154	65.5	9	43.7	8	9.7	9	7.14	SAD	19	11.9	SOC	4	1.4
1967	104	71.25	48	37.7	9	9.8	5	5.3	ADS	24	20.5	CPM	3.2	3
1969	104	72.3	38	39.2	8	9.0	4	4.8	SAD	43	29.4	CPM	2	3.1
1972	104	69.3	66	42.8	-	5.0	10	6.5	SAD	24	27.6	CPM	1	3.3
1977	117	65.4	17	33.6	-	-	7	6.6	SAD	58	31.4	JNP	25	15.0
1980	117	64.3	63	45.2	1	6.5	9	6.5	SAD	37	26.9	CPM	5	4.1
1985	117	67.5	32	37.9	6	5.0	1	4.3	SAD	73	38.0	JNP	1	1.1
1992	117	23.8	87	43.7	6	16.6	4	3.6	BSP	9	16.3	SAD	3	5.2
1997	117	68.7	14	26.6	18	8.3	2	3.0	SAD	41	30.5	BSP	-	5.4
2002	117	65.0	62	36.5	3	5.7	1	1.7	SAD	41	30.5	BSP	-	5.4

Note- Remaining seat and vote have gone to either other minor parties or the independents.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Source: CSDS Data Unit.

Table-5.4

Summary of Lok Sabha Elections in Punjab since 1966¹⁹

Year	Total Seats	Turn Out	INC		BJP BJS (1952-72)		CPI		State Party-I			State Party-II		
			Seats	Vote	Seats	Vote	Seats	Vote	Party	Seats	Vote	Party	Seats	Vote
1967	13	71.3	9	37.31	3	12.49	0	4.28	ADS	1	22.61	ADM	0	4.42
1971	13	59.90	10	45.96	0	4.45	2	6.22	SAD	1	30.85	NCO	0	4.48
1977	13	70.14	0	34.85	0	12.50	0	1.65	SAD	9	42.30	CPM	1	4.34
1980	13	62.65	12	52.45	0	9.97	0	1.27	SAD	1	23.37	INCU	0	2.16
1985	13	67.36	6	41.53	0	3.39	0	3.84	SAD	7	37.17	CPM	0	2.93
1989	13	62.67	2	26.49	0	4.17	0	2.10	SAD (M)	6	29.19	JD	1	5.45
1992	13	23.96	12	49.27	0	16.51	0	1.57	SAD	0	2.58	BSP	1	19.71
1996	13	62.25	2	35.10	0	6.48	0	1.60	SAD	8	28.72	BSP		9.36
1998	13	60.07	0	26.85	0	11.67	0	3.40	SAD	8	32.93	BSP	0	12.65
1999	13	56.11	8	38.44	3	9.16	0	3.74	SAD	2	28.59	BSP	0	3.66

It has been well argued that it is more of a strategic compulsion for the SAD to seek an electoral alliance.²⁰

The continuation of Coalition politics in Punjab has not only witnessed the competitive populism but on a positive note has led to the 'gradual discarding of radical stances by political parties all over the state'. This has been evident in the form of the manifestos of Akali Dal and its ally BJP to maintain 'peace, brotherhood, communal harmony socio-economic welfare, all around development, and sustainable and profitable agriculture through diversification.'²¹

Having a look at the Assembly election survey, the findings of the 2002 post-assembly poll survey enable us in understanding the support

¹⁹ Source: CSDS Data Unit.
²⁰ Ashutosh Kumar, No. 1, pp. 1579-80
²¹ Ibid.

base of SAD and its opposition parties, the findings of the exit poll conducted in Punjab during 1997 Assembly elections are helpful in analyzing the changing pattern of voting of people belonging to different communities. As expected, the Congress seemed to be the most popular among Hindu upper caste voters as 55.3 percent of the respondents voted for the Congress whereas the SAD received only 10.6 and its allies got 16.8 percent as per the 2002 post-poll data.

During the 1997 Assembly Elections, however, nearly 43 percent of the upper caste Hindu voters interviewed, had voted for the SAD allies and only 39 percent among them voted for the Congress allies and this only suggests that the popularity of the SAD-BJP allies has gone down considerably among the upper caste Hindus. If we look at the voting pattern of the respondents belonging to the Hindu OBC caste, the Survey indicated a massive swing away from the Akali Dal-BJP alliance during the 2002 Assembly Elections, compared to the 1997 Assembly elections. The support base for the SAD-BJP alliance has gone down considerably among the Hindu OBC caste. The BSP did manage to attract some Hindu OBC voters as nearly 8 percent among them voted for the BSP during the 2002 Assembly Elections.²² Among the Hindu backward caste voters, nearly 52 percent of those interviewed voted for the Congress. Even as majority of the Hindu Dalit voters interviewed voted for the Congress-CPI alliance in the 2002 Assembly elections, the BSP seemed to have wider acceptance among the Hindu Dalits. The Congress alliance had been the first choice of large number of Hindu Dalit voters, but nearly 29 percent of them also voted for the BSP. It indicated that despite its electoral debacle the BSP continued to retain its support base among the Hindu Dalits.

The SAD-BJP alliance received very little support from among the Hindu Dalits. The data from the exit poll suggest that the SAD-BJP

²² Ibid.

alliance did not attract the support of the Hindu Dalits even during 1997 Assembly Elections despite registering a massive victory. This is not to say that, the Congress alliance is not popular among the Dalit Sikh voters. Majority of the Dalits belonging to the Sikh community voted for the Congress-CPI alliance not only in the recent assembly elections, but also during the 1997 Assembly Elections. From among the respondents nearly 40 percent of the Sikh Dalits voted for the congress allies, only 30 percent opted for the SAD-BJP allies. A comparative study of the data gathered from the two surveys indicate that the popularity of the SAD-BJP allies has been much higher among the Sikh Dalits as compared to its popularity among the Hindu Dalits. And also that the support base for the BSP among the Sikh Dalits has considerably gone down whereas there has been no major shift in the support base for the Akali Dal among the Sikh Dalits during the last two assembly elections. But if we look at the Jat-Sikh and the Khatri Sikh voters in Punjab, we find that the SAD-BJP combine is extremely popular among them. It is true that the alliance lost some support base among these sections of society which attributed to its defeat in these elections but in spite of this, large number of the Jat-Sikh and the Khatri Sikh voters voted for the SAD-BJP alliance in this election. The survey suggested that, despite the defeat, the support base of the SAD-BJP alliance had increased among the Khatri Sikh during the 2002²³ Assembly elections compared to the 1997 Assembly Elections. The Congress alliance had also increased its presence among the Jat-Sikh and the Khatri Sikh voters, but it was in no position to match the popularity of the SAD-BJP alliance among these voters. If we look at the support base of the political parties in terms of the level of urbanity, we find that the SAD-BJP draws greater support among the rural voters, while the Congress draws greater support among the urban voters. The voting pattern of

²³ Ibid.

the rural voters suggests that despite the defeat of the SAD-BJP alliance during 2002 Assembly Elections, the majority of them had voted for the alliance during the elections. Compared to the 1997 assembly elections, the Congress alliance did manage to increase its support base among the rural voters, but still majority of the rural voters voted for the SAD-BJP alliance.

The victory of the Congress alliance during the 2002 Assembly election was largely credited to the increasing presence of the alliance among the urban voters.²⁴

5.1 SHIFT IN THE POLITICAL AGENDA?

Parliamentary and Assembly Elections since 1996, 2002, 2004 and 2007 also have continued to reflect a shift in the electoral politics of SAD, it was first visible in the 1996, 1997 parliament & assembly elections respectively in the manifesto of SAD because politico-socio-economic issues (development, roads, bridges, octroi, free power and water, trader's demands, water for Punjab farmer's, fiscal governance, institutionalized corruption, Shagun scheme for Dalits etc.) replaced the ethno-religious issues (read panthic issues- a product of Gurudwara politics) like Anandpur Sahib resolution, transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab, Anti-Sikh riots or fake encounters, as was the case with the 1992 elections. The end of militancy and revival of democratic institutions witnessed the new found Akali focus on Punjabi identity than the panthic identity as has been reflected in the election manifesto and common minimum programmes of Akali Dal and BJP since 1996 lok Sabha elections and 1997 Vidhan Sabha elections in which it promised all around development of Punjab, preservation of peace, law and order, providing to the people a stable, efficient, corruption-free, transparent administration; better services to the farmers; free water

²⁴ Kumar & Kumar: 2002.

and electricity to the farmers for agricultural use; work for securing more autonomy for the states and several other facilities for all sections of society. Adherence to the Anandpur Sahib resolution was repeated. However, along with its election manifesto, the SAD and BJP signed and declared a common minimum programme which was to be the basis for the formulation of policies of the SAD – BJP government in Punjab which included the following promises:

1. The SAD–BJP alliance shall ensure a corruption free administration, freedom from fear and rule of law for the people of Punjab for ensuring the resolution of all problems.
2. The CMP did not make any mention of the Anandpur Sahib resolution, the SAD manifesto, however, expressed support for this resolution.
3. The five years of the Congress rule in Punjab has failed to make due efforts for resolving the problems of the state.
4. To promote Hindu Sikh unity and harmony.
5. Peace with due respect, prosperity for all and the welfare of all shall be the objectives before the alliance.
6. To appoint a commission headed by a retired Judge for determining the real causes and people behind the violence which marred the life of the Punjabis during the past.
7. After coming to power, the SAD – BJP legislatures shall declare their wealth and property within 90 days. The income from the property should be declared from time to time.
8. The institution of the Lok Pal shall be given full powers and the office of the CM shall fall within its jurisdiction. The Lok Pal shall have the power to investigate all cases of appointment to high offices and charges of corruption against ministers.

9. Transparency in the decision-making shall be insured.
10. Supply of free water and electricity to the farmers for agricultural purposes shall be insured immediately.
11. Agro-Industries and export of agricultural produce shall be encouraged.
12. The system of inspector Raj shall be terminated and a new industrial policy shall be formulated and implemented for securing rapid economic development of the state.
13. Conditions shall be created for securing more financial investments in the State.
14. Full protection shall be given to small scale and cottage industries.
15. Minimum wages of the labourers shall be linked with the price index.
16. Octroi shall be abolished and the sales tax system shall be simplified.
17. The roads and transport network shall be expanded and made efficient.
18. The Public Transport system shall be streamlined.
19. Nepotism in the appointment and promotion of employees shall be eliminated.
20. A scheme for free education to the boys upto high school and to the girls upto the degree classes shall be implemented.
21. Vocational training centres on the pattern of ITIs shall be opened for the vocationalisation of education as well as for making education job oriented.
22. Moral education shall be introduced in schools.

