

**SHIROMANI GURDWARA PARBANDHIK COMMITTEE:
WORKING AND ACHIEVEMENTS (1925-1984)**

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In
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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis 'Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee Working and Achievements (1925-1984)' embodies the work carried out by Mr. Jaspal Singh himself under my guidance/supervision and that the work is worthy and fit for consideration for the award of Ph.D. Degree.

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DECLARATION

I hereby affirm that the present work 'Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee : Working and Achievements (1925-1984)' in the present form of my Ph.D. thesis is exclusively my own work.

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My indebtedness to my guide and supervisor Professor Dr Jaspal Kaur Dhanju, formerly Head Department of History, Punjabi University, Patiala, for her seasoned and generous help as well as keen interest in my present work is too deep for words. She watched my progress over the years and very kindly spared time for discussing several issues related to the subject under review for months together. Professor Dhanju has also gone through all my drafts with her habitual thoroughness and deep insight. She too very kindly permitted me the use of her personal library. I am and would be for the rest of my life grateful to her for her very scholarly suggestions during the course of the writing of my Ph.D. thesis. I am also grateful to Professor Dr D.S. Dhillon, formerly Head Department of History, who is my co-supervisor. It was entirely due to his encouragement that I finally undertook the present study. He too guided me with patience and kindness giving me liberty to pursue my own ideas. I am really grateful to him who despite his very busy schedule could go through the drafts of the present work. He also gave me most valuable suggestions which helped me to finally complete my work of Ph.D.

I am equally indebted to the members of faculty of History Department, particularly the present Head, Professor Dr. Mrs. S.K. Dhillon and Professor Dr. Kulbir Singh Dhillon for their usual courtesy and ungrudging help that they have extended to me from time to time. I am equally thankful to Dr. M. Idris and Mr. Jashandeep Singh and some of my sincere friends (particularly Dr. Balraj Singh, Mr. Karamjit Singh, Dr. Parminder Singh and Dr. Jagdeep Singh), who have inspired me from time to time and given me stimulation to complete the present task. That despite

the constant and valuable criticism and suggestions given by my advisers several errors have crept in is entirely due to my imperfection.

Here, I want to express my deep sense of eternal gratitude's to those authors, editors and writers of various books, research journals, articles published in the dailies and other periodicals which have been cited in my thesis. Secondly, it is my pleasant duty to record my thanks and gratitude to a number of educational institutions which I frequently visited in search of material that was available in their libraries throughout the course of my research. Here, I want to mention the names of some such Institutions; these are: National Archives of India, Janpath, New Delhi; Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, TeenMurti, New Delhi; Archives of contemporary history of India, Jawahar Lal Nehru University, New Delhi; library Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee; Library Khalsa College; Library Sikh studies Khalsa College; library Guru Nanak Dev University., Sri Amritsar; Desh Bhagat Yaadgar Library, Jalandhar; Dawarka Dass library, Madhya Marg, Chandigarh; Library Punjab University, Chandigarh; Bhai Kahan Singh Library, Punjabi University Patiala, etc. I thankfully acknowledge the help given to me by their custodians during my visits to these institutions time and again in search of material.

I am really grateful to the Chairman and Member Secretary, Indian Council of Historical Research, 35 Ferozshah road, New Delhi, for granting junior fellowship for a period of two years which enabled me to complete my work. Without its financial assistance it would not have been possible for me to visit various institutions to consult the primary, contemporary and other related sources. In fact, I could complete this work because of the financial assistance given by this prestigious body.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not thankfully acknowledge the blessings as well as the help of my parents and in-laws who not only proved helpful rather whenever they found me depressed they encouraged me and boosted my moral to complete the present work.

In the end, I must acknowledge the pains taken by my better half Gurmeet Kaur who being a student of English has gone through the final draft of the present work and also for having given me invaluable suggestions and strength at every stage of this thesis preparation. She too gave me encouragement when I needed it and helped me check the type script. In fact, if any error of typing remains in this work, she shares the responsibility with me. In the end I wish to thank Mr. Ravi Yadav of Patiala for devoting several sleepless nights for typing this thesis. I also can't forget the help given to me by the office in charge of the History Department, S. Paramjeet Singh who was always ready to help me in the official requirements in regard with the present work.

(JASPAL SINGH)

PREFACE

The present study, “Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhik Committee: Working and Achievements (1925-1984)” has been under taken on the advice of my esteemed teachers, Professor Dr. Dalbir Singh Dhillon and Professor Dr. Jaspal Kaur Dhanju- formerly Heads Department of History. We are fully aware that Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee (hereafter SGPC) came into being as a statutory religious body of the Sikhs. This body was constituted in the midst of the Gurdwara reform movement, of course, having strong political moorings at the close of the second decade of the 20th century. It represented the Sikhs who constituted the third segment, of course very important one, of the society in the province of Punjab during the period under review. Initially this institution was constituted for the avowed objective of superintendence as well as the control of the Sikh Gurdwaras (religious institutions of the Sikh community). Earlier these had been under the domination of Mahants, who were the loyalists to the British.

We know it well that the SGPC was constituted on November 15, 1920 A.D. By this time, the condition of the Gurdwaras was quite deplorable, as they had lost religious sanctity due to the corrupt and selfish Mahants, as they were interested in only in their own well being. The Sikhs never wanted their religious institutions to be governed by such elements that were neither sincere nor devoted to the Sikh community and their religion. Therefore, the formation of this body soon gathered importance and became quite prominent among the Sikhs. Though apparently a religious body, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik *Committee* since its birth has been articulating the socio-religious, cultural, economic as well as the political interests of the

Sikhs, because these features of the society can not be divorced from each other. Not merely some of its office bearers and members have been politicians of accomplished and high repute but many of the veteran Sikh political leaders have also been taking keen interest in its affairs and activities related to various walks of life of the Sikh community. Being the supreme custodian of the Sikh Gurdwaras, the SGPC enjoys enormous power and prestige in the State of Punjab, particularly among the Sikh Community and also others in general. Doubtlessly, at present it is considered as the 'mini-Parliament' of the Sikhs.

The SGPC has always remained secular and liberal in its character and approach as well as thinking. It has never hesitated to take stern action against such elements which have tried to harm the interests of the Sikhs, their religion and identity. It has established Sikhs missionary institutions for the training of its preachers. It also runs professional schools and Colleges, numerous workshops, hospitals and dispensaries. It has worked a lot for the emancipation of the women of Sikh community in particular and others in general in Punjab.

Looking to the significance of the existence of this body the present study has proved meaningful and of great worth, if we keep in mind the recent crises related to the identity of the Sikhs. Its working, contribution and achievements have given some definite direction to solve the present problems of socio-religious as well as of politico-economic significance. Moreover, the present work carries special importance, because no serious work so far has been done on the emergence and working of the SGPC in totality, though references to its works and activities can be traced out in some writings related to the Akali Party. Of course, about its formation and initial activities some details are available in its own publications but its contribution and

achievements in the socio-religious, cultural, educational, politico-economic life of the Sikh community in particular and others in general have not been studied analytically so far. More over the SGPC has not kept itself confined to the issues related to the state of Punjab and the Sikh community; rather it feels concerned with all those issues which affect the prosperity and peace of the country.

Not much historical work has appeared on the twentieth century Sikh politics and institutions. Dr. Kailash Gulati's *'Akalis Past and Present'* (1974) is the first serious study of Akalis up to 1974 which shows how with inauguration of the Gurdwara Reform Movement, they had become a force to reckon in Punjab. They found a strong base in Sikh peasantry and transcended their religious limitations but it was only before the 1937 elections that Akali Dal became a political party in the authentic sense of the term, which was whole heartedly supported by the SGPC in its work and programme. The other important works include Teja Singh's *Gurdwara Reform and Sikh Awakening* (1922); Ruchi Ram Sahni's *Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines* (1965); Sohan Singh Josh's *Akali Morchian da Itihas* and Mohinder Singh's *The Akali Movement* (1978). All the works based on primary sources emphasize the anti-imperialistic character of the Sikh struggle. As a prominent communist worker Josh sees the struggle from inside but naturally his work is characterized by his own biases and preferences because of his ideological propensities. Dr. Mohinder Singh by using large hitherto unpublished papers, particularly of Sir Malcolm Hailey has a sound grasp of his material and offers a Marxist interpretation in particular situation such as in his explanation of the class character of the Movement, though the tenor of his argument is anything but Marxist.

The present study is largely based only on evidences given in the primary and contemporary sources related to the present study. Special

mention may be made of the proceedings of the general meetings of the SGPC which have been intensively used in the writing of the present thesis.

