

Rise, Growth And Fall Of Bhangi Misal

A

Thesis

presented to the Punjabi University Patiala in fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

HISTORY

(In the Faculty of Social Sciences)

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**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
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Certificate

It gives me immense pleasure to certify that the thesis entitled “**Rise, Growth And Fall Of Bhangi Misal**” submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Social Sciences of Punjabi University, Patiala, is a benefited inter-disciplinary research work by Dalbir Singh under my supervision.

The work is up to the mark as required for Ph.D. standard. Hence it is recommended that it is worthy of consideration for the award of Ph.D. Degree.

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Declaration

I hereby affirm and declare that present work “**Rise, Growth And Fall Of Bhangi Misal**” is my own work. It has not been submitted for any other degree or in any other University/Institution.

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Preface

The present work mainly relates to and documents the *Rise, Growth And Fall Of Bhangi Misal*, the most important and famous *Misal* among the Sikh *Misals* during eighteenth century. So far no exclusive research work has been essayed, which is directly related to the subject of my research topic. The critical study of Rise, Growth and fall of Bhangi Misal is an endeavour to make a useful addition to the already existing literature of the topic. The relations of *Bhangi Misal* with the other *Misals* and with the non Sikh rulers and their style of functioning enable us to determine the exact position of the *Bhangi Misal*. An in-depth study of the primary /contemporary sources will lead us to some meaningful conclusions and insights.

A good quality deal of concentration has been paid to the history of the Sikh *Misals* during the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century as in Teja Singh's and Ganda Singh's, work *A Short History of the Sikhs*; Hari Ram Gupta's work *History of the Sikhs*, Vol II, III, IV; N.K Sinha's, work *Rise of the Sikh Power*; Kirpal Singh's, work *Life of Maharaja Ala Singh of Patiala and his times*; Gopal Singh's work *A History of the Sikh people*; Khushwant Singh's, work *History of the Sikhs*; Himadri Banerjee, *The Khalsa and the Punjab* etc. These historical sources deal mostly with the political history of the Sikhs. Indu Banga's work *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*; Bhagat Singh's, work *History of the Sikh Misals*; Veena Sachdeva's, work *Polity and Economy of the Punjab during the Late eighteenth century*, which largely deal with socio-economic history of the Sikh *Misals*.

Attention has been reserved some individual Sikh *Sardars* too of the late eighteenth century, as by Prithipal Singh Kapur, in his work *Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia*; by Ganda Singh in his work *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*; by

Karam Singh in his work *Jiwan Birtant Maharaja Ala Singh*; by Prem Singh Hoti in his work *Maharaja Ranjit Singh* and Nawab Kapur Singh etc. However, no exclusive work devoted to *Bhangi Sardars* has appeared. In the present study of the *Bhangi Sardars* concentration has been paid to find out their political position during first and second decades of eighteenth century and their relations with one another and with the other Sikh *Misaldars* and non Sikh rulers as well as the political devolvment connected with their activities.

This work on the *Bhangi Misal* generally relates to the eighteenth century which is, undoubtedly, the most hectic period in the Sikh history. The rise of the *Bhangi Misal* symbolizes the emergence of the Sikh political power in the later half of the eighteenth century. *Bhangi Misal* was the most powerful *Misal* of the Sikhs as far as its territories and manpower were concerned. It was under the able leadership of the *Bhangi Sardars* like Chajja Singh, Bhima Singh, Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh, Gurbakhsh Singh Roranwala, Gujjar Singh, Lehna Singh, Sahib Singh of Sialkot, Rai Singh and Sher Singh Buria, Bhag Singh of Hallowal, Sudh Singh Doda, Milkha Singh Thepuria, Nidhan Singh *Attu*, Tara Singh Chainpuria, Jodh Singh Wazirabadia, Bhag Singh Jalawala etc that the Sikhs tasted the fruit of independence and established their supremacy in Lahore, Amritsar, Multan, Jhang, Chiniot, Gujrat, Rawalpindi, Kasur, Attock, Wazirabad, Ferozpur, Buria, Jagadhari and in Jammu and Kashmir etc and oust the Afghans representative from these territories.

Consequently till 1774, the *Bhangis* became the masters of substantial parts of the province of Punjab, from river Indus to Jamuna and from Kashmir mountains to Multan, on the extreme frontiers as well as in the central Punjab. Thus, they soon emerged as the most powerful masters of the Punjab, during the seventh and eighth decades of the eighteenth century.

It is a matter of recorded history that the *Bhangi Misal* was one of the earliest to become well-known but decline set in very rapidly after the premature death of its prominent leaders like Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh etc and the confederacy was one of the earliest to be dissolved in first decade of nineteenth century. Many of its *Sardars* and *Jagirdars* began to assert independence and many of its areas were occupied by the rival *Misaldars* like *Kanahiyas*, *Karorsinghias*, *Phullkians* and *Sukerchakias*, especially by Mahan Singh and after his death by his more ambitious son Ranjit Singh who became very powerful at that time. Consequently till 1814 Ranjit Singh had annexed all the territories of *Bhangi Sardars* and they had conceded a complete submission to Ranjit Singh. So in the despondent end of the *Bhangi Misal*, which was at one time the most powerful and supreme among all the Sikh *Misals* in the 18th century all its *Sardars* were reduced to measly *Jagirdars*. Now in the course of the decline and fall of the *Bhangi Misal* all its *Jagirdars* became the *Jagirdars* of Ranjit Singh. All their territories had now been amalgamated in the territories of Ranjit Singh.

No methodical account of this great confederacy had been attempted so far. At this point an effort has been made to present an account of *Bhangi Misal* from historical point of view. The present study divided into six chapters. The first chapter deals with the historical background and emergence of the *Bhangi Misal* and also introduced with reference to the position of the Punjab during the eighteenth century. The rise of the *Bhangis* into political power and its territorial expansions has been discussed in the second chapter. The third chapter analysis the *Bhangis* relations with the other Sikh *Misals* and their matrimonial alliances with these *Misaldars* also discussed in this chapter. The forth chapter emphasized the *Bhangis* relations with the Afghans and the other non Sikh rulers and their struggle with Afghan rulers like Ahmed Shah Abdali, Timur Shah and Shah Zaman also investigate in this chapter. The fifth chapter observes the

downfall of the *Bhangis*, resultant in the ultimate annexation of their territories by Ranjit Singh. And at last in conclusion I critically have endeavoured to explore the internal and external causes of the decline of the *Bhangis* and the reasons for their failure to protect their *Misal* from the rising power of Ranjit Singh. I have also critically analyzed why the *Bhangis* failed to make any powerful confederacy like the other *Misals* and why they were unsuccessful to unify the Punjab as Ranjit Singh did.

It is true that a large number of primary and secondary sources of 18th century history of Punjab are available. The proposed study has been based largely on contemporary/ primary sources available in different archives and libraries. These sources are available in English, Punjabi and in the form of translations of Persian works. The contemporary and Semi-contemporary Persian and Urdu sources written as of the accounts on the *Bhangis* rise to power and their assuming sovereignty of the Punjab included Jang Nama (1765) written by Qazi, Nur Muhammad, *Tahmas Namah* (1779) written by Tahmas Khan Miskin, *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin* (1782) written by Mir, Seid Ghulam Hussein Khan, *Tarikh-i-Sikhan* (1811) written by Khushwaqat Rai, *Khalsanamh* (1810-14) written by Bakhat Mal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (1824) written by Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Zaffar-nama-i-Ranjit Singh* (1837) written by *Diwan* Amar Nath, *Twarikh-i-Punjab* (1848) written by Bute Shah, *Ibrat Nama* (1854) written by Ali-ud-din Mufti, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab* (1865) written by Ganesh Das Badehra, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* (1880-85) written by Sohan Lal Suri, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* (1881) written by Kanahiya Lal etc. These chroniclers give copious information about the activities of the Sikhs during 18th and 19th century. But some of them like Qazi Nur Muhammad and Tahmas Khan Etc have some limitations; they unfortunately give the impression to have been fanatical in their approach. They proceed with the narrow-mindedness assumption that the Sikhs struggling for their liberation were the insurgents against the state and deserved to be checked

with all possible resources. Nearly all of these writers, deliberately or not deliberately failed to appreciate the spirit behind their struggle and nature of the change they intended to bring about.

Some other sources in Punjabi and Gurmukhi which I have used like *Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka* (1769) written by Chibber, Kesar Singh, *Prachin Panth Parkash* (1865) written by Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Jassa Singh Binod* written by Rao Ram Sukh, *Tawarik Guru Khalsa*, (1880) *Shamsheer Khalsa* (1892), *Raj Khalsa* and *Panth Parkash* (1880) written by Giani Gian Singh, *Tegh Khalsa* written by Giani Kartar Singh Klaswalia, give us sufficient knowledge about the *Rise and Growth of Bhangi Misal*.

The English sources of information about this period like *Sketch of the Sikhs* (1812) written by Malcolm, *A Journey from Bengal to England* (1789) written by George Forster, *Travel in Kashmir and Punjab* (1845) written by Hugel Baron Charles, *A History of the Sikhs* (1849) written by J.D. Cunningham, *History of the Origin and Progress of Sicks* (1788) written by James Browne, *Rajas of the Punjab* (1870) and *The Punjab Chiefs* (1890) written by Lepel Griffin, *History of the Panjab* (1891) written by Syed Muhammad Latif have been thoroughly explored. More than another two or three dozen English source have also been occasionally used. These are the important sources of *Bhangi Misal*. From these sources we can get substantive information about *Bhangi Chiefs* and their activities during the 18th and 19th centuries like their struggle with the Mughals and Afghans, their relations non Sikh rulers and with the other *Misals*, their struggle with Ranjit Singh for supremacy leading to the fall of *Bhangi Misal*. My work largely depends on these contemporary/primary sources. So, these important sources have been perused so as to collect relevant information.

The sources have only been used after critical analyses so as to make the study meaningful. Care has been taken to keep the subject matter in sharp focus. An attempt has been made to trace the Rise, Growth and Fall of *Bhangi Misal* and how the *Bhangi Misal* was on its zenith as far as its territories and manpower were concerned. The responsibility of *Bhangi Sardars* has also been critically analyzed for the downfall of *Bhangi Misal* and what part was played by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in it. The relations of *Bhangi* Chiefs with other *Misals* have also been discussed. Special care has been taken to check omissions, distortions and fallacies with the help of contemporary or semi-contemporary sources.

Dalbir Singh

*Rise, Growth And Fall Of
Bhangi Misal*

Abstract

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Abstract

Evolution of the Sikh *Misals* began with the Sikh challenge to Mughal rulers and Afghan invaders in 1748, which continued for nearly half a century. In this long struggle they not only saved themselves from the oppression and injustice of Mughals and Afghans but also succeeded to establish their own independent rule in the Punjab under 12 *Misals*.

Bhangi Misal was the most powerful *Misal* of the Sikhs as far as its territories and manpower were concerned. The founder of the *Bhangi Misal* was Chajja Singh who took a *Pahul* from the hands of Guru Gobind Singh. He invited a large number of Sikh youth from Majha to join him and thus became a leader of *Bhangi Jatha*. The second bravest man of the *Misal* was Bhima Singh a *Dhillon Jat* of village Hung near Moga. Bhima Singh as a good organizer and commander of his men gave a fillip to the *Misal*. He took full advantage of the disturbance created by Nadir Shah, in 1739 and turned a small *Jatha* of attackers into a powerful confederacy. He seems to have died in the *Chhota Ghallughara*, in 1746.

At the time of the foundation of *Dal Khalsa* in 1748, Hari Singh was acknowledged as the head of the *Bhangi Misal* as well as the leader of the *Taruna Dal*. He raised the *Bhangi Misal* to haloed glory and made it the strongest among all the Sikh *Misals*. He was great warrior and with the help of his companions he succeeded in capturing several important territories in the province of Punjab like wise Khwajah Saeed Ka Kot in 1762, Sialkot, Karial and Mirowal in 1762, Kasur and Chiniot in 1763. Hari Singh was died in 1765 while he was fight with Ala Singh Patiala. After his death his son Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh with the help of their companions Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh Lahore and Gujrat in 1765, Bhawalpur and Sialkot in 1766, Rawalpindi and Attok in 1767, Multan in 1772, Jhang and

Kala Bagh in 1772 and some parts of Jammu and Kashmir like Mirpur, Kotli, Bhimber and some areas of Puncchh in 1767. Amritsar remained open to all but the *Bhangis* were the first to extend their control over Amritsar. In 1765 Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh took a position of Lahore but they left it in December 1766, when Ahmad Shah invaded Punjab for the seventh time.

A deputation of the prominent persons of Lahore met Abdali and told him that Lehna Singh was a good ruler and he had not made any discriminatory distinction between the Hindus and Muslims. He even bestowed turbans on the Qazis, Muftis and Imams of the Mosques on the festivals of Id-ul-Zuha. The Muslims of Lahore had no fear from the *Khalsa* and they had started looking upon them as their comrades rather than hostile enemies. The leader of Lahore recommended Ahmad Shah to appoint *Sardar* Lehna Singh as the governor of Lahore. Ahmad Shah wrote to Lehna Singh, offering him the governorship of Lahore and sent him some dry fruits of Kabul. But Lehna Singh declined the offer saying that to accept an offer from an invader was against the policy and honour of the *Khalsa* and the community.

No sooner Ahmed Shah had left the Punjab in 1767, than the three Sikh *Sardars* Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh and Sobha Singh through out the Dadan Khan the representative of Ahmed Shah from Lahore and captured the city. Thus from 1767 to 1799 the city of Lahore and fort remained under the *Bhangi* chiefs.

Bhangi Sardars were probably the first to establish independent government and good administration all over their territories. The military strength of the *Bhangi Misal* had been variously estimated from 20,000 to 30,000 horsemen. The mode of fighting under the *Misal* was the guerrilla. Lahore which had always been the provincial capital, gave *Bhangi* chiefs an edge over the other *Misals*.

The *Bhangi* chiefs ruled as independent rulers at the beginning of Ranjit Singh's reign. They occupied important areas of Punjab like Lahore, Amritsar, Gujrat, Sialkot, Chiniot, Rawalpindi, Multan and some areas of Jammu and Kashmir etc. Ranjit Singh was the first Sikh conqueror who challenged the *Bhangi* chiefs over the question of Lahore, in 1799 and succeeded to capture it. After Lahore, Ranjit Singh acquired Bhera from Jodh Singh and Chiniot from Jassa Singh *Dullu*. Similarly Amritsar was acquired in 1805 from Gurdit Singh son of Gulab Singh *Bhangi*, Sialkot in 1807 from Jiwan Singh, Gujrat in 1808-09 from Sahib Singh. In the course of the decline of the *Bhangi Misal*, their chiefs became the chiefs of Ranjit Singh, like Milkha Singh Rawalpindi, Bhag Singh Hallowal, Nihal Singh , Tek Singh and Jodh Singh Attariwala, Nidhan Singh Attu, Mehtab Singh, Tara Singh Maan, Jodh Singh kalalwala etc.

In this way half of *Bhangi* principalities were directly annexed by Ranjit Singh by means of warfare and the other half were made a tributary and given *Jagirs* for maintenance. Thus *Bhangi Sardars* failed to protect the *Bhangi Misal* from the raids of Ranjit Singh which result the elimination of *Bhangi Misal*.

***RISE, GROWTH AND FALLOF
BAHNGI MAISAL***

SUMMARY

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SUMMARY

At the very outset I want submit that the title of my Ph.D thesis is “*Rise, Growth and Fall of the Bhangi Misal*”. The objective of my research work is to find out the political position of the *Bhangi Misal* in the first and second decade of the eighteenth century and study how it became the most powerful so far as manpower and area was concerned as compared to the other Sikh *Misals* in the province of Punjab. I have emphasized the *Bhangis* struggle with the Mughals and Afghans and also researched their relations with the Afghans and the other non Sikh rulers. I have also attempted show that the Afghans like Ahmad Shah Abdali and Shah Zaman offered the Governorship of Lahore to the *Bhangis* and that they declined. I have also studied the *Bhangis* relations with the other *Misals* as well as their matrimonial alliances. At last I critically have endeavoured to explore the internal and external causes of the decline of the *Bhangi Misal* and the reasons for their failure to protect their *Misal* from the rising power of Ranjit Singh. I have also critically analyzed why the *Bhangis* failed to make any powerful confederacy like the other *Misals* and why they were unsuccessful to unify the Punjab as Ranjit Singh did.

The present study divided into six chapters. The first chapter deals with the historical background and emergence of the *Bhangi Misal* and also introduced with reference to the position of the Punjab during the eighteenth century. The rise of the *Bhangis* into political power and its territorial expansions has been discussed in the second chapter. The third chapter analysis the *Bhangis* relations with the other Sikh *Misals* and their matrimonial alliances with these *Misaldars* also discussed in this chapter. The forth chapter emphasized the *Bhangis* relations with the Afghans

and the other non Sikh rulers and their struggle with Afghan rulers like Ahmed Shah Abdali, Timur Shah and Shah Zaman also investigate in this chapter. The fifth chapter observes the downfall of the *Bhangis*, resultant in the ultimate annexation of their territories by Ranjit Singh. And at last in conclusion I critically have endeavoured to explore the internal and external causes of the decline of the *Bhangis* and the reasons for their failure to protect their *Misal* from the rising power of Ranjit Singh. I have also critically analyzed why the *Bhangis* failed to make any powerful confederacy like the other *Misals* and why they were unsuccessful to unify the Punjab as Ranjit Singh did.

Evolution of the Sikh *Misals* began with the Sikh challenge to the Mughal rulers and the Afghan invaders, which continued for nearly half a century. As an outcome of this protracted period of struggle, the Sikhs not only managed to save themselves from the oppression and injustice of the Mughals and Afghans but also succeeded in establishing their own independent rule in the Punjab under twelve *Misals*.

The word *Bhangi* is derived from *Bhang* or hemp - a wild plant found in abundance in the jungles of the Punjab and along its river banks. When pounded in a mortar with a pestle and sifted through a piece of coarse cloth, it leaves behind a thick liquid of green color. Its drink is intoxicating and soothes the effect of heat in summer. A particular group - *Bhangi Jatha* - of the *Dal Khalsa* liberally indulged in the consumption of this drink and profusely entertained others also with it. It is said that at the time of fighting; its effect made its consumers furious and reckless. On account of addiction to *Bhang*, this group of the *Dal Khalsa* came to be called *Bhangi*.

In the *Dal Khalsa* the *Bhangi Misal* was supreme as far as its territories and manpower were concerned. The founder of this formidable *Jatha* (group) of warriors was Chajja Singh (Chajju Singh) a *Jat*, the resident of village Panjwar, 9 miles away from Amritsar. He was baptized by Banda Singh *Bahadur*. ; Some writer like Kanahiya Lal believed that Chajja Singh first took a *Pahul* from the hands of Guru Gobind Singh. Bhima Singh, Natha Singh, Jagat Singh, Mohan Singh and Gulab Singh of village Dhousa ; Karur Singh of Jhabal, Gurbakhsh Singh *Sandhu* of village Roranwala, Agar Singh Khangora of village Jai Singhwala and Sawan Singh *Randhawa* were his other companions. They carried conviction in their heads that *Guru* Gobind Singh had destined them for *Raj* or the sovereign power of the Punjab. Enthused with the fire of this mission before them they felt vehemently inspired to pursue their activities against the Mughal Government of the Punjab.

The history of the Sikhs after the martyrdom of Banda Singh *Bahadur* in 1716 is eventful as fresh waves of oppression of the Sikhs started. During this dark period, 1716 to 1733, the Sikhs were left without any permanent leader, who could guide them through this critical period. In the history of the Sikhs, this dark period is a record of the titanic struggle between the *Khalsa* on the one hand the Mughals and Afghans on the other, in which the sons of the soil had not only to fight for their lives, but were able, after long and determined suffering, to assert their superior right to rule over their own land.

As the time advanced the *Bhangis* associated with the other Sikh *Sardars* and began to their assaults on the Mughal authority under Zakarya Khan. In 1733, Zakariya Khan tried to assuage their

aggressive fervour by offering them a large grant of revenue free land of Dipalpur, Kanganwal and Jhabal and the title of *Nawab* which were accepted by the Sikhs. The title of *Nawab* was conferred on *Sardar Kapur Singh Faizullapuria*. After that the *Khalsa* was split in two sections. One of them was named *Budha Dal*, the army of the old veterans, led by *Nawab Kapur Singh Faizullapuria*, with *Bagh Singh Hallowalia* (later joined with the *Bhangi Misal*), *Bhima Singh Bhangi*, *Sham Singh Narroke* and *Gurbakhsh Singh Roranawala*, (both later as the members of *Bhangi Misal*) as prominent members. The other was *Taruna Dal*, the army of the young Sikh soldiers which got further divided into five sections which were led by *Baba Deep Singh*; *Karam Singh* and *Dharam Singh Khatri*; *Baba Kahan Singh Bhalla*. It is said that at the time of the foundation of *Budha Dal* and *Taruna Dal*, the *Bhangi Jatha* was the one of the most powerful *Jatha* of the Sikhs. Thus *Baba Kahan Singh* decided to appoint as his assistant one of the bravest *Sardars* of *Bhangi Misal* named *Hari Singh Dhillon* of village *Panjwar*. His other two assistants were, *Miri Singh* and *Bagh Singh* of *Hallowal* (who later joined the *Bhangis*); *Dassunda Singh Kot Budha*; *Bir Singh*, *Jeon Singh*, *Madan Singh* and *Amar Singh*. Each of *Jathas*, consisting of 1300 to 2000 soldiers was placed under the command of separate *Jathedars*.

Because of long years of struggle the strength of the Sikh *Jathas* became significantly large. Acting in accordance with the circumstances the Sikhs assembled at *Amritsar* on 14 October, 1745 on the occasion of *Diwali* and passed a *Gurmata* for merging all the small *Jathas* into twenty five strong *Jathas*. It has been noted that the *Bhangi Jatha* was one of the most powerful *Jathas* of the Sikhs at that time. *Chajja Singh*, *Bhima Singh* and *Hari Singh Bhangi*, with *Jassa*

Singh *Ahluwalia*, Jai Singh *Kanahiya* and Naudh Singh *Sukerchakia* especially emerged as the stalwarts of the *Khalsa*. They carried out their insurgent activities all over the territory and carried out raids the Government treasures.

Around 1748, the number of these *Jathas* rose up to the strength of sixty five. Out of these sixty five *Jathas* eighteen *Jathas* belonged to the *Bhangis* which were under the command of separate *Jathedars* as under: Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Natha Singh, Gujjar Singh, Garja Singh, Nibahu Singh, Lehna Singh, Sanwal Singh *Randhawa*, Gurbakhsh Singh Doda, Dharam Singh Klalwala, Tara Singh Chainpuria, Mehtab Singh Wadala, Kapur Singh Surianwala, Amar Singh Kingra, Jiwan Singh village *Qila* Jiwan Singh, Bagh Singh Hallowal, Tara Singh Mann.

On March 29th, 1748 on the day of *Baisakhi* the Sikhs assembled at Amritsar and discussed the *Panthic* agenda. Here *Nawab* Kapur Singh moved the resolution that the *Panth* needed solidarity and should have one strong organization. They reconstituted their small *Jathas* into eleven units and gave them a more cohesive shape by combining all their fighting units and reorganizing themselves into one strong organization which was given the name *Dal Khalsa* under the supreme command of Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*. Later on these eleven *Jathas* evolved into *Misals* (The word *Misal*, means alike, equal, similitude or a file; a collection of papers bearing reference to a particular topic). The division of the *Dal Khalsa* into *Budha Dal* and *Taruna Dal* was retained and the following eleven *Misals* were constituted at Amritsar under *Budha Dal* and *Taruna Dal* under separate *Sardars*. *Budha Dal* consisted of six *Misals* as under: *Misal Ahlluwalia* under Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*; *Misal Faizullapuria*

under *Nawab Kapur Singh Faizullapuria*; *Misal Nishanwalia* under Dasaunda Singh; *Misal Dallewalia* under Gulab Singh *Dallewalia*; *Misal Nihangsinghia* under *Baba Deep Singh* (later the *Misal* known as *Shahid* after the death of *Baba Deep Singh*); *Misal Karorsinghia* under *Karor Singh* of village *Panjarh*. The *Taruna Dal* comprised the following: *Misal Bhangian* under the command of *Sardar Hari Singh Dhillon (Bhangi)* of village *Panjwar* and assisted by *Jhanda Singh*, *Ganda Singh*, *Lehna Singh* and *Gujjar Singh* and many others; *Misal Sukerchakia* under *Naudh Singh* and *Charat Singh Sukerchakia*; *Misal Kanahiya* under *Jai Singh Kanahiya*; *Misal Nakai* under the command of *Sardar Hira Singh Nakai*; *Misal Singhaniya* under the command of *Sardar Nand Singh* and *Jassa Singh* of village *Saghane*. The *Misal* later came to be known as *Ramgarhia*.

Although *Phullkian Misal* under the leadership of *Baba Ala Singh* operated independently and separately in *Malwa* but it has been considered as the twelfth *Misal* by the historians.

Thus we can see that the *Bhangi Misal* emerged from a period of prolonged struggle which continued for nearly half a century. After *Chajja Singh's* death *Bhima Singh* a *Dhillon Jat* of village *Hung*, in the *Pargana* of *Wandi*, near *Moga* became the chief leader of the *Bhangi Misal*. *Lepel Griffin* and *Syed Muhammad Latif* believed that *Bhima Singh* an inhabitant of *Kasur* and who may be called the real founder of the powerful *Bhangi* confederacy. He organized a small *Jatha* of attackers during *Nadir Shah's* Invasion in 1739. On the death of *Zakariya Khan* in 1745, *Bhima Singh's Jatha* was one of the twenty five *Jathas* of the Sikhs. As yet, however, he did not possess any

territory. He said to have lost his life in the *Chhota Ghallughara*, in 1746.

On Bhima Singh's death his adopted son Hari Singh *Dhillon Jat* of village Panjwar became the next chief of the *Bhangi Misal*. According to Lepel Griffin, Hari Singh was the son of Bhup Singh, a *Zamindar* of Pattoh, near *Pargana* Wandi. He possessed the qualities of bravery and intrepidity. He organized a large *Jatha* of followers which increased considerably. Under the leadership of Hari Singh the number of the fighting soldiers went up to 20,000 men. At the time of the inception of the *Dal Khalsa*, Hari Singh *Bhangi* was appointed to lead *Taruna Dal* with the *Ramgarhia*, *Kanahiya*, *Sukerchakia* and *Nakai* forces under his command, besides his own. He was the first among the *Bhangi Sardars* who conquered and occupied territories in the province of Punjab. After the organization of the fighting bands into the *Dal Khalsa*, he came into prominence as an important leader. He figured in nearly all the major expeditions of the Sikhs from 1748 to 1765, the phase of Ahmed Shah Abdali's important invasions.

At first Hari Singh established his administrative center was at Gillwali near Amritsar. Thereafter he set himself up at Amritsar. The city of Amritsar did not belong to any single chief but it was adopted as headquarters only by Hari Singh *Bhangi*, who built a fort called *Qila Bhangian*. It was constructed at the back of the famous *Loon Mandi* (Salt Market) in Amritsar. He appears to have conquered some territories close to Amritsar. By the time of Hari Singh's succession to Chiefship of the *Misal* was jointly herd by many other Sikh *Sardars* as under Gujjar Singh, his brothers Garja Singh and Nibhau Singh, Lehna Singh, Gurbakhsh Singh Roranwala, Sawan Singh *Randhawa*,

Gurbakhsh Singh Doda, Tara Singh Chainpuria and Bhag Singh Hallowalia, who made great contributions to his achievements.

Hari Singh next captured Karial, Mirowal and extended his power up to Chiniot and Jhang. In the time of Mir Mannu his *Jatha* was the one of the most powerful *Jathas* of the Sikhs. He also joined the other Sikh *Sardars* in the attacks of Lahore in 1758 and 1760. In 1761, he attacked the retreating army of Ahmed Shah Abdali. In 1762, Hari Singh fell on Kot Khawaja Syed, two miles from Lahore and looted the ammunitions godown of the Afghan Governor of Lahore Khawaja Obed Khan, containing arms, ordnance and munitions of war including the famous *Zamzama* Gun, which subsequently came to be known as *Bhangian-Wali-Top*.

He also subdued the surrounding areas of Bahawalpur. He compelled *Raja* Ranjit Deo the ruler of Jammu to accept his sovereignty and took *Nazrana* from him. He played an important role in the victory of Sirhind in 1763-64, along with the other *Misals* and shared some of areas as a consequence of his contribution. By 1763 Hari Singh allied with *Sukerchakias*, *Ramgarhias*, *Kanahiyas* and *Nakais* and attacked Pathan colony of Kasur. After defeating Hamid Khan and Usman Khan, he received a *Nazrana* from them and established a police post at Kasur. It is believed that Hari Singh twice raided Multan and even realized *Nazrana* from the Derah Ghazi Khan and Derah Ismial Khan. In 1765, he declared a war against *Raja* Ala Singh *Phullkian* Chief of Patiala because of his submission to Ahmed Shah Abdali Hari Singh was killed in the battle field.

Hari Singh had two wives. By his first wife, daughter of Chaudhri Mulla of Panjwar, he had two sons, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh and by his second wife three sons, Charat Singh, Diwan

Singh and Desu Singh. After death Hari Singh was succeeded by his eldest son Jhanda Singh. According to Khushwaqat Rai's version, Hari Singh had no son and Jhanda Singh of village Panjwar in the *Pargana* of Haibatpur was actually his colleague. In the political power and military resources Jhanda Singh made significant improvements in the position as it obtained under Hari Singh. Jhanda Singh associated with many illustrious leaders like Sahib Singh of Sialkot, Rai Singh and Sher Singh Buria, Bhag Singh of Hallowal, Sudh Singh Doda, Milkha Singh Thepuria, Nidhan Singh Attu, Tara Singh Chainpuria, Bhag Singh Jalawala, Gujjar Singh son of Natha Singh native of Bhuri Asal near Khem Karan and Lehna Singh native village Sadhawala in Amritsar.

During the Chieftainship of Hari Singh *Bhangi*, Rai Singh and Sher Singh of Buria seized control of Buria, Jagadhari, Damla, Dyalgarh and other 204 villages. Meanwhile, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* with his brother Nibhau Singh and his two nephews Gurbakhsh Singh and Mastan Singh had taken the possession of Ferozpur, while Jai Singh Gharia with another band from the same quarters had seized Khai, Wan and Bajidpur in the neighborhood of Ferozpur. Karam Singh *Dullu* had captured Jhang and Chiniot. Agar Singh and Sawal Singh had extended their control as far as the village of the Syeds (Pindi Syedian). The territory of Chamiari also belonged to them. By this time Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh associates of Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*, taking advantage of the weakness of Kabuli Mal Afghan Governor of Lahore, had also marched upon Lahore and captured it on 16 April, 1765. After taking the possession of the city of Lahore, they struck coins in the name of the Sikh *Gurus*, with the following inspiration:

Sardar Gujjar Singh had also marched that very first year against Muqarrab Khan and captured Gujrat and made it his capital. He had also extended his control to Chakrali, Sodhra, Bhopawala, Kayanwala, Mitranwali and Sahowala. Gujjar Singh next invaded Jalalpur, Shahpur, Akhnur, Wangali, Pharwala and Wazirabad. He also led his expedition against Islamgarh and captured Mangla, Naushahra and Bhimbar. Thereafter conquered Mirpur, Kotli, Cahiumukh and Shahdru and extended his control up to Puncch in Jammu and Kashmir.

In December 1766, Ahmad Shah Abdali again descended upon the Punjab and to avoid fighting the three Sikh rulers of Lahore left the city before the Shah's arrival. Ultimately Ahmed Shah captured Lahore, on 22 December. Here the leading Muslims and Hindus of the city waited upon him in a deputation and requested him to recall *Sardar* Lehna Singh *Bhangi*. They gave him an insightful and candid feedback about the political and social conditions under Lehna Singh. They expressed their opinion that Lehna Singh was a good and sympathetic ruler, who was acceptable to every body. He had not maintained any communal discrimination between the Hindus and the Muslims. He bestowed turbans on the *Qazis*, Muftis and Imams of the mosques on the festival of *Id-ul-Zuha*. He treated all the citizens with great regard. The Muslims of Lahore had no fear of the *Khalsa* and they had started looking upon them as their comrades rather than as hostile enemies. Thus, the absence of usual communal acrimony had made the Muslim leaders of the city of Lahore recommend to Ahmad Shah Abdali the appointment of *Sardar* Lehna Singh *Bhangi* as their Governor of Lahore in preference to his Muslim nominee. On the suggestions of the venerable personages the city of

Lahore, Ahmed Shah wrote a letter to Lehna Singh *Bhangi* and offered him the Governorship of Lahore. Lehna Singh *Bhangi*, however, declined the invitation on the grounds that it was not commensurate with the guiding principles of the *Khalsa* to confer with an invader and thus, as his reply he wrote in regard to the offer of Governorship "I am a soldier of the *Panth*, which would spurn even the gift of ruler ship of the three worlds, except when it came from the *Guru Gobind Singh*". In this manner Lehna Singh turned down the offer saying that to accept an offer from an invader was against the policy and honour of the *Khalsa*.

Ahmad Shah had to hastily return to his native country, in May 1767, helplessly leaving the whole of the province of Punjab, including the provincial capital of Lahore in the hands of the Sikhs. No sooner had Abdali crossed the border of the Punjab, than the three Sikh *Sardars* Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, Lehna Singh *Bhangi* and Sobha Singh reentered the city of Lahore and triumphantly captured it.

In 1767 Gujjar Singh captured Rawalpindi which was assigned to Milkha Singh Thepuria. The territories of Hasan Abdal, Attock, Surrian *Pargana* including Jagdeo, Ghaniwala and Karial were also captured by Gujjar Singh.

Around this time Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh captured Sialkot and conferred it on Natha Singh, Mohar Singh Atariwala, Sahib Singh Aynawal and Jwahar Singh *Ghuman*. In 1767 Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh conquered Sahiwal, Midh, Musachuha, Kadirabad, Maini, Mitha Tiwana and Khushab. Around the year of 1770, Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* invaded Jammu and received a tribute from *Raja Ranjit Deo* of Jammu. In the year following, the Baloch Chief of Bhera was ousted from a part of his territory and Dhanna

Singh Kalalwala was installed there as a ruler. Next year Jhanda Singh marched towards Kasur and defeated Hamid Khan and Usman Khan. On his way back he conquered Nauri, Jastarwal, Pakho Thather and Chamiari and received a *Nazrana* from them. The most striking achievement of Jhanda Singh was the conquest of Multan in 1772. It is said that Jhanda Singh attacked Multan three times in 1766, 1771 and 1772. He finally captured Multan in 1772 and defeated Shuja Khan. He appointed his step brother Diwan Singh Chachowalia as its Governor. He also received a tribute from Mubarik Khan *Nawab* of Bahawalpur and conquered Kalabagh, Pindi Bhattian, Dhara, Mankhera and Bhera. In the 1774, Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* fought in support of Ranjit Deo of Jammu against his son Brij Raj Deo who was supported by Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* and Jai Singh *Kanahiya*. Both Jhanda Singh and Charat Singh died during this conflict.

Evidently, the *Bhangis* became the masters of substantial parts of the Punjab, from river Indus to Jamuna and from Kashmir mountains to Multan, on the extreme frontiers as well as in the central Punjab. Amritsar had been open to all but the *Bhangis* were the first to extend their control over the city of Amritsar. They had the large army above 30,000 horsemen. Thus, they soon emerged as the most powerful masters of the Punjab, during the seventh and eighth decades of the eighteenth century. The autonomous position of the *Bhangi Sardars* is apparent from the terms used for the individual *Sardars* like *Khalsa Ji*, *Singh Sahib* or even *Sarkar* which were these authority and independence as rulers is also indicated by the in the *Parwanas* which they issued for the realization of their orders of *Dharmarth*. Ganesh Das also uses the terms *Khalsa Ji* for Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh *Bhangis* and term *Badshah* for Hari Singh, Jhanda

Singh and Ganda Singh *Bhangis*. Ganesh Das uses the title Singh Sahib for Gujjar Singh and Sahib Singh and he also refers to the *Bhangis* as 'the royal house of Banda Singh *Bahadur*'. These manifestos of the sovereignty of the *Khalsa* marked the sovereign status of the *Bhangis*.

To extend their territories and strength of the *Misal* they cultivated friendly relations and matrimonial alliances with the other *Misaldars*. This had the potential of creating a basis for rivalries between *Sardars*. Some times, these *Sardars* of the *Misals* aligned themselves on opposite sides just to underline rival *Sardars* as we see in the dispute at Patiala, in 1765 when *Bhangis* with *Ramgarhias* and their other associate *Misals* came to oppose the *Phullkian* chief Ala Singh and at Jammu in 1774, when the *Bhangis* came opposite Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* and Jai Singh *Kanahiya* in which Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* was killed. From the political accounts of the various *Misals* we find the *Bhangis* and *Ramgarhias* jointly fought against *Phullkians* and *Ahluwalias*; *Sukerchakias* and *Kanahiyas* against *Bhangis*; *Bhangis* and *Ramgarhia* against *Kanahiyas*; *Bhangis* and *Kanahiyas* against *Sukerchakias*; *Bhangis*, *Ahluwalias* and *Kanahiyas* against *Ramgarhias*; *Bhangis*, *Ramgarhias* and *Phullkians* against *Karorsinghias*; *Ahluwalias*, *Sukerchakias* against *Bhangis*. These groups and regroupings were made in view of the petty personal interests of the *Sardars*, who changed sides as often as they changed their shirts.

As has been observed they also entered into matrimonial alliances with other *Misals*. Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* married the daughter of his cousin Bhag Singh to Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*'s eldest son Sukha Singh; Sahib Singh son of Amar Singh married to Rattan Kaur

the daughter of Ganda Singh *Bhangi*; Subha Kaur daughter of Hamir Singh of Nabha married Sahib Singh son of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*. Khushal Singh *Faizullapuria* married his daughter to Man Singh *Bhangi* son of Rai Singh *Bhangi*, who ruled over a part of Multan; Budh Singh *Faizullapuria*, married his sister to Lehna Singh *Bhangi* of Lahore; daughter of Nand Singh *Bhangi* of Pathankot married to Tara Singh *Kanahiya*; Jai Singh married with the daughter of Bhag Singh *Hallowalia*; Mehtab Singh *Kanahiya* married his daughter to Tara Singh *Chainpuria*; Fateh Singh *Kanahiya* married his daughter to Gulab Singh *Bhangi*; Sahib Singh *Bhangi* married Raj Kaur daughter of Charat Singh *Sukerchakia*. These marriages were thought to strengthen the positions of the concerned families and united them for the purpose of the combined action. In many cases their previous rivalries and hostilities also come to an end with these matrimonial bonds.

The *Bhangis* retained the frontier positions in the Punjab, so the main burden of the Afghan invasions was on their shoulders. To liberate their land from the authority of the Afghans, they fought number of times with the Afghans under Ahmed Shah Abdali from 1748 to 1767 and after Ahmed Shah's death in 1773, they continued to be challenged by his son Timur Shah but in 1780 they lost the famous city of Multan to Timur Shah. In 1793, Shah Zaman son of Timur Shah opened his series of Indian invasions but was checked again and again by the Sikhs, but at last he triumphantly entered the city of Lahore, in January, 1797. Here he tried to cultivate cordial relations with *Bhangis* as his grandfather Ahmed Shah had earlier done and again offered the Governorship of Lahore to *Sardar* Lehna Singh *Bhangi* one of the rulers of Lahore. Lehna Singh again declined

the offer by saying the same words as he had said to Ahmed Shah. After a stay of few days in Lahore Shah Zaman return to Kabul. In 1798, the Shah advanced again and entered Lahore. The city of Lahore at this time was in the hands of three Sikh Chiefs: Sahib Singh, son of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*; Chait Singh son of Lehna Singh *Bhangi* and Mohar Singh, son of Sobha Singh who left the city before Shah's approach. But, after a few months stay there, finding it impossible to make any arrangements for the permanent occupation of the country, or to render the Punjab in other respects a source of advantage to himself, he retreated to his hereditary dominions west of the Indus and the Sikh *Sardars* returned to the territory and the three rulers of Lahore again occupied the city of Lahore, which had been evacuated on the Shah's approach.

The *Bhangis* triumphantly occupied the large part of Afghan dominion including Kasur, Jhang, Chiniot, Lahore, Multan, Attock, Rawalpindi, Sialkot and some part of Jammu and Kashmir including Mirpur, Kotli, Puncch, Mangla and Manawar. They also conquered some part of the Balouch territory of Sahiwal, Ahmednagar and the territory of Gakhars. Some of these were directly ruled by the *Bhangi Sardars*. But some of these were under their tributaries. Some times the *Bhangi Sardars* had friendly relations with these rulers and they entered into alliances to fight against their common enemies. But at other times these began to adopt threatening and aggressive posterns when the *Bhangis* were on the downward. It is also said to the *Bhangis* tried to develop friendly relations with the British Government.

It is a matter of recorded history that the *Bhangi Misal* was one of the earliest to become well-known and also one of earliest to be dissolved. The unfortunate and premature death of the powerful

Bhangi Sardars; Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh, coming in quick succession, left the task of controlling the turbulent *Bhangi Sardars* in the hands of weaklings, infants and widows.

The death of Jhanda Singh may be regarded as the beginning of the decline of what Ganesh Das refers to as the “Royal house of Banda Singh *Bahadur*”. Jhanda Singh’s younger brother Ganda Singh succeeded him but died of illness in 1774. During this year, Patahankot was taken over by an associate of Jai Singh *Kanahiya* from the widow of Mansa Singh *Bhangi* a *Jagirdar* of Ganda Singh *Bhangi*. Ganda Singh died in 1774, while he fought against Jai Singh *Kanahiya* at Awanak village in Pathankot and was succeeded by Jhanda Singh’s son Charat Singh and then by his own son Desa Singh in 1775 itself.

It was hardly to be expected, however, that the Chiefs who had been inured to campaigning and whose pride it was to lead their forces against the enemy, under *Sardar* Hari Singh and Jhanda Singh, would tamely submit to be governed by a stripling. Many of his *Sardars* and *Jagirdars* began to assent independence. First of them was Milkha Singh Rawalpindi who gave up the service of the *Bhangis* and went over to Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia* and the other was Bhag Singh Hallowalia. The ruler of Jhang also ceased to pay tribute. Muzaffar Khan, son of Shuja Khan, assisted by his ally, the Bahawalpur Chief, made an attempt to recover Multan in 1777.

Now a greater calamity was awaiting the *Bhangis* which was one of the big reasons for the downfall of the *Bhangi Misal* Timur Shah, successor of Ahmed Shah Abdali was determined to recover his lost territories and entered the Punjab, in 1777-78 and finally he captured Multan from Diwan Singh *Bhangi*, in 1780. Desa Singh Chief

leader of *Bhangi Misal* could not add any territories to his *Misal* rather he lost many of his *Parganas* like Pindi Bhatian, Shahiwal, Bhera, Isa Khel, Jhang and Takht Hazara which were had been seized by Mahan Singh and a part of Kasur and some other areas passed into the hands of Nizam-ud-Din Khan of Kasur. He died in 1782 at Chiniot.

None of the successors of Ganda Singh was an experienced ruler. Most of the time in fact, they were in minority and the affairs of the principality were presumably looked after by the widows of the former Chiefs. After Desa Singh his son Gulab Singh was the next Chief of the *Bhangi Misal*. Gulab Singh added Tarn Taran to his possessions before he conquered Kasur in 1790. It remained under his control for four years. But the Afghan Chiefs of Kasur Nizam-ud-Din and Kutab-ud-Din were able to recover Kasur in 1794-95 a little before or at the time of the first invasion of the Punjab by Shah Zaman. Gulab Singh's three *Parganas* of Tarn Taran, Sabraon and Sarhali were seized by Baghel Singh, which he could not recover. Many other territories of Gulab Singh were taken ownership of by his subordinate *Sardars*. Year by year these territories diminished, till at last, the town of Amritsar and some villages including Jhabhal, Kohali, Majitha, Naushehra and Sarhali in the Majha alone remained in his hands.

In the winter of 1798, Shah Zaman invaded Punjab and captured Lahore but after a month's stay at Lahore Shah Zaman left for Kabul. The three rulers of Lahore Sahib Singh son of Gujjar Singh, Chait Singh son of Lehna Singh and Mohar Singh son of Sobha Singh again capture the city. Now Ranjit Singh made up his mind to occupy Lahore the famous city and provincial capital of the *Bhangis* and he accomplished his mission on July 1799 and captured the city. So the

occupation of Lahore by Ranjit Singh was the first major indication of the failure of the *Bhangis*. Ranjit Singh's meteoric rise was creating alarms in the minds of the Sikh *Sardars*. In order to exterminate Ranjit Singh's power, Gulab Singh called all his *Misaldars* and entered into a conspiracy with Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*, Nizam-ud-din of Kasur, Jassa Singh *Dullu*, Jodh Singh Kalalwala, Bhag Singh Hallowalia, Nar Singh Cahmiari as well as Sahib Singh of Gujrat. In 1800, they fought with Ranjit Singh at Bhasin, but in the battle field Gulab Singh *Bhangi* died of excessive drinking.

The allies detached forthwith, without fighting against Ranjit Singh at Bhasin in, 1800. It was indeed a great political and psychological victory for Ranjit Singh who now found himself clearly on the road to monarchy in the Punjab. The constituent *Sardars* of the alliance, thus dispersed, could not meet again to challenge Ranjit Singh's power.

Gulab Singh was succeeded by his ten-year- old son Gurdit Singh. At that time the *Misal* was on its decline and the new ruler was also in an unenviable position. In such circumstances, the affairs of the *Misal* were managed by his mother Mai Sukhan. So Ranjit Singh had an excellent opportunity to decimate the power of the rival *Misal* root and branch and seize Amritsar in 1805 which was the religious capital of the Sikhs. Thereafter on the recommendation of Jodh Singh *Ramgarhia*, Ranjit Singh confirmed grant of Panjore (it may be the Panjwar village in the Tarn Taran district) and five other villages in *Jagirs* to Mai Sukhan and her son Gurdit Singh for their assistance.

Gurdit Singh died in his ancestral village Panjwar in Tarn Taran *Pargana* in 1827 and after his death he was succeeded by his son Ajit Singh and Mul Singh. According to Lepel Griffin and W.L

Conarn, Thakur Singh *Bhangi* with his brother Hakim Singh *Bhangi* was recognized as the head of the *Misal* after Gurdit Singh's death. After Thakur Singh's death in 1925, his son Harnam Singh became the next head of the family. He had two sons named Autar Singh and Kirpal Singh. Hakim Singh brother of Thakur Singh after his death in 1921, was succeeded by his son Hardit Singh. Hardit Singh had three sons named Gurbakhah Singh, Shiv Singh and Gurdial Singh and was succeeded by Gurdial Singh in 1935 who later excelled as the famous Member of Parliament and awarded by many other titles. After the death of Gurdial Singh, Karam Singh son of Shiv Singh became the head of the *Bhangi* family who is still alive. He has two sons named Harmandeep Singh who is working at Nassa in the USA and the other is Ramandeep Singh who is working as a pharmacist in Germa.

It is noted worthily that the main house of the *Bhangi Misal*, there were some noted and celebrated *Misaldars* also who had risen to prominent positions and were ruled as independent rulers at the beginning of Ranjit Singh's reign. One of the bravest men under Hari Singh *Bhangi* was Gurbakhsh Singh of Raorawala, an associate of Bhima Singh. He owned about fifty villages of his own and used to scour the country far and wide with bands of horsemen. Being childless, he adopted Lehna Singh son of Dargaha Singh, a Kahilar (*Kahllon*) *Jat* of Saddhawala village, in the Amritsar District, as his son. On the death of Gurbakhsh Singh, Lehna Singh succeeded him. After some days from the death of Gurbakhsh Singh Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh, son of Gurbakhsh Singh's daughter, quarreled over the estates left behind by the deceased. After a fight between their armies, an arrangement was arrived at between the two *Sardars* by which the estates were equally divided between them. The *Sardars* became the

most powerful of the *Bhangi* confederacy and though they joined Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh in many of their expeditious; they have a history of their own. Lehna Singh established himself at Lahore and possessed a few villages in Atari and a small chunk of territory across the river Ravi. He did not add to his territories after 1765. He was died in September, 1797, leaving behind a son named Chait Singh. About the same time Sobha Singh, another triumvirate of Lahore, passed away. His son Mohar Singh succeeded him. In 1799 when Ranjit Singh captured the city of Lahore and both the *Sardars* conceded complete submission to Ranjit Singh and the later Ranjit Singh conferred a *Jagir* at Vanyeki (in the *Pargana* of Ajnala) to Chait Singh *Bhangi* for his assistance.

Another one of the most powerful *Sardars* was Gujjar Singh who captured Gujrat and some parts of Lahore. He had three sons, named Sukha Singh, Sahib Singh and Fateh Singh. Sukha Singh and Sahib Singh quarreled and fought and the younger Sahib Singh, at the instigation of Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia*, attacked his elder brother who was killed in the action. Gujjar Singh was much enraged when he heard of the death of his eldest son. He disposed Sahib Singh of all the territories under his charge and in grief of sorrow Gujjar Singh died in 1788. After Gujjar Singh's death Sahib Singh took possession of the family estates without active opposition from his younger brother, Fateh Singh. Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia* was secretly the bitterest enemy of *Bhangis* at that time. Besides he was jealous of the supremacy of the *Bhangis*. Mahan Singh in 1790, besieged Sahib Singh in the fort of Sodhra, but died during the action. After his death Ranjit Singh completed the victory of Sodhra.

After the occupation of Lahore by Ranjit Singh Sahib Singh tried to recover his provincial capital but failed. Around the year of 1800-1801 Sahib Singh developed strained relations with his son, Gulab Singh, who occupied a couple of forts against the wishes of his father. Ranjit Singh availed himself of this opportunity.

Ranjit Singh took the advantage of the feeble position of the *Bhangis* and ordered Gulab Singh to relinquish the fort of Jalalpur. Afterwards Ranjit Singh ordered Sahib Singh to evacuate the forts of Manawar and Islamgarh. At first Sahib Singh *Bhangi* agreed to give up the forts but later he refused. Now Ranjit Singh marched towards Manawar and Islamgarh. Feeling no match for Ranjit Singh's forces, Sahib Singh *Bhangi* escaped in the darkness of night to Gujrat. Soon Ranjit Singh dispatched Hukam Singh Atariwala and Seva Singh to pursue Sahib Singh. After a brief resistance Sahib Singh fled away to his fort of Deva Batala situated on the border of Jammu territory.

Sahib Singh, whose career had been hitherto marked by energy and enterprise, now became an indolent debauch and drunkard. He quarreled with the rival chiefs and *Sardars* and his power being thus weakened, in the course of two or three years Ranjit Singh, annexed all his territories including Gujrat, Islamgarh, Jalalpur, Manawar, Bajwat and Sodhra. Sahib Singh took refuge at Bhimbar and started living a life of poverty. Although Sahib Singh *Bhangi* accepted the overlordship of Ranjit Singh, in 1810 and Ranjit Singh restored to Sahib Singh four villages of Bajwat, Kallowal, Sohawa and Rajiwala, in Sialkot district worth 10, 000 rupees annually. He died at Bajawat in 1814.

The *Bhangi Sardars* began to lose all along the line and in the course of the decline of the *Bhangi Misal*, their Chiefs became the

Chiefs of Ranjit Singh and they had conceded a complete submission to Ranjit Singh till 1814, these *Sardars* are listed as under Jassa Singh *Dullu* son of Karam Singh *Dullu* of Chiniot, 1802; Nihal Singh, Tek Singh and Jodh Singh of Atariwala in 1802; Jiwan Singh son of Milkha Singh of Rawalpindi, in 1804; Bhag Singh Hallowalia, in 1804; Bhagwan Singh nephew of Rai Singh *Bhangi* of Buria and Jagadhari, in 1806; Jodh Singh village Kalal in 1806-7; Jiwan Singh of Sialkot in 1807; Nar Singh Chamiari in 1806; Jodh Singh of Wazirabad, in 1809; Nidhan Singh *Attu* of Daska, 1809; Ram Singh son of Gujjar Singh's brother Garja Singh, in 1810; Ram Singh Pada of Sare Kale, in 1811; Gaja Singh grand son of Gurbakhsh Singh *Doda* in 1813; Chait Singh son of Tara Singh Chainpuria; Karam Singh of village Chhina. Amir Singh *Baba* of village Gandanpur, Jassa Singh of village Bhatiwind, Kiun Shah of Sodhi colony in the Jhelum district, Jodh Singh of Sidhu village near Tarn Taran, Gohar Singh of village Sajwah, Ganda Singh of village Rania, Ram Singh so of Gujjar Singh's brother Garja Singh, Bur Singh of village Maraka near Lahore and his son Jassa Singh who had seized a part of Daska, Jai Singh *Sandhu* of village Kot Syed Muhammad; Desa Singh of village Chaubara who held, Chaubara, Govindke, Khoneke, Kilalwala; Hukam Singh Chimini; Malhan Singh of village Sahowala; Sahib Singh Bedi of Una; Sawan Singh who held Kopra and Pathanwali; Sham Singh Bhagowal and Sudh Singh of village Choki etc were the some other minor *Sardars* and *Jagirdars* who served under the *Bhangis* and on the time of their decline they submitted to Ranjit Singh.

Thus we can see the despondent end of the *Bhangi Misal*, which was at one time the most powerful and supreme among all the Sikh *Misals* in the 18th century. All its *Sardars* were reduced to

measly *Jagirdars*. In the course of the decline and fall of the *Bhangi* chiefs we can see that their *Jagirdars* became the *Jagirdars* of Ranjit Singh. All their territories had now been amalgamated in the territories of Ranjit Singh. They were generously remunerated for their loss of supremacy. The *Sardars* who were of peaceful disposition and agreed to retire from energetic political life were granted preservation *Jagirs*. The others, including their *Jagirs* were taken into service. Out of ten, five *Bhangi Sardars* were given *Jagirs* for maintenance the others becoming service *Jagirdars*. Thus by force and deception, tempered with conciliation, Ranjit Singh had succeeded in overcoming all *Bhangi* opposition and cleared the way for the extension of his dominion over the Punjab.

At last we come to a conclusion and here it may be not out of place to discuss the causes of the failure of the *Bhangis* to unify the Punjab, after they had begun their career in a blaze of glory. The first of them was its partition into six independent branches as under first was under the main hose Hari Singh Bhangi and after his death continue under Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Desa Singh, Gulab Singh and Gurdit Singh; second under Gujjar Singh and his successors; third under Lehna Singh and his successors; forth under Karam Singh *Dullu* and his successors; fifth under Milkha Singh Rawapindi and his successors and sixth under Rai Singh and Sher Singh *Bhangi*. These Chiefs had not constituted a single political organization at any time in their history. From the very beginning these Chiefs were independent in the internal administration of their territories and in their relations with the other Chiefs.

Secondly, just contemporary to this time arose other big *Sardars* of the rival *Misals* like; Jai Singh *Kanahiya* and Sada Kaur *Kanahiya*, Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia*, Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*, Baghel Singh *Karorsinghia* and Charat Singh *Sukerchakia*, Mahan Singh and after him his son Ranjit Singh.

The third reason as we stated above was that the *Bhangis* retained the frontier position in the Punjab, so the main burden of the Afghan invasions fell on the shoulders of this *Misal*.

The fourth reason was their family disputes which were created between Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* of Gujrat with his son Sahib Singh; Sahib Singh *Bhangi* between his son Gulab Singh; Sahib Singh between his brother Fateh Singh; Nihal Singh Atariwala between his two brothers Tek Singh and Jodh Singh etc.

The fifth reason was the unfortunate and premature death of its leaders like Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh coming in rapid succession, left the mission of controlling the disorderly *Bhangi* leaders in the hands of toddlers and widows like; Gulab Singh, Gurdit Singh, Mai Sukahn, Sahib Singh, Chait Singh etc, who were incapable of the greatness of their predecessors. Consequently the advantage of these confused states of affairs was taken by the adversary *Misals*, especially by *Sukerchakia* Ranjit Singh, who was most ambitious as well powerful and politically instrumental in the termination of the *Bhangi Misal* and in 1799 he drove the last nail in their coffin when he captured Lahore the provincial capital of the *Bhangis*. In this way with the end of the eighteenth century this authoritative confederacy also moved at a swift pace towards its end and merged completely into the possessions of Ranjit Singh about the year of 1810, when Sahib Singh and his son

Gulab Singh of Gujrat the last powerful *Bhangi* Chief resigned themselves to the supremacy Ranjit Singh.

Consequently, we can say that the *Bhangis* failed to unify the Punjab, after they had begun their career, in a blaze of glory. If they had been controlled by one Chief or *Sardar* like *Sukerchakias* and leagued together against their common enemies Shah Zaman, Timur Shah and Ranjit Singh they may have eliminated them in their early days of rise to power. If they had fought with an interest of unity against Ranjit Singh, they could have stopped the rising power of Ranjit Singh in his early stage and made themselves as the sovereign power of the united Punjab like Ranjit Singh.

Adopting a diplomatic policy Ala Singh of Patiala entered into a sort of tacit alliance with Ahmed Shah Abdali and took political advantage of the sovereign power of Ahmed Shah Abdali. Through this political understanding with Abdali he succeeded in expanding and strengthening his *Misal*. Similarly, Ranjit Singh forged an understanding with Shah Zaman, a sovereign ruler of Afghanistan, and gained recognition of Lahore which gave him an edge over the other *Misaldars*. It becomes apparent that if the *Bhangis* had prudently accepted the proposal made by Ahmed Shah Abdali in 1766 and by Shah Zaman in 1797 the *Bhangis* would have been the masters of the Punjab and would not have been superseded by the Afghans and the Sikhs.

Though, the *Bhangis* failed to unify the Punjab, but the role of the *Bhangi Sardars* in the liberation of Punjab and in the establishment of *Khalsa Raj* which was later established by Ranjit Singh in Punjab should not be forgotten. This is because some of the most important territories in the province of Punjab like

Lahore, Amritsar, Rawalpindi, Attock, Multan, Sialkot, Kasur, Gujrat, Ferozpur, Wazirabad and some part of Jammu and Kashmir etc. had been under the *Bhangis* before they were taken over by Ranjit Singh. Had these territories been under Mughals or Afghans, they may not as easily, have been conquered by Ranjit Singh. In such a scenario even Ranjit Singh would have failed in the unification of Punjab. Thus seen from historical perspective, the establishment of *Khalsa Raj* was owing to an equal measure to the *Bhangis* and Ranjit Singh.

Chapter-1

Historical Background (Emergence of Bhangi Misal)

Evolution of the Sikh *Misals* began with the Sikh challenge to the Mughal rulers and the Afghan invaders, which continued for nearly half a century. As an outcome of this protracted period of struggle, the Sikhs did not only save themselves from the oppression and injustice of the Mughals and Afghans but also succeeded in establishing their own independent rule in the Punjab under twelve *Misals*.

Bhangi Misal was the most famous and powerful *Misal* of the Sikhs as far as its territories and manpower were concerned. In the historical writings of 18th and 19th century, we come across repeated references to the founder of this formidable *Jatha* (group) of warriors, Chajja Singh (Chajju Singh) a *Jat*, the resident of village Panjwar, 9 miles away from Amritsar (in the present day district of Tarn Taran).¹ Chajja Singh was the first among the *Jatha Bhangian* who took a *Pahul* from the hands of Banda Singh *Bahadur*.² But the author of *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Kanahiya Lal says that he had taken *Pahul* at the hands of Guru Gobind Singh and fought many battles under him.³ After the death of Banda Singh *Bahadur*, Chajja Singh administered *Pahul* to the three of his relative named Bhima Singh (some writers called him Bhuma Singh) Natha Singh and Jagat Singh

¹ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, (NP), 1824, (Translated into Punjabi by Gurbakhsh Singh), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, p. 39; Ghulam Muhayy-ud-Din, Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, (NP), 1848, Part-II, (Translated into Punjabi by Janak Singh) preserved in the library of the Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, Accession No. 26, folio no. 6, (after here given as DPHS, PUP); Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1881, (Translated into Punjabi by Jit Singh Seetal), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1987, p. 85.

² Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 39; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no. 6; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, Calcutta, 1891, reprint New Delhi, 1964, p. 296.

³ Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 85.

and they became his close companions co-operated him for the purpose of harassing the tyrannical Government officials.⁴

Now Chajja Singh appealed to a large number of Sikh youth from Majha to join him. According to Syed Muhammad many Sikhs joined his *Jatha* in response to his call. Some prominent name are Mohan Singh and Gulab Singh of Dhousa village, 6 miles north-east of Amritsar; Karur Singh of *Choupal*, Gurbakhsh Singh *Sandhu* of village Roranwala, Agar Singh Khangora of village Jai Singh Wala and Sawan Singh *Randhawa* etc.⁵ Thus, Chajja Singh became the leader of *Bhangi Jatha*. He organized a strong *Jatha* of anti state activities.⁶ According Kanahiya Lal, Chajja Singh inspired in his companions the conviction that *Guru* Gobind Singh had intended the sovereign power of the Punjab for them. Having been fired by this zealous sense of mission, they fervently inspired to pursue their subversive activities against the Mughal Government of Punjab.⁷ Due to a general paucity of weapons and arms they had to adopt the mode of *Guerrilla* warfare against the enemy.⁸

The word *Bhangi* is derived from *Bhang* or hemp - a wild plant found in abundance in the jungles of the Punjab and along its river banks. When pounded in a mortar with a pestle and sifted through a piece of coarse cloth, it leaves behind a thick liquid of green color. Its drink is intoxicating and soothes the effect of heat in summer. A particular group - *Bhangi Jatha* - of the *Dal Khalsa* liberally indulged in the consumption of this drink and profusely entertained others also with it. It is

⁴ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 39; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no. 6, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, (NP), 1854, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Gurbakhsh Singh), preserved in the library of the , DPHS, PUP, Accession No. 30, folio no. 266; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 85.

⁵ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 296.

⁶ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 39; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 85.

⁷ Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 85.

⁸ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 39; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama* , folio no. 266, DPHS, PUP; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 85.

said that at the time of fighting; its effect made its lovers furious and reckless. On account of addiction to *Bhang*, this group of the *Dal Khalsa* came to be called *Bhangi*.⁹

According to Syed Muhammad Latif, numerous Sikhs joined the *Misal* from all sides and the armed ruffians began to make night attacks upon villages of the informers and the Government officials, carrying away everything of value which they could lay hands on. The success, with which they met in their first plundering excursions, was so encouraging, that they now determined to try what the force of their arms could do as regards territorial acquisitions. They thought the time had now arrived when they could look for the fulfillment of Govind's prophecy, which was to the effect that, at no distant date, his followers would make themselves masters of the country.¹⁰

The history of the Sikh after the martyrdom of Banda Singh *Bahadur* in 1716 was eventful and fresh waves of oppressions of the Sikhs started. During this dark period, 1716 to 1733, the Sikhs were left without any permanent leader, who could guide them through this critical period.¹¹ In the history of the Sikhs, this dark period is recorded of the titanic struggle between the *Khalsa* on the one hand the Mughals and Afghans on the other, in which the sons of the soil had not only to

⁹ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 39; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 296; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV New Delhi, 1982, p. 205.

¹⁰ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 296. According to Kanahiya Lal, the members of the *Bhangi* confederacy fell upon the villages and the towns to plunder and destroy them. *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 85. This may be wrong, if the *Bhangis* were robbers and they plunder the villagers and the people of the towns, how the peoples can join their *Jatha* in numerical strength.

¹¹ Mir Seid Ghulam Hussein Khan, *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, (NP), 1782, (Translated into English by M, Raymond) Calcutta, 1832, reprint Ahallabad, 1924, p. 91; Kesar Singh Chibber, *Bansavalinama Dsan Padshahian Ka*, (NP), 1769, (Edited by Pyara Singh Data), Amritsar, 1997, pp. 201-202; Major Henry, Court, *History of the Sikhs*, (Based on Sharda Ram Philauri's, *Sikhan dey Raj Die Vithiya*), Lahore, 1888, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 60.

fight for their lives, but were able, after long and determined suffering, to assert their superior right to rule over their own land.¹²

During the time of Banda Singh *Bahadur*, the Sikhs had experienced freedom and after his demise they struggled incessantly for it. The onus on them was not only to save themselves from the oppression and tyranny of the Mughals but also to organize themselves into strong units in order to retrieve their lands from the hands of Mughal and Afghan usurpers. After the fall of Banda Singh *Bahadur*, Abdus Samad Khan also known as *Diler-i-Jang* was appointed the new Governor of Lahore by the Mughal Emperor Farrukhsiyar. On his accession, strict orders were issued by the new Governor to his forces to eliminate the Sikhs and to proselytize the Sikh masses through forcible conversions. If the Sikhs refused to embrace the Islamic faith, they were to be put to sword. Valuable rewards were also offered by the Government for the heads of the prominent Sikhs.¹³ Left to their own devices, the Sikhs fled from plains to the Shivalik hills and the desert of Bikaner and Jodhpur.¹⁴

James Browne reveals that when the Sikhs fled to the hills and mountains to save themselves those opportunistic *Zimindars* and Rajputs who had joined them during their insurrections, partly to secure themselves and partly for the sake of plunder, now once again cut off their beards and hair and returned to their original

¹² Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, (NP), 1811, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Milkhi Ram), preserved in the library of the DPHS, PUP, Accession No. 22, folio no. 58; Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, London, 1812, pp. 84-85; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, (NP), 1865, (Edited by Bhai Vir Singh), Amritsar, 1914, p. 162.

¹³ *Assrar-i-Samadi*, 1713-37, anonymous, (Translated into Punjabi by Janak Singh), Punjabi University Patiala, 1972, pp. 29-31; Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 85; Ahmmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 34; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 59-60; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Bombay, 1950, reprint Punjabi University, Patiala, 2006, p. 103.

¹⁴ Kesar Singh Chibber, *Bansavalinama Dsan Padshahian Ka*, p. 202; Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, pp. 85-86; Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, (NP), 1810-14, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Janak Singh), preserved in the library of the DPHS, PUP, Accession no. 19, folio no. 28-29.

occupations.¹⁵ The Sikhs did not have any strong organization during this period, nor the guidance of any wise leader. In such a situation individuals and families of the Sikhs migrated to different places where they could find shelter and earn their livelihood by one or the other means.¹⁶

In due course of time the policy of oppression long adopted by the Mughal Government was relaxed because Abdus Samad Khan the Governor of Punjab was growing old and found himself saddled with a number of other preoccupations diverting his attention from the persecution of the Sikhs. Gradually the Sikhs started coming out of their hide-outs and returned to their homes.¹⁷ Once the Sikhs returned from their places of hiding to the plains, their visits to their *Gurudwaras* were resumed with characteristic fervour. This was particularly the case at the *Darbar Sahib*, Amritsar. As a consequence of this renewed interest in their historical shrines, the Sikhs soon came to a situation where they were squabbling with each other on the question of controlling the income and expenditure of the *Gurudwaras*. Differences among the Sikhs intensified to such an extent that they were divided into two groups. One of them was named, “*Tat Khalsa*” under the leadership of Kahan Singh and Baba Binod Singh and while the other was, “*Bandai Khalsa*” under the leadership of Mahant Singh. Rattan Singh *Bhangu*, the author of *Prachin Panth Parkash*, says that the *Bandies* on this score claimed that they should have an equal share in the management of the *Gurudwaras* and the other affairs of the *Panth*. The *Tat Khalsa* were, however, not willing to recognize

¹⁵ James Browne, *History of the Origin and Progress of Sicks*, London, 1788. Also in Ganda Singh's (Ed.), *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, Calcutta, 1962, p. 571.

¹⁶ Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, (NP), 1880, reprints language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1987, pp. 525-26.

¹⁷ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs* London, 1849, reprint Amritsar, 2005, pp. 88-83; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A short History of the Sikhs*, p. 104.

any schismatic divisions and they dismissed the *Bandies* claim as wholly inadmissible.¹⁸

Moreover there was a general lack of unity among the Sikhs at that time. Mata Sundari, the widow of the *Guru Gobind Singh Ji*, who lived at Delhi, sent Bhai Mani Singh to settle the disputes.¹⁹ Abiding by the advice of Mata Sundari, the Sikhs congregated at Amritsar on the occasion of *Baisakhi* in 1721.²⁰ Soon a quarrel arose between these two groups of the Sikhs. In such a situation *Bhai Mani Singh* tried to settle the dispute in the presence of “*Guru Granth Sahib*” which favored the *Tat Khalsa*. But the *Bandi Khalsa* leader Amar Singh rejected any definitive settlement on the lines suggested by *Bhai Mani Singh*. The dispute culminated in a fight with swords between the two parties. This was the first time that the Sikhs had fought against the Sikhs. The fight resulted in a decisive win for the *Tat Khalsa* because as a direct consequence of this internal scuffle among the Sikhs, some of *Bandies* were killed, others melted away from the scene and remaining became true disciples and merged with *Tat Khalsa*.²¹ This re-assimilation of the dissidents added to the strength of the *Khalsa*. Soon they roamed all over the territory in groups of one hundred or so. They also started plundering in some parts of the province for their living.²²

As the Sikhs were determined to free their land from Mughal authorities they continued their incursions against the Government officials. Abdus Samad Khan once again started persecuting the Sikhs with a view to suppressing these

¹⁸ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 34; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 162; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, pp. 105-7.

¹⁹ Kesar Singh Chibber, *Bansavalinama Dsan Padshahian Ka*, pp. 216-17; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 71; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 108.

²⁰ Kesar Singh Chibber, *Bansavalinama Dsan Padshahian Ka*, p. 217; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 71; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, pp. 108-9.

²¹ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 162-63; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 109.

²² Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 163-65; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 77.

disturbances. Around this time there was change of the ministership at Delhi, Nizam-ul- Mulk resigned and Qamar-ud-din Khan, Itmad-ud-Daula-II replaced him. The Governor of Lahore Abdus Samad Khan, on his part, was more concerned with the happenings in Delhi, than with the administration of the Punjab.²³ The Sikhs had little free time; they moved every direction in the Punjab and dealt severely with their enemies. They took revenge on those who had reported against them and plundered them.²⁴

The rebellious faction of the Sikhs was elusive and at large. It could not be easily penalized or taken to task by the authorities. Thus, the Government in its desperation selectively targeted the working class of Sikhs by unleashing a wave of repression against them. This proved to be a blessing in disguise for the Sikhs as those who were even slightly suspected by the police were spurred by a feeling of self defence to clear their homes and join the remaining Sikhs groups (*Jathas*). This led to an augmentation in the number of the fighting Sikhs.²⁵ The errant Sikhs having organized themselves in *Jathas* wreaked havoc on the law and order situation in the country. The administration almost everywhere was made bankrupt by the Sikhs. In these circumstances Delhi Government transferred Abdus Samad Khan from Lahore to Multan and his eldest son Zakariya Khan was appointed the Governor of Lahore, in 1726. It was not long before his father died and he was given the charge of Multan.²⁶

²³ *Assrar-i-Samadi*, pp. 30-31; J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 83; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, New Delhi, 1978, p. 44.

²⁴ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 83-84; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 109.

²⁵ Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 539-60; Syed Muhammad Latif, *Lahore its History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities*, Lahore, 1892, p. 72.

²⁶ Mir Sied Ghulam Hussein Khan, *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, p. 186; Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio nos. 58-59, DPHS, PUP; Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, folio no. 25, DPHS, PUP; Raja Ram Tota, *Guldast-i-Punjab*, (NP, ND), MS, (Translated into Punjabi by Amarwant Singh), preserved in the library of the DPHS, PUP, Accession no. 5, folio nos. 18-19.

Zakariya Khan also known as Khan *Bahadur* looked upon the emergence of the Sikhs a strong threat to the Mughal rule. He was an active soldier and possessed excellent administrative capabilities.²⁷ He appointed Lakhpat Rai, his *Diwan* and Momin Khan his assistant. He adopted a ruthless policy against the Sikhs and took extreme measures to crush them. He took draconian steps against the rebellious Sikhs and issued strict orders that the hair and the beards of the Sikhs be shorn off. This wave of persecution once again forced the Sikhs to flee. They abandoned their houses and they escaped into the hills and Jungles.²⁸ Zakariya Khan dispatched mobile parties in all directions of the province to comb out the Sikhs. These moving parties ransacked the villages and forests and almost daily brought batches of the Sikhs in chains to Lahore. In Lahore they were publically decapitated at *Nakhas Chowk* (horse market in Lahore). The place is now called *Shahid Ganj*.²⁹

The entire machinery of the Government at that time was set into motion and entrusted with the task of smoking out the Sikhs from their places of hiding. If any Sikh was captured he was offered a choice between Islam and death. The Sikhs invariably chose the latter out of a sense of honour. The Sikhs led a highly insecure and turbulent life during those years of official harassment.³⁰ So they retreated to deep forests and the hills, where at time they were driven to extremities and subsisted on vegetable and roots and blades of grass. The Government started

²⁷ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 35; *Assrar-i-Samdi*, p. 37; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 197-98, DPHS, PUP.

²⁸ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio nos. 58-59, DPHS, PUP; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, p. 585.

²⁹ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 59, DPHS, PUP; Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 35; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 165; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 111.

³⁰ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 198, DPHS, PUP; N.K Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh power*, Calcutta, 1936, 3rd edition, 1960, pp. 3-4.

intimidating the Sikhs, but their threats had no effect on them. Rather than making them frightened, the threats issued to the Sikhs further strengthened their resolve to take on the powers. The harsher the means adopted by the Government to suppress them the more it increased their defiance.³¹ They pounced upon the imperial forces like tigers and plundered the Government treasure and the informers. They adopted techniques of *Guerrilla* warfare by disappearing into the hills and jungles whenever they smelt danger. Like this they carried on a kind of predatory war in some parts of the province so as to completely exasperate the new Government.³²

At that time the Sikhs paid particular attention to looting the Government treasures. They formed themselves into different groups (*Jathas*) and roamed in all the four directions of the territory. Before the eventful year of 1726 was over, several cases of the Sikhs ambushing Government treasures and caravans were reported. A party coming from Chawinda side, with chests of revenue money meant for Lahore, was waylaid and looted in July- August 1726. Another party coming from Chunnian and Kasur was seized near Kahna Kacha. A royal merchant of Qandhar, Murtza Khan, who carrying a few thousand horses to Delhi, was also plundered by the Sikhs in September 1726.³³

As a matter of fact, for some years, the Sikhs incursions produced the desired results and no money from revenue could reach the Government treasury. The forces of the Government were also active in their endeavours to exterminate the Sikhs but their success was extremely limited. When the Mughal forces

³¹ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-Sikhan*, folio no. 59, DPHS, PUP; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 112.

³² Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 587-88; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 113.

³³ Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 587-88; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 113. According to James Browne, they also carried out attack on the caravan of Mir Zaffar Khan, an imperial officer. James Browne, *History of the Origin and Progress of Sicks*, p. 571.

attacked the Sikhs to penalize them for their defiant activities, they escaped into the jungles and the hilly areas.³⁴

When ruthless policies of Zakariya Khan to eliminate the Sikhs proved to be utter failures he change his plan and restored to a new policy. He wrote a detailed letter to the Delhi Government, saying “repression has failed to suppress the unrest created by the Sikhs. We should now win them, through the way of peace and policy. If they are offered *Jagirs*, they would stop plundering the land and Government treasures. There is no other way to stop them”. Emperor Muhammad Shah was a weak minded man. He permitted Zakariya Khan to offer *Jagirs* and cash to the Sikhs for the sake of peace in the country.³⁵

Now Zakariya Khan tried to pacify the Sikhs by offering them a large grant of revenue free land. He sent *Bhai* Subeg Singh to Amritsar to meet the Sikhs and offered the *Jagirs* and the title of *Nawab* to the Sikhs. The Sikhs at first rejected the *Jagirs* and the title of the *Nawab* offered by Zakariya Khan. *Bhai* Subeg Singh however requested the Sikhs not to adopt an attitude of intransigence towards the Mughal Government. He even tried to convince them through the argument that these titles and privileges were too precious to be lost and they may rue their decision afterwards. It was a spontaneous offer made by the Mughal Government on his suggestion. On the request and intervention of *Bhai* Subeg Singh, the Sikh leaders agreed to accept the offer on *Baisakhi* in 1733.³⁶

But none of the Sikhs was willing to accept the title of *Nawab*. It was ultimately decided that the title of *Nawab* may be conferred on one of the

³⁴ Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 589-90; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 114.

³⁵ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 200-201; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 114.

³⁶ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 201-202; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 649-53; N.K Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power* pp. 4-5.

Sewadars of Sangat. Accordingly, the Sikhs decided to award the title of *Nawab* to one Kapur Singh *Faizullapuria*, who was a part of the *Sangat* the religious congregation of the *Khalsa*, at that time. He was also given the overall charge of the *Jagirs* of Dipalpur, Kanganwal and Jhabal worth Lakhs of rupees in revenue.³⁷ After taking the title of *Nawab* Kapur Singh appointed the leading Sikhs as his advisers like Hari Singh *Hazori*, Bhima Singh *Bhangi*, Deep Singh *Shahid*, Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*, Budha Singh *Sukerchakia*, Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* and Darbara Singh.³⁸

This opportunity gave the Sikhs time to recoup. They saw this opportunity as a chance to regain lost ground. They came out of their hidings and resumed their professions of agriculture and trade. Since a large of number the Sikhs had significantly improved their economic status, the problem of their management and organization control of a homogeneous religious body had suddenly become apparent. The leading Sikhs who were handling the situation decided to create two sections of the burgeoning *Khalsa* army .³⁹ Soon the *Khalsa* was split in two sections. One of them was named *Budha Dal*, the army of old veterans, led by *Nawab* Kapur Singh *Faizullapuria*, with Bagh Singh *Hallowalia* (belonging to the *Bhangi Misal*), Bhima Singh *Bhangi*, Sham Singh *Narroke* and Gurbakhsh Singh *Roranawala*, (both belonging to the *Bhangi Misal*) as prominent members. *Budha Dal* was entrusted with the responsibility of looking after the holy place, preaching the, *Guru's* word and inducting converts into the *Khalsa Panth* by holding baptize ceremonies. The other was *Taruna Dal*, the army of the young Sikhs soldiers.

³⁷ Major Henry, Court, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 64; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 202-203.

³⁸ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 210-14; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 658-59.

³⁹ Major Henry, Court, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 64; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 114.

Taruna Dal was conceived as a more active section of the *Khalsa*. Its function was to fight in the time of emergency.⁴⁰

The *Taruna Dal* was further organized into five sub section (*Jathas*) as follows:

1. The first was the *Jatha* of the *Nihangsinghia* (later known as *Jatha Shahid* after the martyrdom of Baba Deep Singh *Shahid*) under the leadership of Baba Deep Singh.
2. The second *Jatha* was the *Jatha* of *Amritsarian* under the leadership of Karam Singh and Dharam Singh *Khatri*.
3. The third was the *Jatha* of *SahibJadas* under the leadership of *Baba Kahan Singh Bhalla*. At the time of the foundation of *Budha Dal* and *Taruna Dal*, the *Bhangi Jatha* was the one of the most powerful *Jatha* of the Sikhs. So *Baba Kahan Singh* the leader of the *Jatha* decided to appoint as his assistant one of the bravest *Sardars* of *Bhangi Misal* named Hari Singh *Dhillon* of village Panjwar. His other two assistants were, Miri Singh and Bagh Singh of Hallowal (who later joined the *Bhangis*).
4. The fourth *Jatha* was the *Jatha* of *Dallewal* under the leader ship of Dassunda Singh Kot Budha.
5. The fifth *Jatha* was the *Jatha* of *Ranghretta* under the leadership of Bir Singh, Jeon Singh, Madan Singh and Amar Singh.

Each *Jathas*, consisting of 1300 to 2000 soldiers, were placed under the command of separate *Jathedars*.⁴¹

At that time five centers were established for them at Ramsar, Bibeksar, Lachmansar, Kaulsar and Santokhsar, all located at different places in Amritsar.

⁴⁰ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 215; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 660-64; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 117.

⁴¹ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 216-17; N.K Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, pp. 5-6; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, pp. 47-48.

The *Sardar* of each *Jatha* had his own drum and banner (flag). The entire body of the Sikhs was then given the freedom to individually choose any *Jatha*, commander and centre as according to their preference.⁴²

However, the quantum of the largesse coming from the *Jagirs* conferred by the Governor of Lahore was not enough for the growing needs of the increasing number of the Sikhs. The *Taruna Dal* particularly became restive and ambitious and started breaching the limits of its operation by crossing through Bari-Doab to as far as Hansi and Hissar to collect tribute.⁴³ These allies of the Sikhs made the Mughal Government insecure. When Zakariya Khan realized that his policies had failed to contain the Sikhs, he revoked the conferment of the *Jagirs* allotted to the *Khalsa* in, 1735. Zakariya Khan also reversed his policy of tolerance and intensified his policy of repression more rigorously than before. He issued strict orders to his officers to annihilate the Sikhs.⁴⁴

Now the *Khalsa* was again free to have it out with the Government. Further more, the necessity of maintaining their integrity under political and economic conditions of life forced them to adopt a way of living which was not different in outward appearance from that of freebooted.⁴⁵ The Sikh volunteers now organized themselves into large number of *Jathas*, for the purpose of offence and defense. All the *Jathas* were under separate *Jathedars*, but were ready to merge if the necessity arose. They started frequenting the highways, vanishing at the sight of Mughal horsemen but again coming out to loot the Government treasures and to refill their sources as well as to paralyse the Government administration.⁴⁶

⁴² Sohan Singh Seetal, *Sikh Misalan*, Ludhiana, 1952, pp. 8-9; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, pp. 117-18.

⁴³ Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 666-67; N.K Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, p. 6.

⁴⁴ Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 667-68; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 49.

⁴⁵ Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 668-69; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, pp. 118-19.

⁴⁶ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 217-19; Dr. Gopal Singh, *A History of Sikh People*, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 367-68.

The Government of Lahore retaliated by taking possession of the Golden temple of Amritsar, allowing no Sikhs to visit it. Large scale arrests of the Sikhs were also affected and a proclamation issued that no one should offer them protection or help of any kind and wherever a Sikh is found, he should be handed over to the Government.⁴⁷ Zakariya Khan sent an army of ten thousand to Majha under *Diwan* Lakhpat Rai and his nephew Mukhlis Khan in order to throw them out of the Majha. These marauding parties moved from one village to another, looting the families of the innocent Sikhs and the Hindus.⁴⁸

Soon the leaders of *Budha Dal* were driven to Malwa by Lakhpat Rai, where they were welcomed by Ala Singh. After plundering the whole areas of the Malwa including Sunam and Sirhind, the forces of the *Budha Dal* returned to Amritsar to celebrate Diwali. On their way back, however they were attacked by Lakhpat Rai at Basreke, near Amritsar and pushed away towards Chunian.⁴⁹ This caused the *Taruna Dal* to get actuated. On receiving tidings of the setbacks, *Taruna Dal* hurried with reinforcements to the support of *Budha Dal* and joined them at Hujra Shah Muqim near Lahore where the Sikhs inflicted a heavy defeat on their enemy killing two important commanders and a nephew of Lakhpat Rai. This success infused the Sikhs with courage and they overran the whole area bordering Amritsar.⁵⁰ The Lahore Government was as alarmed as an upshot of these advances that they took possession of the central temple of Amritsar and issued strict orders prohibiting any Sikhs from visiting the *Darbar Sahib (Harmandir Sahib)*.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 60, DPHS, PUP; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 219-20.

⁴⁸ Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 671-72.

⁴⁹ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 219-20; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 671-72; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 119.

⁵⁰ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 220; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 673-75.

⁵¹ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 60, DPHS, PUP; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 220-21.

Taking cognizance of the situation, *Bhai* Mani Singh requested the Governor of Lahore, Zakariya Khan, to grant full freedom to the Sikhs to visit the *Darbar Sahib*. On the festival of Diwali, he would pay rupees 5,000 as fee to the Government.⁵² All the Sikhs from everywhere set out for Amritsar. The Sikhs had scarcely been a few hours in Amritsar, when a confidant of the Sikhs reported that the Governor of Lahore had dispatched a strong armed force to Amritsar to wipe out the Sikhs congregated there. The Sikhs promptly vacated the town. When Zakariya Khan arrived with his forces he could not sight a single Sikh in the whole town. He ordered the arrest of *Bhai* Mani Singh and took him to Lahore, where he was tortured to death at *Nakhas*.⁵³ Sohan Lal Suri, give us another reason for the action taken against *Bhai* Mani Singh. He says that he was hauled up for making converts to Sikhism in Lahore and being asked to shave off his hair had used strong words in giving his refusals.⁵⁴

Bhai Mani Singh was a darling of the Sikhs. When the Sikhs heard of the martyrdom of *Bhai* Mani Singh, their anger knows no limits. They avenged his death. Where ever they could find an opportunity; they looted the Government treasury and killed several of the Government functionaries.⁵⁵

Progressively their resources and their numbers increased and they only awaited the opportune time to re-establish themselves and to capture the strong holds from which they had been ousted earlier. On some occasions, however,

⁵² Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p.221; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 679-82.

⁵³ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 60, DPHS, PUP; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 221-22; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-I*, Lahore, 1880-85, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Dr. Gopal Singh Dhillon), unpublished preserved in the library of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, folio no.130, (after here given as GNDU); Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 682-88.

⁵⁴ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-I*, p. 130, GNDU.

⁵⁵ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 222-24; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-I*, folio nos. 130-31, GNDU.

peculiar circumstances and incidents taking place in the country prompted them to come out of their lairs and assert their strength. One such occasion was the invasion of Nadir Shah of Persia, in 1739.⁵⁶

In December 18th, 1738 Nadir Shah the king of Afghanistan crossed the Attock and reached Lahore, in 1739. There was nobody to check his advance up to Lahore, nor did Zakariya Khan dare to impede his progress till this point of time.⁵⁷ Khan *Bahadur* considered it prudent to challenge him once he had entered the territory of the province of the Punjab. Zakariya Khan continued writing to the Government of Delhi for assistance against Nadir Shah, but Emperor Muhammad Shah *Rangila*, the successor of Farrukhsiyar had a sybaritic disposition and did not pay heed to the repeated entreaties.⁵⁸ Ultimately Khan *Bahadur* resolved to take on Nadir Shah alone. Faced with a formidable adversary, he was unsuccessful in defending himself and was trounced in the very first clash of the armies on January 11th, 1739. He accepted the sovereignty of Nadir Shah and was retained as the Governor of Lahore by Nadir Shah. After the conquest of Punjab, Nadir Shah marched forward towards Delhi and he took some soldiers of Lahore Government with him.⁵⁹ So in the absence of a firm and stable rule and amidst the administrative instability created by Nadir Shah there prevailed a general air of restiveness in the kingdom.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 86; Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 35.

⁵⁷ *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg Khan*, (NP, ND), said to have been written by a Sodhi of Kartarpur, (Translated into English by Ganda Singh), MS., preserved in Ganda Singh collection, Punjabi University Patiala, Accession no. V2.M9DO, folio no. 2 (here after given as GSC, PUP); Alexander Dow, *The History of Hindustan*, Vol-II London, 1803, pp. 412-13; James Fraser, *The History of Nadir Shah*, (Formally called *Thamas Kuli Khan*), London, (ND), pp. 148-49.

⁵⁸ Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 87; James Fraser, *The History of Nadir Shah*, pp. 149-50.

⁵⁹ Mir Sied Ghulam Hussein Khan, *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, p. 314; Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 61, DPHS, PUP; James Fraser, *The History of Nadir Shah*, pp. 155-98

⁶⁰ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 229-30; Padit Debi Parsad, *Gulshan-i-Punjab*, (NP, ND), (Translated into Punjabi by Harmindr Singh Kholi), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1979, p. 5.

In this all pervasive consternation, the politically ambitious discerned an opportunity to gain some ground. This was particularly true of the Sikhs. The Sikhs, who had been taking refuge in the hills and forests, were beginning to trickle back to the plains. Even those who had migrated to Rajputana and Bikener began to return to the Punjab and regrouped themselves into strong *Jathas*. They roamed the length and breadth of the province and plundered the territory from Chenab to the boundaries of Karnal.⁶¹

Nadir Shah's sojourn in Delhi lasted about five months. While departing triumphant for his country, on 5 May, 1739, he carried with him a mammoth load of the spoils of his conquests comprising a huge treasure of rupees five Crore in cash, diamonds and jewelry worth about 50 Crore, the Kohinoor diamond and the royal throne" *Takhat-e-Taos*. On his way back to Afghanistan, in order to avoid the heat of the plains and to exploit new lands for more plunder and marauding, he took the northerly route under the Shivalik hills.⁶²

The Sikhs, who were biding their time in those hills, thought it is a good chance to replenish their possessions and falling upon his rear relieved him of much of his booty.⁶³ In fact, they promptly assembled at Amritsar and passed *Gurmata* or community resolution that Nadir Shah should not be allowed to return to his country unchallenged and that he must not go back without relinquishing to the Sikhs their share of the loot of Delhi.⁶⁴ When the Shah's forces were on their

⁶¹ Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, pp. 87-88; Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, folio no. 26, DPHS, PUP; Ganesh Das Badehra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, (NP), 1865, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Jit Singh Seetal), Persevered in the Library of the DPHS, PUP, Accession no. 7, folio nos. 91-93.

⁶² Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio nos. 61-62, DPHS, PUP; Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 88; Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 35-36; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 208-9, DPHS, PUP; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 722-24.

⁶³ Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, pp. 88-89; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 229-30.

⁶⁴ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 230; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 724-25; C. H. Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, London, (ND), reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 48.

way back from Delhi to Afghanistan, significantly enriched with the spoils of their invasions, they were ambushed by the *Jathas* of the Sikhs who plundered the rich booty from them. Nadir Shah's sporadic attacks on the town of Delhi continued. At the same time the Sikhs undeterred by any sense of fear whatsoever continued launching surprise attacks on Shah's armies.⁶⁵ They even succeeded in liberating thousands of the Indian Hindu boys and girls, who were being transported as prisoners by the Nadir Shah's soldiers.⁶⁶

When Nadir Shah received the tidings of Sikhs' assaults on his armies at Lahore, he was blazing with fury. He is said to have sought from Zakariya Khan the whereabouts of these people, who had dared to interfere with his onward march.⁶⁷

On getting educated about the historic and martial antecedents of the Sikhs and their present status, Nadir Shah warned Zakariya Khan of their impending resurgence. He expressed the certainty that given their martial character they were bound to rise in rebellion, sooner or later, "if this were so, they shall without doubt be the rulers of this land and the day is not far-away when these rebels will take possession of the country."⁶⁸ Ultimately, Nadir Shah handed over the charge of the Lahore province to Khan *Bahadur*, Zakariya Khan and returned to Qandhar in November 1739. Zakariya Khan promised to pay to him an annual tribute of twenty lakh rupees. He accompanied Nadir Shah up to the river Chenab to see him off.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Mir Sied Ghulam Hussein Khan, *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, pp. 314-15; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 230-31; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, p. 725.

⁶⁶ Ahmed Shah, Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 35-36; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 726-28; N.K Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, p. 7.

⁶⁷ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 36; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 726-28; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 118.

⁶⁸ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 36; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 733-34.

⁶⁹ Mir Sied Ghulam Hussein Khan, *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, pp. 317-19; Alexander Dow, Alexander Dow, *The History of Hindustan*, Vol-II, p. 431.

The period of five months when Nadir Shah stayed put in India was a golden time for the Sikhs. This was the time when they recouped their depleted resources. They had significantly augmented their power through looting and plundering the Government treasure. Moreover, as an outfit they were now fully organized.⁷⁰ It was also the time when many of those who had suffered atrocities at the hands of the Muslim rulers, forfeited the comforts of their hearths and homes and joined the Sikhs *Jathas*. He who once took *Amrit or Pahul* and was baptized a Sikh lost all moral desire to withdraw or renege from his new faith because of its rare magnetism. Thus, along with their economic strength the numerical strength of the Sikhs had also increased. Spurred by this new found support, they constructed a mud fort at *Dallewal*, which was meant to act as a storehouse for the looted property and also as a stronghold at the time of conflict with the enemy and in times of difficulty.⁷¹

When Zakariya Khan returned to the capital after the departure of Nadir Shah, he found the whole of Punjab in disarray, a part of it due to the invasion of Nadir Shah and the rest due to the extensive looting carried out by the Sikhs.⁷² He took resolute steps to restore order in the Punjab by putting the Government machinery back on the tracks. He resolved to launch a fresh campaign of aggression against the Sikhs. He created mobile parties of light cavalry and set them in motion in a manhunt for rebel Sikhs.⁷³

⁷⁰ George Forster, *A journey from Bengal to England*, London, 1798, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 313; Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, pp. 89-90; Sir J.H Johan Gordon, *The Sikhs*, London, 1904, pp. 58-59.

⁷¹ James Browne, *History of the Origin of the Progress of the Sicks*, p. 571; Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, folio no. 26, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Singh Seetal, *Sikh Misalan*, p. 9.

⁷² Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, pp. 90-91; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 736-38.

⁷³ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 233-34; Sir J.H John Gordon, *The Sikhs*, pp. 58-59.

When the patrolling parties advanced, the Sikhs receded in the direction of the “Dallewal” fort and the neighboring Jungles. Soon The Mughal forces laid a siege to the fort of “Dallewal”. The Sikhs offered stiff resistance but the enemy’s numerical superiority made all resistance unavailing. At last taking advantage of the darkness of the night, the Sikhs broke through the grip of the enemy and made good their escape. Still a hundred of them lost their lives in this bid to escape and the fort of “Dallewal” was destroyed. Many Sikhs, who were captured from there, were brought to Lahore in chains, where they were all tortured to death at “*Nakhas Chowk*’’.⁷⁴

As a result of these setbacks, a number of Sikhs fled to the hills of Jammu and Kangra, while a good majority crossed the river Beas and moved to the Jullundur Doab.⁷⁵ But here also Zakariya Khan did not let them live in peace. Now, with the objective of chasing the Sikhs out of the Punjab, Khan *Bahadur* appointed Adina Beg Khan, *Faujdar* of Jullundur-Doab with strict instructions. Adina Beg Khan was a calculating and astute political ruler. He had a coveted desire to be the military general of Jullundur-Doab and he nurtured the ambition to retain this position of eminence by all means foul or fair. Soon, Adina Beg Khan dispatched troops against the Sikhs and carried out a massive slaughter against them.⁷⁶

Although, he did succeed in restoring peace and order in the area allotted to him, he did not take decisive steps to crush the Sikhs. He also pursued the policy of not driving the entire body of the Sikhs from his territory. Soon after his arrival, therefore, ways and means of making peace with the Sikhs were looked for. He, like his predecessors even granted *Jagirs* to a few *Sardars*.⁷⁷ Zakariya Khan who

⁷⁴ Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, folio no. 26, DPHS, PUP; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, p. 738; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 56.

⁷⁵ Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, folio no. 26, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-I & II, Lahore, 1870, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 456.

⁷⁶ *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg Khan*, pp. 5-7, GSC, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-II, pp. 454-56.

⁷⁷ Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 739-40; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 57.

was intensely concerned about the situation issued strict instructions to Adina Beg Khan to drive away the Sikhs. Adina Beg Khan had to abide by the instructions and he ordered the Sikhs to withdraw from the territory forthwith. The Sikhs at this moment sent one of their *Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia* to discuss with Adina Beg Khan⁷⁸

Further the Sikhs under their leaders Hari Singh *Bhangi*, Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*, Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* and many others crossed the river Satluj and entered the territory of Sirhind. More force was sent to beat them under Lachmi Naryan and his allies. In this precipitous situation, Hari Singh *Bhangi*, Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* and Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* proceeded to meet Lachmi Narayan but they were again defeated.⁷⁹ Soon Delhi Government dispatched General Azimullah to pose a fresh challenge to the Sikhs. The Sikhs had several skirmishes with the general but it was getting consistently harder to survive in a very precarious atmosphere. Responding to the exigency some of them began to move towards Bikaner, some others drifted to the hills, while still others sought shelter in the Hindu states of Jaipur, Jodhpur and many other areas of the Rajputana.⁸⁰

Zakariya Khan made concerted efforts to eliminate the Sikhs, but all in vain. Thousands of them were executed but there were still a large number of them who had managed to escape the general Sikh massacre. All the ruthless policies adopted by him were of no avail and failed to comprehensively annihilate the Sikhs.⁸¹ Zakariya Khan died on July, 1745 without fulfilling his objective and leaving behind his three sons named Yahiya Khan, Shah Nawaz Khan and Mir Baqi.⁸²

⁷⁸ Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, folio nos. 26-27, DPHS, PUP; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 234; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, p. 740.

⁷⁹ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 234-35; Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-II, pp. 454-56.

⁸⁰ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 235; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, p. 741.

⁸¹ Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 752-54; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, pp. 62-64.

⁸² Tahmas Khan, Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, (NP), 1779, (Translated into English by P.Setu Madahwa Rao), reprint Bombay, 1967, p. 7; Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 63, DPHS,

In the wake of the death of Zakariya Khan, there was a war of succession between his two sons, Yahiya Khan and Shah Nawaz Khan. Yahiya Khan was the son-in-law of Qamar-ud-Din the minister of Delhi. Qamar-ud-Din requested the emperor Mohammad Shah to appoint Yahiya Khan as the Governor of Lahore but emperor Mohammad Shah quite imprudently chose to defer the appointment till a later date. He turned down the supplications of both Wazir-ul-Mumalik and Qamar-ud-Din.⁸³ This did not spell the end of the riddling political troubles. Soon Shah Nawaz Khan demanded his share of patrimony. As the settlement to the dispute was getting endlessly delayed, the armies of both the sides were being retained in their combative positions. Meanwhile, *Wazir*, who did not want to lose his hold on the frontier province, which, by now, had also come under the dominion of the Mughals like Balkh and Bokhara, with the support of the last two viceroys, succeeded in persuading the emperor to grant him *Subedari* of the both of these provinces. The Wazir appointed Momin Khan who had been Zakariya Khan's confidante as his deputy in Lahore.⁸⁴

This period of six month, when the rulers of the Punjab were engrossed in sorting out their mutual, petty disputes, was a golden time for the Sikhs. During the life time of Khan Bahadur, several *Jathas* of the Sikhs came to be concentrated in Amritsar and later, after his death, thousands more flowed into the region of Majha.⁸⁵ These doughty groups organized themselves into units of one hundred each and scattered themselves all over the land, inflicting extensive depredations.

PUP; Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, folio no., 27, DPHS, PUP ; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-I*, folio no. 132, GNDU.

⁸³ Mir Sied Ghulam Hussein Khan, *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, p. 323; *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg Khan*, folio no. 7, GSC, PUP; Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, folio no. 27, DPHS, PUP; J. D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 84.

⁸⁴ Tahmas Khan, Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, p. 7; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-I*, folio no. 136, GNDU.

⁸⁵ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 300-301; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-I*, folio no. 136, GNDU.

Reading a logistical advantage in this interregnum, when their adversaries were involved in mutual squabbling, the Sikhs reaped a rich harvest of booty. Soon the strength of the Sikh *Jathas* became significantly large.⁸⁶

The Sikhs took full advantage of the political chaos and gave shape to a development which was to have positive implications for the organization of the Sikhs in the future times. The Sikhs assembled at Amritsar on 14 October, 1745 on the occasion of Diwali and passed a *Gurmata* for merging all the small *Jathas* into twenty five strong *Jathas*. This was the first *Gurmata* which had immense importance for the existence and status of the Sikhs of all those regularly passed by them. It is notable that this commendable institution of *Gurmata* ensured the universal participation of all individuals connected with the affairs of the Sikh commonwealth. The two institutions of the *Jathas (Dal)* and *Gurmata* that were brought into the lime-light proved to be of vital importance for the *Khalsa's* future success as they combined the benefits of national counsel with those of dividing the *Jathas* for the purpose of better organization.⁸⁷

These regiments were united both through religious affinities and by common interest; therefore a system of general confederations for defense as well as for operations requiring more than individual effort came into existence.⁸⁸ As a result of this new system of organization the different *Jathas* of the Sikhs were put under the leadership of the following *Jathedars* : *Nawab Kapur Singh Faizullapuria*, *Jassa Singh* of village *Kalal (Ahluwalia)*, *Bhima Singh* and *Hari Singh* and *Chajja Singh Bhangis* village *Panjwar*, *Dyal Singh*, *Gurbakhsh Singh*, *Karora Singh*, *Karam Singh*, *Gurdial Singh Dallewal*, *Dharam Singh*, *Naudh Singh Sukerchakia*, *Chanda Singh*, *Kala Singh*, *Bagh Singh* village *Hallowal*, *Deep*

⁸⁶ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.-II, pp. 69-70.

⁸⁷ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Amritsar, (ND), part-II, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, pp. 144-51; Sir J.H Johan Gordon, *The Sikhs*, pp. 59-60; Sohan Singh Seetal, *Sikh Misalan*, p. 9.

⁸⁸ Syed Muhammad Latif, *Lahore its History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities*, p, 74; Sir J.H Johan Gordon, *The Sikhs*, p. 60; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 71.

Singh, Sukha Singh Mari Kamboki, Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*, Jai Singh *Kanahiya*, Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya*, Hira Singh *Nakai*, Sanda Singh *Nakai*, Karam Singh village Narli, Jiwan Singh, Badan Singh, Beer Singh. All the contingents played their respective part in the efforts to liberate the Punjab from the Mughals and foreign invaders. Hari Singh *Bhangi*, Chajja Singh *Bhangi*, Bhima Singh *Bhangi*, Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*, Jai Singh *Kanahiya* and Naudh Singh especially emerged as the stalwarts of the *Khalsa*. They carried out their insurgent activities all over the territory and looted the Government treasure.⁸⁹

The civil war between the two brothers Yahiya Khan and Shah Nawaz Khan came to an end, when Mughal emperor Mohammad Shah agreed to appoint Yahiya Khan as the Governor of Lahore and Shah Nawaz Khan as the Governor of Multan.⁹⁰ Yahiya Khan did not have a sympathetic attitude towards the Sikhs. He unleashed hostilities against them with all the alacrity he was capable of. In the momentous evening of January, 1746 a Sikh party under the leadership of Hari Singh and Chajja Singh *Bhangis* village Panjwar, Gurbakhsh Singh, Karora Singh, Dyal Singh, Deep Singh (latter known as *Shahid*), Hira Singh *Nakai*, Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*, Aggar Singh and Sham Singh Naroke (both were *Bhangis*), Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*, Naudh Singh *Sukerchakia*, Sukha Singh, Beer Singh, Madan Singh *Vir* entered in the city of Lahore and not only plundered the town but also

⁸⁹ George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, pp. 313-14; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, pp. 71-72; Sohan Singh Sital, *Sikh Misalan*, pp. 9-10

“But according to, Lepel Griffin and Giani Gian Singh, the strength of the Sikhs *Jathas* at that time was thirty. Some of them were as follows *Jatha* under Khiala Singh *Kang*, *Jatha* Under Madan Singh, *Jatha* under Sudh Singh *Dodian*, *Jatha* under Bhuma Singh *Khanah*, *Jatha* under Aggar Singh” Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, pp. 455-64; Lepel, Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Lahore, 1865, pp. 11, 78, 119, 315, 321, 385-86; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part-II, pp. 154-55;

⁹⁰ Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, folio no. 27, DPHS, PUP; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 302-3; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-I*, folio no. 136, GNDU.

the areas falling under the *Suba* Lahore.⁹¹ Soon, the Mughal forces came opposite the Sikhs but, once again eluding the Mughals, the Sikhs had taken shelter in the jungle on the banks of river Ravi. Yahiya Khan sent his *Diwan*, Lakhpat Rai at the head of a large battalion with definite orders not to return without chasing the Sikhs out of the territory. The Sikhs abandoned their shelter on the banks of Ravi and progressed to Eimanabad, as a result of which, Lakhpat Rai had to return back to Lahore.⁹²

In the course of their itinerary, the Sikh, about 2000 in number, went to visit Rori Sahib, Eminabad (a sacred place owing to the memory of *Guru Nanak Dev*). According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, it was reported to Jaspat Rai at Khokharn that the Sikhs had driven away a herd of sheep from Gondlanwala and were eating them near the *Gurdwara*.⁹³ But Rattan Singh Bhangu ‘says that the Sikhs had addressed a letter to Jaspat Rai, asking for permission to purchase provisions from his town.’⁹⁴ When the *Faujdar* of Eminabad Jaspat Rai, came to know of the arrival of Sikhs in Rori Sahib in Eminabad, he sent them strict orders to vacate his territory without delay. The Sikhs in their reply said that they would eat and rest for the night and would leave immediately the next morning. However, Jaspat Rai was not ready to extend such concessions. He ordered his army to attack the Sikhs. Although, the Sikhs did not wish to engage the enemy in a combat, they had to fight. This fight had been imposed upon them and they drew their swords. The bloody battle took place at Baddo Ki Gosian in February – March, 1746. Jaspat Rai was killed in the battlefield in a fit of panic.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, folio no. 27, DPHS, PUP; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 303; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, pp. 73-74.

⁹² Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 63, DPHS, PUP; Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, (NP, ND), M.S, (Translation of Punjabi), preserved in the library of the DPHS, PUP, Accession no. 33, folio no. 1.

⁹³ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 217, DPHS, PUP.

⁹⁴ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 303-5.

⁹⁵ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 63, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 217-18, DPHS, PUP ; Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio no. 2, DPHS, PUP.

Diwan Lakhpat Rai was maddened with rage when he heard the news of his brother's death. He came to the *Nawab* at Lahore and flinging his turban at his feet swore that he would re-tie it on his head only when he had destroyed the Sikhs root and branch. 'I am a *Khatri*,' said he, 'as was *Guru* Gobind Singh, the creator of the *Khalsa*: but I shall not call myself by that name until I have erased their name from the page of existence'. Then he got a general proclamation issued from the *Nawab* for the extirpation of the Sikhs. A massive campaign to eliminate the Sikhs was thus launched. To begin with all the Sikhs living in Lahore were arrested and made over to sweepers for execution.⁹⁶

By the beat of Drum, Lakhpat Rai, out of inordinate vengeance, got a universal announcement made in the whole province that no one should read the Sikh scriptures and any one taking the name of the *Guru* would be arrested and his belly ripped open. Even the word *Gur* (molasses), which sounded like *Guru*, was not to be uttered, but the word *Rori* was to be used instead. The word *Granth* was also to be replaced with *Pothi*.⁹⁷ Many volumes of the holy *Granth* were collected and thrown into rivers and wells in this wave of fanatic and hysterical malevolence. The tank of Amritsar temple was also filled with earth.⁹⁸

In this time of crisis the Sikhs fled into the thickets of the river Ravi. Lakhpat Rai collected his soldiers and set out in search of the Sikhs elsewhere. He personally commanded the royal army and marched against the Sikhs. In an attempt to duck out of the fury of the storm nearly 15,000 Sikhs took shelter in the

⁹⁶ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 63, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 217-18, DPHS, PUP; Raja Ram Tota, *Guldast-i-Punjab*, folio no. 19, DPHS, PUP; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 305-6.

⁹⁷ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 308-9; Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio no. 2, DPHS, PUP; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A short History of the Sikhs*, p. 124.

⁹⁸ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 217-18, DPHS, PUP; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 127.

forests of Kahanuwan⁹⁹ under their prominent leaders, Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*, Chajja Singh *Bhangi*, Bhima Singh *Bhangi* and Hari Singh *Bhangi*, Gurbakhsh Singh Roranwala, Gurdial Singh *Dallewalia*, Naudh Singh *Sukerchakia*, Karora Singh, Dial Singh, Deep Singh (latter known as *Shahid*), Sham Singh Naroke (latter joined with the *Bhangis*) Hira Singh *Nakai*, Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*, Aggar Singh (*Bhangi*), Sukha Singh, Beer Singh, Madan Singh *Vir*. Quite unrelentingly, the royal army first laid a siege to their sanctuary and then set fire to the jungle. The Sikhs were trapped inside - a steep mountain in front, a flooded river on the right and a strong-minded enemy behind; they had no ammunition, no food and no help.¹⁰⁰ In desperation, some of them tried to wade through the river Ravi, which was in spate; most of them failed to do so and drowned in the bid to escape. Those who climbed the mountains were caught by the Rajput soldiers who were on guard duty and were killed.¹⁰¹

At this time the Mughal forces were fully equipped with the essential where withal of warfare. They were in possession of cannons and other potent weapons to shoot the Sikhs. Just as the Sikhs tried to scale the mountains to escape the valley of fire, the Mughal army opened fire thus blocking their way.¹⁰² Seeing no end to this horrible predicament, the Sikh Sardars decided that those on foot should try their luck with the hills and others who had horses under them should cut their way through the enemy and follow any direction which they could take. Some of them were as follows: Hari Singh *Bhangi*, Bhima Singh *Bhangi*, Chajja Singh *Bhangi*,

⁹⁹ According to Khushwaqat Rai, the place where the Sikhs were surrounded by the Mughals known as Atiya Nagar. Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 64, DPHS, PUP; But Ali-ud-Din Mufti, mention that place known as Bahhu, in Jammu District. Ali-ud-din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos.218-19, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁰⁰ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 310-13; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part-II, p. 157; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 125.

¹⁰¹ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 313-14.

¹⁰² Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 314-15; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 77.

Sukha Singh, Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*, Tara Singh, Charat Singh, Deep Singh, Sudha Singh, Aggar Singh(*Bhangi*), Dargaha Singh, Daljeet Singh, Gurbakhsh Singh Roranwala, Sham Singh, Hira Singh, Dharam Singh, Karm Singh and Sher Singh.¹⁰³

The cannons were pointed in the directions of the Sikhs hideouts. *Diwan* Lakhpat Rai ordered his forces that instead of allowing themselves to be distracted by looting and plundering, they should lead a determined all out attack to exterminate every Sikh wherever they could find one. He offered cash prize of rupees fifty for the head of every Sikh.¹⁰⁴ Sensing unprecedented danger, the Sikhs decided to leave the battlefield and take any direction that could take them to safety. Thus, fighting a fierce and unequal battle against the adversary, some of them went towards Doba while a few others fled towards Kullu and Kangra valley. Some of them even succeeded in climbing the mountains in spite of the stumbling blocks of enemy soldiers. The Mughal soldiers were still pursuing the Sikhs. In the final reckoning, at least 7,000 Sikhs were killed and some three thousand of them were caught by the mountain flaks of Basoli and handed over to Lakhpat Rai. They were made prisoners and sent to Lahore where they were tortured to death at *Nakhas Chowk*. Their heads were piled up to make pyramids and their bodies buried under the walls of the Mosque.¹⁰⁵

According to Khushwaqat Rai, 400 hundred Sikhs were killed in this bloody battle and near about 400 Sikhs were made prisoners. But Rattan Singh Bhangu says that near about 30.000 to 40.000 Sikhs were killed in this action. The strength given by Rattan Singh Bhangu is too much because the total strength of the Sikhs at that time was near about 15, 000. So the strength given by Rattan Singh Bhangu

¹⁰³ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 314-16; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 781-82.

¹⁰⁴ Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 784-86.

¹⁰⁵ Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio no. 2, DPHS, PUP; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 786-88; Syed Muhammad Latif, *Lahore its History, Architectural Remains and Antiquities*, p. 74.

may be the total strength of the Sikhs who were dead and missing during the action.¹⁰⁶ Bhima Singh *Bhangi* is also suspected to have died in the battle field.¹⁰⁷

This transpired in April-May, 1746. They called it *Ghallughara* (the Holocaust). But sixteen years later in 1762, they had to suffer a worse disaster at the hands of Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Afghan conqueror. This incident in retrospect therefore, came to be known as *Chhota Ghallughara* (the small Holocaust) in the history of the Punjab.¹⁰⁸

After the battle the Sikhs managed to travel some distance by giving a slip to the forces of Lakhpat Rai. After resting for a few days they moved into the territory of Rama *Randhawa* who impeded their progress.¹⁰⁹ After a brief encounter the Sikhs passed Sri Hargobindpur and from there they crossed Doba. Here again Adina Beg Khan marched against them and the Sikhs did not get even breathing time. From there they set out at speed and crossed Aliwal and entered the territory of Majha.¹¹⁰ Subsequently, *Sardar Hari Singh Bhangi*, halted at Dialpur with his companions, *Jassa Singh Ahluwalia* headed for Kapurthalla, while, *Sardar Naudh Singh Sukerchakia* and *Deep Singh Shahid* halted at Patherala and in the Lakhi jungle respectively. Having been unsuccessful in his mission of exterminating the Sikhs, Lakhpat Rai returned to Lahore.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 64, DPHS, PUP; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 320-22.

¹⁰⁷ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, pp. 385-86; Bhagat Singh, *History of the Sikh Misals*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1993, p. 90.

¹⁰⁸ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 321-22; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 788-90; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 125.

¹⁰⁹ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 321-22; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, pp. 125-26.

¹¹⁰ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part-II, pp. 158-59; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, pp. 77-78.

¹¹¹ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part-II, p. 159; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, pp. 77-78; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 126.

The sufferings of the *Khalsa* were not, however, to continue for very long. After five months Shah Nawaz Khan carried his weapons against his brother Yahiya Khan. The war between the two brothers continued from, November 1746 to March 1747.¹¹² This apparently provided a good time for the Sikhs to reinvigorate themselves. They abandoned their retreats and hide outs and started paying visit to Amritsar as mark revitalization of the community. The different *Jathas* of the Sikhs then rallied out of the Amritsar. Furthermore, they fell upon the Bari-Doab and Rachna-Doab like birds of prey.¹¹³ It was their turn to let their vengeance have its full play on the Government officials. They soon succeeded in acquiring an immense booty, thus replenishing their exhausted stores they fully equipped themselves with arms, ammunitions, horses and other paraphernalia.¹¹⁴

In March 1747, the Governor of Multan, Shah Nawaz Khan, the younger brother of Yahiya Khan, forcibly occupied Lahore. After taking possession of Lahore, he did not bring about any change in his policy towards the Sikhs. He adopted a strange carrot and stick policy and tried to crush them through the alternate use of repression and reconciliation.¹¹⁵ In view of political instability the Delhi Government would not grant, the Governorship of Lahore to Shah Nawaz Khan. He in fear turned for help to Ahmad Shah Abdali, the ruler of Afghanistan, whom he invited to invade India. In a knee jerk reaction to his invitation to a notorious invader, the Delhi Wazir sent a belated confirmation to Shah Nawaz Khan, who promptly did a volte-face and unilaterally withdrew his invitation to

¹¹² Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 65, DPHS, PUP; Raja Ram Tota, *Guldast-i-Punjab*, folio no. 19, DPHS, PUP.

¹¹³ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 79.

¹¹⁴ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, part-II, p. 159; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 79.

¹¹⁵ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 65, DPHS, PUP; Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, p. 27, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 219, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Daftar-I*, folio no. 137, GNDU.

Abdali. He even dismissed Durrani's envoy with a rude rejection and poured molten lead into the mouth of courtier but it was too late.¹¹⁶ Ahmad Shah Abdali proceeded with an inexorable mission and initiated a long series of his Indian invasions. He crossed the river Ravi on 10th January, 1748 with the army of 18,000 horsemen. Until he reached Lahore on January 12th, 1748 Shah Nawaz Khan had fled from the town to Delhi. Ahmad Shah occupied the city of Lahore and appointed Jille Khan, the Afghan chief, as Governor and Momin Khan as his Deputy and Lakhpat Rai his Diwan.¹¹⁷

After pausing for a few days in Lahore, he marched towards Delhi and engaged the Mughal forces in a battle at Mannupur, six miles west of Sirhind. Minor and intermittent skirmishes between the two forces started taking place regularly.¹¹⁸ Ultimately, on the 11th of March, 1748 a major and decisive battle was fought between Muin-ul-Mulk and the Afghans in which Abdali was completely routed and had to flee from the field. On 17th March, he crossed the river Satluj and returned to Afghanistan.¹¹⁹

In the conflict with Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Sikhs did not take sides. They were watching the situation closely. When Abdali's forces were defeated they chased them up to Chenab River. The Sikhs under the *Bhangi Sardars* attacked the

¹¹⁶ Tahmas Khan, Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, pp. 7-8; *Ahwat-i-Adina Beg Khan*, folio no. 7, GSC PUP; Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio nos. 65-66, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 219, DPHS, PUP.

¹¹⁷ Tahmas Khan, Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, pp. 7-8; Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, folio no. 28, DPHS, PUP; J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 84-85; Alexander Dow, *History of Hindustan*, pp. 442-43.

¹¹⁸ Tahmas Khan, Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, pp. 9-10; J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 85; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-I*, folio nos. 149-50.

¹¹⁹ Tahmas Khan, Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, pp. 9-10; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 223-25, DPHS, PUP; Alexander Dow, *History of Hindustan*, pp. 442-43.

stragglers of the Abdali's army and looted arms and other precious possessions. In this way the Sikhs harassed Abdali right up the Chenab.¹²⁰

The Sikhs took full advantage of the confusion reigning in Delhi and Lahore which for further exacerbated by the Afghan conqueror. During the invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali the Delhi Government was utterly out of joint. This gave the Sikhs an opportunity to emerge from their hide outs and to recoup their strength. Major reforms were envisaged in the *Khalsa* as the number of their *Jathas* increased to approximately sixty five. They felt the need to unify the autonomous groups of Sikhs. There was a collective realization that in place of the small independent parties of the Sikhs under separate leaders, there should be a strong and central organization of the *Panth*, which should in time of need function less than one commander.¹²¹

At that time there were 65 small *Jathas* under different *Sardars* as under: *Jatha* under *Nawab Kapur Singh Faizullapuria*, *Jatha* under *Jassa Singh(Ahluwalia)* of village Kalal, *Jatha* under *Hari Singh Dhillon (Bhangi)* village Panjwar, *Jatha* under *Jhanda Singh (Bhangi)*, *Jatha* under *Ganda Singh (Bhangi)* village Panjwar, *Jatha* under *Natha Singh* (belonging to the *Bhangi Misal*), *Jatha* under *Gujjar Singh Bhangi*, *Jatha* under *Garja Singh*, *Jatha* under *Nibahu Singh* (brothers of *Gujjar Singh Bhangi*), *Jatha* under *Lehna Singh Khallon, (Bhangi)*, *Jatha* under *Mehtab Singh* village Khakh, district Amritsar, *Jatha* under *Charat Singh Kanahiya*, *Jatha* under *Diwan Singh*, *Jatha* under *Phula Singh* village Panawala, *Jatha* under *Sanwal Singh Randhawa* village Wagha (Belonging to the *Bhangis*), *Jatha* under *Gurbakhsh Singh* village Doda (Later joined the *Bhangis*), *Jatha* under *Dharam Singh* village Klalwala (belonging to the

¹²⁰ McGregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, London, 1846, pp. 115-16; Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio no. 5, DPHS, PUP; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, pp. 85-86.

¹²¹ Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio no. 5, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Dafter-I*, folio no. 153, GNDU.

Bhangi Misal), *Jatha* under Tara Singh village Chainpuria (belonging to the *Bhangis*), *Jatha* under Bagh Singh village Kot Syed Muhammad, *Jatha* under Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya*, *Jatha* under Mehtab Singh village Wadala Sandhuan (belonging to the *Bhangis*), *Jatha* under Jai Singh village Kahna, *Jatha* under Jandu Singh village Kahna, *Jatha* under Tara Singh village Kahna, *Jatha* under Sobha Singh village Kahna, *Jatha* under Bhim Singh village Kahna, *Jatha* under Amar Singh village Wagha, *Jatha* under Sobha Singh village Bhika, *Jatha* under Baghel Singh village Jhabal, *Jatha* under Gulab Singh village Dallewal, *Jatha* under Hari Singh village Dallewal, *Jatha* under Naudh Singh *Sukerchakia*, *Jatha* under Gulab Singh village Majitha, *Jatha* under Mehtab Singh village Julka, *Jatha* under Karora Singh village Pangarh, *Jatha* under Hara Singh, *Jatha* under Lajja Singh, *Jatha* under Nand Singh village Sanghna, *Jatha* under Kapur Singh village Surianwala (belonging to the *Bhangis*), *Jatha* under Amar Singh village Kingra (latter joined with the *Bhangis*), *Jatha* under Jiwan Singh village Qila Jiwan Singh (belonging to the *Bhangi Misal*), *Jatha* under Sahib Singh of Sialkot (latter joined with the *Bhangis*), *Jatha* under Deep Singh Shahid , *Jatha* under Natha Singh Shahid, *Jatha* under Madan Singh, *Jatha* under Mohan Singh village Ranian, *Jatha* under Bagh Singh Hallowal (belonging to the *Bhangs*), *Jatha* under Jhanda Singh village Sultan Vind (near Amritsar), *Jatha* under Mirja Singh *Tarkhan*, *Jatha* under Sham Singh Mann village Bulqichak, *Jatha* under Mala Singh, *Jatha* under Bahal Singh Village Shekupura, *Jatha* under Amar Singh, *Jatha* under Hira Singh, *Jatha* under Ganga Singh, *Jatha* under Lal Singh, *Jatha* under Tara Singh Mann village Mannawala district Amritsar (latter joined with the *Bhangis*), *Jatha* under Mehtab Singh village Lalpur (Tarn Taran), *Jatha* under Roop Singh, *Jatha* under Anoop Singh *Nakai*, *Jatha* under Dasunda Singh, *Jatha* under Tara Singh Gheba of Dallewal, *Jatha* under Dharam Singh *Khatri* (Amritsar), *Jatha* under Sukha Singh village Mari Kamboke, *Jatha* under Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*. It is notable here that

the *Bhangi Jatha* was the most powerful and famous *Jatha* of the Sikhs around this time because out of the 65 *Jathas*, eighteen *Jathas* and *Jathedars* were belonging to the *Bhangis*.¹²²

After the departure of Ahmed Shah Abdali all the Sikhs *Sardars* with their followers assembled at Amritsar in large numbers for the *Baisakhi* celebration on March 29th, 1748 and discussed the *Panthic* agenda. *Nawab* Kapur Singh moved the resolution that the *Panth* needed solidarity and should have one strong organization and one leader and *Jathedar*, who was to be elected by the entire *Panth*. To take a collective action against the Mughals and Ahmad Shah Abdali, they reconstituted their small *Jathas* and gave them a more cohesive shape by combining all their fighting units and reorganizing themselves into one strong organization which was given the name *Dal Khalsa* - the entire fighting body of the Sikhs. Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* was unanimously appointed the supreme commander of the *Dal Khalsa*.¹²³

The *Dal Khalsa* has been variously defined and interpreted by the different writers. In the later part of the 18th century James Browne defined it as under:

“Since the Sicks (Sikhs) became powerful and confederated for the purpose of conquest, they have called their confederacy as *Dal Khalsa Jio* and they have called their grand army as the army of the state.”¹²⁴

Malcolm writes that, “the term *Dal Khalsa* was used for the combined forces of the Sikh leaders at particular time and place”.¹²⁵

¹²² Lepel, Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, pp. 11,83, 119, 151, 171, 177, 207, 212, 217, 230, 305, 315, 321, 339, 365, 385, 386, 452; Lepel, Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab* Vol-II, p 461; Raja Ram Tota, *Guldast-i-Punjab*, folio no. 21, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Singh Seetal, *Sikh Misalan*, pp. 10-19; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, pp. 88-90.

¹²³ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 71, DPHS, PUP; Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, folio no. 30, DPHS, PUP; J. D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 85-86.

¹²⁴ James Browne, *History of the Origin and Progress of Sicks*, p. 573.

¹²⁵ Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, pp. 122-23.

J.D, Cunningham, mentions that the *Dal Khalsa* was the army of the theocracy of the Sikhs.¹²⁶

Sohan Lal Suri, writing about the formation of the *Dal Khalsa* says that *Sardar* Bagh Singh *Dallewalia* along with his deputy *Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, *Sardar* Hari Singh *Bhangi*, *Sardar* *Jassa Singh Ramgarhia* and *Charat Singh Sukerchakia*, further strengthened their possession of entire territory. They named their conquering armies as the *Dal Khalsa Jio*.¹²⁷

A.H, Bingley writes that the Sikh army was generally known as the *Dal Khalsa*, or the army of God.¹²⁸

In actual practice, “The *Dal Khalsa* functioned as an ad-hoc combination of the forces of more than one *Sardar* for the limited purpose of offence and defense. As we clearly know that the *Dal* means an army and the *Khalsa Ji* means the entire body of the Sikhs and thus the *Dal Khalsa* defined as the entire fighting body of the Sikhs. On the exhortation of *Nawab* Kapur Singh, the Sikhs brought together their sixty five *Jathas*. So these various *Jathas* under their respective leaders leagued together and later on they formed themselves into eleven units. Ultimately these eleven *Jathas* emerged in the form of *Misals*.¹²⁹

The term *Misal* has been defined differently by different historians and scholars. In their attempt to trace the etymology of the term, they have usually based their interpretation on the Arabic/Persian word *Misal*. According to Steingass, Persian- English Dictionary, the word *Misal*, means alike, equal, similitude or a file; a collection of papers bearing reference to a particular topic.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 86.

¹²⁷ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-I*, folio no. 153, GNDU.

¹²⁸ A H, Bingley, *The Sikhs*, Calcutta, 1918, reprint Language Department, Punjab, Patiala 1970, p. 31.

¹²⁹ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 290.

¹³⁰ Henry T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikhs power in the Punjab and political life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Calcutta, 1834, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 29 (here after given as H. T Prinsep, *Origin of then Sikh Power*); J. D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 96.

According to some historians, since there was perfect equality between different *Misals* and within the *Misals* themselves, the associations (*Jathas*) began to be called *Misals*.¹³¹

Bute Shah: *Misal* is a territory conquered by a brave *Sardar* with the help of his comrades and placed under his protection.¹³²

McGregor observes that the Sikhs thus become a friendly nation, divided into what were called *Misals*.¹³³

According J.D Cunningham the *Misal* is an Arabic word which has been used to denote the sense of 'alike' or 'equal'. In some references it is understood as a derivative of the Arabic term '*Misluhut*' which means armed men and war like people.¹³⁴

Rattan Singh Bhangu defined, the *Misal*, as a term yielding the sense of groups.¹³⁵

According Major, Henry Court, *Misal* really signifies "dependency to a Chief, or petty rules, which is under the authority of *Raja*".¹³⁶

W.H. McLeod interprets the *Misals* as semi-independent bands of the Sikhs.¹³⁷

N.K Sinha inferred that the *Misals* were confederacies which the Sikhs formed when Timur Shah, the successor of Ahmed Shah Abdali, abandoned the policy of subordinating the Sikhs.¹³⁸

¹³¹ Surjit Singh Gandhi, *Sikhs in the eighteenth century*, Amritsar, 1999, p. 387.

¹³² Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio nos. 95-96, DPHS, PUP.

¹³³ McGregor *The History of the Sikhs*, p. 118.

¹³⁴ J. D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*. 96.

¹³⁵ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p.364.

¹³⁶ Major Henry, Court, *History of the Sikhs*, p.60.

¹³⁷ W.H McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, Delhi, 1975, p.117.

¹³⁸ N. K Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh power*, pp.96-97.

All the above mentioned definitions appear to be inadequate in catching the complexity of the term and its relation to the socio-political realities. The meaning of the word *Misal* during the period under discussion was the same as it is today.¹³⁹ 1748 onward, after the formation of the *Dal Khalsa*, it appears that some sort of record of the activities of such associations (*Jathas*) began to be maintained at *Sri Akal Takhat Sahib* at Amritsar in the form of files. So the term *Misal* was originally used to mean loose papers tagged or stitched together, forming a sort of file and the Sikh *Sardars* posted detailed reports of the territories conquered by them to their leaders. The president of the assembly prepared the separate *Misals* (files) of the individual *Sardars*. These records or *Misals* helped to resolve the territorial dispute whenever and wherever they arose between any two *Sardars*.¹⁴⁰ Later on, *Misal* began to be understood as the army of the *Sardars* or the territory under a *Sardar*. Sometimes the *Sardar* was also called a *Misaldar*. So we can say that *Misal* is a term which came into currency in the eighteenth century history of the Sikhs to describe a unit or brigade of Sikh warriors and the territory acquired by it in the course of its campaign of conquest following the weakening of the Mughal authority.¹⁴¹

The division of the *Dal Khalsa* into *Budha Dal* and *Taruna Dal* was retained and the following eleven *Misals* were constituted at Amritsar under *Budha Dal* and *Taruna Dal* under separate *Sardars*. *Budha Dal* consist six *Misals* as under:

1. *Misal Ahluwalia* under the command of *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*.
2. *Misal Faizullapuria* under the command of *Sardar Kapur Singh Faizulpuria*.

¹³⁹ Bhagat Singh, *History of the Sikh Misals*, p. 363.

¹⁴⁰ Sita Ram Kohli, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh* (Punjabi), Delhi, 1953, p. 22; Bhagat Singh, *History of the Sikh Misals*, p. 363.

¹⁴¹ H T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikhs power*, pp. 35-36.

3. *Misal Nishanwalia* under the command of *Sardar* Dasaunda Singh.
4. *Misal Dallewalia* under the command of *Sardar* Gulab Singh *Dallewalia*.
5. *Misal Nihangsinghia* under the command of Baba Deep Singh (the name of the *Misal* called as *Shahid* after the death of Baba Deep Singh).
6. *Misal Karorsinghia* under the command of Karor Singh, village Panjgarh.

Taruna Dal comprised of the following:

1. *Misal Bhangian* under the command of *Sardar* Hari Singh, (*Bhangi*) village Panjwar and assisted by Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh and may others.
2. *Misal Sukerchakia* under the command of *Sardar* Naudh Singh and Charat Singh *Sukerchakia*.
3. *Misal Kanahiya* under the command of *Sardar* Jai Singh *Kanahiya*.
4. *Misal Nakai* under the command of *Sardar* Hira Singh *Nakai*.
5. *Misal Singhaniya* under the command of *Sardar* Nand Singh and Jassa Singh of village Saghane. The *Misal* later came to be known as *Ramgarhia*.¹⁴²

Although *Phullkian Misal* under the leadership of Baba Ala Singh operated independently and separately in Malwa but it has been considered as the twelfth *Misal* by the historians.¹⁴³

Thereafter every Sikhs soldier and leader was enjoined to join the *Misal* of their choice. Every baptized Sikh was considered to be a member of the *Dal Khalsa* and an equal partner in the organization. Every *Misal* was declared

¹⁴² Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 37-38; J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 96-97
 Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 291-92; Major Henry Court, *History of the Sikhs*,
 pp. 61-62; Sohan Singh Seetal, *Sikh Misalan*, pp. 14-15.

¹⁴³ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 37-38; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, pp. 91-92.

independent with regard to all internal matters but in matters involving common action, the *Misal* was to obey the orders of the *Dal Khalsa*.¹⁴⁴ Thus, the institution of the *Misal* came into being and the new circumstances of the *Panth* took shape.¹⁴⁵

There was another problem that confronted the *Panth*. How long could the *Panth* fight from the shelter of the thickets. The Sikh *Sardars* therefore decided upon the construction of an adequate fortress to fight the enemy in times of national emergency. They constructed a mud fortress named Ram Rauni, near Ramsar at Amritsar. At the same time, *Sardar* Hari Singh *Bhangi* also constructed his square of building called the *Katara Bhangian* at Amritsar.¹⁴⁶

Thus we can see that the *Bhangi Misal* emerged from a period of prolonged struggle which continued for nearly half a century. In the *Dal Khalsa Bhangi Misal* was arguably the supreme *Misal*. The prominent leaders of the *Misal* Chajja Singh, Bhima Singh, Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh etc and continued their endeavours to fortify the position and status of the *Misal* in terms of manpower and territory. Evidently, after the division of the *Dal Khalsa* into the *Misals* it was most vital that they overcome the opposition of the Muslim Governors from all over Punjab as well as foreign invaders from the north-west. With this objective in mind, they leagued together with the other Sikh *Sardars* and continued their armed strife to emancipate their land from the Mughals and Afghans.

¹⁴⁴ Major Henry Court, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 65; J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 96-97; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, pp. 91-92.

¹⁴⁵ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 38; J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 99.

¹⁴⁶ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 38-39; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 325-26; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, pp. 128-29.

“The fort of Ram Rauni was also known as Ramgarh. It was constructed in the year of (1807 Bikermees)” Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, part-II, pp. 162-63.

Chapter-II

Rise of the Bhangi Misal and its Territorial Expansions

The organization of the Sikhs into strong military units proved its authentic worth right away after its beginning. Their new constitution of *Dal Khalsa* had equipped the Sikhs with the requisite wherewithal in anticipation of their future needs when the difficulties arose. The absence of a regular and stable Government gave them strategic vantage and they became not only masters of their own village, but also began to erect forts for the purpose of their defense. By this time a large number of the Sikh Chiefs were generally thought of as belonging to the *Bhangi Misal*, Chajja Singh, Bhima Singh, Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Charat Singh, Desu Singh, Gulab Singh and Gurdit Singh; Gurbakhsh Singh Roranwala, Gujjar Singh, Nibhau Singh, Garja Singh, Sahib Singh, Fateh Singh and Gulab Singh; Lehna Singh and Chait Singh; Karam Singh *Dullu* and Jassa Singh *Dullu*; Dhanna Singh Kalawala and Jodh Singh Kalalwala; Rai Singh, Bhagwan Singh, Bhag Singh and Sher Singh Buria, Sanwal Singh and Nar Singh Chamiri; Karam Singh Mann, Ram Singh Mann and Sham Singh Mann; Budh Singh and Bhag Singh Hallowalia. We may first consider only those chiefs who were active by the early 1760, as they were the founders of the *Bhangi* principalities.

It is already mention that Chajja Singh a Jat of village Panjwar near Amritsar was the founder of the *Bhangi Misal*. After death he was succeeded by one of his companions named Bhima Singh a *Dhillon Jat* of village Hung, in the *Pargana* of Wandi, near Moga.¹ According to Lepel Griffin and Syed Muhammad Latif, Bhima Singh an inhabitant of Kasur and who may be called the

¹ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, (NP), 1824, (Translated into Punjabi by Gurbakhsh Singh), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, p. 39.

real founder of the powerful *Bhangi* confederacy.² Bhima Singh's latent genius as an organizer and commander of his men gave a fillip to the *Misal*. His old associates Natha Singh and Jagat Singh became his subordinates and a large number of the Sikhs rallied round them.³ During Nadir Shah's invasion in 1739, which produced great commotion in the country, Bhima Singh took full advantage of the state of affairs and his supporters are said to have increased to three hundred.⁴ As yet, however, he did not possess any territory. He seems to have died in the *Chhota Ghallughara* in 1746. It is said that Bhima Singh was so arrogant disposition that he was called *Bala-Bash* (high head). This being a *Turcoman* title, annoyed Bhima Singh so much that he begged his comrades to change it for some other.⁵

Since Bhima Singh was childless, he adopted his nephew Hari Singh as his son, who was already settled with him at Panjwar Village. He had taken *Pahul* from the hands of Bhima Singh and had become his close associate from an early life.⁶ On Bhima Singh's death, Hari Singh succeeded him and became the next Chief of the *Bhangi Misal*. Lepel Griffin gives a specific theory about the acquisition of the title *Bhangi* by the *Bhangi Misal*. According to him, Hari Singh was the son of Bhup Singh, a *Zamindar* of Pattoh, near *Pargana Wandi*. It is a

² Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I & II, Lahore, 1890, p. 331; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, Calcutta, 1891, reprint, New Delhi, 1964, p. 296.

³ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 39.

⁴ McGregor, *History of the Sikhs*, London 1846, pp. 120-21; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 296.

⁵ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 331; Giani Gian Singh, *Raj Khalsa*, Amritsar, (ND), reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 2; H.A Rose, *A Glossary of the Tribes And Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province*, Lahore, 1936, Vol-III, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 238.

⁶ Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1881, (Translated into Punjabi by Sohan Singh Seetal), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1987, p. 85; Giani Gian Singh, *Raj Khalsa*, p. 2; H.A Rose, *A Glossary of the Tribes And Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province*, Vol-III, p. 238.

generally held belief that it was owing to his addiction to *Bhang* (an intoxicating preparation of hemp) that the epithet *Bhangi* was acquired as the name of the *Misal*. Some others maintain that this name had its origin in the disposition of Bhima Singh. Accordingly, the contrite Bhima Singh was appointed, when in attendance at *Darbar Sahib* of Amritsar, to pound *Bhang* for the Sikhs and was given the name of *Bhangi*. The former account is the one commonly believed.⁷ At the time of foundation the *Dal Khalsa*, Hari Singh *Bhangi* was nominated the head of the *Taruna Dal*. He had all the spirit of a daring freebooting chief. He organized a large *Jatha* of attackers, with which he overran the country, destroying and plundering the towns and villages of the Government informers. Not only did the *Misal* grow in numerical strength under him, but its daring exploits, often attended with rich booty, made it the strongest and the wealthiest among all the Sikh *Misals*. He raised a strong army of 20,000 horsemen, who were evenly distributed across the various portions of the country. Hari Singh *Bhangi* was the first leader of the *Bhangi Misal* who conquered and occupied the territories in the province of Punjab. After the organization of the fighting *Jatha* into the *Dal Khalsa*, he came into prominence as an important leader among the Sikh *Sardars*. He participated in nearly all the major expeditions of the Sikhs from 1748 to 1765, against the Mughals and Afghans.⁸

Hari Singh had many *Misaldars* under him. It would not be out of place to draw a theoretical distinction in the respective conceptions of the *Sardars* and the *Misaldars*. A *Sardar* was the head of the whole *Misal* whereas there were many *Misaldars* in a *Misal*. The *Misaldars* had parts of the territory of the *Misal* assigned to them by the *Sardar* for the services rendered to him in carving out a *Misal* or State for him. The *Misaldars* used to join hands with the *Sardar* whenever there was perception of outside threat and pose a united front against

⁷ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 331.

⁸ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 296; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, New Delhi, 1982, p. 206.

common enemies. In return for their support, the spoils were apportioned among them proportionate to the number their men.⁹

The political climate of Punjab was rife with uncertainties. Ahmad Shah Abdali had already attacked once before 1748. His attack came as a great shock for the Mughal authorities and weakened their hold on the polity. After this for a considerable duration of time there was no stable Government. Governors were erratically appointed and recalled. The Sikhs were prompt to encash the advantages of attenuated authority. They organized their *Jathas* in a powerful confederacy and would sweep everything that came in their way. Soon the leading Sikh *Sardars* began to assert their dominance over several parts of the Punjab. By this time leading *Bhangi Sardars* Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh, had consolidated their presence in Bari-Doab. Bhag Singh Hallowalia (a *Misaldar* belonging to the *Bhangi Misal*) also claimed the control of a large part of Jullundur Doab.¹⁰ During the same period, Hari Singh captured village Panjwar in Tarn Taran *Pargana* and established his headquarters first at village Sohal and later at Gilwali, both in the district of Amritsar.¹¹ Finally, he set himself up at Amritsar, where he built a residential quarter with a whole market receiving its name, Hari Singh *Ka Katra*, from him. He started the construction of a fort called *Qila Bhangian*. It was constructed at the back of the famous *Loon Mandi* (Salt Market) in Amritsar. Its remains can still be found behind the *Loon Mandi* at Amritsar.¹² Subsequently, he captured Sialkot, Karial, Mirowal, Mitha Tiwana, Shahiwal and Kushab.¹³

⁹ Bhagat Singh, *A History of the Sikh Misals*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1993, p. 91.

¹⁰ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, Lahore, 1880-85, (Translated into Punjabi by Amarwant Singh), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, p. 5.

¹¹ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 332.

¹² Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 39; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 332.

¹³ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 296; Imperial Gazetteers of India, Provincial Series, Punjab, Vol-I, Calcutta, 1908, p. 128.

In 1748, Muin-ul-Mulk, also known as Mir Mannu was appointed the new Governor of Lahore by the Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah. He appointed Kaura Mall as his *Diwan* and confirmed Adina Beg Khan in the *Faujdari* of Jullundur Doab.¹⁴ After Muin-ul-Mulk had firmly established his authority in Lahore, he observed that absolute anarchy and confusion was reigning everywhere. It was a time when most of the prominent Sikh *Sardars* owed allegiance to the *Bhangi Misal*. Some of the most important ones were: Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Gulab Singh Natha Singh, Charat Singh, Diwan Singh (they were the cousin brothers of Jhanda Singh), Gujjar Singh, his brothers Garja Singh and Nibahu Singh, Lehna Singh, Gurbakhsh Singh Roranwala, Sawan Singh *Randhawa*, Gurbakhsh Singh Doda, Tara Singh Chainpuria and Bhag Singh Hallowalia. These and several other Sikh *Sardars*, formed themselves into Sikh confederacies and rallied round their new fortress and were now seen roving in all directions of the province and divesting the very suburbs of Lahore of its cash and riches.¹⁵

A little later the Sikhs assembled to celebrate the Diwali festival at Amritsar. In a sudden development, Mir Mannu fell upon them. Thus caught off guard the Sikhs remained on the defensive with about 5,000 taking shelter in fort of Ram Rauni. Soon the fort was surrounded on all sides by the Mughals and about 200 Sikhs were killed in this Mughal aggression. In this hour of difficulty, Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*, who was in the ranks of Adina Beg Khan, came to help them. The *Khalsa* welcomed him with open arms and he came in with a hundred

¹⁴ Tahmas Khan Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, (NP), 1782, (Translated into English by P. Setu Madhava Rao), Bombay, 1967, pp. 8-9; James Browne, *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks*, London, 1788. Also, in Ganda Singh (Ed.), *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, Calcutta, 1962, p. 573; Himadri Banerje, (Ed.) *The Khalsa and the Punjab*, New Delhi, 2002, p. 42.

¹⁵ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, (NP), 1811, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Milkhi Ram), preserved in the library of the Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University Patiala, Accession no. 22, folio nos. 69-70, (here after given as DPHS, PUP); Ganesh Das Badehra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, (NP), 1865, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Jit Singh Seetal), preserved in the library of the DPHS, PUP, Accession no. 7, folio no. 98.

followers.¹⁶ The siege of Ram Rauni lasted for about four months. A new and unforeseen development, however, compelled the Mughals to raise the siege of Ram Rauni. In circumstances Mir Mannu exercised discretion and came to a rapprochement with the Sikhs through the mediation of *Diwan* Kaura Mall (who had sympathy with the Sikhs). He agreed to grant a *Jagir* to the Sikhs in addition to one fourth revenue of the *Pargana* of Patti and also released the revenue of a dozen of villages of *Guru Ka Chak*. During this period of peace, which extended nearly over a year, the Sikhs ranks and status were further strengthened as a large number of the Sikh youths, from all over the Punjab, joined their *Jathas*. So their number became considerably larger.¹⁷

In December, 1748 nine months after his first invasion Ahmed Shah Abdali stormed into the Punjab for the second time and received the revenue of Char Mahal, Sialkot, Arungabad, Gujrat and Pasrur from Mir Mannu.¹⁸ The invasion of Ahmed Shah and the preoccupation of the Viceroy of Lahore in dealing with the Afghan invader were motivation for the Sikhs to start on their business. According to James Browne, they were becoming more formidable with each passing day. They cut off the royal garrison in the fort of Thanesar, destroyed the fort and plundered all the neighboring districts.¹⁹ Mir Mannu got terribly upset when he saw the whole of Lahore province in ruins and his beautiful capital pillaged by the Sikhs. To start with, he confiscated their *Jagirs* and withdrew their allowance. Then he ordered his officers to eliminate the Sikhs

¹⁶ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, (NP), 1865, (Edited by Bhai Vir Singh), Amritsar, 1914, pp. 325-28.

¹⁷ Rattan Singh, Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 328-29; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, (NP), 1880, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1987, p. 802; Ganda Singh, *Maharaja Kauramal*, Amritsar, 1942, p. 61.

¹⁸ Tahmas Khan Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, pp. 11-12; *Tarikh-i-Ahmed Shahi*, 1754, Also see in Elliot and Dowson, M.R.A.S, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, Vol-VIII, London, 1877, pp. 114-15.

¹⁹ James Browne, *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks*, p. 574.

and slay them wherever they were found. Once again the rewards were given for the heads of the Sikhs.²⁰

In summer 1752, for the third time, Ahmed Shah marched towards Lahore with the purpose of taking retributive action against Mir Mannu, who had raised a banner of revolt against him.²¹ Mir Mannu, on his part, planned to offer stiff resistance with the objective of liberating himself permanently from the vassalage of Kabul. He wrote to Delhi Government for help, but there was no answer. Left to his own devices, he put forth a strong army to fight with the invader. In view of the impending crisis, he even permitted *Diwan* Kaura Mal to negotiate with the Sikhs. If the Sikhs extended support to him against the invader, he promised that after the invader had been driven away; the Sikhs would be permitted to occupy the hilly tracts of Parol, Kauhta, Basoli and those surrounding the valleys. Seeing tactical advantage, *Dal Khalsa* agreed to help Mir Mannu. Approximately 30,000 Sikhs gathered at Ghaniye-Ke. According to Rattan Singh Bhangu, by this time their numbers dwindled due to the defection of 10,000 followers of Hari Singh *Bhangi*. Incidentally, Hari Singh *Bhangi* had killed Kushal Singh *Ramgarhia* by accident, which brought him the wrath of the main body of the *Khalsa*. A major dispute arose as other Sikh *Sardars* resented this outrage and started pillaging the *Bhangis* camp. In these circumstances, Hari Singh *Bhangi* left the camp with his followers and returned to their original camp at Amritsar.²² The remaining Sikhs soldiers, about 20,000 in number, proceeded towards Lahore where they were defeated by the Afghans on the banks of river Ravi and on their way back to Lahore they were attacked, in a demonstration of ingratitude and deceit, by the Mannu troops.²³

²⁰ James Browne, *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks*, p. 574.

²¹ Elphinstone, *Kingdom of Kabul*, Vol-II, London, 1842, pp. 286-88; *Tarikh-i-Ahmed Shahi*, pp. 120-21.

²² Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 332-34.

²³ Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 810-14; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Bombay, 1950, reprint, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2006, pp. 135-36.

Mir Mannu finally came out of his trenches on March 6th, 1752. He attacked the enemy fiercely, but Kaura Mal was the only one of all his senior generals who fought vigorously and loyally. *Diwan* Kaura Mal was killed in action in a conspiratorial manner. The shot that killed him was not fired by the enemy, but by an agent of Adina Beg Khan named Bayazid Khan, a Pathan of Kasur.²⁴ Soon Mir Mannu was routed by Abdali and he made an offering of Rupees 30 Lakh to the victor, besides other presents. Ahmed Shah reappointed Mir Mannu, but this time as an Afghan Governor of Lahore. Mir Mannu promised him to pay revenue of 50 Lakh rupees for the province of Lahore.²⁵

After taking the possession of Lahore, Mir Mannu initiated concerted measures to eradicate the causes of disturbance within the country. In the changed scenario, he had no use of the Sikhs. *Diwan* Kaura Mal, the only link between Mir Mannu and the Sikhs was dead. He resumed his old policy towards the Sikhs with a greater vengeance. He withdrew the *Jagirs* which they had been enjoying since the early month of 1749.²⁶ He had given strict orders to his officers and instructed them to bring any Sikh men, women and children, they happened to meet, to Lahore. These orders were executed rigorously. Thousands of the Sikhs were captured every day and taken to the *Nakhas Chowk* at Lahore and decapitated. The number of the chopped off heads of the Sikhs was so large that they were heaped high into towers, wells were filled with them and deep foundations were leveled with them before structures were raised thereon.²⁷

²⁴ George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, London, 1798, p. 315; Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 77, DPHS, PUP.

²⁵ *Tarikh-i-Ahmed Shahi*, p. 122; Tahmas Khan Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, pp. 16-17.

²⁶ *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg Khan*, (NP, ND) said to have been written by a Sodhi of Kartarpur, (Translated into English by Ganda Singh), MS., also preserved in Ganda Singh collection, Punjabi University Patiala, Accession no. V2.M9DO, (here after given as GSC, PUP), folio nos. 8-9; N.K Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, Calcutta, 1936, 3rd edition, 1960, p. 28.

²⁷ Tahmas Khan Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, p. 18; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 70.