23. The Public Distribution System shall be strengthened.
24. More rights and autonomy for the Status shall be got implemented.
25. Recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission shall be got implemented.
26. The river water dispute shall be resolved on the riparian principle.
27. Chandigarh and other Punjabi speaking areas shall be got integrated with Punjab.
28. Employment schemes & self-employment schemes shall be implemented.
29. The SAD-BJP government shall give Rs. 5000/- at the time of the marriage of every girl belonging to the Dalits and Scheduled Castes under a Shagun Scheme.

At the time of Lok Sabha elections 1999, the SAD issued its election manifesto sought a mandate for political stability, economic prosperity and social harmony. It voiced the need for setting up a genuine federal structure in the country with more fiscal and statutory powers to the states for insuring balanced and all round development. In February 2002 assembly elections SAD expressed the resolve to maintain peace, brother hood, communal harmony, socio-economic welfare, all round development, sustainable and profitable agriculture through diversification. Also SAD in it's manifesto demanded the establishment of federal political structure with greater socio-economic and political autonomy that further strengthens the unity and integrity of the country. Also it put forth the demand for transfer of Chandigarh and other Punjabi speaking areas to Punjab and opposed the construction of SYL canal. Cast based reservations were to continue and special steps were to be taken for ameliorating the living conditions of the poor

and the down trodden. Interest free loans shall be given to the jobless and a separate board shall be created for the development of the border districts. Decentralization of powers and functions as a part of the extension of the Sangat Darshan programme shall be pursued. A special tribunal to redress the problems of the employees and a regulatory shall also be created.

Also discernible is the shift from anti-centre stand to cooperative federalism mentioned in all the Akali Dal election manifestos since 1997. Such a shift in the political agenda of Akali Dal represented the yearning of the people in today's post-militancy Punjab for break from Gurudwara politics and a hope for lasting peace and prosperity. One can also refer to the new breed of Akali party workers who, unlike in the past, have little to do with the Gurudwara politics or the SGPC, as the memories of operation Bluestar and Anti-Sikh riots fade, and a new generation of youth which has grown up in the militancy free peaceful Punjab of the 1990s become the voters, the "secular criteria such as governance and socio-economic policies" have taken precedence over the identity politics drawing up on the community and regional aspirations.

Will this lead to the reconstruction of the Akali Dal? Survey data shows that the social base of the Akali Dal is in sharp contrast to that of the Congress.²⁵ The Akali Dal gets only a meager 10 percent votes from the Hindus of the state. And even among the Sikhs, it fails to attract the backward castes and the Dalits. In other words, Akali Dal continues to be the party of Jat Sikhs and Khatri.²⁶ When in the rest of the country, aspirations of the lower castes are being articulated vociferously, how far can the Akali Dal manage to ignore these aspirations? If it continues to do that, factionalism and decline await it. Just as the Akali Dal has

²⁵ See Punjab Assembly Elections, Results, 1996, 2002, 2007 and Parliamentary Elections results 2004, Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, www.wikipedia.com

²⁶ Election Survey

adopted a new language of development, it will also have to adopt a new social profile.

The defeat of Akali Dal in the Assembly Elections 2002 preceded by the poor performance in the Lok Sabha elections was largely attributed to its poor performance in terms of governance as revealed in post election survey data.²⁷ However the Congress government led by Amarinder Singh has been victim of factional fights in the form of personality clashes between the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister Rajinder Kaur Bhattal. The fight against corruption has been essentially in the form of filling cases against Badal and his family members rather than bringing reforms at the institutional level. Ironically the Deputy Chief Minister herself is facing corruption charges.

As against the internal fight within the Congress the Akali Dal has been witness to 'panthic' unity in the form of joining hands of factions led by late Gurcharan Singh Tohra and Badal after a standoff since 1999. Tohra was made the president of SGPC replacing Kirpal Singh Badungar: a close associate of Badal. Tohra remained the president of SGPC for over 25 years. Based on past experience this is nothing unusual as being out of power Akalis have always come together in the name of panthic unity. What goes against the Akali Dal is the public perception about the relative lack of initiative on the part of the party while in power to pursue vigorously what for them have been the three core issues since 1996, i.e., the status of Chandigarh, territorial adjustment along the linguistic issue and the sharing of river water. Now united Akalis have also been raising the emotive issue of excess committed by the Congress government on the Akali workers.

These developments pose critical questions about the ability of the Akali Dal to seize the initiative and bring into sharp relief the issue of

²⁷ Election survey data during Punjab Assembly Elections of 2002.

development. It is interesting to note that while the Akali Dal is now in better position to take on the Congress it may not be able to force an effective shift from the more traditional versions of emotive and identity based politics. And curiously enough, with all its failing and limitations, it is the Akali Dal alone that has the potential of actually effecting a shift in the political agenda of Punjab which is evident from election Manifesto of SAD for Punjab Vidhan Sabha Elections February 13, 2007.²⁸

5.2 POLICY AND PROGRAMME PUNJAB VIDHAN SABHA ELECTIONS (FEBRUARY 13, 2007)

The Shiromani Akali Dal is the oldest regional democratic party of the country, with a glorious saga of historic and valiant struggle for the attainment and preservation of India's Independence. The unparalleled sacrifices made by its brave and selfless soldiers form the proudest chapter in the history not only of the country but of the entire human race. Inspired by the highest ideals of welfare of the entire humankind (Sarbat Da Bhala) and fired by the examples of supreme sacrifice set by the great Gurus in the defence of the noblest human values, millions of selfless soldiers of party have striven selflessly to measure up to the glorious and proud traditions of the land of great seers, saints, mystics and visionaries.

At the national level, while remaining in the vanguard of national mainstream, the Shiromani Akali Dal has always remained committed to a dignified dispensation for Punjabis in general and the Sikhs in particular, always fighting to safeguard their political economic, social and cultural rights.

5.2.1 Political

The Shiromani Akali Dal party reiterates its commitment to the highest ideal of the welfare of humanity (Sarbat Da Bhala).

²⁸ Source: Election Manifesto of SAD for Punjab Vidhan Sabha Elections February 13, 2007.

In the context of the contemporary reality, the party declares its commitment to the following policy and programme for seeking and securing a rightful dispensation for the Sikhs and the entire Punjabi community in India, as a partner in national polity:

Taking like-minded regional and national parties along, the SAD will continue its efforts to liberate the development processes in states from the constricting clutches of fiscal and political centralization.

5.2.2 Federal Structure

Shiromani Akali Dal was the first to advocate the need for co-operative federalism based on political and fiscal autonomy, a concept first opposed but subsequently accepted and adopted by almost every regional and national political party. SAD firmly believes that the setting up of a truly federal structure is the only way to strengthen the goals of national unity and prosperity. Hurdles put in the path of such a system in the country by the Congress party greatly harmed the interests of development and:

Congress governments at the centre and in the state have systematically violated the Riparian Principle. Captain Amrinder Singh, who publicly hailed the late Mrs. Indira Gandhi for starting the digging operation of the SYL canal at Kapoori in 1982, has now delivered the biggest blow to state's interests by giving a legal guarantee to the flow of Punjab's river waters to Haryana and Rajasthan under Clause 5 of the Punjab Termination of Agreements Act....

Prosperity in the states and delayed for more than fifty years since the emergence of India as a global leader.

Taking like-minded regional and national parties along, the SAD will continue its efforts to liberate the development processes in states from the constricting clutches of fiscal and political centralization.

5.2.3 Chandigarh and the Punjabi Speaking Areas

The Shiromani Akali Dal has waged long battles for the inclusion of Chandigarh and other Punjabi speaking areas in Punjab. But, unfortunately, successive Congress governments at the centre have always conspired to scuttle this demand. The Congress Party and the Punjab Government led by Captain Amrinder Singh have not raised this issue even once during the past five years.

The Shiromani Akali Dal will continue its peaceful and democratic struggle for the fulfillment of Punjab's legitimate demand for the transfer of Chandigarh and other Punjabi speaking areas to Punjab.

5.2.4 River Waters Issue

On the river waters issue, the SAD has always demanded the implementation of the nationally and internationally accepted Riparian Principle, accepted by the Supreme Court and applied by it in every river water dispute, like the Narbada River Water dispute. Under the Constitution, river water is a state subject and non-Riparian states have no locus standi in any dispute arising out of sharing of the river waters. Why should an exception be made to this principle only to turn Punjab into a desert?

Apart from the question of the constitutional legitimacy of Punjab's demand, Punjab's river waters must be safeguarded as the state is already in the grip of a severe crisis and could be reduced to a mere desert by 2020 due to the alarming fall in the level of sub-soil water because of massive depletion through tube well irrigation.

Unfortunately, successive Congress governments at the centre and in the state have systematically violated the Riparian Principle. Captain Amrinder Singh, who had publicly hailed the late Mrs. Indira Gandhi for starting the digging operation of SYL canal at Kapoori in 1982, has now delivered the biggest blow to state's interests by giving a

legal guarantee to the flow of Punjab's river waters to Haryana and Rajasthan under Clause 5 of the Punjab Termination of Agreements Act. This Clause strikes at the very root of the Riparian Principle, completely contradicting Punjab's stand that as Haryana and Rajasthan are non-Riparian states, they have no right to have share in Punjab's river waters.

The SAD-BJP government will take political, legal and constitutional steps to redress this grievous wrong done to the people of the state.

5.2.5 Promotion of Punjabi Language and Culture

The Congress governments in Punjab and at the center have always completely neglected Punjab language and culture. Captain Amarinder Singh's only contribution to the language of the Gurus (Gurmukhi) was that even business of the Punjab Vidhan Sabha was not been allowed to be conducted in the mother tongue of Punjabis.