During the course of present research work, I have visited National Archive of India, Janpath, New Delhi where I could get large number of primary source material related to the present topic. Home political Record files; Proceedings related to the Punjab Legislative and Assembly Debates; Reports on the Native Newspapers and some individual biographies in the reference section of these prestigious institutions have been consulted and objectively used. I also visited Nehru Memorial Museum Library Teen Murti, New Delhi. There private correspondence of the British officials in the form of micro films has been consulted. I have also consulted in the reference section of this library some transcripts prepared on the basis of the interviews taken by some scholars of the freedom fighters who were directly or indirectly related to the movements of the Sikhs, particularly during the reform movement of the Gurdwaras. In Punjab I have visited various libraries such as library Sikh Studies of Khalsa College; Library SGPC; Library G.N.D.U Sri Amritsar; Desh Bhagat Yadgar Library Jalandhar; Dwarka Dass Library Madhya Marg, Chandigarh; Library Punjab University, Chandigarh; Central Library, Patiala and Bhai Mohan Singh Library (various sections like Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid, Dr. Ganda Singh, etc.), Punjabi University, Patiala. In these libraries I could get number of vernacular Newspapers, Magazines, Journals, books, etc. which throw ample light on the activities and works of the SGPC. A list of these vernacular papers, Journals etc are given in the bibliography of the present work. Even several leaders have been interviewed and their statements as well as versions have been properly utilized. It is equally

important to state that these sources have been studied keeping in view strictly the research methodology of our discipline.

For the treatment of the present subject in the systematic way the thesis has been divided into six chapters. Chapter one furnishes a brief introduction to the condition of the Sikhs during the first quarter of the 20th century and is intended to serve as a background. It also deals with the factors which led to the formation of the SGPC and the resources and institutional framework as well as the organization of its different bodies like the Executive Committee, Gurdwara Management Board, and the Gurdwara Judicial Commission. The second chapter deals with the relations between the British Government and the body in question up to the period of 1947. An attempt has also been made to examine its relation analytically with the Shiromani Akali Dal and also its role in the creation of Punjabi Suba in 1966. Its relations with the Punjab and Central Government's and its attitude towards the political and economic demands of the Sikhs up to 1984 have also been studied analytically. In the third chapter, an effort has been made to explore and examine critically the work done by the SGPC in the socio- economic field especially to awaken and uplift the Sikhs' so that they could demand and fight for their just rights and position in the society from 1925 to 1984. Chapter fourth deals with efforts made by the SGPC to spread education within the state and outside the state in order to uplift the community and make the Sikhs equal to the other individuals of different communities in the country. Chapter five deals with some significant constructive works undertaken by the SGPC for the welfare of the Sikhs in particular and the state of Punjab in general. This chapter clearly shows that the SGPC has not been confined only to the Sikhs; rather it took keen interest in the affairs of the country. For instance, the work done by this body in the rehabilitation of the refugees soon after

the partition of the country and then in the Indo-Chinese War in 1962 and then in two Indo-Pak Wars of 1965 and 1971 is of great value and worth. This goes to its credit, though being a religious body of the one segment of the society in the Punjab, yet it has taken interest in the betterment and uplift of the larger issues as well. The last chapter analyses the work and achievements of the SGPC in general.

Jaspal Singh

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ABSTRACT

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Keywords: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee, Sikh Gurdwaras Act, Gurudwara Reform Movement, Shiromani Akali Dal, Akal Takhat, Punjabi Suba.

The SGPC was constituted on November 15, 1920 A.D. By this time, the condition of the Gurdwaras was quite deplorable, as they had lost religious sanctity due to the corrupt and selfish Mahants, as they were interested in only in their own well being. The Sikhs never wanted their religious institutions to be governed by such elements that were neither sincere nor devoted to the Sikh community and their religion. Therefore, the formation of this body soon gathered importance and became quite prominent among the Sikhs. Though apparently a religious body, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee since its birth has been articulating the socio-religious, cultural, economic as well as the political interests of the Sikhs, because these features of the society can not be divorced from each other. Not merely some of its office bearers and members have been politicians of accomplished and high repute but many of the veteran Sikh political leaders have also been taking keen interest in its affairs and activities related to various walks of life of the Sikh community. Being the supreme custodian of the Sikh Gurdwaras, the SGPC enjoys enormous power and prestige in the State of Punjab, particularly among the Sikh Community and also others in general. Doubtlessly, at present it is considered as the 'mini-Parliament' of the Sikhs.

Looking to the significance of the existence of this body the present study has proved meaningful and of great worth, if we keep in mind the recent crises related to the identity of the Sikhs. Its working,

contribution and achievements have given some definite direction to solve the present problems of socio-religious as well as of politico-economic significance. Moreover, the present work carries special importance, because no serious work so far has been done on the emergence and working of the SGPC in totality, though references to its works and activities can be traced out in some writings related to the Akali Party. Of course, about its formation and initial activities some details are available in its own publications but its contribution and achievements in the socio-religious, cultural, educational, politico-economic life of the Sikh community in particular and others in general have not been studied analytically so far. More over the SGPC has not kept itself confined to the issues related to the state of Punjab and the Sikh community; rather it feels concerned with all those issues which affect the prosperity and peace of the country.

The present study is largely based only on evidences given in the primary and contemporary sources related to the present study. Special mention may be made of the proceedings of the general meetings of the SGPC which have been intensively used in the writing of the present thesis.

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CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee (hereafter SGPC) having strong political moorings, was constituted in the midst of the religious 'reform movement' popularly known as the gurdwara reform movement in the history of Punjab as well as in the history of freedom struggle of the country that was gathering momentum at that time. It is pertinent to mention that the SGPC was actually constituted on November 15, 1920 A.D., as the supreme religious body of the Sikhs. Initially this body was constituted for the avowed purpose of superintendence as well as the control of the Sikh gurdwaras which had been under the domination of mahants,¹ who were assisted by the British. These mahants were rightly called the loyalists to the British Government and administration in the Punjab.

After Ranjit Singh's death, undoubtedly, the internal dissensions among his successors had weakened the Sikh Kingdom. The presence of the British provided an additional negative factor in the situation that made their condition all the more critical and difficult. Even the Hindus and the Muslims too did not feel comfortable and also the same way towards the Sikh community as they used to feel earlier. When the Sikhs were in ascendance several Hindus had embraced Sikhism. However,

¹ The Mughal policy of persecution during the 18th century led the Sikhs to leave their gurdwaras. These were taken over by the *Udasis*. The *Udasis* had faith in Sikhism but they had not accepted the symbols of baptized *Khalsa*. Due to the absence of these symbols they could save themselves from Muslim persecution. Since then the gurdwaras came under their supervision. The head priests of gurdwaras were known as mahants. Vide. Mohinder Singh, *The Akali Movement*, Macmillan, Delhi 1978, p.4.

after the annexation of the Punjab in 1849 they returned to the Hindu fold.²

The condition of the Sikh gurdwaras had almost completely declined. Particularly, during the early twentieth Century they had lost religious as well as socio-cultural sanctity due to the corrupt mahants. They were not only controlling these gurdwaras, but at the same time they proved themselves the well wishers, loyalists and supporters of the British Government in the province of Punjab soon after it was annexed to the British Empire (1849). They had been following that kind of policy because they wanted to keep these gurdwaras under their domination. They never wanted to leave them and for that they wanted the British help. The dominance of the mahants in the affairs of the gurdwaras, and especially their own way of interpretation of the *gurbani* distressed and demoralized the feelings of the Sikhs.³ They started giving a Hindu tint/touch to the Sikh doctrine and beliefs. Even idols found their way not only into the houses of the Sikhs but into the Sikh gurdwaras especially at Harmandir Sahib in Amritsar.⁴ At that time, the Brahmans used to sit and worship their idols of deities in the premises of Harmandir Sahib. It was believed that the Sikhs and the Hindus coming for the pilgrimage bowed their heads before the idols and after that they received charan-pauhal.⁵

² Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, London, 1966, pp. 136-37; K. Antonova, *et al.*, *A History of India*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1979, p. 225; *The Spokesman*, Vol, 29, Numbers 3-4, Annual Number, 1979. pp. 47-50.

³ Teja Singh, *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and The Sikh Awakening*, Jullundur, 1922, p. 34; Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority politics in the Punjab*, Princeton, 1966, p. 234.

⁴ *The Khalsa* (*Gurmukhi Weekly*, Lahore), 25.10.1899 (Hereafter referred to as the *Khalsa*).

⁵ *Ibid.*; J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, London, 1924, p. 340; *Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 1957, pp. 62-63.

Even the *Ahmadiyahs* made several attempts to erode the sacred legacy of the Sikhs. Their leader Ghulam Ahmad came out with the thesis that Guru Nanak was a Muslim and his message was another form of Islam.⁶ The Christians were equally active in this respect. They had established a number of schools and preaching centers in the Punjab after its annexation. A center had been set up by them in one of the “bungas” in the premises of the Harmandir, Amritsar itself.⁷ The Christian missionaries had got so much inspired and encouraged that they openly and freely talked of turning ‘Sri Darbar Sahib’ into a Church. In 1853 Daud Singh was converted to Christianity in Punjab. In the same year Dalip Singh, the last Sikh sovereign, also renounced his religion and embraced Christianity. Prince Harnam Singh, the heir-apparent to the Kapurthala throne too became a Christian; for this he forfeited his claim to the throne. Sadhu Sunder Singh, a Jat of Rampura (Patiala State), too embraced Christianity while studying in the Mission School set up by the Christians in his village. He later on became a great preacher of Christianity. Kesar Singh, a Sikh granthi of Sultanwind, too became an active Christian missionary.⁸ The Christian Church was very rich and accomplished its aims of conversion through pecuniary inducements. The Sikhs from the lower strata of society were easily lured towards this new faith which promised them economic emancipation as well as better status and position.