But these atrocities seem to have generated no fear in the hearts and minds of the Sikhs, as would appear from the following song, full of heroic valour, composed by the Sikhs, which has come down from those days:

“Mannu is our sickle’

And we are a crop for him to mow;

The more he cuts us the more we grow.”²⁸

In this difficult period of 1753, *Dal Khalsa* returned to the Punjab, to the rescue of their families and relatives and started fighting Mannu’s forces at many places. When Mannu received this news, he moved from Lahore. When he reached near Malikapur (Mullanpur), he ordered his army to capture and kill any Sikh they found. The hunter, in the midst of this horrid exercise, was brought down by the mightier hunter, death, and he died on November 3, 1753.²⁹

After his death, his widow succeeded in procuring the acknowledgement for her infant son as the Viceroy to function under her own guardianship. She endeavoured to stand equally well with the court of Delhi and with the Durrani King. She professed submission to both and she betrothed her daughter to Ghazi-ud-Din, the grandson of the first *Nizam* of the Deccan, who had supplanted the viceroy of Oudh as the minister of the enfeebled empire of India. But the *Wazir* had loftier ambitions; he wished to recover a province for his sovereign as well as to obtain a bride for himself. He proceeded towards Lahore and removed his enraged mother-in-law.³⁰

²⁸ “*Mannu saadi Datari, Assen Mannu Day Soey, Jeon jeon Sannoo Wadh Da , Assen Teon Teon Dooney Hoey*”. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, 1854, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Gurbakhsh Singh), preserved in the library of the DPHS, PUP, Accession n o. 30, folio nos. 229- 232.

²⁹ Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, London, 1812 p. 92; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-I*, Lahore, 1880-85, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Dr. Gopal Singh *Dhillon*), unpublished preserved in the library of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, folio no. 162, (here after given as GNDU).

³⁰ Tahams Khan Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, pp. 29-41; James Browne, *History of the Origin and progress of the Sicks*, pp. 574-75.

Several changes were effected in the Government of Lahore from November 1753 to October 1756. Not even once did these years witness a firm administration in the centre of the province. It resulted in utter confusion and chaos in the province and centrifugal tendencies began to have full play. Nobody knew whether the Punjab was a part of the Mughal Empire or whether it belonged to the Afghans to be guided from Kabul. This, yet again, provided an opportunity to the Sikhs to build upon their strength.³¹ According to Malcolm “the Sikhs took all the advantages which the local distractions of a falling offered them, of extending and establishing their power and their bands under their most active leaders, plundered the very directions”.³²

Around this time, the *Jats* of Sheikhpura waylaid five Sikhs who included two brothers named Sarja Singh and Garja Singh and killed them. In order to avenge this wanton killing, *Sardar* Bhag Singh Hallowalia, fell upon them and plundered their village killing about fifty adversaries. In a related development, *Sardar* Hari Singh *Bhangi* joined hands with Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia* and others and launched an attack on Kalanaur. It was the old home town of *Diwan* Lakhpat Rai and he had been a sworn enemy of the Sikhs. The Sikh wreaked havoc on the entire town and killed several relatives of Lakhpat Rai. From there they advanced towards Pathankot and Sujampur and seized control of both the towns.³³

March 11th 1755, Qutab Khan Rohela, took possession of Sirhind. When Adina Beg Khan came to know of it, he at once sought help from *Dal Khalsa* to banish him out of Sirhind. The combined forces of *Dal Khalsa* and Adina Beg advanced against Qutab Khan. The battle took place at Ropar and Qutab Khan was killed. After their triumph over Qutab Khan, *Dal Khalsa* installed Adina Beg Khan as the ruler of Sirhind. Thereafter, *Dal Khalsa* marched toward Shahbad,

³¹ Tahams Khan Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, pp. 29-41.

³² Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, pp. 92-93.

³³ Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 832-34.

Thanesar, Ghuram, Mansoorpur and Mustfabad and received a *Nazrana* from the rulers of these places.³⁴

After participating in the battle of Sirhind, Hari Singh *Bhangi* moved towards Malwa with Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*, Tara Singh *Ghaiba*, Baghel Singh, Deep Singh, and Charat Singh *Sukerchakia*. From Malwa they advanced towards Jaipur and seized the territories of Rampur, Badshahpur, Patgawan, Kanaunda, Narnaul, Parkhan and Kanauray.³⁵ On the way back from Jaipur in November 1755, *Dal Khalsa*, in its annoyance with Adina Beg Khan, compelled him to cede to them the *Pargana* of Fatehabad, by way of *Jagirs*.³⁶

In November 1756, Ahmad Shah Abdali came down for the fourth time to complete the disintegration of the country. On 20th December 1756, Abdali reached Lahore and he stayed there for twelve days. Afterwards he crossed the river Satluj and advance towards Delhi.³⁷

This foreign invasion as usual threw the whole country into utter political and social commotion and insecurity prevailed everywhere - insecurity of honour, insecurity of property, insecurity of life and insecurity of work. Whereas, economically people were being ruined, politically they hoped neither for peace nor justice. They desperately needed a ruler whose presence could guarantee security of their life and property. At that time the Sikhs were largest and the biggest organized power in the Punjab and the people of the Punjab knew that the *Dal Khalsa* could bring them peace and stability. The leaders of the *Dal Khalsa*, on the other hand, were also conscious that this was the right opportunity for them to set up their Government in the country. So, under these circumstances,

³⁴ Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 93; *Ahiwal-i-Adina Beg Khan*, folio no. 22-23, GSC, PUP.

³⁵ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 351-52.

³⁶ Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, p. 838; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, New Delhi, 1978, p. 126.

³⁷ Elphinstone, *Kingdom of Kabul*, pp. 288-89; Colonel G.B Malleon, CSI, *History of Afghanistan*, London, 1879, p. 284.

Dal Khalsa came forward promising the common people protection and security in return for payment of one fifth of one's income twice a year. In this system *Dal Khalsa* offered plans to the villages individually. The villagers were to place themselves under the protection of the *Dal Khalsa*. Thus, the *Dal Khalsa*, proclaimed as their own, a village or the territory of a *Chaudhris*, who agreed to yield to the *Dal Khalsa* one fifth of their income twice a year in May and October. This system was known as *Rakhi* (protection) system. Under this system a protection was granted to the people, against the exploitation of the *Zimindars*, Government officials and robbers.³⁸

After the country had been placed under the *Rakhi* system, the *Dal Khalsa* was divided into various sections each one of which was allotted a particular area to patrol for guarding peace and security. Under this arrangement, *Sardar Hari Singh Bhangi* along with his sons *Jhanda Singh* and *Ganda Singh* and some other companions, like *Lehna Singh* and *Gujjar Singh*, set up himself over the part of the *Bari-Doab* and *Rachna-Doab* under the system called *Rakhi*.³⁹

While *Abdali* was occupied in pillaging the city of *Delhi* ruthlessly, the Sikhs utilized the situation to their advantage. On their way back from *Delhi*, the *Afghan* forces were attacked by the Sikhs; they were carrying huge quantities of booty.⁴⁰ When *Ahmed Shah* came to know about these activities of the Sikhs, he set his forces against the Sikhs and dispatched the *Afghan* soldiers towards *Kartarpur*. The Sikh temple was reduced to ashes and the residents were put to the

³⁸ James Browne, *History of the Origin and progress of the Sicks*, p. 575; Teja Singh, *Ganda Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 147.

³⁹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, Lahore, 1880-85, (Translated into Punjabi by Amarwant Singh), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, p. 5.

⁴⁰ Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, (NP), 1810-14, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Janak Singh), preserved in the library of the DPHS, PUP, Accession no. 19, folio no. 35; Ganda Singh, *Ahmed Shah Durrani*, Bombay, 1959, p. 87.

sword by contingents of Afghans. Thereafter, he marched to Lahore and took stock of the situation.⁴¹

After wresting control of Lahore, Ahmed Shah made a few official changes in the territory. He had already appointed Abdus Samad Khan as the Governor of Sirhind, Nasir Ali Khan was posted in Jullundur Doab, while Abdali's own son prince Timur Shah was nominated as the overall chief of entire territory of the Punjab with Jahan Khan as his lieutenant and commander in chief. Satisfied with these arrangements, he embarked on his return journey to Afghanistan.⁴²

Soon after the departure of Ahmmed Shah Abdali, the Sikhs found in Adina Beg a willing ally (who had fled away to the Shivalik hills during the invasion of Abdali). They met in the village of Mairi in the district of Hoshiarpur and decided to launch a joint offensive against Timur Shah.⁴³ In December 1757, combined forces of about 25,000 horsemen under Hari Singh *Bhangi*, Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*, Kapur Singh *Faizullapuria* and other Sikh *Sardar* marched against the Afghans. They defeated Afghan general Murad Khan of Multan, Safraz Khan *Faujdar* of Jullundur and Buland Khan at Mahilpur in the district of Hoshiarpur. Then they entered the city of Jullundur and captured Nasir Ali. After this significant victory they nominated Adina Beg Khan as Governor of Jullunder Doab. To reward the Sikhs for their help, Adina Beg Khan paid them a lakh and quarter of rupees as *Rakhi* or protection money for the Jullundur Doab and brought *Karah Parsad* worth 1,000 rupees to be distributed among them.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Giani Gain Singh, *Panth Parkash*, p. 841.

⁴² James Browne, *History of the Origin and progress of the Sicks*, p. 575; Elphinstone, *Kingdom of Kabul*, pp. 288-89.

⁴³ *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg Khan*, folio no. 10, GSC, PUP; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 337-39.

⁴⁴ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 339-41; Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, (NP, ND), MS., (Punjabi translation), preserved in the library of the DPHS, PUP, Accession no. 33, folio no. 13.

Adina Beg Kahn was not satisfied with his Sikh allies. In order to enhance his sense of security, he opened negotiations with the Marathas and invited them to the Punjab, promising to pay rupees one Lakh for every day they marched and fifty-thousand for a day of halt. The Maratha chief Raghu Nath Rao accepted the offer and marched towards Punjab with his generals, Jankoji Rao, Bhao Bhadur, Malhar Rao, Makku Ji, Nikku Ji and Deva Patil.⁴⁵ Over and above this, Adina Beg also secured the help of Sikh contingents. In March 1758, combined forces of Marathas and Adina Beg Khan, in collaboration with the contingents of the Sikh *Sardars* like Hari Singh *Bhangi*, Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*, Lehna Singh *Bhangi*, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, Tara Singh Ghaiba, Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*, Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*, Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* and many more occupied the city of Sirhind. Orders were given to the army to carry out to blindly raid and plunder the city. Abdus Samad Khan the Afghan Governor of Sirhind had already fortified his capital and he could not withstand the attack and was forced to flee. The Sikhs were the first to enter in the city of Sirhind. They subjected the hated city to raging plunder.⁴⁶

The Marathas were furious with the Sikhs for having pre-empted them in the matter of loot, but the Sikhs claimed priority on account of their historical grouse against the city and also because they had made it a condition with Adina Beg. After a little affray the dispute was settled through an agreement.⁴⁷

After this important victory, the combined forces marched towards Lahore. Before their arrival Timur Shah and Jahan Khan deserted the city and safely departed to Afghanistan. According, to Elphinstone, “Timur Shah and

⁴⁵ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 81, DPHS, PUP; Grant Duff, *History of the Marathas*, Calcutta, 1918, p. 132; A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, Calcutta, 1918, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 27.

⁴⁶ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 81, DPHS, PUP; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash*, p. 355.

⁴⁷ Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 95; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 855-56.

Jahan Khan, who were already pressed by the Sikhs and distrustful of their Hindustanis troops, retired to Eminabad. The city of Lahore, which they evacuated, was taken by the Sikhs. On April 19, 1758, the Sikhs and the Marathas entered in the city and killed or captured all the Uzbek, Qazilbash and Afghan soldiers left by Timur Shah. These soldiers were handed over to the Sikhs leaders, who, as retribution for their earlier assaults, took them to Amritsar and made them clean up the tank around the *Harimandir Sahib*.⁴⁸

Ali-ud-Din Mufti says that among the visitor to Amritsar were the Maratha Chiefs who paid obeisance at the temple along with Sikh *Sardars* and were much honored.⁴⁹

After taking possession of the city of Lahore, Raghunath Rao appointed Adina Beg Khan as the Governor of Lahore on the condition of an annual Tribute of rupees 75 Lakh to the Marathas and moved out of Lahore. Only a few detachments were left at Multan and Attock.⁵⁰ Adina Beg made some administrative adjustments in Lahore by appointing his men to key posts. First of all he appointed Khawaja Mirza Khan, his son-in-law, as his Lieutenant Governor and later Sadiq Beg Khan was made the commander of Sirhind. After making these arrangements he decided to shift his headquarter from Lahore to Adinanagar, a town founded by himself in the salubrious region of Batala.⁵¹ But Adina Beg Khan lived to enjoy the Government of Lahore only for four months and died on September 15, 1758.⁵²

In the wake of the death of Adina Beg Khan, the *Dal Khalsa* assembled at Amritsar, on 30th October 1758, on the day of Diwali and passed a resolution

⁴⁸ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 81, DPHS, PUP; Elphinstone, *Kingdom of Kabul*, p. 290.

⁴⁹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 242, DPHS, PUP.

⁵⁰ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio nos.81-82, DPHS, PUP.

⁵¹ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no.82, DPHS, PUP.

⁵² *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg Khan*, folio no. 26, GSC, PUP; J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*. 89.

(*Gurmata*) to take the possession of Jullundur Doab. The *Dal Khalsa* soon marched ahead to take possession of Jullundur Doab; here the Sikhs were challenged by Hassan Beg Khan, the son of Adina Beg Khan and *Diwan* Bishamber Das. A great battle was fought between them near Urmur Tanda. Soon Bishamber Das was killed in action and his army fled the battle field. After vanquishing the adversaries, the Sikhs took up the possession of the entire Jullundur Doab, which they apportioned among themselves.⁵³

Dattaji Sindhia received the tidings that the Sikhs had established themselves in a commanding position in the city of Lahore and its neighborhood. In March 1759, he sent his deputy Samabhaji Sindhia and Jankoji to Lahore to recover their erstwhile possession of the Punjab. They appointed Mirza Ahmed Khan as the Governor of Lahore and Saleh Khan, the Governor of Multan. Thereafter, Dattaji returned to Delhi after making these arrangements in the Punjab leaving behind Samabhaji Patil at Lahore.⁵⁴

In 1759, Ahmed Shah again invaded India to avenge the insult of his son Timur Shah. Before Ahmed Shah could reach Lahore, Sambhaji Patil fled from the city. Ahmed Shah occupied Lahore without any resistance.⁵⁵ The Shah, however, continued his march and passed through Sirhind, Ambala and Taraori where he defeated Dattaji Sindhia. On January 9, 1760, Ahmed Shah defeated Dattaji and his nephew Jankoji Rao at Bhari Ghat. Malhar Rao Holkar also lost a battle to the Durrani near Sikandarabad on March 14, 1760. At the same time, Sada Shiv Bhau, the brother of Peshwa occupied the city of Delhi on July 22 and the fort of Delhi on August 2, 1760.⁵⁶ Ahmed Shah then crossed the river Jamuna

⁵³ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 358; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, p. 858.

⁵⁴ Grant Duff, *History of the Marathas*, pp. 132-33; Himadri Banerjee, *The Khalsa and the Punjab*, p. 47.

⁵⁵ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio nos.82-83, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos.245-46, DPHS, PUP.

⁵⁶ Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, folio nos. 38-39, DPHS, PUP; Elphinstone, *Kingdom of Kabul*, p. 292; Grant Duff, *History of Marathas*, p. 136.

on October 23, 1760 and camped at Panipat. The Maratha general Sada Shiv Bhau too, came up there and camped near the flank opposite Abdali. Both the armies were equally poised in numbers with about seven Lakh men on either side. They stayed there facing one another for three months. There were small and sporadic skirmishes between them. At last, the third historic battle of Panipat was fought on January 14, 1761. The Marathas were defeated in it and their commander-in-Chief, Sada Shiv Bhau, Jankoro Ataji Mankeshwar and several other renowned generals were killed. Wishwas Rao, the son of the Peshwa was wounded. Between sixty to seventy thousand Marathas lost their lives, though some have put their losses at one Lakh. This defeat sealed the fate of the Maratha Empire in the North.⁵⁷

When on his way to Delhi, Ahmed Shah Abdali appointed Karimdad Khan as the Governor of Lahore. He was soon recalled and Sarbuland Khan was sent to replace him. This man, out of fear of the Sikhs, kept away from Lahore and made Jullundur his capital, nominating Saadat Yar Khan as his deputy to stay at Lahore. In a rapid process of succession, two other Governors followed: one was *Diwan* Surat Singh and the other Mir Muhammad Khan, son of Mir Momin Khan of Kasur. None of them could check the swelling power of the Sikhs. The *Khalsa* now wanted nothing less than sovereignty. They availed themselves of the opportunity offered by the unsettled state of affairs caused by the Afghan invasion. The Sikh *Sardars* had occupied their respective territories once again and built some fortresses in each one of them.⁵⁸

On November 7, 1760 the Sikhs assembled in Amritsar on the occasion of Diwali and resolved by way of a *Gurmata* to take the possession of the city of Lahore. Within a few days near about 10,000 Sikhs horsemen,⁵⁹ under the

⁵⁷ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 243, DPHS, PUP.

⁵⁸ James Browne, *History of the Origin and progress of the Sicks*, p. 578; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 246-48, DPHS, PUP.

⁵⁹ Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 76.

leadership of Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* assisted by Hari Singh *Bhangi*, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, Lehna Singh *Bhangi*, Charat Singh *Sukerchakia*, Jai Singh and Chait Singh *Kanahiya* and many others marched towards Lahore.⁶⁰ When the Sikhs entered the city, Mir Muhammad Khan Governor of Lahore shut the gates of the city to avoid confrontation with the Sikhs. According to Ali-ud-din Mufti, “Lehna Singh *Bhangi* sent one of his *Sardar* named Sadakat Singh, to meet the Governor Mir Muhammad Khan and ask him for surrender.⁶¹ After disrupting all the channels of communication, the Sikhs ransacked the suburbs. When the Sikhs threatened to break open the city gates, Governor Muhammad Khan, collected 30,000 rupees and offered them the amount for the *Karah Parsad* whereupon the Sikhs accepted the amount and returned to Amritsar.⁶²

In May, 1761 Abdali left Lahore and returned to his native place. Before leaving the Punjab, he appoint Khawaja Obed Khan as the Governor of Lahore, Sarblund Khan that of Multan, *Raja* Ghumand Chand, the commander of Jullundur and Zain Khan as a Governor of Sirhind.⁶³

Soon after the departure of Ahmed Shah, *Dal Khalsa* spread themselves over the length and breadth of the Punjab, carrying their arms through the Majha and the Doab and even beyond up to Nadaun in the Shivalik hills. On their way, they took punitive action against their enemies such as Khawaja Mirza Jan *Faujdar* of Char Mahal, Zain Khan of Sirhind and Bhikhan Khan of Malerkotla.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 248, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-I*, folio no. 177, GNDU.

⁶¹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 248-49, DPHS, PUP.

⁶² Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 248-49, DPHS, PUP; Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio no. 20, DPHS, PUP.

⁶³ George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, p. 318; Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 84, DPHS, PUP.

⁶⁴ Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 888-89; Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio no. 210, DPHS, PUP .

The recent victories of the Sikhs had emboldened them to infest the very neighborhood of Lahore. Their activities seriously impeded governance of the Mughals. So much so, the collection of the revenues ceased at every place. Khawaja Obed Khan resolved to address this problem and turned his attention towards the Sikhs. Soon he fell upon Gujranwala, the capital of Charat Singh *Sukerchakia*.⁶⁵ The besieged *Sardar* came out now and then inflicting heavy losses on the enemy. In the meantime, the news of the siege of the fort of Gujranwala had spread far and wide. When the Sikhs *Sardars* came to know of this happening, near about 15, 000 Sikhs, including Hari Singh *Bhangi*, his son Jhanda Singh, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, Lehna Singh *Bhangi* joined with Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*, Jai Singh *Kanahiya* and Sobha Singh *Kanahiya* and marched towards Gujranwala to the aid of Charat Singh. This news leaked out to Obed Khan, who was so much terrified that he took flight after nightfall without striking a blow. The Sikhs were not unaware of the Governor's movement. They suddenly fell upon his troops, who started running amok in all directions leaving everything in the field. The booty consisting of swivels, pieces of cannon, horses, camels, stores of provisions, vessels and other camp baggage fell into the hands of the Sikhs. Thus, Khawaja Obed Khan found his way back to Lahore with extreme difficulty.⁶⁶

Encouraged by these victories, the Sikhs in the general meeting held at Amritsar on Diwali (22 October, 1761), passed a resolution (*Gurmata*)⁶⁷ according to which they resolved to punish their inveterate enemy Guru Aqil Das

⁶⁵ Henry. T Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Calcutta, 1834, reprinted Language Department, Punjab, Patiala, 1970, pp. 18-19, (here after given as H.T Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh power*).

⁶⁶ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 252-53, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-I*, folio nos. 181-82, GNDU.

⁶⁷ According to J D Cunningham, "this was the first regular *Gurmata* passed by the Sikh", *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 91.

of Jandiala and capture Lahore. Consequently, the *Dal Khalsa* marched upon Lahore under Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*, assisted by *Sardar Hari Singh Bhangi*, *Jhanda Singh Bhangi*, *Rai Singh Bhangi* and many others. They besieged the city and cut off all channels of communication. Khawaja Obed Khan shut himself up in the fort and did not stir out to oppose them. The leading citizens, knowing the weakness of the Governor opened the city gates to the triumphant *Dal Khalsa* who entered the capital. After this they proclaimed Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* the king, with the title of *Sultan-ul-Qaum*. Now there were two rulers in one place, the Sikhs in the city and Khawaja Obed Khan in the fort. Further *Dal Khalsa* entered in the fort and killed Khawaja Obed Khan. Soon after this, they seized control of the royal mint and they minted the second Sikh rupee in the name of the *Guru* with the following inscription:

Deg o tegh o fateh o nusrat be-dirang
Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh. ⁶⁸

Before they had firmly established themselves in the city, they rushed out into the Jullundur Doab and routed the Daurrani *Faujdar*s, Saadat Khan and Sadiq Khan Afridi; while the Hindu Raja Ghumand Chand Katauch, who had been appointed Governor of Jullundur, quietly relinquished his claim to authority and left for the hills on their approach. Thus we can see that passed the entire Punjab, from the Indus to the Satluj, into their hands. ⁶⁹

On the invitation of his Indian representative Aqil Das of Jandiala, Ahmed Shah Abdali again crossed the river Indus in 1761-62, with an army of 40,000 soldiers. He reached Lahore and from thence advanced towards Jandiala to penalize the Sikhs (January 1762). ⁷⁰ However, apprised of the threat, the Sikhs

⁶⁸ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 85, DPHS, PUP; Teja Singh Ganda, Singh, A *Short History of the Sikhs*, pp. 160-61.

⁶⁹ Tahmas Khan Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, p. 104.

⁷⁰ H. T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh power*, p. 19.

raised their siege in time and escaped towards Sirhind. On receipt of this intelligence, the Shah left Lahore on the February 3, 1762 and by the morning of the February 5, 1762 the Afghan armies appeared before Malerkotla. The Sikhs, numbering about 50,000 were also camping near village Kupp, close to Malerkotla.⁷¹ They were attacked by the forces of Sirhind from the front and the Ahmed Shah Abdali from the rear. The Sikhs had been taken completely by surprise. They at once held a council and decided to die fighting. They threw a strong impregnable cordon round the remnants of their women and children and moved on fighting and fought on moving, occasionally turning upon their assailants and inflicting damages on them.⁷² According to Rattan Singh Bhangu, “*Bhangis, Kanahiyas, Ramgarhias, Nakais Nishanwalias, Dllewalias, Faizullahpurias, Ahaluwalias, Sukerchakias, Karorsinghias, Nihang Singhias, Amritsarias, Rangreetas, Sodhis and Bhallas Sikh Sardars* guided the baggage train (*Bahir*) towards Barnala”. They continued fighting and moving slowly towards Barnala.⁷³ Abdali wanted to have a pitched battle with the Sikhs. But they were astute enough not to understand the logistics of the battle. They went along fighting from village to village. The people of the village of Qutab-Bahmani, Gahal and other places, through which they passed, out of fear of the invader’s vengeance, gave them no shelter. Rather they fell upon them and killed off many. The Sikhs were obliged to trek on. Their aim was to reach Barnala, where they hoped to find some relief and reinforcements from Baba Ala Singh, failing which they could pass on into the waterless desert of Bhatinda.⁷⁴

⁷¹ James Browne, *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks*, p. 578; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 253, DPHS, PUP.

⁷² Tahmas Khan Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, pp. 105-6; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 954-55.

⁷³ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 358-61.

⁷⁴ H. T Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power*, pp. 19-20; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 361-70; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, pp. 162-63.

However, before they could reach Barnala, the Durrani forces attacked them ferociously and a full fledged pogrom of the Sikhs ensued. Historians variously estimate the loss of the defeated Sikh army killed and the wounded was 12, 000 to 30, 000 people. In this fearful carnage, which occurred on February 5, 1762 in the battle of Kupp, the Sikh suffered so heavy losses that this event is called *Wadda Ghallughara* or the Second Great Holocaust in the Sikh history, to distinguish it from the first which took place in 1746.⁷⁵

Ahmed Shah later marched to Barnala and plundered its peripheral territories. Soon, Ala Singh was captured and his hair was ordered to be shorn, but Ala Singh escaped by purchasing it by paying one and a quarter lakh of rupees through his wife, Mai Fatto. In addition to this, Ala Singh paid Abdali another sum of Rupees four lakh to secure his release. He had also paid tribute and accepted the overlordship of Abdali.⁷⁶ Then Ahmed Shah moved on to Amritsar before *Baisakhi* (April 1762) and blew up the temple of *Harmindir Sahib* with gunpowder. He also filled up the sacred tank with refuse and desecrated it with the entrails and blood of cows.⁷⁷ According to Sohan Lal Suri

⁷⁵ The Sikhs losses in this battle field are variously estimated as follows by different historians: George Forster, (25,000), *A Journey from Bengal to England*, p. 319; Khushwaqat Rai,(30, 000), *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no.86, DPHS, PUP, Malcolm, (upwards to 20,000), *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 98; H.T Prinsep, (25 to 30,000), *Origin of the Sikh Power.*, p. 20; J D Cunningham, (12 to 25,000), *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 93; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, (30,000), *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 253, DPHS, PUP; Rattan Singh Bhangu, (as told by the people 50,000 and as he heard from his father and uncle 30,000), *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 372; Giani Gian Singh, (13,000) *Panth Parkash*, p. 966; Kanahiya Lal, (24, 000), *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 79; Hari Ram Gupta, (20,000), *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 183.

⁷⁶ Tahmas Khan Miskan, *Tahmas Namah*, p. 106; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, pp. 164-65.

⁷⁷ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 86, DPHS, PUP; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 79.

and Giani Gain Singh on this occasion Ahmed Shah was hit on the nose by a brick of the *Harimandir* and the festering wound developed into cancer.⁷⁸

These disasters, set backs and humiliations did not demoralize the Sikhs as is evident from their subsequent actions. When Ahmed Shah Abdali was still in India, in May, 1762, the Sikhs led by Hari Singh *Bhangi* and his son Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh *Bhangi*, Jai Singh and Haqaqit Singh *Kanahiya*, Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*, Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*, Baghel Singh, Sant Singh *Nishanawala*, Hari Singh Dholia, Tara Singh Ghaiba, Bagh Singh, Bhainga Singh and Masat Singh Basantria, etc. plundered the baggage of Zain Khan and looted his *Diwan*, Lachhmi Narayan. Afterwards, in a battle at Harnaulgarh, 30 miles from Sirhind, the Governor of Sirhind was comprehensively defeated by them. The defeated Zain Khan was directed to pay the penalty of a heavy tribute and Durrani did not come to his help.⁷⁹ Emboldened by this success the Sikhs began to spread themselves in different directions of the Punjab. Tahmas Khan traveled from Sirhind to Sialkot and back, probably in July. He observes that the Sikhs were growing stronger while the Afghans were busy in laying the country waste and dearth of flour prevailed everywhere.⁸⁰ For a full month, from 25 August to 24 September, 1762, a strong force of the *Dal Khalsa* under their respective leaders continued to cross the Satluj and marching through Malwa, gathered their contingents in the neighborhood of Karnal and Panipat.⁸¹

According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, "At this time Afghan representatives of India including, Ala Singh of Patiala, Kabhait Singh, Mehar Singh, Rai Ahmed Mashaih, Afghans of Kotla and Kotkapura and *Zinandars* of Faridkot accepted

⁷⁸ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-I*, folio nos.181-82, GNDU; Giani Gain Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 967-68.

⁷⁹ Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, pp. 102-3; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 384-85.

⁸⁰ Tahmas Khan Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, p. 106.

⁸¹ Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio nos. 21-22; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, p.19.

the authority of the Sikh *Sardars*. By this time Hari Singh *Bhangi*, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh *Bhangi*, Rai Singh *Bhangi* of Buria, and Bhag Singh of Buria extended their control over Saharanpur".⁸²

After getting news of some disturbances in Afghanistan, Ahmed Shah resolved to return to his native place. Before leaving the Punjab, he appointed Hindu Raja Kabuali Mal as the Governor of Lahore, Zain Khan as the Governor of Sirhind and Saadat Yar Khan as the Governor of Jullundur Doab and the hilly territory between the Satluj and the Beas was assigned to *Raja* Ghumand Chand Katauch of Kangra, the Bari-Doab to Murrad Khan, the Rachna Doab and Sind Sagar Doab to Jahan Khan and Kashmir to Nur-ud-Din Bamezei. He left the city of Lahore on 12, December 1762 and marched towards Afghanistan.⁸³

No sooner had Ahmed Shah left the Punjab than the *Dal Khalsa* emerged from the Lakhi Jungle and resumed their insurrectionary activities. In 1762, Hari Singh *Bhangi* was appointed to lead the *Taruna Dal* with the *Kanahiya*, *Nakai*, *Ramgarhia* and *Sukerchakia*, force under his command, besides his own. They occupied territories in the Afghan province of Lahore in addition to cleansing the 'pool of immortality' and repairing sacred buildings at Amritsar.⁸⁴ The city of Amritsar open to all several of the chiefs had built their *Bhungas* or headquarters on all sides of the *Durbar Sahib*,⁸⁵ like wise *Ahluwalia Misal*, Jassa Singh and Bhag Singh; *Bhangi Misal* Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Desu Singh, Charat Singh, Diwan Singh, Tara Singh Chainpuria, Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh; *Faizullahpuria Misal*, Kapur Singh, Khushal Singh; *Karorsinghia Misal*, Baghel Singh Chubhalia; *Ramgarhia Misal*, Jassa Singh.⁸⁶ Amritsar was the seat

⁸² Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 256-57, DPHS, PUP.

⁸³ James Browne, *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks*, pp. 578-79.

⁸⁴ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 385; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 195.

⁸⁵ Amritsar District Gazetteers, Chandigarh, 1976, p. 32.

⁸⁶ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 39; Amritsar District Gazetteers, 1976, p. 32.

of their most sacred shrine and was treated as the sanctum sanctorum of their religion. The principal *Misals* associated with Amritsar were the *Bhangis*, *Ahaluwalias* and the *Kanahiyas* but the *Bhangis* were the first to extend his control over Amritsar. Hari Singh *Bhangi* adopts Amritsar as his headquarters. A part of the city eventually became his capital with a large tract in the neighborhoods in his possession.⁸⁷

In the year of 1762, *Sardar* Hari Singh *Bhangi* attacked Kot Khawaja Syad, two miles from Lahore, where Khawaja Obed Khan, the Afghan Governor of Lahore, had stored his war materials and ammunition, the whole of which was carried away by him. He also took from there the big gun, later known as *Top Bhangian Wali* manufactured by *Sardar* Jahan Khan.⁸⁸ Furthermore, he conquered the fort of Kehlwar in the Sandalbar area and returned the same to its former masters on the assurance of receiving one Lakh rupees annually as a tribute from them. The Sikhs under Hari Singh *Bhangi* next marched towards Multan and swept over the Indus and the Derah Ghazi Khan. Their generals conquered Rawalpindi, subdued the Malwa and Majha country.⁸⁹ According to Syed Muhammad Latif, in 1762 Hari Singh *Bhangi* sacked the Jammu at the head of 12,000 cavalry and made Ranjit Deo, the Rajput *Raja* of Jammu and made him under his tributary. Afterwards he penetrated into Kashmir valley, where, however he was repulsed with heavy loss.⁹⁰

By the time 1763, the prestige of the *Bhangis* had been fully established as defenders and saviors of all the oppressed people in the country, as is

⁸⁷ R.H Davies and M.Biyth Esquires, *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Umritsar (Amritsar) District*, Lahore, 1860, p. 2, (hereafter given as SR. Amritsar District, 1860); S.S Bal, *The City of Amritsar in the Eighteenth Centaury*, (Edited by Fauja Singh), New Delhi, 1978, p. 72.

⁸⁸ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 39; McGregor, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 123.

⁸⁹ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 102; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 296.

⁹⁰ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 296-97.

exemplified by the following incident. The whole body of the *Dal Khalsa* gathered at Amritsar to celebrate the *Baisakhi* festival which fell on the 10th April, 1763. Some Brahmans of Kasur came there and made a bitter complaint against the persecution of the Hindus at the hands of the Afghans of Kasur, particularly Usman Khan, who had seized the beautiful wife of one of them and converted her forcibly to Islam. In their plight, they appealed to the *Khalsa* to help them against the Pathans. In the same breath, they also reported that the Pathans carried out sacrilegious killing of cows in the open markets and cast their bones into the local wells and the tanks.⁹¹ After attending to these complaints, some of the Sikh leaders favored the idea of not attacking that town particularly. One of the reasons for this was that the *Budha Dal* was not there to join them. But *Sardar Hari Singh Bhangi*, the head of *Taruna Dal*, at once accorded assent to help the Brahmans.⁹² He asserted that the *Guru* had conceived and instituted the “*Panth*” for protecting the helpless and the meek. Therefore, the Brahmans, who besought the aid of the “*Panth*”, must not be allowed to depart with despondence in their hearts. *Sardar Hari Singh Bhangi* invoked the blessings of the *Guru* and made preparations to march upon Kasur. *Sardar Charat Singh Sukerchakia* also joined him with the force of his *Misal*. The remaining *Ramgarhias*, *Kanahiya* and *Nakais* also lined up with them.⁹³

Consequently, in May 1763, *Sardar Hari Singh Bhangi* assisted by *Jhanda Singh Bhangi* and joined with *Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, *Jassa Singh Ramgarhia*, *Jai Singh Kanahiya*, *Charat Singh Sukerchakia* and *Nakai Sardars* marched upon Kasur. Soon they entered the town and clashed with the Pathans. The wife of the appellant Pandit was returned to her husband. Ghulam Mahy-ud-Din Khan died,

⁹¹ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 385-86.

⁹² According to Ram Sukh Rao, when *Sardar Hari Singh Bhangi* was near Kasur he was looted by Kasuri Pathan Alam Khan, *Hari Singh Bhangi* reported to the *Khalsa* against the Pathans and so he wanted to take an action against the Pathans. *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio no. 32, DPHS, PUP.

⁹³ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 386-88.

while he was fighting. His nephew, Hamid Khan and Usman Khan fell at the feet of *Sardar* Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* and managed to save their life by offering him a sum of four Lakhs of rupees.⁹⁴ The city was sacked and burnt. Large quantities of gold, silver ornaments, jewels and pearls, etc. fell into their hands. At last Hari Singh *Bhangi* made tributary over Kasur and the two rulers of Kasur, Hamid Khan and Usman Khan agree to join a service under Hari Singh *Bhangi*. After taking the possession of the city and the town of Kasur, Hari Singh *Bhangi* established here a police post to check the activities of the Pathans.⁹⁵

After being apprised of the challenge posed by the Sikhs through their fearless defiance, Ahmed Shah Abdali deputed Jahan Khan to march against the Sikhs. On November 4, 1763 the entire *Dal Khalsa* assembled at Amritsar to celebrate the festival of Diwali. Here they received the news of the advent of Jahan Khan. By this time, *Bhangi Sardars* Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh joined with other Sikh *Sardars* and came out to meet Jahan Khan.⁹⁶ According to Ram Sukh Rao, “they managed their forces in regular battle as under: the first group was led by Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*, Ganda Singh *Bhangi* and Data Singh; the second was led by Jai Singh and Haqaqit Singh *Kanahiya*; Charat Singh *Sukerchakia*, Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*, Amar Singh Bhaga, (belonging to the *Bhangis*); Dal Singh, Bhag Singh and Dharam Singh; the third was led by Bhagel Singh, Dyal Singh, Lakha Singh, and Sangat Singh *Nishanwal*; the fourth was led by Tara Singh, Mit Singh and Kushal Singh and main body was led by Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* and Lehna Singh *Bhangi*.” They

⁹⁴ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 388-89; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of Panjab*, pp. 296-97; C.A Rose & W.E Purser, *Report on the Revised Land-revenue Settlement of the Montgomery District in the Mooltan division of the Punjab*, Lahore, 1878, p. 32 (hereafter given as SR. of Montgomery District).

⁹⁵ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Punjab*, p. 92; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p 391.

⁹⁶ Ali-ud-din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 255-56, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, p. 12.

inflicted a crushing defeat on the Durrani general at Sialkot and forced him to hasten back to Peshawar.⁹⁷

Further, Hari Singh *Bhangi* joined with Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*, Karora Singh, Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia* and other Sikhs and moved towards the territory of Sirhind. Then they fell upon Morinda to take revenge on Jani Khan and Mani Khan, who had handed over the sons of *Guru Gobind Singh* to the *Nawab* of Sirhind. The sons and grandsons of these two men, along with other *Ranghars* were caught hold of and hammered to death.⁹⁸

Shortly afterwards, the *Taruna Dal* under the leadership of *Sardar* Hari Singh *Bhangi*, who was assisted by his son Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh *Bhangi*; Jai Singh, Haqaqit Singh *Kanahiya*, Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* and Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*, Sangat Singh *Nishanwalia*, Hari Singh Jalalwala, Tara Singh Kahnna (*Kanahiya*), Bagh Singh, Tika Singh and Mit Singh *Bhangi* with 7, 000 strong soldiers advanced towards Sirhind and took its possession. Zain Khan came out of the city to fight with the Sikhs. Almost then, *Budha Dal* and *Phullkian Misal* came to the help of *Taruna Dal*. Shortly after this, the *Dal Khalsa* attacked the camp of Zain Khan and plundered it. A glory battle was fought but at last Zain Khan was killed.⁹⁹ Then they entered the city of Sirhind and plundered the treasure of the Government, pulled down the walls of the city and the fort of Sirhind was razed to the ground. The spot where the infant sons of *Guru Gobind Singh* had been mercilessly martyred was sought out and a *Gurdwara*, called Fatehgarh Sahib was built. After the victory the town was handed over to Ala Singh of Patiala.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio no.33, DPHS, PUP.

⁹⁸ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 380-84; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 168.

⁹⁹ Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, folio no. 44, DPHS, PUP; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 405-6.

¹⁰⁰ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 406-11; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 199.

Some time after this major victory, Rai Singh of Jagadhari (a *Misaldar* belonging to the *Bhangi Misal*), with his brother Bhag Singh, had taken *Pahul* from Hari Singh *Bhangi*. After the fall of the Sirhind in 1763, they seized control of Buria, Jagadhari, Damla and the neighboring territory. He built a fort near Buria, which he named Dyalgarh and made it his headquarters.¹⁰¹ In collaboration with his brother, Bhag Singh, Rai Singh *Bhangi* eventually occupied 204 villages. Out of these, 84 villages came to Rai Singh's share in Jagadhari and Dyalgarah, while Bhag Singh became the master of the Buria estates consisting of 120 villages.¹⁰² Meanwhile, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* with his brother Nibahu Singh and his two nephews Gurbakhsh Singh and Mastan Singh took the possession of Firozpur, while Jai Singh Gharia with another band from the same quarters seized Khai, Wan and Bajidpur in the neighborhood of Firozpur and made them over to his subordinates.¹⁰³

After their victory at Sirhind the *Taruna Dal* under the leadership of *Sardar* Hari Singh *Bhangi*, entered the Jullundur Doab, the ruler of which sought safety in flight. The *Taruna Dal* took control of the entire area and from there

¹⁰¹ Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-I & II, London, 1870, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, pp. 45-46; according to Ambala District Gazetteer, Jagadhari had been utterly destroyed by Nadir Shah, but it was rebuilt by Rai Singh who encouraged the commercial and manufacturing classes to settle there. Ambala District Gazetteer, 1892-93, pp. 22-23, 69.

¹⁰² According to Lepel Griffin, Buria which they had occupied earlier had been abandoned by Lachmi Naryan, an officer of Jain Khan and had been taken in possession by a few Narawia Sikhs. The latter, when they learnt about the occupation of Buria by the *Bhangi Sardars*, joining with the Afghans of Aurangabad enticed Nanu Singh (one of Rai Singh's associates during Buria campaign), to the Aurangabad fort and put him to death. Rai Singh and Bhag Singh, the adopted son of the murdered Nanu Singh avenged his death by defeating the Aurangabadis and by seizing more territories, in all 204 villages in the district of Jagadhari and Dyalgarh. Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 46.

¹⁰³ Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio nos. pp. 35-36, DPHS, PUP; Punjab District Gazetteers, District Firozpur, Lahore, 1883, pp. 32-33.

proceeded straight to lay siege to Lahore in the month of February, 1764.¹⁰⁴ They seized the neighboring villages, besieged the city and cut off all supplies. But the Governor, Kabuli Mal did not stir out of the city. Quite defensive against the juggernaut of Sikh aggression, he got the gates of the city securely bricked up. The Sikhs offered to Kabuli Mal three conditions for peace: (1) all the cow slaughterers of the city should be handed over to the Sikhs. (2) Cow slaughter should be banned for the future: and (3) tribute should be paid to the *Panth*. Upon the refusal of the Governor to agree to these conditions, the Sikhs smashed open the Delhi gate, entered the city and ransacked the outskirts of the city. The Governor was now frightened into accepting the terms of the Sikhs and thus made peace with them. He handed over a few butchers to the Sikhs and paid the tribute and thus saved his capital.¹⁰⁵ Before leaving, Hari Singh *Bhangi* appointed Tek Chnad as his representative at Lahore *Darbar*, who was paid a daily remuneration of ten rupees and was to advise Kabuli Mal in all affairs of the state.¹⁰⁶

By this time *Taruna Dal* was divided into two sections under two prominent leaders. One was under *Sardar* Hari Singh *Bhangi*, who accompanied by his sons Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh and other *Sardars*, marched to the south-west of the province of Punjab. The second was under Charat Singh *Sukerchakia*. This group conjoined with *Nakai Sardar* Hira Singh and captured the territory of Lamma and Naka. Hari Singh *Bhangi* later marched towards Multan in 1764. At first he plundered Bahawalpur and then on reaching Multan he captured the city without any difficulty.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A short History of the Sikhs*, pp. 169-70.

¹⁰⁵ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 257-58, DPHS, PUP; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 212.

¹⁰⁶ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 258, DPHS, PUP; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, New Delhi, 1978, p. 19.

¹⁰⁷ Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, (NP), 1765, (Edited by Ganda Singh), Amritsar, 1939, p.20; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, p. 1000.

Qazi Nur Muhammad says, “They led an expedition against Multan and gave the city over to plunder, the dogs (Sikhs) have brought an immense booty from there. My mind refuses (to describe) what the dogs (Sikhs) did there. O faithful ones! Since the days of auspicious-natured Adam none remembers to have heard of such miseries inflicted anywhere except in Multan. But as god willed it each of us also should submit.”¹⁰⁸

Sardar Hari Singh Bhangi next crossed the river Indus and brought the territory of Derajat under his control. He also obtained tributes from the Baluchi Chiefs in the districts of Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi Khan and Dera Ismail Khan. On his way back, he received the tributes from the local Chiefs of Pind Dadan Khan Region amounting to rupees 4,000.¹⁰⁹ The *Bhangis* then proceeded towards the Sial of Jhang territory. The Chiefs of the Jhang offered the *Bhangi* Chiefs a formidable opposition, but they also capitulated before the might of the redoubtable Sikhs and their territories of Jhang, Khushab and Chiniot were seized by the *Bhangis* and fell into the share of Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*. They succeeded in extracting considerable tribute from Inayat-ullah Khan, the Sial Chief of Jhang before they entered Chiniot. The administration of their territory was entrusted to Karam Singh *Dullu*, a *Bhangi* chief.¹¹⁰

Qazi Nur Muhammad paid a visit to Chiniot on his way to Lahore only about six months later. He writes, “The city had been ruined by the atrocities of the Sikhs. All the people of the place were in trouble and misery. The whole town from inside and its suburbs lay in ruin. Its buildings had been pulled down and all

¹⁰⁸ Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, p. 21.

¹⁰⁹ Imperial Gazetteer of India, Punjab, provincial series Vol-I, p. 208; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 213.

¹¹⁰ Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, p. 25; Jhang District Gazetteers, Lahore, 1833-34, pp. 32-33; Imperial Gazetteer of India, Punjab, Provincial Series, Vol-II, Calcutta, 1908, pp. 208-9; E.B Steadman, *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Jhang District of the Punjab*, (1874-80), Lahore, 1882, p. 37. (hereafter given as SR. of Jhang District)

the mosques were deserted. They were spoiled by the dung and fodder of their horses. The learned people, nobles and the Syeds of the city led a miserable life. When the Dogs (Sikhs) partitioned this land, the city became the *Jagir* of the accursed Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*. Soon they divided the whole country, Sirhind, Lahore, Multan, Jhang, Khushab and the Chenab among themselves.¹¹¹

After receiving tidings of the latest spurt in Sikh activities in the Punjab and of the failure of his generals, in October, 1764 Ahmed Shah Abdali again crossed the river Indus with an army of 18,000 soldiers.¹¹² When Ahmed Shah Abdali reached Lahore, he came to know that the Sikhs had moved towards Amritsar. On reaching Amritsar he did not find any Sikhs there, except a few left in attendance at the *Akal Takht*. They were merely thirty in number, but they had not a grain of fear about them. They were determined to sacrifice their lives for the *Guru*.¹¹³ From there he advanced towards Sirhind. What he beheld left him utterly confounded. What he had seen as a flourishing city was now in ruins. At this place, Ala Singh presented himself before the Durrani King with costly gifts.¹¹⁴ Ahmed Shah therefore, conferred upon Ala Singh independent Chieftainship of Sirhind for an annual subsidy of three and a half Lakh rupees.¹¹⁵

Having stayed at Sirhind for a few days, Ahmed Shah marched back homeward and crossed the Satluj, probably at Machhiwara. When Ahmed Shah was on his way back to Afghanistan, he was attacked by the Sikhs, who were under Hari Singh *Bhangi*, Jhanda Singh, Gulab Singh *Bhangi*, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* and Ram Das (belonging to the *Bhangis*) Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* and Jassa

¹¹¹ Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, pp. 25-26.

¹¹² J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 93; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 80.

¹¹³ Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, pp. 33-35; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 414-25.

¹¹⁴ Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 174.

¹¹⁵ Karam Singh, *Maharaja Ala Singh*, Tarn Taran, 1918, pp. 240-41.

Singh *Ramgarhia*, Lehna Singh *Bhangi*, Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* and Jai Singh *Kanahiya*. They continued to persistently harass the Shah's troops.¹¹⁶

Thus we can see that the author of the *Jang Nama*, Qazi Nur Muhammad gives us an account of the possessions of the *Bhangi* leaders at that time in the province of the Punjab. He records "Chiniot is under the supreme authority of Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*. That black faced dog (Sikh) is most luminous there. The country of the *Chattas* and the whole territory of Jhang is under *Sardar Hari Singh Bhangi*, Chief leader of the *Bhangi Misal*. On the other side, Karam Singh *Bhangi* extends his control over the territory of Vairbal, which is situated in the district of Jhang, while Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* and Lehna Singh *Bhangi* possess Waniki and derive their income from there. Agar Singh and Sawal Singh (the *Jagirdars* of the *Bhangi Misal*) extend their control as far as the village of the Syeeds (Pindi Syeedian). The territory of Chamiari is also belonging to them. Both the dogs (Sikhs) have grown rich there. From Lahore to Multan and even Derahjat, the whole country has been divided by these wretched Dogs (Sikhs) among themselves. They enjoy it and fear nobody".¹¹⁷

Before departing from the Punjab, Ahmed Shah appointed Kabuli Mal as the Governor of Lahore and Nasir Khan as the Governor of Jhang and Multan.¹¹⁸ After his departure the Sikhs congregated at Amritsar on the *Baisakhi* day, April 10. Like in the past years, this time again they decided by way of a *Gurmata* to capture the city of Lahore.¹¹⁹ After the festivities at Amritsar were concluded, Lehna Singh *Bhangi* and Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, both the *Bhangi*

¹¹⁶ Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, pp. 48-50.

¹¹⁷ Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, pp. 64-66; Himadri Banerjee, *The Khalsa and the Punjab*, p. 50. All such words like dogs in *Jang Nama* are used by Qazi Nur Muhammad in abusive sense. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, pp.225-26.

¹¹⁸ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*. 93; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. p. 260, DPHS, PUP .

¹¹⁹ H.T Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power*, p. 22.

Sardars, returned to their head-quarters at Ranghruini near Lahore. They formed a plan to oust Ahmed Shah's representative from Lahore and occupy Lahore. Kabuli Mal the Governor of Lahore was a timid and tyrannical ruler. He was much disdained by the common people of Lahore because of his brutal methods of extracting money from them. When he came to know about the planned coup of the Sikhs, he decamped and ran away to Jammu, leaving the city of Lahore under his nephew Amir Singh.¹²⁰

Taking advantage of this opportunity, on 16 April, 1765 *Sardar* Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* marched towards Lahore at the head of a contingent of 2,000 strong soldiers and encamped near Baghbanpura. According to the author of *Jassa Singh Binod*, Ram Sukh Rao, Hari Singh *Bhangi* and his son Jhanda Singh and Jai Singh *Kanahiya* were also with them in the occupation of Lahore.¹²¹ Soon they opened negotiations with Bhai Nand Ram, the *Purabia* employed in the fort, who was also the *Thanedar* of the fort of Lahore. Since, he had been hostile towards Kabuli Mal; he defected to the fold of the *Bhangi Sardars*. Soon, he sent a message through one of his servants named Diyal Singh giving them a crucial clue. He alerted them to the risk of entering into the city by the gates and advised them to exercise stealth and enter into the city at night by breaching the wall at a specific point. After this Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh managed to win over *Nuqra Jats*, Mehar Sultan, Ghulam Rasul, Asharaf, Chunnu and Baqar, the Arians of Baghbanpura, who worked as gardeners in the fort.¹²²

On the advice of *Bhai* Nand Ram *Purbia*, they undertook to lead the Sikhs into the fort by breaking in a hole in the wall of the fort at a place where there was not much danger of causing alarm. Gujjar Singh was the first to enter the fort

¹²⁰ Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, pp. 65-66; George Forester, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, p. 320; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-I*, folio no.189, GNDU.

¹²¹ Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio no. 49, DPHS, PUP.

¹²² Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio nos. 88-89, DPHS, PUP; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp.79-80.

with a group of 50 soldiers. Lehna Singh soon followed Gujjar Singh. Both the *Bhangi Sardars* captured the fort of Lahore on 16, April, 1765. Amir Singh and Jagan Nath were instantly taken prisoners and held captive in Mozang.¹²³ Then the fort of Lahore came into the hands of the *Bhangi Sardars* without much resistance. Next morning, April 17, Sobha Singh of *Kanahiya* joined the *Bhangi* chiefs at the head of 2, 000 soldiers and put up in the mansion of Maghraj Khatri, nephew of *Diwan* Lakhpat Rai. The troops of the three chiefs on entering the city began to ruthlessly ransack it. At this time *Chaudhri* Rupa, Lala Bishan Singh and Mahraj Singh, the grandsons of *Diwan* Surat Singh, Mir Nathu Shah, Hafiz Qadir Bakhsh and Mian Muhammad Ashiq and other prominent persons of the city beseeched the Sikhs to terminate violence. They said, “This city is called the *Guru’s* cradle. If you look after it, you will also prosper, but if you ruin and destroy it, you too will derive no profit and advantage.”¹²⁴ According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti and Kanahiya Lal, at this time the family of Kabuli Mal was released by the Sikhs of Lahore, on payment in return of a *Nazrana* of 25, 000 rupees and they were sent to Jammu.¹²⁵

Heeding the wisdom of their appeal, the *Bhangi Sardars* accordingly shut all the city gates and issued a proclamation that whosoever was found to oppress the subjects would be punished. To ensure compliance, both the *Sardars* rode into the town with sticks in their hands and beat out each rioter they found in any street. Then they offered one third of the city to Sobha Singh and sought his co-operation in protecting the town. In short, the three chiefs spared no pains in restoring peace and dedicated themselves wholeheartedly to the duties of administration.¹²⁶ The three *Sardars* then parceled out the city and its

¹²³ Sohan Lal Suri, says, “That Amir Singh was arrested when he was busy enjoying the performances of his dancing girls.” Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-I*, folio nos. 189-90, GNDU.

¹²⁴ J D, Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 93; Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal empire*, Vol- II, Calcutta, 1966, pp. 352-53.

¹²⁵ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 261-62, DPHS, PUP; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 82.

¹²⁶ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 262, DPHS, PUP.

neighborhood among themselves. Gujjar Singh was allotted the eastern part of the city, from Kabuli Mal's mansion to the Shalimar Garden, in the centre of which he built an unwallled fort which was called *Qila Gujjar Singh* (the site is still known by the same name). Lehna Singh obtained the central part of the city including the fort of Lahore with the Roshnai, Kashmiri, Khizri and Masti Gates.¹²⁷ While the southern part of Lahore as far as Niazbeg, 13 kilometers from the city on the banks of river Ravi, including Mozang, Kot Abdullah Shah, Ichhra and Chauburji fell to the share of Sobha Singh who had his strongest bastion in the garden of Zebinda Begam, which he turned into a fort known as Nawankot.¹²⁸

The city of Lahore was thus divided between these Chiefs and each ruled over and administered his portion as its master, receiving the revenue from all imports and duties within the city, including the mint.¹²⁹

According to Hari Ram Gupta, when Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* occupied the city of Lahore, the site was a rendezvous of the thieves. Gujjar Singh invited people to reside there. He laid forty wells for the supply of water. He established about a dozen brick kilns and constructed fifteen shops. The total number of the houses built there was 150. There were four grocery shops, 20 houses of flower gatherers, eight of leather dressers, two of Hindu shopkeepers, one each of a blacksmith, a carpenter and a barber and the rest of peasants. A mosque also existed there.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Abdul Qadir, Maulvi, *Memorandum of the Route between Delhi and Cabul*, Asiatic Register, (1860, London, 1809, p. 10; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 337-38; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, pp. 227-28.

¹²⁸ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 337-38; H.R. Goulding & T.H. Thornton, *Old Lahore*, Lahore, 1924, p. 76.

¹²⁹ James Browne, *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs*, p. VII; Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol-II, pp. 352-53; Lahore District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1883-84, p. 29.

¹³⁰ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 225.

No sooner did Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* hear of the fall of Lahore then he came to the city and demanded a share in the spoil. The three *Sardars* had no intention of making such a powerful Chief their enemy and with a view to outwitting him, very willingly offered him the *Zamzama* gun which was readily taken by him.¹³¹

The *Khalsa* looked upon this achievement as a mark of the *Guru's* benediction. So to commemorate the momentous occasion of the assumption of the sovereignty of the province and in memory of *Guru Nanak*, who founded the Sikhism, and *Guru Gobind Singh*, who established the *Khalsa* brotherhood, they struck coin in the name of the Sikh *Gurus*. When coining money they repeated the inscription which had already appeared on the seals of Banda Singh and the coins of Jassa Singh.

Obverse

Deg o tegh o fateh o nusrat be-dirang

Yaft az Nanak Guru Gobind Singh.

In the Reverse of the coin following inscription:

Struck in the capital of Lahore in, 1765 A D

At this juncture of time, while the whole country, liberated from foreign rule, passed into the hands of the Sikhs, there were still a few parts which did not acknowledge their sovereignty.¹³²

¹³¹ Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* turned up in Lahore, at the head of his army, a few days later. The *Bhangi Sardars* unwilling to make so powerful Chiefs their enemy, offered him the best part of the spoil the *Zamazama* Gun; they had believed that Charat Singh would be unable to carry it away. But Charat Singh, seeing that, he could get nothing more, called his men and carried it off to Gujranwala. For detail see Carmichael Smyth, *History of the Reigning Family of Lahore*, Calcutta, 1847, pp. 15-16; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 14-15.

¹³² Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal Vol-. L, part-I. No.I, Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1881, p. 79; Ganda Singh, *Banda Singh Bahadur*, Amritsar, 1935, p. 153; J.S, Grewal, *The Character of the Sikh Rule*, Miscellaneous Articles, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1974, p. 151. According to Lepel Griffin, the rupees struck by the Sikhs after the occupation of Lahore, was to be called 'Gobindshahi' not 'Nanakshahi' and imprinted with *Deg o tegh o fateh o nusrat be-diran Yaft az*

Karam Singh *Dullu*, as mentioned earlier, had supported Hari Singh *Bhangi* and got Chiniot to administer.¹³³ A part of Amritsar also came into his possessions and he came to be regarded as a chief.¹³⁴

Sanwal Singh Randhawa had adopted Sikh faith around 1750 and started helping Hari Singh in his campaigns. He fought on his side in many battles and came into possession of large tract on the left bank of the river Ravi, including Ajnala and Chamiani. He also occupied the *Talluqa* of Ghonewala of Amritsar district and eight villages of the *Pargana* of Narowal.¹³⁵

The history of the Punjab from 1765 onwards is a record of the resurgence and growth of the Sikh *Misals*. After ensuring the sovereignty of the country, the Sikhs *Sardars* roamed undeterred all over the territory of the Punjab and claimed it as their permanent heritage. Every leader, according to his capacity and the strength of his army was seizing what fell in his hands. Thus, the leaders of the *Bhangi Misal* took full advantage of the favorable times and endeavoured to establish themselves as a sovereign political power in the Punjab. They had already mastered Lahore, Kasur, Amritsar and some parts of the Jammu territory and they were feeling the urge to extend their control over the remaining large parts of the province of Punjab. The occupation of the city of Lahore by the *Bhangis* gave them an edge over the other *Misals*.¹³⁶

Nanak Guru Gobind Singh., Which means, hospitality, the sword and victory and conquest unfailing to *Guru Gobind Singh* from *Nanak*. Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 466.

¹³³ Imperial Gazetteer of India (Punjab), Provincial Series, Vol, II, p. 208.

¹³⁴ Foreign Political Proceedings, 7 January, 1853, no. 219, preserved in National Archive of India (after here given as NAI).

¹³⁵ Qazi Nur Muhammed, *Jang Nama*, pp. 59-60; R. Creathed, R.A. Prinsep, R Temple, J. H. Mooris, W. Blyth, Esquires, *Report on the Revised Settlement of Purgunah Narowal Tulwandee of the Umritsar District in the Umritsar Division*, Lahore, 1860, p. 148, (here after given as SR Narowal): S R of the Amritsar District, 1860, p. 11.

¹³⁶ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 231.

In 1765, Hari Singh *Bhangi* marched against Ala Singh of Patiala (who had accepted the over lordship of Ahmed Shah Abdali).¹³⁷ The battle took place between them at village Lang-Challian near Patiala, in which Hari Singh *Bhangi* was killed by gun shot. His body was kept by his son Jhanda Singh at village Nasrali (at present in Khanna District), where a *Gurdwara* was built in the memory of *Sardar Hari Singh Bhangi*. Hari Singh *Bhangi* held the *Sardari* of the *Bhangi Misal* for eighteen years.¹³⁸ The most important chiefs serving under Hari Singh were Gujjar Singh, Lehna Singh, Milkha Singh, Bhag Singh Hallowalia, Tara Singh Chainpuria, Karam Singh Chhina, Bagh Singh Kalaswalia, Rae Singh of Jagadhari, Sher Singh of Buria, Sudh Singh Doda, Sahib Singh and Tara Singh Sialkotias and Gurbakhsh Singh Roranwala. At this time the income of *Bhangi Misal* was about 15 Lakhs.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Ahmed Shah Abdali had invaded India for the seventh time in December 1764. While at Sirhind, on his return journey, he called upon Ala Singh of Patiala to his presence. The latter arriving, accepted his suzerainty and received from him the Governorship of Sirhind for which Ala Singh, himself had requested. Ahmed Shah also had wanted to appoint some local men on this post. The Sikhs, after they had disposed of the invasion of Ahmed Shah, taking Ala Singh's submission as a national disgrace attacked Patiala. Both the parties fought a relentless battle at Langchallian in Patiala district. Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, pp. 47-48; Giani Gian Singh, *Raj Khalsa*, p. 8; Kirpal Singh, *Life of Maharaja Ala Singh of Patiala and his times*, Amritsar, 1954, pp. 125-27; Karam Singh, Historian, *Baba Ala Singh*, p. 173.

¹³⁸ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 296-97; Lepel Griffin, *Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 337; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 208. According to J D Cunningham, Hari Singh *Bhangi* died in 1770. *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 103. But Ali-ud-Din Mufti, give us another reason, about the death of Hari Singh *Bhangi*, he says that when the Sikhs, capture Sirhind in 1764 and confirmed to Ala Singh, who paid *Nazrana* (annual tribute) to Hari Singh *Bhangi*. But after Ala Singh's death his son Amar Singh refuse to pay the *Nazrana* to Hari Singh *Bhangi*. Thus Hari Singh *Bhangi* marched against Amar Singh of Patiala and was killed. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 270, DPHS, PUP.

¹³⁹ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 297; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 208.

Hari Singh had two wives. By his first wife, daughter of *Chaudhri* Mulla of Panjwar, he had two sons, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh and by his second wife three sons, Charat Singh, Diwan Singh and Desu Singh.¹⁴⁰ According to Khushwaqat Rai, Hari Singh had no son and Jhanda Singh of village Panjwar in the *Pargana* of Haibatpur was his colleague.¹⁴¹ After his death his son Jhanda Singh become the Chief leader of the *Misal* and his brother Ganda Singh was the commander-in-chief of the *Misal*. In terms of political power and military resources they made a remarkable improvement on the position as it obtained under Hari Singh *Bhangi*. The army was reorganized and its numerical strength was increased considerably. The fighting strength of the *Misal* at this time was above 20,000 men, who were stationed at different places of its territories. They made great efforts to take the *Misal* to the zenith of political significance.¹⁴²

They extended their control around the city of Amritsar and also around Tarn Taran (particularly the southern side of the Tarn Taran) and the town itself. The territory of Chunian was under Karam Singh *Bhangi* and the areas of Sainsra were assigned to Diwan Singh.¹⁴³ Hari Singh *Bhangi* before his death occupied the areas of Kalaswala, Kalalwala, Panwana, Chauhara and Maharajke, After Hari Singh's death these areas fell into the hands of his sons Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh.¹⁴⁴

On the other side, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* was not content with the occupation of Lahore and its surrounding Jungle land and by being a mere partner

¹⁴⁰ Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 86.

¹⁴¹ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no.117, DPHS, PUP. This may be wrong because not any other writers supported him on this account.

¹⁴² Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 40-41.

¹⁴³ Amritsar District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1892-93, pp. 10-12, 21-22; Sohan Singh Seetal, *Sikh Misalan*, Ludhiana, 1952, p. 340.

¹⁴⁴ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, pp. 107, 120; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 233.

in the ruling constellation. Now, he had begun to nurture ambition for new and independent lands. He appointed his eldest son Sukha Singh at Lahore while he marched to the north-west. Soon he seized Eminabad, 56 kilometers from Lahore. Gujjar Singh further advanced towards the important town of Wazirabad, 32 kilometers away from Gujranwala. Gujjar Singh captured it with ease and assigned it to Gurbakhsh Singh *Waraich* of Jhabal village. However, later on, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* entrusted it to his own son-in-Law, Jodh Singh of Pasrur (later known as Wazirabad). Gujjar Singh also seized Chakrali and Sodhra on the southern bank of river Chenab, the *Pargana* of Sodhra contained Begowala, Bhopawala, Kayanwala, Mitranwali and Sahowala. In short he captured all 150 villages in Gujranwala district.¹⁴⁵

On the other side of Chaj-Doab, between the river Chenab and the river Jhelum and 114 kilometers from Lahore lay the town of Gujrat. It was an old city. In those days Muqarrab Khan Gakhar, who owed allegiance to Ahamd Shah Abdali was supreme in the Chaj-Doab; his supremacy spanned the period from 1741 to 1765 and Gujrat was under him.¹⁴⁶ Conscious of the importance of the city of Gujrat, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, joined with Charat Singh *Sukerchakia*, marched towards it in December 1765. When they entered the city of Gujrat, Muqarrab Khan offered stiff opposition first on the western bank of river Chenab and then outside the walls of the town. Having been vanquished by the Sikhs, Muqarrab Khan shut himself up in the fort.¹⁴⁷ The town was immediately besieged by the Sikhs. Caught in a hopeless situation, Muqarrab Khan decided to escape. In a dark night he made a sudden sally and cut his way through the Sikh cordon. He was riding on an elephant. The Sikhs pursued him. Muqarrab Khan

¹⁴⁵ Gujranwala District Gazetteers, Lahore, 1936, pp. 16-17; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p.226.

¹⁴⁶ Gujrat District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1883-84, pp. 15-16; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 226.

¹⁴⁷ Ganesh Das Bادهhra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, folio no. 125, DPHS, PUP.

descended into the flooded stream flowing nearby. The elephant crossed it, but the Chief was not on its back. The Sikhs thought he had been drowned. Riding a horse at the head of his womenfolk he dashed on. But latter he was captured by his rival Ghakhar Chief Himmat Khan of Domeli and was put to death.¹⁴⁸

The Sikhs proceeded to plunder the entire camp of Muqarrab Khan. Afterwards they fell upon Gujrat. They combed the town with reckless fury and whatever was found in the town was carried away. The *Waraich Jats*, who held 170 villages in the Gujrat district and 41 villages in Gujranwala including Jalalpur, Shahpur, Akhnur, Islamgarah Wangali, Pharwala submitted meekly before Gujjar Singh.¹⁴⁹ The Sikhs took possession of the city and they renewed the fortifications, strengthened the walls and Gujjar Singh established his capital at this place. Gujjar Singh appointed Takhat Singh, one of his relatives, as the administrator of the Gujrat. Further Gujjar Singh marched towards Islamgarh and defeated the local Chiefs Rahmat Khan and Sikander Khan and made them his tributaries. According to the author of *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, Ganesh Das Badehra, After taking the possession of the city of Gujrat, Gujjar Singh requested to the people who were leaving the city during the Sikh - Afghans conflict, to return to the city and live peacefully, he also appointed famous persons like *Diwan Dilbagh Singh Sial*, Gamgur Kakaran, Mehta Bhawani Das Badehra, Mian Mohammed Salih, Mehta Chait Ram, Mehta Devi Sahai and Ismatula *Qanungo* to restore peace and better administration in the city.¹⁵⁰ Then the two Sikh *Sardars* divided the territory between themselves. Gujjar Singh extended his control from river Jhelum to Wasohawa. Gujrat and the *Waraich Taluka* were also added to the share of Gujjar Singh. While the *Pargana* of Kunjah, as far as the boundaries of

¹⁴⁸ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 127, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, p. 242; Gujrat District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1883-84, pp. 17-18; Rawalpindi District Gazetteers, Lahore, 1909, pp. 42-43.

¹⁴⁹ Gujrat District Gazetteer, 1883-84, p. 18; Bhagat Singh, *History of the Sikh Misals*, p. 106.

¹⁵⁰ Ganesh Das Badehra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, folio no. 125, DPHS, PUP.

Maini, came to be to be occupied by the Charat Singh *Sukerchakia*. The most important places belonging to Gujjar Singh in the Chaj-Doab were Gujrat, Jalapur and Islamgarh.¹⁵¹

In December, 1766, *Bhangi Sardars* Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh and Lehna Singh marched in the direction of Multan and declared a war against Shuja Khan of Multan and Daudputras (Bahawalpur). Faced with a strong challenge, Shuja Khan sought help from Mubarik Khan the ruler of Bahawalpur (from 1749 to 1772).¹⁵² A grim battle was fought between them, on the banks of river Satluj, but neither side conceded defeat during this action. At last, it was agreed to divide the territory from Bahawalpur to Lahore equally between them. A treaty was signed between them in which Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* was acknowledged as the master of the territory 208 kilometers from Lahore and 221 from Bahawalpur up to Pakpattan (The *Bhangi* Chiefs had earlier occupied it from Abdus Subhan, the *Diwan* of Pakpattan”). Then they declared Pakpattan the line of demarcation between them.¹⁵³ A little later Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh seized the territory of Muhammad Azim Hans lying a little to the north-west of Pakpattan. But after the agreement with Shuja Khan of Multan, they appear to have left only a small force behind in any case of Muhammad Azim expelled the remaining troops.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Gujrat district Gazetteer, 1883-834, p.18; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, p.242; Shahpur District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1883-84, pp.17-18.

¹⁵² Tahmas Khan Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, p. 115; According to, J D Cunningham, The Governor of Multan and *Nawab* of Bahawalpur were defeated by Hari Singh *Bhangi* in 1767. *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 102-3. This may be incorrect because Hari Singh *Bhangi* died in 1765, when he was fought against Ala Singh of Patiala.

¹⁵³ Shahamat Ali, *The History of Bahawalpur*, London, 1848, p. 52; Multan District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1883-84, p. 32; Montgomery District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1883-84, p. 33 and 1933, p. 37; Bahawalpur District Gazetteers, Lahore, 1908, p. 56.

¹⁵⁴ S R of Montgomery District, Lahore, 1878, p. 33; Montgomery District Gazetteers, Lahore, 1920, p. 37.

In December 1766, Ahmad Shah Abdali again descended upon the Punjab, to retrieve his fallen prestige and to recover his lost territory, with a mighty host. He crossed the river Indus at Attock and proceeded towards Lahore.¹⁵⁵ At that time, 8,000 Sikhs soldiers were present at Lahore under the stewardship of *Sardar* Lehna Singh *Bhangi*, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* and Sobha Singh, who ruled over the city. As Ahmad Shah approached Lahore, the three rulers of Lahore, Lehna Singh *Bhangi*, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* and Sobha Singh, left the city, because they could not contend with mammoth force of Abdali. Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* and Lehna Singh *Bhangi* retreated with their forces in the direction of Kasur, from Kasur they moved towards Amritsar, while Sobha Singh fled in the direction of Pakpatan.¹⁵⁶

Ahmad Shah reached Lahore on the 22 December, 1766. He occupied the city of Lahore without any struggle.¹⁵⁷ Here the leading Muslims and Hindus of the city waited upon him in a deputation and requested him to recall *Sardar* Lehna Singh *Bhangi*. They gave him an insightful and candid feedback about the political and social conditions under Lehna Singh. They expressed their opinion that Lehna Singh was a good and sympatric ruler, who was acceptable to every body. He had not maintained any communal discrimination between the Hindus and the Muslims. He bestowed turbans on the *Qazis*, Muftis and Imams of the mosques on the festival of *Id-ul-Zuha*.¹⁵⁸ He treated all the citizens with great regard. The Muslims of Lahore had no fear of the *Khalsa* and they had started looking upon them as their comrades rather than as hostile enemies. Thus, the absence of usual communal acrimony had made the Muslim leaders of the city of Lahore recommend to Ahmad Shah Abdali the appointment of *Sardar* Lehna

¹⁵⁵ Tahmas Kahn Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, p. 115.

¹⁵⁶ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 262-63, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁵⁷ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 429.

¹⁵⁸ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 262-63, DPHS, PUP.

Singh *Bhangi* as their Governor of Lahore in preference to his Muslims nominee.¹⁵⁹ Ahmad Shah too had thoroughly perceived the situation. He sent Rehmat-ullah Beg of village Mode, one of his ministers, as his emissary and wrote a letter to Lehna Singh *Bhangi*, offering him the Governorship of Lahore. As a show of courtesy he also sent him some dry fruits of Kabul. Lehna Singh *Bhangi*, who was at Amritsar, however, declined the invitation on the grounds that it was not commensurate with the guiding principles of the *Khalsa* to confer with an invader and thus, as his reply he returned the dry fruit along with a sample of gram, along with his own letter that contained the following words; “fruit is the food of the kings: I am an ordinary soldier and can well sustain myself on a simple meal. In regard to the offer of Governorship, I am a soldier of the *Panth*, which would spurn even the gift of ruler ship of the three worlds, except when it came from the *Guru Gobind Singh*.” In this manner Lehna Singh turned down the offer saying that to accept an offer from an invader was against the policy and honour of the *Khalsa*.¹⁶⁰

Ahmad Shah Abdali stayed in Lahore for a week and in order to fill the vacancies, he appointed Dadan Khan, the brother of *Maulvi* Abdulla Khan as the Governor of Lahore and Rehmat Khan Rohilla as assistant at the head of 1,500 horse and foot soldiers.¹⁶¹

Soon after this, Lehna Singh *Bhangi* and Charat Singh *Sukerchakia*, with an army of 20,000, fell upon Shah’s camp at Lahore and plundered it. At this time

¹⁵⁹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 262-63, DPHS, PUP; Muhammad Baqir, *Lahore Past and Present*, Lahore, 1952, pp. 196-97.

¹⁶⁰ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 263, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁶¹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 264, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-I*, p. 191, GNDU. According to Kanahiya Lal, after the occupation of Lahore, Ahmed Shah appointed *Maulvi* Abdulla Khan as the Governor of Lahore, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 80; But Rattan Singh Bhangu, says that Ahmed Shah, had appointed Timur Shah at Lahore, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 429.

Shah's brother-in-law with the Shah's family, several officers and approximately 4,000 horses were in the city of Lahore. Finding that the Sikhs were very strong, the Shah's brother-in-Law did not venture out. Rather, he wrote to the Shah informing him that the Sikhs had attacked and plundered the baggage. He apprehended that as they were now approaching Lahore, they would in no time besiege him and his family. He, for this reason, requested his majesty to return to his assistance. As soon as Ahmad Shah received this news, he returned to Lahore. The Sikhs however, had, by now, escaped to safety after plundering the camp of Ahmad Shah Abdali.¹⁶²

On January 15, 1767 when Ahmad Shah Abdali was in the neighborhood of Nur-ud-Din Kot and wrote a *Khundba* (letters) to the Sikh *Sardars* Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*, Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* and Khushal Singh *Singhpuria* and invited them to meet him to settle the terms but the Sikhs declined the Shah's offer and continued carrying their arms against him.¹⁶³

Afterwards, Abdali crossed river Beas on the January 17 and reached Theley (Suhareewal, nearly 35 kilometers from the Beas). Here, Rao Magh Raj, Surjan Rai, Lahori Mal, Bhim Singh the emissaries respectively of Najib-ud-daula, Mir Qasim, *Raja* Jawhar Mal and *Raja* Madho Singh, as also the representative of *Raja* Amar Singh of Patiala and of Rai Kalha, waited upon Ahmad Shah and paid their obeisance to him. After receiving the presents from these representatives, Ahmad Shah crossed the river Satluj.¹⁶⁴

While Ahmad Shah was busy in meeting with his representatives, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* gave the charge of Gujrat to his son Sahib Singh and moved toward the valley of Kashmir which was under the Durranis. First of all, Gujjar Singh

¹⁶² Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 264, DPHS, PUP; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 430.