The SAD-BJP government will initiate following steps to revive Punjab's rich literature, language and culture:

1. Necessary amendments to be made in the relevant Act for the promotion Punjabi language and for removing hurdles in the way of giving it its due place as state language.
2. Efforts will be made to secure for Punjabi language its due status

An empowered core Group comprising leading Punjabi writers and other intellectuals will be constituted to interact with the Chief Minister's Office on the promotion of Punjabi language, culture and religious heritage. The Chairman of this group will have the status of minister Shiromani Awardees to be extended facility of boarding and lodging at government rest houses/Bhawans on concessional rates.

instates where there is a considerable presence of Punjabi speaking populace.

3. An empowered Core Group comprising leading Punjabi writers and other intellectuals will be constituted to interact with the Chief Minister Office on the promotion of Punjabi language, culture and religious heritage. The Group will also function as monitoring authority for progress on a government policies/schemes with regard to the promotion of the Punjab language and culture throughout the world.
4. The Chairman of this Group will have the status of minister. Other members will also be given high official status.
5. A major initiative will be undertaken for bringing together all Punjabis working in different countries for the spread of their language and culture.
6. A Special Award will be instituted for outstanding work in the international arena for spreading awareness of Punjabi culture, language and religious heritage among people from different parts of the world.
7. A major contribution is being made by Punjabis abroad, especially in the field of Punjabi journalism. The new government will take steps to recognize and honour their contribution to their mother land its rich culture.
8. Similarly, outstanding work is being done by Punjabis living in others states for the promotion of their language and culture. Efforts will be made to bring them on a common platform and to honour them in a befitting manner.
9. Punjab Language Department will be strengthened through release of liberal funds for promotion of Punjabi language.

10. The number of Shiromani Awards will be increased to broad base representation by including categories, which are not represented adequately at present.
11. The amount of Sahitya Shiromani Award to be raised to five lacs and that of other Shiromani Awards to 2.5 lakhs each.
12. Shiromani Awardees to be extended facility of boarding and lodging at government rest houses/Bhawans on concessional rates.

5.2.6 Fighting Poverty, Price Rise and Unemployment

As a results of the pro-rich policies of the Congress government at the centre and in Punjab, an unprecedented price rise has broken the back of every section of society, especially of the poorer sections. Prices of wheat atta have gone up from Rs. 6.50 per kg in 2002 to Rs. 17 at present. Similarly, the price of ordinary pulses (daal) have also shot up from Rs. 18 per kg in 2002 to Rs. 65 at present. Diesel prices have gone up from Rs. 14.50 per litre to Rs. 32 p litre where as cooking a gas cylinder which cost only Rs. 210 in 2002 now costs Rs. 375.

1. The new government will provide atta at Rs. 4 per kg and daal at Rs. 20 per kg to the poor.
2. The SAD is committed to providing employment to the BPL and other poor families by introducing a central scheme of National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) in every block of the state.

5.2.7 Agriculture

Agriculture, which is the back bone of Punjab's economy, faces and alarming crisis. Unless drastic and timely steps are taken to save this crucial sector, Punjab will get global economic upsurge the benefits of to state's overall economy will no gross mismanagement and indirect.

- Farm indebtedness and the resultant suicide menace to be tackled on war footing. Application of “One Time Debt Settlement Scheme” and “Staggered Debt Transfer Plan”, on the lines of the scheme for industry, to be taken up with the centre.
- Free power and for farm sector to continue. Free canal irrigation (no abiana) and revenue tax on land.

The new government will provide atta at Rs. 4 per kg and daal at Rs. 20 per kg to the poor. Farm indebtedness and the resultant suicide menace to be tackled on war footing. Application of “One Time Debt Settlement Scheme” and “Staggered Debt Transfer Plan” on the lines of the scheme for industry, to be taken up with the centre.

Tube-well connections on priority basis for all farmers. Free Health Insurance Cover of up to 2 lakhs for every poor farmer and landless labour.

- All arrears on tube-well bills falling due to non-fulfilment by Captain Amrinder Singh’s promise of free power and irrigation will be reviewed.
- Tube-well connections on priority basis for all farmers.
- Power connections to farm houses in small clusters known as Dhaanis, deras etc.
- To increase irrigation potential of the state, the Government tube wells to installed at Moghas (delivery points) at the tail end of canals wherever necessary.
- Kacha drain lines (Khaalas) to be made Pucca with concrete lining and all Pucca Khaalas to be repaired.
- Free Health Insurance Cover of up to 2 lakhs for every poor farmer and landless labour.

- *Procurement to be made Pro-Punjab Farmers:* Efficient and quick procurement of farmers' produce and on-the-spot payment for the crops sold.
- MSP should be linked to import prices: SAD will seek and strive for price linkage of agricultural produce with global market. Congress Government's procurement policy has been anti-Punjab farmer and pro-Australian farmer. While it procured wheat from Punjab farmer at just Rs. 650/- per quintal, it paid Australian farmers Rs. 1150/- per quintal.
- In addition, the SAD will strive to get the Union Government to link MSP of farm produce with overall price index.
- Crop/Cash Insurance Scheme will be introduced for farm sector.
- Cooperative education loans up to Rs. Ten lakhs at nominal rates of interest for children of poor farmers, dalits/BCs and other poor sections will be arranged.
- Land Acquisition-New Pro-Farmer Policy: Farmer's prior consent will be made mandatory for acquisition. In case of consent, the government will pay full market price of the land acquired, plus 30% of the price as displacement allowance. Acquisition only after payment.
- Market price of land will be determined a committee comprising the local Member of Parliament, M.L.A., Deputy Commissioner, Sarpanch of the village/member of Municipal Committee of the concerned area.
- Farmers whose land is acquired by government will be exempted from registration duty in case they re-invest their sale proceeds on buying fresh land in the state.

- Tube well connections will be given for the land so purchased on priority basis.
- A new scheme making farmers share-holders in the projects on the land acquired from them will be started. Farmers could opt either for a stake in housing and infrastructure development schemes or a certain share in net profit over his land after deducting expenses incurred by Govt.
- High Quality seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and weedicides and other agricultural inputs to made available.

Cooperative education loans up to Rs. 10 lakhs at nominal rates of interest for children of poor farmers, dalits/BCs and other poor sections will be arranged.

A new scheme make farmers share-holders in the projects on the land acquired from them will be started.

Agricultural products of major crops to be processed locally and marketed through a global network, with special emphasis on food processing, textile and fashion technology industry to broad-base the demand for textile raw material.

- Revenue records to be computerized and supplied to farmers/owners every six months.
- Punjab Forest Preservation Act to be amended.
- *Dairying as Career Option*: New schemes in collaboration with the centre government will be started to give a fresh thrust to allied farm activity, such as dairying.
- Major Thrust on Horticulture: Similarly, the state government would aim at utilizing the state's full potential for central assistance between Rs. 150 crores and Rs. 200 crores for the development and promotion of horticulture in the state. Up to 75% of this assistance comes in the form of subsidies.

- The Congress government under Caption Amarinder Singh deprived the state's farmers of this great opportunity.
- *Boost for Food Processing, Textile Designing and Fashion Technology:* Agriculture products of major crops to be processed locally and marketed through a global network, with special emphasis on food processing textile and fashion technology industry to broad-base the demand for textile raw material.
- *Global Marketing Strategies:* Avenues of assured, pre-production marketing companies through tie-ups for direct uplifting of farmers produce.
- Agricultural Marketing Centers will set up across the state for promoting marketing and export of vegetables, fruit and flowers.
- An economic cooperation centre will be set up in Punjab to facilitate marketing of agricultural produce like sugar cane, cotton, potatoes and other vegetables, dairying as well as industrial products with Pakistani Punjab.
- State investment in agricultural research to stepped up break stagnation in agricultural production.
- Skill acquisition and training programmes will be started in collaboration with foreign countries for helping Punjab farmers desirous of starting farm enterprise in other countries, especially in USA, Canada, Australia etc.
- Monetary assistance for setting up self employment ventures on priority basis shall be provided to the suicide affected families of farmers and also for the farmers' families who have lost their sole earning member due to natural death. This scheme will also extend to non-farmers suffering due to economic adversity.

- Dependent aged, women and children shall be provided with monetary relief in the form of old-age pension with relaxation in the age limit and employment on compassionate ground and subsidized education.
- *Increase Productivity of Crops through Biotechnology:* This technology advancement will be used not only for raising the yield of the existing crops to meet the increasing food demand, but also for diversification of crops towards horticulture and animal husbandry.
- Problems and demands of farm technocrats such as parity with their counterparts in other professions with identical qualifications to be looked into on a priority basis to increase their involvement in the second push to agriculture.
- The SAD will work for securing a structural adjustment package of Rs. 2500/- crore from the

Monetary Assistance for setting up self employment ventures on priority basis shall be provided to the suicide affected families central government for a second push to the green revolution to meet national food requirements.

5.2.8 Welfare of Dalits

Dalits, SCs/BCs were made the target of systematic neglect and injustice during the Rajwarashahi regime of Captain Amarinder Singh. The Shagun scheme introduced by Mr. Prakash Singh Badal government was discontinued and brought back in a distorted form and that too only towards the end of the tenure of the present government. Funds from the Special Component Scheme meant for the welfare of this section were either diverted for benefit of the rich or left un-utilised. It is a matter of disgrace that during the past five years, Punjab recorded the highest number of custodial deaths of dalits in the country.

Pension schemes for this section were first discontinued and later made to suffer from tardy implementation.

The SAD will not only reverse this trend. The party will start a major and bold socio-economic initiative to completely revolutionize the government's and the society's approach to the downtrodden.

- Government will give Rs. 15000 at the wedding of every girl belong to the dalit section without any preconditions such the Below Poverty Line stipulation imposed by the Congress regime.

Dalits, SCs/BCs were made the target of systematic neglect and injustice during the Rajwarashahi regime of Captain Amarinder Singh. The Shagun scheme introduced by Mr. Parkash Singh Badal government was discontinued and brought back in a distorted form, and that too only towards the end of the tenure of the present government.

- 5 Marlas of construction space be allocated to every SC/BC/Dalit family to construct houses/flats. The financial assistance given under the scheme shall be increased to Rs. 50,000/-.
- Each SC/BC/Dalit family will receive 400 units of electricity free without any pre-conditions like poverty line.
- *Special Government Sponsored Health Insurance for SC/BC/Dalits*: A special insurance scheme would be launched to provide best treatment to the sick from dalit and economically weaker sceions.
- Free educational of all SC/BC/Dalit girls to the graduation level through scholarships and financial assistance.
- Brilliant SC/BC/Dalit students will be provided scholarships and educations loans up the ten lakhs on easy terms for pursuing their studies in engineering and other technical courses in foreign

countries. Arrangements would also be made to ensure free education up to university level within the state.