⁶ H.A. Walter, *Ahmadiya Movement*, Calcutta, 1918, p. 133.

⁷ Ganda Singh, ‘Bhai Vir Singh and His Times’, *Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. VI-II, Patiala, p. 244.

⁸ *The Imperial Gazetteer of India 1908*, XX, pp-291-92; Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, p. 137; E.M. Wherry, *Our Missions in India*, Boston, 1926, pp. 167-69; Parker, Arthur (Mrs), *Sadhu Sunder Singh*, London, 1927, p. 17; Harbans Singh, “The Singh Sabha Anniversary”, *The Sikh Review*, Calcutta, February, 1972.

In 1873, four Sikh students of the Mission School, Amritsar announced in public their eagerness to be converted to Christianity.⁹ These young men were dissuaded from their intended step with great difficulty. At about this time one Sardha Ram Phillauri also made the atmosphere distressing for the Sikhs by making indecent remarks and attacks on their scriptures as well as the Gurus. He was in the Government's pay for writing the 'Sikh History'. In his book '*Sikhan Di Viyatha*' he gave twisted interpretation to the teachings of the Sikh Gurus.¹⁰ All that gave a big jolt to the followers of Sikhism. To consider these matters, some prominent Sikhs convened a meeting in the *Majithia Bunga* at Amritsar.¹¹ As a result of their deliberations, a society or an organization, under the name of Singh Sabha, with Thakur Singh Sandhanwalia as President and Giani Gian Singh as secretary was formed.¹² Among other things, the Singh Sabha undertook: (i) to restore Sikhism to its pristine purity; (ii) edit and publish historical and religious writings and books; (iii) propagate current knowledge, using *Punjabi* as the medium, and to start magazines and newspapers in *Punjabi*; (iv) reform and bring back into the Sikh fold the apostates; and (v) promote and entrust the highly placed Englishmen in, and ensure their association with, the educational programmes of the Sikhs.¹³ Here, it will not be out of place to state that the SGPC soon after it was constituted adopted in its various agendas the said objectives.

The Singh Sabha thus undertook the work of emancipation of the Sikh community at a very critical juncture as their identity had almost

⁹ *Report of the Singh Sabha*, (Aaya Singh, Attar Singh, Santokh Singh and Sadhu Singh), Patiala, 1880, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰ Ganda Singh, *History of the Khalsa College Amritsar*, Amritsar, 1949, p. 2.

¹¹ Among those, who attended, were Baba Sir Khem Singh Bedi, Kanwar Bikram Singh of Kapurthala, Giani Sardul Singh and Giani Gian Singh of Amritsar.

¹² Harbans Singh, *Origins of the Singh Sabha movement*, Patiala, 1973, p. 139.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 139-40.

disappeared. It is worth mentioning that the Sikhs had not even been shown as a separate community in the first Census of the Punjab.¹⁴ The Singh Sabha tried to improve this situation by undertaking to regenerate the moral and socio-religious life of the Sikhs. For this, steps were taken to authenticate the Sikh literature as also to spread education among the Sikhs. In 1885 Gurmat Granth Parcharak Sabha was constituted. It was to propagate the tenets of Sikhism. Research was undertaken to authenticate the contents of Dasam Granth.¹⁵ Giani Gian Singh's '*Panth Parkash*' and Twarikh Guru Khalsa, as well as Pandit Tara Singh Narotam's '*Guru Granth Kosh*' and '*Teerath Sangrah*' were also significant contributions in the form of authentic works towards raising religious literature and that bore the stamp of their identity.

Apart from the Khalsa College, Amritsar, a large number of schools, including those of girls, were established throughout the province.¹⁶ The sponsors of the Chief Khalsa Diwan founded the Sikh Educational Conference in 1908 to assist the cause of the Sikh education.¹⁷

In 1879 another Singh Sabha was formed at Lahore that comprised the middle-class intellectual celebrities as against the Amritsar group which was comprised men from higher strata of society.¹⁸ To coordinate the work of the two Singh Sabhas, i.e. of Lahore and Amritsar a common organization called the Amritsar Khalsa

¹⁴ The Census of 1855: A report published in the *Journal of the Punjab University Historical Society*, Vol. IV, Part II, December, 1935.

¹⁵ Jagjit Singh (Dr), *History of the Singh Sabha (Gurmukhi)*, Amritsar, n.d., p. 15; *The Punjabi Dunya (Gurmukhi Monthly, Patiala)*, January, 1973.

¹⁶ Chief Khalsa Diwan, *Silver Jubilee Book*, Amritsar, 1935, pp. 150-60; Alfred Marvyn Davies, *Sikhs and Their History*, London, 1917, p. 26.

¹⁷ Harbans Singh, *Origins of the Singh Sabha movement*, p. 143.

¹⁸ Gurmukh Singh, Ditt Singh and Jawahar Singh, etc., became the pioneers of this new body. Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, p. 142.

Diwan was founded in 1883,¹⁹ but it did not last long. The Lahore Party was known as the party of whole-hoggers' on account of their radical outlook. All supporters of the reforms gathered around Bhai Gurmukh Singh. They were opposed to the overbearing ways of Baba Khem Singh Bedi who had added his name to the hierarchy of the Sikh *Gurus*. Soon the educated and awakened elements of Sikh community were attracted to the Lahore Singh Sabha.²⁰ It was inevitable that such an organization as Singh Sabha, which had such multifarious activities, should have evolved its own politics as well. These crystallized in the formation of the Chief Khalsa *Diwan*, Amritsar, in 1902. It decided (a) to cultivate loyalty to the crown; (b) to safeguard the Sikh rights vis-à-vis the other communities; and (c) to fight for adequate representation of the Sikhs in the services, particularly the army.²¹ The scope of the Singh Sabha movement was thus widened. Men like Sir Sunder Singh Majithia, Bhai Arjan Singh Bagrian, Bhai Jodh Singh and Sardar Harbans Singh Attari became the members of this body.

The second decade of the twentieth century was loaded with developments that were bound to affect the Sikhs. The First World War was the most significant event. The Ghadrites were active during this period as they thought that they could not command reverence unless and until their own country was freed. Unlike the Ghadrites the Sikhs as a community contributed 80,000 soldiers in the First World War.²² Economic assistance was over and above it. For all these services, however, the Sikhs got no reward. The Act of 1919 recognized the Sikhs

¹⁹ Harbans Singh, *Origins of the Singh Sabha movement*, Patiala, 1973, p. 141.

²⁰ Teja Singh, *Essays in Sikhism*, Lahore, 1944, pp. 132-34.

²¹ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, p. 145; Kahan Singh Nabha, *Gurshabd Ratnakar Mahankosh*, Patiala: Bhasha Vibhag, Reprint 1974, pp. 16-17.

²² Chief Khalsa Diwan File No. 342.54 (Sikh History Research Centre, Khalsa College, Amritsar (Hereafter C.K.D.); for details see, Teja Singh, *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and Sikh Awakening.*, p.122.

as a separate community but did not give them the weightage as a minority which the Muslims had been given where they were in minority.²³ The Rakabganj gurdwara dispute was another cause of strong resentment in the Sikh community; the government demolished the outer wall of the gurdwara to build a road. The Sikhs strongly condemned the government.²⁴ Thus a Morcha had to be waged against the demolition of the gurdwara outer wall by the British.²⁵ The Sikhs strongly denounced this act of the British. The identity of the Sikhs got another set-back when they were ignored both by the Muslim League and the Congress in the Lukhnow Pact of 1916.²⁶ Like others in the province, the Sikhs also did not relish the Jallianwala Bagh holocaust and the abominable Rowlatt Act, 1918.²⁷ Their religious life was still in jeopardy as far as their gurdwaras were concerned. The most important of the Sikh shrines was the Darbar Sahib at Amritsar with its group of dependent shrines. For many years (nearly a period of six decades) the Government exercised a controlling authority and appointed a manager

²³ C.K.D. File No. 342.54, Sikh History Research Centre, Khalsa College, Amritsar, also Partap Singh, Giani, *Gurdwara Sudhar Arthat AkaliLehar*, Amritsar, 1951, p. 81; also see. *Ludhiana Gazetteer* (1888-89), Chapter III-C, p. 72.

²⁴ Teja Singh, *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and Sikh Awakening*, p. 143.

²⁵ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, pp. 196-97; Mehtab Singh, *Punjab Legislative Council Debates*, Vol. I, March 14, 1921, (Lahore: Superintendent, Government Printing Press, 1921), p. 360. Also see Teja Singh, *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and Sikh Awakening*, p. 17.

²⁶ *Punjab Legislative Council Debates*, Vol. I, April 5, 1921 (Lahore: Superintendent, government Printing Press, 1921), pp. 532-33; Narain Singh, *Gurdwara Parbandh Sudhar Lehar (1920-25)*, pp. 193-95; Sohan Singh, *AkaliMorchain da Itihas*, Delhi: Navyug Publishers, 1972, pp. 14-15; Teja Singh, *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and Sikh Awakening*, pp. 85-119; Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Shromani Akali Dal*, Jalandhar n.d. p. 47.