¹⁶³ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 431; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 208-9.

¹⁶⁴ Tahmas Khan Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, p. 116; J D Cunningham *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 102-3.

conquered Islamgarh. Thereafter he defeated Rahmat Khan and Sikander Khan and made them his tributary. Then Gujjar Singh fell upon the fort of Mangla and brought 51 villages in this territory under his sway. He also conquered Naushahra on the bank of river Jhelum and the areas that had been assigned to Seva Singh and Deva Singh. Then Gujjar Singh reduced to subjection the Muslim hilly states of lower Kashmir region. He defeated Sulaiman Khan and made his tributary over Bhimbar.¹⁶⁵ Eventually, he successfully stretched his expeditions in the direction of Mirpur, Kotli, Cahiumukh and Shahdru. These successes emboldened Gujjar Singh to the extent of envisaging a plan to conquer the whole valley of Kashmir. Thus fired with enthusiasm, he advanced towards Punchh. Up to this time the Sikhs had experience of only low altitude hills with a height of up to three to four thousand feet high. They were not familiar with high altitude warfare. They developed a great fear of snow, storms and cold winds as well as of the enemy attacks in narrow gorges. The Sikhs soldiers found themselves in a quandary. They did not certainly want to be entrapped in formidable and treacherous mountainous conditions. In one particular encounter with the troops of the Governor of Kashmir, the Sikh were trounced and most of their baggage and many horses were snatched by the enemy and they retreated to Gujrat crest fallen.¹⁶⁶

Islam Khan, the *Zamindar* of the Islamgarh also got entangled in a clash of interests with Gujjar Singh. It was well known that this Chief had a partiality for horses and maintained a large stable at Islamgarh. Gujjar Singh aspired to seize his stables by imprisoning him. When Islam Khan came to know about this

¹⁶⁵ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, pp. 182-83; Jhelum District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1907, p. 242.

¹⁶⁶ Hugel Browne Charles, *Travels into Cashmere and the Punjab*, (Translated from German by Major T.B. Jarvis), London, 1845, pp. 35-37; Gujrat district Gazetteer, Lahore, 1892-93, pp. 5-6; Lepel Griffin and W.L Conran, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-I & II, Lahore, 1909, (Edited by G.L Chopra), Lahore, 1940, p. 464.

conspiracy, he took flight leaving his horses and other things behind at Islamgarh the whole of which was captured by Gujjar Singh.¹⁶⁷

On the Jamuna side, the old Najib-ud-Daula was so hard pressed by Rai Singh *Bhangi* of Jagadhari. Najib-ud-Daula at once approached Ahmad Shah Abdali and sought his help against the Sikhs. Abdali immediately ordered his general Jahan Khan to proceed for the assistance of Najib-ud-Daula against the Sikhs and he reached Meerut in three days.¹⁶⁸ As soon as the Sikhs got the news of Jahan Khan's approach they tried to get away across the Jamuna. Some small encounters took place between Shamli and Kerana, (in Muzaffargarh district), between them, in which the Sikhs were defeated.¹⁶⁹ According to Tahmas Khan Miskin, the number of the Sikhs who were killed in this action was 9,000. The rest fled away. Then, in the same manner, the detachment returned to the halting place in the course of seven days.¹⁷⁰

Ahmad Shah had to hastily return to his native country, in May 1767, helplessly leaving the whole of the province of Punjab, including the provincial capital of Lahore in the hands of the Sikhs. Before leaving the Punjab Ahmad Shah Abdali appointed Dadan Khan as the Governor of Lahore.¹⁷¹ No sooner had Abdali crossed the border of the Punjab, than the three Sikh *Sardars* Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, Lehna Singh *Bhangi* and Sobha Singh marched towards Lahore to once again retrieve the coveted territory from Afghan representatives. Soon they reached the city of Lahore and stationed themselves with their forces in the Shalimar Gardens. On reaching there they sent a message to Dadan Khan, the new Governor of Lahore. The message sent to Dadan Khan offered him the alternative of either vacating Lahore or facing the might of the Sikh arms. Dadan

¹⁶⁷ Lepel Griffin and W.L Conran, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-II, p. 464.

¹⁶⁸ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 102-3.

¹⁶⁹ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 102-3.

¹⁷⁰ Tahmas Khan Miskin, *Tahmas Namah*, p. 116.

¹⁷¹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-I*, folio nos. 190-91, GNDU.

Khan had hardly any nerve to face the Sikhs. Thus, Dadan Khan held a meeting of his advisors such as Mian Muhammad Ashiq, Mir Nathu Shah, Hafiz Qadir Bakhah Tajar, Lala Maharaj Singh (grandson of *Diwan* Surat Singh). All of them unanimously advised him to abdicate his gubernatorial office and leave the city of Lahore for the Sikh *Sardars*. They also sensitized him of the possibility of the common people extending tacit or open support to the Sikhs. They told him plainly that the people were satisfied with the Sikh rule. In an attempt to re-establish the Sikhs in Lahore, the common subjects might open the city gates in the night or break holes in the city walls and thus admit the Sikh *Sardars* into the town. Dadan Khan saw wisdom in the counsel of the noble men and went to appear personally before the Sikhs, who, on their part, treated him with great consideration and respect. He was sanctioned a daily allowance of twenty rupees. And thus the *Bhangi Sardars* took over possession of the city of Lahore and its surrounding areas without any violence or bloodshed. They took up the administration of the Suba Lahore with whole-hearted commitment.¹⁷² According to Kanahiya Lal, Dadan Khan was arrested by the Sikhs and was sent into jail but after two months he was released on the request of his brother *Maulvi* Abdulla Khan.¹⁷³

Lahore which had always been the provincial capital, gave *Bhangi Sardars* a strategic edge over the other *Misals*. Now with the possession of Lahore, the *Bhangis* became the most powerful masters of the Punjab. Lahore remained under the control of the *Bhangis* up to 1799, when Ranjit Singh captured it.¹⁷⁴

Around this time, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh *Bhangi* organized their forces in a well organized association and joined with Tara Singh, Sahib Singh

¹⁷² Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 264-65, DPHS, PUP; Giani Gain Singh, *Panth Parkash*, p. 1058.

¹⁷³ Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 83.

¹⁷⁴ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-I*, folio no. 192, GNDU; Muhammad Baqir, *Lahore past and present*, p. 198.

and Jiwan Singh to launch a fresh assault against the Afghan Governor of Sialkot. The confidantes of the famous Gulab Singh, Mariwala, represented the *Bhangis* in Sialkot at that time. Soon the *Bhangis* entered Sialkot and occupied the fort. They also captured the whole territory around Sialkot, which yielded revenues worth rupees 60,000 annually. Sialkot was then given over to the four of their retainers Natha Singh, Mohar Singh Atariwala, Sahib Singh Aynawal and Jwahar Singh *Ghuman*, who held the Sialkot district in four divisions. According to the author of *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, Ganesh Das Badehra, the Sikhs divided all the areas of the city into four *Muhallas* (divisions) and requested the people (who were leaving the city during the invasions of Ahmed Shah Abdali) to continue live their peaceful life.¹⁷⁵ Karam Singh *Bhangi* a Jat of the Gill tribe of Chhina village, then took possession of Chhina, Firozki, Kaleki, Rurki and Bajra in the Sialkot district and the neighboring villages yielding 50,000 rupees.¹⁷⁶

In 1767, Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* and Ganda Singh *Bhangi* with their associates acquired the possession of the tract of country lying between the salt-range hills and the river Chenab, nearly as far as Sahiwal. The division of the new possessions falling within this district was as follows: the territories of Midh and Musachuha, as dependencies of Kadirabad, were retained as their own share by Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh, the most prominent *Sardars* of the *Bhangi Misal*; village Maini was assigned to *Sardar* Tara Singh, while Bhera with Ahmadabad fell into the hands of Mann Singh from whom they passed in 1769 to Dhanna Singh and Charat Singh of the same confederacy. The Muslims chieftains of Sahiwal, Mitha Tiwana and Khushab though constantly hard pressed, were able generally to resist the encroachments of their new neighbors. Although, the

¹⁷⁵ Ganesh Das Badehra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, folio nos. 134-38, DPHS, PUP; Sialkot District Gazetteers, Lahore, 1921, p. 18.

¹⁷⁶ Lepel Griffin and W.L. Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-II, p. 500.

Bhangis had succeeded in wresting from Muhammad Jahan of Sahiwal the greater part of his possession, thus appropriating to themselves the whole Doab east of Shahpur, while to the west of that place as far as Nihang, the country owed allegiance to the authority of the chief of Sahiwal.¹⁷⁷

After regaining control of the city of Lahore, Gujjar Singh now began to further extend the boundaries of their territory by conquering the uncontrolled parts of the province of the Punjab. It needs to be mentioned that in 1765, the chief of Gujrat, Muqarrab Khan had been defeated and killed by Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*. Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* had established his headquarters here. When Gujjar Singh was in the Majha area, *Nawab* Sarbuland Khan, the relative of Ahmad Shah Abdali, occupied Rohtas and took possession of Gujrat. He killed *Chaudhri* Rehmat Khan *Qanungo* of Gujrat and *Diwan* Shiv Nath. In the meantime, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* and Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* took a firm resolve that unless the *Nawab* of Rohtas was driven out of his possessions they would not be able to set-up and consolidate their principalities. The two *Sardars* Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* and Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* re-crossed the river Chenab with a view to fighting against the *Nawab* of Rohtas. The *Nawab* come out to fight with the Sikhs, but after some initial skirmishes with the Sikhs, the *Nawab's* forces were defeated at the hands of the Sikhs and took flight to the fort of Rohtas. The Sikh *Sardars* besieged the fort of Rohtas and its inmates, including the *Nawab*, were made prisoners in the city or fort of Rohtas. Now they set out to conquer the areas of Jhelum, 53 kilometers from Gujrat and Rohtas. It was agreed that the whole region, along the highway up to the Indus, would belong to the Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*. The western parts in the Chaj-Doab and Sind Sagar-Doab, with the

¹⁷⁷ Shahpur District Gazetteers, 1883-84, pp. 17-18; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, p. 282; Ously, G. & W.E Davies, *Report on the revised settlement of Shahpoor District in the Rawalpindi Division*, (1866), Lahore, 1886, p. 37 (here after given as SR Shahpur District, 1866).

exception of those places already under the *Bhangi* chiefs would be in the sphere of *Sukerchakia*. The city and fort fell into the lot of Charat Singh *Sukerchakia*.¹⁷⁸

After accomplishing the task of taking the possession of the Jhelum areas, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* initiated the process of systematic subjugation of the war like tribes of the Salt-Range and Rawalpindi. The land between the river Jhelum and the river Indus was full of ravines. It was an arid area. Between Rohtas and Rawalpindi a distance of about 100 kilometers covering Jhera, Jagatpur, Pharwala and Pakoke Sarae was the stronghold of the Gakhars. The Gakhars were hardy and numerous tribes of great valour. Sultan Mukarram Khan of Pharwala, Karmullah Khan of Dhani and Mansur Khan of Gheb submitted to power of Gujjar Singh. Gujjar Singh then conquered the territory of Pathohar, including two *Parganas* of Wangli and Pharwala. Wangli contained eight *Tappas* with its headquarter at Kalra town.¹⁷⁹

In addition to Gakhars there were other tribes such as Awans, Dhunds and Ghulers. In Jhelum district they occupied the tract of Awan Kari lying across the river Gabir. They occupied a string of crucial positions in the Rawalpindi district. The Awan strongholds in the Rawalpindi district were at Chihan, Jand Bugdial and Sarwala. An Awan clan known as Guleras, notorious for marauding activities, lived to the north of Rawalpindi. The Dhund tribes, a lawless and refractory people, inhabited the hilly region to the north of Rawalpindi between Hazara and Murree. Their citadels were at Dewal, Kahuta and Murree. It was with such people that Gujjar Singh had to deal with and make them his tributaries.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 102-3; Rawalpindi District Gazetteer, 1909, p. 44.

¹⁷⁹ Jhelum District Gazetteers, 1907, pp. 69-70.

¹⁸⁰ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, pp. 319-20; Jhelum District Gazetteers, 1907, p. 70; Imperial Gazetteer of India, Punjab, Provincial Series, Vol-I, p. 144; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 228.

Rawalpindi was an insignificant place in those days. It contained a few of Rawals or Hindu mendicants. Gujjar Singh realized its strategic importance as it was situated at the junction of two highways from Kabul to Lahore and from Kabul to Kashmir. Gujjar Singh, along his son Sahib Singh, marched towards Rawalpindi in the winter of 1767. After extending his control over Rawalpindi, Gujjar Singh gave the charge of Rawalpindi to Milkha Singh Thepuria. Thereafter, Gujjar Singh proceeded to Hasan Abdal, 46 kilometers from Rawalpindi and established his seat at Kali Sarae nearby. Gujjar Singh then went ahead to Attock, 53 kilometers from Hasan Abdal and captured the areas between Hasan Abdal and Attock. Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* gave the charge of these areas to a Brahman named Ram Singh Padha and he also established his headquarters at Kali Sarae. Both the *Sardars* viz. Gujjar Singh and Milkha Singh, had worked as a united team. Individually, each was responsible for his own region, but jointly they were responsible for their collective defense requirements. Milkha Singh's wife exercised supervision over the army of Milkha Singh. Milkha Singh had control over the whole areas lying between Rohtas and Attock. Milkha Singh appointed Sadhu Singh to discharge the duty of providing rations for the Sikh troops. Budh Singh was to supervise the collection of revenues in the absence of Milkha Singh and his wife commanded Sikh forces to scotch all local rebellions between Rawalpindi and Attock. The villages of Kotli, Chapar and Raniyal were given to Karam Singh of Haranpur by Milkha Singh. *Tappa* and *Qila* Rotala were given to Chait Singh, brother of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*. Kalra and Pothohar were assigned to Jodh Singh Atariwala. In addition to this, he was made the *Thanedar* of the fort and a *Tehsildar* or collector of Pothohar. At this time Gujjar Singh's *Misaldar* Jodh Singh joined with his brother Lakha Singh and carried out sporadic attacks in the great part of the Surrian *Pargana*, inclusive the *Ilakas* of Jagdeo, Ghaniwala, Kariyal and Surrian worth rupees 150000.¹⁸¹

¹⁸¹ Rawalpindi District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1883-84, pp. 31, 37-39, 69, 71, 106, 107, 109, 11 and 1893-94, p. 237 and 1909, pp. 42-44; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 130, 134 & Vol-II, pp. 313, 319-20, 377; Imperial Gazetteer of India, Punjab, Provincial Series, Vol-I, pp. 162, 172.

After these conquests, Gujjar Singh moved towards Attock and captured the areas between Rawalpindi and Attock, including the forts of Khairabad, Kalachita and Khairimurat hills.¹⁸²

Gujjar Singh continued with his twelve year subjugation of the warlike tribes in the north-western Punjab. The Awans, Dalals, Gakhars, Ghebas, Guleras, Janjuas, Jodras, Khatars, Runials and Tarkhelis of the Jhelum and Rawalpindi districts and the salt-range all gave way before him. In this onerous task, he was assisted by Charat Singh *Sukerchakia*. In 1770, Gujjar Singh completely won over the Gakhars. In the *Pargana* of Fatahpur Baoarh, the Gakhars owned 669 villages, which were in due course of time, captured by Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*. Out of these 669 villages, 192 villages were granted to Milkha Singh of Rawalpindi. These estates called *Mushakhsa* were recipients only of trifling tributes. The remaining villages were kept under his direct management and were known as the *Khalsa Jagir*. These *Jagirs* were distributed amongst the various Gakhars, Goleras and Janjuas and others as follows: 2 villages Gakhars of Anjuri, 107 villages Gakhars of Chaneri and Mandala hills of Murree and Phuigiran, 1 village Gakhars of Malakpur, 7 villages Gakhars of Rawalpindi, 22 villages Gakhars of Saivadpur, 3 villages Gakhars of Shaikhpur, 22 villages of Goleras, 18 villages Janjuas of Dhanial, 6 villages Janjuas of Runial, 2 villages of Pothials, Tumair, Runials and 2 villages Sayyids of Shalditta. All of 192 villages were under supervision of *Sardar* Milkha Singh of Rawalpindi.¹⁸³

Around the year of 1770, Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* invaded Jammu. Feeling inadequate before the Sikh aggression, *Raja* Ranjit Deo did not offer any resistance to the Sikhs. He submitted to Jhanda Singh and also paid a small

¹⁸² Attock District Gazetteers, Lahore, 1932, pp. 47-48.

¹⁸³ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, pp. 320, 25-26, 29 ; Imperial Gazetteers of India, Punjab, Provincial Series, Vol-II, pp. 325, 29, 30-36, 45, 58; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 231.

tribute.¹⁸⁴ According to George Forster, who visited Jammu in 1783, says “Ranjit Deo paid only a few thousand rupees”. But Giani Gian Singh puts this amount at one lakh rupees, Sialkot District Gazetteer mentioned one lakh and a quarter and Khushwaqat Rai, two and half lakhs.¹⁸⁵ In the beginning he seems to have paid only rupee. 30,000.¹⁸⁶

It has already been mentioned that Kasur had been seized by Hari Singh *Bhangi*, in 1763. After establishing his principality of Kasur, Hari Singh *Bhangi* established a military post to make the Pathans of Kasur desist from their inimical activities. In 1771, some Brahmans of Kasur came to Amritsar and complained against sexual excesses and ill-treatment of Hindus by the Pathans of Kasur. They further voiced their resentment that the cows were publically being slaughtered in various parts of the town. Furthermore, they informed him that, the military post established by *Sardar* Hari Singh *Bhangi* in Kot Khawaja Husian at Kasur had been evicted by the Pathans. After hearing this news, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Gujjar Singh *Bhangis* joined with Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* and several other Sikhs and marched towards Kasur to punish the offenders.¹⁸⁷ When they reached Kasur, two leaders of Kasur named Hamid Khan and Usman Khan owing allegiance to Afghans come out to fight with the Sikhs. In spite of the stubborn resistance on the part the defenders, the Sikhs managed to force their way into the town. Hand to hand combats continued to take place in the streets. The Sikhs destroyed Garhi Adur Rahim Khan and a lot of booty fell into their hands.¹⁸⁸ The other Afghan

¹⁸⁴ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 41; J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 103.

¹⁸⁵ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Sikhan*, folio no.126, DPHS, PUP; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, p. 1170; Sialkot District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1883-84, pp. 17-18.

¹⁸⁶ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 332-333.

¹⁸⁷ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 41; J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 103.

¹⁸⁸ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 297; Lt. R. Maclagan, “Fragments of the history of Mooltan, The Derajat and Bahawalpoor, from Persian MSS” Journal of the Asiatic Society of

Chiefs ultimately found that any further resistance would be in vain and agreed to make peace. They accepted the authority of the Sikhs. They also promised to pay a tribute in addition to a fine (*Nazrana*) of four Lakh of rupees. These terms received the consent of the Sikhs Chiefs. Then Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* re-established the military post of Kot Khwaja Husian. Before leaving, they restored the territory of Kasur to the original rulers and retired from Kasur.¹⁸⁹

While retiring from Kasur the *Bhangi* Chiefs Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh halted at Nauri on the banks of the river Ravi. Afterwards they reached Saurian, 25 kilometers north of Amritsar.¹⁹⁰ Here the two Pathans named Ahmad Khan and Umar Khan accepted their authority and submitted to them and offered money and horses to the *Bhangi* chief Jhanda Singh as a *Nazrana*. The *Bhangi* chiefs next marched towards Jastarwal. The Musalman Chiefs of these places also made presents of horses and 2,000 rupees as a tribute. Jhanda Singh further advanced towards Chamiari, the Rajput ruler of Chamiari paid him rupees 5,000 as a tribute in addition to a few horses. Soon Jhanda Singh retired from Chamiari and passing through Ramdas, 43 kilometers north of Amritsar, came to Pakho Thather, the stronghold of the *Randhawas*, who too found their safety in submission.¹⁹¹

In 1771, Gujjar Singh led an expedition against Ahmed Khan of *Chathas* on the invitation of his brother Pir Muhammad Khan. The two brothers had quarreled with each other. Ahmed Kahn was invited to a conference by Gujjar Singh, where he captured him and shut him without water till he agreed to resign

Bangal, Vol-XVII, Part II, (July to December 1848), p. 564 (here after given as J.A.S.R.Vol, XVII, Part II).

¹⁸⁹ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 297.

¹⁹⁰ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 363-64.

¹⁹¹ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 375, 383; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 209.

the *Zamzama* Gun. Gujjar Singh did not deliver it to Gujrat and kept it for himself.¹⁹²

In 1771 Jhanda Singh again turned his attention against Bahawalpur and he ordered Majha Singh one of his commanders, to carry out an attack on Bahawalpur. On his way, Majha Singh seized Khai, Sadullahpur and several neighboring places which were subject to Bahawalpur. But when he was engaged in fighting with troops of Bahawalpur, he was struck by a bullet and died instantly.¹⁹³ His soldiers did not lose heart and persevered with fighting the enemy. The *Nawab* of Bahawalpur purchased peace with the Sikhs by paying one Lakh of rupees and they further advanced towards Multan. Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* next marched towards Sahiwal, but was repulsed though not before taking possession of a portion of the territory.¹⁹⁴

In the year 1772, a quarrel arose between the successive Governors of Multan, because Timur Shah had appointed Sharif Beg Taklu as Governor of Multan, in place of Shuja Khan and *Haji* Sharif Suddozi.¹⁹⁵ Shuja Khan was determined to recover his lost position. Jaffar Khan the *Nawab* of Bahawalpur was his helper and associate at that time.¹⁹⁶ Soon the combined forces of Shuja Khan and Jaffar Khan besieged Multan. In desperation, Sharif Beg sought help from the *Bhangi Sardars* Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh, in return for a *Nazrana* of one Lakh of rupees. He sought limited help from the *Bhangis* to the extent of

¹⁹² Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, pp. 387-88.

¹⁹³ J.A.S.R. Vol, XVII, Part II, p. 564; Multan District Gazetteer , 1883-84, p. 27 say that the *Bhangi* Chiefs had themselves marched to Multan.

¹⁹⁴ Shahamat Ali, *History of Bahawalpur*, pp. 189 & 200; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, p. 1170; Bahawalpur District Gazetteer, 1904, p. 56.

¹⁹⁵ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 103; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 297; Multan District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1901-2, pp. 53-54; Bahawalpur District Gazetteer, 1904, p. 57.

¹⁹⁶ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 297.

ousting his rivals from the fort of Multan. The *Bhangi Sardars* agreed to help him against Shajua Khan and Zaffar Khan.¹⁹⁷ Soon Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh accompanied by Lehna Singh, at the head of a well-organized and strong army marched towards Multan. On 25, December 1772, they reached Multan to the help of Sharif Beg and besieged the city. The siege had gone on for eighteen days when at last Shuja Khan and Jaffar Khan conceded defeat. Muzaffar Khan, the son of Shuja Khan fled from the battle field. Soon the city of Multan was occupied by the *Bhangi* chiefs and it remained under Sharif Beg Taklu.¹⁹⁸

Then the *Bhangi Sardars* desired to see the temple of Prahladji situated inside the fort. The Governor allowed them to come into the fort in batches of fifty men each. For some time the arrangement went on well and peacefully. Sharif Beg Taklu was applying *Mehndi* to his beard in the upper storey. Just then he heard a great noise below and sent four officers one by one to enquire into the matter. No one returned. The Governor was alarmed. On knowing that the entire Sikh army had entered the fort he tried to flee. Nevertheless, the Sikh chief allowed him to retire with his family and property in safety to Talamba. From there he went to Khairpur, Tanwin, where he died some time afterwards. The fort and the province of Multan fell into the hands of the *Bhangi Sardars* Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh and Lehna Singh and they divided the territory of Multan amongst themselves. Jhanda Singh appointed his step-brother, Diwan Singh Chachowalia, as the Governor of Multan; Jamait Singh was the finance minister of Multan and Lehna Singh was their military commander.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 103; Shahamat Ali, *The History Bahawalpur*, p. 62; Multan District Gazetteer, 1901-2, p. 54; J.A.S.R.Vol, XVII, Part II, pp. 564-67.

¹⁹⁸ Ahmad Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 41; McGregor, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 122.

¹⁹⁹ McGregor, *History of the Sikhs*, pp.122-23; Syed Muhammad Latif, *Early History of the Multan*, Lahore, 1891, p. 21; Multan District Gazetteer, 1901-2, pp. 54-55; J.A.S.R.Vol, XVII, Part II, pp. 564-65.

Afterwards, Ganda Singh *Bhangi* returned through Bahawalpur, from where he extracted a tribute of one Lakh of rupees.²⁰⁰ Then Jhanda Singh turned to the west of Punjab. He first captured Talamba, situated near the bank of the river Ravi. Its fort was built in an area of 1,000 feet square. The outer wall of the fort was 200 feet thick and 20 feet high. There was an inner wall also and between these two walls there was moat almost 100 feet deep. The inner fort was 400 feet square, its walls 40 feet high. In the center of this fort there was a tower 70 feet high. It commanded a large view over the neighborhood.²⁰¹ In his way Jhanda Singh subdued the Baluch territory of Jhang district, which he pillaged and captured. The Baluchs were the most powerful tribe along the course of the river Chenab. They invited the local Chief of Ahmadabad and a battle was fought between their combined armies and the Sikhs at Ahmed Nagar. After defeating them, Jhanda Singh further proceeded towards Mankhera and captured it. He, however failed in an attempt to capture Shujabad, built by the Afghans after the loss of Multan. Further Jhanda Singh marched towards Ahmadabad situated to the west of the river Jhelum opposite Bhera. The Chief of Ahmadabad submitted and paid a tribute of twenty thousand rupees to Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*. Both the places Ahmadabad and Bhera were assigned to Man Singh by Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*.²⁰² Jhanda Singh then crossed the river Indus at Kalabagh. Soon he captured Kalabagh and also captured some portions of Dera Ismail Khan District.²⁰³ On his way back he captured Pindi Bhattian and Dhara (the place under Sardha Singh

²⁰⁰ Montgomery District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1920, pp. 37-38.

²⁰¹ Dera Ismail Khan District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1883-84, p. 33; Bahawalpur District Gazetteer, 1904, p. 57.

²⁰² Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 297-98; Mianwali District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1915, p. 32; Muzaffargarh District Gazetteer, 1916, p. 31; Shahpur District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1917, pp. 2, 27, 54, 55; Jhang District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1929, p. 25.

²⁰³ Dera Ismail Khan District Gazetteer, 1883-84, p. 33; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 297-98; Imperial Gazetteer, of India, Punjab, Provincial Series, Vol-I, p. 201.

who took service under *Sardar Charat Singh Sukerchakia*.) Soon Jhanda Singh attacked the stronghold of *Chathas* Pathans at Rasulnagar later Known as Ramnagar. From here he seized the *Zamzama* gun and carried it to Amritsar. And he placed the gun in *Qila Bhangian*, a fort constructed by him.²⁰⁴ According to Syed Muhammad Latif, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* captured this gun from *Chathas* in 1771 and it remained with the *Bhangis* for some time after which it was wrested by Charat Singh. The *Chathas*, who were always eager to fight with *Sukerchakias*, recovered it in 1772 and removed it to Rasulnagar (Also called Ramnagar).²⁰⁵

Raja Ranjit Deo of Jammu, which was a tributary of Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*, developed a misunderstanding with his eldest son Brij Raj Deo, in 1774 and he thought of setting him aside by nominating the younger brother Dalel Singh, as successor. In order to secure his hereditary rights, Brij Raj Deo broke into rebellion.²⁰⁶ The dispute developed into a war and Brij Raj Deo applied for aid to Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* and Jai *Kanahiya*, both of whom readily assented to help him. Ranjit Deo could not fight against this formidable coalition single-handedly. He invited his overlord Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* to help him against Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* and Jai Singh *Kanahiya*.²⁰⁷ The united forces of Jai Singh *Kanahiya* and Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* marched into the hills and encamped on the banks of the river Basantar near the border of Sialkot district a little to the east of Jammu. Ranjit Deo collected an army of his own, as well as of his allies, such as the chiefs of Chamba, Kangra, Nurpur and Basoli, in addition to the forces of Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*. Both the parties began fighting at Dasuha,

²⁰⁴ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 333; J D Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, pp. 103-4.

²⁰⁵ Syed Muhammad Latif, *Lahore, its History Architectural Remains and Antiquities*, Lahore, 1892, pp. 383-84.

²⁰⁶ George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, pp. 286-87; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 271, DPHS, PUP.

²⁰⁷ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 103-4.

adjacent to Zafarwal. The fighting dragged on for twenty-three days without yielding result. On the twenty third day, Charat Singh was killed by the bursting of his own gun which struck him on the forehead.²⁰⁸

Jai Singh *Kanahiya* could not fight against formidable Jhanda Singh. So he hatched a conspiracy to kill Jhanda Singh by winning over a daring young man of the *Bhangi Misal* who was employed as a sweeper and paid him a sum of 4,000 rupees as the prize for murdering his master. One day after nightfall Jhanda Singh was going to his camp. On the way in the dark he was shot dead from behind by this man and the assassin took shelter in the *Kanahiya's* camp.²⁰⁹

Jhanda Singh's younger brother Ganda Singh was present in the camp. Jhanda Singh's death broke his heart. He did not like to continue the fight and soon retired from Jammu. Ranjit Singh realized the supremacy of Jai Singh *Kanahiya*. He not only patched up peace with his son but also paid one Lakh and twenty-five thousand rupees annually as tribute.²¹⁰

After the death of Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* his younger brother Ganda Singh succeeded to the chieftainship of the *Bhangi Misal*. Ganda Singh carried forward and completed the works of improvement which had been initiated by his deceased brother at Amritsar. Earlier, he had participated in all the activities with Jhanda Singh. He had also taken active part in the campaigns of Bahawalpur, Multan, Central Punjab and Western Punjab.²¹¹

Thus, we can see that by 1774, the *Bhangis* who had emerged triumphant from their Herculean struggles of the past over half-a century, fortified their

²⁰⁸ McGregor, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 123; Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, Oxford, 1905, p.154.

²⁰⁹ McGregor, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 123; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 271-72, DPHS, PUP; C.H Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, London, (ND), reprinted by Language Department, Patiala, 1970, p. 67.

²¹⁰ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 40-41; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 298.

²¹¹ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab* p. 41; McGregor, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 123.

presence in the places that mattered in the political space of the Punjab. The long drawn agony of their subjection came to an end and their dream of independence was realized due to their tenacity of purpose and resourcefulness of mind. They successfully occupied the important parts of the Punjab like Lahore, Multan, Jhang, Chiniot, Sialkot, Gujrat, Rawalpindi, Kasur, Derah Ismial khan, Derah Gazi Khan, Attock, Bahawalpur, Wazirabad, Hassan Abdal, Buria, Jagadhari and some parts of Jammu and Kashmir including; Bhimbar, Mirpur, Kotli, PUNCHH etc. Although, the city of Amritsar later became accessible to all the Sikh *Misals* it was the *Bhangis* who were the first to extend their rule over Amritsar. This *Misal* outshone the other Sikh *Misals* even in the inchoate stages of Sikh resurgence. Thus, the *Bhangis* were probably the first to establish an independent and sovereign Government of their own in their conquered territories. So, we can see that they became the masters of substantial parts of the Punjab, from river Indus to Jamuna and from Kashmir mountains to Multan, on the extreme frontiers as well as in the central Punjab. Thus, they soon emerged as the most powerful masters of the Punjab, during the 7 and 8 decades of 18 century.

Chapter-III

Relations with other Misals

After the martyrdom of Banda Singh *Bahadur*, when the tyranny of the Mughals continued and the Afghans invaded the Punjab, the *Bhangi* leaders collaborated with the other Sikh *Sardars* and decided to take joint action against their common enemy. Earlier they supported each other to occupy the territories of the Mughals and Afghans rulers, later they enter into conflict with each other for the sake of conquering the territories of each others. When Ahmed Shah and his successors invaded Punjab, they came close to each other and made joint attacks on their common enemy. But after the departure of the Afghans they again started fighting with each other. Some times they forged friendly relations and united together for a common action against the other *Sardars*. These groupings and regroupings were made in view of the petty personal interests of the *Sardars*, who changed sides as often as they changed their shirts. From the political accounts of the various *Misals* we find the *Bhangis* and *Ramgarhias* jointly fought against *Phullkian* Chiefs, *Sukerchakias* and *Kanahiyas*; *Bhangis* and *Kanahiyas* jointly fought against *Sukerchakias* and Brij Raj Deo of Jammu, *Bhangis* fought against *Ahaluwalias*, *Bhangis* and *Ahaluwalias* jointly fought against *Sukerchakias* and *Kanahiyas*, *Bhangis* and *Kanahiya's* jointly fought against *Ramgarhias*, *Bhangis* fought against *Karaorsinghias*. Later they even entered into matrimonial alliances with each other. These marriages strengthened the positions of the concerned families and united them for the purpose of the combined action. In many cases their previous rivalries and hostilities also ceased with these matrimonial bonds.

Relations with Ahluwalia Sardars: Jassa Singh son of Badar Singh was the founder of *Ahluwalia Misal*.¹ In his early days he, jointly worked along with the

¹ Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-I & II, Lahore, 1870, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, Vol-II, pp. 452-53; Ganda Singh, *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, pp. 22-23.

Bhangi Sardars as under Hari Singh, Bhima Singh, Sham Singh Naroke and Gurbakhsh Singh Arroanwala in most of their expeditions against the Mughals and Afghans.²

In March 29, 1748, on the organization of *Dal Khalsa*, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was acknowledged the supreme commander of the *Dal Khalsa*. So from the year of 1748, all the Sikh *Sardars* fought under the supreme commandship of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.³ In the beginning Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was opposed to *Bhangi Sardars*. The reason was that Hari Singh *Bhangi*, leader of the *Taruna Dal*, acknowledged Jassa Singh Ahluwalia as Chief of the *Dal Khalsa* only when it suited him like when both the *Dals* were united for a joint action. At other times he considered Jassa Singh the leader of the *Budha Dal* only. The opposition continued even after the death of Hari Singh *Bhangi* in 1765, because his son Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh also maintained the same view as their father.⁴ Even though Jassa Singh was not on good terms with the *Bhangis*, he collaborated with Hari Singh *Bhangi* and Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* in many of the Sikhs expeditions such as: battle against Lakshmi Naryan, officer of Abdus Samad Khan in 1745, battle of Sirhind in 1755, attack on Multan, 1755, attack on Lahore in 1758 and 1761, battle of Kup in 1762 and battle of Sirhind.⁵ In 1763, when *Bhangi Sardars* Hari Singh, Jhanda

² McGregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, London, 1846, pp. 146-47; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, (NP), 1854, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Gurbakhsh Singh), preserved in the library of the Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, Accession 30, folio nos., 267-68, (here after given as DPHS, PUP).

³ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, (NP), 1811, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Milkhi Ram), preserved in the library of the DPHS, PUP, Accession No. 22, folio no. 71; Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, (NP), 1710 -14, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Janak Singh), preserved in the library of the DPHS, PUP, Accession no. 19 folio no. 30.

⁴ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, New Delhi, 1982, p. 36.

⁵ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 81; Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, London, 1812, p. 93; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, (NP), 1865, edited by Bhai Vir Singh, Amritsar, 1965, pp. 339-41; Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, (NP, ND), MS., (Translation of Punjabi), preserved in the library of the DPHS, PUP, Accession no. 33, folio no. 13.

Singh, Ganda Singh, Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh, joined with the other Sikh *Sardars* to lead an expedition against the Pathan colony of Kasur, Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* again joined them.⁶

Till 1765 the relations between the *Bhangis* and *Ahluwalias* remained very cordial and friendly but in the action against Ala Singh of Patiala they found themselves arrayed on opposite sides. Jassa Singh was inclined towards Ala Singh (who had purchased the title of *Raja* from Ahmed Shah) and was jealous of Hari Singh *Bhangi's* power and influence.⁷ However, Hari Singh *Bhangi* the leader of *Taruna Dal* marched upon Patiala. But Hari Singh died while fighting and the peace was established between the *Bhangis* and *Phullkian* Chief Ala Singh, through Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*.⁸

In Dec 1766, Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* collaborated with the *Bhangi Sardars* Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh and Hira Singh *Nakai* against Jahan Khan who was beaten at Sialkot.⁹ In 1774, Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* formed a coalition with Ganda Singh and Jhanda Singh *Bhangis*, Nar Singh *Chamiariwala* and many other Sikh *Sardars*, to expel Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia* from the Punjab and seize his possessions.¹⁰

⁶ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, (NP), 1824, (Translated into Punjabi by Gurbakhsh Singh), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, p. 15; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 388-89; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of Panjab*, Calcutta, 1891, reprint New Delhi, 1964, pp. 315-16.

⁷ Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio no. 32; Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 25.

⁸ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 110, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-II, p. 462.

⁹ Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio nos. 32-33; Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, Lahore, 1880-85, (Translated into Punjabi by Amarwant Singh), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, pp. 12-13.

¹⁰ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 96; J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, London, 1849, reprint Amritsar, 2005, p. 103. According to Lepel Griffin and Syed Muhammad Latif, this was happening in 1776. Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-II, p. 462; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 316. This may be wrong, because Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*, Ganda Singh *Bhangi* and Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* were died in 1774. In view of this action J D Cunningham is absolutely right.

The antagonism again flared up between the *Bhangis* and *Ahluwalias* in, 1774 when Jassa Singh provided aid to Jai Singh and Tara Singh *Kanahiya* in the battle of Pathankot against Ganda Singh *Bhangi*. In the battle field Ganda Singh the last powerful *Bhangi Sardar* died.¹¹ According to Ram Sukh Rao, after Ganda Singh's death Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* came between the *Bhangis* and *Kanahiyas* for the restoration of peace.¹²

In order to maintain friendly relations with the *Bhangis*, Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* engaged the daughter of his cousin Bhag Singh to Gujjar Singh *Bhangi's* eldest son Sukha Singh. This marriage took place in 1779. Thus against Jai Singh *Kanahiya's* domination of two *Misals*, *Kanahiya* and *Sukerchakia*, Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* created a combination of other three powers *Ahluwalia*, *Bhangis* and the *Phullkian* state.¹³ He also got *Phullkian Raja* Amar Singh's son, Sahib Singh engaged to the Rttan Kaur daughter of Ganda Singh *Bhangi*. The marriage ceremony was performed at village Panjwar which took place in 1782. Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* attended the marriage party when it passed thorough Kapurthala.¹⁴ When Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia* provides aid to *Raja Brij Raj Deo* of Jammu against Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* on the question of *Karrianwala*, Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* mediated and brought peace between them.¹⁵

In October 22, 1783 Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* passed away. After his death, he was succeeded by his close relative Bhag Singh *Ahluwalia*.¹⁶ After Jassa Singh's

¹¹ Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio nos. 58-59, DPHS, PUP; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1881, (Translated into Punjabi by Jit Singh Seetal), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1987, p. 86.

¹² Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio no. 59, DPHS, PUP.

¹³ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 37.

¹⁴ Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio no. 70, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 50; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 328.

¹⁵ Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-II, p. 472; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 231.

¹⁶ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 66; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 316-17.

death the relations between the *Ahluwalia* and the *Bhangis* came in a flash point, because Bhag Singh helped Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia* when he was besieged at Amritsar by Sahib Singh *Bhangi*, Karam Singh *Dullu* and Tara Singh Chainpuria, who were made assistance to Jai Singh *Kanahiya* against Charat Singh.¹⁷ Bhag Singh then entered into a quarrel with Gulab Singh *Bhangi* who owned Amritsar and the neighboring areas and whose soldiers had put to death an *Ahluwalia* agent at Chaubal. With a view of taking revenge for the death of his agent, Bhag Singh *Ahluwalia* occupied Jandiala and Tarn Taran but made no effort to retain these acquisitions and returned to Kapurthala.¹⁸

In 1801 Bhag Singh died and was succeeded by his only son Fateh Singh. One of his first acts was to form an alliance, offensive and defensive, with Ranjit Singh, who was, then gaining power in the Punjab. Then the young *Ahluwalia* Chief Fateh Singh and Ranjit Singh *Sukerchakia* exchanged turbans at Fatehbad near Tarn Taran and swore before the *Guru Granth Sahib* to become each other's brothers.¹⁹

This act made it clear that the enemy of Ranjit Singh would be the enemy of Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia* and that the *Bhangis* were the bitter enemies of Ranjit Singh and that of *Ahluwalias*. So Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia* helped Ranjit Singh in many of his expeditions. One of his first actions was against the *Bhangi* confederacy at Bhasin in 1800, when they were entered into conflict with Ranjit Singh. Soon after the battle of Bhasin, Sahib Singh *Bhangi* of Gujrat and Nizam-

¹⁷ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 26-27; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 45.

¹⁸ Ghulam Muhayy-ud-Din, Bute Shah *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, (NP), 1848, MS., Part-II & III, (Translated into Punjabi by Janak Singh), preserved in the library of the DPHS, PUP, Accession No. 26, folio no. 12; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 350-51, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-II, p. 473.

¹⁹ Fakir Syed Waheedudin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, (NP, ND), reprint Punjabi University, Patiala, 1981, p. 56; M.L Ahluwalia, *Remembering Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab*, New Delhi, 1999, p. 43.

ud-Din of Kasur, both openly revolted. Ranjit Singh did not himself march against Sahib Singh and he sent an expedition under Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia* against them.²⁰

A little later Ranjit Singh marched towards the village Zamke and seized the village and entered into fight with Sahib Singh *Bhangi*. When Ranjit Singh failed to defeat Sahib Singh *Bhangi*, he called Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia* for assistance. At first Fateh Singh came to the help of Ranjit Singh but later through his mediacy Ranjit Singh cultivated friendly relations with the *Bhangis*.²¹ Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia* also allied with Ranjit Singh against Gurdit Singh *Bhangi* son of Gulab Singh *Bhangi* in an expedition of Amritsar in 1805.²²

In 1808 Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia* accompanied allied with Ranjit Singh in his march towards Sialkot and captured the fort from Jiwan Singh *Bhangi* the *Thenedar* of Sialkot.²³ In 1810, Fateh Singh *Gujrati* son of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* on the death of his brother Sahib Singh *Bhangi* and resumption of the *Jagir* went to Kapurthala, where he remained in the service of the *Ahluwalia Sardar* Fateh Singh.²⁴

Relations with *Dallewal Misal*: Gulab Singh was the founder of the *Misal Dallewal*, a Khatri of village Dallewal, near Dera Baba Nanak.²⁵ During Nadir Shah's invasion in 1739, *Bhangis* and the *Dallewalias* jointly fought against Nadir

²⁰ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 351, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 59-60; Bikramjit Hasrat, *Life and time of Ranjit Singh*, Hoshiarpur, 1977, p. 43.

²¹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 60-61.

²² Ali-ud-Din Mufti, folio no. 352, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh- Daftar-II*, pp. 65-66; Bhagat Singh, *History of the Sikh Misals*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1993, p. 101.

²³ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, p. 79

²⁴ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs, Vol-I & II*, Lahore, 1890, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 345; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab* p. 306.

²⁵ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Amritsar, (ND), part-II, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, pp. 250 -51; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 321.

Shah.²⁶ At the formation of *Dal Khalsa* in 1748, Gulab Singh was declared the head of the *Dallewal Misal* and Gurdial Singh and Tara Singh *Ghaiba* as his deputies.²⁷ In 1755 Hari Singh *Bhangi* and Tara Singh *Ghaiba* joined in the expedition of Jaipur, the state of Rana Madho Singh.²⁸ Tara Singh also formed alliance with *Bhangi Sardars* Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* and other Sikhs leaders for the help of Adina Beg Khan and the Marathas in the expedition of Lahore and captured Sirhind in 1758.²⁹

According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, Tara Singh also collaborated with the Hari Singh and Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* in their expedition into Kasur and obtained cash and jewelry worth four lakhs rupees.³⁰

It is believed that Tara Singh *Ghaiba* actively participated in most of the Sikh incursions in the Ganga Doab, Rohilakhand and Delhi in the company of Rai Singh *Bhangi* of Buria.³¹ The combined forces crossed the river Jamuna on April 22, 1775 near Kunjpura. They easily occupied the territories of Lakhauti, Gangoh, Ambeta, Nanautah and Deoband and fell upon the territory of Zabita Khan. They also seized Barah Sadat village, Shanli, Karianah, Kandhla and Mirth. They further advanced towards Khurja, while returning they sized Paharganj and Jaisinghpura at Delhi on July 15, 1775. They crossed the river Jamuna and return to home on July 24, 1775.³²

²⁶ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part-II, pp. 250 -51.

²⁷ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, part-II, p. 252; Bhagat Singh, *History of the Sikh Misals*, p. 226.

²⁸ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 357, DPHS, PUP; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parakash*, pp. 351-52.

²⁹ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 81, DPHS, PUP; Bakhat Mal, *Khalsa Namah*, folio no. 37, DPHS, PUP; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, p. 355.

³⁰ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 358, DPHS, PUP.

³¹ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 105; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 55.

³² J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 105; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 55.

Tara Singh *Ghaiba* also allied with the *Bhangi Sardars* Lehna Singh *Bhangi* of Lahore and Gujjar Singh and Jodh Singh Wazirabadia when they came to the aid of *Raja Amar Singh* of Patiala against Baghel Singh *Karorsinghia* and Delhi Nawab Abdul Ahad.³³

The friendship between the *Bhangis* and *Dallewalias* came close to a break down in 1792-93, when Jaimal Singh, son of Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya*, was imprisoned by Fateh Singh, son of Mehtab Singh *Kanahiya* and supported by Gulab Singh *Bhangi* of Amritsar. Tara Singh came to the aid of Jaimal Singh *Kanahiya* against the *Bhangis* allies.³⁴

Relations with Ramgarhia Misal: This *Misal* took its name from Ram Rauni or 'Fortalice of God, at Amritsar. It was converted into *Ramgarh*, or 'fort of the Lord,' by Jassa Singh the celebrated *Thoka*, or carpenter native of Ichhogill. However, the founder of the *Misal* was Khushal Singh, a *Jat* of *Mouza Guga*, in Amritsar district. According to Rattan Singh *Bhangu*, in 1752, when the Sikhs fought on the side of Mir Mannu against Ahmed Shah Abdali, Hari Singh *Bhangi* accidentally killed Khushal Singh *Ramgarhia* as the incident disputes between the *Sardars* had not completely died out. This brought him the wrath of the main body of the *Khalsa*. A major dispute arose as other Sikh *Sardars* resented this outrageous act and started pillaging the *Bhangi's* camp. In these circumstances, Hari Singh *Bhangi* left the camp with his followers and returned to their original camp at Amritsar.³⁵ After his death Nodh Singh succeeded the Chiefship of the *Misal*. On Nodh Singh's death the most daring man in this *Misal* was Jassa Singh son of Bhagwan Singh took the possession of the *Misal* and subsequently became

³³ Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 49; Bhagat Singh, *History of the Sikh Misals*, pp. 274-75.

³⁴ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 139, DPHS, PUP; Bute Shah, *Twarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio nos. 49-50, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 110-11, DPHS, PUP.

³⁵ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 339; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 332-34 ; Giani Gian Singh *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part-II, p. 233.

very famous among the Sikhs as a brave and intrepid warrior.³⁶ Some times Jassa Singh fought on the side of Adina Beg Khan against Ahmed Shah Abdali. In 1758 Ahmed Shah Abdali, appointed Timur Shah as the Governor of Lahore and Adina Beg Khan formed an alliance with the Sikhs and the Marathas, in which Jassa Singh joined with the *Bhangi Sardars* like Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh and with the other Sikhs in their war against the Timur Shah.³⁷

The rising power of the *Bhangis* could not remain unchallenged even from their best friends. Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia* had very friendly and cordial relations with the *Bhangis*.³⁸ They had jointly led many expeditions against their common enemies; such as, against Zain Khan of Sirhind in 1762 and against Jahan Khan, in 1763 and Ahmed Shah Abdali when he was on his way back to Afghanistan in 1764.³⁹ They had also jointly attacked Kasur. Their relations remained smooth and unruffled till 1763. It is said that during their joint attack of Kasur they got huge amount of booty. Mali Singh, brother of Jassa Singh, was alleged to have concealed a valuable part of the booty.⁴⁰

There was a profundity in their relations, when Jassa Singh helped Ganda Singh *Bhangi*, in the battle of Dinanagar in 1774, against Tara Singh and Jai Singh *Kanahiya*.⁴¹ According to Bute Shah, Jassa Singh instigates Ganda Singh against the *Kanahiyas*.⁴²

³⁶ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 339-40; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p.355.

³⁷ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 306-7; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 342-55.

³⁸ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no. 11, DPHS, PUP.

³⁹ Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, (NP),1765, (Edited by Ganda Singh), Amritsar, 1939, pp. 48-50; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 255-56, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, p. 12; Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio no.33, DPHS, PUP.

⁴⁰ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no. 13, DPHS, PUP.

⁴¹ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no.119, DPHS, PUP; Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 39-40.

⁴² Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no.14, DPHS, PUP.

Jassa Singh had conquered the hill states, Riarki and Doaba till 1774; with his conquest his power reached its zenith. Consequently many Sikh *Sardars* became jealous of his increasing power especially *Ahluwalias*, *Kanahiyas* and *Sukerchakias* who decided to throw out Jassa Singh from Punjab and they invited the *Bhangis*. Now their friendship was converted to hostility because Desa Singh *Bhangi* and Nar Singh Chamariwala, helped Jai Singh *Kanahiya* and Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*, to expel Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia* from Punjab and Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* took all his possessions.⁴³ Jassa Singh fled to Hansi and Hisar where he was challenged by Rai Singh and Sher Singh *Bhangi* of Buria and their allies Gurdit Singh Ladwa, Baghel Singh and Gurbakahsh Singh. But later they maintained a friendly relation with Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*.⁴⁴

After the occupation of Lahore in July 1799, by Ranjit Singh, many of the Sikh Chiefs joined hands to restrain Ranjit Singh from his policy of territorial aggrandizement, some of them like Gulab Singh *Bhangi*, Sahib Singh and Nizam-ud-Din Khan, who formed an alliance against him and met him at Bhasin in 1800; Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia* also joined with them. Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia* continued having friendly relations with the *Bhangis* till his death.⁴⁵

Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia* died on 1803 and after his death he was succeeded by his son Jodh Singh.⁴⁶ After his father's death Jodh Singh was very friendly to

⁴³ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio nos. 107-8, DPHS, PUP; J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 104; According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, Jai Singh sent a letter to Gulab Singh *Bhangi* for help against Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*. Ali-ud-din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos.340-42, DPHS, PUP.

⁴⁴ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no. 59, DPHS, PUP. According to Khushwaqat Rai, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh *Bhangi* also helped the other Singh *Sardars* during this action against Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*. Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio nos. 107-8, DPHS, PUP. This may be not feasible because Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh died before this action.

⁴⁵ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no. 62, DPHS, PUP; Diwan Amar Nath, *Zaffar-nama-i-Ranjit Singh*, Lahore, 1837, (Translated into Punjabi by Dr. Kirpal Singh), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1983, p. 10.

⁴⁶ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no. 63, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 359.

the *Bhangis*. In 1805 when *Maharaja* Ranjit Singh with Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia* and Sada Kaur besieged the city of Amritsar and fell upon Gurdit Singh *Bhangi* and Mai Sukhan (widow of Gulab Singh *Bhangi*). At that time Jodh Singh *Ramgarhia* sent a secret reinforcement of three hundred soldiers to Mai Sukhan. At the same time he advised her either to hand over the bone of contention- the *Zamzama* gun, to Ranjit Singh or destroy the gun. She did not heed the suggestions. When the opposing forces were at the point of severely clashing, Jodh Singh with *Akali Phulla Singh* intervened and persuaded Sukhan to surrender.⁴⁷ After losing the city of Amritsar, Mai Sukhan and Gurdit Singh accepted the hospitality of Jodh Singh *Ramgarhia* and stayed with him for some time. Later on the recommendation of Jodh Singh, Ranjit Singh granted a *Jagir* in the areas of Panjwar village for their assistance.⁴⁸

Relations with *Faizullapuria (Singhpuria) Misal:* Kapur Singh a *Virk Jat* of village Faizullapur near Amritsar was the famous leader of the *Faizullapuria Misal*.⁴⁹ In 1733, when Zakariya Khan Governor of Lahore failed to suppress the Sikhs, he won them over by offering them *Jagirs* and title of *Nawab*, which was confirmed on *Sardar* Kapur Singh. All the Sikh *Sardars* paid utmost regards to *Nawab* Kapur Singh and considered him their leader. So, the entire Sikh *Jatha* work together under the supreme commandership of *Nawab* Kapur Singh and *Bhangi Misal* was also one of them.⁵⁰

Sardar Kapur Singh died in 1753, after his death his nephew Khushal Singh succeeded him.⁵¹ According to Ahmed Shah Batalvi, Khushal Singh was the associate of Hari Singh *Bhangi* and participate with Hari Singh *Bhangi* in all his

⁴⁷ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio nos. 17-18, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 336-37.

⁴⁸ Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 154; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 337.

⁴⁹ . Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 45; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 100.

⁵⁰ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, part-II, p. 268; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Bombay, 1950, reprint Punjabi University, Patiala, 2006, p. 121.

⁵¹ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 45; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 100.

activities against Ahmed Shah Abdali.⁵² The relations between *Bhangis* and *Faizullapurias*, after the death of *Nawab* Kapur Singh remained very cordial and friendly. Khushal Singh was very close to Rai Singh *Bhangi*, so in 1784, when *Raja* Amar Singh of Patiala formed an alliance with Jai Singh *Kanahiya* and marched against Rai Singh *Bhangi* (who had captured four forts of Amar Singh of Patiala), Khushal Singh came for the aid of Rai Singh *Bhangi*.⁵³ Soon they seized the town of Banur. But soon afterwards *Raja* Amar Singh defeated them with help of Dhar Rao Maratha and recovered the forts from Rai Singh *Bhangi*.⁵⁴

A little later *Diwan* Nanu Mal of Patiala was instigated by Hari Singh of Sialba to launch an attack upon Khushal Singh *Faizullapurias*, who had taken Awankot and other villages of the Sialba territory. They first attacked Kotla (a small fort under Mann Singh son-in-law of *Singhpurias*) further they besieged Awankot but Budh Singh son of Khushal Singh *Faizullapurias*, at that time combined with Rai Singh *Bhangi* of Jagadhari and Tara Singh *Ghaiba*, compelled the raising of the siege. The Patiala army could not succeed in their attempt to get Awankot released from them.⁵⁵

In 1795, Khushal Singh died and his son Budh Singh succeeded him. After his death his son Budh Singh continued to have friendly relations with the *Bhangis*. To consolidate the position of the *Misal* Budh Singh also married his sister to Lehna Singh *Bhangi* of Lahore.⁵⁶ According to Bute Shah, Khushal Singh during his life time married his daughter to Man Singh *Bhangi* son of Rai Singh *Bhangi*,

⁵² Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 45.

⁵³ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 109; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 78.

⁵⁴ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 323.

⁵⁵ Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-I, pp. 59-60; Bhagat Singh, *History of the Sikh Misals*, pp. 145-46.

⁵⁶ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 45-46; Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 100, DPHS, PUP.

who ruled over a part of Multan. He also gifted him the villages of Kakanwali, Kotla and Nasut around the Jullundur district in dowry.⁵⁷

Relations with *Karorsinghia Misal*: Karora Singh, a *Virk Jat* native of village Barki in Lahore district was the famous leader of the *Karorsinghia Misal*. He maintained gracious relations with the *Bhangis* in the face of internal strife and Afghan invasions.⁵⁸

When the Sikhs were surrounded by Lakhpat Rai in the forest of Khanuwan, in June 1746 Karora Singh collaborated with the Sikhs including the *Bhangi Sardars* Chajja Singh, Bhima Singh and Hari Singh to meet with Lakhpat Rai in the battle field.⁵⁹ According to J D Cunningham, in 1770 Rai Singh *Bhangi* of Buria and Baghel Singh *Karorsinghia* made an alliance to harass Najib-ud-Daula.⁶⁰

In 1775 *Bhangis* and *Karorsinghias* took hostile postures and there were occasional confrontations between the two. Baghel Singh son of Karora Singh acquired village Zahura on the river Beas, he also captured the three *Parganas* of Tarn Taran, Sabroon and Sirhali from Gulab Singh *Bhangi*.⁶¹ According to Khushwaqat Rai, Gulab Singh *Bhangi* could not face Baghel Singh in the field, so he engaged a Brahman to get Baghel Singh killed through magic and sorcery but the experiment proved ineffective.⁶² However, Baghel Singh joined *Bhangi Sardar* Rai Singh of Jagadhari, in 1775 in the expeditions of Lakhauti, Gangoh, Ambeta,

⁵⁷ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no. 29, DPHS, PUP.

⁵⁸ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no. 15, DPHS, PUP; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part-II, p. 255.

⁵⁹ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 310-13; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 125.

⁶⁰ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p.103.

⁶¹ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio nos. 101-102, DPHS, PUP; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, part-II, p. 259; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 84.

⁶² Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 102, DPHS, PUP.

Nanautah and Deoband.⁶³ But he did not made good terms with other *Bhangi Sardars*: Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh and Jodh Singh of Wazirabad who had joined the *Phullkian* Chief Amar Singh, in 1779 against Baghel Singh *Karorsinghia* and Delhi *Nawab* Majad-ud- Abdul Ahad.⁶⁴

On September 1780, Bhag Singh Buria brother of Rai Singh *Bhangi* along with Bhanga Singh of Thanesar and Sahib Singh Khondah joined Diwan Singh Lang of Sikandera against Baghel Singh *Karorsinghia*, who had seized the town of Sikandera.⁶⁵ But in January, 1785 Beghel Singh *Karorsinghia* and Rai Singh *Bhangi* joined with the other Sikh leaders and entered the Ganga Doab and fell upon the territory of Zabita Kahn of Ghausgarh.⁶⁶

But the opposition was soon resumed in, 1792-93 Baghel Singh helped *Rani* Sahib Kaur wife of Jaimal Singh *Kanahiya* (Jaimal Singh *Kanahiya* was held captive at Amritsar by Fateh Singh *Kanahiya* with the support of his son-in-law Gulab Singh *Bhangi* of Amritsar), against Fateh Singh *Kanahiya* and Gulab Singh *Bhangi*.⁶⁷ Baghel Singh raised a serious objection to the arrest of Jaimal Singh and demanded his immediate release. Then Baghel Singh asked them to send Jaimal Singh to their side and whatever the price for his release would be paid by him. Gulab Singh *Bhangi* and Fateh Singh did not accept the offer. However, little later Jaimal Singh was released without any ransom.⁶⁸

⁶³ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 323; Bhagat Singh, *History of the Sikh Misals*, p. 274.

⁶⁴ Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 49; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 323-24.

⁶⁵ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 86.

⁶⁶ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 117; Bhagat Singh, *History of the Sikh Misals*, p. 281.

⁶⁷ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 310, DPHS, PUP; Bhagat Singh, *History of the Sikh Misals*, p. 165.

⁶⁸ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 310-11, DPHS, PUP; Bhagat Singh, *History of the Sikh Misals*, pp. 165-66 & 284.

Relations with Phullkian Misal: Ala Singh the founder of Patiala state was brave leader of *Phullkian Misal*.⁶⁹ Remarkably among the *Phullkian* Chiefs Ala Singh of Patiala who was very diplomatic in his dealings. Patiala and Jind always submitted to Delhi, Qandhar and Kabul, as well as to the *Dal Khalsa*.⁷⁰

According to Qazi Nur Muhammad, who accompanied Ahmed Shah Abdali's expedition of 1764-65, writes about Ala Singh "He is a *Hakim* (ruler), a *Zabit* (Governor) and a *Amin* (commissioner), no body else is so resourceful in the countries as the Punjab, Lahore and Sirhind as he is. He serves the Shah in his absence as well as in his presence and carries out his orders with wisdom and dignity."⁷¹ In March 1765, Ala Singh accepted the authority of Ahmed Shah Abdali.⁷² But *Dal Khalsa* was enraged at Ala Singh's submission to the enemy of their faith. At that time Hari Singh *Bhangi* persuaded the *Dal Khalsa* to penalize Ala Singh and marched upon his capital. At this time Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* patron of Ala Singh, said that Ala Singh is a Sikh of the *Guru* and no action should be taken against him. But the *Taruna Dal* was opposed to the policy of reconciliation and under its leading leader Hari Singh *Bhangi* was fuming and marched upon Patiala against Ala Singh. Hari Singh *Bhangi* delivered the attack and a battle was fought between *Taruna Dal* and Ala Singh of Patiala at village Lang-Challian near Patiala. In action Hari Singh *Bhangi* was killed.⁷³ The next leader of the *Taruna Dal* was Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*. He was on friendly terms with Ala Singh. Thus

⁶⁹ Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 102; Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 13; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 326.

⁷⁰ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 153-, 207.

⁷¹ Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, pp. 45-46.

⁷² Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, p. 46; Karam Singh, *Jiwan Birtant Maharaja Ala Singh*, Tarn Taran, 1918, pp. 212-13.

⁷³ Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 25, Khushwaqat Rai, says that Hari Singh *Bhangi* was poisoned to death by Ala Singh, which may be incorrect, because Bute Shah, says that Hari Singh, killed by gun shot. Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 110, DPHS, PUP; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, Vol-II, folio no. 11, DPHS, PUP. Giani Gian Singh Says that Hari Singh *Bhangi*, helped Raja Amar Singh of Patiala, to occupy Bhatia near Hisar and was killed in the battle field. Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part-II, p. 227.

the entire *Dal Khalsa* turned in favor of Ala Singh of Patiala and retired from Patiala.⁷⁴

Shortly afterwards the battle Ala Singh passed away on 22 August, 1765. After his death Ala Singh was succeeded by his son *Raja Amar Singh*.⁷⁵ The new ruler Amar Singh maintained gracious relations with *Bhangis* particularly with Rai Singh *Bhangi* of Jagadhari and his brother Sher Singh of Buria, who jointly fought against the allies of Hari Singh the ruler of Sialba, Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*, Gurdit Singh and Diwan Singh Ladwa, Karam Singh of Shahzadpur and Gurbakahsh of Ambala in 1778-79.⁷⁶

In 1779, Desa Singh *Bhangi* of Amritsar, Lehna Singh *Bhangi* of Lahore, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* of Gujrat, Jodh Singh *Bhangi* of Wazirabad, Dal Singh and many other Sikhs went to Patiala for the assistance of *Raja Amar Singh* against the combined forces of Baghel Singh *Karorsinghia*, Delhi *Nawab* Majad-ud-Doulah Abdul Ahad, Sahib Singh Khundawala and Karam Singh Shahid.⁷⁷ When *Nawab* got the news about the march of the Sikhs, he was frightened and he thought of immediate retreat. At this time Baghel Singh told him that the Sikhs would not allow him safe retreat unless they were given money. Baghel Singh *Karorsinghia* retained the loin's share of the three Lakhs of rupees which he had extracted from Desu Singh of Kaithal. He gave a part of that money to the Sikh Chiefs, who retired to their places and the *Nawab* retreated to Delhi.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Karam Singh, *Jiwan Birtant of Maharaja Ala Singh*, pp. 212-13; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 35, 153, 207.

⁷⁵ Bute Shah, *Twarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no. 18, DPHS, PUP; Karam Singh, *Jiwan Birtant of Maharaja Ala Singh*, p. 249.

⁷⁶ Bute Shah, *Twarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio nos. 185-88, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 26.

⁷⁷ Bute Shah, *Twarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no. 188, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-I, pp. 47-49.

⁷⁸ Bute Shah, *Twarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio nos. 188-89, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 49.

Raja Amar Singh died on February 5, 1781 and he was succeeded by his son Sahib Singh.⁷⁹ During his life time, to cultivate a friendly relation with the *Bhangis* he engaged his son Sahib Singh to Rattan Kaur the daughter of Ganda Singh *Bhangi* through Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*. Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* and Rani Hukman wife of Amar Singh suggested an early marriage. The marriage was fixed in 1782, one year after Amar Singh's death. Nanu Mal made elaborate arrangements. The marriage party contained Bhag Singh of Jind, Hamir Singh of Nabha, Desu Singh of Kaithal, *Nawab* Ataullah of Malerkotla and Rai Ahmed of Jagron. Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* joined the marriage party at Kapurthala. He bore the entire expense of the *Braat* from Kapurthala to Tarn Taran. The marriage ceremony was performed at village Panjwar.⁸⁰

In 1785, a quarrel arose between *Raja* Sahib Singh and his *Bakhshi* over the question of roll-call of troops. The *Bakhshi* slapped Sahib Singh who was then ten year old. He went weeping to his mother. The Rani put the *Bakhshi* under arrest. This resulted the *Bakhshi's* relatives held four large forts as avenger of the *Bakhshi's* insult, which they handed over to Rai Singh *Bhangi* of Jagadhari and Baghel Singh *Karorsinghia*.⁸¹

Around the 1788, *Diwan* Nanu Mal of Patiala induced by Hari Singh Sialbah makes attack upon Khushal Singh *Singhpuria* (who had taken Awankot and other villages of the Sialbah country) and reduced Kotlah a small fort held by Mann Singh son-in-law of Khushal Singh *Singhpuria*. At that time Rai Singh

⁷⁹ Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 50; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 328.

⁸⁰ Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Binod*, folio no. 70, DPHS, PUP; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 328. According to Lepel Griffin, the marriage was performed in 1787. Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 58.

⁸¹ Bute Shah, *Twarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio nos. 196-97, DPHS, PUP; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 171.

Bhangi of Jagadhari came for the help of Budh Singh son of Khushal Singh *Singhpuria* against *Diwan* Nanu Mal of Patiala.⁸²

Eventually there was peace between Rai Singh *Bhangi* and *Raja* Sahib Singh of Patiala. In April 1796, a great *Kumbh* fair took place at Hardwar. The pilgrims convened there from all parts of India. The *Gosains* managed the affairs at the fair. Those strictly religious-minded among them were clad in sunshine and were called *Nangas*. Soon Rai Singh *Bhangi* and Sher Singh *Bhangi* joined with *Raja* Sahib Singh of Patiala and their forces numbering about 14,000 arrived at the fair. They were accompanied by a large number of *Udasi Faqirs*, followers of *Guru* Nanak son Sri Chand. The Sikhs encamped at Jawalapur. The *Udasis* came to Hardwar and selected a site for their camp on the bank of the Ganga without the permission of *Gosain Mahant*. The *Gosains* felt offended for not having been consulted about the choice of the site. They insultingly drove away the *Udasis*, plundering the whole camp. At this time the chief leader of *Udasis* priest hurried to the Sikhs camp at Jawalapur and complained to the Sikhs. Soon the entire contingents Sikhs moved towards Hardwar to chastise the *Gosains* and near about five hundred *Sadhus* were cut to pieces. A large number of them drowned in the attempt of crossing the river.⁸³

Relations with Nabha State: *Raja* Hamir Singh of Nabha State died in 1783 and was succeeded by his eight year old son Jaswant Singh. In preference to Jaswant Singh's mother, his step mother *Rani* Deso, became regent of the kingdom. She was a brave lady but due to weak position of the Nabha State she could not handle the state affairs effectively both in peace and war. So in order to maintain the state firmly, she struck a matrimonial alliance with the *Bhangis* and married her daughter named Subha Kaur to Sahib Singh *Bhangi* of Gujrat son of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*.⁸⁴

⁸² Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-I, pp. 59-60.

⁸³ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 175.

⁸⁴ Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 105; Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-II, p. 381; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 185-86.

When *Raja Gajpat Singh* of Jind captured some territory of Nabha State *Sahib Singh Bhangi* of Gujrat came for the aid of his mother-in-law *Rani Deso*. Soon she recover most of the territory with the aid of troops lent by her son-in-law *Sahib Singh Bhangi* which had been seized by *Raja Gajpat Singh*.⁸⁵

Relations with *Kanahiya Misal*: The founder of the *Kanahiya Misal* was *Amar Singh Kingra* who regularly carried out activities against the Mughal Government. Soon *Jai Singh*, a *Sandhu Jat* settled about fifty miles south of Lahore joined the *Jatha* of *Amar Singh Kingra*. After his death *Jai Singh* was nominated the head of the *Kanahiya Misal*.⁸⁶

The relations between the *Bhangis* and the *Kanahiyas* remained very cordial and friendly. In their early days they jointly fought against internal enemies, Mughals and the foreign invaders. In 1761, *Bhangi Sardars Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh*, allied with *Jai Singh and Sobha Singh Kanahiya* and with other Sikhs marched upon Gujranwala to assist *Charat Singh Sukerchakia* against *Khawaja Obed Khan* of Lahore.⁸⁷ *Jai Singh and Haqiqat Singh Kanahiya* also supported the *Bhangi Sardar Hari Singh and Jhanda Singh* in an attack on Kasur, in 1763.⁸⁸ According to *Ahmed Shah Batalvi*, “*Jai Singh* obtained the booty included cash, gold and silver utensils, various kinds of pearls and precious clothes, very costly silk and *Pashmina* clothes.”⁸⁹

Hari Singh Bhangi and *Jai Singh Kanahiya* were very friendly to each other and had jointly under taken armed operations against the Mughals and Afghans. But after the sack of Kasur, *Jai Singh* quarreled with *Hari Singh Bhangi* and they clashed at Emenabad. At last the fight between them came to ended without a

⁸⁵ Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Vol-II, p. 382.

⁸⁶ *Ahmed Shah Batalvi*, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 53; *Bute Shah*, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no 32, DPHS PUP; *Kanahiya Lal*, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 79.

⁸⁷ *Syed Muhammad Latif*, *History of the Panjab*, p. 309; *Hari Ram Gupta*, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 256.

⁸⁸ *Ahmed Shah Batalvi*, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 53; *Lepel Griffin*, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 158.

⁸⁹ *Ahmed Shah Batalvi*, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 53.

decisive victory for any of them.⁹⁰ But in 1764, Jai Singh *Kanahiya* again cooperated with *Bhangi Sardars* Hari Singh, Gujjar Singh, Gulab Singh and Ram Das (belonging to *Bhangi Misal*), to resist the advancing of the Durrani generals Shah Wali Khan, Jahan Khan and Nasir Khan who reached Ropar to chastise the Sikhs..⁹¹

According to Kanahiya Lal, Sobha Singh nephew of Jai Singh Kanahiya took a *Pahul* from the hands of Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* and served under him.⁹² In 1765, Sobha Singh *Kanahiya* consistently worked in collaboration with Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh *Bhangi* to occupy the city of Lahore. After conquering the city Sobha Singh received the southern part of Lahore as far as Niazbeg, 13 kilometers from the city on the bank of river Ravi, including Monzang, Kot Abdullah Shah, Ichhra and Chauburji. The garden of Zebinda Begam, which he turned into a fort known as Nawankot was his stronghold. He took up the whole administration of Lahore with Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh.⁹³

According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, in Hizri, 1194 (1769 AD), a lady named Sarson belonging to the *Bhangi* family complained to Sobha Singh against the *Zamindars* of Ichhra, who had refused to pay the tribute to her. In these circumstances Sobha Singh in preference to providing help to her, captured Ichhra.⁹⁴ Six months after this Karam Singh *Dullu* joined with Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, Bhag Singh Hallowal and Tara Singh Chainpuria and marched against Sobha Singh to get Ichhra. On the other side Jai Singh *Kanahiya* came for the aid

⁹⁰ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no 34, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 158; Bhagat Singh, *History of the Sikh Misals*, p. 152.

⁹¹ Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, pp. 50-55; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, pp. 175-76.

⁹² Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 135.

⁹³ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 125, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos.261-62, DPHS, PUP; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 134-35.

⁹⁴ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 326, DPHS, PUP.

of Sobha Singh *Kanahiya*. Karam Singh asked Sobha Singh to hand over Ichhra, but Sobha Singh replied that he had taken a *Pahul* from the hands of Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*, so he had the right to hold the Ichhra.⁹⁵

In 1771 Jai Singh and Haqaqit Singh *Kanahiyas* joined with *Bhangi Sardars* Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh in their Kasur expedition and obtained lot of cash and jewelry.⁹⁶

According to Bute Shah, during the expedition of Kasur, Jai Singh got a smaller share of the booty than the *Bhangis* that was the reason that Jai Singh disliked the *Bhangis*. The relations between the *Bhangis* and *Kanahiyas* come to an end on the question of Jammu in 1774, when they fought on opposite side. Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh *Bhangi* fought in favor of *Raja* Ranjit Deo of Jammu and Jai Singh *Kanahiya* along with Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* fought in favor of Brij Raj Deo son of Ranjit Deo. In the action Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* was killed.⁹⁷

The death of Charat Singh gave an advantage to the *Bhangis*. Jai Singh then determined to assassinate Jhanda Singh. He heavily bribed a *Mazabi* Sikh, who shot him dead as he was riding, attended by three horsemen, through the camp.⁹⁸ So the death of Jhanda Singh ended the struggle. The rival forces retired from Jammu which became a tributary, paying one lakhs and twenty five thousand rupees annually to Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya*.⁹⁹

The hostilities between the *Bhangis* and *Kanahiyas* were renewed yet again in 1774, over the issue of Pathankot. Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* had bestowed Pathankot on one of his *Misaldars*, named Nanad Singh, also known as Mansa Singh, whose

⁹⁵ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 326-27, DPHS, PUP.

⁹⁶ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 55; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no 35, DPHS, PUP.

⁹⁷ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no 36, DPHS, PUP.

⁹⁸ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikahn*, folio nos. 118 & 125, DPHS, PUP; Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 56; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 159.

⁹⁹ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, par-II, folio no. 37, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 272, DPHS, PUP.

widow Mai Jashon married her daughter to Tara Singh *Kanahiya* a near relation of Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya* and gave the *Jagir* of Pathankot to her son-in-law. Ganda Singh *Bhangi* insisted that Tara Singh should give up the *Jagir* but he refused. There was a skirmish between the *Bhangis* and *Kanahiyas* at Dinanagar, but soon the *Bhangis* withdrew from the battlefield due to the bad health of Ganda Singh. Soon after this Ganda Singh died, so the death of powerful *Bhangi* Chief further strengthened the position of *Kanahiya*'s.¹⁰⁰

A little later after the clash of Dinanagar, Jai Singh *Kanahiya* joined the *Bhangis* and *Ahluwalias* to expelling Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia* from the Punjab.¹⁰¹

The opposition between the two came to an end in 1781, when Brij Raj Deo son of Ranjit Deo (who succeeded the throne of Jammu after his father's death), invited Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya* and Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia* to help in getting released the *Taluqa* of Karianwala, town of Jalalpur and Islamgarh from Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*.¹⁰² In the heart of their hearts the *Kanahiya Sardars* did not like the proposal as the *Bhangis* were their friends and Jai Singh had newly married the daughter of Bhag Singh Hallowalia a *Bhangi Sardar*. Mahan Singh came to assist Brij Raj Deo to capture Karianwala. Haqiqat Singh did not join the beginning but at last he was compelled to join the alliance. But he had his sympathies with Gujjar Singh who was assisted by Karam Singh *Dullu*, Bhag Singh Hallowalia, Tara Singh Chainpuria and Jiwan Singh Sialkot and did not put his heart in the fighting on the side of Brij Raj Deo.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 56; Bute Shah writes that the widow of Mansa Singh herself married to Tara Singh, a relative of Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya*, this may be wrong. In fact, she had married her daughter to Tara Singh. Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no. 37, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁰¹ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 160.