5.2.9 Participatory Governance for Dalits

Dalits would be given adequate representation on boards, corporations, planning board and grievance committees etc. to ensure their active participation in the decision making.

- Vocational Training Centres
- Training Institutes will be opened at district headquarters for SC/BC/Dalit students who could not get admission to engineering and other professional colleges to provide job training like plumbers, electricians, carpentry, mobile repair, TV repair etc. so that they can earn their livelihood.
- *Improve Sanitation in Areas Inhabited by Dalits: Own a Toilet Scheme.* SAD shall lay emphasis on sanitation in the colonies of the Dalits/SCs/BCs. Especially on liquid and solid waste disposal, food hygiene, personal, domestic as well as environmental hygiene. SAD shall provide toilet to each dalit family in the village. The toilet shall be owned by the Dalit family. SAD shall plan proper drainage system for SCs/BCs colonies.
- *Special Government Sponsored health insurance for SC/BC/Dalits.*
- **Access to Safe Drinking Water:** The government will bring the entire SC/BC/Dalit population under the Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) so as to provide them with safe drinking water. Also, voluntary organizations and Panchyati Raj institutions shall be involved in health education to create mass awareness about the hazards of using unsafe water and keeping in sanitary conditions.

5.2.10 Trade and Industry-I

In Punjab, the industrial sector is mainly dominated by small-scale industry. There are over two lakh small-scale units in the state, providing employment to about nine lakh persons which is over 80 percent of the total employment generated in the industrial sector of Punjab. The small scale sector also contributes about 60 percent of the total exports from the state, but the WTO regime and easy import of consumer goods have affected the export performance. In addition, long distances from sources of raw materials/minerals and ports, resulting in additional freight charges, put the local units an even greater disadvantage.

To address these and other issues, the SAD-BJP government to be formed after the assembly elections will take major revolutionary steps by bringing a new “Make and Implement Your Policy” for trade and industry to promote these segments. Under the new government.

- Octroi will stay abolished and will not be brought back under any pretext.
- Punjab being a border state, the government will seek a

The SAD-BJP government to be formed after the assembly elections will take major revolutionary steps by bringing a new “make and Implement Your Policy” for trade and industry to promote these segments.

Special Economic Package for the state on the patter of the package given to Himachal Pradesh, J & K so that flight in trade and industry in the state could be stopped.

- 24 hours uninterrupted power supply to be ensured for industry within three years, or earlier, power sector will be put on the top of the government’s agenda for growth and development.

- An Urban Cooperative Bank is proposed to be set up to provide loans to small shopkeepers, vendors, hawkers, etc.
- The existing structure and functioning system of the PSEB will in no case be allowed to be disturbed under the garb of privatization.
- At the same time, in the light of the fast growing needs of the stage in the power sector, the new government will consider a proposal for exploring additional and dedicated generation and distribution channels from sources outside the state for commercial sector (trade and industry) on a nominally higher tariff. For this, participation of NRI entrepreneurs could be solicited in addition to tie-ups with private sector. Feasibility of implementing the Bombay model would be considered.
- Our aim will be: 24 hour supply seven days a week all year round for industry and trade, along with agriculture. Our efforts will be to realize this aim from the every outset by arrangements with other states/agencies. Conspicuous consumption of power for luxury at the expense of productive sectors will be discouraged, at least till the state surplus in power.

5.2.11 Trade and Industry-II

i) Participative Governance

- Three Development Board one each for Large and Medium Scale Industry, Small Scale Industry and Trade (Large, Small and Tiny) will be formed to bring into force the “Make and Implement Your Own Policy” scheme promised by the SAD-BJP during the campaign.
- Each Board will have 11 members from the concerned fields to function as “legislators of trade and industry”.

- Chairperson of each of these boards will enjoy the status of a minister in cabinet rank.
- In addition, representation will be given to trade and industry on boards, corporation, planning boards and grievance committees and relevant department of the government.
- The filing of C-Form return shall be made simple. Instead of these returns to be filled every quarter, it will be made mandatory to file these annually.
- Essential Commodities Act to be amended.
- SAD-BJP government will introduce online filing and refund of VAT on the pattern of central excise and taxation.
- Government will simplify VAT on the basis of recommendations received from representatives of trade and industry on development boards.
- Harassment of traders, small scale businessmen and industrial entrepreneurs by government. Officials at check points and places of work will be stopped for every by introducing a new plan for “Self Assessed Average Guaranteed Revenue Receipts” from sales and other taxes. Efforts will be made to implement proposal for proportionate increments in state revenue on a five year

Three Development Boards one each for Large and Medium Scale Industry, Small Scale Industry and Trade (Large, Small and Tiny) will be formed to bring into force the “Make and Implement Your Own Policy” scheme promised by the SAD-BJP during the campaign.

average basis though self-assessment by traders and industrialists and to stop the present system of unnecessary checking and detainment of commercial consignments. Inspector Ra will be made a thing of the post.

- A cold chain will be set up in Punjab to support the plan for the purpose of transportation of these perishable commodities. This will be linked with the international airport.
- Special scheme will be started to promote industry in the Kandi belt.
- Emphasis will be placed on Information Technology, Bio-Technology and Nanotechnology Based Industries.
- To give a practical shape to our for Indian Punjab Pakistan Punjab's Economic Cooperation, we will prepare and implement a plan for infrastructure development through promotion of trade across borders in agriculture, agro-based machinery and tools, cycle parts and tyres, agricultural products, health tourism, educational exchange etc.
- Government will consider a package of Rs. 100 crore for strengthening traditional industrial base of Punjab such as sports goods, hosiery, iron and steel, head-tools, cycle parts, pappadvarhi, chilli power etc.
- To protect the Punjab's industry, import of raw material and intermediary products should be allowed at zero or minimum duties.

5.2.12 Urban Renewalism and Rural Transformation

Urban Development/Authority Board for Each City: The SAD shall set up an Urban Development Board to evolve an integrated plan of each city; to effectively implement the poverty alleviation scheme; to prepare master plans of new cities to accommodate the growing pressures on urban areas; to rationalize building byelaws; and to publish the Municipal Act in Punjabi language.

i) Renewal of Towns though

- Construction of public toilets.

- Environment resurgence and pollution control; Health care, with emphasis on checking the spread of seasonal disease, immunization, nutrition and safe motherhood in the urban slums;
- Adoption of one city or a town by ministers and councilors for ensuring better quality of life.
- The members of the community, students, youth activist shall be involved in this drive. The active involvement of school and college teachers and medical practitioners shall be ensured.

ii) **Setting up of Community Resource Centres**

- The SAD shall set up community resource centres in each city of the state.
- These community resource centres shall be equipped with facilities like public library, computer network to provide market intelligence and latest information to the small-scale industry, traders and farmers, and counseling facilities for students for better career and health education cell for retired and old people.

5.2.13 Power Sector

The SAD strongly believes that no development and progress is possible without giving generation and distribution of power of top priority. Trade and Industry in the state has suffered major lows in the past five years mainly because of the total neglect of the power sector. We are determined not only to reverse this trend but to turn Punjab into a role model for revolutionary advancement in this critical sector for both commercial and the domestic consumption. Accordingly:

1. We will make Punjab a power surplus state in three years.
2. All pending power projects to be completed and new tie ups and projects will be started for the achievement of this goal.

3. 24 hours uninterrupted power supply to industry in three years, or less. Efforts will be made for early implementation by power sharing arrangements with other states/agencies.
4. Tube well connections for every needy farmer.

We will make Punjab a power surplus state in three years.

5. Farmers will continue to get free power.
6. Arrears of tube well bills for the past four years will be waived off.

SAD-BJP government will revive Projects Abandoned by the present Government, including, among other projects

- The Goindwal power plant of 500 mw: capacity will be enhanced to 1000 MW.
- Bathinda Refinery with a capacity of 500 mw.
- Shahpur Kandi : 168 MWs
- Lehra Mohabbat III: 500 MWs
- Share in power projects in Orissa, Gujrat, and M.P. : 1600
- Other on-going projects to be completed on time.

i) Captive Power

7. Captive power distribution with the cluster of industries will be allowed. Efforts will be made to get the Union government's policy of subsidy under CLCS Scheme to cover installation of captive power generation equipment and state should also give matching subsidy.
8. Small capacity captive power plants and free trade of power among the promoters who have incorporated special purpose vehicles for installation of their share in SPV (free tradability of power) will be allowed.

5.2.14 Employees

The present government headed by Captain Amarinder Singh not only gave this proud and hard-working employees in the state a royal neglect but repeatedly subjected them to humiliation, disgrace and repression. The SAD-BJP government will consider every employee a partner in its dream for a prosperous Punjab. In pursuance of this vision, the new government will initiative a new culture of mutual respect and cooperation between various wings of government. Following measures will be taken for their welfare.

i) Fifth pay commission

SAD shall reconstitute the pay commission and shall broad base its scope in consultation with the employees of state government, boards, corporations and statutory authorities.

Government will follow the central government Pattern for its employers in all sections as also including the employees working in Corporations/Boards and other statutory bodies for the purpose of raising age of retirement.

ii) To fill Vacancies to provide Employment

All vacancies of ETT teacher, B. Ed. teachers, pharmacists, veterinary pharmacists, laboratory technicians and also in other departments will be filled up through regular employment.

iii) Promotional Scales for Employees and Police

- All employees to be given promotion scale of (4-9-14) in letter and spirit.
- Time bound promotion for constables up to the rank of ASI under an integrated pay scales on Tamil Nadu Pattern.
- To create additional posts of 100 inspectors and 4000 SI to cut down stagnation in police department.

- Government will also consider some other demands of the police department pertaining to uniform, kit etc for constabulary.
- Government will follow the central government pattern for its employees in all sections as also including the employees working in Corporations/Boards and other statutory bodies for the purpose of raising age of retirement.
- Women employees working in boards and corporations will be extended the benefits of “Half Work: Half Pay” scheme on the pattern prevalent in some states.

iv) Extension of LTC/Foreign Travel

SAD is committed to offer one time foreign travel to all the employees of the State government/corporations/boards’ and other institutions under the Government of Punjab to visit either Singapore, Malaysia, Bangkok or SAARC countries once during their service tenure on completion of certain a tenure in service.

v) Youth (Employment, Awareness and Sports)

1. A youth Development Board will be set up, comprising 11 Members.

SAD is committed to offer one time foreign Travel to all the employees of the state Government/corporations/boards/

The chairman of the Board will have the status of the minister in cabinet rank.