²⁷ Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Shromani Akali Dal*, p. 49; Bhagat Singh, "Gurdwaras Legislation", *The Spokesman*, Vol. 9, No. 13-14 (*Baisakhi* Number, 1950), pp. 23-25.

there.²⁸ They realized that they could be given control over their gurdwaras. But this was not evidence. The mahants, aided and abetted by the Government,²⁹ put spokes into the wheels of the Singh Sabha. They even denounced the Koma Gata Maru and the Sikh heroes, at the Akal Takhat. They went to the extent of honoring General Dyer at Amritsar after the bloody tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh.³⁰ This arrangement became unsatisfactory to the Sikh community due to the possible use of the gurdwaras for political intrigues for many years past ensured a fairly peaceable administration of the shrine. As, however, the manager had usually maintained the *status quo* and countenanced some doubtful practices, the reforming party of the Sikhs had for some years past pressed for the removal of Government control.³¹

The conglomeration of the above circumstances found the Chief Khalsa Diwan totally unfitted to deal with the situation and threw up a new leadership in the form of the Central Sikh League,³² which was formed on 2nd December, 1919 to safeguard the interest of the Sikhs. Its inaugural session passed the following resolution that that league representing the Sikh community expressed the strong conviction that the management and control of the Sikh temples and endowments

²⁸ File No. 942/1922 *Home political Dept.* NAI, File No 459/1922 *Home political*, New Delhi, NAI, New Delhi.

²⁹ K.C. Gulati, *The Akalis Past and Present*, New Delhi, 1974, p. 24; For detail also see, Gainsi Partap Singh, *Akali Lehr da Itihas*, pp. 77-78.

³⁰ Sardul Singh Caveeshar, *Sikh Politics*, Delhi, 1950, p. 189; For details see, J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, London: Macmillan, 1918; K.P. Karunakaran, *Religion and Political Awakening in India*, Meerut: Meenakshi, 1965 and Paul Wallece, "Communalism, Factionalism and National Integration in the Pre-independence Congress Party", in Harbans Singh and N.G. Barrier (eds.) *Punjab Past and Present: Essays in Honour of Dr. Ganda Singh*, Patiala, 1976, pp. 389-405.

³¹ File No. 942/1922 *Home Political Dept.* N.A.I. New Delhi.

³² *The Tribune*, December 10, 1919; Khushwant Singh, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol. 2, p-197.

should no longer be withheld from the community itself, as imperatively called for in the best interests of the endowments and the Sikhs.³³

In the initial stages the League remained under the leadership of moderate Sikhs like Sardar Bahadur Gajan Singh, Captain Gopal Singh Bhagowalia, Ujjal Singh, Rai Sahib Wasakha Singh, Sant Singh (Member, Central Legislature), Gurbakhsh Singh, Amar Singh and Bhai Jodh Singh, etc.³⁴ However, impatience and aggressive attitude of the Sikhs could be vividly noticed in their mood. Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent non-cooperation movement then held greater appeal for them. The Sikhs were then definitely drifting away from the British government and administration. Therefore, a big shift was bound to take place in the Sikh leadership. The moderate Sikh leaders gradually started remaining aloof from this organization.³⁵ The government tried to insulate the Sikhs against the influence of the Indian National Congress vis-à-vis mass non-cooperation movement by offering 33 per cent share of legislature seats and a university for the Sikhs. The release of the Sikhs, arrested in connection with the *Ghadr* movement, was also promised.³⁶ But the Sikhs knew how their leaders, like Sardar Sewaram Singh, Sardar Shivdev Singh, Sardar Sohan Singh and Sardar Ujjal Singh did make desperate efforts for these concessions but unmistakably and miserably failed.³⁷ The Sikhs were, therefore, not taken in by these

³³ *The Tribune*, 14th January, 1920.

³⁴ Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Shromani AkaliDal*, p. 49; Khushwant Singh, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol. 2, p. 138.

³⁵ Khushwant Singh, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol. 2, p. 50; *Report on the Census of British India*, Vol. I, London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883, p. 41; Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Shromani AkaliDal*, p. 49

³⁶ Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Shromani AkaliDal*, p. 170; Harbans Singh and N.G. Barrier (eds.), *Punjab Past and Present: Essays in Honour of Dr. Ganda Singh*, pp. 273-82.

³⁷ C.K.D. File No. 342.54, (Sikh History Research Centre, Khalsa College, Amritsar; Visakha Singh, *Malwa Itihas*, Vol. II, (Kishan Pura Kalan: *Gurmat*

tricky gestures of the British authorities. A section of the Sikh community was at this time feeling very much pained at the unholy alliance between the Government and the mahants which promised only bitter and intractable judicial trials for the Sikhs.³⁸ At this time the Sikhs generally realized the need for still more vigorous and bold leadership which should go farther than the mild resolution-passing methods.³⁹

Baba Kharak Singh was elected as President of the Central Sikh League in October 1920 at Lahore, when its second session was held. Soon a mass agitation was started by the League against the British Government for the liberation of the religious places i.e. gurdwaras. The mass movement which was started to liberate the religious institutions of the Sikh community mingled with the Akali Movement. A Hukamnama was issued from the Akal Takht summoning a general assembly of the Sikhs to meet on 15th November 1920 at Akal Takht for the purpose of electing a representative committee of the Panth to control the Golden Temple and all other gurdwaras.⁴⁰ One delegate from each organization was invited and the conditions were: He must have taken Amrit; he must be a regular learner of the Scriptures; he must possess the five K's; he must be an early riser; and he must give 1/10 Dasuand of his income regularly for the cause and development of Panth. The representation was regulated as follows:

1. Four Takhts-6 representatives from each; (2) Gurdwaras-1 representative from each; (3) Sikh Associations-of 100 representative/ member each;

Parcharak Singh Sabha Ilaqa Tihara, 1954). pp. 239-93. Also see Khushwant Singh, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol. 2, pp. 141-42.

³⁸ Khushwant Singh, *The Sikhs*, London, 1953, p. 193; Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Nationalism in India and the Problem*, Delhi: Heritage, n.d., p. 34.

³⁹ *Ibid.*; Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Shromani Akali Dal*, p. 55; Ajit Singh Sarhadi, *Nationalism in India and the Problem*, p. 34.

⁴⁰ File No 459/11/1922, *Home Political*, NAI, New Delhi.

2.	Khalsa College	Managing Committee, staff and students		
	Amritsar	1	1	2
3.	G.N. College			
	Gujrawal	1	2	2
4.	Akal College			
	Mastuana	1	2	2
5.	High Schools	1	1	1
6.	Middle Schools	1	1	1
7.	Primary Schools	1	1	1
8.	Sikh states	5 each		
9.	Mixed Sikh Cavalries	2 each		
10.	Mixed Sikh Regiment	2 each		
11.	Purely Sikh Cavalries	5 each		
12.	Purely Sikh Regiments	5 each		

13. Nihang Jathas, whose special duty in the past had been the protection of temples 5 each of every 100 members.⁴¹

Two days before the meeting was held the government hastened to constitute a Managing committee, consisting of 36 members, with the help of loyalist Sikhs.⁴² It had already been announced that a meeting would be held on 15th and 16th November where a committee known as ‘Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee’ with the object of ‘controlling the Sikh gurdwaras/ religious institutions would be formed. It would provide for their management all the facilities required and also lines acceptable to the Sikh Panth. Members were elected to represent the Sikh states and Sikh bodies in Burma, Malaya, China and America.⁴³

⁴¹ Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement and Sikh Awakening*, pp.110-111.

⁴² File No. 459/11/1922, *Home Political Department*, NAI, New Delhi.

⁴³ Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement and Sikh Awakening*, p. 111.

Sardar Sundar Singh Majithia, Harbans Singh Attari and Sardar Sunder Singh Ramgarhia were appointed President, Vice President and Secretary respectively, in December 1920.⁴⁴

Soon after, its formation, the SGPC appointed a sub-committee to prepare a *dastur-ul-Amal* (rules and regulations) of the management of the Darbar Sahib and to draft a constitution for itself. According to the SGPC's constitution four-fifths of its members were to be elected by direct vote by the Sikhs from outside Punjab. The remaining one-fifth was to be nominated by the elected members. The elected members were to be returned from territorial constituencies carved out on the basis of the Strength of the Sikh population and 'importance of the Sikhs residing there'. The Sikh States were also given representation on this body from where one-fourth of the members were to be nominated by their Sikh Maharajas. Every baptized Sikh who had attained the age of twenty-one and observed the elementary rules of Sikh conduct was given the right to vote. After adopting this constitution, the SGPC got itself registered as a corporate body on April 30, 1921.⁴⁵

After the new constitution, fresh elections to this body were held in July 1921 and the first popularly elected SGPC came into existence in August.⁴⁶ It wanted to abolish the British influence in religious affairs of the Sikhs. Although the leadership of this body was still dominated by individuals of elite background yet it was not opposed to the mass sentiment of establishing the supremacy of the SGPC over the Sikh gurdwaras. Its President Kharak Singh was known for holding strong anti-British views and attitude, while Sunder Singh Ramgarhia and

⁴⁴ File No 459/11/1922, *Home Department Political*, NAI; Khushwant Singh, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, p- 198.

⁴⁵ For details see Teja Singh, *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening*, pp. 168-70.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 168-70.