¹⁰² Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no. 39, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 303, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁰³ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio nos. 39-40, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 160.

But later Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya* helped Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, to re-occupy the *Taluqa* of Karianwala from Brij Raj Deo of Jammu. They at first besieged Shakargarh. In desperation Brij Raj Deo appealed Mahan Singh for help. Mahan Singh hurriedly responded to the call and attacked the *Dera* of Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya* who was willingly helped by Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, Karam Singh *Dullu* and others. Soon Mahan Singh and Brij Raj Deo were beaten back and the siege of Shakargarh continued. At last Brij Raj Deo died in the battle field and Gujjar Singh captured the *Taluqa* of Karianwala.¹⁰⁴

In 1784, Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya* died of pneumonia at his headquarter Fatehgarh.¹⁰⁵ At that time Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* with many other *Bhangi Sardars* assembled at Fatehgarh to observe commiseration on the death of Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya*.¹⁰⁶ A little later on the festival of Diwali of 1784, Gulab Singh, Gujjar Singh, Karam Singh *Dullu*, Tara Singh Cahainpuria, Bhag Singh Hallowal, Tara Singh *Ghaiba* and Baghel Singh Karorsingha reached Amritsar, on the invitation of Jai Singh *Kanahiya*. Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia*, accompanied by his force and artillery also arrived at Amritsar.¹⁰⁷ According to Bute Shah, to punish Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia*, Jai Singh invited these *Sardars* at Amritsar.¹⁰⁸ Later they allied together to attacked the possession of *Nakka* territory. The *Nakkai Sardars* Wazir Singh and Bhagwan Singh relatives of Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia*, finding none coming to their assistance, submitted to them.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio nos. 40-42, DPHS, PUP; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, part-II, p. 244; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 161.

¹⁰⁵ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 343.

¹⁰⁶ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio nos. 43-44, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no.310, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁰⁷ Ali-ud-Din Mifti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos, 434-35, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁰⁸ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio nos.45- 46, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁰⁹ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio nos.45- 46, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 161.

Jai Singh died in 1793 at the age of 81. Before his death Jai Singh divided his territories among his wife Raj Kaur (mother of Nidhan Singh and Bhag Singh) and his eldest son Gurbakhsh Singh's widow Sada Kaur. Nidhan Singh and Bhag Singh were too young to handle the state affairs so the real control the *Misal* at that time passed into the hands of Sada Kaur.¹¹⁰ According to Bute Shah, in 1786 Sada Kaur invited Bhag Singh Hallowal, to avenge the death of his husband Gurbakhsh Singh from Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*.¹¹¹

Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya* and Mehtab Singh *Kanahiya* were real brothers. Mehtab Singh married his daughter to Tara Singh Chainpuria (a *Bhangi Sardar*). A little later she was going to live in her in-laws house, at that time many *Kanahiya Sardars* assembled at Fatehgarh, in the district of Gurdaspur, to see her off. Haqiqat Singh's son Jaimal Singh also came there to see off his cousin sister. At this time Fateh Singh son of Mehtab Singh *Kanahiya* took Jaimal Singh hostage.¹¹² When Jaimal Singh's wife Sahib Kaur, daughter of Amar Singh of Patiala came to know of the detention of her husband, she at once with large forces marched towards Fatehgarh. In those very days, Fateh Singh had married his daughter to Gulab Singh *Bhangi*. When he heard about the coming of the forces against him and finding himself unable to resist, Fateh Singh along with Jaimal Singh hastened to Amritsar, during the night, where his son-in-law Gulab Singh *Bhangi* ruled. Meanwhile Sahib Kaur along with Baghel Singh *Karorsingh* and Tara Singh *Ghaiba* reached Amritsar and demanded her husband's release, but Fateh Singh

¹¹⁰ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 62; Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 137, DPHS, PUP. Bute Shah says that Jai Singh died in 1789. Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio nos. 48-49, DPHS, PUP.

¹¹¹ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no. 50, DPHS, PUP.

¹¹² Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 139, DPHS, PUP; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no. 49, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 310, DPHS, PUP.

Kanahiya and Gulab Singh *Bhangi* refused and demanded a ransom for Jaimal Singh's release but later he was released without getting any ransom.¹¹³

Sada Kaur had been a unique lady of the age. She decided to fight the destiny and carve out for herself a place known only to administrative and diplomatic talents. After her husband's death the first diplomatic plan which struck her was that of reconciliation between the *Kanahiyas* and *Sukerchakias*. Soon she successfully achieved by a matrimonial alliance between the two *Misals* and her daughter, Mehtab Kaur was engaged to Mahan Singh's son Ranjit Singh.¹¹⁴ Similarly she got the second opportunity to accomplish her plans in 1790, while on his death Mahan Singh handed over the charge of his ten year old son Ranjit Singh to Sada Kaur of *Kanahiya*. She got the third opportunity in 1795 when she married her daughter Mehtab Kaur to Ranjit Singh. Further she helped in the conduct of the affairs of *Sukerchakia Misal* for about six years.¹¹⁵

This matrimonial alliance broke the closeness of the *Bhangis* and *Kanahiya's* and she helped Ranjit Singh in 1799, in the expedition of Lahore against the *Bhangi* Chiefs.¹¹⁶ Sada Kaur further aided Ranjit Singh in the battle of Bhasin in March 1800, against the *Bhangi Sardars* Sahib Singh and Gulab Singh who joined with Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia* and Nizam-ud-Din of Kasur and came to oppose Ranjit Singh over the question of Lahore occupation.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 139, DPHS, PUP; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no. 50, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 310-11, DPHS, PUP.

¹¹⁴ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 160-61; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 311.

¹¹⁵ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio no. 19, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 39-40.

¹¹⁶ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 49-52; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 349; Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part-II, p. 245.

¹¹⁷ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, Part-III, folio no. 19, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 50-55; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 350 -51.

In 1801, Sada Kaur again helped Ranjit Singh in the mission of Gujrat against Sahib Singh *Bhangi* of Gujrat, who was assisted by Dal Singh of Akalgarh and to oppose the united forces. Meanwhile *Baba* Sahib Singh Bedi came between them and the fight was stopped.¹¹⁸ The hostility continued between the two *Misals* till 1805 when Sada Kaur came with large forces to the aid of Ranjit Singh to get the city of Amritsar from Gurdit Singh *Bhangi* and Mai Sukhan.¹¹⁹

Relations with *Nakkais*: Hira Singh was the famous leader of the *Nakkai Misal*. He joined with the *Bhangis* and *Kanahiya's* in their attack upon the tyrannical Mughal rulers and Afghan invaders.¹²⁰ The relations between the two *Misals* was very cordial and friendly. After the foundation of *Dal Khalsa*, in March 1748, Hari Singh *Bhangi* was acknowledged the chief leader of the *Taruna Dal* and six *Misals* were placed under *Taruna Dal* including *Nakkai*. Under the circumstances Hira Singh *Nakkai* and many other *Nakkai Sardars* felt concerned with the movements of *Taruna Dal* and Hari Singh *Bhangi*.¹²¹ In 1762, after the departure of Ahmed Shah Abdali from Punjab, Hira Singh *Nakkai* along with Hari Singh *Bhangi* was stationed at Amritsar. In 1763, when Hari Singh decided to attack the Pathan colony of Kasur, Hira Singh *Nakkai*, one of the first Sikh *Sardar* who supported Hari Singh *Bhangi* joined an ally.¹²²

In 1764 *Taruna Dal* got divided into two sections: one under Hari Singh *Bhangi* and another was under Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* but *Nakkai Sardar* Hira

¹¹⁸ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio nos. 27-28, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 57-58.

¹¹⁹ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio nos. 16-17, DPHS, PUP; Bhagat Singh, *History of the Sikh Misals*, p. 101.

¹²⁰ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-II, folio no. 68, DPHS, PUP; Giani Gain Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part-II, p. 247.

¹²¹ Sir J.H. Johan Gordon, *The Sikhs*, London, 1904, p. 71; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, 1978, pp. 91-92 & Vol-IV, p. 205.

¹²² Ahmed Shah, Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 17; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 371-77; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 167.

Singh chose to join the *Jatha* under Hari Singh *Bhangi*. A little later Hira Singh assisted *Bhangi Sardars* Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh and Gujjar Singh in their expedition of south-western of Punjab. They captured the territories of Lamma and Nakka which were appropriated by Hira Singh, until they came to Multan; soon the town of Multan was also captured by them and it fell into the share of the *Bhangis*. Further they crossed the river Indus and overran the territory of Derajat.¹²³

Relations and conflict for the supremacy of power with *Sukerchakia Misal*:

The *Sukerchakia Misal* emerged during the later half of the 18th century. It is said that towards the end of the 18th century it acquired a position of pre-eminence among the Sikh *Misals*. Its rapid rise was due to the competent leadership of the number of generals like Naudh Singh, Charat Singh, Mahan Singh and Ranjit Singh.¹²⁴ Charat Singh son of Naudh Singh was the famous leader of *Sukerchakia Misal*, who continued the conflict with *Bhangis* to achieve supremacy.¹²⁵ At the time of his father's death in 1752, Charat Singh was 20 years of age and well known Sikh *Sardars* Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh *Bhangis* and Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* were aggressively toiling to carve out their *Misals*. They had their powerful *Dals* at their command and had established their rule under *Rakhi* in the Bari Doab and Rachna Doab and Jullundur Doab of the Punjab.¹²⁶ According to the Sikh Chronicles, in the beginning, the relations between the *Bhangis* and the *Sukerchakias* were cordial.¹²⁷ It is said Charat Singh,

¹²³ Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, pp. 20-21; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, (NP), 1880, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1987, p. 890.

¹²⁴ Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of the State and Society under Ranjit Singh*, New Delhi, 1982, p. 1.

¹²⁵ Carmichael Smyth, *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore*, (N.P), 1847, reprinted Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 6; Prem Singh Hoti Mardan, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 3rd edition, Amritsar, 1931, p.19.

¹²⁶ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 188, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 4-5; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 110-11.

¹²⁷ Giani Gian Singh, *Shamsheer Khalsa*, Sialkot, 1892, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 168.

to start with, was in the *Bhangi Dal* but soon thereafter he began to nurse, in his heart, political aspirations and parted ways with the *Bhangi* contingent and declared himself as holding a self-determining position.¹²⁸ In a short time Charat Singh's power swelled and he was counted among the most notable Sikh *Sardar*. This Chief acquired a large territory in Gujranwala district and made it his headquarter.¹²⁹

The *Sardars* of both these *Misals* used to help each other against their internal enemies and foreign or external invaders. Giani Gian Singh writes that Kesar Singh who was an eye witness narrated that Hari Singh *Bhangi* came to help Charat Singh, when he was challenged by Ahmed Shah Abdali on his second invasion and Charat Singh was besieged by the Afghans.¹³⁰ Another such incident was in 1761, when Charat Singh was besieged at Gujranwala by Khawaja Obed Khan Afghan Governor of Lahore and the *Bhangi Sardars* Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh, joined with Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*, Jai Singh and Sobha Singh *Kanahiya* and marched towards Gujranwala for the relief of Charat Singh and defeated Khwaja Obed Khan.¹³¹

According to Khushwaqat Rai, some times Charat Singh fought with the *Bhangi Sardar* Hari Singh and captured his territory but having a respect to Hari Singh *Bhangi*, he went to the *Bhangi* camp with *Nazrana*, which was accepted by

¹²⁸ Ganesh Das Badehra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, (NP), 1865. Edited by Dr. Kirpal Singh, Amritsar, 1965, p. 135; Bhagt Singh, *A History of the Sikh Misals*, pp. 177-78.

¹²⁹ Bute Shah, *Twarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio nos. 2-3, DPHS, PUP; McGregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, p. 149.

¹³⁰ Giani Gian Singh, *Shamsheer Khalsa*, p. 169.

¹³¹ Henry T Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh power in the Punjab and Political life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Calcutta, 1834, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, pp. 18-19 (after here given as H T Prinsep *Origin of the Sikh power*); Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, pp. 3-4, DPHS, PUP ; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 8-9.

Hari Singh.¹³² By 1763, when Hari Singh *Bhangi* the leader of *Taruna Dal* decided to attack Kasur, Charat Singh *Sukarchakia* supported him.¹³³

Charat Singh was very ambitious as though he had been imbued with a strategy of creating a formidable position for himself. To fulfill his mission Charat Singh crossed the river Jhelum and extended his control over Pind Dadan Khan and its surrounding areas, including Ahmadabad, Khushab, Soen etc. which were formally held by Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh *Bhangis*. Soon he wrested the salt mines of Kheora as well from the *Bhangis*, which proved good source of income to him.¹³⁴ According to Sohan Lal Suri, when Hari Singh *Bhangi* was going to capture Multan in 1763, on his way back he captured Pind Dadan Khan and received tribute amounting of rupees 4000, from the local Chief.¹³⁵ The escalation of hostilities between the two resulted in their open warfare because Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh considered that Pind Dadan Khan to be under their principality. The two *Misals* came face to face in the field but neither could gain a victory. Meanwhile Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India and the two *Sardars* resolved to make peace with each other to face their common enemy.¹³⁶ According to Sohan Lal Suri, “the fight between the two *Sardars* continued for few months. When Ahmed Shah Abdali invade India, they jointly fought with their common enemy. But after the departure of Abdali, they again came to face with each other on the question of Pin Dadan Khan.”¹³⁷

¹³² Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 190, DPHS, PUP.

¹³³ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 17, 56; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 425, DPHS, PUP.

¹³⁴ Ahmed Shah, Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 70; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio nos. 4-5, DPHS, PUP.

¹³⁵ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, pp. 9-11

¹³⁶ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio no. 5, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 428, DPHS, PUP.

¹³⁷ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, pp. 11-12.

In 1764, *Taruna Dal* got divided into two sections: one under Hari Singh *Bhangi* and the other was under the Charat Singh *Sukerchakia*.¹³⁸

To maintain amicable relations with the *Bhangis* and to deal with the menace of the warlike tribes and foreign invaders, Charat Singh engaged his daughter Raj Kaur to Gujjar Singh's second son Sahib Singh.¹³⁹

Thereafter, he again continued to cooperate with *Bhangi Sardars* Jhanda Singh and Gujjar Singh in the expedition of Sialkot and defeated Jahan Khan Durrani's general.¹⁴⁰ He also cooperated with Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh, Gulab Singh and Ram Das *Bhangis* when they fought with Ahmad Shah Abdali in December 1764.¹⁴¹ In 1765 the *Bhangi Sardars* Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh, conquered Lahore. It is said when Charat Singh heard of the fall of Lahore, he came to the city and demanded a share in the spoil. The three *Sardars* persuaded Charat Singh and he agreed to accept the *Zamzama* gun, offered by the *Sardars*.¹⁴²

Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* made up his mind to extend his control in the north-westerly direction. He was apprehensive of dealing single handed with these Muslim rulers. The *Bhangis* were the strongest of all at that time, so he decided to coalesce with Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* one of the triumvirate Chiefs of Lahore. Charat Singh found him a good companion. After wresting the possession of the north-west, they made an agreement, in which they agreed that the district of Gujranwala and Shekhupura were to be with Charat Singh. While Sialkot and Gujrat fell to the

¹³⁸ Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, p. 20 ; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 170.

¹³⁹ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 44; McGregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, p. 152; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, pp. 11-12.

¹⁴⁰ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 191, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁴¹ Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, pp. 50-51; Teja Singh, Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, p. 175.

¹⁴² Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 426, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, pp. 14-15.

share of Gujjar Singh. Jhelum and Shahpur district were to go to Charat Singh. Rawalpindi and Attock were assigned to Gujjar Singh. While Hazara district fell into the hands of Gujjar Singh, Fateh Jang was placed in the sphere of Charat Singh. The northern hill states lying between the Indus and the Chenab including Kashmir came within the share of Gujjar Singh. The salt mine of Kheora and Pind Dadan Khan were left to Charat Singh. In all the three Doabs, Rachna, Chaj and Sind Sagar the northern part was to be occupied by Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* and the southern parts by Charat Singh *Sukerchakia*.¹⁴³

In May 1767, Gujjar Singh and Charat Singh jointly captured Jhelum town which stood on the right bank of the river Jhelum and assigned to Charat Singh.¹⁴⁴ A little later Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* allied with Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* and occupied the town of Rohtas from Sarbuland Khan paternal uncle of Ahmed Shah Abdali. Afterward they agreed to divide the territory around the Rohtas among themselves. The territories of Wangal, Bharwal, Rawalpindi and Khanpur, up to the boundary of Attock, were annexed by Gujjar Singh and the fort of Rohtas, Dhan, Baloki, Ghebb and Mukhad fell into the hands of Charat Singh.¹⁴⁵

According to Syed Muhammad Latif, the successive victories scored by Charat Singh and the power and resources at his command made him an object of jealousy for the rival *Misaldars*, who all looked upon him with great suspicion and apprehended that their own position were not safe before his vast scheme of conquest and annexation. None, however, became more apprehensive than the *Sardars* of the *Bhangi Misal*, who had from the first entertained hostile feelings

¹⁴³ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, p. 13; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 135; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs Vol-IV*, pp. 297-98.

¹⁴⁴ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 428, DPHS, PUP; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 298-99.

¹⁴⁵ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 428, DPHS, PUP; Ganesh Das Badehra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, (NP), 1865, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Jit Singh Seetal), preserved in the library of DPHS, PUP, Accession no. 7, folio nos. 114-15.

towards the rising *Sukerchakias*. But a cause for open conflict was no longer wanting, for circumstances arose in border hill State, involving a general rupture between the various *Misals*.¹⁴⁶ Now *Bhangis* and *Sukerchakias* took hostile postures and there were occasional confrontations between the two in 1774 at Jammu, when Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* assisted Ranjit Deo of Jammu and Charat Singh with along with Jai Singh *Kanahiya* came to the support of Brij Raj Deo against his father Ranjit Deo.¹⁴⁷ The two armies met at Dasuha, adjacent to Zafarwal. This lasted for twenty three days. On the twenty third day Charat Singh was killed in his own camp by bursting of his gun which struck him in the forehead.¹⁴⁸

Bhagat Singh says that all contemporary writers' anonymous about death cause of Charat Singh *Sukerchakia*.¹⁴⁹ But Khushwaqat Rai and Ali-ud-Din Mufti, says that Charat Singh died while he was fought in favor of *Raja* Brij Deo against Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh *Bhangi* and Ranjit Deo of Jammu at Zafarwal.¹⁵⁰ Sohan Lal Suri says that Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* killed in the battle of Kallowal in the district of Sialkot by a gun shot, which was gifted by Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*.¹⁵¹

Jhanda Singh was also killed in conspiracy which was planned by Jai Singh *Kanahiya* and after his death Ganda Singh returns to Amritsar.¹⁵² According to

¹⁴⁶ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 339.

¹⁴⁷ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 428, DPHS, PUP; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 339-40.

¹⁴⁸ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 340-41.

¹⁴⁹ Bhagat Singh, *History of the Sikh Misals*, p. 183.

¹⁵⁰ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio nos. 191-92, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 428-29, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁵¹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 16-17.

¹⁵² McGregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, p. 123; Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 41.

Sohan Lal Suri, “Mai Desan prevailed upon Jai Singh to get Jhanda Singh Murdered.”¹⁵³

At the time of Charat Singh’s death his successor, Mahan Singh was only ten years of age. So the state of affairs was handled by his step mother Mai Desan. Desan was a worldly-wise, experienced and an intelligent lady. In order to strengthen her position she married her daughter, Raj Kaur to Sahib Singh son of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, who had been betrothed during the life time of Charat Singh.¹⁵⁴ According to Sohan Lal Suri, the marriage was solemnized at Gujranwala. Charat Singh gave in dowry one hundred five horses, a large quantity of ornament and jewelry, numerous utensils of coed and one thousand suits of clothes (Tewar) etc.¹⁵⁵

After Jammu warfare Ganda Singh *Bhangi* (brother of Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* and Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia* (son of Charat Singh *Sukerchakia*) settled their dispute and they realized their mistake because both of them earned nothing in the battle of Jammu. Both the *Sardars* promised to maintain friendly relations with each other for future. The author of *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Kanahiya Lal, says that, after Charat Singh’s death his son Mahan Singh maintained peace with Ganda Singh *Bhangi* and even took his services. He also joined Ganda Singh *Bhangi* in his expedition of Pathankot in 1774, against the *Kanahiyas*.¹⁵⁶

During the life time of Charat Singh relations with Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* remained amicable. After his death Mahan Singh resolved to oust the *Bhangis* through a combinational of diplomacy and force. Besides he was jealous of the supremacy of *Bhangis*. Militarily he could not face the *Bhangi Misal* in the field so he resorted to diplomacy. Mahan Singh first of all applied his diplomatic skill at

¹⁵³ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh Daftar-II*, p. 17.

¹⁵⁴ McGregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, p. 152; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 430, DPHS, PUP; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 340.

¹⁵⁵ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, p. 11.

¹⁵⁶ Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 114.

Gujrat, a strong hold of *Bhangis*, which was under Gujjar Singh. He took advantage of his relationship with Sahib Singh *Bhangi*. Mahan Singh instigated him to set himself up as an independent Chief with his support against the authority of his father. On his persuasion Sahib Singh quarreled with his brother Sukha Singh of Lahore, in which Sukha Singh was killed. Gujjar Singh was much enraged by this act of Sahib Singh and he disposed Sahib Singh of all the territories under his charge.¹⁵⁷

According to Khushwaqat Rai, shortly afterwards Bhag Singh Hallowal, Sahib Singh, Tara Singh and Jiwan Singh Sialkotias and Tara Singh Chainpuria captured some territories of Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia*.¹⁵⁸

In 1778-79, Mahan Singh assisted by Jai Singh *Kanahiya* and launched an attack on Rasulnagar at the head of 6,000 troops where Mussalaman *Jat*, named Pir Muhammad *Chathas* ruled. The pretext was the famous *Zamzama* gun of Ahmed Shah, which Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*, after his conquest of the *Chathas*, had left with Pir Muhammad Khan in deposit, for its being too heavy to be taken across the Chenab. Mahan Singh now claimed it as the property of the *Khalsa*. The *Chathas* in vain sought the aid of the *Bhangi Sardars*, who were at that time busy with Timur Shah at Multan and conquering Multan and Bahawalpur. Now Pir Muhammad Khan was alone to face Mahan Singh. Soon he was overpowered and the town of Rasulnagar was captured by Mahan Singh.¹⁵⁹

The *Chathas* did not accept defeat lying down and soon got refractory against Mahan Singh. The army had again to be led against them. This time, Alipur

¹⁵⁷ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio nos 7-8, DPHS, PUP; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 115.

¹⁵⁸ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 193, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁵⁹ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 194, DPHS, PUP; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 340-41.

and Mancher were also occupied and Alipur was renamed Akalgarh.¹⁶⁰ Chet Singh, the younger brother of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, had come to help the *Chathas*. Mahan Singh captured and imprisoned him in the fort of Gujranwala. Sahib Singh's wife Raj Kaur, who was the sister of Mahan Singh, came from Gujrat to Gujranwala to secure Chet Singh's release. Mahan Singh paid no attention to her imploring and did not liberate the *Bhangi Sardar*.¹⁶¹ Mahan Singh now began to think of the advisability of extending and enlarging his dominions. The power of the *Bhangi Misal* had been effectually broken by the invasion of Timur Shah and the Sikhs under the *Bhangis* were expelled both from Multan and Bahawalpur in 1780. Mahan Singh made the downfall of the other *Misals* the foundation of his own power. Taking advantage of their weakness, he marched to Pind Bhatian, Sahiwal, Jhang, Isa Khel and Musa Khel. All these places belonged to the *Bhangi Sardar* Desa Singh. But Desa Singh could not check Mahan Singh.¹⁶²

Mahan Singh next entered the Sialkot district and captured Kotli Loharan and obtained matchlocks in tribute, but failed to capture Sialkot. Afterwards he seized Jhang and Takht Hazara.¹⁶³ According to Syed Muhammed Latif, during his stay in Sialkot, he performed one of those acts of barbarous treachery which ever after made his name a terror to all the Chiefs and *Sardars* of the province. Under pretence of holding an important consultation, he invited a very large number of *Sardars* and upon their complying with his invitation; he seized and imprisoned twenty two of the principal Chiefs among them. Charat Singh Kalalwala, Dya Singh nephew of Sahib Singh, Dhanna Singh and Mihan Singh Wadialia were also

¹⁶⁰ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio nos. 9-10, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh- Daftar-II*, pp. 24-25.

¹⁶¹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh- Daftar-II*, pp. 24-25; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 308.

¹⁶² Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 115; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 341.

¹⁶³ Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 115.

part of the group thus apprehended. These *Sardars* obtained their release only on payment of heavy *Nazaranas* according to their rank and wealth.¹⁶⁴

About the year of 1780, Mahan Singh attacked the village Bhangian. Gulab Singh *Bhangi* at the head of 3,000 troops came to contend with Mahan Singh at village Nihang Singhwala, but at last Mahan Singh left the field. Shortly afterwards Mahan Singh captured Bhera.¹⁶⁵

In 1782, Desa Singh marched to wrest Chiniot and had many skirmishes with *Sukerchakia* Chief, Mahan Singh. But Desa Singh was killed in action.¹⁶⁶ Another cause for interfering with *Bhangis* in Jammu affairs was as follows: the *Bhangis* had taken possession of some of the territory belonging to the Jammu *Raja* Brij Raj Deo son of Ranjit Deo of Jammu, who had ascended the *Gadi* on Ranjit Deo's death in 1780. Brij Raj wished to win back his lost territory and appealed to Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia*, Jai Singh *Kanahiya* and Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya*, for aid. The *Taluqa* of Karianwala was recovered after a pitched battle but soon the *Kanahiyas* deserted their ally and went over to the *Bhangis*. Soon the *Bhangis* not only succeeded in recovering Karianwala, but invaded Jammu under Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, Bhag Singh Halowalia Karam Singh *Dullu*, Jodh Singh Wazirabad and Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya*. In these circumstances the Jammu *Raja* called Mahan Singh for aid but was signally defeated and agreed to pay a tribute of 30, 000 rupees to Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya*.¹⁶⁷ After the lapse of two or three months Mahan Singh marched towards Chiniot. Karam Singh *Dullu* ruler of Chiniot finding himself no match for Mahan Singh deserted the fort and came to

¹⁶⁴ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 341-42.

¹⁶⁵ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 194, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁶⁶ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio no. 10, DPHS, PUP; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 308-9.

¹⁶⁷ H. T Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power*, p. 34; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio no. 10, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, p. 25; C.H Payne, *History of the Sikhs*, London, (N.D), reprinted Language Department, Patiala, 1970, p. 6.

Sialkot.¹⁶⁸ Later Mahan Singh handed over the fort of Chiniot to Karam Singh *Dullu* on the request of Gulab Singh *Bhangi*, who was very close to Mahan Singh.¹⁶⁹

Another cause of displeasure between the *Bhangis* and *Sukerchakias* was the death of Ghulam Muhammad *Chatha*, who took shelter in the camp of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, in 1787-88 when Mahan Singh besieged Rasalnagar. Now Mahan Singh demanded the surrender of Ghulam Muhammad's *Chatha* from Gujjar Singh but Gujjar Singh refused the demand of Mahan Singh. Meanwhile, in order to oblige his brother-in-law Sahib Singh son of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* handed over the demanded *Chatha* Chief to the Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia*.¹⁷⁰

Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* died in 1788.¹⁷¹ After Gujjar Singh's death his son Sahib Singh *Bhangi* occupied all the territories which had been given to Fateh Singh *Bhangi* by Gujjar Singh and the latter took refuge with Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia*. This conflict between two brothers gave an opportunity to Mahan Singh to aggrandize his desires. Mahan Singh coveting his possession supported the cause of his younger brother Fateh Singh, against the elder brother Sahib Singh, the result of which was that war was declared between Mahan Singh and Sahib Singh, without the slight regard being paid to the relationship which existed between them by virtue of their intermarriages. Mahan Singh was determined to affect his aspiring and ambitious plans at any cost and recourse to arms was thus rendered inevitable.¹⁷² It is sufficient to say here that Mahan Singh, at this juncture, asserting his own superiority over Gujrat, demanded tribute from Sahib Singh,

¹⁶⁸ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, Vol-III, folio no. 160, DPHS, PU; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 432, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 31-32.

¹⁶⁹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 435-36, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁷⁰ H.T Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power*, pp. 41-42; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 342.

¹⁷¹ According to J D Cunningham, Gujjar Singh died in 1791, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 107.

¹⁷² Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-I Sikan*, folio no.197, DPHS, PUP; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio no. 16, DPHS, PUP.

which was of course refused on the ground that Gujjar Singh had never fought under the standard of the *Sukerchakia Misal*, but was an adherent of the *Bhangi Misal*, says Muhammad Latif.¹⁷³

To promote the interests of one's state even close blood relationship was disregarded. Sahib Singh was the husband of Mahan Singh's real sister Raj Kaur. She waited upon her brother and tried to dissuade him from fighting but Mahan Singh paid no heed to her entreaties. Hostilities commenced between them. In the night Sahib Singh came from Gujrat to Sodhra which was also besieged by Mahan Singh. The siege of Sodhra continued for three months.¹⁷⁴ At that time he called on *Darvesh* Mastan Shah. He fell at the Saint's feet and invoked his blessing the *Darvesh* prayed to God to save the innocent and penalize the guilty. The effect was instantaneous.¹⁷⁵ The *Sukerchakia* Chief was suffering from a failing health due to overwork and exhaustion and in the course of the siege of Sodhra when the victory was just in sight he was suddenly taken ill by a violent attack of fever. Handing over the charge of the siege to his ten year old son Ranjit Singh, Mahan Singh retired to Gujranwala where he expired on the 15th April, 1790.¹⁷⁶

Meanwhile Karam Singh *Dullu* came at Sodhra for the relief of Sahib Singh *Bhangi*. When Ranjit Singh came to know about the arrival of Karam Singh then he marched from Sodhra to fight with Karam Singh *Dullu* and defeated him at Kot Mahraj and Charat Singh Kalawala who had joined the *Bhangis* was also killed in the action and a lot of war material fell into the hands of Ranjit Singh.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p 344.

¹⁷⁴ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, p. 32; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p 344.

¹⁷⁵ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 313.

¹⁷⁶ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio no. 17, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 34-35.

¹⁷⁷ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio nos. 16-17, DPHS, PUP; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 346; Bikram Jit Hasrat, *Life and time of Ranjit Singh*, p. 34.

After the death of Mahan Singh, Ranjit Singh succeeded the Chiefship of the *Misal*. At the time of his father's death he was young boy of ten years old.¹⁷⁸ A little later *Bhangi* Chief of Lahore, Lehna Singh and Sobha Singh assembled at Gujranwala to observe condolence on the death of Mahan Singh and to congratulate Ranjit Singh on the ceremony of Chiefship.¹⁷⁹

Mahan Singh had bequeathed to his minor son a sizeable kingdom and plenty of troubles too. Although the battle of Batala had established *Sukerchakia* supremacy over the *Kanahiya* but the score with the *Bhangis* had yet to be settled. The *Ramgarhia* under Jassa Singh had regained power but the *Bhangis* still held the important towns of Lahore, Amritsar and Gujrat; the principality of Wazirabad was under Jodh Singh *Bhangi*. They all harbored with mutual jealousies and were inimical towards the growth of *Sukerchakia* power.¹⁸⁰

In 1795-96, the friendly relations again flourished between the *Bhangis* and *Sukerchakias*, when Sahib Singh *Bhangi*, who with Milkha Singh came to aid of Ranjit Singh to recover the fort of Rohtas from Ahmed Khan Shahanchibashi, the general of Shah Zaman. They killed the Shahanchibashi and captured the fort of Rohtas.¹⁸¹

The friendly relations were further strengthened between the *Sukerchakias* and the *Bhangis*, when Ranjit Singh reached Lahore and meet with Chait Singh *Bhangi* and Mohar Singh the *Sardars* of Lahore. At Lahore Ranjit Singh was

¹⁷⁸ As told Mahan Singh died in 1790, when Ranjit Singh was ten year old and not 11 years as written by Ali-ud-Din Mufti or 12 years as written by Syed Muhammad Latif. But Ali-ud-Din agrees with Sohan Lal Suri. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 450-51, DPHS, PUP; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab* p. 346; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 36-37.

¹⁷⁹ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio nos. 17-18, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 36-37.

¹⁸⁰ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab* p. 346; Bikramjit Hasrat, *Life and time of Ranjit Singh*, p. 34.

¹⁸¹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp 41-42; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 347.

welcomed by Chait Singh and Mohar Singh the ruler of Lahore.¹⁸² Later they jointly fought with Shah Zaman the ruler of Kabul, when he again marched to the Punjab in the beginning of the winter of 1798. Ranjit Singh also collaborated with Sahib Singh *Bhangi* to penalize Nizam-ud-Din of Kasur, who had taken the possession of the fort evacuated by the Sikhs, during Shah Zaman's invasion. 19 November, 1798, Ranjit Singh also supported Sahib Singh and Nahar Singh of Chamiari village and Sondha Singh to oust Wafadar Khan from the territory of Gujrat. This shows the cordial relations between the two *Misals*.¹⁸³

On November 21, 1798 Milkha Singh and Ranjit Singh came to Amritsar from Shahdra and invited Budh Singh (brother of Jodh Singh *Bhangi* of Wazirabad), Gulab Singh *Bhangi*, Bhag Singh, Jaimal Singh *Kanahiya* and Rani Sada Kaur to fight against their common enemy. Soon Rai Singh *Bhangi*, Mehtab Singh *Bhangi*, Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*, Gurdit Singh and Bhanga Singh joined them in fighting against the Afghans.¹⁸⁴

On 30 November, 1798 Shah Zaman crossed the river Ravi and reached Lahore. The ruler of the city of Lahore Mohar Singh and Chait Singh had already left the city before Shah approach.¹⁸⁵ At this time every night Ranjit Singh visited, with a few *Sawars*, the suburbs of the city of Lahore and attacked the force of Shah at night with a view to persecute him.¹⁸⁶

According to Sohan Lal Suri, "Ranjit Singh at this time, thrice rushed upon the Samman Buraj of the Lahore fort with a few men, fired a number of Afghans

¹⁸² Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, p. 46.

¹⁸³ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 454-55, DPHS, PUP; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 496

¹⁸⁴ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio nos. 22-23, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 455-56, DPHS, PUP; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 497.

¹⁸⁵ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 455, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, p. 48.

¹⁸⁶ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, p. 47.

and on one occasion challenged the Shah himself to hand to hand fight. ‘ come out you, o grandson of Ahmed Shah,” shouted Ranjit Singh to him, “ and try two or three hands with the grandson of great *Sardar* Charat Singh.” but as there was no response from the other side Ranjit Singh had to retire without a single combat with the Durrani.¹⁸⁷ At this time Shah was receiving disquieting news from Qandhar and Heart. Under the circumstances he thought it proper to retire from Punjab.¹⁸⁸

According to Syed Muhammad Latif, Ranjit Singh now began to entertain ideas of making himself master of Lahore and was encouraged in his views by Sada Kaur. He thought the time most opportune for the undertaking, as he had no fear of the Durrani.¹⁸⁹

After Shah Zaman’s exit from Lahore, the three rulers of Lahore Sahib Singh, Mohar Singh and Chait Singh re-occupied the city of Lahore. But they did not handle the administration of Lahore in collaboration. People of Lahore were suffering hardships and mismanagement under misrule of their Chiefs, invited Ranjit Singh to occupy Lahore and also promised him to support him in the action.¹⁹⁰ Ranjit Singh, who had already, began to entertain designs for securing Lahore to himself and his mother-in-law Sada Kaur felt encouraged and marched towards Lahore and captured it in July 6, 1799.¹⁹¹ After occupation Mohar Singh was allowed to precede to his a *Jgirs*, along with his goods.¹⁹² Chait Singh *Bhangi*

¹⁸⁷ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 47-48.

¹⁸⁸ J D Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 118; Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio nos. 22-23, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 47-48.

¹⁸⁹ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 348.

¹⁹⁰ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 48-49.

¹⁹¹ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 348-49.

¹⁹² Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 131. According to Bute Shah, Mohar Singh tried to make peace with Ranjit Singh and sent Mangal Singh with costly gift. Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio, 24, DPHS, PUP.

was offered settlement at Vanyeki village with a *Jagir* (in the *Pargana* of Ajanala).¹⁹³

Ranjit Singh's power was growing day by day. Success which had hitherto attended his arms and now the capture and possession of the capital of the Punjab by him rendered him an object of envy, hatred and inheritableness among his contemporary Chiefs so they joined hands to restrain Ranjit Singh from his policy of territorial aggrandizement. One of them was Gulab Singh *Bhangi* who formed an alliance with Sahib Singh of Gujarat, Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia* and Nizam-ud-Din to drive out Ranjit Singh from Lahore.¹⁹⁴ The allied forces confronted Ranjit Singh at Bhasin in 1800, where Ranjit Singh with his mother-in-law Sada Kaur also waited for them. Meanwhile Gulab Singh *Bhangi* died due to hard drinking of wine and the death of this *Sardar* spread consternation through-out the camp of the *Bhangis* and it being felt that the *Sukerchakia* Chief inflexible was and well equipped to keep the field, the army of the confederate *Sardars* broke up and Lahore was ever after in the undisturbed possession of Ranjit Singh.¹⁹⁵

According to Khushwaqat Rai, after the battle of Bhasin, Ranjit Singh married one of Gulab Singh's widows a daughter of Karam Singh Nirmala.¹⁹⁶

The hostility between the two *Misals* again spurted when Sahib Singh of Gujrat, launched an attack on Gujranwala. Ranjit Singh accompanied by his mother-in-law, proceeded against the *Bhangi* Chief. Through in the intercession, however *Baba* Sahib Singh Bedi of Una, reconciliation was affected and the *Maharaja* returned to Lahore. The *Maharaja* next proceeded against Nizam-ud-

¹⁹³ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 349-50.

¹⁹⁴ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio, nos. 24-25, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 54-55.

¹⁹⁵ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 54-55; Diwan Amar Nath, *Zaffar-nama-i-Ranjit Singh*, pp. 10-11; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 352.

¹⁹⁶ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 201, DPHS, PUP.

Din of Kasur, who had entered into an alliance with Sahib Singh *Bhangi*.¹⁹⁷ A little later the Sahib Singh and Nizam-ud-Din of Kasur again raised the average of revolt. Ranjit Singh deputed *Sardar* Fateh Singh, Kaliwala, to take the command at Kasur and marched in person to condense Sahib Singh. On the approach of the *Maharaja* troops, Sahib Singh shut himself up the fort of Gujrat, which was besieged by the Lahore troops, but at length Sahib Singh *Bhangi* finding himself no match for the sovereign of Lahore, entered into negotiations for peace, which was agreed to on condition of the *Bhangi* Chief paying a large *Nazarana* to Ranjit Singh. This *Nazrana* having been paid and assurances of future submission and good behavior given, the *Maharaja* returned to Lahore as Syed Muhammad Latif, records.¹⁹⁸

Although, Sahib Singh having developed friendly relations with Ranjit Singh, these relations again came to be point of disruption, when Sahib Singh *Bhangi* of Gujrat encouraged by Dal Singh of Akalgarh and *Sardar* Jodh Singh of Wazirabadia, raised an army for a march on Lahore to challenge *Sukerchakia* authority, Ranjit Singh however, forestalled the confederate and he took recourse to a stratagem by inviting Dal Singh to Lahore with the lure of joint conquests and the sharing of spoil. When the Dal Singh arrived at the capital, he was apparently received with all honors, but the same night he was quietly put in chains by Ranjit Singh with the help of Mohkam Chand at Ramnager. Soon afterward the *Maharaja* marched to Akalgarh at the head of his troops to take possession of the captive *Sardars* territory, but was opposed by Tehju wife of Dal Singh. Several skirmishes took place with no decisive result. Information was in the meanwhile, given Ranjit Singh that the wife of Dal Singh had opened communications with Sahib Singh of Gujrat and Jodh Singh of Wazirabad and that she was about to be joined by their

¹⁹⁷ *Diwan Amar Nath, Zaffar-nama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 15; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 353.

¹⁹⁸ *Diwan Amar Nath, Zaffar-nama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 15; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 354

troops. Ranjit Singh seeing that all his attempts to conquer the Dal Singh's wife was fruitless and that his prolongation of the contest would be prejudicial to his interests deemed it advisable to withdraw, but not without first attempting to impair the power of Sahib Singh *Bhangi*. At that time a friendly letter sent to Jodh Singh by Ranjit Singh, reminding him of all the favours that had been conferred on him by the late Mahan Singh and promising his own cordial support in furthering the *Sardars*'s views of aggrandizement was a sufficient inducement for the Wazirabad *Sardar* to desist from taking part with Sahib Singh *Bhangi* against the ruler of Lahore, who now moved to Gujrat with all his available troops. Therefore Ranjit Singh invested Akalgarh, where Dal Singh's wife, defied the invader's attempts to conquer the fortress. The Lahore troops ultimately withdrew and marched on Gujrat where Sahib Singh had collected a large force. Sahib Singh and Jodh Singh of Wazirabad also came out to meet Ranjit Singh. They clashed at Khewaywala near Ramnagar. Meanwhile, Dal Singh of Akalgarh was released under the agreement and soon peace, was restored on the intercession of *Rani Sada Kaur* and *Baba Kesra Singh Sodhi*.¹⁹⁹

As soon as Ranjit Singh set up Law and order in his newly captured territories, he marched towards the village Zamke and seized the village. On the other side Sahib Singh *Bhangi* of Gujrat came to challenge Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh invited Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia* to fight *Bhangis* and he was at once come for the help of Ranjit Singh against the *Bhangi Sardars*. Afterward Ranjit Singh captured the village of Zamke and established there a police post. After the battle Ranjit Singh decided to cultivate friendly relations with the *Bhangis* and he sent Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia* to Gujrat to meet with Sahib Singh *Bhangi*.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio nos. 27-28, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, pp. 57-58; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 354-55.

²⁰⁰ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio no. 28, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, pp. 60-61.

Ranjit Singh along with Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia* then proceeded towards Daska and reduced the fort. A police post was established at Daska and the allied Chiefs returned to Lahore. Meanwhile complaints having reached Ranjit Singh from Pindi Bhatian, of the excesses committed on the *Zamindars* of that place by Jassa Singh *Dullu* son of Karam Singh *Dullu*, who held the fort of Chiniot, the *Maharaja* forthwith proceeded thither at the head of an army. Jassa Singh shut himself up in the fort, which was closely besieged by the *Maharaja* and taken after some resistance. The *Maharaja* gave Jassa Singh a suitable *Jagir*.²⁰¹ According to Syed Muhammad Latif, at this time Ranjit Singh appoint some of the *Sardars* to his honorary commanders as following Jassa Singh son of Karam Singh *Dullu*, Sahib Singh son of Gujjar Singh of Gujrat, Chait Singh son of Lehna Singh of Lahore, Bhag Singh Hallowalia and the sons of Nar Singh Chamari, 10,000 troops each.²⁰²

In the year of 1805 Ranjit Singh, assembled his own and Sada Kaur's troops and being joined by Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia*, the three united *Misals* fell suddenly on the Amritsar which was under Gurdit Singh son of Gulab Singh *Bhangi* and Mai Sukhan.²⁰³ Ranjit Singh ask her to hand over the fort. At first she refused but later on the suggestion of Akali Phula Singh and Jodh Singh Ramgarhia, she agreed to handover the fort to Ranjit Singh. Thereafter on the suggestion of Jodh Singh *Ramgarhia*, Ranjit Singh granted the *Jagir* of Panjore and another five or six villages to Mai Sukhian and Gurdit Singh for their subsistence.²⁰⁴

According to Khushwaqat Rai, Raj Kaur wife of Sahib Singh *Bhangi* of Gujarat and sister of Mahan Singh went to Lahore and pleaded for Gurdit Singh,

²⁰¹ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio nos. 31-32, DPHS, PUP; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 354-55.

²⁰² Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 361.

²⁰³ H .T Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh power*, p. 43.

²⁰⁴ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio, no. 464, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, p. 65.

but Ranjit Singh did not pay any attention and sent her with Gurdit Singh and Mai Sukhan at *Ramgarhia* fort.²⁰⁵

In 1808 Ranjit Singh proceeded towards Sialkot. To stop Ranjit Singh, Sialkot Chief, Jiwan Singh *Bhangi*, appealed to the other *Bhangi Sardars* for help. All undertook to save Jiwan Singh but Sahib Singh *Bhangi* refused to comply with the order, less from a spirit of rebellion than from fear of treachery. An attack was made on Sialkot and the city taken by storm, but Jiwan Singh, with a body of one hundred fighting men, ably defended the fort, which was closely invested. The siege lasted seven days, at last the *Maharaja* entered in the city. Jiwan Singh was put in chains and arrangements having been put in place for the administration of the district, the troops left for Gujrat. The *Maharaja* himself followed these troops, but before he reached his destination, Sahib Singh's agents met him and paid him a large sum of money as tribute and in addition, entered into treaty acknowledging his allegiance to the *Maharaja*. Ranjit Singh being satisfied with these terms withdrew.²⁰⁶ Afterward he captured the fort of Atariwala near Sialkot from Mohar Singh of Atari.²⁰⁷

After the victory of Sialkot Ranjit Singh marched towards Akhnur, Chaprar and Shairmal to set up law and order in the territories. Here Sahib Singh *Bhangi* of Gujrat maintained friendly relations with Ranjit Singh through *Baba* Sahib Singh Bedi of Una.²⁰⁸ A little later Ranjit Singh sent *Diwan* Mohkam Chand to collect the revenue from Ambala, Ludhiana and Patiala. But they did not give any attention to him. Soon Ranjit Singh decided to build a fort at Faloor and appointed Gulab

²⁰⁵ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 204, DPHS, PUP.

²⁰⁶ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio no. 55-56, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio, no. 466, DPHS, PUP; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 371.

²⁰⁷ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, pp. 78-79.

²⁰⁸ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio no. 57, DPHS, PUP. According to Sohan Lal Suri, "when Sahib Singh *Bhangi* went to meet with Ranjit Singh, he gifted him two horses and a gun as the sign of their friendship". Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, pp. 79- 80.

Singh *Bhangi* son of Sahib Singh of Gujrat, Dal Singh and Jodh Singh of Wazirabad as the helpers of *Diwan* Mohkam Chand.²⁰⁹

In the beginning of 1809 (1865 BK), Gulab Singh *Bhangi* son of Sahib Singh *Bhangi* quarreled with his father and reported to Ranjit Singh against his father. Ranjit Singh advised him to wait for the *Jagirs* and start revolt against his father. Now on the suggestion of Ranjit Singh, Gulab Singh came to Gujrat and openly revolted against his father. In such a situation Sahib Singh decided to make peace with his son and hand over the territories of Jalapur, Lakhawal and Bhagowal to his son Gulab Singh. But Gulab Singh *Bhangi* demanded the fort of Islamgarh.²¹⁰ According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, Suba Kaur wife of Sahib Singh *Bhangi* (daughter of Hamir Singh of Nabha) reported to Ranjit Singh against Sahib Singh and request intervention in favor of his son Gulab Singh.²¹¹

Soon Gulab Singh again reported to Ranjit Singh against his father. On the other side Sahib Singh also decided to meet with Ranjit Singh about this matter and marched from Lahore with Jodh Singh of Wazirabad. At Lahore Sahib Singh *Bhangi* and his son Gulab Singh join Ranjit Singh to visit Amritsar.²¹²

In November, 1809 Ranjit Singh seized all his territories and property of Jodh Singh Wazirabad after his death and appointed Ganda Singh son of Jodh Singh Wazirabad as the ruler of all his father's territories. The *Pargana* of Wazirabad containing about 500 villages and all the personal property of Jodh Singh came into Ranjit Singh's possession.²¹³ Meanwhile, Sahib Singh developed

²⁰⁹ Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio no. 6, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, p. 93.

²¹⁰ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II* pp. 104-105.

²¹¹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 480, DPHS, PUP.

²¹² Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio no. 71, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, p. 106.

²¹³ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, pp. 108-9; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 383.

strained relations with his son, Gulab Singh, who occupied couple of forts against the wishes of his father. Ranjit Singh availed him of this opportunity.²¹⁴ He captured the fort of Jalalpur from Gulab Singh. Later he asked Sahib Singh to evacuate the forts of Manawar and Islamgarh but Sahib Singh refused. Now Ranjit Singh marched towards Manawar and Islamgarh. Sahib Singh being no match with Ranjit Singh escaped in the darkness of night to Gujrat.²¹⁵

In 1809, Ranjit Singh dispatched Hukam Singh Attariwala and Seva Singh to pursue Sahib Singh. After a brief resistance Sahib Singh fled away with 500 horsemen to his fort of Deva Batala situated on the border of Jammu territory.²¹⁶ In the course of two or three months Ranjit Singh annexed all his territories including Gujrat, Islamgarh, Jalalpur, Manawar, Bajwat and Sodhra worth two Lakhs and a half annually and his property worth four Lakhs. Soon Ranjit Singh sent Faqir-Aziz-ud-Din to set up administration of Gujrat. This happened in September, 1809.²¹⁷ Sahib Singh's son Gulab Singh joined Ranjit Singh against his father. He recovered a *Jagir* worth rupees 25,000 annually near Kunjah from Ranjit Singh.²¹⁸ Sahib Singh took refuge at Bhimbar. He was living a life of poverty.²¹⁹

In the beginning of 1810, Ranjit Singh occupied Daska from Nidhan Singh *Aattu*. Later in November, Bhag Singh Hallowalia, in Rachna Doab, who with his son, Sobha Singh was present in camp, having incurred the displeasure of the *Maharaja*, was put in chains, all his estates being at the same time sequestered. But

²¹⁴ Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 188; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 383.

²¹⁵ Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 188; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 109-110.

²¹⁶ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, p. 110; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 383.

²¹⁷ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, p. 110; Diwan Amar Nath, *Zaffar-nama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 46; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 383.

²¹⁸ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 45; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 250.

²¹⁹ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 81; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 114-115.

later he was released by *Maharaja* through the mediation of Mulk Raj and Jaimat Singh.²²⁰

According to Khushwaqat Rai, Ranjit Singh developed friendly relations with Sahib Singh through Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia* and Sodhi Kesra Singh and invited him at Lahore. In 24, November, 1810 Sahib Singh reached Lahore *Darbar*, where Ranjit Singh offered a Jagir to Sahib Singh.²²¹

In 1810, Sahib Singh made complete submission to Ranjit Singh and confirmed *Jagirs* of four villages of Bajwat, Kallowal, Sohawa and Rajiwala, in Sialkot district worth rupees 10, 000 annually till his death which took place in 1814.²²²

Sahib Singh had four wives. His first wife was Raj Kaur, real sister of Ranjit Singh's father Mahan Singh. His second wife was a Nabha princess. Daya Kaur, Daughter of Diwan Singh Virk, was his third wife and Rattan Kaur was forth. Ranjit Singh took two of Sahib Singh's widows, Daya Kaur and Rattan Kaur, into his Harem, marrying them by the ceremony of Chadar Pauna. Daya Kaur was the mother of Princes Peshaura Singh and Kashmera Singh and Rattan Kaur was the mother of Multana Singh.²²³

Sahib Singh *Bhangi* was the last *Sardar* of the *Bhangi Misal* to fall. Thus we can see all the possession of the *Bhangi Sardars* seized one by one by Ranjit Singh till 1810. He easily reduced the whole of the *Bhangis* to submission and allot a *Jagirs* and some posts under his officers for their assistance.²²⁴

²²⁰ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 388-89.

²²¹ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 292, DPHS, PUP.

²²² Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, part-III, folio nos. 81-82, DPHS, PUP; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 389. Kanahiya Lal, says that Raj Kaur wife of Sahib Singh request Ranjit Singh, to give the fort Mangala as a *Jagir* to Sahib Singh. Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 201.

²²³ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 481, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 345; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 133.

²²⁴ J. A. Grant, *Final Reports on the revision of settlement of the Amritsar District in the Punjab*, 1883-93, Lahore, 1893, p. 7.

Chapter-IV

Relations with Non Sikh Rulers

From 1752 to 1770, the *Bhangis Misal* continued to rise to a position of supremacy in the Punjab. With intention of liberating their land from the Afghan powers, they fought a number of time with Ahmed Shah Abdali and his successors Timur Shah and Shah Zaman. There were times when Ahmed Shah Abdali and Shah Zaman tried to cultivated friendly relations with *Bhangis* but they did not responded. So by 1770, they triumphantly occupied large parts of Afghan dominion including Kasur, Jhang, Chiniot, Lahore, Multan, Attock, Rawalpindi, Sialkot, Amritsar and some parts of Jammu and Kashmir including Mirpur, Kotli, Puncch, Mangla and Manawar. They also conquered some part of the Balouch territory of Shahiwal, Ahmednagar and the territory of Gakhars. Some of these territories were directly ruled by the *Bhangi Sardars*. But some of these were under their tributaries. At that time the *Bhangi Sardars* had friendly relations with these rulers and they patched up with them to fight against their common enemies. Some times these rulers demonstrated aggression when the *Bhangi* were on a decline. Some accounts suggested that the *Bhangis* tried to befriend of the British Government.

Relations with Ahmed Shah Abdali and his successors: As we know that Ahmed Shah Abdali invasions of India continued for eight times from 1748 to 1767-68. In nearly most of his expeditions, he was attacked by the Sikhs and they looted his baggage. So his last three invasions of India from 1762 to 1767 were carried out clearly to annihilate the Sikhs. It has already been mentioned that, Hari Singh *Bhangi* the Chief leader of the *Bhangi Misal* had fought with Afghans a number of times. On November 1756, Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India for the fourth time and captured Lahore but soon he returned to Afghanistan leaving

behind Timur Shah at Lahore.¹ By 1758, Adina Beg Khan met the Sikhs and solicited their help to throw out the Afghans representative from Lahore. Soon Hari Singh *Bhangi* along with his son Jhanda Singh, Gujjar Singh, Lehna Singh and built a combined front with Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*, Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*, Jai Singh *Kanahiya*, Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* and other Sikh *Sardars*. They allied with Adina Beg Khan and the Marathas and marched upon Lahore. Before their advent into Lahore Timur Shah fled to Afghanistan and they captured the city of Lahore without any great effort. According to Elphinstone, “Timur Shah and Jahan Khan, who were already pressed by the Sikhs and distrustful of their Hindustanis troops, retired to Eminabad. The city of Lahore, which they evacuated, was taken by the Sikhs.”²

In February, 1762 Ahmed Shah again invaded India and the Sikhs suffered a heavy loss of life and property in the battle of Kup. These disasters set backs and humiliations did not deter the Sikhs as is evident from their subsequent actions.³ While Ahmed Shah Abdali stayed at Lahore, *Bhangi Sardars* Hari Singh and his son Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh and other companions, along with the other Sikh *Sardars* continued to carry out their armed assaults against Abdali’s representatives in India, such as Zain Khan, Khabiati Singh, Mehar Singh, Rai Ahmed Mashaihi, Afghans of Malerkotla and Kotkapura and *Zinandars* of Faridkot

¹ Tahmas Khan Misakin, *Tahmas Namah*, (NP), 1782, (Translated into English by P. Setu Madhava Rao) Bombay, 1967, pp. 8-9; Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, (NP), 1811, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Milkhi Ram), Preserved in the library of the Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University Patiala, Accession No. 22, folio .80, (here after given as DPHS, PUP).

² George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, London, 1798, p. 318; Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarkh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 81, DPHS, PUP; Elphinstone, *Kingdom of Kabul*, Vol-II, London, 1842, p. 290.

³ Ganda Singh, *Ahmed Shah Durrani*, Bombay, 1950, pp. 277-81.

and obtained tribute from them.⁴ In December 1762, Ahmed Shah left Lahore for Afghanistan. After some time in Afghanistan Ahmed Shah received the news of the disturbance created by the Sikhs in Punjab, he at once deputed his general Jahan Khan to march upon Punjab and take punitive action against the Sikhs. Soon Jahan Khan crossed the river Indus, made straight for Sialkot. When the Sikhs came to know the arrival of Jahan Khan at Sialkot *Bhangi Sardar* Jhanda Singh, Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh joined with Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* and fell upon on the camp of Jahan Khan. They launched a ferocious attack against the Afghans and dispersed those inflicting heavy losses. Soon Jahan Khan himself took flight and all his camp equipage fell into the hands of the Sikhs.⁵ In the course of two years after the departure of Ahmed Shah Abdali, the *Bhangi Sardars* threw out the Abdali representatives from Sirhind, Multan, Jhang, Chiniot, Kasur, Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi Khan and Dera Ismail Khan and occupied them as their permanent territories.⁶

Hearing of the failure of his generals and representatives in India and the conquest of the Sikhs Ahmed Shah Abdali again crossed the river Indus in October 1764, with an army of 18,000 soldiers.⁷ When he reached Lahore, he led some expeditions against the Sikhs, but failed. Then he advanced towards Sirhind, from where he decided to return to Afghanistan. Having stayed at Sirhind for a few days, Ahmed Shah marched back homeward and crossed the river Satluj, probably

⁴ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, (NP), 1854, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Gurbakhsh Singh), preserved in the library of the DPHS, PUP, Accession no 30, folio nos. 256-57; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, (NP), 1865, edited by Bhai Vir Singh, Amritsar, 1914, pp. 384-85.

⁵ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Dafter-II, Lahore, 1880-85, (Translated into Punjabi by Amarwant Singh), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1985, pp. 12-13; Ganda Singh, *Ahmed Shah Durrani*, p. 290.

⁶ Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, (NP), 1765, edited by Ganda Singh, Amritsar, 1939, pp. 20-25.

⁷ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, London, 1849, reprint Amritsar, 2005, p. 93; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1881, (Translated into Punjabi by Jit Singh Seetal), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1987, p. 80.

at Machhiwara. One morning when he had hardly gone 3 kilometers from the other bank of the river, the Sikhs fell upon his army. Ahmed Shah at once braced himself to face the challenge of the Sikhs, who had organized themselves in a regular battle formations as Hari Singh *Bhangi*, Gulab Singh *Bhangi*, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* and Ram Das also called Ram Singh (belonging to the *Bhangi Misal*) were on the left; Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* and Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia* with the other Sikh *Sardars* in the center while Lehna Singh *Bhangi* and Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* and Jai Singh *Kanahiya* were on the right.⁸ The author of *Jang Nama* Qazi Nur Muhammad who participated in many battles under Ahmed Shah Abdali against the Sikhs, talks about the nine prominent leaders in the Sikh army who had come to fight with Ahmed Shah. Out of these nine leaders, 5 leaders belong to *Bhangi Misal*, namely Hari Singh, Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh, Gulab Singh and Ram Das. This account of Qazi Nur Muhammad confirms the facts shore that the *Bhangi Misal* was supreme in the *Dal Khalsa* at that time.⁹

These skirmishes went on for seven days. Later when the Durrani was heading for the Beas, he was also challenged by the Sikhs under the command of Hari Singh *Bhangi*, Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* and Bhagel Singh. Subsequently Ahmed Shah crossed the river Ravi and returned to Afghanistan.¹⁰

Consequently after the departure of Ahmed Shah from Punjab, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, Lehna Singh *Bhangi* and Sobha Singh, marched towards Lahore in April, 1765 and banished the Abdali envoy Kabuli Mal from Lahore and conquered territories all around the *Suba* of Lahore.¹¹ In the course of the next two years from

⁸ Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, pp. 48-50; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, reprint New Delhi, 1978, pp.219-20.

⁹ Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama*, p. 51.

¹⁰ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 93; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 260, DPHS, PUP.

¹¹ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio nos. 116-17, DPHS, PUP; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 79-80.

1765 to 1767, the *Bhangi Sardars* Jhanda Singh and Gujjar Singh extended their control over most of Afghan legislature such as Gujrat, Wazirabad, Sodhera, Jalalpur, Shahpur, Akhnur, Islamgarah, Bahawalpur, Pakpatan etc.¹²

To reclaim his lost territories, Ahmed Shah again crossed river Indus in December 1766 and reached Lahore. Before his arrival, the three rulers of Lahore Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, Lehna Singh *Bhangi* and Sobha Singh left the city, as they could not with stand the large armed force of Ahmed Shah Abdali.¹³

Meanwhile Ahmed Shah reached Lahore. The venerable members of the population including Hindus and Muslims informed him about the preparations and planning of the Sikhs with particular mention of *Sardar* Lehna Singh *Bhangi*. They told him that Lehna Singh possessed good administrative qualities and was a sympatric ruler, who suitable for people of Lahore. He had never made any distinctions between the Hindus and the Muslims. He bestowed turbans on the *Qazis*, Muftis and Imams of the mosques on the festival of *Id-ul-Zuha*. He deals with the general public with great regard. The Muslims of the Lahore had no fear of the *Khalsa* and they had started looking upon them as their comrades rather than antagonistic enemies. Afterwards they request him to call *Sardar* Lehna Singh and appoint him as a Governor of Lahore in the place of his Muslim nominee.¹⁴ The Author of *Ibrat Nama*, Ali-ud-Din Mufti says that, “when Ahmed Shah Abdali, came to Know from the people of Lahore about the credibility of *Sardar* Lehna Singh *Bhangi*, he wondered how Lehna Singh a competent organizer could flee from the city”.¹⁵ On the other hand the great Durrani leader had lost his youth and

¹² J D Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, pp. 102-3; Ganesh Das Bادهhra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, (NP), 1865, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Jit Singh Seetal) Preserved in the library of the DPHS, PUP, Accession no. 7, folio no. 125.

¹³ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 262-63, DPHS, PUP; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 80.

¹⁴ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 263, DPHS, PUP; Muhammad Baqir, *Lahore Past and Present*, Lahore, 1952, pp. 196-97.

¹⁵ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 263, DPHS, PUP.

infirmity was creeping upon him. He had no man of genius like Adina Beg Khan to leave in charge of the province. Thus he resolved to conciliate the Sikhs chiefs. Soon he sent a present of fruits to Lehna Singh and offered him the Governorship of Lahore. But Lehna Singh returned the fruits and declined the offer, asserting to accept a proposal of an invader was against the policy and dignity of the *Khalsa* community.¹⁶

Around this time *Sardar* Lehna Singh and Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* allied with the other Sikh *Sardars* and made a surprise attack on Shah's army and plundered their baggage.¹⁷ In the circumstances Ahmed Shah tried to buy peace with the Sikhs and on 15 January, 1767 when he was in the neighborhood of Nur-ud-din Kot wrote a *Khundba* (letters) to Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*, Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia* and Khushal Singh *Singhpuria* the chiefs of the Sikhs, to effects that if they were desirous of entering his service they should come and join him, but if they any hostile intensions, they should meet him in the field. But in short the Sikh *Sardars* declined the proposal of Ahmed Shah. Thereafter *Bhangi Sardar* Jhanda Singh along with Gujjar Singh again moved towards Lahore with their forces, while small bodies of their men kept hovering all around the Shah's army in sphere of about 20 kilometers.¹⁸ Several skirmishes took place between the Afghans and the Sikhs such as one with Jahan Khan who was defeated at Sialkot by Jhanda Singh, Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh *Bhangis*; Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*, Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* and many others. Another one took place with Najib-ud-Daula,

¹⁶ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 263-64, DPHS, PUP; Muhammad Baqir, *Lahore Past and Present*, p. 198.

¹⁷ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 264, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-I*, Lahore, 1855-85, MS., (Translated into Punjabi By Dr. Gopal Singh *Dhillon*), unpublished preserved in the library of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, folio no. 191, (here after given as GNDU).

¹⁸ Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 430-31; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 240

who was defeated by Rai Singh *Bhangi* and his companions at Bari-Ghat (Jamuna).¹⁹

With neither any chance of peace with the Sikhs nor any prospect of checking their rising power, Ahmed Shah speedily marched towards his native place Afghanistan in 1767, leaving the whole territory of Punjab, in the hands of the Sikhs. This was the inglorious end of the last invasion of Ahmad Shah. In spite of all his Herculean and constant efforts, he was ultimately unsuccessful in eliminating the powerful Sikh *Sardars*, who were not only closely knit together by affinities of race and religion but also possessed invincible courage and irresistible will.²⁰

After the disappearance of Ahmed Shah from Punjab, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, Lehna Singh *Bhangi* and Sobha Singh again captured the city of Lahore. In the course of next five years they completely threw out the Afghan representatives in Punjab and extended their control up to Multan, Rawalpindi, Jhang, Chiniot, Sialkot, Kasur, Bahawalpur and some portion of Jammu.²¹

In 1772-73, Ahmed Shah Abdali died and was succeeded by his son Timur Shah.²² Now a greater calamity was awaiting the Sikhs because Timur Shah the successor of Ahmed Shah was resolved to recover his lost territories in the Punjab. Accordingly he sent his general, Faizullah Khan, to Peshawar to launch an attack on the Punjab. According to Syed Muhammad Latif, the general mustered up a considerable number of Afghans, Chiefly from the Khyber tribes with the avowed object of punishing the Sikhs, but instead entered into a clandestine agreement with Mian Muhammad, son of Shekh Omar, the *Sahibzada* of Chamkani and a

¹⁹ J D Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, pp. 102-3; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 241.

²⁰ Muhammad Baqir, *Lahore Past and Present*, p. 197.

²¹ George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, p. 324; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, Calcutta, 1891, reprinted, New Delhi, 1964, pp. 297-98.

²² Elphinstone, *Kingdom of Kabul*, p. 300.

declared enemy of the Shah, to put an end to the king's life. He marched his troops to the citadel of Peshawar on the pretext of parading them before the King; but when they reached the fort, they cut to pieces the guards at the gates and forced their way in. Timur Shah ascended the upper story of his palace and made his situation known to the guards. The Gholam Shahis, the King's own body guards and the Durrani, attacked Faizullah's men and a terrible slaughter ensued, ending in the arrest of Faizullah and his son were both tortured to death.²³

Timur Shah now took vigorous steps to execute his plans regarding Sindh, Bahawalpur and the lower Punjab. In the winter season of 1777-78, Timur Shah dispatched an expedition under Haini Khan to recover Multan. In the battle seems to have been fought near Kali Sare, in which Haini Khan was defeated and captured by the Sikhs. He was tied to the mouth of gun and was blown apart.²⁴ In 1778, Timur Shah again sent one of his generals named Baharu Khan to siege Multan. He entered the town by breaching the wall and ransacked the city and soon retired to Afghanistan. Meanwhile Timur Shah sent his ambassador, Abdul Jabbar Khan, to Delhi. When he was reached Delhi, on, March 12, 1778 and met Shah Alam-II. He assured him of his full co-operation to Timur Shah.²⁵

Timur Shah thereupon determined to recover Multan himself and sent a contingent of 15, 000 horses as his superior protector. This force was opposed by Diwan Singh *Chhachowalia*, the Governor of Multan and his *Bhangi* allies on the bank of the river Indus and beaten back to Peshawar. In view of the serious opposition from the Sikhs, the Durrani agents at Delhi tried to secure assistance from the notable Maratha chief Mahadji Sindhia, so that the Sikhs might be attacked from the two fronts. Mahadji cleverly put them off. News dated September 12, 1779, near Karnal, stated that Timur Shah had arrived at Peshawar

²³ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 298-99.

²⁴ Ganesh Das Bادهرا, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, folio no. 108, DPHS, PUP; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 299.

²⁵ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 275, DPHS, PUP.

and his superior protector had crossed the river Jhelum. There it was revealed that a strong army of 60, 000 Sikhs intended to seize Dera Ismial Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan and Sind. At this news Timur Shah was greatly alarmed. To check this grandiose scheme of the Sikhs, Timur Shah made up his mind, to recover Multan.²⁶

Timur Shah at first tried to recover Multan by diplomacy. He sent Haji Ali Khan as his agent to the Sikhs. When the agent reached Multan; he tried to intimidate the Sikhs by worming them about the impending conflict with the “Lion of Islam” and of the terrible consequences of the royal wrath. He endeavored to persuade them to retire from Multan voluntarily.²⁷ According to Giani Gian Singh, when Haji Ali Khan an agent of Timur Shah reached Lahore, he asked Gujjar Singh and other *Bhangi Sardars* (who were come to Multan for the relief of Diwan Singh) to submit before Timur Shah. However Gujjar Singh replied that the Kingship was bestowed on them by God and they would not accept the overlordship of Timur Shah. The Sikhs, in the face of this challenge held *Gurmata* and acknowledged that “here is an ambassador of the Shah; but our king is *Sat Guru*. This man threatens us with the Shah’s displeasure; we should therefore put him to death.” Thereafter the Sikhs commanded to tie Haji Ali Khan to a tree and shoot him dead. His companions were allowed to depart in peace to report to the Shah. The Sikhs then fell back to Rohtas.²⁸ On learning this sad news Timur Shah sent forth a contingent 18, 000 men including Yusufzais Durrani, Mughals and Qizabashes under Zangi Khan the Durrani general. Zangi Khan encamped at a distance of 25 kilometers from the *Bhangis* camp. Desa Singh *Bhangi* the Chief

²⁶ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 299; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, New Delhi, 1982, pp. 433-34.

²⁷ Ali-ud-Din, Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 275, DPHS, PUP; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 433-34.

²⁸ Giani Gian Singh, *Shamsheer Khalsa*, Sialkot, 1892, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, pp. 218-19. According to Giani Kartar Singh Klaswalia, Ganda Singh *Bhangi* was ordered to his soldiers to Killed Haji Ali Khan. Giani Kartar Singh Klaswalia *Tegh Khalsa*, Amritsar, (ND), p. 185. It may be incorrect, because Ganda Singh *Bhangi* was died in the battle of Dinanagar while he was fought with the *Kanahiyas*.

was at this time embroiled with the leaders of the rival *Misals* at Multan and was absolutely ignorant of their presence, considering them to be at Peshawar, nearly 300 Kilometers away. Next day early in the morning a little before day break, Timur Shah fell upon the Sikhs and gave them hot pursuit. About 3, 000 were slain and 500 drowned in the river Jhelum in an attempt at crossing it; while 2,000 of them safely reached the opposite bank of the river.²⁹

This news greatly encouraged Timur Shah and rekindled his hopes off recover Multan. Soon a fierce attack was launched against the Sikhs by Zangi Khan near Leiah. Just at that moment a storm began. Clouds of dust darkened the sky. A war drum of the Sikhs fell into the hands of the Afghans. It was forcefully beaten, the Sikhs on hearing the sound of their war drum ran towards it. They were all slain. The remaining Sikh army took flight. In the meantime Timur Shah joined with Zangi Khan and pursued the Sikhs up to the walls of Multan. The Sikhs took up their position in the fort and closed the city gates. Early in January, 1780, Timur Shah laid the siege to the town of Multan. Timur Shah expected reinforcements for the Sikhs garrison and in that event he considered his own resources insufficient. He therefore marched towards Bahawalpur, to secure reinforcements for himself. The major portion of his army was left at Multan. The *Nawab* of Bahawalpur gave the Shah 12,000 troops and Ghulam Ali Khan Letti paid tribute. Just at that time Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* and Lehna Singh *Bhangi* along with Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*, Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya*, Bhanga Singh and other Sikh *Sardars* at the head of 15,000 horsemen arrived with reinforcement to the help of Diwan Singh *Chhachowalia*.³⁰

²⁹ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of Panjab*, p. 299.

³⁰ Elphinstone, *Kingdom of Kabul*, pp. 303-4; Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 117, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 275, DPHS, PUP. According to J D Cunningham, when Timur Shah marched upon Multan, Ganda Singh the new leader of the *Bhangis* was embroiled with other Sikhs and his lieutenant surrendered the citable after a show of resistance. J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 104. This may be wrong because Ganda Singh *Bhangi* died in 1774, when he was fought against Tara Singh and Jai Singh Kanahiya, at Dinanagar.

Timur Shah at once hurried from Bahawalpur towards Multan and confronted with the Sikhs at Shujabad, where a severe battle was fought on 8, February, 1780. The Sikhs lost the day with 2,000 casualties and fled towards Lahore. Timur Shah dispatched a detachment of 20,000 strong soldiers in pursuit of them. This force overtook the Sikhs at Hujra Muqim Khan, 64 kilometers from Lahore. Timur Shah hurried to Multan to pacify the Sikhs and occupied the city of Multan, on 18 February, 1780. After this victory, Timur Shah bestowed the Governorship of Multan on Shuja Khan, father of Muzaffar Khan, surnamed Safdar Jang, who retained it until being expelled by Ranjit Singh.³¹ The Shah then subdued Bahawal Khan the *Abbasi* Chief of Bahawalpur. The town of Bahawalpur was pillaged and many of its edifices were burnt. The *Nawab's* arsenals, together with a portion of the fort, were blown up. The *Nawab* was compelled to pay an annual tribute and the Afghan troops withdrew. The Shah then reduced to subjection the Talpurs of Sindh, who also agreed to pay subsidy.³² After this he led several expeditions towards India but could not capture more territories and he died in, May 18, 1793.³³

Timur Shah was succeeded by his son Shah Zaman. He succeeded the throne of Kabul on 18 May, 1793 and turned his attention to recover his lost territories in India. He initiated series of Indian invasions, in 1794 and marched up to Peshawar. In 1796 Shah Zaman again crossed the river Indus at Attock and marched towards India. Soon he captured Rohtas which was under *Sukerchakia*. Shah Zaman had stayed at Hasan Abdal for about a week but soon returned to Afghanistan to take punitive against Muhammad Khan of Herat and Aga Muhammad Khan Kajar who had revolted against him.³⁴ He left behind a general

³¹ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of Panjab*, p.299.

³² Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of Panjab*, pp. 299-300.

³³ Elphinstone, *Kingdom of Kabul*, p. 306; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 453.