2. The Board shall have three cells, i.e. Employment Cell, Training Cell and Sports cell.
3. The Employment Cell will explore employment avenues both in India and abroad. It will also interact with overseas institutions

business organizations to facilitate placement of Punjabi youth desirous of seeking settlement opportunities abroad.

4. The Training Cell will make suggestion on the setting up of training institutes and formulating new syllabus for diploma and degree courses.
5. All Sports and Youth Clubs will receive a grant of Rs. 51000 for sports related activities and facilities such as kit.
6. A new Scheme for Employment loans will be started under concessional rates of interest for setting up of self-employment units to each eligible unemployed youth. Government will also consider subsidization of such ventures on merit basis.
7. A special cell would be set up to facilitate tie-ups with overseas educational institutions, including universities. This will not only equip our youth to compete with their counterparts from the advanced countries but facilitate local courses to gain international acceptability and recognition.
8. All 1,50,000 vacant posts in various government departments would be filled to fight the problem of unemployment.
9. It hubs will be in Majha, Malwa and Doaba, in addition to Mohali, to create employment avenues for One Lac (100,000) youth.
10. Youth will be given adequate and meaningful representation in social and administrative spheres.

A Youth Development Board will be set up, comprising 11 members. The Chairman of the Board will have the status of a minister in cabinet rank.

A new Scheme for employment Loans from will be started under which loans from Rs. Five lac to 25 lacs would be given on concessional rates of interest for setting up of self-employment units to each eligible unemployed youth.

11. To promote health and focus the youth energy on constructive aspects of life, sports will be placed high on the government's agenda.
12. The new government will start a fresh initiative for total professionalism of sports. Efforts will be made to turn into a serious career option.
13. Three world class Cricket stadiums will be set up in the next three years, one each in Majha, Malwa and Doaba.
14. Punjab Institute of Sports will be set up on the pattern of the National Institutes of Sports, with three regional centers, one in each segment of the state. Sportsmen will receive training from world class coaches. Government will bear all expenses, including those on boarding and lodging, to be incurred during the training period.
15. Every registered club will be given a grant of Rs. 51 thousand for the purchase of sports equipment.
16. Two new Astroturf hockey fields be laid in the state.
17. Three training institutes for Kabaddi and Wrestling will be set up, one each in Majha, Malwa and Dooda.

5.2.15 Education

Of all the key areas of socio-economic planning and development, education in Punjab bore the maximum the brunt of Governmental neglect all through the past five years. From providing basic infrastructure to recruitment of teachers and right down to responding to the problems and feelings of the student Community, Captain Amarinder Singh government treated this most crucial sector with shocking indifference and utter contempt, subjecting teachers their students both boys and girls-and even their parents to despotic high

handedness. No thought was spared for the waste of Punjab's immeasurably talented youth and their future. As a consequence, educational landscape primary, secondary as well at the college and university levels – Punjab has been reduced to a virtual wasteland, registering the lowest school enrolment average in the country, with just 137 out of every 1000 children being enrolled in schools.

The new government will substantially increase the budgetary allocation for education.

Punjab has been reduced to a virtual wasteland, registering the lowest school enrolment average in the country, with just 137 out of every 1000 children being enrolled in schools.

Needed: A Drastic Revamp

The SAD is firmly of the view that the entire educational structure needs a drastic revamp. Any vision for socio-economic progress of the people of the state has to be rooted in a clear understanding of the need for this revamp.

5.2.16 Primary School as Pivot of Change (Too Late Thereafter)

SAD is firmly of the view that any major restructuring of the educational scene has to begin with primary education and therefore with the primary school teacher and his/her students. The primary school teacher is the greatest pivot of social change. He/She therefore must be put on the highest pedestal of social hierarchy. This requires a revolutionary recasting of priorities and social value system.

Accordingly, primary school teachers have to be readied through skill up-gradation and through the awakening of idealistic zeal in them for the momentous role that only they can play.

5.2.17 Quality Education for All

i) Adarsh Schools in every block

Adarsh schools will be set up, one in each Block, with an investment of Rs. 5/- crore each to provide quality education in the rural areas. The wards of the poor farmers and Dalits will receive free education in these public schools. Talented and motivated teachers will be employed for ensuring the success of this venture.

ii) Foreign Collaboration for Quality Education

Collaboration with reputed foreign universities for joint degrees in various professional courses would be encouraged so that Punjab's youth can get internationally reputed degrees, while studying the state.

iii) Filling of Vacancies of Teachers in the First year

All vacancies of teachers in primary and high schools shall be filled in the first year of the SAD government.

95% grant in aid to educational institutions:

All privately managed government recognized schools and colleges will again start getting 95% grants in aid.

Adarsh schools will set up, one in each Block, With an investment of Rs. 5/- crore each to provide quality education in the rural areas.

iv) Minimum Quality standards for Technical Educational Institutions

The present government has reduced institution of technical education to mere shops and business outlets. The SAD government shall introduce minimum quality standards for these professional institutions. For this, a minimum Quality Grading System will be evolved and enforced in these institutions. This will enable the youth to compete in the global employment market.

v) Education for Employment in IT Sector

Children who have passed the 10+2 and graduation, shall be imparted training in English speaking/voice modulation/accent training for their absorption in the expanding IT sector, particularly in call centers in India and overseas. For this, the SAD government plans to start special courses in rural and semi-urban areas with the assistance of institutions and colleges located in the area.

vi) Access to Modern Skills to Semi-Employed workers and youth

Most of the skilled workers are in the unorganized sector. Skill acquisition programmes in of masonry, whitewashing, carpentry, hair cutting, plumbing, welding etc. shall be introduced as evening courses in Institutes like polytechnics or a separate institution shall be set up in each district of Punjab. After updating these skills, workers will get higher incomes.

vii) Establishment of Knowledge City in the State

A knowledge city will be set up, equipped with the following:

- a) An institute of excellence like IIT and IIM
- b) A film production training institute to produce technicians.
- c) A media institute of international standards in collaboration with established media schools in the USA or any other foreign country.

viii) To Reconstitute Education and Knowledge commission for State

SAD is committed to Reconstitute Education and Knowledge commission in the State to make quality education accessible to the people across the Punjab at the primary level and also to introduce quality Standards for achieving excellence in higher learning, research

and building exchange programmes for institutions of excellence worldwide.

5.2.18 Health

Rs. 500/- Crore fund for providing Easy and Subsidized Access to Health Services to The Poorer sections of society.

- Free Medical Insurance Cover up to Rs. 2 lakhs for every farmer and every person in the BPL group.
- Free Medical check up and basic health amenities to senior citizens above the age of 65 years.
- Super Speciality Cancer Hospitals for subsidized treatment to be set up.
- Income Limit for Subsidized Health Facilities will be raised from the present Rs. 2000/- p.m. for levying user charges.

i) Parity in Access to Health Facilities

The rural coverage of health facilities is uneven in the districts of Punjab. New hospitals will be opened in areas which have less coverage per lakh of population to provide equal access irrespective of regions or any other consideration.

ii) To check Infant Mortality Rate

Punjab has a high infant mortality rate (IMR) of 51 per thousand as compared to 11 in Kerala as per 2004 data. The SAD is committed to taking measures to check the growing infant mortality rate and the under-five mortality rates.

5.2.19 Panchyati Raj Establishment of Real Panchayati Democracy

- (a) In accordance with the 73rd and 74th constitution Amendments, the Panchyats, block Samitis and Zila Parishads will be assigned the control of all the 29 departments.

Rs. 500/- Crore Fund for Providing Easy and subsidised Access to Health Services to the poorer section of society.

- Punjabi youth in different parts of Punjab.
- A state level international institute for training of pilots, Air Hostesses and Cabin Crew for the expanding travel industry.

5.2.20 Textile Designing and Fashion Technology in Traditional Crafts

- Centre for excellence in fashion technology and designing would be set up both in the vicinity of Chandigarh and at various other regional centres like Amritsar, Ludhiana, Patiala and Jalandhar.
- Training centres will also be set up for imparting skills in state-of-the-art designing in Phulkari and other traditional handicrafts for international market. Initially, three centers located in three universities of the state Amritsar, Ludhiana and Patiala shall be set up.

5.2.21 Media, Technology and Management Training Hub

- International level IIT and IIM institute to be set up to prepare Punjabi youth for employment. Efforts to be made for central assistance.
- An International Institute of Media and Communication Centre to cater to the growing demand of electronic media in collaboration with media houses and recognized by international media school of excellence shall be set up.

5.2.22 Museum for Future

- To set up War Museum to be located in Amritsar.
- To set up Agricultural Historical Museum to document the history of Punjab's agriculture and to display various phase of

mechanized instruments used and to document the sacrifices made by farmers for providing food security to the nation.

5.2.23 Modern Market Network and Trade Promotion

- An Asia's Biggest Mechanised, Techno Savvy Vegetable Market shall be set up to promote and grow vegetables for international standards.
- International Trade Centre for Promotion of Trade to build forward linkages of local produce with international trade a

Centre for excellence in fashion technology and designing would be set up both in the vicinity of Chandigarh and at various other regional centres like Amritsar, Bhatinda, Ludhiana, Patiala and Jalandhar.

- (b) Apart from these 29 departments, the right to issue birth, death certificate, domicile (etc.) certificated will rest with the sarpanches, councilors and presidents of the municipal committees.
 - (c) The village Panchayat will be vested with adequate powers to attest registration, wills and affidavits. The income of the Panchayats will enhanced with accounts.
 - (d) The arrangement of annual grants for village Panchayats will be included in the administrative annual budget. The payment will be made directly to the Panchayats. The Panchayats will be empowered to utilize these resources for local development.
 - (e) Representatives of Panchayati institutions will get respectable allowances.
9. The access to and quality of delivery of essential services of the people has been inadequate. The governance in Punjab has suffered a major set-back due to inaccessibility and corruption of the Capt's Congress government and a lax administration. The

SAD shall focus on improving the delivery of services in partnership with citizens. The SAD shall give a transparent, efficient and accountable governance.