Mehtab Singh, the two other eminent leaders, also did not publicly deviate from the popular line to align with the British.

Matters came to head in connection with the shrine at Nankana Sahib gurdwara, one of richest in the Province. Narain Dass, who was a notorious ill-liver, administered it.⁴⁷ He began to recruit a strong force to resist the aggressive Akalis. He was also said to have had a personal interview with Mr. C.M. King, the Commissioner of Lahore Division. The latter gave him a verbal assurance of help in the event of an Akali attack on his shrine.⁴⁸ Mahant fearing an attack was provided a guard and weapons. When on February 20th, 1921 band of about 130 Sikhs suddenly seized the courtyard of the shrine, the gates were shut on them. They were brutally massacred; the bodies being afterwards burnt with Kerosene oil. The excitement caused by this incident was naturally tremendous.⁴⁹ Mahatma Gandhi denounced this violence in these words: “Everything I saw and heard points to a second edition of ‘Dyerism’ more barbarous, more calculated and more fiendish than the Dyerism of Jallianwala Bagh tragedy.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ File No 942/1922 *Home political* NAI, New Delhi; Dr. Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Comiittee Keve Bani*, SGPC publication, Amritsar, 2000, p. 33; Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchain da Itihas*, p-58.

⁴⁸ In the Nankana Sahib case, H.A. Herbert, the Government prosecutor, quoted a letter found in the safe of Mahant Narian Das in which his fellow Mahants exhorted him that in the event of the Akalis coming to take possession of Nankana shrine he should not hesitate to kill and burn them; proceeding quoted in *The Tribune*, 15th September, 1921. The Akali 16th April, 1922, alleged that Mr. King had given a promise of help to Narain Dass after accepting a bribe from him. Also see C.M. King Defamation case cited in File No 179-11/1922, *Home Political*, NAI, New Delhi; the Akalis 15th January 1923. Quoted by him in his personal explanation in the *Punjab Legislative Council debates* 13 March 1921 admits of Mahants interview with him see Mohinder Singh, *The Akali Movement*, p.28.

⁴⁹ File No 942/1922 *Home Political Department*, NAI, New Delhi; *Punjab Legislative council Debates* Government printing Press, Lahore, 1921, Vol. I, 11th March, 1921, p. 304.

⁵⁰ *Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XIX, Ahmedabad, 1971, p. 401.

The Anglo Indian and vernacular press described this tragedy as a disturbance of a sectarian character and horrible crime calling for capital punishment for the mahant.⁵¹ The mahant was at once arrested and troops were moved to the site of the crime, but all the Sikhs, with extremist views, of the province assembled at Nankana. So, for some weeks there was tension in full swing. The Government gave over the administration of the shrine provisionally to a committee of the reforming party. This committee was gradually dissolved, leaving the management in the hands of the SGPC.⁵² When the SGPC took on the management of Golden Temple in November 1920 the Government made no express recognition of its position and the manager appointed by the government remained in possession of the keys of the Temple Treasury (Toshkhana).⁵³ The second aspect of the autonomy goal of the SGPC pertained to the clearance of the gurdwara management of the vestiges of the governmental influence. Though this apex body had come into existence in October 1920, and had afterwards acquired a representative status too, yet the Government was reluctant to transfer the complete charge of the Darbar Sahib, Sri Amritsar to it. The keys of the Golden Temple treasury were still in the custody that had appointed Sarbrah (manager) of the shrine who continued to hold that position effectively.

After the popular elections of the SGPC in July 1921, its executive committee passed a resolution on October 29th, 1921⁵⁴ that the keys of the Golden Temple treasury be transferred to the custody of the

⁵¹ *Punjab Administration Report 1921-22* Lahore, 1923, pp. 280-81; *The Akali*, February 24, 1921.

⁵² File No. 942/1922 *Home political Department*, NAI, New Delhi.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Even 'Moderate' Sikh leader Mehtab Singh criticized the Government for not handing over the keys to the SGPC. See, Report, File No. 459/1-17, *Home Department (Political)* Government of India, 1921, New Delhi, NAI.

SGPC President from that of the Sarbrah.⁵⁵ Consequently, the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar took away the keys from the Sarbrah. He also issued a statement that the SGPC was not a representative body of the Sikhs.⁵⁶ He also added that the keys would be handed over to a more representative organization of the Sikhs when it was constituted. A more loyal person, Captain Bahadur Singh was appointed in place of Sunder Singh Ramgarhia.⁵⁷ The Sikhs reacted sharply against this move of the Government. To assuage their agitated feelings, the Government started holding public meetings especially in the rural areas wherein offered justification for their action. The Akali leaders too began organizing their own meetings to counter the government propaganda. In wake of the conflicting situation that followed all the prominent Akali leaders were arrested under the Seditious Meetings Act. At this, the SGPC called upon all the Sikhs to hold Diwans at different places and at different times to enlighten the masses about the British repression. In a subsequent meeting it also resolved to boycott the visit of the Prince of Wales to India.⁵⁸ The SGPC's step led to the arrest of more Akali leaders. Many of them were later on sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. The Akalis won the sympathies of the vernacular press as well as the Congress leadership. The solidarity and popularity of the Akali Morcha baffled the government.

Realizing that it was loosing its hold on the situation, the Government declared unconditional release of the Akali prisoners. It handed over the keys of the Darbar Sahib to Kharak Singh, the then

⁵⁵ *Akali*, 10th November, 1921.

⁵⁶ File No 459/ 1922 *Home political Department*, NAI, New Delhi.

⁵⁷ Teja Singh, *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and Sikh Awakening*, pp. 348-349.

⁵⁸ File No. 459/1922 *Home Political Department*, NAI, New Delhi.

President of the SGPC, on January 19th, 1922.⁵⁹ At the same time, it also accorded recognition to the SGPC as the representative body of the Sikh community. It entrusted the administration of the shrine to the SGPC. Its struggle for supremacy over the gurdwaras, however, reached its zenith in the Morchas of Guru Ka Bagh and Jaitu.⁶⁰ The former was launched against the recalcitrant mahant of the Guru Ka Bagh⁶¹ gurdwara who had refused to hand over the complete charge of the shrine to the SGPC. As the Government came in open support of the mahant, the Morcha virtually turned against the former.⁶² During the course of the Morchas (from August to November 1922), the Akalis suffered severe physical repression inflicted by the authorities.⁶³ It aroused nation-wide sentiments of the people. Under the pressure of Public opinion and relentlessness on the part of the Akalis, the Government had to concede the SGPC an undisputed right over the gurdwara.

The Jaitu Morcha had a more pronounced political accent than the previous ones. It involved the issue of the British policy towards the local rulers of Punjab. The British authorities in India had made Ripudaman Singh, the Maharaja of Nabha to abdicate in favor of his son

⁵⁹ For details see Mohinder Singh, *The Akali Movement*, p. 46.

⁶⁰ For an elaborate account of these *morchas* see, Sohan Singh Josh, *AkaliMorchian Da Itihas, (Punjabi)*, pp. 135-205; Teja Singh, *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and Sikh Awakening*, pp. 395-442 and Giani Partap Singh, *Akali Lehr Da Itihas, (Punjabi)*, pp.156-273; Ganda Singh, "Punjab's Struggle Against Religious Bigotry and Political Domination through the Ages", *The Spokesman*, Vol. 29, Number 3-4 (Annual Number, 1979), pp. 47-50.

⁶¹ File No. 914/1922, *Home Political Department*, New Delhi, NAI.

⁶² *Ibid.*; Teja Singh, *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and Sikh Awakening*, p.399; Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchian Da Itihas, (Punjabi)*, p.157.

⁶³ *Ibid*, Punjab Legislative Council Debates, 31st October, 1922, 1st November, 1922, pp 434-507. About 5605 Sikhs were arrested in this *Morcha* and 1650 were beaten till they went into unconsciousness.

for his pro-Akali attitude and also for having national leanings.⁶⁴ The SGPC demanded the restoration of the deposed Maharaja and resolved to express its protests by holding-Diwans (religious rallies) at different places in the province.⁶⁵

All through this struggle, especially after the Nankana episode a dialogue had been going on between the Government and the SGPC for a legislative solution of their religious problem. In fact, the latter had been impressing upon the former for an appropriate enactment to legalize its possession of the gurdwaras taken over from the mahants. The government and some of the orthodox Hindus had been trying to protect their interests.⁶⁶ 'The Sikh gurdwaras and Shrine Bill' had 20 sections, each one dealing with specific point. Its object was to obtain information relating to the foundation, past management, rights of succession, titles in property and other essential matters relating to such institutions so as to enable government, the legislature and the public to know on what matters the legislation was necessary to ensure that in future these gurdwaras would spread Sikhism in all parts of the country.

Further, the Commissioner who was to be appointed under this Bill was required to prevent further tension. He was empowered to take

⁶⁴ For Details see, Ruchi Ram Sahni, *Struggle for Reforms in Sikh Shrines*, SGPC, Amritsar, 1964, pp. 197-236 and Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchian Da Itihas*, (Punjabi), pp. 270-413.