³⁴ Elphinstone, *Kingdom of Kabul*, pp. 307-9; Colonel G. B. Malleon, *History of Afghanistan*, London, 1879, p. 305.

named Ahmed Khan Shahanchibashi to stay at Rohtas. He also dispatched Bahadur Khan Son of Faiz Ali Khan Shahnkarwala at the head of 12,000 horses to conquer Gujrat. When Bahadur Khan reached Gujrat, Sahib Singh *Bhangi* son of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* came out to oppose him. In the course of fighting Bahadur Khan was killed and the Afghans were defeated. Just at this time Ranjit Singh sought help from Sahib Singh *Bhangi* to recover Rohtas. Both the Sikh *Sardars* along with Nihal Singh and Wazir Singh Attariwala, Jodh Singh Wazirabad and Karam Singh *Dullu* marched upon Rohtas, where Ahmed Khan Shahanchibashi was staying. No sooner did they reach the bank of the river Jhelum than, Ahmed Khan Shahanchibashi left Rohtas and fled away to Peshawar. The Sikhs after defeating the Afghans captured the areas of Rohtas, Pothohar and Gheba.³⁵

Crestfallen Shah Zaman then opened negotiations with the Sikhs. He sent a special messenger to the Sikh *Sardars* asking them not to torment his troops and impede his progress to Delhi in the interest of their safety of life, honour and property. The Sikhs *Sardars* expressed their willingness to cooperate to and allow him a safe passage through the Punjab on the condition of the Shah's commitment to the part with "a large portion of plunder" which he would bring from Delhi.³⁶

Shah Zaman left Kabul on 12 October, 1796 and reached Attock. He sent a contingent of his troops towards Hasan Abdal under general Sher Muhammad, which was stopped by Milkha Singh Rawalpindi. The engagement lasted for a few hours and in the combat about fifty men on the both side were killed. At last Milkha Singh was defeated and fell back into Rohtas.³⁷ On 19 December news arrived at Lahore that Shah Zaman was staying at Hasan Abdal and his advance

³⁵ Ganesh Das Badehra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, folio nos. 108-9, DPHS, PUP; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 462-63.

³⁶ Giani Gian Singh, *Shamsheer Khalsa*, pp. 286-87; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 464.

³⁷ Ganesh Das Badehra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, folio no. p. 109, DPHS, PUP; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of Panjab*, p. 301; Giani Kartar Singh Klaswalia, *Tegh Khalsa*, Amritsar, (ND), p. 196.

guard marched towards Jhelum. Ranjit Singh had already left Rohtas and retired to Pind Dadan Khan from where he took up his position at Miani where he was joined by Milkha Singh and Sahib Singh of Gujrat. Lehna Singh ruler of Lahore had always been the most famous Sikh chief with his subjects, particularly with the Muslims and whenever there was an invasion, the Muslims always commended him to the Durrani monarch for more considerate treatment. On this occasion Shah Zaman sent messengers to Lehna Singh *Bhangi* assuring him of the royal favour and retention in the Governorship of Lahore and advising him to shake off his apprehensions. Lehna Singh thanked the Shah for his kindness and regard but declined the offer on account of hostile attitude of the Khalsa community.³⁸

Later on Lehna Singh offered to the Muslim leaders of Lahore to take charge of the city; “but was persuaded by their entreaties to stay two days more.” The distance between the Ravi and the Chenab on the high way was about 100 kilometers. As the Shah was marching slowly, it was expected that he would take three or four days in reaching Lahore.³⁹ On the second day Lehna Singh, delivered the keys of the citadel to Mian Chiragh-ud-din Shah Sultanpuri. Then he summoned Mian Chiragh-ud-din Shah Sultanpuri, Mir Ghalib Shah, Mian Muhammad Ashiq and other Muslim leaders. “Without manifesting any partiality for the Hindus”, he made over the city to their charge. He told them that he was leaving the fort in good repair without any damage done to it. He requested them to use their power with the Shah to secure lenient treatment to the people. Afterwards he got into a palanquin as he was growing old and was not in good health and accompanied by 100 horses, one field piece and an elephant halted at the fort of Haji Said Khan.⁴⁰

³⁸ Giani Kartar Singh Klaswalia, *Tegh Khalsa*, pp. 196-97; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 470-71.

³⁹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, p. 41; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 471.

⁴⁰ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 301-2; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 471-72.

On 31st December, 1796 *Wazir* Share Muhammad Khan at the head of 12,000 troops entered in the city of Lahore. The leading Muslim citizens of the city delivered the keys of the fort to him. Just at that time arrived a letter from Shah Zaman for Lehna Singh *Bhangi* promising him all concessions and favours. Another messenger brought a proclamation from the Shah prohibiting the Afghan soldiers from committing any outrage on the inhabitants of the city. It was also declared that if any Afghan officer would to live inside the city, he could rent a house with the consent of the proprietor. Ahmed Khan Shahanchibashi and the city *Kotwal* proclaimed security of life and property and in consequence the shops which had been shut were reopened.⁴¹

Such were the strict orders of Shah Zaman that an intelligencer from Lahore stated that “no outrage has been committed upon any individual during the Shah’s progress from Peshawar to Lahore” declaring that his troops “Put to death all the Sikhs who appear in arms against the Afghans, but spare the rest.”⁴² Afterward Shah Zaman entered Lahore on 3rd January, 1797 and took the possession of the city. According to Syed Muhammad Latif, the city was illuminated for three successive nights in honour of its occupation by the Durrani. The deserted houses in the city were all occupied by the Afghan *Sardars* and nobles, while the parade ground, fronting the palace was swarmed with the followers of the Afghan army. Following the policy adopted by his grandfather, Ahmed Shah, the invader dispatched *Chapals*, or light parties, in various directions into the country to persecute the Sikhs in their retreat by rapid marches, to seize their cattle, destroy their grain and harass them in all ways possible. He also wrote to the Sikh Chiefs that if they desired peace they should attend upon the Shah; else they would be punished by the imperial army. In February, 1797, he left for Afghanistan leaving

⁴¹ Giani Kartar Singh Klaswalia, *Tegh Khalsa*, pp. 196-97; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 471-72.

⁴² Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 472.

behind Ahmed Khan at Rohtas to look after the affairs of the country between the Jhelum and Sindh with Bhadur Khan, *Muhammedzie*, Bostan Khan, Durrani and Nueullah Khan, Khatak at the head of 7,000 horses as his subservient generals.⁴³

After the departure of Shah Zaman, the people of the city of Lahore invited Lehna Singh to come to Lahore and resumed the Governorship. At the behest of the general public Lehna Singh, Sahib Singh and Sobha Singh returned to Lahore and occupied it. But Lehna Singh died in September, 1797, leaving behind a son named Chait Singh. About the same time Sobha Singh also died and was succeeded by his son Mohar Singh.⁴⁴ Now the Sikhs again started recovering their lost territory. Milkha Singh joined with Sahib Singh of Gujrat and proceeded towards Rawalpindi, while Ranjit Singh marched towards Rohtas. Just at this time Hayat Khan, son of Chaudhri Rahmat Khan Wariach of Jalalpur captured Islamgarh and raise the standard of revolt against Sahib Singh of Gujrat. In such state of affairs Ahmed Khan Shahanchibashi, made up his mind to drive the Sikhs from Gujrat. He made Islamgarh the base of his operations. His plan was to begin his campaign from Sialkot in the east and to drive the Sikhs from Gujrat towards Jhelum, surround them on the bank of the river and to force them to capitulate.⁴⁵

On hearing of the atrocities of Shahanchibashi, Bedi Ram Singh belonging to village Kotli Faqir Chand Bedian in Sialkot district joined with Jodh Singh and Diwan Singh Kalaswalia (belonging to the *Bhangi Misal*) and Mehtab Singh *Bhangi* of Wadala marched upon Sialkot, where Shahanchibashi's troops were staying. Shahanchibashi deputed Kamil Din, Murid Khan, Asadullah and Ali Khan to meet the Sikhs. The first day battle was fought at village Portain. The battle was fought over a tract of about 10 square kilometers but neither could score a victory.

⁴³ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 301-2.

⁴⁴ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 302.

⁴⁵ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Dafter-II, pp. 41-42; Giani Kartar Singh Klaswalia, *Tegh Khalsa*, p. 197.

Next morning the two sides again got ready for the fight. The Sikhs managed their forces in regular battle as under; Ram Singh was in the front, Behind him were Diwan Singh and Charat Singh of Klaswalia, Dharam Singh Jalalwala, Budh Singh Dodia, Karam Singh *Gill*, Mehtab Singh Wadala, Ram Singh Sare Kali, Jodh Singh Atariwala, Nar Singh Chimiariwala, Mansa Singh, Milkha Singh Rawalpindi (they were all the *Bhangis*), Jodh Singh *Ramgarhia*, Bhag Singh *Ahluwalia*, Natha Singh *Shahid*, Desa Singh, Sham Singh Sultanwind, Jaimal Singh *Kanahiya* and many more. A pitched battle was fought the whole day. Both the parties fell back at Daska and none of them was triumphant.⁴⁶

The major part of the Afghan army was under Shahanchibashi who was camping at some distance from Gujrat. At this time Sikhs advanced from the western bank of river Chenab. Sahib Singh *Bhangi* of Gujrat and Ranjit Singh and the other Sikh *Sardars* proceeded from the west against Shahanchibashi. A savage battle was fought between them about 7 kilometers from Gujrat. In the battle field Shahanchibashi was shot dead and the Afghan forces took to flight and a large booty consisting of camels, horses and war material fell into the hands of the Sikhs.⁴⁷

The Sikhs knew that Shah Zaman was determined to repeat his exploits and they expected his invasion in the winter of, 1797. Some Sikh chiefs decided to meet at Amritsar on the day of Diwali and to concert measures to oppose the invader. They invited Sahib Singh the ruler of Patiala to be present at Amritsar; but he being a loyal subject of the Afghan monarch “declined the invitation to be present at the conference on the pretence that their plans this year would prove equally inefficacious like those of last season”. Sahib Singh of Patiala was in correspondence with Shah Zaman. He sent his messengers to the invader, when

⁴⁶ Giani Kartar Singh Klaswalia, *Tegh Khalsa*, pp. 200-212.

⁴⁷ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 41-42; Giani Gian Singh, *Shamsheer Khalsa*, p. 287; Giani Kartar Singh Klaswalia, *Tegh Khalsa*, pp. 212-16.

they meet at Peshawar, offering his submission and homage. They brought letters from the Shah and his *Wazir* for the *Raja*. Sahib Singh received these letters in full court and offer applying then to his forehead delivered them to his *Munshi* to be read out.⁴⁸

About this time The territorial distribution was as such: Milkha Singh was at Rawalpindi; but the farthest outpost on the north-west frontier at Sare Kali was held by his wife, Sahib Singh at Gujrat, Jodh Singh at Wazirabad, Jassa Singh Son of Karam Singh *Dullu* at Chiniot, Chait Singh son of Lehna Singh at Lahore, Bhag Singh, Nahar Singh, Fateh Singh and Jiwan Singh (belonging to the *Bhangi Misal*) at Sialkot, Gulab Singh *Bhangi* at Amritsar, Ranjit Singh at Pind Dadan Khan, Dal Singh at Ramnagar, Jodh Singh *Ramgarhia* at Tarn Taran, Tara Singh *Gahiba* at Nakoder and Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia* at Naduan.

The military strength of the various important *Sardars* was as follows:

1. Milkha Singh of Rawalpindi	2,000 horse
2. Sahib Singh of Gujrat	6,000 horses
3. Ranjit Singh	15,000 horses
4. Cahit Singh and Mohar Singh of Lahore	16,000 horses
5. Gulab Singh of Amritsar	6,000 horses
6. Jassa Singh of <i>Ramgarhia</i>	3,000 horses

It was, however expected that the Sikhs would not allow the Shah an easy passage and that they would carry out *Guerilla* warfare, harass his troops and impede his progress.⁴⁹

In 13 October, 1798 Shah Zaman again marched towards India and reached Attock. Shah Zaman sent his advance guard under Madad Khan, who reached Sare Kali, which had already been evacuated by the wife of Milkha Singh. She managed to reach Rawalpindi, where Milkha Singh along with Ram Singh was already

⁴⁸ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 491.

⁴⁹ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 491-92.

engaged in a battle with the Mulluka *Zamindars* of Sare Kali and Rawalpindi and had fallen back by 50 kilometers. Having been taken unawares the Sikhs lost the day in the skirmish and both the *Sardar* Milkha Singh and Ram Singh captured and were sent to Shah Zaman at Attock. They paid a ransom of three Lakhs of rupees to Shah Zaman, for their release.⁵⁰

On November 16, 1798 Shah Zaman reached Rohtas. On the other side Milkha Singh, Karam Singh *Dullu* and Ranjit Singh were camping at Rasulpur while Sahib Singh was at Gujrat. On November 19, Wazir Wafadar Khan was attacked by Sahib Singh, Nahar Singh, Ranjit Singh and Sondhe Singh, somewhere between Gujrat and Wazirabad. In the battle field Waffadar Khan lost a considerable number of his troops. The victorious Sikhs returned to Wazirabad.⁵¹ Then the Sikhs came to Amritsar, here they held interview with Budh Singh, Gulab Singh, Bhag Singh, Jaimal Singh and Bibi Sada Kaur. Further they invited Tara Singh, Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*, Gurdit Singh, Bhanga Singh Mehtab Singh and Rai Singh Jagadhari to join them in fighting against the Shah saying: "Victory is the gift of God. Let us make an effort to oppose him."⁵²

On 24 November Shah Zaman was came to know about the presences of the Sikhs at Amritsar. He at once dispatched a contingent of 10,000 troops towards Amritsar. At this time Sahib Singh *Bhangi* and Ranjit Singh at the head of 500 horses, were patrolling around Amritsar. They clashed with Afghans and instantly engaged them in a fight. On hearing about this engagement Gulab Singh *Bhangi*, Jodh Singh and Budh Singh Klaswalia with 2,000 horses come to their assistance.

⁵⁰ Ganesh Das Bادهرا, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, folio nos. 108-9, DPHS, PUP; Giani Gian Singh, *Raj Khalsa*, Amritsar, (ND), reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 8.

⁵¹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 452, DPHS, PUP; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 495-96.

⁵² Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 497.

The battle raged for three hours and about 500 men on each side were killed and the Afghans were ultimately forced to retreat to Lahore.⁵³

On November 29, Gulab Singh Amritsar, Chait Singh Lahore, Sahib Singh of Gujrat, Bhag Singh and Ranjit Singh with 10,000 horses marched from Amritsar towards Lahore to confront the Afghans. Shah Zaman reached Lahore on November 30, 1798.⁵⁴ Consequently the Sikhs encamped 16 kilometers from Amritsar on the Lahore road and disrupted supplies of grain to the Shah's camp, from two directions, Kasur and Amritsar. The Sikhs further attacked the royal camp at Lahore and after carrying out a plunder of the merchants fled away.⁵⁵ According to Sohan Lal Suri, at this time Ranjit Singh himself rushed thrice upon the Samman *Buraj* of the Lahore fort with a few men, fired a number of shots, killed and wounded a number of Afghans and on one occasion even challenged the Shah himself to a single hand combat. 'Come out you, o grand son of Ahmed Shah, "shouted Ranjit Singh to him, "and try two or three hands with the grandson of the great *Sardar* Charat Singh."⁵⁶

At this time a moment development Afghanistan necessitated Shah Zaman's return. According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, Shah Zaman left for Kabul after a month's stay at Lahore as Mahmud Shah, in collaboration with Baba Qachar, had attacked Kabul in his absence.⁵⁷

The Sikhs were constantly in touch with the happenings at Lahore. Chait Singh *Bhangi* and Milkha Singh marched from Amritsar in the night between 3 and 4 January and encamped near Lahore. No sooner did the Shah cross the river

⁵³ Ganesh Das Badehra. *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, folio nos. 108-9, DPHS, PUP; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 498-99.

⁵⁴ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 302; Giani Gian Singh, *Raj Khalsa*, p. 9.

⁵⁵ Ganesh Das Badehra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, folio no. 109, DPHS, PUP; Colonel G. B Malleon, *History of Afghanistan*, p. 306; Giani Gian Singh, *Raj Khalsa*, p. 10.

⁵⁶ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 47-48.

⁵⁷ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 292 & 455, DPHS, PUP.

Ravi both the Sikh *Sardars* entered Lahore and re-occupied the city. Most of the other Sikh *Sardars* also retired to their own territories.⁵⁸

Now the Sikhs decided to Shah Zaman on his way passage through the river Chenab. Torment acting on diplomatic lines, Ranjit Singh chose not to pose any threat to Shah Zaman on his march he rather facilitated his return so that he might not get annoyed with him and think of hitting back at him at the earliest opportunity. Ranjit Singh infect dissuaded the other Sikh *Sardars* from executing their designs and the Shah was allowed to return to Kabul unimpeded. Since the Shah had to back hurriedly 12 of his guns sank in the river Jhelum that was in spate because of rainy season. On the Shah's request Ranjit Singh extricated all the 12 guns from the river. He dispatched 8 of them to Kabul and added four to his arsenal. One of these was of iron and three of brass.⁵⁹

Relations with the Pathan rulers of Kasur: During 1762-63, Kasur was under the three Pathans named Usman Khan, Mahy-ud-Din Khan and Hamid Khan who ruled under the authority of Ahmed Shah Abdali. In 10th April 1763, some Brahmans of Kasur came at Amritsar where Hari Singh *Bhangi* and other Sikh *Sardars* had assembled. Here the Brahmans bitterly complained against the persecution of the Hindus at the hands of the Pathans.⁶⁰ When Hari Singh *Bhangi* heard of the agony of the Hindus, he at once decided to help them. Soon Hari Singh *Bhangi* joined with the other Sikh *Sardars* and marched upon Kasur. When the Sikhs entered in the city of Kasur, Hamid Khan along with Usman Khan and other Pathans came out to challenge the Sikhs. But they were soon beaten by the Sikhs and they agreed to join service under them. They also agreed to pay annual

⁵⁸ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, p. 48; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 511-12.

⁵⁹ Giani Gian Singh, *Shamsheer Khalsa*, p. 289; Giani Gian Singh, *Raj Khalsa*, p. 10.

⁶⁰ Rattan Singh, Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 386-88.

tribute of rupees one lakh, which was accepted by the *Bhangis*. Before departure Hari Singh *Bhangi* established a police post at Kot Khawaja Husian.⁶¹

In 1771, the Pathans of Kasur again revolted against the *Bhangi* Chiefs and again started sexual exploitation and oppression of Hindus by killing the cows in open market at Kasur. They also disposed the police post of Kot Khawaja Husian, which was established by Hari Singh *Bhangi* in 1763. At this time some Brahmans of Kasur came to Amritsar, where Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* and the other *Bhangi Sardars* had assembled and voiced against their grievances. When Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* came to know about audacious revolt of the Pathans, he immediately decided to march towards Kasur to punish the Pathans.⁶² Soon Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* summoned all his *Jagirdars* and allying with other Sikh *Sardars* left Amritsar and marched upon Kasur. When they reached Khem Karan, they were joined by other Sikhs in large numbers. Then they advanced towards Kasur. When they entered the city of Kasur, the two leaders of Kasur named Hamid Khan and Usman Khan of Afghans come out to fight with the Sikhs. In spite of the stubborn resistance on the part the defenders, the Sikhs managed barge into the town. A hand to hand fight continued in the streets. Soon the Sikhs destroyed Garhi Adur Rahim Khan and a lot of booty fell into their hands.⁶³

In the Kasur there were a twelve forts, all situated close to one another. Their names were Kot Abdul Ghani Khan, Kot Azam Khan, Kot Badar-ud-Din Khan, Bakar-ud-Din Khan, Kot Fatahdin Khan, Kot Ghulam Muhayu-ud-Din Khan, Kot Hakim Khan, Kot Khwaja Hisian Khan, Kot Murad Khan, Piran Ka Kot, *Qila* Pukhta and Kot Usman Khan. The bloody battle was fought, for two days around these forts. At that time the Afghan Chiefs ultimately found resistance useless and agreed for peace. They accepted the authority of the *Bhangis*. They

⁶¹ Rattan Singh, Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, pp. 388-91; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 79.

⁶² J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 103.

⁶³ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 103.

also promised not to kill the cows, not to persecute their Hindu subjects and to pay a tribute in addition to a fine of four Lakhs of rupees. These terms was accepted by the *Bhangi* Chiefs. After this Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* re-established the military post of Kot Khwaja Husian. Then they granted the territory of Kasur to the same rulers and retired from Kasur.⁶⁴

The territory of Kasur remained under the tributary of the *Bhangi Sardars* till the death of powerful *Bhangi* chief Ganda Singh happened, in 1774. After death Ganda Singh was succeeded by his son Desa Singh *Bhangi*. In this state of affairs many of his *Sardars* and *Misaldars* became independent. Nizam-ud-Din and Kutb-ud-Din of Kasur also took full advantage of the feeble ownership of Desa Singh *Bhangi* and established themselves separately at Kasur.⁶⁵ After Desa Singh's death his son Gulab Singh *Bhangi* marched upon Kasur and besieged the city. In state of affairs the hopeless Pathans rulers of Kasur agreed to join the service of Gulab Singh *Bhangi*. Further Nizam-ud-Din and Kutab-ud-Din joined with Gulab Singh *Bhangi* and captured the fort of Khadian, which was under the father-in-law of Nizam-ud-Din. In 1794, the Afghan brothers Nizam-ud-Din and Kutb-ud-Din again recovered Kasur, with the support of their countrymen. Due to the weak position of the *Misal*, *Bhangi Sardar* Gulab Singh despite his repeated attempts and could not drive out the Pathans.⁶⁶ In the year of 1798, when Shah Zaman invaded India for the last time, all the places in the Sikh occupation had been evacuated by them. In such a situation the *Zamindars* of Shahdara invited Nizam-ud-din of Kasur to take ownership of the forts evacuated by the Sikhs. He arrived there at the head of 400 horses. On his way march he captured the territories around Kasur including, Kankipur, Havali, Maruf, Atari, Nadian,

⁶⁴ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 208-09.

⁶⁵ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 124, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 375-76, DPHS, PUP.

⁶⁶ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 378, DPHS, PUP.

Mahimoki, Khemkaran and Chunian which were under Tara Singh Cahinpuria who was a *Bhangi Sardar*. On November 18, 1798, Sahib Singh *Bhangi* son of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* joined with Ranjit Singh and marched against Nizam-ud-Din of Kasur and defeated him with heavy losses.⁶⁷

After the departure of Shah Zaman from Lahore, three Sikh *Sardars* Sahib Singh, Cahit Singh and Mohar Singh again captured the city of Lahore. But they could not set up an alliance with each other. Finding the situation in Lahore fluid, *Nawab* Nizam-ud-Din of Kasur started toying with the idea of possessing Lahore. But in view of Ranjit Singh's growing power the *Nawab* of Kasur was obliged to drop the idea of occupying Lahore. According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, some of the Arians of Lahore had been imprisoned and deprived of their belongings by its rulers. They invited Nizam-ud-Din of Kasur to deliver them of bondage. The *Nawab* got ready for Lahore but he shortly realized that it would not be possible for him to keep Lahore in his hands for long.⁶⁸

In 1799, Ranjit Singh captured the city of Lahore and the *Bhangi Sardars* formed a plan to kill Ranjit Singh. To accomplish their plan they also invited the *Nawab* of Kasur Nizam-ud-Din in the battle of Bhasin, in 1800. However they lost the battle and Nizam-ud-Din returned to Kasur.⁶⁹ In 1801 Ranjit Singh sent a massive force against Nizam-ud-Din of Kasur. The *Nawab* suffered a defeat at the hands of the Lahore army and obtained peace through submission and became a tributary *Subedar* of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 379, DPHS, PUP; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 248-49.

⁶⁸ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 380-81, DPHS, PUP.

⁶⁹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 381, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, pp. 54-55.

⁷⁰ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, pp. 54-55; Diwan Amar Nath, *Zaffarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, Lhore, 1837, (Translated into Punjabi by Kirpal Singh), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1983, p. 19.

Relations with rulers of Jammu: The Jammu state lying between the Banihal Mountains on the west and river Ravi in the east was comprised mostly of the hilly region. There were twenty-two states, of which eight were situated to the west of river Chaneb. The *Raja* of Jammu was the head of all these states. The Mughal Emperor appointed a Governor of the Jammu to keep the *Rajas* under control and to release tribute. About the middle of the eighteenth century the Jammu *Raja* began to assert his independence. Later on he became a tributary first to Ahmed Shah Abdali and then to the Sikhs. *Raja* Dharab Deo of Jammu had four sons- Ranjit Deo, Ghanshan Deo, Surat Singh and Balwant Singh. On his death in 1730, he was succeeded by his son Ranjit Deo. He extended his sway into the plains of the Punjab to the north of line drawn from Ganga in the Chaj Doab to Kalowal on the Chenab and from Roars to Sankatra and Munda Khail on the Ravi. These areas mainly covered the districts of Gujrat and Sialkot.⁷¹

The Sikh Chiefs used to send their families with cash, jewelry and other valuable articles to Jammu during the Durrani invasions and everything remained absolutely safe and secure. This is how the Sikhs came to learn about its riches and its military weakness. In the plains of Punjab the Sikhs had been rising into power and under their various leaders they were independently establishing themselves in the territory of Punjab. But Hari Singh *Bhangi* was first amongst the Sikhs who conquered the valley of Kashmir.⁷² Hutchison and Vogel are of the view that Jammu was made tributary to the Sikhs by Bhima Singh *Bhangi*, in 1761. It may be wrong because Bhima Singh *Bhangi* died in 1746, in the battle of Khannuwan (*Chotta Ghallughara*). They further believed that Hari Singh *Bhangi* plundered

⁷¹ Sialkot District Gazetteers, Lahore, 1921, p. 16; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-II, p. 351.

⁷² Sialkot District Gazetteers, 1921, pp. 16-17.

Jammu in 1762. It could be feasible. This view is also corroborated by Ahmed Shah Batalvi.⁷³

According to J D Cunningham, Jammu was under the suzerainty of Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*, who conquered it in 1770. Ranjit Deo the ruler of the Jammu ruled for about half a century. By his docile nature, humility and simplicity he had pleased Jhanda Singh who remained satisfied with a small amount of tribute.⁷⁴ Giani Gian Singh puts this amount at one lakh rupees, Sialkot District Gazetteer at one lakh and a quarter and Khushwaqat Rai at two and half lakhs.⁷⁵ In the beginning he seems to have paid only rupee 30,000.⁷⁶

In 1774 a serious quarrel arose between Ranjit Deo of Jammu and his eldest son Brij Deo. The heir apparent was of dissolute character and Ranjit Deo wanted his younger son Dalel Singh to succeed him. The dispute developed into a war and Brij Raj Deo not realizing the consequences sought assistance from Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* and Jai Singh *Kanahiya*, against his father and brother. It was apparent that Ranjit Deo could not face them single handed. So he called his overlord Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* to help him against them.⁷⁷ Soon the united forces of Jai Singh *Kanahiya* and Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* marched into the hills and encamped on the banks of the river Basantar near the border of Sialkot district and a little to the east of Jammu. Ranjit Deo collected an army of his own, as well as of

⁷³ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, (NP), 1824, (Translated into Punjabi by Gurbakhsh, Singh), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, p. 40; J. Hutchison and J. Ph. Vogel, *History of the Panjab Hill States*, 2 Vol, Lahore, 1933, Vol-I, p. 89 & Vol-II, p. 544.

⁷⁴ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 103.

⁷⁵ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 126, DPHS, PUP; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, (NP), 1880, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1987, p. 1170; Sialkot District Gazetteer, 1921, pp. 17-18.

⁷⁶ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 332-333.

⁷⁷ George Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, pp. 286-87; Baron Hugel, *Travels into Cashmere and the Punjab*, (Translated from German by Major T.B. Jervic), London, 1834, p. 358; J. Hutchison and J. Ph. Vogel, *History of the Panjab Hill States*, Vol-II, pp. 544-45.

his allies, such as the Chiefs of, Teg Chand Ghatoch of Chamba, *Raja* Prithi Singh of Kangra, Nurpur and Basoli in addition to the force of Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*. Both the parties began fighting at Dasuha, adjacent to Zafarwal and continued fighting intermittently for six months. In the battle field Charat Singh was killed accidentally.⁷⁸

Jai Singh *Kanahiya* was stunned at this loss. So he formed a plan to kill Jhanda Singh. For this purpose he hired a *Mazbhi* Sikh to murder Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* who took service under Jhanda Singh. After some days he killed Jhanda Singh, when he was going to his camp after nightfall. After the death of Jhanda Singh his brother Ganda Singh did not like to continue the fight and retired from Jammu. After his departure Ranjit Deo realized the supremacy of Jai Singh and he patched up peace with his son as well as with Jai Singh *Kanahiya* by paying him a sum of one Lakhs and a quarter of rupees.⁷⁹

According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Bhangis* and *Kanahiyas* continued attacked on Jammu and seized the territories of Salhar, Bustah and Syadgarh. In such situation Ranjit Deo ruler of Jammu fixed cash *Nazrana* to the *Bhangis* and *Kanahiyas* as tribute and appointed their *Waqils* at Jammu *Darbar*.⁸⁰

In 1781, *Raja* Ranjit Deo of Jammu died and his son Brij Raj Deo succeeded him. The new ruler of Jammu now determined to recover some of his lost territories, which were occupied by the *Bhangi Sardars*. Soon Brij Raj Deo sent a message to Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya* and Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia* wrote them that if they helped him get the *Taluqa* of Karrianwala and the towns of Jalalpur and Islamgarh released from Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, he would give them, 30, 000 rupees and their share of victory.⁸¹ The *Kanahiya Sardars* accepted the

⁷⁸ J D Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 103; Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, Oxford, 1905, p.154.

⁷⁹ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 40-41; J. Hutchison and J. Ph. Vogel, *History of the Panjab Hill States*, Vol-II, p. 546. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 441.

⁸⁰ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 441.

⁸¹ J. Hutchison and J. Ph. Vogel, *History of the Panjab Hill States*, Vol-II, pp. 546-47.

offer reluctantly as the *Bhangis* were their friends but on the persuasion of Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia* came to assist Brij Raj Deo to capture Karianwala. On the other side Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* along with Karam Singh *Dullu*, Bhag Singh Hallowalia, Tara Singh Chainpuria and Jiwan Singh Sialkotia come to face the alliance. It was with a lot of effort for two months that the Jammu chief was able to occupy Karianwala from Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*.⁸²

A little later Brij Raj Deo marched against Mian Motay and Badan Singh, who ruled over the fort of Tilokpur in Sialkot district. The siege of Tilokpur continued for some days. In circumstances Mian Moaty and Badan Singh invited their overlord *Bhangi Sardar* Desa Singh against Brij Raj Deo. Soon Desa Singh along with Milkha Singh of Rawalpindi came for their assistance. In such a state of affairs to avoid fighting with the *Bhangi Sardars*, Brij Raj Deo lifted of the siege of Tilokpur and returned to Jammu.⁸³

Now Brij Raj did not pay the stipulated *Nazrana* to Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya* probably on the suggestion of Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia*. This led to an estrangement between Mahan Singh and Jai Singh *Kanahiya* and Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya*. Soon Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, accompanied by his *Misaldars* and Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya* and his other associates made a bid to get the *Taluqa* of Karianwala released from Brij Raj Deo of Jammu. They besieged Brij Raj Deo at Shakargarh. Brij Raj Deo immediately appealed Mahan Singh for assistance. The jointly forces of Mahan Singh and Brij Raj entered to conflict with Gujjar Singh, who was strongly assisted by Karam Singh *Dullu*, Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya* and other *Bhangi Sardars*. Consequently Mahan Singh and Brij Raj Deo were beaten back and the siege of Shakargarh continued.⁸⁴ After some days Brij Raj Deo was shot dead at Shakargarh and Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* captured Karianwala. After Brij

⁸² J. Hutchison and J. Ph. Vogel, *History of the Panjab Hill States*, Vol-II, p. 547.

⁸³ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 443, DPHS, PUP.

⁸⁴ J. Hutchison and J. Ph. Vogel, *History of the Panjab Hill States*, Vol-II, pp 548-49.

Raj Deo's death Gujjar Singh, allowed Mian Mottay to appoint Sampuran Deo the head of Deo family and the Governor of Jammu.⁸⁵

Relations with the rulers of Kashmir Valley: In 1767, Gujjar Singh conquered the valley of Kashmir which was under the Afghans. At first Gujjar Singh marched towards Islamgarh, which was under Rahmat Khan and Sikander Khan of Jalalpur Jatan, (who had helped the Sikhs in the battle of Gujrat and had been nominated as the rulers of Islamgarh), who had already submitted to Gujjar Singh, when he captured Gujrat from Mqarrab Khan, in 1765. They had built a strong fort at Islamgarh and had appointed Islam Khan, the *Qiledar* of the fort. Gujjar Singh once again routed them in the battle field and they voluntarily submitted to Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*. Then Gujjar Singh retained the possession of Islamgarh and some village in Gujrat including Jalalpur to the same chiefs. Further Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* fell upon the fort of Mangla, where Bnadu Khan ruled. After minor conflict Gujjar Singh succeeded in capturing the fort. In Gujrat district they held fifty one villages. Besides they possessed the tract of Khari Kharyali stretching from the forts of Mangla and Naushahra on the river Jhelum in the hilly region up to the river Chenab. About the same time Gujjar Singh reduced to subjection the Muslim hilly states of lower Kashmir region. First he marched towards Bhimbar (Bhimbar is the name of a state, town, and river). It lay on the royal Mughal road to Kashmir from Gujrat via Pir Panjal. Bhimbar was the starting point for the mountains region. The state was ruled by the *Rajas* Sultan Khan and Sulaiman Khan who had been converted to Islam, but retained their old Hindu title. Gujjar Singh made his tributary over them and captured Bhimbar.⁸⁶ Afterwards he advanced towards Mirpur, Kotli, Cahumukh, Shahdru and PUNCHH. These successes emboldened

⁸⁵ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 443, DPHS, PUP; Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 150, DPHS, PUP.

⁸⁶ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 443, DPHS, PUP; Jhelum District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1907, p. 242.

Gujjar Singh to conquer the valley of Kashmir which was under the authority of Afghans. But he failed to capture them and returned to Gujrat with great difficulty.⁸⁷ A little later Gujjar Singh again turned his attention towards Islamgarh. It was well known that Islam Khan, the *Zamindar* of Islamgarh being fond of horses had a large stable at Islamgarh. Gujjar Singh planned to seize his stables by imprisoning him. When Islam Khan came to know about this conspiracy, he took flight leaving his horses and other things behind at Islamgarh. Gujjar Singh occupied all his territory.⁸⁸

Relations with Inyat Ula Khan of Jhang: Inyat Ula Khan was the nephew of Mahram Khan, who held the territory of Chiniot and the great part between the river Ravi and Chenab as far as north of Pindi Bhatian and also holding the country to the west of the river Chenab and Jhelum as far as Mankera. He was a brave and successful general and is said to have won twenty two battles. The most important of these were against the chiefs of Multan, who were encroaching the Jhang territory and the recovery of Chiniot from the *Bhangi Sardar* Karam Singh *Dullu*. He died in 1787 and was succeeded by his son Sultan Muhammad Khan, who was an imbecile and did not last long because he fought with his brother Sahib Khan and was killed. The next *Raja* of the Jhang was Kabir Khan, son of Ismial Khan. The Sikhs had by this time become very powerful and Karam Singh *Dullu* the *Bhangi* Chief had conquered Chiniot. After Karam Singh's death, Ranjit Singh capture the territory of Chiniot from Jassa Singh *Dullu* son of Karam Singh *Dullu* and returned the territory of Chiniot to Ahmed Khan son of Kabir Khan.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 127, DPHS; Hugel Browne Charles, *Travels into Cashmere and the Punjab*, pp. 35-37; Lepel Griffin and W.L Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-I & II, Lahore, 1909, (Edited by G. L Chopra), Lahore, 1940, Vol-II, p. 464.

⁸⁸ Gujrat District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1892-93, p. 6; Lepel Griffin and W.L Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-II, p. 464.

⁸⁹ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I & II, Lahore, 1890, Vol-II, p. 76.

Relations with Ahmed Khan Chatha and his successors: The *Chathas* were the numerous Muhammadan tribes chiefly inhabiting the Hafizabad and Wazirabad *Parganas* of Gujranwala district, where they held 78 villages. They claimed to be originally Chohan Rajputs and to have immigrated to the Punjab from Delhi. They rapidly increased in numbers, spreading along the bank of the river Chenab and populated Nadala, Manchar, Bangli, Pandorian and other villages. Around the year of 1765, Ahmed Khan son of Nur Muhammad Khan was the chief of *Chatha* tribe and he was the great enemy of the *Bhangis*. At the time of the occupation the city of Lahore, he captured the celebrated the *Bhangi* gun, which Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* had placed in Gujranwala. In 1771 Ahmed Khan and his brother Pir Muhammad Khan quarreled and fought for some time with varying success. At last Pir Muhammad Khan sought help from Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* of Gujrat, who invited Ahmed Khan to a conference. Soon Gujjar Singh captured Ahmed Khan and shut him up without water till he agreed to resign. After some days he agreed to resign and both the brothers agreed to submit to Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*. Further Gujjar Singh captured the great *Bhangis* gun, which he carried to the fort of Gujrat. It remained with the *Bhangis* for some time after which it was wrested By Charat Singh.⁹⁰

While Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* was on his way back after capturing Multan from Shuja Khan, he fell upon Ramnagar the strong hold of the *Chathas* situated on the Sialkot-Multan road, 33 kilometers below Wazirabad on the banks of the river Chenab. Ahmed Khan came out to clash with the *Bhangis* but in vain. Jhanda Singh then demanded the famous gun from him, helpless Ahmed Khan then agreed to hand over the gun and submitted himself to Jhanda Singh. Jhanda Singh carried the *Zamzama* gun to Amritsar and placed it at *Qila Bhangian*. The *Zamzama* (*Bhangian- Wali –Top*) had been given to Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* by the Lahore chiefs, in 1765. The former had carried it off to Gujranwala from where it was

⁹⁰ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, p. 202

captured by Ahmed Khan *Chatha* who took it to his fort of Ahmednagar. Pir Muhammad Khan, his brother, thinking that he had also a claim to it, quarreled with him. In the fight which ensued, a son of Pir Muhammad Khan and two sons of Ahmed Khan *Chatha* were killed. Pir Muhammad Khan at last Called Gujjar Singh for help, who seized the gun and took it to Gujrat for himself. It remained with the *Bhangis* for some time after which it was wrested By Charat Singh. The *Chathas*, who were always eager to fight with *Sukerchakias*, recovered it in 1772 and removed it to Rasulnagar. From here Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* occupied it in the same year.⁹¹

In 1790, Mahan Singh joined with Jai *Kanahiya* and marched towards Rasulnagar. The besieged *Chatha Sardar* Pir Muhammad who soon surrender and his territory were captured by Mahan Singh.⁹² But later the *Chathas* did not accept defeat lying down and soon got refractory against Mahan Singh. At this time Chait Singh *Bhangi* younger brother of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* came to help the *Chathas* against *Sukerchakias*. But they were defeated at the hands of Mahan Singh and Pir Muhammad Khan lost some of his territory like Alipur and Mancher. Mahan Singh captured Chait Singh and imprisoned him in the fort of Gujranwala.⁹³ In June, 1797 Lehna Singh *Bhangi* with his only son Chait Singh joined with Ranjit Singh in his campaign against Hashmat Khan *Chatha* son of Ahmad Khan of Rasulnagar later renamed Ramnager. After a brief resistance Hashmat Khan sued for peace. He was granted two villages for his maintenance and the rest of the territory and the fort passed on to Ranjit Singh.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 336-37.

⁹² Henry T Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Calcutta, 1834, pp. 41-42 (here after given as H T, Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power*).

⁹³ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, p. 42; Bhagat Singh, *History of the Sikh Misals*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1993, pp. 184-85.

⁹⁴ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 42-44.

Relations with the Blouch of Shahiwal: In 1772 Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* captured Multan; on his way back he attacked Shahiwal, but was repulsed, though he took possession of portion of the territory. Muhammad Khan the chief of Shahiwal at length succeeded in recovering this with some loss, but was assassinated, soon afterwards by the *Bhangis* and Blouch who had come to Shahiwal under the pretence of paying him a complimentary visit. A little later Fateh Khan the new Chief of the Shahiwal family turned his arms against the Sikhs and come to meet with Mit Singh *Bhangi*. From him he recovered the fort of Nahang and Shekh Jalal and also captured the territory of Dera Jara.⁹⁵

Relations with the Gakhar Tribes: The territory between the Chaj-Doab, the river Chenab and the river Jhelum was the territory of Gakhars. Sultan Muqarrab Khan became the head of the Gakhar tribe in 1739, at the time of Nadir Shah. He subdued Yusufzai Afghans of Hazara district. He defeated Jang Quli Khan Khatak. He seized Gujrat and established his headquarters there in 1758, after the death of Adina Beg Khan. He supported Ahmad Shah Abdali in his Indian invasions and gave away his daughter in marriage to him and received great consideration from him. The Gakhars were a tremendously powerful tribe. They had possessed great power for many hundred years. They dominated over wide extent of country lying between river Chenab and river Indus.⁹⁶

Around 1765, *Sardar* Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* marched from Lahore against Muqarrab Khan Gakhar the ruler of Gujrat. Muqarrab Khan fought a battle outside the walls of Gujrat, but was defeated and compelled to retire across the Jhelum, giving up his possession in the Chaj-Doab and Gujrat to Gujjar Singh. His power being thus under mined the rival chiefs of his own tribe rebelled against him and Himat Khan Domli took him prisoner by treachery and put him to death and

⁹⁵ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, pp. 303-4.

⁹⁶ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, pp. 357-58; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 226.

himself assumed the headship of the tribe. Then the two elder sons of Muqarrab Khan took the *Illaka* of Pharwala and the two younger sons took the possession of Dangli, but they stroved among them selves on the question of divided the territory. Gujjar Singh took the advantage and seized every thing, with the exception of Pharwala and Dangli. After victory these *Illakas* were divided among the two brothers named Sadula Khan and Nazir Ali Khan on the condition of tribute. But after some time they died without any male issue. Mansur Khan and Shadman Khan succeeded to their shares, which they held till 1818, when *Sardar Anand Singh Thepuria*, grand son of the famous *Bhangi Sardar Milkha Singh Rawalpindi*, seized their whole territory.⁹⁷

Relations with Ahmed Yar Khan: Lakha a famous *Chaudhri*, held the Wattu country on the both side of river Satluj. Around the middle of 18 century, he held the villages around Atari and Haveli and some of 40 more on the other side of the Satluj. After death he was succeeded by his grandson Ahmed Yar Khan. But a little latter Fateh Singh *Bhangi* overran the country and defeated him at Kandhwala and drove him across the Satluj. One account says the leader of the *Bhangis* was Budh Singh. He improved the country greatly and the Wattus, who had been ill-used before, were well off and as contented as they could be under the *Bhangis*. An occasional attempt was made to oust the latter, but ineffectually. It would seem as if the *Bhangis* treated Jahan Khan, the successor of Ahmed Yar Khan, with consideration and did not entirely despoil him of his property. The territory of the *Bhangis* extended from Maruf in the east to *Bhangianwala* near Pakpattan in the west.⁹⁸

Relation with the British Government: Jhanda Singh tried to cultivate friendly relations with the British Government. The nearest political outpost of the British at that time was at Lucknow. On August 19, 1771, Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* wrote a

⁹⁷ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, pp. 358-59.

⁹⁸ Montgomery District Gazetteers, Lahore, 1933, pp. 17-18.

letter to General Barker of the East India Company and informed him that he maintained cordial relations with *Raja* Ranjit Deo of Jammu. Then he told to the General that Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* had taken Sarbuland Khan Prisoner and the Sikhs had disallowed Ahmed Shah Durrani from crossing the river Indus and forced him to return to Qandhar. So Ahmed Shah Abdali was not likely to attack Hindustan as he was frightened of the *Khalsa* in the Punjab.⁹⁹ According to N.K Sinha, Jhanda Singh thus wrote to the British, with an idea of course to impress on them the strength of his own position and that of the Sikhs.¹⁰⁰ It is something the credit of this Trans-Satluj Sikh chieftain that he could look beyond his narrow circle and cultivate the goodwill of the foreigners. It is remarkable to note that of all the *Bhangi* Sikhs chiefs Jhanda Singh alone tried to cultivate healthy relations with the British Government.¹⁰¹ Further N K, Sinha stated that Rai Singh *Bhangi*, a Sikh Chief of the Cis-Sutlej region, thus informed the British authorities: “the disturbance that reigns in this quarter, meaning Zaman Shah’s invasion, cannot be in any respect unknown to you. The chiefs of the *Khalsa* repaired to places of security on account of their families and every one of them is bent upon repelling this disturbance and being now at ease with regard to their families, will take measures for that purpose. Your well-wisher with his brethren and chiefs is in force in Buria. They have no knowledge of *Gourmitter*, which is called *Sillah* Gobind. The Supreme Being did before repel the devoted body (meaning the Abdalis) from this country and over-whelmed them and He will now do the same”.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Abstracts of the letter of 19 August 1771, no. 868, Calendar of Persian Correspondence, Vol-III, Central Publication Branch, Calcutta, 1911, No. 108; N.K Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, Calcutta, 1936, 3rd edition, 1960, p. 57.

¹⁰⁰ N.K Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, p. 57.

¹⁰¹ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 210.

¹⁰² N.K Sinha, *Rise of the Sikh Power*, pp. 104-5. *Gourmitter*, i.e., *Gurumat*, or resolutions of the assembly according to *Sillah* Govind or the rulers of the 10th Guru.

Chapter-V

Fall of Bhangi Misal and its Minor Chiefs and Chieftains

As we know the *Bhangi Misal* became the strongest and wealthiest *Misal* among all the other Sikh *Misals* in the second half of 18th century. The members of this confederacy successfully ruled over a large part of the province of Punjab till, 1799, during which period they remained on their Zenith. But the power of the *Bhangis* began to decline before the end of the 18th century, by which time powerful *Bhangi Sardars* Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh had died. Their downfall was also hastened by the rise of Ranjit Singh in the early 19th century and the invasions of Timur Shah and Shah Zaman and the conquests of Punjab by the Afghans these are all a clear evidence of the weakness of the *Bhangis*. In this state of affairs many of their *Misaldars* who had earlier extended all the military assistance expected of them became independent. It must be emphasized, however, that the *Bhangi* Chiefs had already lost much of their territories before Ranjit Singh appeared on the scene. Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia* had conquered some of the territory belonging to the *Bhangi Sardars*. In addition to this, they never were able to build a united front against Mahan Singh. Ranjit Singh only accomplished the process which had been in progress through Mahan Singh on a little scale.

Decline of the main family of the *Bhangis*: Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* was the Chief leader of the *Bhangi Misal* who looked after the affairs of the *Misal* and made great efforts to place the *Misal* on an, exceptionally sound footing. He died in 1774, when he was fighting in favor of *Raja Ranjit Deo* of Jammu (which was a

tributary of Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*) against his son Brij Raj Deo assisted by Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* and Jai Singh *Kanahiya*.¹

According to Kanahiya Lal, Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* died without an issue. So after the death of Jhanda Singh his brother Ganda Singh became the Chief leader of the *Misal*.² Earlier he had participated in all the activities with Jhanda Singh and had taken active part in the campaigns of Bahawalpur, Multan, Central Punjab and Western Punjab. But after Jhanda Singh's death, he did not make any remarkable progress.³

The murder of Jhanda Singh was, nevertheless rankling in the mind of Ganda Singh. He was waiting for an opportunity which soon presented itself to him.⁴ According to Ahmed Shah *Batalvi*, "Jhanda Singh had seized Pathankot from Fatah Muhammad Khan and Pathankot was then conferred to one of his *Misaldars* named Nand Singh also called Mansa Singh, who died shortly after the Jammu affair. His widow named Jaunsan married her daughter to Tara Singh *Kanahiya*. She also gave away the territory of Pathankot to *Kanahiyas* in dowry."⁵

Now Ganda Singh asked the *Kanahiyas* to hand over Pathankot back to him, which they naturally refused. Thereupon, Ganda Singh joined with Jassa

¹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, (NP), 1854, MS., (Translated into Punjabi, by Gurbakhsh Singh), preserved in the library of the Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, Accession No. 30, folio nos. 271-72, (after here given as DPHS, PUP); Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Lahore, 1881, (Translated into Punjabi by Jit Singh Seetal), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1987, p. 86.

² Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 86.

³ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, (NP), 1824, (Translated into Punjabi by Gurbakhsh Singh), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, p. 39; Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Sikhan*, (NP), 1811, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Milkhi Ram), preserved in the library of the DPHS, PUP, Accession No. 22, folio no. 118.

⁴ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, Calcutta, 1891, reprint, New Delhi, 1964, p. 298.

⁵ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 39.

Singh *Ramgarhia*, Gujjar Singh, Lehna Singh, Bhag Singh Chamiari, Pir Muhammad Khan *Chatha* and Ranjit Deo of Jammu. The united forces advanced towards Pathankot. The two armies met at Sundar Chak near village Awanak in *Pargana* Dinanagar, where fighting continued for several days, without any decisive result.⁶ Hostilities ceased after ten days of incessant fighting, when Ganda Singh passed away suddenly due to illness.⁷

After Ganda Singh's death his elder son Charat Singh succeeded the *Sardari* of *Bhangi Misal* and continued the *Misal's* against the *Kanahiyas*. In one of the early engagements, however Charat Singh *Bhangi* was killed at Pathankot.⁸ These successive deaths of the *Bhangi* rulers broke the back of the *Misal* and the *Kanahiyas* had an upper hand in the contest for power. In these circumstances, Desa Singh (also known as Desu Singh) son of Ganda Singh was installed as head of the *Bhangi Misal*.⁹ Desa Singh the new *Sardar* of the *Bhangi Misal* was weedy minded and dull witted. He appointed Gujjar Singh as his minister with through intercession he concluded peace with the *Kanahiya's* and returned to Amritsar. After the termination of the conflict the fort of Pathankot remained under the possession of the *Kanahiyas*.¹⁰

According to Syed Muhammad Latif, it was hardly as expected, however, that the Chiefs who had been inured to campaigning and whose pride it was to lead their forces against the enemy, under *Sardar* Hari Singh and Jhanda Singh,

⁶ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 39-40.

⁷ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 298.

⁸ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 119, DPHS, PUP; Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 41. According to, Syed Muhammad Latif, says that Charat Singh was Ganda Singh's nephew. *History of the Panjab*, p. 298.

⁹ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 298. According to Kanahiya Lal, Desa Singh was Ganda Singh's brother and Ganda Singh's son Gulab Singh was little at that time so the *Bhangis* elected Desa Singh as their leader. Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 86. Here may be Kanahiya Lal, wrong because not any other writer support to Kanahiya Lal on this account.

¹⁰ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 40; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 298.

would tamely submit to be governed by a stripling.¹¹ Desa Singh could not manage the affairs of the *Misal* effectively. The veteran *Bhangi Sardars* could not be controlled by him. Many of his *Misaldars* began to assert independent. They assumed freedom and stopped paying any attribute to the fighter-head of the *Misal*. According to Lepel Griffin, first of them was Milkha Singh Rawalpindi who got rid off the service of the *Bhangis* and went over to Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia* and the other was Bhag Singh Hallowalia. The ruler of Jhang also ceased to pay tribute. Muzaffar Khan, son of Shuja Khan assisted by Bahawalpur Chief Bahawal Khan made an attempt to recover Multan in 1777. This progress was, however, checked by Diwan Singh, the Governor of Multan (appointed by Jhanda Singh).¹²

A greater calamity was awaiting the *Bhangis* which became one of the big reasons of the downfall of the *Bhangi Misal* that Timur Shah, successor of Ahmed Shah Abdali was determined to recover his lost territories in the Punjab. In 1777-78, he sent two detachments of the Afghan troops to drive out the Sikhs from Multan but with no success.¹³ At the end of 1779, Timur Shah again sent his troops, numbering 18,000 under the control of Zangi Khan, to recover Multan from the *Bhangis*. At that time Diwan Singh the Governor of Multan, could not save Multan and the *Bhangis* are said to have suffered heavy losses with 3, 000 soldiers killed in the battle field and 2, 000, drowned in the process of crossing the river. After the success over Multan, it was placed under the Governorship of Shuja Khan, father of Muzaffar Khan.¹⁴

¹¹ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 298.

¹² Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I & II, Lahore, 1890, Vol-I, p. 334; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 298.

¹³ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 119, DPHS, PUP; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 298-99.

¹⁴ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 336; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 299.

There is no doubt that the decline of the *Misal* which started earlier, continued under the weak command of Desa Singh *Bhangi*. Even though some places slipped out of his control he continued receiving revenue to the tune of fifty thousand rupees annually from the Sial Chiefs.¹⁵

The role of *Sukerchakias* was also very important in the decline of the *Bhangi Misal* because Mahan Singh was a sworn enemy of the *Bhangis*. Desa Singh was not on good terms with Mahan Singh who was now becoming very powerful. Both were often engaged in mutual warfare and there were sporadic skirmishes between them. The stars of the *Sukerchakias* were on the ascendant in those days. Desa Singh could not add any territories to his *Misal*; rather he lost many of his *Parganas* like Pindi Bhatian, Shahiwal, and some part of Bhera, Isa Khel, Jhang and Takht Hazara which were sized by Mahan Singh. A part of Kasur and some other areas passed into the hands of Nizam-ud-Din Khan of Kasur.¹⁶

In 1782, Desa Singh marched towards Chiniot to reduce the city and had many skirmishes with Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia*. In the action Desa Singh was killed. He ruled for eight years.¹⁷

Desa Singh was succeeded by his minor son Gulab Singh, who looked after the affairs of the *Misal* with the help of his cousin Karam Singh *Dullu*.¹⁸ During the period of his minority his cousin Karam Singh *Dullu* carried on administration of Amritsar and on coming of age Gulab Singh dismissed him.

¹⁵ Bhagat Singh, *A History of the Sikh Misals*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1993, p. 99.

¹⁶ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no.119, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 276, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁷ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 300.

¹⁸ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 40. According to Kanahiya Lal, Gulab Singh was the son of Ganda Singh, who became the leader of the *Bhangi Misal* after the death of Desa Singh. Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 86. But not any other contemporary and semi-contemporary writers supported him in this point.

Gulab Singh was a bold and brave *Sardar*. He fought a number of battles with Mahan Singh *Sukarchakia* and won back his old *Parganas*. Gulab Singh enlarged the city of Amritsar, where he resided and on attaining years of discretion, overran the whole Pathan colony of Kasur. He subdued the, Pathans chiefs of Kasur, Nizam-ud-Din and Kutab-ud-Din.¹⁹ But this success was of an enduring nature, because in 1794, Nizam-ud-Din and Kutab-ud-Din again occupied the city of Kasur. In this time Gulab Singh despite his repeated attempts and could not drive out the Afghans. He was left with no influence and energy sufficient to keep together the possessions which his father had left for him.²⁰

Taking advantage of this instability, the two tribes of Nepalis and Dugars, in the Sarhali area had become awfully rebellious and independent. The *Bhangi Sardars* had built a fort one kilometer away from the Sarhali town to contain these tribes under end to keep them subjection. Once Gulab Singh while on a tour there was attacked and his camp was plundered. Gulab Singh's three *Perganas* of Tarn Taran, Sobraon and Sarhali were also seized by Baghel Singh, which could not be recovered. Many other territories of Gulab Singh were taken control of by his other subordinate *Sardars*. Year by year these territories diminished, till at last, the town of Amritsar and some villages including Jhabhal, Kohali, Majitha, Naushehra and Sarhali in the Majha alone remained in his hands.²¹

Syed Muhammad Latif says that Gulab Singh as a consequence of his debaucheries was not a debilitated and idiotic ruler, possessing neither force of

¹⁹ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 41; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 276, DPHS, PUP.

²⁰ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, part-II, Amritsar (ND), reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 230.

²¹ Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, part-II, p. 231; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 336.

character nor influence sufficient to protect his interests against on intrigues of the rival chiefs whose power was now in the ascendant.²²

As we know in the course of the years 1795, 1796 and 1797, the Punjab was twice exposed to invasions by Shah Zaman, who had recently succeeded the placement of Timur Shah on the throne of Kabul. The Sikhs ventured not to oppose him openly in the field and his coming, therefore, was a source of infinite confusion, Sikh *Sardars* near his route. In 1798, the Shah advanced again and entered Lahore. The city of Lahore at this time was in the hands of three Sikh chiefs namely Sahib Singh son of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*, Chait Singh son of Lehna Singh *Bhangi* and Mohar Singh son of Sobha Singh who had already deserted the city before Shah's approach. But after a few months stay there, finding it impossible to make any arrangements for the permanent occupation of the country or to render the Punjab in other respects a source of advantage to himself, he retraced his steps to his hereditary dominions west of the Indus; the Sikh *Sardars* now returned each to his territory and the three rulers of Lahore again occupying the city of Lahore, which had been evacuated on the Shah's approach.²³

Upon the retirement of the Shah, Ranjit Singh began to entertain designs for securing Lahore to himself and his mother-in-law Sada Kaur encouraged and lent her aid to forward his views.²⁴ The city was at this time in the joint possession of Chait Singh, Mohar Singh and Sahib Singh. The only chief of any resource fullness amongst them was Sahib Singh *Bhangi* but he generally resided at Gujrat. Chait Singh and Mohar Singh were unpopular among the inhabitants

²² Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 303.

²³ Henry T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab, and Political life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Calcutta, 1834, reprinted Language Department, Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 40 (after here given as H T, Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh power*); Himadri Banerjee, *The Khalsa and the Punjab*, p. 76.

²⁴ H.T Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power* p. 40.

of Lahore.²⁵ Weighing the advantage, Ranjit Singh marched upon Lahore with his mother-in-law Sada Kaur and after defeating the two Governors of Lahore, Mohar Singh and Chait Singh, he achieved a complete victory over Lahore on July 7, 1799.²⁶

The occupation of Lahore by Ranjit Singh was the first significant failure of the *Bhangis*. Ranjit Singh's achievements were creating alarm in the minds of the Sikh *Sardars* and especially the *Bhangis*. Gulab Singh *Bhangi* was not reconciled to occupation of Lahore by Ranjit Singh. In order to annihilate Ranjit Singh's power, Gulab Singh called all his *Misaldars* and his supporters to fight against Ranjit Singh and formed an alliance against Ranjit Singh. He entered into a conspiracy with Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia* and Nizam-ud-din of Kasur, Jassa Singh *Dullu*, Jodh Singh Kalalwala, Bhag Singh Hallowalia, Nar Singh Cahmiari as well as Sahib Singh himself being the leading man behind the whole plan.²⁷ According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, Jiamal Singh son of Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya*, Jasaa Singh *Dullu* son of Karam Singh *Dullu*, Mehar Singh son of Tara Singh Chainpuria, Bhag Singh Hallowalia, Sudh Singh son of Gurbakhash Singh Doda, Amar Singh Bakha, Assa Singh Ubbawala, Mohar Singh Rakhwala, Jodh Singh Kalalwala, Assa Singh Surian, Sondha Singh Sukerwind and Chait Singh Son of Lehna Singh also joined in the expedition of Bhasin.²⁸ In 1800, the allies combined their forces at the village of Bhasin, 12 miles east of Lahore.²⁹ On the other side Ranjit Singh also advanced with his mother-in-law Sada Kaur and

²⁵ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, Lahore, 1880-85,MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Amarwant Singh), Guru Nanak Den, University, Amritsar, 1985, p. 49; Carmichael Smyth, *Reigning Family of Lahore*, Calcutta, 1847, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 8.

²⁶ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, p. 49; G.L Chopra, *The Panjab as Sovereign State*, Hoshiarpur, 1960, (2nd edition), p. 8.

²⁷ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 40; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, p. 54.

²⁸ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 463, DPHS, PUP.

²⁹ According to McGregor, the united forces amounted to 50,000 or 60,000 men. McGregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, London, 1846, pp. 124-25.

Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia* and they encamped opposite the *Bhangi* camp. After minor skirmishes the contending armies stood apart waiting for a bigger clash. Meanwhile Gulab Singh *Bhangi* died of excessive drinking at his camp.³⁰ So the death of their leader dispirited the confederate army which dispersed without achieving anything and their plans fizzled out.³¹

But Ali-ud-Din Mufti gives us another reason of the failure of the *Bhangis* in the battle of Bhasin, according to him Sahib Singh, Sudh Singh Doda and Amar Singh Bakha (Bagga), deserted the battle field and due to the weak position of the *Bhangis* the remaining *Sardars* too defected to the side of Ranjit Singh one by one. The face of this setback, Gulab Singh returned to Amritsar, where he died.³²

The allies detached forthwith, without fighting against Ranjit Singh. It was indeed a great political and psychological victory for Ranjit Singh who now found himself clearly on the road to monarchy in the Punjab. The constituent *Sardars* of the alliance, thus dispersed could not meet again to challenge Ranjit Singh's power.³³

Gulab Singh was survived by his ten-year- old son Gurdit Singh and his widow Mai Sukhan. At that time the *Misal* was on its downward march and the new ruler was also in a helpless condition. In such circumstances, the affairs of the *Misal* were managed by his mother Mai Sukhan.³⁴ Ranjit Singh was fully aware of the importance of the religious city and capital of Amritsar so now he

³⁰ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio nos.120-21, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 55. According to Ahmed Shah Batalvi, "Gulab Singh fell ill at Bhasin. He came back to Amritsar where he passed away." Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 41-42.

³¹ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no.123, DPHS, PUP ; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 277, DPHS, PUP.

³² Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 463-64, DPHS, PUP.

³³ Bhagat Singh, *A History of the Sikhs Misals*, p.100.

³⁴ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 336.

saw an excellent opportunity to destroy the power of the rival *Misal* root and branch and seize the religious capital of the Sikhs without the control of when he could not claim supremacy among his co-religionists.³⁵

In 1805 Ranjit Singh, assembled his own and Sada Kaur's troops and being joined by Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia*, the three united *Misals* fell suddenly on the family of Gulab Singh *Bhangi* of Amritsar.³⁶ According to Kanahiya Lal, after the death of Gulab Singh his son Gurdit Singh collected his forces and marched upon Lahore against Ranjit Singh.³⁷ The moment was considered favorable to crush the power of the *Bhangis*. Accordingly, the widow of Gulab Singh was called upon to surrender the fort of Lohgarh at Amritsar and to give up the great *Bhangi* Gun (*Top Bhangian Wali*).³⁸ Now, on being called upon to

³⁵ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, New Delhi, 1982, p. 219.

³⁶ H.T Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh power*, p. 43.

³⁷ Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 86. This may be wrong because Gurdit Singh was a ten year old at that time; how this is possible a ten year old child led an expedition against a powerful ruler such as Ranjit Singh.

³⁸ Diwan Amar Nath, *Zaffar Nama-i-Ranjit Singh*, Lahore, 1837, (Translated into Punjabi by Dr. Kirpal Singh), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1983, p. 18. According to Ghulam, Muhayy-ud-din, Bute Shah, *Tawarikh-i-Punjab*, (NP), 1848, part-III, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Janak Singh) preserved in the library of the DPHS, PUP, Accession No. 26, folio no. 16. According to Lepel Griffin, the history of this gun is somewhat remarkable. It was cast at Lahore, with another gun of the same seize, in 1761 by Shah Nazir, under the directions of Shah Wali Khan, prime minister of Ahmed Shah. The date of its founding (A.H.1174) may be derived from last of the Persian verses engraved upon it, each letter having a numerical value.

The material of which the guns were made was a mixture of copper and brass obtained by the *Jazia* (tribute levied by Mohammedans), a metal vessel being taken from each house in Lahore. Ahmed Shah, on his returning to Kabul after his victory over the Afghans at Panipat, in 1761, left the *Zam-Zam* gun, the carriage of which was not ready at Lahore in the charge of Khawaja Abad, whom he had appointed Governor. The other gun he took with him and it was lost in the passage of the Chenab. The *Zam-Zam* Gun had a longer life. Hari Singh *Bhangis* said to have captured it when he plundered Khawaja Abad's arsenal and to have taken it to Amritsar. According to Lepel Griffin this is not correct; for it is certain that during the whole Governorship of Khawaja Abad, 1761-1762, the

surrender the gun, Mai Sukhan refused to part with it as its possession had guaranteed glory and regard to the *Misal*.³⁹ According to Sohan Lal Suri, at this time there was a clash between Mai Sukhan's Minister Santokh Singh and Kamal-ud-Din a Muslim noble of Amritsar. On the other side one of the Shahukar of *Katra Bhangian* named Arrur Mal had also entered into a quarrel with Mai Sukhan on the question of tax money. Kamal-ud-Din and Arrur Mal patched up a strategic collaboration against Mai Sukhan and sent a letter to

gun was lying uncaptured in *Shahi Buraj* at Lahore. In 1764, when *Sardar* Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh *Bhangis* captured Lahore, they obtained possession of it. Two days later, Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* came to congratulate the *Bhangis* and hinted that he should have some share of spoil. The *Bhangis*, who knew that Charat Singh had come, not for congratulation, but only as a vulture who has scented a car case, thought to outwit him and unwilling to make so powerful a Chief their enemy, offered him, with the greatest politeness, the *Zam-Zam* gun, the best part they asserted of the spoil, hoping and believing that he would be unable to carry it away. But Charat Singh, seeing he could get nothing more, called his men together and with great labour, carried it off to his camp and then to his fort at Gujranwala from where it was captured by Ahmed Khan *Chatha* who took it to his fort Ahmednagar. Pir Muhammad Khan, his brother, thinking that he had also a claim to it, quarreled with him. In the fight which ensued, a son of Pir Muhammad Khan and two sons of Ahmed Khan *Chatha* were killed. Pir Muhammad Khan at last Called Gujjar Singh for help, who seized the gun and took it to Gujrat for himself. It remained with the *Bhangis* for some time after which it was wrested by Charat Singh. The *Chathas*, who were always eager to fight with *Sukerchakias*, recovered it in 1772 and removed it to Rasalnagar. From here Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* occupied it in the same year on his return journey of Multan and was by him sent to Amritsar, where it remained in the *Bhangis* fort till 1802, when Ranjit Singh who had the greatest desire to possess it, drove the *Bhangis* out of Amritsar and seized it. During the reign of Ranjit Singh the gun was taken, with great pomp, on five deferens campaigns, Viz., Daska, Kasur, Sujampur, Wazirabad and Multan. At the siege of the last-named place, in 1818, it was seriously damaged and being considered unfit for further service, it was brought to Lahore and placed at the Delhi gate of the city, where it remained till 1860, when it was placed in front of Lahore Museum, where it now stands. Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 333-34.

³⁹ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 337.

Ranjit Singh to invite him to occupy the city of Amritsar and promised him their support him in the occupation of Amritsar.⁴⁰

Mai Sukhan got ready to fight with Ranjit Singh. In the meantime Jodh Singh *Ramgarhia* advised her that either she should hand over the *Zamzama* gun to the *Sukerchakia Sardar* and purchase peace or destroy the gun. Mai Sukhan did not accept either of the suggestions and decided to face Ranjit Singh. The *Bhangi* fort fell after a brief resistance lasting for five hours. When the opposing forces were at the point of coming to a fierce clash Jodh Singh *Ramgarhia* and *Akali Phulla* Singh came in between them. Later on the suggestion of Jodh Singh *Ramgarhia* and *Akali Phula* Singh, Mai Sukhan agreed to surrender without much resistance. The fort of Lohgarh and the city of Amritsar were evacuated by Mai Sukhan on 14 *Phagun*, 1861 BK February 24, 1805.⁴¹

There is a controversy regarding the date of the occupation of city of Amritsar. According to, J D Cunningham and *Diwan* Amar Nath the occupation of Amritsar took place in 1802.⁴² Ali-ud-din Mufti maintains that, Ranjit Singh conquered Amritsar in 1803.⁴³ Sohan Lal Suri, who was a cotemporary to Ranjit Singh, says that Ranjit Singh occupied Amritsar, in 1805.⁴⁴ Though some of these writers had the privilege of being Ranjit Singh's contemporaries their dates of the occupation of Amritsar do not seem to be coinciding. In this regard Sohan Lal Suri's version is accepted to be correct by the historians.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 65.

⁴¹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 277-78, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 66.

⁴² J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, London, 1849, reprint Amritsar, 2005, p. 118; *Diwan*, Amar Nath, *Zaffar-nama-i-Ranjit Singh*, pp. 18-21.

⁴³ Ali-ud-din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 278, DPHS, PUP.

⁴⁴ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 66.

⁴⁵ Bhagat Singh, *A History of the Sikh Misals*, p. 101.

After the fall of Amritsar, Mai Sukhan and her son Gurdit Singh remained under the protection of Ramgarhia *Sardar* Jodh Singh for some time. Then on the recommendation of Jodh Singh *Ramgarhia*, Ranjit Singh confirmed the grant of Panjore (it may be the Panjwar village in the Tarn Taran district) and five other villages in *Jagirs* to Mai Sukhan and her son Gurdit Singh for their assistance.⁴⁶

According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, Gurdit Singh was confirmed a post of five *Sawars* from Ranjit Singh under Hari Singh Nalwa.⁴⁷ Gurdit Singh died in his ancestral village Panjwar in Tarn Taran *Pargana* in 1827.⁴⁸ His two sons, Ajit Singh who was blinded and Mul Singh possessed revenue free land of five villages in the Tarn Taran *Pargana* by *Maharaja* Ranjit Singh.⁴⁹

Thakur Singh and Hakim Singh *Bhangi*: According to Lepel Griffin and W.L Conarn, Thakur Singh *Bhangi* was recognized as the head of the *Misal* after Gurdit Singh's death.⁵⁰ He was *Zaildar* and a member of the local board of Tarn Taran and the District Board of Amritsar and had a seat in the divisional *Darbars*. He along his brother Hakim Singh, enjoyed a *Jagir* yielding rupees 24000 per annum and owned about 2,000 *Bighas* of land. He was granted 10 squares in the Lyallpur district and 7 squares in the Montgomery district. He was also given the title of *Sardar Bhadar* in 1914.⁵¹

Harnam Singh *Bhangi*: After the death of Thakur Singh *Bhangi* in 1925, his son Harnam Singh became the head of the family. He was a divisional *Darbari*

⁴⁶ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 66-67; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 86-87.

⁴⁷ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 278, DPHS, PUP.

⁴⁸ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 66-67.

⁴⁹ According to, Ali-ud-Din Mufti and Kanahiya Lal, Gurdit Singh had two sons named Ganda Singh and Mul Singh. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 278, DPHS, PUP; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 86.

⁵⁰ Lepel Griffin and W.L Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-I & II, Lahore, 1909 (Edited by G.L Chopra), Lahore, 1940, Vol-I, p. 460.

⁵¹ Lepel Griffin and W.L Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 460.

and was appointed a *Zaildar*, but resigned the latter post in 1935. He had two sons named Avtar Singh and Kirpal Singh.⁵²

Hakim Singh Bhangi: Hakim Singh *Bhangi* was the brother of *Sardar* Thakur Singh *Bhangi*. He was an Honorary Magistrate. He received the title of *Sardar Bahadur* in 1920 and a generous grant of 7 rectangles of land in the Montgomery district. On his death in 1921, he was succeeded by his son Hardit Singh, who was an Honorary Magistrate and was also a member of Debt Conciliation Board, Amritsar; he also received a Silver jubilee medal in 1935. Hardit Singh had three sons named Gurbakhsh Singh, Shiv Singh and Gurdial Singh.⁵³

Gurdial Singh Dhillon (Bhangi): Hardit Singh *Bhangi* was succeeded by his son Gurdial Singh, who was born, on 6 August, 1915, at village Sirhali. Gurdial Singh was educated at the *Khalsa* collegiate School, Amritsar and he completed his graduation from Government College Lahore in 1935. He took the Law degree from the University Law College Lahore, in 1937 and set up practice under the apprenticeship of the well known nationalist leader of Amritsar, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew. He was selected for a commission in the army and though he completed the training; he did not join the service owing to his patriotic proclivities. The pull of the nationalist sentiment proved decisive and in spite of his aristocratic birth, he was led to join the ranks of the Indian National Congress. Soon after passing out of the University's portals, he faced his first political test. A mass demonstration by students was then rocking the Punjab into political activity which became his life-long passion. For his participation in the students' agitation he was awarded a brief spell in jail. Thereafter, which participating in a much larger protest which came to be known in the annals of the Punjab as Harsa Chhina Morcha and which cost Him a whole year in jail. Soon after this he became editor of two newspapers, the daily *Vartman (Punjabi)*

⁵² Lepel Griffin and W.L Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 460.

⁵³ Lepel Griffin and W.L Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-I, pp. 460-61.

and the daily *Sher-i-Bharat* (Urdu). This gave Gurdial Singh an opportunity to broaden his political career.⁵⁴

At the first general elections in Independent India, in 1952, Gurdial Singh was elected a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly. After brief spell as Deputy Speaker of the Punjab Legislative Assembly, he was elected Speaker. In 1965 he became a member of Punjab cabinet holding the portfolios of Transport and Rural Electrification and Irrigation. Transferring himself to Delhi, after his election as a member of the Lok Sabha, the lower house of Indian parliament, he maintained his position as an ace parliamentarian, leading to his election as speaker of the Indian Parliament. He was entrusted with a diplomatic assignment as India's High Commissioner in Canada. He was also awarded the Medallion of the Parliament of Canada. He was elected acting President of Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference at Geneva in 1973 and president at Tokyo in 1974.⁵⁵ *Sardar* Gurdial Singh Dhillon had no male child and he was died in Delhi, on 23 March 1992, following y a heart attack.⁵⁶

Gurbakhsh Singh: One of the bravest men under Hari Singh *Bhangi* was Gurbakhsh Singh of Rorranwala, an associate of Bhima Singh. He was a great warrior and owned about forty villages of his own and used to scour the country far and wide with bands (*Jatha*) of horsemen.⁵⁷ According to Lepel Griffin, being childless, Gurbakhsh Singh adopted Lehna Singh as his son. Gurbakhsh Singh died in 1763 and on his death Lehna Singh succeeded him.⁵⁸ But Gujjar Singh son of Gurbakhsh Singh's brother quarreled with him about the estate left by the deceased. After a fight between their armies, an arrangement was arrived

⁵⁴ Dr. Harbans Singh, *Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, Vol-I, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1996, p. 140.

⁵⁵ Dr. Harbans Singh, *Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, pp. 140-41.

⁵⁶ Dr. Harbans Singh, *Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, p. 141.

⁵⁷ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 278-79, DPHS, PUP.