10. The SAD is committed to allocating higher resources for social development by providing health, education, social security and a safety net to its people.

5.2.24 Punjab: A Global Destination

i) To Integrate Punjab into information Technology Circuit

- To make Punjab part of IT Transit Circuit of Silicon Valley Los Angeles, USA, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai and Punjab. Every district shall have one IT nursery for training of youth in information technology (IT). These IT nurseries shall provide human resource to IT parks and IT centres. These IT parks shall be set up in Malwa, Majha and Doaba. These parks will be linked with IT transit circuit of Silicon Valley, Los Angeles, USA, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Chennai.

ii) Excellence in Hotel and Tourism Industry

- To make Punjab part of IT Transit Circuit of Silicon Valley Los Angeles, USA, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai and Punjab. Every district shall have one IT Nursery for training of youth in information technology (IT). These IT nurseries shall provide human resource to IT parks and IT centres. These IT parks shall be set up in Malwa, Majha and Doaba. These parks will be linked with IT transit circuit of Silicon valley, Los Angeles, USA, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Chennai.

iii) Excellence in Hotel and Tourism Industry

- To set up Centers of Excellence for Training in Hotel and Tourism Industry in collaboration with Hotel Management Institutes within India and abroad. Three Institutes to cater to Checklist of

International level IIT and IIM institutes to be set up to prepare Punjabi youth for employment. An International Institute of Media and Communication Center recognised by International media school of excellence shall be Set up.

commodities international market shall be prepared.

5.2.25 Transport Infrastructure

Smooth, safe and speedy transport and communication infrastructure is a prerequisite for speeding up commercial activity and push up the process of economic growth and development in the state. Accordingly, the SAD-BJP government will have the following items on the top of its agenda.

- Six-Lane super express ways to be built in collaboration with the centre to connect Chandigarh with Patiala-Sangrur-Bhatinda, Ludhiana-Moga-Ferozepur and Roper, Newanshehar-Jalandhar Amritsar.
- Work on four-laning of all state highways to be taken up on priority.
- A network of ring roads and by-passes to de-congest traffic around all major cities and towns of Punjab.
- Similarly, the new government will start work on a network of long distance elevated roads to take inter-city traffic over cities like Ludhiana, Amritsar, Jalandhar and Patiala.
- Metro-Rail Projects for Ludhiana and Amritsar. For this feasibility studies shall be conducted and sent to the Union Government for assistance and collaboration in the first year of SAD Government for assistance and collaboration in the first year of SAD Government.

- Multi-point fly-over for railway crossings shall be built. All railway crossings within towns and rural areas of Punjab to get Railway over Bridges (ROBs) in time bound manner.

Six-Lane super express ways to be built in collaboration with the centre to connect Chandigarh with 'Patiala-Sangrur-Bhatinda, Ludhiana-Moga-Ferozepur and Roper, Newanshehar-Jalandhar-Amritsar. Work on four-laning of all state highways to be taken up on priority.

- Government to seek two more international airports for the state. Modernization and expansion of Amritsar Airport to be taken up with the concerned ministry immediately.
- Lending international airlines will be approached with incentives to start fresh flights from and to destinations with considerable population of Punjabi NRIs.

i) Traffic Awareness Drive

- To cope with the sophistication levels in transport and tackle traffic hazards on the roads, a special initiative for civic awareness and education in traffic rules to be started through a statewide chain of duly recognized training centers and traffic parks. Civil and traffic awareness will be included as a subject in the school curriculum. Services of NGOs will be solicited for the purpose.
- Slip (Parchi) system will be stopped and instead passes will be issued to truck operators to save them from harassment at check points or otherwise in transit.

5.2.26 Media Policy

The Shiromain AAkali Dal is committed to total freedom and dignity of the press and fully and sincerely respects its right to act as the

Fourth Estate of the country's democratic polity. The party has a proven and exemplary record of not only respecting the freedom of the press but actually waging a nationwide battle to preserve this freedom, regarding it as the very foundation on which the edifice of free democracy is built.

In pursuance of this vision and tradition, the Media Policy of the new government has been framed through interactive discussions with representatives of the members of the Fourth Estate.

1. SAD-BJP government will review the present practice in respect of facilities such as allotment of government accommodation to accredited journalists from large. Medium and small newspapers, periodicals as well as the electronic media and from new policy guideline for extending this and other facilities.
2. In addition, the Haryana pattern in respect of provision of cooperative housing for members of the Fourth Estate etc. will be followed while framing the new policy.
3. A Special welfare Fund would be set up for media persons.
4. Accredited and senior Journalists would be provided an insurance cover of Rs. 5 Lac each.
5. Accredited journalists will be given the facility of group housing societies, the land for which would be provided by the PUDA/Improvement Trusts.
6. A scholarship scheme for media persons for providing them exposure within India and abroad to new technology, skills and knowledge shall be put in place.

7. Schemes for group housing, lodging/boarding in government guest houses/Bhawans etc. will also be applicable to recognized/accredited senior/free lance journalists, especially those serving the cause of the Punjabi language, culture and religious heritage. Clear and objective norms would be laid for the inclusion of writers in this category.
8. With the fast expanding sphere of electronic media, the cable network has emerged as a significant segment of the press. The SAD-BJP government will take concrete steps to address the problems of professionals/ workers engaged in Cable TV network operations.
9. The new government will recognize cable network operations as a wing of the media and give representation at par with other branches of the media. Accordingly, most of the facilities given by the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) to the media will be extended to cable operating professional also, especially to those engaged in direct field media operations such as software gathering etc.
10. The DIPR will issue Press Identity Cards to cable media professionals.
11. Government will also consider sympathetically the demand of the cable operators to be included in categories eligible for Co-operative Group Housing Schemes.

5.2.27 Our Vision

Punjab needs a qualitative change in its governance strategies, development vision and social outlook. Accordingly, it has to rearrange its politics and policies.

SAD's vision is to make Punjab a global leader in Human Resource Development, a model of corruption-free participatory and egalitarian governance, secular in social ethos and ethical transparent in the spiritual sphere.

Congress governments at the centre and in the state have systematically violated the Riparian Principle. Captain Amrinder Singh, who had publicly hailed the late Mrs. Indira Gandhi for starting the digging operation of the SYL canal at Kapoori in 1982, has now delivered the biggest blow to state's interests by giving a legal guarantee to the flow of Punjab's river waters to Haryana and Rajasthan under Clause 5 of the Punjab Termination of Agreements Act.....

The new government will provide atta at Rs. 4 per kg and daal at Rs. 20/- per kg to the poor. Farm indebtedness and the resultant suicide menace to be tackled on war footing. Application of "one Time Debt Settlement Scheme" and "Staggered Debt Transfer Plan", on the lines of the scheme for industry to be taken up with the centre.

Dalits, SCs/BCs were made the target of systematic neglect and injustice during the Rajwarashahi regime of Captain Amarinder Singh. The Shagun scheme introduced by Mr. Parkash Singh Badal government was discontinued and brought back in a distorted form and that too only toward the end of the tenure of the present government.

Agricultural products of major crops to be processed locally and marketed through a global network, with special emphasis on food processing, textile and fashion technology industry to broad-base the demand for textile raw material.

Agricultural products of major crops to be processed locally and marketed through a global network, with special emphasis on food processing, textile and fashion technology industry to broad-base the demand for textile raw material.

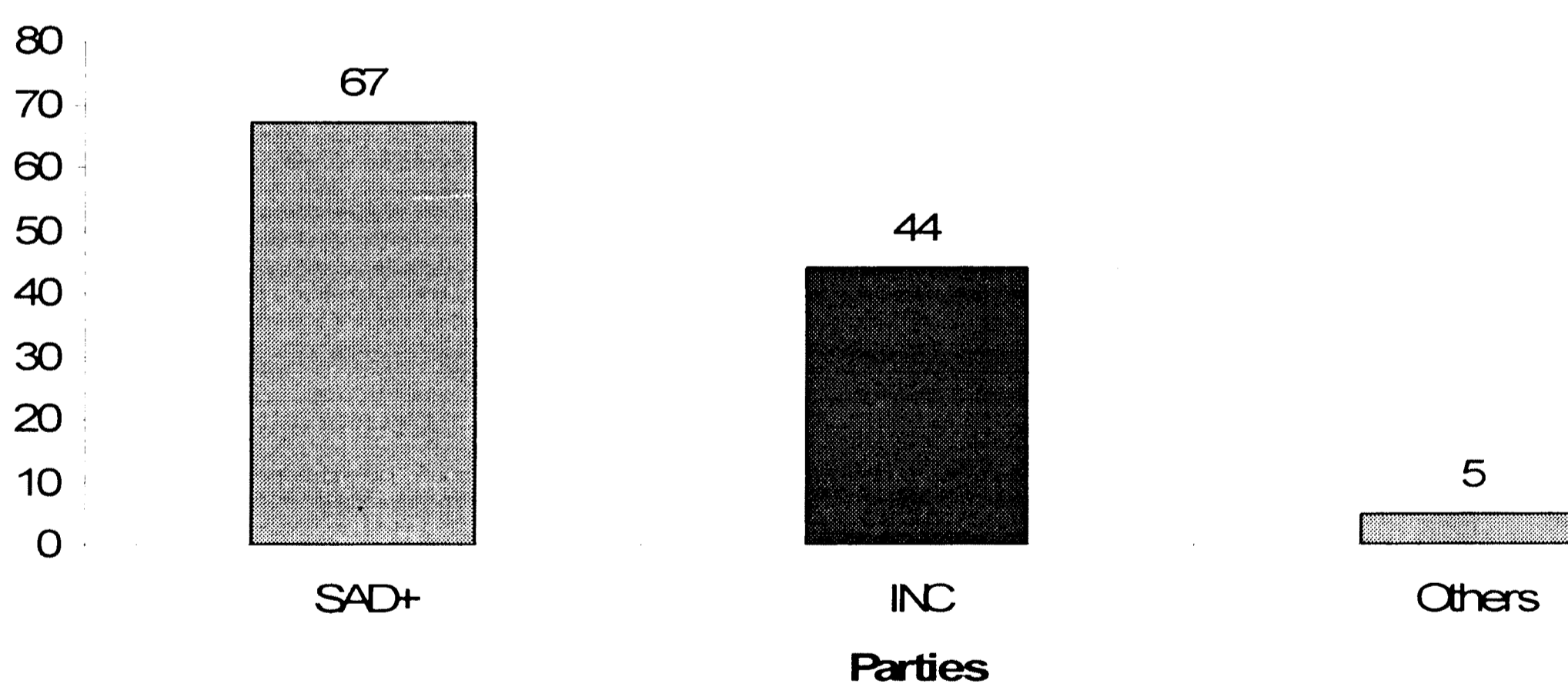
Now, Punjab assembly election results 2007 as given below show that the SAD-BJP alliance has got 67 seats while congress has got 44 seats. The SAD and BJP break up is 48 and 19. Five independents have also won in the 116 seats of Punjab Vidhan Sabha²⁹. Badal again became the Chief Minister of Punjab.