⁶⁵ See correspondence between Mahatma Gandhi and the Secretary of the SGPC. Ganda Singh (ed), *Confidential Papers of Gurdwara Reform Movement*, pp. 45-69; D.C. Ellinwood Jr., "An Historical Study of the Punjabi Soldiers in World War I", in Harbans Singh and N.G. Barrier, *Punjab Past and Present: Essays in Honour of Dr. Ganda Singh*, Patiala, 1976, p. 343. Also refer to Michael O' Dwyer, *India As I Know It: 1885-1925*, London, 1925, pp. 418-19; File 180, 1924, *Home Department* (Political), NAI, New Delhi; Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchian Da Itihas*, (Punjabi), p. 14.

⁶⁶ *Punjab Legislative Council debates*, Vol. I (March 14, 1921), pp. 349-72; Teja Singh, *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and The Sikh Awakening*, Jullundur, 1943, p. 91. Also see Khushwant Singh, *The History of the Sikhs*, Vol. 2, p. 144.

possession of gurdwaras and shrines which are notified as disputed. To manage them during the period of their office and at the same time by powers conferred on them to entertain compromises and settlement in respect of particular gurdwaras entered into by disputing parties.⁶⁷ The proposed Bill constituted supreme authority, called Board of Commissioners which consisted of the following:

(i) A non-Sikh to be appointed by the local Government as President; (ii) A Sikh to be appointed by the local Government; (iii) Two Sikhs to be selected by the local Government from a panel of eight to be proposed by majority of the Sikh members of the Legislative Council. Upon any vacancy occurring in the Board, by reason of death, resignation or incapacity, the local Government would by notification was to appoint another person possessing the same qualification. The President would in case of equal votes have second vote, as the casting vote. With the exception of his salary, the salaries of the Commissioners were to be paid from the funds of the gurdwaras under the management of the Board. The tenure of the office for the members was not to exceed two years period.

The SGPC strongly denounced the Bill. It met on 11th April, 1921 at Akal Takht to consider the situation arising out of the introduction of the Bill. It rejected it as a contemptuous piece. Even those members who were known for their moderate views were averse to accepting it. The Akali, an extremist Sikh newspaper flashed a headline to the effect that the SGPC and the Akalis would not to accord their approval to the law like this.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ *Punjab Legislative Debates* 5th April, 1921, p. 53, Secretariat Library, Chandigarh.

⁶⁸ *The Akali*, April, 1921.

On April 5, 1922, the government sent feelers to SGPC to agree to Gurdwara Bill which the Government had drafted. According to this Bill, to discuss the draft proposal of new gurdwara legislation, there would be a tribunal of three Sikhs - One each to be elected by the SGPC and the Sikh Councilors and the third to be nominated by the Government. The tribunal was to have the complete authority of civil litigation in case of disputed gurdwaras and their property. A local committee for each gurdwara was also envisaged.⁶⁹

The government, as the perusal of the draft Bill showed, did not contemplate to pass the control and management of gurdwaras into the hands of SGPC. The reasons for this were not far to make. The Government apprehended that SGPC's control over all the gurdwaras would make it a powerful organization. Moreover, large resources of gurdwaras at its disposal might be used for anti-government activities. Besides, as the SGPC was dominated by the elements which would set in motion the forces that would further strengthen the Indian nationalistic cause by orienting the Sikh attitude to be at once anti-imperialistic and freedom-loving.⁷⁰

Even the SGPC on its part refused to give any consideration to the Bill partly because it was deficient in many respect and partly but more importantly, it looked shabby and undignified that the SGPC should condescend to discuss the Bill while a large number of Sikhs including their leaders were anguishing in jails.⁷¹ However, the Bill did not satisfy the Sikh aspirations much less those of SGPC. The Bill was a temporary measure. Because of this, the Sikhs did not attach much importance to it. Moreover, SGPC's morale had gone very high in the wake of their

⁶⁹ *Sunder Singh Majithia Papers* NMML, New Delhi; Surjit Singh Gandhi, *Perspective on Sikh Legislation*, Delhi, 1993, p. 78.

⁷⁰ File No. 459/11/1922, *Home Department Political*, NAI, New Delhi.

⁷¹ Surjit Singh Gandhi, *Perspective on Sikh Gurdwaras Legislation*, p. 78.

triumphs in the 'Keys Affairs' and subsequently a large measure of success in organizing struggle at Guru-ka-Bagh. Then, they hoped to win fresh victories against the authorities especially when the Indian National Congress and nationalist forces had started supporting their cause. It was not surprising, therefore, that when the Bill was taken up for discussion in the Council, the Bill was vehemently opposed by all the Sikh members, the only Indian Christian member and some enlightened Muslims. One executive Councilor and one Minister thought it better to remain neutral. The government, however, got the measure through with the support of the Muslim and the official members of the Council. Since the SGPC and Sikh MLC's who were to nominate a representative each on the gurdwara tribunal provided by this Bill refused to lend their co-operation, the Bill soon became a dead letter.⁷² An earlier bill that the Government had drafted and circulated for public opinion in 1921 did not meet the aspirations of the SGPC because the bill neither recognized the SGPC nor its control over the Sikh shrines. However, the SGPC initiated a constitutional struggle to oppose that proposed measure, which lasted till 1925. The ever growing magnitude of the Akali agitation, combined with the compulsions of the Jaitu Morcha, however, pressed the Government to change its attitude towards them. Finally, it withdrew the old bill. A fresh move was initiated to draft a new legislation with the cooperation of the Sikh members of the Punjab Legislative Council. After the approval of the SGPC, the bill was enacted as the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925 (Punjab Act VIII of 1925).⁷³

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ For details see, Tek Chand *et al.*, *Commentaries on the Punjab Acts*, Lahore: The University Book Agency, 1940, Vol. II, pp. 2655-2746.

After the role of government for Gurdwara Act, 1925, there came the question of releasing the arrested individuals who had participated in the agitation for Gurdawara Act. The release of gurdwara Movement prisoners, however, created some problems. The release was made conditional on the signing of an undertaking by the prisoners that they would cooperate in implementing the Gurdwara Act.⁷⁴ This condition aroused various comments. It was a very clever move on the government's part. It sowed seeds of dissensions in the Akali ranks which had faced all previous challenges with unique success. One group of leaders led by Sardar Bahadur Mehtab Singh agreed to cooperate and was released.⁷⁵ But quite a large number of them refused to give this humiliating undertaking. The hard core of Sikh leadership in jail did not relent even when Teja Singh Samundari died in jail on September 17th, 1926. At last the Government unconditionally released these prisoners on September 27th, 1926.⁷⁶

Thus the Panth emerged from this struggle victorious, but divided against itself.⁷⁷ The Sardar Bahadur Party was called after the name of Sardar Bahadur Mehtab Singh. It accepted a conditional release of Gurdwara Act, raised the Central Akali Dal parallel to the *Shromani Akali Dal*.⁷⁸ On the eve of the arrival of the Simon Commission in 1927 certain demarcations were visible in the Sikh community. The *Shromani Akali Dal* which was constituted in 1920 to furnish man-power for the gurdwara reform movement was spilt into two factions respectively known as Shiromani Akali Dal and Central Akali Dal. Both of them were primarily concerned with the control and management of Sikh

⁷⁴ Teja Singh, *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and The Sikh Awakening*, p. 91.

⁷⁵ Khushwant Singh, *The Sikhs*, London, 1953, p. 212.

⁷⁶ Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Shromani Akali Dal*, pp. 92-93.

⁷⁷ Harbans Singh, *Sikh Political Parties*, Delhi, 1948, p. 3.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

gurdwaras and were non-political bodies. Religion and politics being closely intermingled in Sikhism, these bodies were already dabbling in politics and there was no guarantee that in the time to come they would not evince more and more interest in Sikh politics.⁷⁹

At that time, Central Sikh League was the leading political organization of the Sikh community, yet it always cared about the instructions and objectives of the SGPC. However, it was faced with a two-fold danger. First, there was a real apprehension that the Shiromani Akali Dal and Central Akali Dal rift would cast its long shadow over the deliberations of the League causing serious damage to its unity and cohesion. Second, it was also feared that the increasing politicization of the two Dals might not hamper. The Socio-religious development of the Sikh Community with this background we have already discussed in the formation of SGPC.

There were some moderate elements such as the Chief Khalsa Diwan. As usual they were very cautious in their approach and generally went with the Government. The Chief Khalsa Diwan had become much discredited but it was not dead. Rather there was a possibility inherent in the situation that the loyalist Sikh lobby might receive accretion of strength from the moderate elements within the Akali ranks. Lastly, Politics in Punjab at the very outset of our period of study was full of clear communal overtone.⁸⁰ The identity of the Sikhs was in jeopardy at the hands of the Christians, Hindus and the Muslims alike. The Sikh Gurdwara Act 1925, as its preamble declared, aimed at providing “for the better administration of certain Sikh gurdwaras and for enquiries into

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Chief Khalsa Diwan, File No. 342.54, Sikh History Research Centre, Khalsa College, Amritsar.

matters and settlement of disputes connected therewith”. The following are the main objectives of the Sikh Gurdwara Act, 1925.

(i) To do away with the permanent position of the mahants, hereditary priests of temples and thus to end their irresponsibility; (ii) To utilize the property and income of the gurdwaras for the purpose for which they were founded and saved it from being wasted in luxurious and immoral living; and (iii) To conduct the rituals and ceremonies according to the teachings of Shri Guru Granth Sahib.