⁵⁸ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 337.

at between the two *Sardars* by which the estates were equally divided between them an account of the settlement is given below.⁵⁹

On account of blood relationship Gujjar Singh claimed the whole property of his uncle. Feelings ran so high that Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh had intervened of the settlement of their dispute. They invited Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh to Vanyeki. Lehna Singh agreed to the division of the estate in two equal parts. Gujjar Singh did not accept the offer. He rushed from Vanyeki and besieged Roranwala. Lehna Singh followed him and engaged him in a number of battles. Lehna Singh proved so tough that Gujjar Singh yielded and accepted the division. Roranwala remained with Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh founded a village on the site of his last battle with Lehna Singh hand called it Rangarh. After this the two *Sardars* became fast friends for the rest of their lives.⁶⁰

The two *Sardars* became the most powerful in the *Bhangi* confederacy and though they joined Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh, successors of Hari Singh in many of their expeditions, they have a history of their own.⁶¹

Lehna Singh of Lahore: According to Lepel Griffin, Lehna Singh's grandfather was a *Zimindar* of minor consequence, who belonged to the *Kahlon* Sub-caste of the *Jats*. At a young age, he left his native village Sadhawala in Amritsar district during a famine and went to Mastapur near Kartarpur in the Jullundhar Doab. Here his son Dargaha Singh was born. So Lehna Singh was the son of Dargaha Singh, who in the course of time settled at Ladhewala. In his youth he joined the *Jatha* of Gurbakhsh Singh *Raoranwala*.⁶²

⁵⁹ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 41. Syed Muhammad Latif, write Gujjar Singh to be the son of Gurbakhsh Singh's daughter that is why he want his share from the Gurbakhsh Singh's property. *History of the Panjab*, p. 300.

⁶⁰ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 289, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 337-38.

⁶¹ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 300.

⁶² Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 337.

Lehna Singh took up service under Gurbakhsh Singh as a trooper. The young man while still in his youth displayed courage and bravery, good quality performance and deep loyalty. The most spectacular achievement of Lehna Singh in combination with Gujjar Singh was the conquest of Lahore and striking the national Sikh rupee in May, 1765.⁶³ Lehna Singh occupied the fort of Lahore with Masti, Khizri, Kashmiri and Roshani Gates and the city.⁶⁴

Lehna Singh with their companions remained in Lahore in peace till Ahmed Shah Abdali made his final invasion upon the Punjab in December 1766 and feeling themselves to be no match for Abdali; the three Sikhs *Sardars* of Lahore including Lehna Singh abandoned the city.⁶⁵

After the departure of Ahmed Shah from the Punjab the three rulers again occupied the city of Lahore and remained in possession of Lahore till 1796-97, when Shah Zaman again invaded Punjab and the three rulers of Lahore Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh and Sobha Singh once again left the city before the Shah's approach.⁶⁶ Shah Zaman entered Lahore on 3rd January, 1797 and took the possession of the city. He stayed for a few months in Lahore and received *Nazranas* from the citizens of Lahore. On the recommendation the prominent citizens of Lahore, Shah Zaman wrote to Lehna Singh and offered the Governorship of Lahore to him, but Lehna Singh declined the offer as he had earlier declined the offer of Ahmed Shah Abdali in 1767. After staying for a short time Shah Zaman had left the Punjab in February, 1797.⁶⁷

According to Syed Muhammad Latif, on account of the goodness of Lehna Singh, the people of the town invited him to taken over the administration

⁶³ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 41-42; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 300.

⁶⁴ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 337-38.

⁶⁵ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 300.

⁶⁶ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 301.

⁶⁷ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Dafter-II, pp. 42-44.

of the Lahore after the departure of the Shah. He died in September, 1797, leaving behind a son named Chait Singh.⁶⁸ About the same time Sobha Singh, another triumvirate of Lahore, passed away. His son Mohar Singh succeeded him. The third ruler of Lahore Gujjar Singh had breathed his last, in 1788. His son Sahib Singh lived at Gujrat.⁶⁹

Chait Singh Bhangi: After Lehna Singh's death his son Chait Singh became the head of the family and captured all the territories which had been under Lehna Singh. He remained in the possession of Lahore with his other companions.⁷⁰ But this success was not for long time, because Shah Zaman again crossed the river Ravi and reached Lahore, in 30 November, 1798. In such circumstances Chait Singh along with Mohar Singh left the city before the Shah's approach and Shah Zaman captured the city without any resistance.⁷¹ After a few months Shah Zaman decided to return to Kabul to solve troubles of local nature in Afghanistan and left Lahore in December 1799. After the departure of the Shah's Chait Singh along with Milkha Singh and Mohar Singh, marched from Amritsar in the night between 3 and 4 January, 1799 and encamped in the neighborhood of Lahore. So twenty six days after Shah Zaman's exit from Lahore on January 4, 1799 the *Bhangi Sardars* re-entered Lahore and reestablish Sikh rule again in the city.⁷² But the three rulers of Lahore were not functioning in collaboration with one another and their mutual dissensions adversely affected the Law and order situation in the city.⁷³ The new Governors of Lahore possessed neither the talents nor the capabilities to rule over the country which they need inherited

⁶⁸ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 302.

⁶⁹ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 339-40.

⁷⁰ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 302.

⁷¹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, p. 48.

⁷² Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 293, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 340.

⁷³ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, pp. 48-49.

along with the subjects entrusted to their care. Chait Singh was an imbecile, while Mohar Singh exercised little influence over the people.⁷⁴

Syed Muhammad Latif gives us a perfect reason for the occupation of Lahore by Ranjit Singh. He says that the Muhammadans who exercised the greatest influence in the town about this time were Mian Ashiq Muhammad and Mian Mohkam Din. Their opinion was taken on all important matters connected with the city and its neighborhood and they were known as the *Chaudhris* of the city. Mian Ashiq Muhammad's daughter was married to another equally opulent and influential *Chaudhri* of the city named Mian Badar-ud-Din, who happened to have a quarrel with some of the *Chaudhris*, in the town. These *Chaudhris*, wishing to avenge themselves on Badr-ud-Din, went to *Sardar* Chait Singh *Bhangi*, one of the *Hakams* (ruler) of Lahore, who at that time resided in the *Summan Burj* or Place of Mirrors in the fort of Lahore and complained to him of what they represented to be the revolting conduct of Badr-ud-Din whom they charged with holding clandestine correspondence with Shah Zaman, the ruler of Kabul. Certain forged papers were adduced in support of the story told by them and so many persons corroborated the false charge that the *Sardar* was convinced of Badr-ud-Din's treachery guilt. Without giving him an opportunity or offering an explanation and without even having an interview with him, he ordered him to be instantly seized often which he was heavily ironed and cast into a dungeon.

Mian Ahiq Muhammad, the father-in-Law of the unfortunate man and his colleague, Mian Mohkam Din were much distressed at hearing this and taking with them *Chaudhri* Kuka, Ashraff Khan and many other influential Muhammadans of the city, went in a body to Chait Singh to convince him of Badr-ud-Din's innocence and to obtain his release. They failed, however, to obtain a hearing and were summarily dismissed from the presence of the *Sardar*,

⁷⁴ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 302-3.

who with an air of arrogance had recourse to insulting language. The Chiefs returned, greatly disappointed and highly incensed at the haughty conduct of the *Sardar* and swore vengeance against Chait Singh and his friends the *Chhatris*, the originators of trouble. Negotiations were kept up for nearly a month to obtain Badr-ud-Din's release, but without avail. All attempts to obtain redress having failed, it was at length resolved to have recourse to other means. A petition was drawn up, signed by *Hakim* Hakam Rai, *Bhai* Gurbakash Singh, Mian Ashiq Muhammad, Mian Mohkam Din, Muhammad Bakar, Muhammad Tahir, Mufti Muhammad Mokarram, Mir Shadi and other leading citizens of Lahore and addressed to Ranjit Singh. These citizens saw no other way out of this anarchy except calling on Ranjit Singh and inviting him to take over Lahore.⁷⁵

According to Henry T Prinsep, in order to prepare the way for the success of his scheme, Ranjit Singh deputed Qazi Abdur-rahman a native of Rasalnagar to open an intrigue with some of the principal Mussalman inhabitants. Mir Mohkam Din the manager for Chait Singh with Muhammad Ashiq and Mir Shadi were won over to assist the project. They promised on the approach of Ranjit Singh to open one of the gates to him.⁷⁶

With the ambition of capturing the city, Ranjit Singh marched upon Lahore with his mother-in-law Sada Kaur. When Ranjit Singh entered the city of Lahore through Lahori gate he found that it was strongly defended by Chait Singh. On the next day July 6, 1799 Ranjit Singh triumphantly entered in the city of Lahore. Chait Singh *Bhangi*, who was in possession of the fort of Lahore, continued exchanging fire from within the fort with Ranjit Singh forces. But soon Ranjit Singh won over Chait Singh, through the mediation of Sada Kaur who assured to Chait Singh that if he would vacate the fort, he would be treated kindly and would permitted to take all his movable property with him to his

⁷⁵ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 348-49.

⁷⁶ H. T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power*, p. 41.

Jagir at Vanyeki (in the *Pargana* of Ajnala) where he could live in peace and comfort. On this assurance Chait Singh agreed and evacuated the fort on July 7, 1799⁷⁷ and continued hold the annual *Jagir* of 60,000 rupees in Vanyeki till his death which occurred in 1815. He left no son by any of his eight wives, but four months after his death Hukam Kaur gave birth to a son, named Attar Singh, in help of whom Ranjit Singh released a *Jagir* of 6, 000 rupees at Vanyeki Village the same was, afterwards much reduced.⁷⁸

Gujjar Singh Bhangi of Gujrat: Gujjar Singh was the son of Natha Singh, a poor cultivator *Sandhu Jat* of village Bhuri Asal also called Borahsal situated near Khem Karan on the western border of district Ferozepur. Natha Singh had four sons, Gujjar Singh, Garja Singh, Nibhau Singh and Chait Singh. They joined the *Jatha* of Gurbakhsh Singh Roranwala. Gujjar Singh captured Amargarh and began to reside there. After Gurbakhsh Singh's death Gujjar Singh merged his *Jatha* into the army of Hari Singh *Bhangi*, head of the *Bhangi Misal*.⁷⁹

After the retirement of Ahmed Shah Abdali from Punjab in 1765, Gujjar Singh joined with Lehna Singh and captured the city of Lahore. Gujjar Singh captured uninhabited eastern part of the city lying outside its walls. Gujjar Singh erected an unwallled fort there called *Qila* Gujjar Singh. Though the fort no longer exists there, the area still bears his name.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Abstract of a letter of 4 December 1797, *Poona Residency Correspondence*, 1774-99 (Ed.by Jadunath Sarkar), Vol-VIII, p. 63, Preserved in Punjab State Archive, Patiala (after here given as PSAP); Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 126, DPHS, PUP; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 293, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, pp. 51-52.

⁷⁸ Foreign Political Proceedings, 14 January, 1853, no. 232, National Archive of India, New Delhi (after here given as NAI); Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 340-41.

⁷⁹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 279, DPHS, PUP; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, New Delhi, 1982, p. 224.

⁸⁰ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 303; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 341.

It will be remembered that, after the capture of Lahore by the three *Bhangi Sardars*, Gujjar Singh had marched northwards with a view to further conquests. His schemes were successful and he became a far more powerful chief than Lehna Singh and Sobha Singh had been in their time. He took Gujrat and made Gujrat his headquarters. Next year he overran Jammu, seized Islamgarh, Puncch and Deva Batala and reduced Garura, on the banks of the Chineb, where he seized the property of Rahmat Khan and Hasmat Khan and extended his territory as far as Bhimber hills and the Manjha country.⁸¹

Gujjar Singh had three sons named Sahib Singh, Sukha Singh and Fateh Singh and divided his territories between his three sons as under Gujrat in the hands of his eldest son Sahib Singh, territory in the Rachna Doab including Lahore was probably placed under his son Sukha Singh. The youngest son Fateh Singh managed the family estate at Ramgarh, 30 kilometers from Amritsar towards Lahore. Of the three brothers Sahib Singh was the most ambitious and most selfish and had no filial and brotherly considerations.⁸²

Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia* was the bitterest enemy secretly of the *Bhangis* at that time. Besides he was jealous of the supremacy of the *Bhangis*. Militarily he could not face the *Bhangi Misal* in the field. So he resorted to diplomacy. He took advantage of his relationship with Sahib Singh (as Sahib Singh had married Raj Kaur sister of Mahan Singh) and instigated him to set himself up as an independent chief with his support against the authority of his father. Sahib Singh played into his hands of his intelligent brother-in-law. He began to defy the commands of Gujjar Singh. Gujjar Singh felt hurt but he kept quiet. Mahan Singh then encouraged Sahib Singh to get hold of Lahore from his brother Sukha Singh. He convinced Sahib Singh that the ruler of Lahore was greater than the ruler of Gujrat. Sahib Singh led an expedition against his own brother Sukha

⁸¹ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 303-4.

⁸² Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 41; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 341-42.

Singh who lost his life in the action. Gujjar Singh was deeply grieved when he heard of the death of his eldest son; he decided to march against Sahib Singh to punish him. Sahib Singh now marched against his father and closed himself in the fort of Islamgarh. But Gujjar Singh declined against proceeding with did not wish to proceed to extremities and forgave his son. He allowed to Sahib Singh resume his old possessions and Lahore was confirmed to Fateh Singh.⁸³

Soon another cause of displeasure between Gujjar Singh and his son Sahib Singh cropped up. Mahan Singh besieged Rasulnagar and Ahmad Khan, the *Chatha* Pathan Chief, escaping from the town, took shelter in Gujjar Singh's camp. Mahan Singh demanded his surrender. Gujjar Singh utterly disregarded the appeal of Mahan Singh. In order to facilitate his brother-in-law Sahib Singh clandestinely sent the Pathan Chief over to Mahan Singh. Gujjar Singh was extremely disappointed at this dishonesty. When he reprimanded Sahib Singh, he openly insulted and disgraced his father. In grief and sorrow he retired a broken-hearted man at Lahore where he died in 1788.⁸⁴ His tomb is situated near the *Samman Burj*. He ruled his territory for twenty years.⁸⁵

Sahib Singh Bhangi of Gujrat: After Gujjar Singh's death Shaib Singh took possession of the family estates without active opposition from his younger brother, Fateh Singh. As has been observed he could not see through the game, and fell an easy prey to the machinations of his brother-in-law. For some time there was peace between his brother-in-law Mahan Singh and Sahib Singh. Soon

⁸³ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 342; Gujrat District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1883-84; H.M Lawrence, *Adventures of an officer in the Service of Ranjit Singh*, London, 1845, p. 248; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 232.

⁸⁴ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 342. Khushwaqat Rai and Syed Muhammad Latif," places his death in 1788. Khushwaqat Rae, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no.127, DPHS, PUP; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 304. But Cunningham puts it in 1791. J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 107.

⁸⁵ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 304.

Mahan Singh assumed an agonistic attitude towards him; Mahan Singh demanded *Haq-i-Hakmana* or succession money or tribute from Sahib Singh who refused to provide it at all. The well-known proverb that “Kinship knows no Kingship” so suitably applied to this state of affairs. At last in 1790, Mahan Singh marched against Sahib Singh and besieged the fort of Gujrat. In order to avoid a fighting with such a powerful *Sukerchakia* Chief, Sahib Singh managed to flee from Gujrat to his fort of Sodhra. Soon Mahan Singh besieged Sahib Singh in the fort of Sodhra.⁸⁶

Mahan Singh’s sister Raj Kaur (wife of Sahib Singh) came to her brother’s camp and tried to reconcile the subject but Mahan Singh declined the propose. At the time of hard fighting Mahan Singh fainted on the elephant outside Sodhra. Soon he left Sodhra and went to Gujranwala where he died, in 1790 and Sodhra was captured by Ranjit Singh in the same year.⁸⁷

When Ranjit Singh captured the city of Lahore in July 7, 1799, Sahib Singh *Bhangi* was not in the town. None of the contemporary or semi-contemporary writers including Khushwaqat Rai, Bute Shah, Amar Nath, Sohan Lal Suri, Ali-ud-Din Mufti and Ganesh Das Bادهhra have made mention of him. In Ranjit Singh’s career the capture of Lahore was of the greatest significance and this ownership made him the most powerful chieftain in the northern India. Lahore had always been a provincial capital and it gave Ranjit Singh an edge over the other Chiefs in the Punjab and enhanced his political status significantly at the cost of the *Bhangis*.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 127, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 342-43.

⁸⁷ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 40; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 304.

⁸⁸ Bhagat Singh, *A History of the Sikhs Misals*, p. 113. According to Hari Ram Gupta, at the time of the occupation of Lahore by Ranjit Singh Sahib Singh *Bhangi* was busy to conquer the Kashmir valley on the suggestion of Ranjit Singh.” Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 249.

So when Sahib Singh of Gujrat heard of the fall of Lahore he became part of a conspiracy which was hatched by Gulab Singh *Bhangi*, Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia* and Nizam-ud-Din of Kasur and others Sikh *Sardars*, to restrain Ranjit Singh from his policy of territorial aggrandizement. They met with Ranjit Singh at Bhasin in 1800, but retired without any success.⁸⁹

In 1801, Sahib Singh *Bhangi* formed a plan to capture the city of Lahore. When Ranjit Singh came to know about the plan of the *Bhangis* he accompanied by his mother-in-Law Sada Kaur, marched upon Gujrat. As Ranjit Singh reached near the fort of Gujrat, the *Bhangis* started firing from within the fort. Ranjit Singh had also carried 20 guns with him to Gujrat. Finding themselves no match for Ranjit Singh, *Bhangi Sardars* sued for peace through *Baba Sahib Singh Bedi* and the fight was stopped.⁹⁰ But within a few months Sahib Singh broke his promise and provided help to Dal Singh of Akalgarh against Ranjit Singh.⁹¹

A little later Sahib Singh developed strained relations with his son, Gulab Singh, who occupied couple of forts against the wishes of his father. Ranjit Singh availed himself of this opportunity.⁹² According to Sohan Lal Suri, he took the advantage of the feeble position of the *Bhangis* and ordered to Gulab Singh to hand over the fort of Jalalpur. Afterwards Ranjit Singh ordered Sahib Singh to evacuate the forts of Manawar and Islamgarh. At first Sahib Singh *Bhangi* agreed to give up the forts but latter he refused. Now Ranjit Singh marched towards Manawar and Islamgarh. Feeling no match for Ranjit Singh's forces, Sahib Singh escaped in the darkness of night to Gujrat.⁹³ Soon Ranjit Singh dispatched Hukam Singh Atariwala and Seva Singh to pursue Sahib

⁸⁹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, pp.54-57.

⁹⁰ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio nos. 127-28, DPHS, PUP; *Diwan Amar Nath, Zaffar Nama-i-Ranjit Singh*, p. 18.

⁹¹ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, pp. 57-58.

⁹² Ahmad Shah Batalvi *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 40; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, p. 106.

⁹³ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, pp. 109-110.

Singh. After a brief resistance Sahib Singh fled away with 500 horsemen to his fort of Deva Batala situated on the border of Jammu.⁹⁴

Sahib Singh, whose career had been hitherto marked by energy and enterprise, now became an indolent debauchee and drunkard. He quarreled with the rival Chiefs and *Sardars* and his power being thus weakened. In the course of two or three months Ranjit Singh annexed all his territories including Gujrat, Islamgarh, Jalalpur, Manawar, Bajwat and Sodhra. This happened in September, 1809.⁹⁵ Sahib Singh took refuge at Bhimbar. He was living a life of poverty. According to Sohan Lal Suri, “a little after Ranjit Singh sent Faqir Aziz-ud-Din to Bhimbar, when Aziz-ud-din met with the ruler of Bhimbar, he promised him to not give any assistance to Sahib Singh of Gujrat.”⁹⁶

Although Sahib Singh *Bhangi* accepted the overlordship of Ranjit Singh, in 1810, Sahib Singh’s mother Mai Lachami waited on Ranjit Singh and implored him for a grant of land for their subsistence.⁹⁷ Sahib Singh’s *Diwan* Haqaqit Rai, presented himself at the court of the *Maharaja*, on December 22, 1810 and requested permission for his master to take the possession of the new estates. Ranjit Singh asked him to wait for a few days.⁹⁸ Retrospectively we can see that, in the last decade of the eighteenth century, Sahib Singh was one of the most powerful Sikh chiefs, particularly after the death of Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia*, but, he lost all his possessions to Ranjit Singh by the beginning of nineteenth century. His son Gulab Singh was given a *Jagir* worth only 4,000 rupees in the Gujranwala area. According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, Ranjit Singh

⁹⁴ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio nos. 127-28, DPHS, PUP; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh Daftar-II*, p. 110.

⁹⁵ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh Daftar-II*, p. 110, DPHS, PUP; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 306.

⁹⁶ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh Daftar-II*, pp. 114-115.

⁹⁷ Ahmad Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 41; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 306.

⁹⁸ Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 87; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 306.

allowed the fort of Thothianwala to Gulab Singh *Bhangi* and his mother for their subsistence and appointed Gulab Singh in the service of Mohar Singh Atariwala.⁹⁹ Subsequently, Sahib Singh was also given in the Sialkot area four villages of Bajwat, Kallowal, Sohawa and Rajiwala 10, 000 rupees annually for subsistence. This *Jagir* was held by him till his death which took place in 1814. His tomb was built at Bajawat. Sahib Singh ruled for a period of twenty two years.¹⁰⁰

A.C Elliot writes in the *Chronicles of Gujrat*, “Both the rulers Gujjar Singh and his son Sahib Singh are still alive in the year of 1902 and gratefully remembered for their good and peaceful administration. The agents of Ranjit Singh are, on the contrary, remembered for their cruelty and rapaciousness”.¹⁰¹

Fateh Singh son of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*: When Sahib Singh took possession of the family estates, Fateh Singh went to Gujranwala on the invitation of Mahan Singh. Mahan Singh told him that he was a petty *Zimindar*, while his brother Sahib Singh was a *Raja*. Further he told him to claim half of the estate from his brother. After the fall of Lahore, Fateh Singh joined with Ranjit Singh and got the possession of Fatehgarh and Sodhra. Fateh Singh became reconciled to his brother Sahib Singh but this friendship did not last long because Fateh Singh favored Raj Kaur, wife of Sahib Singh, who feeling shocked at her husband’s third marriage, had seized the fort of Jalalpur. Fateh Singh went back to Ranjit Singh who would not do any thing for him. Fateh Singh returned to Lahore and

⁹⁹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 481, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁰⁰ Ganesh Das Bادهرا, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, (NP), 1865, MS., (Translated into Punjabi by Jit Singh Seetal), preserved in the library of DPHS, PUP, Accession no. 7, folio no. 119; Punjab Government Records, 1808-15, II, pp. 169-172; Foreign Secret Consultation, 13 February 1810, No. 3, Preserved in National Archive of India, (after here given as NAI); Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 344-45.

¹⁰¹ A.C. Elliot, *The Chronicles of Gujrat*, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, pp. 31-32.

remained in Lahore in poverty for a year and then he was compelled to return to his brother at Gujrat who granted him Daulatnagar and other estates.¹⁰²

After Sahib Singh's death Fateh Singh went to Kapurthala where he remained in the service of the *Ahluwalia Sardar* Fateh Singh. After the death of his mother Mai Lachmi, Fateh Singh received a grant of Rangher and some other villages in the district of Amritsar. A little later he entered the service of Sham Singh Atariwala. He was killed at Bannu in 1832 during the campaign of Malik Dilasah Khan.¹⁰³ He was succeeded by his son Jaimal Singh who took service under Sham Singh Atariwala. He, however, quarreled with his Chief and this brought on Jaimal Singh more troubles than there is space to record here. Because of the enmity of Sham Singh, his *Jagir* was revoked and when the British occupied the territory of Punjab, he was in a great poverty. He resided at Rangarh, without pension or estate and thus the great *Bhangi* confederacy collapsed. He died in 1871, leaving behind son named Jowala Singh.¹⁰⁴

Jowala Singh and Budh Singh: Jowala Singh son of Jaimal Singh *Bhangi* resided at Rangarh near Atari in Amritsar. His son Budh Singh was a *Lambadar* of the village and was succeeded by his nephew Janmeja Singh, who was also *Lambadar* and *Kursi Nashin*. Hira Singh another son of Jowala Singh was succeeded by his son Mota Singh. He was a divisional *Darbari* and was granted a *Sanad* and a revolver for supplying recruits during the Great War.¹⁰⁵

Gurbakhsh Singh Doda: Gurbakhsh Singh son of Sahib Singh was the resident of the village of Doda situated in the Shakargarh *Tehsil* in Sialkot district.

¹⁰² Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 345.

¹⁰³ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 345; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 306.

¹⁰⁴ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 306; Lepel Griffin and W. L Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 467.

¹⁰⁵ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 345; Lepel Griffin and W. L Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 467

Gurbakhsh Singh joined the *Bhangi Misal* and had his possessions in the Shakargarh area with headquarters at Doda, including Bhopalwala Jassar, Ranjrur and Sadhanwal. He also captured some territory of Jammu. Gurbakhsh Singh and his son Sudh Singh were bitter enemies of Jammu. Gurbakhsh Singh died in 1795 and was succeeded by his son Sudh Singh who retained his possessions till his death in 1813, presumably as a tributary of Ranjit Singh.¹⁰⁶

Since he had no male issue, his cousin Gajja Singh approached *Maharaja* Ranjit Singh at Lahore with a large *Nazrana* of two lakhs of rupees, one elephant and a number of horses to get recognition as a successor. Ranjit Singh took the presents and treated Gaja Singh well and with kindness. The family was granted 25 villages on the condition of providing 18 horse-men on demand. Gaja Singh was in command of these troops. He fought in the campaigns of Attock, Kashmir, Mankerah and Multan and died in 1823.¹⁰⁷

Karam Singh Dullu of Chiniot: As we know that the city of Chiniot was occupied by Hari Singh *Bhangi* in 1760. It was given to Karam Singh *Dullu* because of his gallantry and generosity and for having joined Hari Singh in the campaign. He took the possession of Jhang, Chinot, Khewa, Kot Kamalia, Mirak and Shorkot the greater part of the country between the Ravi and the Chenab and the Jhelum up to Mankera. He commanded about 2,000 cavalry and 1,000 infantry as permanent forces, he had eight strong forts in his territory that yielded him nearly fourteen lakhs of rupees every year.¹⁰⁸ After the death of Karam Singh *Dullu*, Ranjit Singh decided to march towards Chiniot in 1802. The territory of Chiniot at that time was in the hands of Jassa Singh, son of Karam Singh *Dullu* who had helped Gulab Singh *Bhangi* during the campaign of

¹⁰⁶ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, p. 53.

¹⁰⁷ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 298, DPHS, PUP; Foreign political Proceedings, 13 August, 1852, No. 49, NAI.

¹⁰⁸ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 278, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, p. 76.

Bhasin, in 1800, so Ranjit Singh wanted to penalize him. The *Maharaja* led an army to Chiniot. Jassa Singh closed the gates of the fort.¹⁰⁹ According to Sohan Lal Suri, “the sister of Sahib Singh of Gujrat was engaged to Jassa Singh son of Karam Singh *Dullu* so Jassa Singh applied to his brother-in-Law Sahib Singh *Bhangi* for help but the latter did not give him any response”.¹¹⁰ The siege continued for about two months. Helpless Jassa Singh at last evacuated the fort and negotiated his surrender through Fateh Singh Kalaswalia. The *Maharaja* gave Jassa Singh a suitable *Jagir* of five villages, worth 50,000 rupees in the neighborhood of village Panjwar for his maintenance.¹¹¹

Gaur Singh and Nihal Singh Atariwala: In his early days Gaur Singh entered the service of Gurbakhash Singh Roranwala. Soon Gaur Singh became a disciple of Bawa Mal Das, an ascetic of great sanctity, who directed him to settle at Tiblia or Karewa, where Gaur Singh accordingly built Atari or thatched house, which gave its name to the family. After Gurbakhash Singh’s death, Gaur Singh served under *Sardar* Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* and Lehna Singh *Bhangi*. In 1767 he took the possession of villages around Atari yielding rupees, 7,000 per annum and a year afterwards he received from *Sardar* Gujjar Singh a *Jagir* worth rupees 18,600. He died in 1793 and his son Nihal Singh, continued to hold the *Jagir* under Sahib Singh *Bhangi*.¹¹² After the battle of Bhasin, Ranjit Singh tried to induce him to change sides and take service under him. *Sardar* Nihal Singh, however, declined. He was not going to desert his old master and told Sahib

¹⁰⁹ Foreign Political Proceedings, 29 December, 1849, no. 474, NAI; Settlement Report of Jhang District, 1874-80, p. 38; Jhang District Gazetteers, Lahore, 1936, p. 27.

¹¹⁰ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp. 63-64.

¹¹¹ H. T Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power*, p. 42; C.S. Monckton, *Report on the Settlement of the Jhang District*, (1860), Lahore, 1860, pp. 33 & 37-38, PSAP, (after here given as SR of Jhang District); Imperial Gazetteer of India, Punjab, provincial Series, Vol-I & II, Calcutta, 1908, pp. XIV, 127.

¹¹² Lepel Griffin and W. L Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 473.

Singh of the offer, who was much pleased at his refusal and increased his *Jagir* and allowances.¹¹³

This promotion excited much jealousy in the minds of his cousins, Tek Singh, Jodh Singh and Wazir Singh who were all in the service of the Sahib Singh *Bhangi* and it was through their misrepresentations and provocations that Sahib Singh, curtailed *Jagirs* of rupees 15,000. Nihal Singh then gave up the *Bhangi* service in disgust and retired to Atari. But after some time he entered the service of Ranjit Singh.¹¹⁴

Tek Singh and Jodh Singh Atari: Tek Singh and Jodh Singh were the most distinguished leaders under Sahib Singh *Bhangi*. After the death of Tek Singh his sons Jagat Singh and Hakim Singh abandoned the service of Sahib Singh *Bhangi* and came over to the *Maharaja* Ranjit Singh and received a *Jagir* of Awan, Miani and Bhau Chinah.¹¹⁵ Jodh Singh entered the service of Ranjit Singh in, 1805 after a brave but vain attempt to hold the fort of Klar against him in interests of his master, Sahib Singh *Bhangi*. He was received with great favor and obtained a grant of a large tract of country valued at two lakhs of rupees in Pathwar, consisting of the *Tapas* of Barsali, Bishander, Saidpur and others.¹¹⁶

Tara Singh Chainpuria: Tara Singh a native of village Chainpur also joined the *Bhangi* confederacy and took a part in most of their campaigns. He held a *Jagir* of rupees 10,000 at the village of Cahinpur. Occasionally he transferred his loyalties and went over to Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia*, but in the end he chose to serve under Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*. After Tara Singh's death Ranjit Singh occupied all his *Jagirs* and granted his son Chait Singh five villages including Chainpur.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Lepel Griffin and W. L. Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-I, pp. 473-74.

¹¹⁴ Lepel Griffin and W. L. Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 474.

¹¹⁵ Lepel Griffin and W. L. Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 480.

¹¹⁶ Lepel Griffin and W. L. Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-I, pp. 481-82.

¹¹⁷ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 129, DPHS, PUP.

Karam Singh and Sudh Singh Chhina: Karam Singh *Bhangi* a *Jat* of the Gill tribe of Chhina village took the possession of Chhina, Firozki, Kaleki, Rurki and Bajra in the Sialkot district and the neighboring villages worth 50,000 rupees. When all the *Bhangi Sardars* fell one by one before Ranjit Singh, Karam Singh too shared the common fate and lost all his estates, however, before he received back the *Jagir* of Chhina, Narram and Firozki worth rupees 50,000 from Ranjit Singh. With his sons Sudh Singh and Budh Singh, he served in many campaigns of Ranjit Singh.¹¹⁸

Jodh Singh Kamla: Jodh Singh (also known as Godh Singh) the son of *Chaudhri* of Manihala was the companion of Hari Singh *Bhangi*. When Hari Singh *Bhangi* constructed a small fort near Sialkot, he appointed Jodh Singh and his brother Uttam Singh in charge of the fort. Their horses were usually tied outside the fort. One day all of a sudden Jodh Singh observed that a vast cloud of dust was advancing from Jammu side. Fearing an attack he closed the gates of the fort and got ready to fight. Appreciate that the horses would fall into enemy hands. He quickly cut off the ropes with which their front and back legs were tied. The horses ran amok. The enemy fearing a counter attack field back to Jammu. It was a force of 300 irregulars of *Raja* Ranjit Deo of Jammu who was trying to occupy the Sialkot District. Hari Singh called Jodh Singh “*Kamla*” or foolish and he came to be known by this nickname. Jodh Singh and his brother often fought in the *Bhangi* army against Ranjit Deo, Sansar Chand Katoch and the *Sukarchakias*.¹¹⁹ Jodh Singh died without an issue and his brother Utam Singh succeeded his estates, but both, he and his two elder sons, died soon afterwards and Jai Singh became the head of the family. His *Jagirs* were

¹¹⁸ Munchi Amin Chand, *A History of the Sialkot District*, (Translated by Charles A Rose), Lahore, 1874, p. 11; Lepel Griffin and W. L Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 500; Veena Sachdeva, *Polity and Economy of the Punjab, during the late Eighteenth Century*, New Delhi, 1993, p. 41.

¹¹⁹ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 127-28; Lahore District Gazetteers, Lahore, 1920, p. 64.

increased by Gulab Singh *Bhangi* to rupees 50,000 and when that Chief died in 1800 AD, Jai Singh joined the service of Ranjit Singh and received additional *Jagirs* worth rupees 40,000 in Shekhupura, Sidhani and Bhaowal. In 1817 as he has grown too old for active service, Ranjit Singh appointed him judge at Amritsar, revoking all but worth 16,000 rupees of his *Jagirs* and granting him a cash allowance of rupees 8,000. Jai Singh died in, 1827.¹²⁰

Mohar Singh Atariwala, Natha Singh, Sahib Singh Aynawala and Jiwan Singh: The Sialkot area above Gujranwala was conquered by Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* in association with a number of the other leaders in 1770. Jhanda Singh himself retained only a portion of his possession along the river Chenab on the west of Sialkot. The city of Sialkot with the villages around it were given to the four *Sardars* as under Mohar Singh Atariwala, Natha Singh, Sahib Singh Aynawala and Jiwan Singh Ghumman.¹²¹ When Ranjit Singh rose to power and captured the *Bhangis* territories one by one, the Sialkot *Sardars* on seeing these confiscations combined to resist his authority, upon this *Diwan* Mohkam Chand and Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia* with a large force were sent to Sialkot in 1807. The reason assigned for the occupation was the refusal of Jiwan Singh (who was the *Thanedar* of the fort), to accept his suzerainty. When Ranjit Singh marched to occupy Sialkot, Mohar Singh Atariwala saw that resistance was useless and submitted. Ranjit Singh occupied his fortress and fixed his own gun over it to bombard the main fort of Sialkot.¹²² Jiwan Singh with a body of 1,000 fighting men and four pieces of artillery, defended the fort for 7 days, when at last one of the gates of the fort was battered down by the fire of the besiegers, which

¹²⁰ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 128.

¹²¹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no.337, DPHS, PUP; Sialkot District Gazetteers, Lahore, 1920, p. 18.

¹²² Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, pp. 78-79.

enabled them to enter and occupy it.¹²³ With the mediacy of Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia*, Jiwan Singh was confirmed a sufficient *Jagir* for maintenances.¹²⁴

Nand Singh Bhangi of Pathankot: Nand Singh also called Mansa Singh was confirmed as the *Misaldar* of Pathankot by Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*. He died after the Jammu warfare in 1774 and left behind a widow named Jaunsan who married her daughter to Haqiqat Singh *Kanahiya*. She also gave away the *Jagirs* of Pathankot to her son-in-law and changed her service from *Bhangis* to *Kanahiyas*.¹²⁵

Bawa Mushtak Singh and Khushal Singh: This family was of the *Bhalla Khatri* caste, descended from the brother of Guru Amar Das. Bawa Mushtak Singh and Khushal Singh migrated to Rawalpindi in the time of Milkha Singh and received from him considerable grants of land. Bawa Khushal Singh established a Gurdwara at Saidpur in Rawalpindi, also called Ramkund. When Bawa Mushtak Singh died, his nephew Bawa Atar Singh occupied the *Gaddi* at Rawalpindi, while Bawa Khushal Singh remained in service at *Darbar Sahib* at Amritsar.¹²⁶

Bakshi Manah Singh: Manah Singh son of Lajja Singh native of Kauntrilla, was originally a *Rais* of Sialkot, but subsequently settled at Basrali a village in Rawalpindi district. Manah Singh was first a revenue officer under the *Sardars* of Atariwala and later a *Nazim* of the Rawalpindi district. He died in 1824 and his son Gohar Singh, began service in the army of Jodh Singh Atariwala and ended as the *Kardar* in Jullunder Doab.¹²⁷

Tek Singh: Tek Singh was in the service of the *Bhangi Sardars* of Lahore, from them he received a grant of the then deserted village of Nodhpur. In 1794, when

¹²³ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 371.

¹²⁴ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, p.79; Sialkot District Gazetteers, 1920, pp. 19-20.

¹²⁵ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, pp. 40-41.

¹²⁶ Lepel Griffin and W.L Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-II, p. 296.

¹²⁷ Lepel Griffin and W.L Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-II, p. 303.

Nizam-ud-din of Kasur drove the Sikhs out of Kasur, Tek Singh joined Suka Singh against Nizam-ud-din but was killed in action.¹²⁸

Sujan Singh: Sujan Singh son of Natha Singh Uppal of village Aimah in Gurdaspur district. In 1783, he successfully captured Chaharbajwa in the Sialkot district from Brij Raj Deo. Then he was associated with the *Bhangi Misal* and fought under *Sardar Karam Singh Dullu*. He died in 1799 and his son Nar Singh, still a youth, joined Gulab Singh *Bhangi*. But after Gulab Singh's death he joined Ranjit Singh and accompanied him in his many expeditions.¹²⁹

Katha Singh and Karam Singh: Katha Singh Chahal *Jat*, with his brother, took service under the *Bhangi Sardar* Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh, who in 1764 had taken possession of Lahore. Katha Singh was killed in a skirmish on the border of Bahawalpur and his son Karam Singh succeeded to the *Jagirs* worth, 5.000. For some years Karam Singh fought for the *Bhangi Misal* till in 1799, Ranjit Singh took Lahore from Chet Singh *Bhangi*. Karam Singh, at first followed the fortunes of his old masters, but at last he joined the service of Ranjit Singh who bestowed upon him *Jagirs* of rupees 60.000 at Ajnala.¹³⁰

Sanwal Singh and Nar Singh Chamriari: Sanwal Singh, the founder of the Chamriari family, became a member of the *Bhangi Misal* around 1750. He fought under Hari Singh *Bhangi* in many battles. He took the possession of a large tract of country on the left bank of river Ravi, including Ajnala and Chamriari. Sanwal Singh was killed in battle leaving no issue, but his widow Mai Malkian made over the estate to Nar Singh, a cousin of her deceased husband. This arrangement was confirmed by the *Gurmata* and Nar Singh the acknowledged heir of all Sanwal Singh's estates, went forth to conquer. Soon he invaded the Sialkot district and took possession of Pasrur. He held Ajnala, Badiana, Chamri,

¹²⁸ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 166.

¹²⁹ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 315-16.

¹³⁰ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 318.

Chewindan, Chhor, Dhamtal, Jahur, Jahirwah, Khanowala, Lalah Marara, Mundeke Bajwa, Pasrur, and Sankhatra. He then transferred his loyalties to the *Kanahiya Misal* and later on fought with or against Jhanda Singh *Bhangi* at Numar in the Sialkot district.¹³¹ In 1800 and 1801 he supported Sahib Singh *Bhangi* of Gujrat against Ranjit Singh. Realizing the strength of Ranjit Singh, he himself submitted to him in 1804. He was allowed to remain in possession of his territories but on terms of vassalage.¹³² He died in 1806 and Ranjit Singh seized all his *Parganas*. On the death of Nar Singh his sons were minor. Ranjit Singh took possession of the greater portion of the family estates, including the share in Sialkot district and the *Taluqia* of Saddowal, Chaniwala and Chaimari. The widow, Mai Milkyan and the sons of Nar Singh were left with only a small portion of their estate.¹³³ These estates left with the family were again reduced after the death of his son Hari Singh.¹³⁴

Rai Singh, Bhag Singh and Sher Singh Buria: The founder of the Buria Chiefship was Nanu Singh a *Jat* of village Jhalwal Madan, near Amritsar. With Bhag Singh and Rai Singh he joined the *Jatha* of Hari Singh *Bhangi*. Soon they seized the town and *Pargana* of Buria from some *Narwaria* Sikhs, who had entered into its possession a year previously. Shortly afterward the Afghans of Aurangabad invited Nanu Singh to a feast and treacherously put him to death.

¹³¹ Qazi Nur Muhammed, *Jang Nama*, (NP), 1865, Edited by Ganda Singh, Amritsar, 1939, pp. 59-60; R. Creathed, R.A. Prinsep, R Temple, J. H. Mooris, W. Blyth, Esquires, *Report on the Revised Settlement of Purgunah Narowal Tulwandee of the Umritsar District in the Umritsar Divission*, Lahore, 1860, p. 148, PSAP, (after here given as SR Narowal District Amritsar); Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, New Delhi, 1978, pp. 140-41.

¹³² Ganesh Das Badehra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, folio nos. 142-43; Prinsep, E.A., *Report on the Revised Settlement of Sealkote District in the Amritsur Division*, Lahore, 1865, p. 48, PSAP, (here after given as SR Sialkot District); H T, Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power*, p. 48.

¹³³ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no.130, DHPS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 364-65.

¹³⁴ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 365.

Nanu Singh had no son and he had adopted Rai Singh. The two brothers Rai Singh and Bhag Singh led an expedition against Aurangabad, defeated the Afghans and demolished their fort. They seized about two hundred villages of the region. Then they made a division. Bhag Singh was assigned Buria with 120 villages, while Rai Singh got 84 villages including Jagadhari and Dayalgarh.¹³⁵

According to Khushwaqat Rai, when *Bhangi Sardars* lost all their possessions one by one in the Punjab, Rai Singh and Sher Singh Buria entered the service of Maratha *Sardar* Bapuji *Sindiya* who granted them the *Jagirs* of Jualpur, Rurki and Mangloor.¹³⁶ On Bhag Singh's death in 1785, his son Sher Singh succeeded him. Rai Singh died in 1805. He had two daughters but no son. After his death he was succeeded by his nephew Bhagwan Singh. When Ranjit Singh was rising to power Bhagwan Singh transferred his loyalty to Ranjit Singh in 1806 and an offering him a *Nazrana* received a large *Jagir*.¹³⁷ After the treaty of Amritsar between Ranjit Singh and the British, in 1809, Dyalgarh, Jagadhari and Buria came under the British protection. Bhagwan Singh died in 1812, without an issue. His widow fought over the property and it was divided equally between Mai Daya Kaur and Mai Sukhan by the British arbitrator. To Mai Daya Kaur's share fell the Jagadhari estate, which she kept with herself till her death in 1828. After that the estate lapsed to the British Government. Mai Sukhan got the Dyalgarh estate and held it till 1852. After her death her estate was divided between her blood relations. Sher Singh the Buria Chief lost his life while fighting against the British at Saharanpur in 1804 and was succeeded by his sons Jaimal Singh and Gulab Singh.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Lepel Griffin and W.L Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-II, p. 61.

¹³⁶ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-Sikhan*, folio no. 186, DPHS, PUP.

¹³⁷ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 75; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 369; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, New Delhi, 1978, p. 60.

¹³⁸ Lepel Griffin and W.L Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-II, p. 61; Press Lists of Political Records of the Delhi Residency, 1804-16, Vol-II, p. 4, NAI.

Jai Singh Sandhu: Jai Singh was a *Sandhu Jat* of Kot Syed Muhammad, two miles from Amritsar. He was a trooper in the employ of *Sardar Gulab Singh Bhangi*, but in the year 1809 Jai Singh married his daughter Rup Kaur to *Maharaja Ranjit Singh* and this marriage result in transfer of allegiance to Ranjit Singh.¹³⁹

Dasaunda Singh of Isapur: Dasaunda Singh was the founder of Isapur branch of *Randhawa*, joined the *Bhangi* confederacy and obtained a *Jagir* worth about rupees 20, 000 including the village Isapur. His son Bhagat Singh preserved the old estate and acquired new *Jagirs*. His son Ram Singh about the year 1804 joined Ranjit Singh who confirmed to him the village of Isapur, Bolah, Suran and some other in Amritsar district for his assistance.¹⁴⁰

Nodh Singh of Chicna: Nodh Singh was the son of Ladha Singh resident of village Chicna. He joined the service of *Sardar Gujjar Singh Bhangi* in 1767. He held six villages in Daska *Pargana* named Balkwala, Jalul, Sahibran, Gilwala and Kalarwala. Further he received six other villages in the neighborhood of Gujrat from Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*. He died in 1780 and succeeded by his son Lakha Singh but shortly his territory was recovered by Ghulam Muhammad (an officer of Ahmed Shah) Lakha Singh left no son and his brother Bhag Singh held *Jagirs* under Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* worth rupees 40,000. Soon he died without an issue and his nephew Jhanda Singh remained in the service of Sahib Singh *Bhangi*, till Ranjit Singh having taken possession of Amritsar and the power of *Bhangi Misal* being an the decline he joined the service of Ranjit Singh.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 377; Lepel Griffin and W. L Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 505.

¹⁴⁰ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 383.

¹⁴¹ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, p. 387; Lepel Griffin and W. L Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-I, p. 508.

Kala Singh of Hasan Abdal: Kala Singh was a sweeper by caste and was of pitch dark color as his name indicated.¹⁴² He was converted to Sikhism by Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*. He joined Gujjar Singh's force. Gujjar Singh appointed him *Thanedar* at Hasan Abdal lying mid-way between Rawalpindi and Attock.¹⁴³ He establish his headquarters at Sarae Kali 35 kilometers from Rawalpindi. This was the last frontier outpost of the Sikhs. After some time he shifted his allegiance to Charat Singh *Sukarchakia*. On Charat Singh's death in 1774, his son Mahan Singh grew doubtful of Kala Singh and replaced him with his trusted follower Jiwan Singh. Later Ranjit Singh found Jiwan Singh intriguing with the Afghans and sent a trusted officer from Lahore to succeed him.¹⁴⁴

Karam Singh Doda: Karam Singh Doda the resident of village Jassarwal, 96 kilometers from Lahore, retained permanently 500 cavalry and 1,000 infantry. He possessed ten pieces of cannon and fifty camel guns. In an emergency he could assemble a force of 2,000 horse and 1,000 foot soldiers. His territory yielded about eight Lakhs of rupees as annual revenues. He had several forts such as Bhopalwala, Gopal, Jassarwal, Sambrial.¹⁴⁵

Amar Singh Langa: Amar Singh *Langa* was the son of Ganda Singh, brother of Karam Singh *Dullu*. He held the territory of Mirowal and served under Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*. After his death, Ranjit Singh captured all his *Jagirs*.¹⁴⁶

Mehtab Singh *Bhangi* of Wadala: Mehtab Singh *Bhangi* was the son of Diwan Singh native of village Wadala near Daska in Sialkot district. Mehtab Singh was

¹⁴² Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p.391; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 234.

¹⁴³ Ganesh Das Badehra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, folio nos, 111-12, DPHS, PUP; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 230.

¹⁴⁴ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 234-35.

¹⁴⁵ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 235.

¹⁴⁶ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no.278, DPHS, PUP.

its chief. He joined the *Bhangi* confederacy under Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh. He captured, 52 villages around Wadala thereby strengthening his possession at Wadala. After some time Mahan Singh invited him to attend a family gathering at Gujranwala. He went in a grand procession at the head of 500 men. He was well received. On the following day he was imprisoned. Mahan Singh sent a force to seize his territory and property. His four sons put up a bold front. A compromise was finally made. The young men were to pay a sum of rupees 1, 25, 000 for the release of their father. After some time Nidhan Singh Attu seized Wadala. Ranjit Singh expelled him after the battle of Daska in 1809.¹⁴⁷

Garja Singh: Garja Singh was the brother of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*. He held the territory of Roranwala. After his death his son Bachait Singh succeeded him and took possession of all the territories which had been under his father. Bachait Singh was succeeded by his son Ram Singh, who held the territories till Sahib Singh's reign. When Ranjit Singh captured all the territories of Sahib Singh *Bhangi*, he also occupied the territory of Ram Singh. After this Ranjit Singh appointed Ram Singh as the *Subedar* of *Qila Ahdiya* and granted him a *Jagir* around Ahdiya.¹⁴⁸

Nibahu Singh: Nibahu Singh was the second brother of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*. He held the Firozpur *Pargana* that contained thirty-seven villages. He had four sons from his two wives and he divided his territory between his sons. Nibahu Singh settled down at Singhpura. His eldest son Gurbakhsh Singh was given the *Parganas* of Sataragarh, Bhedian and Muhalim situated to the north of the Satluj. His second son Dhanna Singh received Firozpur. He was married to Lachhman Kaur, daughter of Rai Singh of Jagadhari, who managed the *Jagir* after Dhanna Singh's death. The third son Gurbakhsh Singh got Sahjara north of

¹⁴⁷ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, p. 107.

¹⁴⁸ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 286-87, DPHS, PUP.

the Satluj. The youngest Jai Singh retained Khai, 10 kilometers south-west of Firozpur, Wan and Bajidpur.¹⁴⁹

Rani Lashmman Kaur died without a male issue in 1835. The place now belonged to Lahore *Darbar*. It was annexed by the British without any protest from Ranjit Singh.¹⁵⁰

Diwan Singh, Dhanna Singh and Jodh Singh Kalals: According to Lepel Griffin, Hari Singh *Bhangi* had no son and he adopted Diwan Singh and in the year 1760 left him heir to his estates.¹⁵¹ Diwan Singh after his death succeeded by his son Dhanna Singh, who had already distinguished himself in the service of Hari Singh *Bhangi*. When the *Bhangi Sardars* Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh seized Sialkot and divided the various estates of Sialkot, at that time Kalalwala, Panwanas, Chuhara and Mehrajke fell into the share of Dhanna Singh and little later he captured Bhera. On his death, in 1793, his son Jodh Singh succeeded him. Jodh Singh Kalalwala married the daughter of Sahib Singh *Bhangi*. In 1803 he was attacked by Ranjit Singh, who made connection of Jodh Singh's with his old enemy Sahib Singh of Gujrat, the excuse for increasing his own estates.¹⁵² The fort of Bhera and the surrounding territories came unopposed into Ranjit Singh's possession. Jodh Singh somehow managed to escape and took shelter with Sahib Singh at Gujrat. The latter gave him the village of Karianwala in Gujrat. Ranjit Singh in 1806-7, again attacked Jodh Singh and made complete victory over Jodh Singh. He was asked to pay *Nazrana* of rupees 5.000 and was

¹⁴⁹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 286-87, DPHS, PUP; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 245.

¹⁵⁰ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 287, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁵¹ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, p. 120. In this account Lepel Griffin is incorrect because Hari Singh *Bhangi* had five sons named Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Charat Singh, Diwan Singh and Desu Singh.

¹⁵² Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-i-Sikhan*, folio no. 285, DPHS, PUP; Ousley, G. & W.G.Davies, *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Shahpooor District in the Rawalpindi Division*, 1866, Lahore, ND, p. 39, PSAP, (here after given as SR Shahpur District).

given back his former estates of Kalalwala, Mehrajke, Panwana and Chaubara worth 60,000 rupees but only on condition of service.¹⁵³

Kushal Singh Kalar Bajwa: *Sardar* Kushal Singh took service under Sahib Singh *Bhangi*. When Ranjit Singh finally crushed the opposition of the *Bhangi Sardars*, Khushal Singh refused to worship the rising sun and retired to the old home. He died there in 1833.¹⁵⁴

Dasunda Singh Rania: Dasunda Singh son of Bhan Singh was the relative and *Misaldar* of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*. He served under him and acquired a large *Jagir* in the *Taluka* of Rania, 12 mile from Lahore, on the bank of river Ravi. After his death, he was succeeded by his son Ganda Singh. When the *Bhangi* Chiefs were on their downward march Ranjit Singh compelled Ganda Singh to join his service and confirmed him the same *Jagir*.¹⁵⁵

Mahi Singh of Sajwah: Mahi Singh was the resident of village Sajwah and he was the *Misaldar* of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*. He took part in most of Gujjar Singh's campaigns. Soon his two sons Dharam Singh and Jiwan Singh succeeded in capturing the *Taluka* of Karial and other 12 villages. They joined with *Sardar* Gohar Singh of Surrian and entered the service of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*. In 1830(1886 B.C), Ranjit Singh captured the territory of Gohar Singh from his grand son Amir Singh and he entered the service of Ranjit Singh, but Ram Singh grand son of Mahi Singh still held on to his old possessions.¹⁵⁶

Kapur Singh Ghuman: Kapur Singh native of village Sidhu near Tarn Taran joined the service of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*. His wife and the wife of powerful *Sardar* Gujjar Singh happening to be both pregnant at the same time, it was agreed that if a boy and a girl were born they should be at once betrothed. The

¹⁵³ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, p. 120; Munshi Amin Chand, *A History of Sialkot District*, p.11; Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, p. 23

¹⁵⁴ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, p. 124.

¹⁵⁵ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 293, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁵⁶ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 294, DPHS, PUP.

wife of Kapur Singh soon after gave birth to a son and *Sardar* Gujjar Singh's wife giving birth to a girl, so the children were betrothed and when they grew up were married. The sons of Kapur Singh acquired separate estates. Sukha Singh took possession of Uthain, Lakha Singh of Awan and Jodh Singh seized Surrian *Pargana* including Jagdeo, Ghoniwala and Karial worth about 150,000. In 1799 Jodh Singh joined Ranjit Singh just before the occupation of Lahore and received the *Jagir* of Gujjar Singh brother's Garja Singh, including the villages of Gazi, Ghaga, Lieanwala, Sharifpur and Varowal.¹⁵⁷

Bhagat Singh of Ruriala: Bhagat Singh a resident of village Ruriala in Gujranwala district having married his daughter to the powerful *Bhangi* Chief Gujjar Singh and obtained a grant of village Ruriala. After his death Gujjar Singh took his two young sons Seva Singh and Deva Singh his service. He gave them the *Jagir* of Naushera in Gujrat district, which was held by the brothers in joint possession till the death Seva Singh and *Jagir* was with drawn by Sahib Singh *Bhangi*. Two village of the *Jagir* were, however, left to Deva Singh and on costrel village Ruriala.¹⁵⁸

Gutumal of Bhera: Gutumal was the son of Dianat Rai resident of Bhera in Shahpur district. He entered the service of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* and he remained with Gujjar Singh and Sahib Singh till his death, acting as *Diwan* and regulating the civil affairs of the large tract over which these Chiefs ruled. His son Ram Korr succeeded him in his office which he held until Ranjit Singh, in 1810, took possession of Sahib Singh's estates.¹⁵⁹

Jodh Singh *Bhangi* of Wazirabad: Jodh Singh son of Gurbakhsh Singh possessed the *parganas* of Wazirabad, Ghaniwala, Gharthal, Jagdeo, Karial,

¹⁵⁷ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 295, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, pp. 129-30.

¹⁵⁸ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, pp. 181-82.

¹⁵⁹ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, p. 194.

Mitranwali, Saurian and Talwandi Musa Khan consisting of about 500 villages. He was married to the daughter of Sahib Singh *Bhangi*. He was a brave warrior and powerful Chief.¹⁶⁰ Officially he was a vassal of Sahib Singh *Bhangi*, but Mahan Singh *Sukarchakia* had won him over. In the campaign of Sodhra against Sahib Singh, Jodh Singh supported Mahan Singh. After some time he realized his mistake and retired to Wazirabad in the midst of fighting.¹⁶¹

This action is said to have been the cause of Ranjit Singh's hostility towards him. Finding his enemy too powerful to be openly attacked, Ranjit Singh set a trap for him. He invited him to Lahore, received him in a *Darbar* with great courtesy and while professing friendship and esteem, Ranjit Singh suddenly gave the signal to his soldiers for the seizure of Jodh Singh. Jodh Singh drew his sword and called on them to attack as he disdained to flee. The *Maharaja* was so struck with his gallantry that he dismissed the assaults and added his *Jagirs*. A few years later, however, when Jodh Singh died in 1809, the *Maharaja* marched a force to Wazirabad and ruthlessly confiscated all the *Jagirs*, allowing a small grant for the maintenance of Ganda Singh and Amrik Singh the minor sons of Jodh Singh. Amrik Singh (some writers call him Amir Singh) started serving Ranjit Singh during the second decade of the nineteenth century. He appears to have held Surian till his death in 1825.¹⁶²

The *Pargana* of Wazirabad containing about 500 villages and all the personal property of Jodh Singh came into Ranjit Singh's possession.¹⁶³ In June 1810, Ranjit Singh ordered Faquir Aziz-ud-Din to go to Wazirabad and occupy

¹⁶⁰ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, pp. 213-14; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 234.

¹⁶¹ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, pp. 213-14; Gujranwala District Gazetteers, Lahore, 1935, p. 20.

¹⁶² H.L.O, Garret and G.L Chopra, *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh*, 1810-17, Lahore, 1935, reprint Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 203; Gujranwala District Gazetteers, 1935, pp. 20-21.

¹⁶³ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, pp. 107-8.

the town. Soon Aziz-ud-Din captured the fort. Ganda Singh was relieved of his charge and was given a reasonable *Jagir* for his subsistence.¹⁶⁴

Kiun Shah: Kiun Shah resident of Sodhi colony in the Jhelum district received charitable grants of villages in Sind Sagar Doab from *Sardar* Ram Singh and *Sardar* Milkha Singh of Rawalpindi including the village of Kotli, Chapar and Ramial. In 1833, Kiun Shah transferred his loyalty from *Bhangis* to *Sukerchakias*. *Sardar* Mahan Singh gave him the *Dharmarth*, worth rupees 1,300 which is still enjoyed by his descendants. His son Ram Singh entered the service of *Maharaja* Ranjit Singh.¹⁶⁵

Tara Singh and Karam Singh Maan: *Sardar* Tara Singh was native of village Mogalehak in Gujranwala district, in his early days he joined with the *Bhangis* in most of their expeditions and held many villages in Amritsar district. After his death his son Karam Singh Maan joined the *Bhangi* confederacy and acquired *Jagirs* in Lahore, Sialkot and Amritsar district. He rebuilt Mananwala in Amritsar district and took up his residence there. After his death Karam Singh was succeeded by his sons Ram Singh and Sham Singh. These two young men left the *Bhangi Misal* in 1780 and went under the service of Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia*.¹⁶⁶

Diwan Sulakhan Mal: *Diwan* Sulakhan Mal a native of Peshawar left his village and joined the service of *Sardar* Milkha Singh *Thepuria* (Rawalpindi). His son *Diwan* Radha Kishan and Kishan Chand remained in the service of Milkha Singh and Jiwan Singh, son of that Chief till his death which was in 1819.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh, Daftar-II*, pp.115-116.

¹⁶⁵ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, p. 251.

¹⁶⁶ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, pp. 301-2.

¹⁶⁷ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, p. 313.

Diwan Singh Chachowalia: Diwan Singh was one of five sons of Hari Singh *Bhangi*. In 1772 he was appointed Governor of Multan by Jhanda Singh. Diwan Singh had to face three great enemies in Shuja Khan, *Nawab* of Bahawalpur and Haji Sharif Khan. Besides these there was always the danger from Kabul, Further, it was a hard task to keep the Muslim population, about 95 percent of the total, in control. He remarkably maintained his position in the midst of all these inimical factors. Several forces advanced from Kabul to oust him. He was eventually defeated by Timur Shah himself in 1780. The king was so highly impressed with Diwan Singh's bravery that he allowed him to depart unmolested with the entire moveable.¹⁶⁸

Milkha Singh Rawalpindi: Milkha Singh was one of the most notable *Bhangi Sardars* attached to Gujjar Singh *Bhangi*. He was the native of village Kaleke near Kasur. He founded the village of Thepur in Lahore district and was called *Thepuria*. He seized many villages in the districts of Ferozpur, Lahore, Gujranwala and Gujrat. On the north-western side he was always in the advanced guard of the *Bhangis*. When Gujjar Singh occupied Rawalpindi, he appointed Milkha Singh as his Governor at Rawalpindi.¹⁶⁹ Milkha Singh perceived how admirably Rawalpindi was situated and fixed his headquarters there. He conquered a tract of country around Rawalpindi worth rupees three lakh a year.¹⁷⁰ However, According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, Milkha Singh on occasions transferred his loyalty from *Bhangi* to Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia*.¹⁷¹

Milkha Singh died in 1804. Ranjit Singh called him *Baba* and grandfather out of respect. He supported Ranjit Singh in many battles on the frontier. Milkha

¹⁶⁸ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, pp. 297-99; Multan District Gazetteer, Lahore, 1922-23, pp. 51-52.

¹⁶⁹ Ganesh Das Bادهhra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, folio no. 113, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, p. 320.

¹⁷⁰ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-I, pp. 134-35.

¹⁷¹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio no. 276, DPHS, PUP.

Singh's territory yielded him annual revenue of rupees three lakhs. He commanded a force of 2,000 horses. He was succeeded by his son Jiwan Singh. Jiwan Singh served under Ranjit Singh and was appointed the *Thanedar* of the fort of Rawalpindi.¹⁷² Jiwan Singh accompanied Ranjit Singh in his Kashmir expedition in 1814. Jiwan Singh died in 1815. The *Maharaja* seized all his territory and took his son Anand Singh under his service.¹⁷³

Anand Singh, the eldest son of Jiwan Singh's three sons, succeeded to a portion of his father's *Jgirs*. The *Maharaja* revoked rupees 2, 92,000 and left only rupees 8,000 of the old estate, granting new *Jagirs* to the value of rupees 42,000 in the Ferozpur district. He was subjected to the service of one hundred horsemen. The other sons of Jiwan Singh like; Ram Singh, who survived his father only for one year, had a *Jagir* assigned to him in Hazara and Gurmukh Singh received Sultani and Kalri, worth rupees 2,00, in the Gurdaspur district. Anand Singh died in 1831. His only son Fateh Singh was then a boy of eight years of age and in 1836 the *Maharaja* reduced his *Jagir* to rupees. 13.000 and subjected him to the service of twenty horses.¹⁷⁴

Nidhan Singh Aattu (Hattu) of Daska: Nidhan Singh Aattu (*Hattu*) was (the word *Hattu* derives from Punjabi *Hat*, meaning 'courage') the son of Jassa Singh of village Maraka in Lahore District. He owned many *Parganas* in Sialkot district with his seat at Daska. Akbar, Bhatti Bhango, Dewalah, Dhamonke, Ghilotian, Jabhoke, Mokhal, Nidala, Wadalah and joined the *Bhangi* confederacy. When Ranjit Singh visited Ramnagar, he summoned Nidhan Singh *Attan* before him. The *Sardar* knew that Ranjit Singh was in the habit of treacherously imprisoning independent Sikh Chiefs. He replied that he would

¹⁷² Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, p. 320; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar-II, pp. 122-23.

¹⁷³ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, p. 320-21; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 243.

¹⁷⁴ Lepel Griffin and W.L Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-II, pp. 358-59.

come under the security of a Sodhi priest. Ranjit Singh immediately invaded Daska and Nidhan Singh's family fell into his hands.¹⁷⁵ They were subjected to "shameful impositions." Nidhan Singh fearlessly rode in to Ranjit Singh's camp. In utter disregard of his oaths he fettered the *Sardar* and imprisoned him. He remained in jail for six weeks. The Sodhi priest sat in *Dharna* at Ranjit Singh's court and forced the *Maharaja* to set Nidhan Singh free. After release Nidhan Singh crossed into Jammu territory and took up service with Ata Muhammad Khan of Kashmir. Shortly afterwards all his lands and property were captured by Ranjit Singh.¹⁷⁶

Budh Singh of Wattu: Lehna Singh *Bhangi* overran the country of Wattu around the villages Atari and Haveli both on sides of the river Satluj, he took over this territory from Ahmad Yar Khan and confirmed to Budh Singh. The famine of 1785 occurred in Budh Singh's time and he is said to have sold all his property and to have fed the people with grain bought from the proceeds. In 1807, Ranjit Singh wrested the country from Budh Singh and made it over to Kahn Singh *Nakkai*.¹⁷⁷

Ram Singh Pada: Ram Singh Pada of the *Bhangi Misal* was a Brahman who had embraced Sikhism. He was appointed by Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* at Sarai Kala. He held the country between Hasan Abdal and Attock, a distance of 50 kilometers. He kept his headquarters at Kali Sarae, but constantly watched any

¹⁷⁵ Ganesh Das Bادهhra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, folio no. 166, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, pp. 107-8.

¹⁷⁶ Khushwaqat Rai, *Tarikh-i-Halat-Sikhan*, folio no. 286, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, p. 108; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Dafter-II*, p. 79.

¹⁷⁷ H.A Rose, *A Glossary and Tribes and Castes*, Vol-II, p. 491; C.A Rose., & W.E Purser, *Report on the Revised Land Revenue Settlement of the Montgomery District*, 1874, Lahore, 1878, pp, 30, 34-35& 36, PSAP, (after here given as SR Montgomery District); Montgomery District Gazetteers, Lahore, 1933, pp. 17-18.

movement of the Durrani armies from Kabul.¹⁷⁸ He was an intrepid soldier and kept the hostile Muslim population in check. He offered residence to enemy's scouts and moles. He lost his position to Ranjit Singh in 1811.¹⁷⁹

Bhag Singh Hallowalia: Bhag Singh Hallowalia a resident of village Zafarwal was one of the famous *Bhangi Sardar*, who served under Hari Singh *Bhangi*. He captured the village Bhag Kllan. In the upper Doab, the most important Chief was Bhag Singh Hallowalia, with possessions in the *Parganas* of Aurangabad and Zafarwal and his headquarters at Zafarwal. After some time Mahan Singh compelled him to join his service and shut him up in the fort of Rasalnagar and confirmed his *Jagir* of Budha Gorhaya, Changi Changa, Dhodha to Asa Singh and Dorika, Gondal, Kasowala, Lurkie, Saukhandwind Sahib Singh of Zafarwal.¹⁸⁰ According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti, Bhag Singh's two sons built two forts called after their names *Qila* Sobha Singh and *Qila* Suba Singh. His territory fetched him two and half lakhs annually.¹⁸¹ Bhag Singh had joined the party of Gurdit Singh and Sahib Singh *Bhangi* at Bhasin in 1800 and opposed Ranjit Singh at Kheevawali in 1801. But in 1804, he deserted the *Bhangis* and went to Ranjit Singh and submitted to him. He was allowed to remain in possession of his territories on terms of vassalage.¹⁸² In 1810, Ranjit Singh came to know that Bhag Singh had given some help to Nidhan Singh against him. Now Ranjit Singh sent Nihal Singh Atariwala and *Diwan* Mohkam Chand against Bhag Singh Hallowal. He was soon arrested with his son Sobha Singh.

¹⁷⁸ Ganesh Das Badehra, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*, folio no. 113, DPHS, PUP; Lepel Griffin and W.L. Conarn, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol-II, p. 61.

¹⁷⁹ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, p. 246.

¹⁸⁰ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 330-31, DPHS, PUP; Prinsep, E.A., *SR Sialkot District*, Lahore, 1865, p. 46; Venna Sachdeva, *Polity and Economy of the Punjab During the Late eighteenth century*, p. 40.

¹⁸¹ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 330-31, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁸² H T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power*, p. 66; Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 361.

They were kept as prisoners at Lahore and all their territories were annexed.¹⁸³ In December, 1810, however, Bhag Singh was set free and was granted the *Jagirs* at Hallawal worth rupees 1,000, *Qila* Sobha Singh, Changi-Changa and Budha Goraya, most probably for maintenance. After his death Ranjit Singh resumed all his *Jagirs*.¹⁸⁴

Milkha Singh of Bhatiwind: Milkha Singh was a resident of Cahinpur (near Ram Das on the bank of river Ravi). After taking a *Pahul* he joined the *Bhangi Jatha*. After death he was succeeded by his son Sahib Singh, who took the charge around the village of Chainpur. He soon died and was succeeded by his brother Tara Singh. He took part in most of the expeditions under the *Bhangis*. He had three sons named Jassa Singh, Sukha Singh and Jaimat Singh. After his death Tara Singh was succeeded by Jassa Singh. Soon Nizam-ud-Din occupied most of his territory and the remaining was captured by Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh gave the *Jagir* of the village Chainpur to him. After this Jassa Singh gave marriage in one of his daughters to Ranjit Singh.¹⁸⁵

Sadhu Singh and Budha Singh: Sadhu Singh occupied a prominent position among the citizens of Rawalpindi in 1766, when Milkha Singh occupied Rawalpindi. Soon both Sadhu Singh and Budha Singh entered the service of powerful *Bhangi* chief Milkha Singh *Thepuria*. Thus Sadhu Singh was entrusted by Milkha Singh with the duty of providing rations for the Sikhs troop and Budha Singh was employed in superintending the revenue collections.¹⁸⁶

Amir Singh *Baba* of village Gandanpur: Bur Singh of village Maraka near Lahore and his son Jassa Singh who had seized a part of Daska; Desa Singh of village Chaubara who held, Chaubara, Govindke, Khoneke, Kilalwala; Hukam

¹⁸³ Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, p. 388; Sialkot District Gazetteers, 1921, p. 21.

¹⁸⁴ Ahmed Shah Batalvi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 82; H T. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power*, p. 66; Munshi Amin Chand, *A History of Sialkot*, pp. 10-11; Sialkot District Gazetteers, 1921, p. 21.

¹⁸⁵ Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibrat Nama*, folio nos. 332-33, DPHS, PUP.

¹⁸⁶ Lepel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs*, Vol-II, p. 377.

Singh Chimini; Malhan Singh of village Sahowala; Sahib Singh Bedi of Una; Sawan Singh who held Kopra and Pathanwali; Sham Singh Bhagowal and Sudh Singh of village Choki were the some other minor *Sardars* and *Jagirdars* who served under the *Bhangis* and on the time of their decline they submitted to Ranjit Singh.¹⁸⁷

Thus we can see the gradual and despondent end of the *Bhangi Misal*, which was at one time the most powerful and supreme among all the Sikh *Misals* in the 18th century. All its *Sardars* were reduced to standing of measly *Jagirdars*. All their territories had now been amalgamated in the territories of Ranjit Singh. They were generously remunerated for their loss of supremacy. The *Sardars* who were of peaceful disposition and required to retire from energetic political life were granted preservation *Jagirs*. The others, including their *Jagirs* were taken into service. Out of ten, five *Bhangi Sardars* were given *Jagirs* for maintenance, the others becoming service *Jagirdars*. Thus by force and deception, tempered with conciliation, Ranjit Singh had succeeded in overcoming all *Bhangi* opposition and cleared the way for the extension of his dominion over the Punjab.

¹⁸⁷ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-IV, pp. 252-53

Conclusion

At the very outset I want submit that the title of my Ph.D. thesis is “*Rise, Growth and Fall of Bhangi Misal*”. The objective of my research work is to find out the political position of the *Bhangi Misal* in the first and second decade of the eighteenth century and study how it became the most powerful so far as manpower and area was concerned as compared to the other Sikh *Misals* in the province of Punjab. I have emphasized the *Bhangis* struggle with the Mughals and Afghans and also researched their relations with the Afghans and the other non Sikh rulers. I have also attempted to show that the Afghans like Ahmad Shah Abdali and Shah Zaman offered the Governorship of Lahore to the *Bhangis* and that they declined. I have also studied the *Bhangis* relations with the other *Misals* as well as their matrimonial alliances. At last I critically have endeavoured to explore the internal and external causes of the decline of the *Bhangi Misal* and the reasons for their failure to protect their *Misal* from the rising power of Ranjit Singh. I have also critically analyzed why the *Bhangis* failed to make any powerful confederacy like the other *Misals* and why they were unsuccessful to unify the Punjab as Ranjit Singh did.

Evolution of the Sikh *Misals* began with the Sikh challenge to the Mughal rulers and the Afghan invaders, which continued for nearly half a century. As an outcome of this protracted period of struggle, the Sikhs not only managed to save themselves from the oppression and injustice of the Mughals and Afghans but also succeeded in establishing their own independent rule in the Punjab under twelve *Misals*.

The *Bhangi Misal* is said to have its name from its founder’s abdication to *Bhang*- an intoxicating preparation of hemp. In the *Dal Khalsa* the *Bhangi Misal* was supreme as far as its territories and manpower were concerned. The founder

of this formidable *Jatha* (group) of warriors was Chajja Singh a *Jat* the resident of village Panjwar, 9 miles away from Amritsar. He was baptized by Banda Singh *Bahadur*. Bhima Singh, Natha Singh, Jagat Singh, Mohan Singh, Gulab Singh Dhousa ; Karur Singh, Gurbakhash Singh Roranwala, Agar Singh Khangora and Sawan Singh *Randhawa* were his other companions. They carried conviction in their heads that *Guru* Gobind Singh had destined them for *Raj* or the sovereign power of the Punjab. Enthused with the fire of this mission before them they felt vehemently inspired to pursue their activities against the Mughal Government of the Punjab.

As the time advanced the *Bhangis* associated with the other Sikh *Sardars* and began to their assaults on the Mughal authority under Zakarya Khan. At the time of the foundation of *Budha Dal* and *Taruna Dal* the *Bhangi Sardars* Bhima Singh, Hari Singh, Bagh Singh Hallowalia, Sham Singh Narroke and Gurbakhsh Singh Roranawala became well known leaders among the Sikhs. Because of long years of struggle the strength of the Sikh *Jathas* became significantly large. Acting in accordance with the circumstances the Sikhs assembled at Amritsar on 14 October, 1745 on the occasion of Diwali and passed a *Gurmata* for merging all the small *Jathas* into twenty five strong *Jathas*. By 1748, the number of these *Jathas* rose up to the strength of sixty five. Out of these sixty five *Jathas* eighteen *Jathas* belonged to the *Bhangi Misal* which were under the command of separate *Jathedars* as under: Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Natha Singh, Gujjar Singh, Garja Singh, Nibahu Singh, Lehna Singh, Sanwal Singh *Randhawa*, Gurbakhsh Singh Doda, Dharam Singh Klalwala, Tara Singh Chainpuria, Mehtab Singh Wadala, Kapur Singh Surianwala, Amar Singh Kingra, Jiwan Singh village *Qila* Jiwan Singh, Bagh Singh Hallowal and Tara Singh Mann.