Table-5.5
Punjab Assembly Elections Results, 2007³⁰

Parties	Result 2007
SAD+	67
INC	44
Others	5
Total Seats	117 (117)*

* The polling in Beas segment will be held on March 11, Amended/updated list of candidates is given was and SAD+BJP alliance had got one more seat of Beas

Figure-5.1
Punjab Assembly Elections Results, 2007



²⁹ Source: Punjab Assembly Election Results, 2007, Punjab Newslines.com
³⁰ Ibid.

From above it is evident that people of Punjab voted for SAD-BJP combine due to the shift of Policy Programme of SAD-BJP from ethno-religious issues to Politico-Socio-Economic issues for the betterment of the people of Punjab because much more thrust was given to social and economic development of various sections of society with the promise for cooperative federalism with centre government than anti-centre stance and from a politics of confrontation to peace and Hindu-Sikh unity as mentioned in Akali Dal election manifesto since 1997.

CHAPTER-6

CONCLUSION

The Shiromani Akali Dal is one of the most powerful and oldest regional parties of India. The Akali Dal had a long and chequered history because it had passed through several vicissitudes and to face many trials and tribulations. The origin of the Akali Dal can be traced back to 1920 when the Gurudwara movement was launched both for liberating the Gurudwaras from the corrupting influence of the Mahants and restoring the sanctity of these pious seats of Sikh religion. The Mahants had virtually converted 'these Gurudwaras' into their personal possessions. The followers of Sikhism wanted to restore the traditional sanctity of the Gurudwaras as Gurudhams and of the holiest of the holigurus, Shri Guru Granth Sahib. The Sikhs launched the Gurudwara movement, in which they received good support for securing these objectives but in the process had to face state repression. However the sacrifices made by the Sikhs and the other sections of the Indian society produced good results. The Punjab government created bylaw (Sikh Gurudwara Act. 1925) the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak committee for managing the Gurudwaras. The establishment of the SGPC came to be a source of political recognition of the Sikhs and subsequently paved the way for the establishment of Shiromani Akali Dal, on 24th Jan. 1921, as the party of the Sikhs, a panthak party and the soul political body of the Sikhs.

The Akali Dal thus emerged as a "paramilitary political organization" during The Akai Movement. The Congress party which had launched its peaceful non-cooperation Movement in 1920-21 was very much impressed by the passive reistance of the Akalis Congress, therefore, decided to lend support to the cause of the Akalis and the Gurudwara movement was looked upon as a part of the national

movement. As a result of this mutual cooperation, the Akali and the Congress worked together in the national movement for freedom. In 1929, at its session in Lahore, the Congress party acceded to the demand that it should not agree to a constitution which was not acceptable to the Sikh community. While cooperating with the congress party, the Akali Dal engaged independently in political activity to secure political privileges specifically for the Sikh community.

After the attainment of independence, the Akali Dal began playing an active part in politics, particularly in the Punjab Politics. In the first general elections held in 1952, the SAD secured important gains (14 Seats) in the Punjab Assembly. Thereafter, it has always remained an active actor in the Punjab politics. However, internal factionalism and unhealthy struggle for power among some of its leaders have very often kept its role limited. In the early years of independence, the leadership of the Akali Dal was in the hands of Master Tara Singh and the major concern of this party was to combat the fear of the Sikhs being sucked into the majority community. The Akali Dal, therefore, launched a Morcha for securing Punjabi Suba. The party successfully launched two very impressive agitations for realizing this objective. In the first agitation (May 10, 1955 to July 12, 1955) 12,000 Akalis were taken into custody. Government was ultimately compelled to withdraw a ban on "Punjabi Suba Slogan". In the second agitation of 1960 about 57,000 Akali volunteers were again arrested. The first attempt, however was not successful. Thereafter, in 1960-61, encouraged by the formation of Maharashtra and Gujrat, Akali Dal launched a massive morcha for the formation of Punjabi Suba. In 1966, Punjab was reorganized into Punjab and Haryana with the former as the Punjabi-speaking Sikh-majority state. In the fourth general elections, held in 1967 Akali Dal (Sant Fateh Singh) secured spectacular gains and Master Tara Singh group fell into the background. Sant Fateh Singh's emphasis on the

relatively secular aspect took him near to the masses and made his politics more pragmatic and attractive which could be accommodated within the framework of the Constitution of India.

But the issue of transfer of Chandigarh and other Punjabi-speaking areas to Punjab led to the emergence of a confrontationist approach towards the issue of relations with the Central Government. In 1972, the Central Government accepted the demand for the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab but linked transfer of certain areas of Punjab to Haryana. This linkage, however, made the whole issue more problematic. In 1972, the death of Sant Fateh Singh came as a blow to the Akali Dals strength. But after this the Akali Dal policies came to be centered on the demand for more autonomy to the states which was amply clear in the statement of Anandpur Sahib Resolution which was past by its Working Committee on October 17, 1973, which was past by the general meeting of the Akali Dal held on August 28, 1978. It was finally ratified by the All India Akali conference on October 29, 1978. The Anandpur Sahib Resolution, as such, constitutes a statement of the main principles, policies and programmes of the Akali Dal. However the controversy resulting from the presence of several drafts of its text has made it an object of debate. While the moderates interpreted it as a demand for more autonomy for Punjab, many others regarded it as a demand for securing sovereignty.

The Akali Dal joined hands with national opposition parties that has rallied under the banner of "Total Revolution" of Jaya Prakash Narayan. The opposition parties were demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (as she was held guilty of resorting to mal-practice during her election to Lok Sabha in 1971 by the Allahabad High Court) but she resorted to internal emergency on June 25, 1975 to suppress the agitation launched by the opposition parties. Draconian measures like imposition of Defence of India Rules, MISA (Maintenance

of Internal Security Act), suspension of Fundamental Rights and the adoption of 42 constitutional amendments, censorship on press etc. were resorted to curtail the fundamental liberties of the people. The Akali Dal reacted sharply to all these repressive measures and launched a peaceful morcha from June 6, 1975. The party continued its crusade for 19 months and 43,000 Akalis were arrested by protesting against the excesses of emergency. The stand taken by the party raised its stature and hence Akali-Jan Sangh-CPM alliance was able to win all Lok Sabha seats from Punjab during the March 1977 Lok Sabha elections. This combination (Akali-Jan Sangh-CPM) also won a landside victory in the June 1977 assembly elections.

In view of its distinctive role, The Akali Dal was accommodated as a coalition partner at the national level. One Cabinet minister (Surjeet Singh Barnala) and one Deputy Minister (Dhana Singh Gulshan Singh) were included in the Union council of Ministers. In wake of the massive victory of the Akalis (Akali Dal won 58 seats, Jan Sangh party won 25 and CPM 8 seats). An Akali – Janta coalition ministry under Parkash Singh Badal as Chief Minister assumed office on June 20, 1977 in Punjab. Due to the factional fights for the Prime Minister's post between Morarjee Desai and Charan Singh, the Janta conglomerate failed to retain its unity. Morarjee Desai had to step down in the wake of the split in the Janta Party. His place was taken by Chaudhary Charan Singh, owing to the support given by Indira Gandhi. The Charan Singh government failed to prove its majority and did not face the Lok Sabha. Consequently mid-term poll was ordered in the country by the President of India. Mrs. Indira Gandhi was able to win a massive majority in the January 1980 Lok Sabha elections and she assumed office as Prime Minister of India. Taking advantage of the precedent set by Janta Party, she got the nine state governments dislodged (including the Punjab

Ministry headed by Parkash Singh Badal from office on February 17, 1980).

Although Akali-Janta coalition ministry had to face many crises, inspite of this it had fulfilled many of its commitments. The Akali Dal led government introduced an ambitious Rs. 302 crores Rural Integrated Development Programme. It also negotiated an agreement on the Thein Dam with the Himachal Pradesh Govt. It also reduced electricity rates and interest of the cooperative banks. It appointed the Pay Commission for the revision of salaries of the state employees and accepted its recommendations. It also accorded Cabinet Minister Status to the leader of the opposition of the State legislative Assembly.

The Akali party has always suffered from acute factionalism and internal dissensions. The party which fought for achievement of Punjabi Suba in order to safeguard the interest of Sikh community and Punjabi culture could not come up to its expectations after the reorganization of Punjab. The first Akali led United Front Government formed in 1967 could not last for more than a few months due to lust for power on the part of Akali leaders. In 1969 mid-term polls Akalis were again able to form coalition government with Justice Gurnam Singh as Chief Minister for the second time but it could not last for more than a few months and in July, 1970 it was replaced by ministry led by Parkash Singh Badal. Badal ministry also fell victim to the internal dissensions. The people were so much disappointed with the akali leadership that they punished the party by returning only one candidate to Lok Sabha in 1971 elections and 24 members to Punjab Legislative Assembly. As mentioned earlier, the misdeeds of the Congress government and the fight put up by the Akalis during the emergency helped the party to regain its popularity. With the help of Janta Party and C.P.M., the Akali Dal won nine seats in Lok Sabha and 58 in the Punjab Assembly in 1977 elections. Soon after regaining power in Punjab, Akali leadership

resumed its mutual infighting forgetting their responsibility to the people who had placed their confidence in them. However, the people took them to task at the time of elections held in 1980. Only one Akali member was returned to Lok Sabha and 34 members out of 117 were elected to Punjab Assembly. The Akalis did not learn from this defeat and continued fighting with the result that the Akali Dal again split into two groups each claiming to be the real Akali Dal. One was headed by Jathedar Jagdev Singh Talwandi and the other by Sant Harchand Singh Longowal. The issue that caused the division was apparently ideological as well as tactical. In reality, however, it was a clash of personalities eager to lay hold over the power, organization and the S.G.P.C.