FORMAT OF THE SIKH GURDWARA ACT, 1925: It consisted of 148 sections; it was further divided into three parts and consisted of four schedules. In the first part there were three chapters while the second comprised of one chapter, where as the third part was comprised of eight chapters. It is pertinent to point out that Part I, contained, besides preliminary matters such as title, extent and definitions, references of gurdwaras covered by the Act, procedure for bringing other gurdwaras under its purview as well as appointment and procedures for a gurdwara Tribunal. Interestingly, the definition clause did not define a Sikh gurdwara but a subsequent clause, section 2-10, lays down a “notified Sikh gurdwara” as any gurdwara “declared by notification of the local government under the provision of this Act to be a Sikh gurdwara”.

The Chapter I of this part referred two categories of Sikh gurdwaras—Scheduled and Unscheduled. The important historical Sikh gurdwara, there could be no doubt there being Sikh gurdwaras owned by the Sikhs were listed in the schedule I. Before the partition, there were 241 historical gurdwaras, entered in this schedule, 65 gurdwaras remained in Pakistan. However, 173 gurdwaras within Pepsu were added into it by the Amending Act, 1959. Schedule II, contained the details of institutions which were not “Sikh” gurdwaras about the

control of which no dispute could be raised. In respect of gurdwaras listed in these two schedules or the scheduled gurdwaras as they were called, the State Government issued a notification also detailed the property claimed by each gurdwara.

Part III of the Act provided for a central body; it was to manage the Sikh gurdwaras. The central body was given the name of gurdwara Central Board. It at its first meeting, adopted for itself the name of SGPC. This change was accepted by government; it was notified to a notification dated 17th January 1927. The SGPC directly managed some important Sikh gurdwaras; it supervised the working of the committees of other gurdwaras as well. In fact they were partly nominated by it and partly elected by the electors of the district in which the gurdwara was situated. Under an amendment made in the Act in 1987, all gurdwaras with an annual income of over 25,000 rupees began to be administered directly by the SGPC. According to the amendment, under Act XI of 1944, 12 seats in the SGPC were reserved for Mazhabi and Ramdasia Sikhs; its tenure was increased from 3 to 5 years. Its employees were also made liable to legal action for misuse of official authority (formerly only members of the committee were so liable); plural constituencies for its election were either abolished or replaced by single-member constituencies. Gurdwara Act VIII of 1925 provided for the better administration of some Sikh gurdwaras and also for inquiries into matter and settlement of disputes there with, and where as the previous sanction of the Governor-General was obtained to the passing of this Act.

Its first chapter dealt with the “Board”. It was constituted under the provisions of Part III.⁸¹ Then there was a provision of a “Commission” which meant the Judicial Commission. It was constituted

⁸¹ For details see, Sikh Gurdwara Act VIII of 1925, Punjab government, Lahore, 1925, p. 1. (see appendix I in the end of the thesis).

under the provisions of Part III.⁸² Then it decided to have a ‘Committee’, means a committee of management. It was constituted under the provisions of Part III.⁸³ This act also provided an “Office” which meant any office by virtue of which the holder thereof took part in the management or performance of public worship in a gurdwara or in the management or performance of any ritual or ceremony observed therein. Similarly, there was a provision of “Office holder”. It meant any individual who held an office. It will not be out of place if we define the word Sikh as per the version of Gurdwara Act VIII of 1925. That 'Sikh' means an individual who believes in the Sikh religion and the tenets of Sikh Gurus. If any question arises as to whether any man is, or not to be a Sikh, he would be deemed respectively to be or not to be a Sikh accordingly as he makes or refuses to make in such manner as the Local Government may prescribe the following declaration: ‘I solemnly affirm that I am a Sikh, that I believe in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, that I believe in the Ten Gurus and that I have no other religion’.⁸⁴

It is pertinent to write about the appointment of and proceedings before a Tribunal. To this may also be added constitution and procedure of tribunal for the purposes of the Act.⁸⁵ (1) For the purpose of deciding claims made in accordance with the provisions of this Act the Local Government may from time to time by notification direct the constitution of a tribunal or more tribunals than one and may in like manner direct the dissolution of such tribunal or tribunals;⁸⁶ (2) A tribunal is to be consisted of a President and two other members appointed by notification by the Local Government; (3) The President

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

of a tribunal would be a Judge of High Court and each other member would be-a District Judge or a Subordinate Judge of first class, or a barrister of not less than ten years experience, or a man who has been a pleader of any High Court for an aggregate period of not less then ten years; (4) The members of a tribunal while they continue as such would be paid by the Local Government such remuneration as may from time to time be fixed by the Local Government; they would be deemed to be public servant within the meaning of section (21) of the Indian Penal Code; (5) The Local Government may by notification remove any member of the tribunal: (a) if he refuses to act or in the opinion of the Local Government becomes incapable of acting, or unfit to act, as a member, or (b) if he was absented for more than three consecutive meetings of the tribunal, or (c) if he is an un-discharged insolvent; (6) Whenever a vacancy occurs in a tribunal by reason of removal, resignation or death of a member, the Local Government would by notification appoint a person qualified within the meaning of sub-section (3) to fill the vacancy; (7) A change in the membership of a tribunal under the provisions of sub section-5 or sub-section-6 would not invalidate any matter pending before it, nor would it be essential for a tribunal on account of such change to recommence any enquiry into any matter pending before it for disposal; (8) The Local Government may from time to time appoint such officers and servants as it may deem to be necessary for the due performance of its duties by a tribunal. The officers and servants so appointed would, while they continue as such, be deemed to be public servants within the meaning of section (21) of the Indian Penal Code; (9) A tribunal, for the purpose of deciding any matter that it is empowered to decide under the provisions of this Act, would have the same powers and rights as are vested in a court by the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, and would have

jurisdiction, unlimited as regards value, throughout the Punjab, and would have no jurisdiction over any proceedings other than is expressly vested in it by this Act; (10) Save or otherwise provide in this Act a decree or order of a tribunal that would be executed or otherwise given effect to by the District Court of the district; in that the gurdwara in connection with which the decree or order was passed by the district court to which the tribunal directs that any decree or order would be sent for this purpose, as if the decree or order had been a decree or order passed by such court; (11) The proceedings of a tribunal would, so far as may be, and subject to the provisions of this Act, be conducted in accordance with provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908; and (12) If more tribunals than one are constituted, the local Government may by notifications direct which tribunal may entertain petitions relating to a particular gurdwara or gurdwaras situated in any specified areas, and may at time transfer any proceedings from one tribunal to another as it may deem proper.⁸⁷

It is worth mentioning that no proceedings would be taken by a tribunal unless at least two members are present, provided that notices and summons as may be issued by the President or a member nominated by the President for this purpose. In case of a difference of opinion between the members of a tribunal, the opinion of the majority would prevail; provided that if only two members are present of whom one is the President and if they are not in agreement, the opinion of the President would prevail: and if the President is not present, and the two remaining members are not agreed, the question in dispute would be kept pending until the next meeting of the tribunal at which the President is present; the opinion of the majority, or of the President

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

when only two members are present, would be deemed to be the opinion of the tribunal.⁸⁸

Tribunal is required to dispose the petitions under section 5,6,8,10 and 11 of the Act. Local Government would forward to a tribunal all petitions received by it under the provisions of sections 5,6,8,10, and 11, and the tribunal would dispose of such petitions by order in accordance with the provisions of this Act. Moreover, the forwarding of the petitions would be conclusive proof that the petitions were received by the local Government within the time prescribed in section 5,6,8,10, and 11, as the case may be, and in the case of a petition forwarded by worshippers of a gurdwara under the provisions of section 8, would be conclusive proof that the provisions of section 8 with respect to such worshippers were duly complied with. Similarly power of tribunal to join parties and award costs are clearly mentioned in chapter III of the Act. This way: (a) In disposing of any matter in which it has jurisdiction a tribunal may order any dispute arising there from to be dealt with in one proceeding separately or more such disputes than one to be dealt with in one proceeding and may by public advertisement or otherwise enquire if any person desires to be made a party to any proceeding, and may join in any proceeding any person who it considers ought to be made a party thereto; (b) the tribunal may order any person to submit within a fixed time a statement in writing setting forth the nature of his claim or objection and the grounds thereof; (c) if any person fails to comply with an order passed under the provisions of sub-section (2) and duly notified him, the tribunal may decide the matter in dispute against him, provided that the tribunal may at any time extend the time fixed by its order for the submission of the statement if the person satisfies it that he has sufficient cause for not submitting the statement within the time

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

fixed; and (d) A tribunal may pass any such order as to cost of a proceeding as a court might pass under the provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.⁸⁹

To this may be added: (i) notwithstanding any thing contained in any other law in force, if in any proceedings before a tribunal it is disputed that a gurdwara should or should not be declared to be a Sikh gurdwara, the tribunal would, before inquiring into any other matter in dispute relating to the said gurdwara, decide whether it should or should not be declared a Sikh gurdwara in accordance with the provisions of sub-section-2; (ii) If the tribunal finds that the gurdwara: (a) was established by, or in memory of any of the ten Sikh Gurus, or in commemoration of any incident in the life of any of the ten Sikh Gurus, and is used for public worship by Sikhs; or (b) owing to some tradition connected with one of the Sikh Gurus, is used for public worship predominantly by Sikh; or (c) gurdwara was established for used by the Sikhs for the purpose of public worship and was used for such worship by the Sikhs; or (d) it was established in memory of a Sikh martyr, saint or historical person and was used for public worship by the Sikhs; and (e) gurdwara was established owing to some incident connected with religion was used for public worship predominantly by the Sikhs.⁹⁰

Above all suit for relief claimable by application under this Act, barred notwithstanding anything contained in any Act to the contrary, no suit would be instituted or continued in any court claiming any relief in respect of the management or administration of a notified Sikh gurdwara if such relief might be or might have been claimed in an application made under the provisions of this Part of the act. For the purpose of this Act a Board would be constituted; for every notified Sikh gurdwara a

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

committee of management would also be constituted. A Judicial Commission, in the manner hereinafter provided the management of every notified Sikh gurdwara power and right that it would be administered by the committee constituted. Therefore, the Board and the Commission in accordance with the provisions of this part functioned.⁹¹ To understand clearly the functioning of this part of the Act, Board Management Committee is discussed at length here.