On March 29th, 1748 on the day of *Baisakhi* the Sikhs assembled at Amritsar and discussed the *Panthic* agenda. Here they reconstituted their small

Jathas into eleven units and gave them a more cohesive shape by combining all their fighting units and reorganizing themselves into one strong organization which was given the name *Dal Khalsa* under the supreme command of Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*. Later on these eleven *Jathas* evolved into *Misals* under separate *Sardars* likewise: *Misal Ahluwalia* under Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia*; *Misal Faizullapuria* under *Nawab Kapur Singh*; *Misal Nishanwalia* under *Dasaunda Singh*; *Misal Bhangian* under the command of *Sardar Hari Singh Dhillon* of village *Panjwar* assisted by *Jhanda Singh*, *Ganda Singh*, *Lehna Singh* and *Gujjar Singh* and many others; *Misal Dallewalia* under *Gulab Singh Dallewalia*; *Misal Nihangsinghia* under *Baba Deep Singh* (later the *Misal* known as *Shahid* after the martyrdom of *Baba Deep Singh*); *Misal Karorsinghia* under *Karor Singh* of village *Panjgarh*, *Misal Sukerchakia* under *Naudh Singh* and *Charat Singh Sukerchakia*; *Misal Kanahiya* under *Jai Singh Kanahiya*; *Misal Nakai* under the command of *Sardar Hira Singh Nakai*; *Misal Singhaniya* under the command of *Sardar Nand Singh* and *Jassa Singh* of village *Saghane*. The *Misal* later came to be known as *Ramgarhia*.

Although *Phullkian Misal* under the leadership of *Baba Ala Singh* operated independently and separately in *Malwa* but it has been considered as the twelfth *Misal* by the historians.

Thus we can see that the *Bhangi Misal* emerged from a period of prolonged struggle which continued for nearly half a century. After *Chajja Singh's* death *Bhima Singh* a *Dhillon Jat* of village *Hung*, in the *Pargana* of *Wandi*, near *Moga* became the Chief leader of the *Bhangi Misal*. He organized a small *Jatha* of attackers during *Nadir Shah's* Invasion in 1739. On the death of *Zakariya Khan* in 1745, *Bhima Singh's* *Jatha* was one of the twenty five *Jathas* of the Sikhs. As yet, however, he did not possess any territory. He is said to have lost his life in the *Chhota Ghallughara*, in 1746.

On Bhima Singh's death his adopted son Hari Singh *Dhillon Jat* of village Panjwar became the next Chief of the *Bhangi Misal*. He organized a large *Jatha* of followers which increased considerably. Under the leadership of Hari Singh the number of the fighting soldiers went up to 20,000 men. At the time of the inception of the *Dal Khalsa*, Hari Singh *Bhangi* was appointed to lead *Taruna Dal*. He was the first among the *Bhangi Sardars* who conquered and occupied territories in the province of Punjab. He figured in nearly all the major expeditions of the Sikhs from 1748 to 1765, the phase of Ahmed Shah Abdali's important invasions.

At first Hari Singh established his administrative center at Gillwali near Amritsar thereafter he set himself up at Amritsar. The city of Amritsar did not belong to any single Chief but it was adopted as headquarters only by Hari Singh *Bhangi*, who built a fort called *Qila Bhangian* behind the Loon Mandi (salt market). By the time of Hari Singh's succession to Chiefship of the *Misal* it was jointly held by many other Sikh *Sardars* as under Gujjar Singh, his brothers Garja Singh and Nibhau Singh, Lehna Singh, Gurbakhsh Singh Roranwala, Sawan Singh *Randhawa*, Gurbakhsh Singh Doda, Tara Singh Chainpuria, Bhag Singh Hallowalia and many others, who made great contributions to his achievements.

Hari Singh next captured Karial, Mirowal and extended his power up to Chiniot and Jhang. He also joined the other Sikh *Sardars* in the attacks of Lahore in 1758 and 1760. In 1761, he attacked the retreating army of Ahmed Shah Abdali. In 1762, Hari Singh fell on Kot Khawaja Syed, two miles from Lahore and looted the ammunitions godown of the Khawaja Obed Khan Afghan Governor of Lahore. He also subdued the surrounding areas of Bahawalpur. He compelled *Raja Ranjit Deo* the ruler of Jammu to accept his sovereignty and took *Nazrana* from him. He played an important role in the victory of Sirhind by the Sikhs in 1763-64. By 1763, Hari Singh allied with *Sukerchakias*,

Ramgarhias, Kanahiyas and Nakais and attacked Pathan colony of Kasur and established a police post at Kasur. It is believed that Hari Singh twice raided Multan and even realized *Nazrana* from the chiefs of Dera Ghazi Khan and Dera Ismial Khan. In 1765, he declared a war against *Raja Ala Singh* of Patiala because of his submission to Ahmed Shah Abdali but he was killed in the action.

Hari Singh had two wives. By his first wife, daughter of Chaudhri Mulla of Panjwar, he had two sons Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh and by his second wife three sons Charat Singh, Diwan Singh and Desu Singh. After death Hari Singh was succeeded by his eldest son Jhanda Singh. In the political power and military resources Jhanda Singh made significant improvements in the position as it obtained under Hari Singh. Jhanda Singh associated with many illustrious leaders like Gujjar Singh, Lehna Singh, Sahib Singh of Sialkot, Rai Singh and Sher Singh Buria, Bhag Singh of Hallowal, Sudh Singh Doda, Milkha Singh Thepuria, Nidhan Singh *Attu*, Tara Singh Chainpuria, Bhag Singh Jalawala etc.

Around this time Rai Singh and Sher Singh of Buria seized control of Buria, Jagadhari, Damla, Dyalgarh and other 204 villages. Meanwhile, Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* with his brother Nibhau Singh and his two nephews Gurbakhsh Singh and Mastan Singh had taken the possession of Ferozpur. Karam Singh *Dullu* had captured Jhang and Chiniot. Agar Singh and Sawal Singh had extended their control as far as the village of the Syeds (Pindi Syedian). The territory of Chamiari also belonged to them. Little later Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh taking advantage of the weakness of Kabuli Mal Afghan Governor of Lahore also marched upon Lahore and captured it on 16 April, 1765.

Gujjar Singh also marched that very first year against Muqarrab Khan and captured Gujrat and made it his capital. He had also extended his control to Chakrali, Sodhra, Bhopawala, Kayanwala, Mitranwali and Sahowala. Gujjar Singh next invaded Jalalpur, Shahpur, Akhnur, Wangali, Pharwala and Wazirabad. He also led his expedition against Islamgarh and captured Mangla,

Naushahra and Bhimbar. Thereafter he conquered Mirpur, Kotli, Cahiumukh and Shahdru and extended his control up to Punchh in Jammu and Kashmir.

In December 1766, Ahmad Shah Abdali again descended upon the Punjab and after capturing the city of Lahore Abdali offered the Governorship of Lahore to Lehna Singh *Bhangi*, but the proposal was soon declined by *Sardar* Lehna Singh *Bhangi* by saying that words, “I am a soldier of the *Panth*, which would spurn even the gift of ruler ship of the three worlds, except when it came from the *Guru* Gobind Singh”. In this manner Lehna Singh turned down the offer saying that to accept an offer from an invader was against the policy and honour of the *Khalsa*. Consequently later after the departure of Ahmed Shah Abdali, the three Sikh *Sardars*, Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh and Sobha Singh occupied the city of Lahore.

In 1767, Gujjar Singh captured Rawalpindi which was assigned to Milkha Singh Thepuria. The territories of Hasan Abdal, Attock, Surrian *Pargana* including Jagdeo, Ghaniwala and Karial were also captured by Gujjar Singh.

Around this time Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh captured Sialkot and conferred it on Natha Singh, Mohar Singh Atariwala, Sahib Singh Aynawal and Jwahaar Singh *Ghuman*. In 1767 Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh conquered Sahiwal, Midh, Musachuha, Kadirabad, Maini, Mitha Tiwana and Khushab. Around 1770, Jhanda Singh invaded Jammu and received a tribute from *Raja* Ranjit Deo. In the year following, the Baloch Chief of Bhera was ousted from a part of his territory by Jhanda Singh and Dhanna Singh Kalalwala was installed there as a ruler. Next year Jhanda Singh marched towards Kasur and defeated Hamid Khan and Usman Khan. On his way back he conquered Nauri, Jastarwal, Pakho Thather and Chamiari and received a *Nazrana* from them. The most striking achievement of Jhanda Singh was the conquest of Multan in 1772. It is said that Jhanda Singh attacked Multan three times in 1766, 1771 and 1772. He finally captured Multan in 1772 and defeated Shuja Khan. He appointed his step

brother Diwan Singh Chachowalia as its *Subadar*. He also received a tribute from Mubarik Khan *Nawab* of Bahawalpur and conquered Kala Bagh, Pindi Bhattian, Dhara, Mankhera and Bhera. In 1774, Jhanda Singh fought in support of Ranjit Deo of Jammu against his son Brij Raj Deo who was supported by Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* and Jai Singh *Kanahiya*. Both Jhanda Singh and Charat Singh were died during the conflict.

Evidently, the *Bhangis* became the masters of substantial parts of the province of Punjab, from river Indus to Jamuna and from Kashmir mountains to Multan, on the extreme frontiers as well as in the central Punjab. They had the large army of above 30,000 horsemen. Thus, they soon emerged as the most powerful masters of the Punjab, during the seventh and eighth decades of the eighteenth century.

To extend their territories and strength of the *Misal* they cultivated friendly relations and matrimonial alliances with the other *Misaldars*. Gujjar Singh *Bhangi's* eldest son Sukha Singh married the daughter of Jassa Singh *Ahluwalia's* cousin Bhag Singh; Rattan Kaur the daughter of Ganda Singh *Bhangi* married Sahib Singh son of Amar Singh of Patiala; Sahib Singh son of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* married Subha Kaur the daughter of Hamir Singh of Nabha. Maan Singh *Bhangi* son of Rai Singh *Bhangi*, who ruled over a part of Multan married the daughter of Khushal Singh *Faizullapuria*; Lehna Singh *Bhangi* of Lahore married the sister of Budh Singh *Faizullapuria*; daughter of Nand Singh *Bhangi* of Pathankot married Tara Singh *Kanahiya*; Bhag Singh *Hallowalia* married his daughter to Jai Singh *Kanahiya*; Tara Singh *Chainpuria* married the daughter of Mehtab Singh *Kanahiya*; Gulab Singh *Bhangi* married the daughter of Fateh Singh *Kanahiya*; Sahib Singh *Bhangi* married Raj Kaur daughter of Charat Singh *Sukerchakia*. These marriages were thought to strengthen the positions of the concerned families and united them for the purpose of the

combined action. In many cases their previous rivalries and hostilities also come to an end with these matrimonial bonds.

Some times, these *Sardars* of the *Misals* aligned themselves on opposite sides just to undermine the rivals and some times they entered into conflict with each other for the sake of conquering the territories of each others. From the political accounts of the various *Misals* we find the *Bhangis* and *Ramgarhias* jointly fought against *Phullkians* and *Ahluwalias*; *Sukerchakias* and *Kanahiyas* against *Bhangis*; *Bhangis* and *Ramgarhia* against *Kanahiyas*; *Bhangis* and *Kanahiyas* against *Sukerchakias*; *Bhangis*, *Ahluwalias* and *Kanahiyas* against *Ramgarhias*; *Bhangis*, *Ramgarhias* and *Phullkians* against *Karorsinghias*; *Ahluwalias*, *Sukerchakias* against *Bhangis*.

As we know the *Bhangis* retained the frontier positions in the Punjab, so the main burden of the Afghan invasions was on their shoulders and they fought number of times with the Afghans under Ahmed Shah Abdali from 1748 to 1767 and after Ahmed Shah's death in 1773, they continued to be challenged by his son Timur Shah and finally Timur Shah captured Multan from Diwan Singh *Bhangi*, in 1780. In 1793, Shah Zaman son of Timur Shah opened his series of Indian invasions but was checked again and again by the Sikhs, but at last he triumphantly entered the city of Lahore, in January, 1797. Here he tried to cultivate cordial relations with *Bhangis* as his grandfather Ahmed Shah had earlier done and again offered the Governorship of Lahore to *Sardar* Lehna Singh *Bhangi*, one of the rulers of Lahore. Lehna Singh again declined the offer by saying the same words as he had said to Ahmed Shah. After a stay for few days in Lahore, Shah Zaman returned to Kabul. In 1798, Shah Zaman successfully captured the city of Lahore. But, after a few months stay there, Shah Zaman retreated to his hereditary dominions and the three rulers of Lahore Sahib Singh, Mohar Singh and Chait Singh again occupied the city of Lahore, which had been evacuated on the Shah's approach.

As we know the *Bhangis* triumphantly occupied the large part of Afghan dominion including Kasur, Jhang, Chiniot, Lahore, Multan, Attock, Rawalpindi, Sialkot and some part of Jammu and Kashmir including Mirpur, Kotli, Puncch, Mangla and Manawar. They also conquered some part of the Balouch territory of Sahiwal, Ahmednagar and the territory of Gakhars. Some of these were directly ruled by the *Bhangi Sardars*. But some of these were under their tributaries. Some times the *Bhangi Sardars* had friendly relations with these rulers and they entered into alliances to fight against their common enemies. But at other times these began to adopt threatening and aggressive postures when the *Bhangis* were on the downward. It is also said to the *Bhangis* tried to develop friendly relations with the British Government.

It is a matter of recorded history that the *Bhangi Misal* was one of the earliest to become well-known because under Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh, the *Misal* was so powerful that the unification of the whole of the trans-Sutlej Punjab under its sway appeared to be quite in the fitness of the things but decline set in very rapidly and the confederacy was one of the earliest to be dissolved. Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh died till 1774, so the unfortunate and premature death of these *Bhangi* leaders, coming in quick succession, left the task of controlling the turbulent *Bhangi Sardars* in the hands of weakling, infants and widows. During this year, Pathankot was taken over by an associate of Jai Singh *Kanahiya* from Mansa Singh *Jagirdar* of Jhanda Singh *Bhangi*. Ganda Singh died in 1774, while he fought against Jai Singh *Kanahiya* at Awanak village in Pathankot and succeeded first by Jhanda Singh's son Charat Singh and then by his own son Desa Singh in 1775 itself.

It was hardly to be expected, however, that the chiefs who had been inured to campaigning and whose pride it was to lead their forces against the enemy, under *Sardar* Hari Singh and Jhanda Singh, would tamely submit to be governed by a stripling. Many of his *Sardars* and *Jagirdars* began to assert

independence. First of them was Milkha Singh of Rawalpindi who gave up the service of the *Bhangis* and went over to Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia* and the other was Bhag Singh Hallowalia. The ruler of Jhang also ceased to pay tribute. Muzaffar Khan, son of Shuja Khan, assisted by his ally, the Bahawalpur Chief, made an attempt to recover Multan in 1777. Desa Singh could not add any territories to his *Misal*; rather he lost many of his *Parganas* like Pindi Bhattian, Shahiwal, Bhera, Isa Khel, Jhang and Takht Hazara which had been seized by Mahan Singh and a part of Kasur and some other areas passed into the hands of Nizam-ud-Din Khan of Kasur. He died in 1782 at Chiniot.

None of the successors of Ganda Singh was an experienced ruler. Most of the time in fact, they were in minority and the affairs of the principality were presumably looked after by the widows of the former Chiefs. After Desa Singh's death his son Gulab Singh was the next Chief of the *Bhangi Misal*. Gulab Singh added Tarn Taran to his possessions before he conquered Kasur in 1790. It remained under his control for four years. But the Afghan chiefs of Kasur Nizam-ud-Din and Kutab-ud-Din were able to recover Kasur in 1794-95. Gulab Singh's three *Parganas* of Tarn Taran, Sabraon and Sarhali were seized by Baghel Singh *Karorsinghia*, which he could not recover. Many other territories of Gulab Singh were taken ownership of by his subordinate *Sardars*. Year by year these territories diminished, till at last, the town of Amritsar and some villages including Jhabal, Kohali, Majitha, Naushehra and Sarhali in the Majha alone remained in his hands.

In the winter of 1798, Shah Zaman captured Lahore but after a month's stay at Lahore Shah Zaman left for Kabul. After Shah's departure the three rulers of Lahore Sahib Singh, Chait Singh and Mohar Singh again captured the city but failed to hold the administration of the province. In these circumstances Ranjit Singh made up his mind to occupy Lahore the famous city and provincial capital of the *Bhangis*. He triumphantly accomplished his mission with the support of

his mother-in-law Sada Kaur and captured the city of Lahore, on July 1799. So the occupation of Lahore by Ranjit Singh was the first major indication of the failure of the *Bhangis*. Ranjit Singh's meteoric rise was creating alarms in the minds of the Sikh *Sardars*. In order to exterminate Ranjit Singh's power, Gulab Singh called all his *Misaldars* and allied with Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*, Nizam-ud-din of Kasur, Jassa Singh *Dullu*, Jodh Singh Kalalwala, Bhag Singh Hallowalia, Nar Singh Cahmiari as well as Sahib Singh of Gujrat and marched against Ranjit Singh. In 1800, they met with Ranjit Singh at Bhasin, but in the battle field Gulab Singh *Bhangi* died of excessive drinking and the allies left the battle field.

Gulab Singh was succeeded by his ten-year-old son Gurdit Singh. At that time the *Misal* was on its decline and the new ruler was also in an unenviable position. In such circumstances, the affairs of the *Misal* were managed by his mother Mai Sukhan. So Ranjit Singh had an excellent opportunity to decimate the power of the rival *Misal* root and branch and seize Amritsar in 1805. Thereafter Ranjit Singh confirmed grant of Panjore (it may be the Panjwar village in the Tarn Taran district) and five other villages in *Jagirs* to Mai Sukhan and her son Gurdit Singh for their assistance.

Gurdit Singh died in his ancestral village Panjwar in Tarn Taran *Pargana* in 1827 and after his death he was succeeded by his son Ajit Singh and Mul Singh. According to Lepel Griffin and W.L Conarn, Thakur Singh *Bhangi* with his brother Hakim Singh *Bhangi* was recognized as the head of the *Misal* after Gurdit Singh's death. After Thakur Singh's death in 1925, his son Harnam Singh became the next head of the family. He had two sons named Autar Singh and Kirpal Singh. Hakim Singh, brother of Thakur Singh, after his death in 1921, was succeeded by his son Hardit Singh. Hardit Singh had three sons named Gurbakhsh Singh, Shiv Singh and Gurdial Singh and was succeeded by Gurdial Singh in 1935 who later excelled as the famous Member of Parliament and was

awarded by many other titles. After the death of Gurdial Singh, Karamjit Singh son of Shiv Singh became the head of the *Bhangi* family who is still alive. He has two sons named Harmandeep Singh who is working at NASSA in the USA and the other is Ramandeep Singh who is working as a pharmacist in German.

The other *Bhangi Sardars* who ruled as independent rulers at the beginning of Ranjit Singh's reign were Sahib Singh son of Gujjar Singh (died in 1788) at Lahore and Gujrat; Chait Singh son of Lehna Singh (died in 1797) at Lahore; Jassa Singh *Dullu* son of Karam Singh *Dullu* at Chiniot; Jodh Singh son Dhanna Singh at Kalalwala and Bhera; Bhag Singh Hallowal at Hallowal; Sudh Singh Doda at Doda and Jassarwal; Nihal Singh, Tek Singh and Jodh Singh at Atariwala; Jiwan Singh son of Milkha Singh at Rawalpindi; Bhagwan Singh nephew of Rai Singh *Bhangi* at Buria and Jgadhari; Jiwan Singh, Natha Singh and Mohar Singh Annyanwala at Sialkot; Nar Singh at Chamiari; Jodh Singh *Bhangi* at Wazirabad; Nidhan Singh *Attu* at Daska; Ram Singh son of Gujjar Singh's brother Garja Singh at Rorranwala; Ram Singh Pada at Sare Kale; Gaja Singh grand son of Gurbakhsh Singh *Doda* at Doda; Chait Singh son of Tara Singh Chainpuria at Chainpur and Karam Singh Chhina at Chhina etc. These Chiefs had not constituted a single political organization at any time in their history. However, at one time or the other, their ancestors had combined their resources with Hari Singh or with his successors, for the purpose of conquest and defense. From the very beginning these Chiefs were independent in the internal administration of their territories and in their relations with the other Chiefs.

Consequently the advantage of these confused states of affairs was taken by the adversary *Misals*, especially by *Sukerchakia* Ranjit Singh, who was most ambitious and powerful. He was politically instrumental in the demise of the *Bhangi Misal*. Ranjit Singh's first important conquest involving the *Bhangis* was that of Lahore in 1799 from Chait Singh. He treated Chait Singh one of the three

rulers of Lahore, with much consideration and conferred a *Jagir* of Rs. 60,000 at Vanyeki (in the *Pargana* of Ajnala) to Chait Singh *Bhangi* for his assistance. Sahib Singh the other ruler of Lahore lost his possessions in the city and its neighborhood of Lahore.

After establishing his authority over Lahore Ranjit Singh cast his eyes on the other territories of the *Bhangis*. Around the year of 1800-1801 Sahib Singh of Gujrat developed strained relations with his son Gulab Singh who occupied a couple of forts against the wishes of his father and appeal to Ranjit Singh against his father. According to Sohan Lal Suri, Ranjit Singh took the advantage of the feeble position of the *Bhangis* and ordered Gulab Singh to relinquish the fort of Jalalpur. Afterwards Ranjit Singh ordered Sahib Singh to evacuate the forts of Manawar and Islamgarh. At first Sahib Singh *Bhangi* agreed to give up the forts but later he refused. Now Ranjit Singh marched towards Manawar and Islamgarh. Feeling no match for Ranjit Singh's forces, Sahib Singh *Bhangi* escaped in the darkness of night to Gujrat. Soon Ranjit Singh dispatched Hukam Singh Atariwala and Seva Singh to pursue Sahib Singh. After a brief resistance Sahib Singh fled away to his fort of Deva Batala situated on the border of Jammu territory.

Sahib Singh, whose career had been hitherto marked by energy and enterprise, now became an indolent debauch and drunkard. He quarreled with the rival chiefs and *Sardars* and his power being thus weakened, in the course of two or three years Ranjit Singh, annexed all his territories including Gujrat, Islamgarh, Jalalpur, Manawar, Bajwat and Sodhra. Sahib Singh took refuge at Bhimbar and started living a life of poverty. Although Sahib Singh *Bhangi* accepted the over lordship of Ranjit Singh, in 1810 and Ranjit Singh restored to Sahib Singh four villages of Bajwat, Kallowal, Sohawa and Rajiwala, in Sialkot district worth 10, 000 rupees annually . He died at Bajawat in 1814.

The *Bhangi Sardars* began to lose all along the line and in the course of the decline of the *Bhangi Misal*, their *Jagirdars* became the *Jagirdars* of Ranjit Singh and they had conceded a complete submission to Ranjit Singh till 1814, these *Sardars* are listed as under Jassa Singh *Dullu* son of Karam Singh *Dullu* of Chiniot, 1802; Nihal Singh, Tek Singh and Jodh Singh of Atariwala in 1802; Jiwan Singh son of Milkha Singh of Rawalpindi, in 1804; Bhag Singh Hallowalia, in 1804; Bhagwan Singh nephew of Rai Singh *Bhangi* of Buria and Jagadhari, in 1806; Jodh Singh village Kalal in 1806-7; Jiwan Singh of Sialkot in 1807; Nar Singh Chamiari in 1806; Jodh Singh of Wazirabad, in 1809; Nidhan Singh *Attu* of Daska, 1809; Ram Singh son of Gujjar Singh's brother Garja Singh, in 1810; Ram Singh Pada of Sare Kale, in 1811; Gaja Singh grand son of Gurbakhsh Singh *Doda* in 1813; Chait Singh son of Tara Singh Chainpuria; Karam Singh of village Chhina. Amir Singh *Baba* of village Gandanpur, Jassa Singh of village Bhatiwind, Kiun Shah of Sodhi colony in the Jhelum district, Jodh Singh of Sidhu village near Tarn Taran, Gohar Singh of village Sajwah, Ganda Singh of village Rania, Ram Singh so of Gujjar Singh's brother Garja Singh, Bur Singh of village Maraka near Lahore and his son Jassa Singh who had seized a part of Daska, Jai Singh *Sandhu* of village Kot Syed Muhammad; Desa Singh of village Chaubara who held, Chaubara, Govindke, Khoneke, Kilalwala; Hukam Singh Chimini; Malhan Singh of village Sahowala; Sahib Singh Bedi of Una; Sawan Singh who held Kopra and Pathanwali; Sham Singh Bhagowal and Sudh Singh of village Choki etc were the some other minor *Sardars* and *Jagirdars* who served under the *Bhangis* and on the time of their decline they submitted to Ranjit Singh.

The autonomous position of the *Bhangi Sardars* is apparent from the terms used for the individual *Sardars* like *Khalsa Ji*, *Singh Sahib* or even *Sarkar*. Their authority and independence as rulers is also indicated by the *Parwanas* which they issued for the realization of their orders of *Dharmarth*. Ganesh Das

also uses the terms *Khalsa Ji* for Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh *Bhangis* and term *Badshah* for Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh *Bhangis*. Ganesh Das uses the title Singh Sahib for Gujjar Singh and Sahib Singh and he also refers to the *Bhangis* as 'the royal house of Banda Singh *Bahadur*'. These manifestos of the sovereignty of the *Khalsa* marked the sovereign status of the *Bhangis*.¹

The *Bhangi Misal* was one of the earliest to become well-known and also one of earliest to be disintegrated. Here it may not be out of place to discuss the causes of failure of the *Bhangis* in unifying the Punjab, after they had begun their career in a blaze of glory. Numerous factors were responsible for the collapse and disintegration of this authoritative *Misal*. The first and the most important cause of the fall of the *Bhangi Misal* was its partition into almost independent branches. The Chiefs called *Bhangis* can be seen as belonging to different houses of rulers. Chajja Singh, Bhima Singh, Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Charat Singh, Desa Singh, Gulab Singh and Gurdit Singh belonged to the main house of the well-known leader Hari Singh *Bhangi* and succeeded to Chiefship one after the other. Similarly Gujjar Singh and Sahib Singh, Lehna Singh and Chait Singh, Karam Singh *Dullu* and Jassa Singh *Dullu* of Chiniot, Dhanna Singh Kalawala and Jodh Singh Kalalwala of village Kalalwala, Diwan Singh Chachowalia, Bhag Singh Hallowal of Hallowal, Milkha Singh of Rawalpindi, Rai Singh, Sher Singh and Bhag Singh of Jgadhari and Buria and Nand Singh *Bhangi* of Pathankot, Gaur Singh and Nihal Singh Atariwala, Tara Singh Chainpuria, Karam Singh and Sudh Singh Chhina, Jodh Singh *Kamla*, Mohar Singh Atariwala, Natha Singh, Sahib Singh Aynawala, and Jiwan Singh, Tek Singh, Sujjan Singh, Sawal Singh and Nar Singh Chamiari, Charat Singh Chunian, Jai Singh Sandhu, Kala Singh of Hasan Abdal, Karam Singh of Doda, Amar Singh *Langa*, Mahtab Singh *Bhangi* of Wadala, Kushal

¹ J.S Grewal and Indu Banga, *Early Nineteenth Centaury Punjab*, Amritsar, 1975, p. 16.

Singh Kalar Bajwa, Dasunda Singh Rania, Kapur Singh *Ghuman*, Bhagat Singh of Ruriala, Jodh Singh *Bhangi* of Wazirabad, Tara Singh and Karam Singh Maan, Budh Singh of Wattu, Ram Singh Pada, etc can be clubbed together as members of other five different ruling houses.

However, we need not rule out the possibility of their association with one another at one or the other stage in their histories. If we look at the territories of all these Chiefs we find first of all that only the territories of Rai Singh and Sher Singh of Buria close to the river Jamuna were far away from the territories of others. All the remaining *Sardars* had their possessions in the Bari, Rachna, Chaj and Sind Sagar Doabs. In the Bari Doab they covered the middle and lower portions; in the Rachna, Chaj and the Sind Sagar, the upper portions. The first house had its capital at Amritsar, the second at Gujrat, the third at Lahore, the fourth at Chiniot, the fifth at Rawalpindi and sixth at Jagadhari.

This pattern of territorial occupation is suggestive of some kind of association between a large numbers of the *Sardars*; indeed there are references to close co-operations between Chiefs called *Bhangi*. They unified their resources when the need arose, the ties of association accounted for a secure position. However as a result of partition, the *Misal* lost its extensive relations. Every division had its own headquarter and each of the *Bhangi Sardars* established his own administration in his own provinces by means of his own prudence and had to countenance its problems independently. For instance the *Bhangi Sardars* of Lahore, Amritsar and Gujrat could not come together for any general cause. These approximately self-governing Chiefs promptly changed their centers. Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh and Gujjar Singh established their own different centers or headquarters namely Jammu, Multan, Kasur and Gujrat respectively.

If we analyze these conclusions in conjunction with the explanations expressed by historians like, Rattan Singh *Bhangu*, Henry T, Prinsep, J.D

Cunningham, Syed Muhammad Latif and Hari Ram Gupta, we can appreciate the nature of the organization called *Misal* much better. They visualize the *Misal* as a confederacy of equals. According to Henry T, Prinsep, *Misal* was a confederacy of equals under the Chief of their own choice in the sense that the *Sardars* or the Chiefs of the Sikh nation were followed into a field by relations, friends and volunteers and not ordinarily by hired retainers. Rattan Singh *Bhangu* defined, the *Misal*, as a term yielding the sense of groups. According to Syed Muhammed Latif, the various clans under their respective Chiefs were leagued together and formed a confederacy which they denominated *Misal* or similitude thereby implying that the Chief and followers of one clan were equal to those of another'. Where Rattan Singh *Bhangu* emphasizes the significance of the groups and Latif emphasizes the value of clan in the formation of the *Misal*, Prinsep makes its basis broader by including outsiders as friends.

Until recently, historians of the late eighteenth century had contended that *Misaldars* were formed for the purpose of Government as well as conquest. Dr. Indu Banga has argued in her *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, that different *Sardars* associated with one another unto the point of conquest and territorial occupation only. Their association was often strengthened by the ties of kinship. But it was never institutionalized. The *Sardars* combined to conquer, but they divided to rule. Every *Sardar* was completely independent of the leader in matters concerning territorial administration. He used to exercise the authority of an independent ruler from the very commencement. The organization of the *Sardars* should never be puzzled with the subordination of the other *Sardars* to so-called chief of the *Misal*.

The *Bhangi Sardars* never collected a solitary political organization at any time in their history. They established more than a dozen houses and their rulers were autonomous in their internal Government and in their relations with other *Sardars*. The diagram of communal proceedings on the part of few *Bhangi*

Chiefs shows that such combinations were intended for occupation. After the territorial conquest the *Sardars* were sovereign in the exercise of their influence. Consequently, not with standing any official or informal involvement between the Chiefs of the *Bhangis* before the territorial conquests, they give the impression of being autonomous individual rulers. Thus we can say that the separation of the *Bhangis* was the major causes of the decline of the *Bhangi Misal*.

There is no doubt each of the *Bhangi Sardars* corresponded to Ranjit Singh in control in his own hands. Like him they had no constraints on the use of their superiority. They were all kings in their own little empires. The variation between Ranjit Singh and entity of *Bhangi Sardars* was only of degree. The tiny size of their Government and administration should not need us to overlook the essential similarity. The position of the *Bhangi Sardars* were nor dissimilar from the position of Charat Singh and Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia*'s. So far the catholicity and sensible point of view of Ranjit Singh was prefigured by the late eighteenth century Sikh *Sardars*, as well as the *Bhangi Sardars*.

Secondly, just contemporary to this time arose other big *Sardars* of the rival *Misals* like; Jai Singh *Kanahiya* and Sada Kaur *Kanahiya*, Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia*, Jassa Singh *Ramgarhia*, Baghel Singh *Karorsinghia* and Charat Singh *Sukerchakia* and after him his son, Mahan Singh who had conquered some portions of the *Bhangi* territories. The *Bhangis* began to lose all along the line. Charat Singh and Mahan Singh raised the power and prestige of their *Misal*. Mahan Singh died in 1790 and his boy son, who succeeded him, was destined to establish the famous Sikh military monarchy.

The rival *Misals* grew in potency and the swarming energy of the Sikhs was not channelized so much in ever-increasing their territories as in their civil warfare. In this internecine combat the *Bhangis* could not uphold their superior position. Some times the *Bhangis* entered into alliance with the *Sukerchakias*

and *Kanahiyas* against *Phullkians*, some times they leagued with *Phullkians* against *Dallewalias* and *Karorsinghias*, some times they forged matrimonial alliances with *Kanahiyas* against the *Sukerchakias* and some times they adopted hostile attitudes against the *Sukerchakias*, *Kanahiyas* and *Ahluwalias*, in which two powerful *Bhangi Sardars* Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh even lost their lives. Moreover the *Bhangis* leagued with *Ramgarhias* were always opposed to the *Kanahiyas* in league with *Sukerchakias*. The courage of splinter groups amplified more and more as time passed on, until about the end of the eighteenth century when the *Misal* became inoperable.

These groupings and regroupings by the *Bhangis* weakened the power of the *Misal*, which was the golden opportunity for the other *Misals* especially Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia*, who early took possession of *Bhangis* territories including Jhang and Chiniot. However Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* maintained friendly and matrimonial relations with *Sukerchakias* and married his son Sahib Singh with Charat Singh's daughter Raj Kaur. But after Gujjar Singh's death these relations come to an end and Mahan Singh son of Charat Singh forcefully occupied some possessions of his brother-in-law Sahib Singh. The famous maxim that "kingship knows no kinship" can be so aptly applied to the situation. To promote the interests of ones principality even close-blood relationship was disregarded and thus he went on and captured the fort of Sodhra. After Mahan Singh's death Ranjit Singh also adopted the same views for his uncle Sahib Singh and aunt Raj Kaur and he also occupied all the possessions of Sahib Singh, by 1810 including Gujrat, Islamgarh, Deva Batala and Jalalpur. Now we can say that if the *Bhangi Sardars* had maintained superior position by forging strategic and tactically favourable league with the *Sardars* of the other *Misals*, as Ranjit Singh's league had done with Fateh Singh *Ahluwalia* and Sada Kaur of *Kanahiya*, they would have triumphantly established the *Khalsa Raj* in the Punjab like Ranjit Singh.

The third reason as we stated above was that the *Bhangis* retained the frontier position in the Punjab, so the main burden of the Afghan invasions fell on the shoulders of this *Misal*. When they started their much motivated career Ahmed Shah Abdali was still a force to be reckoned with. When he finally disappeared from the field of Punjab politics, for some time they carried everything before them and extended their power from Jammu to Multan, which had been populated by the Afghans. After Ahmed Shah's death, his son and successor Timur Shah considered it as a challenge to his power and wrested Multan from the *Bhangis* in 1780. The loss of Multan gave a serious set back to the prestige of the *Bhangi Misal*. Shah Zaman son of Timur Shah started his series of Indian Invasions in 1794 and in 1798-99 captured Lahore the provincial capital of Punjab which once again proves the weakness of the *Bhangi Sardars* Sahib Singh, Mohar Singh and Chait Singh. The Chiefs of the other *Misals*, especially Ranjit Singh, encashed every opportunity and set his eyes on the large possessions of the *Bhangi Misal*. After Shah Zaman's exit from Lahore Ranjit Singh captured Lahore the provincial capital of the *Bhangi Misal*.

Similarly the *Bhangis* took the possession the territory of Jammu and Kashmir including, Mirpur, Kotli, Punchh and others like Islamgarh, Deva Batala, Mangla, Ahmednagar, Kasur, Bahawalpur and Shahiwal etc which had been under Afghan authority. After capturing these territories the *Bhangi* Chiefs returned the possession of these states to their old masters and made them their tributary states. But these tributary rulers on numerous occasions revolted against the *Bhangi Sardars* and when the *Bhangis* on their time of demise, these rulers made themselves autonomous rulers. Thus we can say that the invasions of the Afghans and the revolts of their tributary states is one of the major causes of the collapse of the *Bhangi Misal*, because they fought at one and the same time with these rulers and with the rival Sikh *Sardars*, which resulted in weak possession of their territories and the advantage of this weakness was taken by

the other Sikh *Sardars* like Ranjit Singh. If they had appointed their own Sikh Governors in these territories as they had appointed in the other territories like Multan, Sialkot, Jhang and Chiniot, they could have been in a better position to defend themselves against insurgency of these rulers.

The loss of Lahore is another major reason for the downfall of the *Bhangis*. We know that the city of Lahore which had always been the provincial capital, gave *Bhangi Sardars* a strategic edge over the other *Misals* and the *Bhangis* became the most powerful masters of the Punjab. The wealthy bankers, traders and land owners were settled there. The city of Lahore was also important from the industrial point of view. The *Bhangis* benefited a great deal from the economic, political and industrial importance of Lahore. The *Bhangis* were able to maintain a big army with the help of the revenue obtained from Lahore. But they lost Lahore to Ranjit Singh in 1799. Consequently the loss of provincial capital of Lahore was the first major indication of the failure of the *Bhangis*. Because with the possession of Lahore Ranjit Singh enhanced his political prestige considerably at the cost of the *Bhangis* and its position gave Ranjit Singh's an edge over the other Chiefs in the Punjab.

As we know that Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh and Sobha Singh, the three rulers of were dead till 1799 and were succeeded by their sons namely Chait Singh, Sahib Singh and Mohar Singh who failed to hold up the administration of the city of Lahore. In these circumstances the noble citizens of the city of Lahore invited Ranjit Singh to occupy Lahore. If Sahib Singh Mohar Singh and Chait Singh held the affairs of the city of Lahore as Lehna Singh, Gujjar Singh and Sobha Singh had done during their life, may be they could have won over the people of Lahore and prevented the occupation of Lahore by Ranjit Singh.

It is also believed that Sahib Singh *Bhangi* of Gujrat was not in the town at the time of occupation of Lahore by Ranjit Singh. At that time Sahib Singh *Bhangi* was busy in conquering Kashmir. If Sahib Singh *Bhangi* had been

present at Lahore during the occupation of Lahore by Ranjit Singh and combined with the forces of Chait Singh and Mohar Singh, may be they could have defeat Ranjit Singh. So the absence of Sahib Singh *Bhangi* of Gujrat from Lahore also became a big reason for the downfall of the *Bhangis*.

The family disputes of the *Bhangi Sardars* were other major factors for the fall of the *Bhangi Misal*. We know that Gujjar Singh divided all his territories between his two elder sons, Sukha Singh and Sahib Singh and the younger Fateh Singh, was left out. Sahib Singh fought with Sukha Singh at the instigation of Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia* and attacked and killed his elder brother. Gujjar Singh was terribly enraged over his eldest son's murder and decided to dispossess Sahib Singh of all his possessions. But later the relations improved. But later these relations between the father and the son again became strained when Sahib Singh handed over the *Chathas* Chief Ahmed Khan to Mahan Singh against the wishes of his father Gujjar Singh. In grief and sorrow Gujjar Singh died. After Gujjar Singh's death Sahib Singh forcefully eliminated of his brother Fateh Singh and captured all the possessions of his father's territories. Mahan Singh took full advantage from these family disputes and instigated Fateh Singh against Sahib Singh and soon captured Sodhra. Thereafter Sahib Singh's relations with his son Gulab Singh and his wife Raj Kaur, who was Mahan Singh's sister also became disturbed. They were made an appeal to Ranjit Singh to help against Sahib Singh. Ranjit Singh was watching the situation and it afforded him a golden opportunity and in the circumstances Ranjit Singh captured all of Sahib Singh's possessions.

Similarly there were other disputes like that of the Atariwalas family in which Tek Singh, Jodh Singh and Wazir Singh cousin brothers of Nihal Singh who were all in the service of Sahib Singh *Bhangi* and were jealous of the superiority of Nihal Singh, instigated Sahib Singh *Bhangi* against Nihal Singh and Sahib Singh confiscated his *Jagir* of rupees 15.000. As a consequence Nihal

Singh gave up the *Bhangi* service in disgust and entered the service of Ranjit Singh.

Lack of unity between the *Bhangi Sardars* and their minor Chiefs and *Jagirdars* and their revolts were another reason of the collapse of the *Bhangi Misal*. *Bhangis* had many minor *Sardars* and *Jagirdars*, who were all appointed by them as local administrators. When the *Bhangis* were their downward march these *Sardars* initiated revolts against their commanding masters and shifted their loyalty from *Bhangi Misal* to other *Misals*. First of them was the wife of Nand Singh *Bhangi* of Pathankot, who after Nand Singh's death transferred her service to *Kanahiyas Misal*. Thereafter Milkha Singh of Rawalpindi transferred his loyalties from Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* to Mahan Singh *Sukerchakia*. As the time advanced all the minor *Bhangi Sardars* including, Bhag Singh Hallowal, Jodh Singh Wazirabad, Nidhan Singh *Aattu*, Sahib Singh Sialkot, Tara Singh Chainpuria, Bhag Singh, Rai Singh and Sher Singh Buria, Jassa Singh *Dullu*, Nihal Singh Atariwala, Nar Singh Chamari, Charat Singh Chunian, Karam Singh Doda, Mahtab Singh of Wadala, Jodh Singh *Kalal*, Milkha Singh of Bhatiwind, Ram Singh Pada, Kiun Shah, Gutumal of Bhera, Bhagat Singh of Ruriala, Ganda Singh Rania, Kushal Singh Kalar Bajwa, Amar Singh *Langa*, Kala Singh of Hasan Abdal, Ram Singh nephew of Gujjar Singh *Bhangi* etc, one by one left the *Bhangi Misal* and conceded complete submission to Ranjit Singh. They could not show any unity nor any character even when they disposed of Ranjit Singh's power at Bhasin in 1800. They disappeared from the battle field one by one as Ali-ud-Din the writer of "*Ibrat Nama*" says. If they had fought as one power and shown their gallantry as they had shown in the other expeditions, may be they could have checked Ranjit Singh in his early rise to supremacy.

It is well known fact the *Bhangi Misal* had achieved the elevation of its supremacy through the capability of its authoritative *Sardars* like: Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Ganda Singh, Gujjar Singh and Lehna Singh all whom died by the

year 1799. Consequently the unfortunate and premature deaths of these *Bhangi Sardars*, coming in rapid succession, left the mission of controlling the disorderly *Bhangi* leaders in the hands of toddlers and widows like; Gulab Singh, Gurdit Singh, Mai Sukahn, Sahib Singh, Chait Singh etc, who were incapable of the greatness of their predecessors. Consequently the advantage of these confused states of affairs was taken by the adversary *Misals*, especially by *Sukerchakia* Ranjit Singh, who was most ambitious as well powerful and politically instrumental in the termination of the *Bhangi Misal* and in 1799 he drove the last nail in their coffin when he captured Lahore the provincial capital of the *Bhangis*. In this way with the end of the eighteenth century this authoritative confederacy also moved at a swift pace towards its end and merged completely into the possessions of Ranjit Singh about the year of 1810, when Sahib Singh and his son Gulab Singh of Gujrat the last powerful *Bhangi* Chief resigned themselves to the supremacy Ranjit Singh.

Here, we can say that the *Bhangis* failed to unify the Punjab, after they had begun their career, in a blaze of glory. If they had been controlled by one Chief or *Sardar* like *Sukerchakias* and leagued together against their common enemies Shah Zaman, Timur Shah and Ranjit Singh they may have eliminated them in their early days of rise to power. If they had fought with an interest of unity against Ranjit Singh, they could have stopped the rising power of Ranjit Singh in his early stage and made themselves the sovereign power of the united Punjab like Ranjit Singh.

Adopting a diplomatic policy Ala Singh of Patiala entered into a sort of tacit alliance with Ahmed Shah Abdali and took political advantage of the sovereign power of Ahmed Shah Abdali. Through this political understanding with Abdali he succeeded in expanding and strengthening his *Misal*. Similarly, Ranjit Singh forged an understanding with Shah Zaman, a sovereign ruler of Afghanistan, and gained recognition of Lahore, a historic capital, the possession

of which was necessary for the prestige and power to any master of the Punjab. It thus laid the foundation of a sovereign Sikh monarchy in the Punjab. However, Ranjit Singh had earliest challenged the Shah to a personal duel and rode up to Lahore and said to the Shah: “O grandson of Abdali, come down and measure swords with the grandson of Charat Singh”. All this spirit of youthful bravado appears unfeasible. But it is evident that during the last Afghan invasion Ranjit Singh did not remain inactive as Ali-ud-Din Mufti and Giani Gian Singh writes, “torment acting on diplomatic lines, Ranjit Singh chose not to pose any threat to Shah Zaman on his return march he rather facilitated his return so that he might not get annoyed with him and think of hitting back at him at the earliest opportunity. Ranjit Singh in fact dissuaded the other Sikh *Sardars* from executing their designs and the Shah was allowed to return to Kabul unimpeded. Since the Shah had to back hurriedly 12 of his guns sank in the river Jhelum that was in spate because of rainy season. On the Shah’s request Ranjit Singh extricated all the 12 guns from the river. He dispatched 8 of them to Kabul and added four to his arsenal”.² However, we have not any concrete evidence that Ranjit Singh sent his deputy to do homage to the Shah along with some of the *Sardars* of the Punjab when he reoccupied Lahore. J.D Cunningham and Syed Muhammad Latif claimed that Ranjit Singh forged understanding with Shah Zaman because when Shah Zaman tried to win Ranjit Singh over to his interests by sending him a rich *Khillat* from Kabul it was accepted by Ranjit Singh. In this point of view their friendly contact which had been established during this time also become visible as J.D Cunningham and Syed Muhammad Latif write. According to J.D Cunningham, during this second invasion of Lahore by Shah Zaman the

² Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, (NP), 1854, MS., (Translated into Punjabi, by Gurbakhsh Singh), preserved in the library of the Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, Accession No. 30, folio nos. 455-58; Giani Gian Singh, *Shamsheer Khalsa*, Sialkot, 1892, reprinted by Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, p. 289.

character of Ranjit Singh seems to have impressed itself, not only on other Sikh leaders but on the Durrani Shah. He coveted Lahore, which was associated in the mind of men with the possession of power and as the king was unable to cross his heavy artillery over the flooded Jhelum, he made it known to aspiring Chief that their transmission would be an acceptable service. As many pieces of cannon as could be readily extricated were sent after the Shah and Ranjit Singh procured what he wanted a royal investiture of the capital of the Punjab.³ According to Syed Muhammad Latif, when Ranjit Singh began to entertain the ideas of making himself master of Lahore and he was encouraged in his views by his mother-in-law Sada Kaur and thought that the time most opportune for the understanding, as he had no fear of the Durrani's interference, his late services to Shah Zaman, in recovering the lost guns from the bed of the Jhelum river and forwarding them to Kabul in safety, having, as already narrated, obtained for him a formal grant of it.⁴

But *Bhangis* had different views and had adopted different policy as compared to Ala Singh of Patiala and Ranjit Singh. In preference of adopting the diplomatic policy as adopted by Ala Singh and *Sukerchakia* Ranjit Singh, they liked to adopted the religious views or ideology because when Ahmed Shah Abdali in 1766, offered the Governorship of Lahore to *Sardar* Lehna Singh *Bhangi*, in preference to accepting the offer Lehna Singh *Bhangi* completely refused it by saying that words "I am a soldier of the *Panth*, which would spurn even the gift of rulership of the three worlds, except when it came from the *Guru* Gobind Singh". Similarly when Shah Zaman occupied the city of Lahore in 1797 and also offered the Governorship of Lahore to *Sardar* Lehna Singh *Bhangi* here again the offer was declined by Lehna Singh *Bhangi* by saying the same words as he had said to Ahmed Shah Abdali in 1766. Consequently it becomes

³ J D Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, London, 1849, reprint Amritsar, 2005, pp. 120-21.

⁴ Syed Muhammad Latif, *A History of the Panjab*, Calcutta, 1891, reprint New Delhi, 1964, p. 345.

apparent that if the *Bhangis* had also adopted the diplomatic policy like Ala Singh of Patiala and *Sukerchakia* Chief Ranjit Singh and had prudently accepted the proposals of Governorship of Lahore twice made by the Afghans, first by Ahmed Shah Abdali in 1766 and second time made by Shah Zaman in 1797, the *Bhangis* would have been the masters of the Punjab like Ranjit Singh during nineteenth century and would not have been unheeded by the Afghans and the Sikhs.

Though, the *Bhangis* failed to unify the Punjab, but the role of the *Bhangi Sardars* in the liberation of Punjab and in the establishment of *Khalsa Raj* which was later established by Ranjit Singh in Punjab should not be forgotten. This is because some of the most important territories in the province of Punjab like Lahore, Amritsar, Rawalpindi, Attock, Multan, Sialkot, Kasur, Gujrat, Ferozpur, Wazirabad and some part of Jammu and Kashmir etc. had been under the *Bhangis* before they were taken over by Ranjit Singh. Had these territories been under Mughals or Afghans, they may not as easily, have been conquered by Ranjit Singh. In such a scenario even Ranjit Singh would have failed in the unification of Punjab. Thus seen from historical perspective, the establishment of *Khalsa Raj* was owing to an equal measure to the *Bhangis* and Ranjit Singh.

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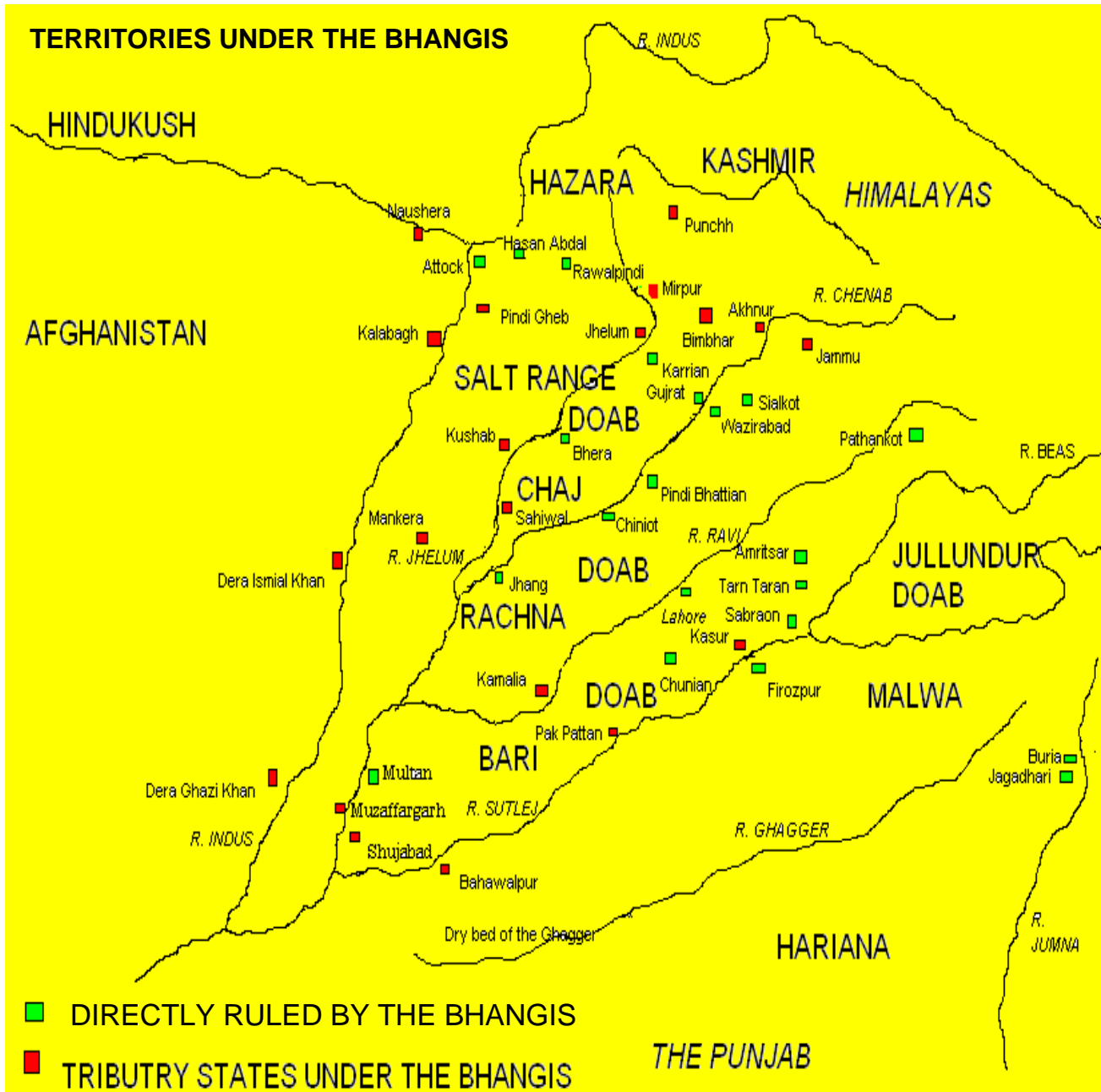
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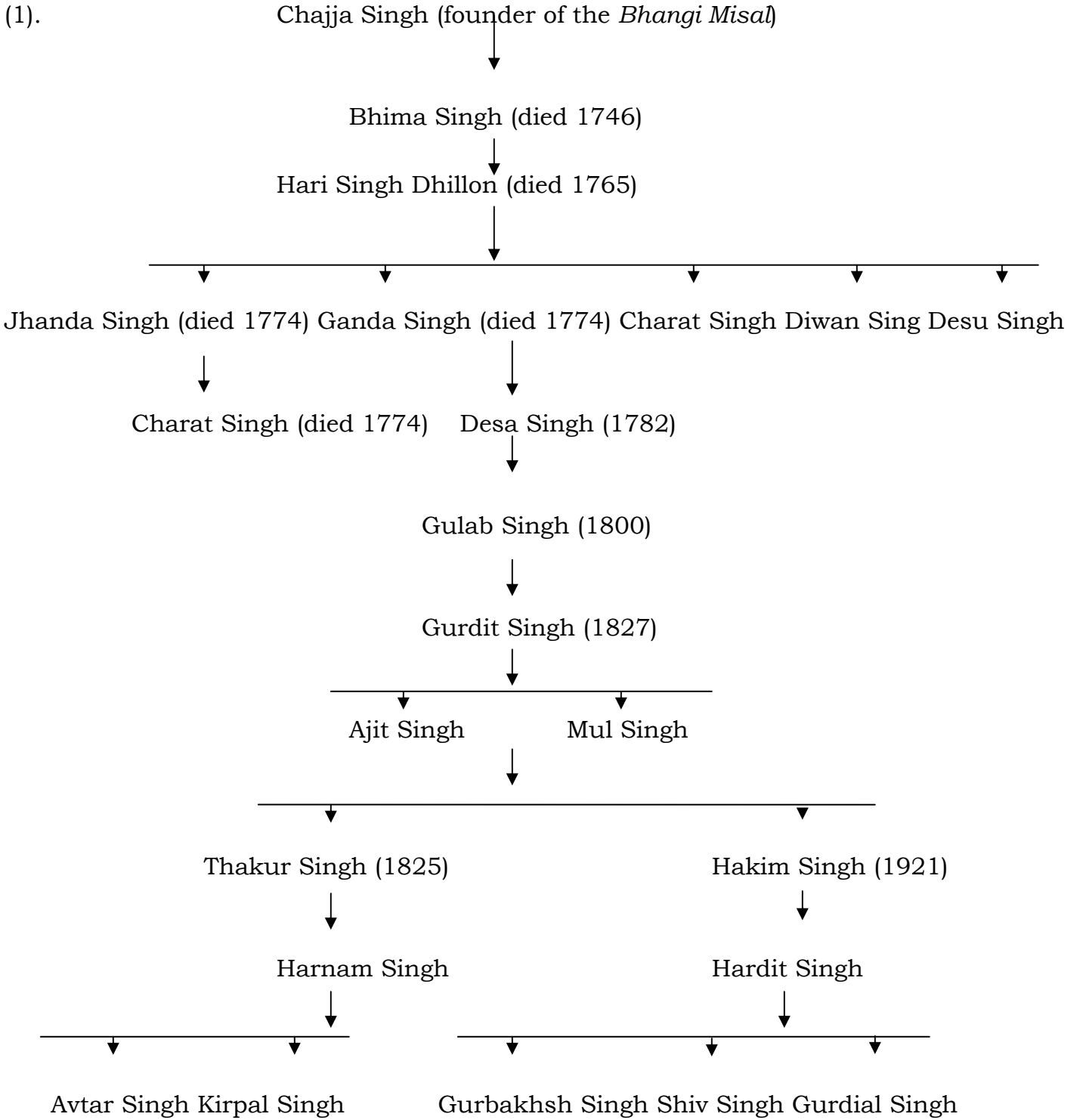
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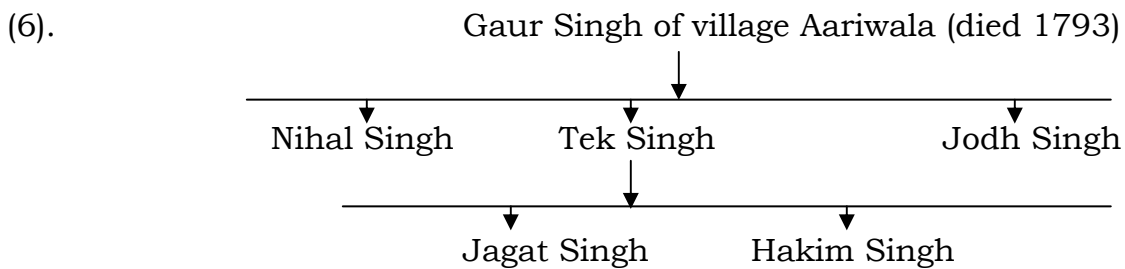
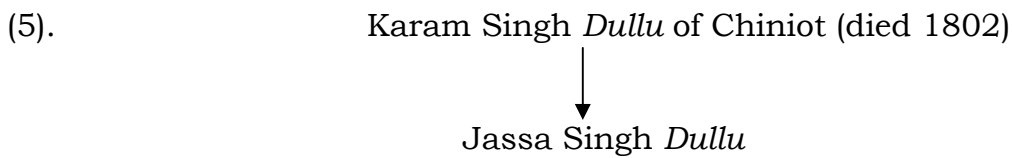
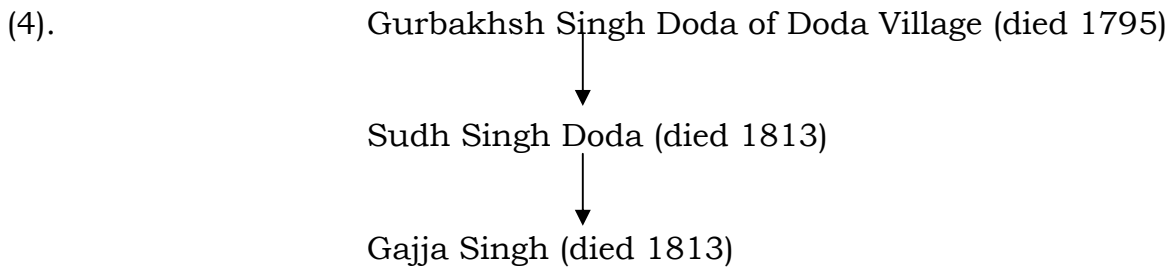
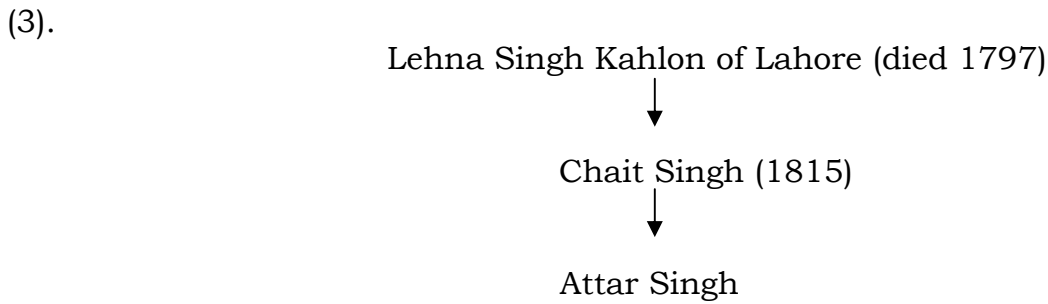
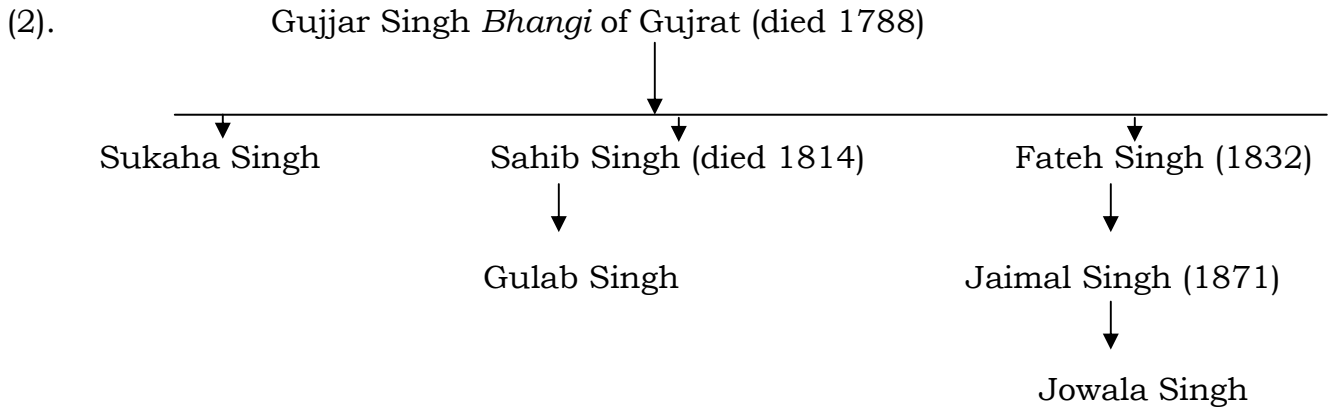
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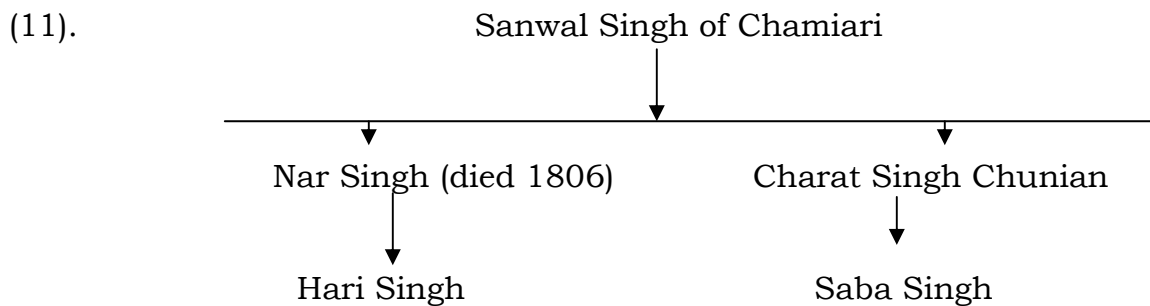
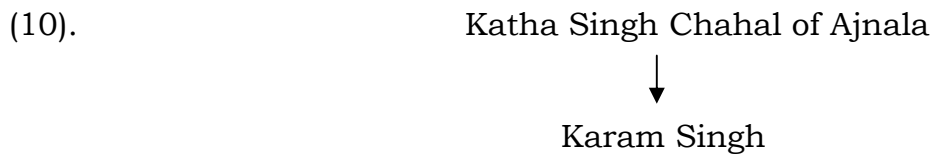
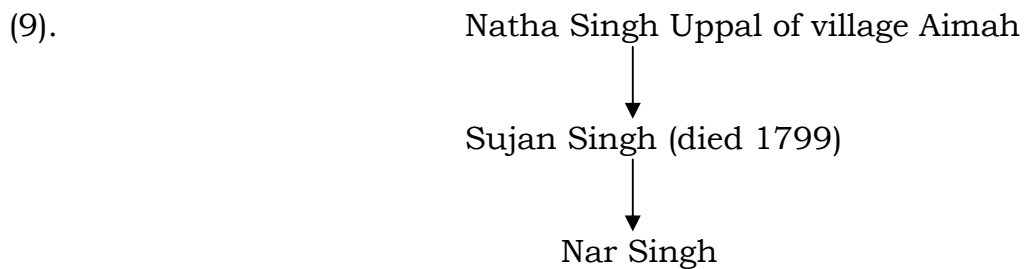
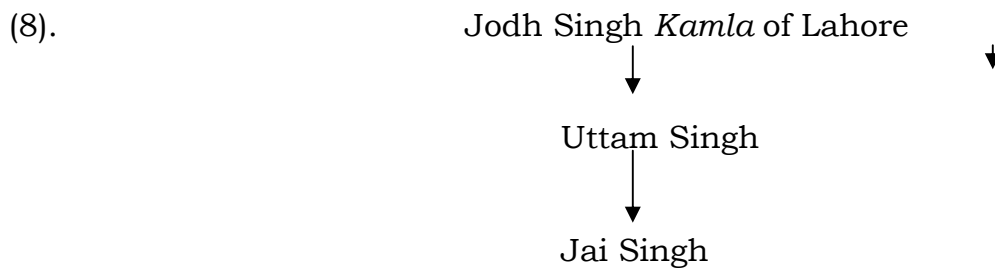
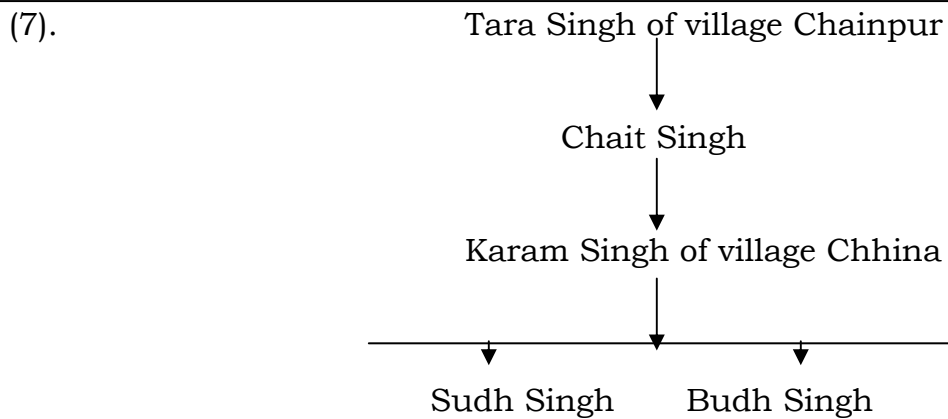
APPENDIX-I MAP



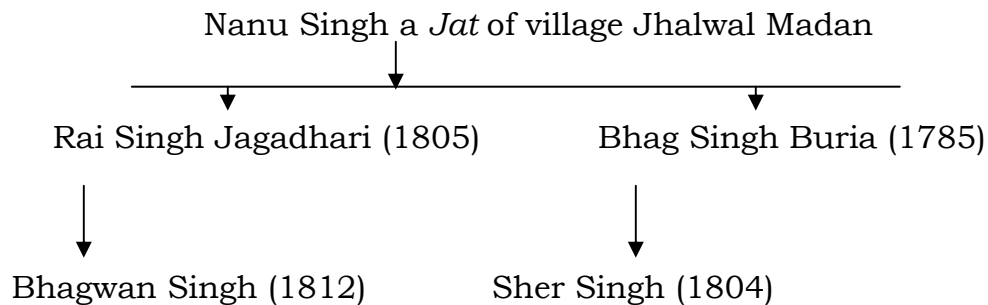
APPENDIX-II
GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE 25 BHANGI FAMILIES



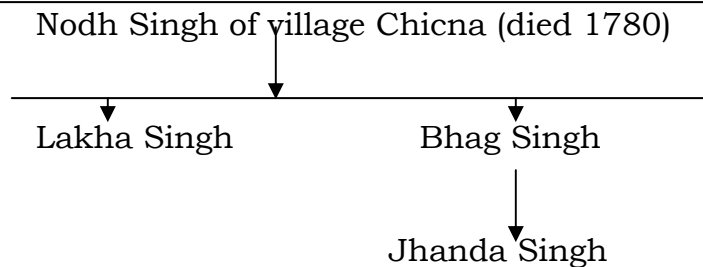




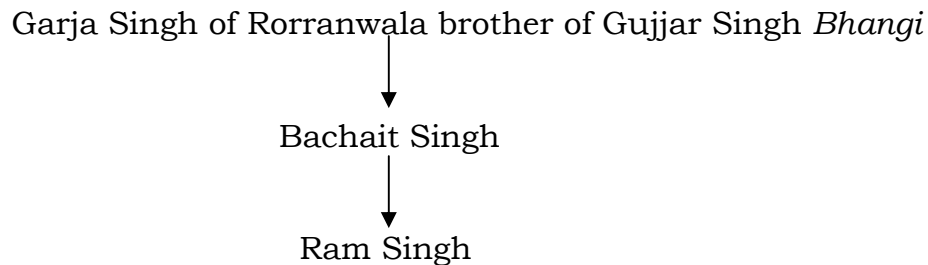
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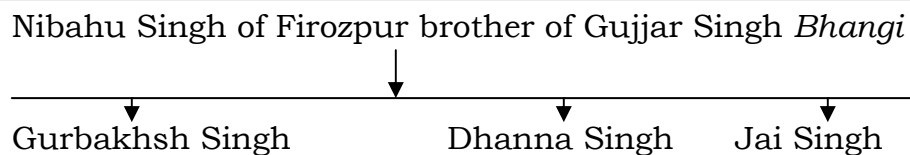
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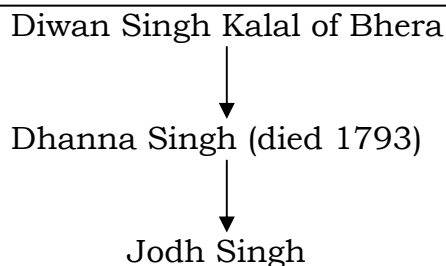
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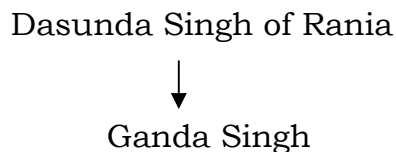
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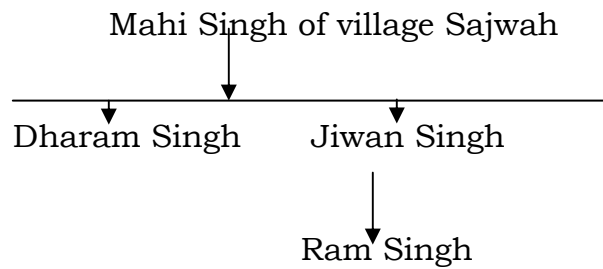
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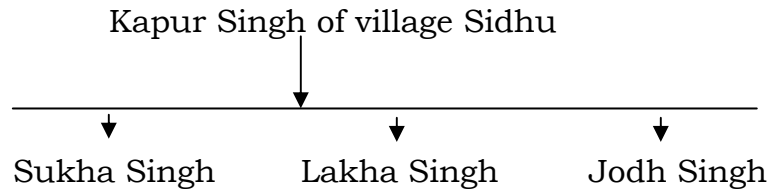
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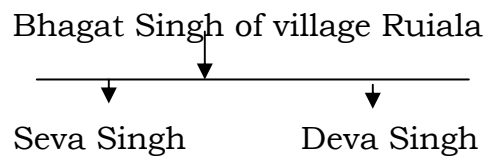
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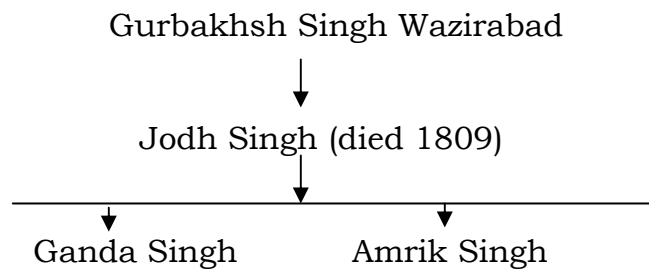
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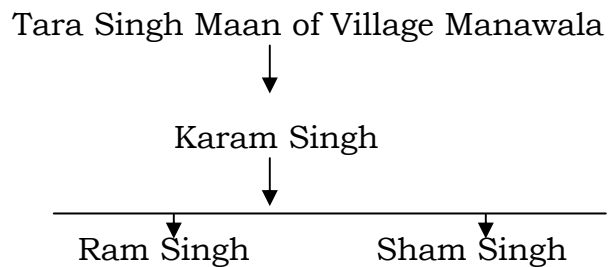
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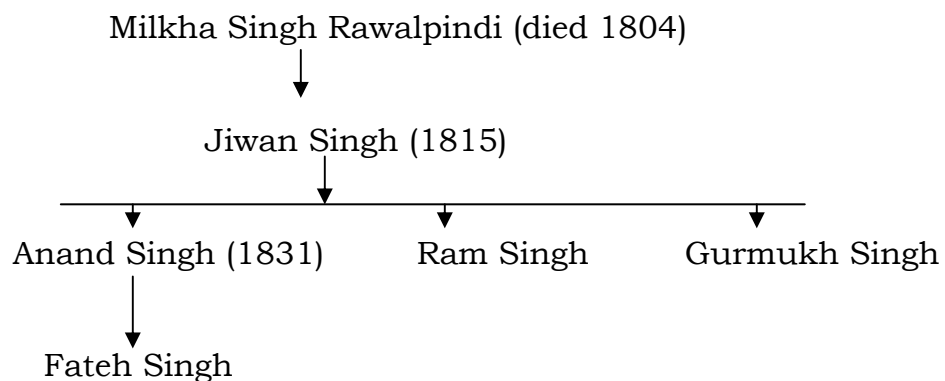
(21).



(22).



(24).



(25).

Bhag Singh Hallowalia



Sobha Singh

APPENDIX-III PICTURES



Qila Bhangian at Amritsar (Pillar-1)



Qila Bhangian at Amritsar (Pillar-2)



Qila Bhangian at Amritsar (Pillar-3)



*Misal House at village Panjwar
(District Tarn Taran) view-1*



*Misal House at village Panjwar
(District Tarn Taran) view-2*



*Misal House at village Panjwar
(District Tarn Taran) view-3*



*Misal House at village Panjwar
(District Tarn Taran) view-4*



Tomb of Hari Singh *Bhangi* at village Nasrali (Ludhiana) view-1



Tomb of Hari Singh *Bhangi* at village Nasrali (Ludhiana) view-1



Gurdwara build up at village Nasrali in the memory of Hari Singh Singh *Bhangi*



Gurdwara build up at village Panjwar in the memory of *Bhangi Sardars*