After 1980 the Akali Dal witnessed a grim power struggle among its various factions. Having lost its roots in Punjab, the Talwandi group launched a morcha in front of the Parliament House in New Delhi for implementations of the Anandpur Sahib resolution. After slow disintegration of its cadre, this group ultimately merged in the united Akali Dal of Baba Joginder Singh in 1985. Various leaders later deserted the Dal.

The Longowal group launched a morcha against the central government which practically continued upto the Rajiv-Longowal accord of 1985. It started with 45 demands later reduced to mainly three demands. During its phased agitation a record number of its volunteers were arrested. To consolidate the support base of its morcha it also aligned with the external leader Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindrawala. Its top leaders were arrested during the Operation Blue Star. On their release in early 1984 the Dal had the accord with the centre. The Dal withdrew its agitation and in return most of outstanding demands were accepted. The Dal was returned to power in Assembly elections which were held in September 1985. The Akali Dal (Longowal group) won 73 seats out of 117 and Surjit Singh Barnala became the Chief Minister.

The Longowal Dal, however, again got split in early 1985 with the revolt of Badal, Tohra and Amarinder Singh against Surjit Singh Barnala-Balwant Singh combine constituted the Akali Dal (L). There was bitter power struggle between these two Dals. It demanded the downfall of Barnala ministry. However, the Akali Dal (Barnala) enjoyed Congress support in the Assembly and continued to rule with this support till President's rule was imposed on Punjab on the eve of 1987 Haryana Assembly elections. During the President's rule which lasted for almost five years the Akalis were totally pushed to the background by the militant leadership.

Ultimately normalcy returned to Punjab after February 1992 elections which were boycotted by the Akali factions except Akali Dal (K). Factionalism among the Akalis is a matter of tradition particularly on the eve of elections. Though there were many factions, viz. Akali Dal (Mann) and Akali Dal (Panthic), but the Akali Dal (Badal) had emerged as the most powerful party. Akali Dal (Badal) may be termed as the real Akali Dal in the SGPC elections held in October, 1996. Thereafter, Akali Dal (B) emerged as a single largest party in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha elections held in February 1997. The Akali Dal (B) secured 75 out of 117 assembly seats in Punjab.

The Akali Dal again got divided into two antagonist factions on May 30, 1999 when a Panthic convention hosted by Tohra loyalists, S. Parkash Singh Badal was removed from the office of the President of the party and S. Gurcharan Singh Tohra was appointed in his place to lead the party. This split again led to two Akali Dals under the presidentship of S. Gurucharan Singh Tohra & Parkash Singh Badal. There was a considerable loss in popularity and power of the party due to this split. It could win only two seats from Punjab in October 1999 Lok Sabha elections. Whereas the party led by S. Gurcharan Singh Tohra failed to win even a single seat. Though the Badal Akali Dal was able to

establish its supremacy by winning the bye elections of Nawanshahar Assembly seat, the position of party kept on deteriorating. In 2002 Assembly election it was reduced to minority with having secured just 41 seats while its ally BJP could get only 3 seats. The Congress came to power in the state by winning 82 seats, while 2 seats were captured by CPI. This result shows that people of Punjab were disillusioned with the performance of Badal government, so they preferred to change it. But due to the misrule of Congress party & the right approach put up by the Akali Dal by shunning its policy of confrontation with centre & putting an agenda for the betterment of the people of Punjab the SAD and BJP alliance got 67 seats and congress has got 44 seats during 2007 assembly elections. The SAD and BJP break up is 48 and 19. The independents have also made their presence felt in the 116 seats of Punjab Vidhan Sabha. Badal again became the Chief Minister of Punjab.

A survey of the role and performance of the Akali Dal, during the past eighty years rightly reveals that the party has not been able to find a political model which should protect the political, economic and cultural interests of the Sikhs and enable them to hold their heads high. The Akali Dal has earned popular acclaim for its role in the Gurdwara Reform Movement and later for pioneering the country's struggle for freedom, with more than 75% sacrifices. But at the time of transfer of power, the Akali Dal had no leader of the caliber of Gandhi, Nehru and Jinnah, who could safeguard the interests of the Sikhs as the third political entity in the country. Naïve as they were, the Akali leaders relinquished their bargaining power and agreed to the partition of Punjab which divided the community into two almost equal parts. As a result, the community suffered incalculable losses of unprecedented magnitude.

The only perceptible advantage of the partition, through sheer accident, was the concentration of the Sikhs in a single territorial unit in which they could protect their political rights and identity. Their hopes were soon belied when the demand for a Punjabi speaking state was denied and no constitutional safeguards were provided to the Sikhs as a minority. It was a big political blunder on the part of the Akali leaders to give their full consent to the merger of PEPSU, the only Sikh bastion, with Punjab. This showed arrangements for the Akali leaders to secure the satisfactory political arrangements for the Sikhs in India. The Akali leaders were again stumped when they entered the congress fold enmasse and relinquished their independent political status. Merger with Congress was a short term arrangement and secured no political gains for the Akali Dal.

After leaving the Congress ranks, the Akali Dal had to wage a protracted struggle for the attainment of a Punjabi speaking state. But surprisingly the Akalis gave their consent to the Punjab Reorganization Act (1966) though it had failed to grant the status of a full-fledged state to Punjab. Chief Minister Gurnam Singh lacked the will and the skill to put things in their true perspective. With the creation of a truncated and economically crippled sub-state, the situation became more complex and had defied logical solutions. The issues assumed grim and terrifying proportions with the army assault on the Darbar Sahib and the massacre of Sikhs in Delhi and other places in November 1984. It was unfortunate that Akali leaders like Harchand Singh Longowal, Surjit Singh Barnala and Balwant Singh overlooked the trauma that the Sikhs had gone through. They held secret parleys with the government and signed the Rajiv-Longowal Accord. It was total surrender of every demand and every right the Sikhs had struggled for since 1966. Both Surjit Singh Barnala and Balwant Singh bartered away the vital interests of the Sikhs and the state for their vested interests.

There are visible signs of deterioration in Punjab's economy. Economists have noticed a general decline in the growth of economy in the 1990's. Agriculture is stagnating, in the matter of unemployment, the Planning Commission has bracketed the state with Bihar, U.P. and Kerala. There are nearly 15 lakh educated unemployed youth in the state. In per capita income Maharashtra has overtaken Punjab. Leadership in Punjab has not been able to provide direction to the state's development needs. Today the Sikhs are baffled, helpless and rudderless. They resent the degradation of their sacred and time honored institutions and traditions. Overt and covert moves of the Hindutva forces to dilute or destroy the socio-political identity of the Sikhs have driven the community to despair. Lack of representative Sikh leadership is the root of the problem. There is an urgent need to salvage the Akali Dal from its present decadent state and restore its representative and democratic character.

After the fall of Surjit Singh Barnala govt and non implementation of Rajiv-Longowal Accord, the state witnessed President's rule for the next five years and there was a bloodshed to the large extent in Punjab. But a significant development was the rise of the moderate Akali leadership; under the leadership of S. Parkash Singh Badal who tried to impress upon the people about the volfarious designs of congress party as well as fundamentalist. During this period they focused their attention to go in depth to study the failure and success of the past vis-vis loss to the state of Punjab and nation as a whole. As such keeping in mind the state as well as national interest in the far front, he decided to participate in the democratic process initiated by the central government in the shape of Assembly Elections in 1991 inspite of the serious threat from the fundamentalists. There fore Akali Dal (Badal) fielded the candidates for the elections and had to sacrifice many candidates in the fray. But they again fell to centre who cancelled the election process at

the eleventh hour just before polling and decided to boycott the 1992 elections.

Therefore, during 1992 elections congress captured power with very thin vote bank and ruled the state upto 1997. During those five years, there was a great shift in the policy programmes of Akali Dal (Badal) the main party of Akali's. The think tank of the party toed the moderate line completely thereby shedding the militant postures to a great extent. Thereby enabling the people specific, state specific, nation specific policies which came into effect in the shape of Election Manifesto of SAD (B) before 1997 Election.

So there was a marched shift in the electoral priorities of SAD, Politico-Economic, Socio issues have replaced ethno-religious ones. Also discrimnable is the shift from an anti-centre stand to cooperative federalism and from a politics of confrontation to peace and Hindu Sikh Unity. Due to the pro-people policy and programme put forward by the SAD (B) and BJP, they captured power during 1997 elections and formed the government under the Chief Ministership of S. Parkash Singh Badal. During their rule from 1997-2002, they tried to implement many clauses of their pre-election promises, such as free power to farmers, Shagan scheme for Dalit families, abolition of Octroi, etc. But due to the rampant corruption in governance and mismanagement at the level of bureaucracy, peoples faith eroded in the government and for this they have to pay a price during 2002 election though they lost to the congress marginally. From the analysis of election results, it was evident that SAD/BJP combine tried their level best to fullfil their poll promises by working for the upliftment of the deprived section of society like Dalits, small farmers etc., and tried to give justice at the door step of people by holding Sangat Darshan. But due to the luke warm attitude at the level of bureaucracy, they have to loose the power during 2002 elections.

Now by learning from the past and seeming the needs of people of state, a marked shift was witnessed in the policy programme of SAD on the eve of 2007 Assembly election. It gives much more thrust over social, economic and political needs of the state. This has been evident in the form of manifestos of Akali Dal and its alliance BJP to maintain peace, brotherhood, communal harmony, socio-economic welfare, all round development and sustainable & profitable agriculture through diversification. The most important change is the gradual discarding of radical stances by the SAD. Due to the above said reasons, SAD/BJP won recently held 2007 Assembly elections and due to the above policies, there was a major shift in the voting pattern because SAD/BJP coalition much more votes in urban areas as compared to past.

So from the above, we can conclude that the SAD is now a much more active party under the leadership of Parkash Singh Badal and will look after the socio-political and socio-economic needs of people of Punjab more effectively thereby ushering an era of peace, development and equal justice to all section of society with a caution to rein in the lethargic bureaucracy.

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