It is equally worth mentioning that the Board was to consist of- 140 elected members; the head ministers of the Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, and the following four Sikh Takhts, namely- Sri Akal Takht Sahib, Amritsar, Sri Takht Kesgarh Sahib, Anandpur, Sri Takht Patna Sahib, Patna, and Sri Takht Huzur Sahib, Hyderabad; twelve members nominated by the Darbars of Indian States specified in sub-section (2); fourteen resident members, in India, of whom not more than five were to be the resident of Punjab, co-opted by the members of the Board as described in its clauses.⁹² Moreover, the members of the Board were elected by the constituencies specified in Schedule IV, and the number of members to be elected by each constituency would be as stated therein against that constituency, provided that the Local Government might, from time to time, and after such consultation with the Board as it considered proper, by notification alter the local limits of any consistency. A person would not be eligible for election as a member of the Board if he was of unsound mind; was an undercharged insolvent; was a Patit; and is a minister of a notified Sikh gurdwara, other than the head minister of the Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, or of one of the four Sikh Takhts specified in clauses (ii) of sub-section (1) of section 43. To this may be added the qualification of nominated members. It was made

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁹² *Ibid.*

clear in chapter VI of the Act that a person would not be nominated or co-opted to be a member of the Board if he was less than twenty one years old; was not a Sikh, was of unsound mind, was an undischarged insolvent; was a patit; was minister of a notified Sikh gurdwara other than the head minister of the Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, or of any of the four Sikh Takhts specified in clause (ii) of sub-section (1) of section 43; and was a paid servant of any notified Sikh gurdwara or of the Board other than a member of the executive committee of the Board.⁹³

Election of members of the Board under the provisions of this Act would be held on date to be fixed by the Local Government. An electoral roll would be prepared in such manner as may be prescribed for every constituency, on which would be entered the names of all individuals entitled to be registered as voters in that constituency. Every man would be entitled to have his name registered on the electoral roll of a constituency for the election of a member or members of the Board who was a resident of that constituency and either was on the electoral roll for the time being in force of men entitled to vote for the election of member to represent a Sikh Government of the Punjab, or was a Sikh more than twenty-one years of age, who got his name registered as a voter in such manner as might be prescribed. Every person registered on the electoral roll for the time being in force for any constituency for the election of a member or members of the Board would be entitled while so registered to vote at an election of a member or members for that constituency, provided that no person would be entitled to vote at an election in more than one constituency.⁹⁴

The members of the Board would hold office for three years from the date of its constitution or until the constitution of a new Board

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

whichever was later. However, when a vacancy occurred in the Board owing to the death or resignation of a member or for any other reason, a new member would be elected, nominated or co-opted, as the manner in which the member whose seat was to be filled was elected or nominated or co-opted.⁹⁵ The first general meeting of the Board would be held at a time not later than one month after the Local Government had notified that it had been constituted, and notice therefore would be given by notification by the Local Government. Annual general meeting of the Board would be held every year. However, meetings of the Board other than the first meeting would be called and for this twenty days notice in writing would be served on every member of the Board in such manners as might be prescribed by bye-laws made by the Board. At the same time, any ten or more members might submit application in writing to the President and demand that a general meeting of the Board be held. If notwithstanding such demand and notice of a meeting was not given within fifteen days, from the date on which the application was received by the President, the applicants might themselves call a meeting to be held at the office of the Board by ten days' notice served in the manner described in section 56.⁹⁶

This Board would have an office in Amritsar for the transaction of not be exercised except by the Board at a meeting at which thirty-one or more members were present. The powers vested by this Act in the Board in general meeting would not be exercised except by the Board at a meeting at which thirty-one or more members were present. The meetings of the Board and the executive committee would be chaired by the President, if the President was absent, the Vice-President would chair; and if neither the President nor the Vice-President was present the

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

members present would elect one of themselves to be the Chairman of the meeting. Except as otherwise provided by this Act or prescribed all questions which came before the Board or its executive committee would be decided by a majority of the votes of the members present and in the case of an equality of votes the Chairman would have a second or casting vote.

There was a provision of the executive committee of the board. The Board would, at its first general meeting, elect by ballot one of its members to be the President and another to be the Vice-President of the Board, to be known as office-bearers of the Board, and would also at the same meeting in like manner elect not less than five and not more than eleven of its members, as the Board might deem fit, to be members of the executive committee of the Board. The office-bearers and members so elected would constitute the executive committee of the Board. If a vacancy occurred in the executive committee, the remaining members of the executive committee might, if the vacancy was that of an office-bearer, appoint one of themselves, or if the vacancy was that of any member other than an office-bearer, nominate any member of the Board temporarily to fill the vacancy until the next following general meeting of the Board, and the Board would at such meeting elect a member of the Board to fill the vacancy. A member of a committee of management would not be eligible for election as a member of the executive committee and if any member of the executive committee at any time became a member of a committee of management he would forthwith cease to be a member of the executive committee. A member of the executive committee might resign his office by giving notice to the President. An office-bearer might resign his office by giving notice to the executive committee; such resignation would affect from the date on which the resignation was accepted by the President or Executive

Committee as the case might be. Any member of the executive committee might receive out of the funds of the Board such salary or other remuneration as might be fixed by the Board in its general meeting. The executive committee of the Board might appoint such servants as it thought to be necessary of the due performance by itself of its duties, and might from time to time determine the number, designations, grades and scales of salary, or other remuneration of such servants, and might at any time fine, reduce, suspend or remove any servant.⁹⁷ There was also provision of Judicial Commission in the Gurdwara Act VIII of 1925. This is discussed at length below:

The Judicial Commission would consist of three members. They would be true Sikhs appointed from time to time as might be necessary by the Local Government. No man would be appointed to be its member unless he (i) was, or, at the time of his retirement or resignation from Government service, was a District Judge or a Subordinate Judge of the first class or of not less than ten years standing, as a lawyer or (ii) was a barrister of not less than ten years' standing, or (iii) was a man who had been a pleader of any High Court of an aggregate period of not less than ten years. Two of its members would be selected by the Local Government out of a list of qualified persons prepared and maintained as described in section 71 of the Act.⁹⁸

For the purpose of the appointment of its members the Board would be soon as might be after its constitution submit a list of the names of seven men nominated by the Board and the Local Government would after being satisfied that they were qualified as required by section 70, provided that if the Board failed to submit a list within ninety days from the constitution of the Board, the Local Government

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

might itself complete a list of qualified men: a person whose name was on the list described in sub-section (7) would be entitled to have his name retained thereon for two years after his nomination had been recorded, provided that the Local Government might at any time remove his name, if it was not satisfied upon a report made by the Board and any enquiry it might see fit to make, that he was incapable of acting as a member of the Commission; if any person whose name was on the list died, or applied to the Board to have his name removed there from, the Board would inform the Local Government and his name would be removed from the list; The local Government would on request being made to it for this purpose by the Board remove from the list the name of any person whose name had been on the list for more than three years, provided that the name of any person would not be so removed while such person was a member of the Commission; When a name had been removed from the list the Board would nominate a qualified person for the purpose of filling the vacancy, and the Local Government would after being satisfied that such person was qualified; and If the Board failed to nominate a person to fill a vacancy as required by sub-section (5) the Local Government might after giving one month's notice of its intention to the Board placed the name of any qualified person on the list to fill the vacancy.⁹⁹

Broadly speaking, if any person who was a member of the Board or of a committee or of both was appointed to be a member of the Commission and accepted the appointment he would forthwith cease to be a member of the Board or committee or of both, as the case might be. Its members, while they continued as such, would receive such remuneration as might be fixed from time to time by the Local Government and would be deemed to be public servants within the

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

meaning of section 24 of the Indian Penal Code. The Local Government might from time to time appoint such officers and servants as it might deem to be necessary for the due performance of its duties by the Commission, and the officers and servants so appointed would, while they continued as such, be deemed to be public servants within the meaning of section 21 of the Indian Penal Code. All expenses arising from its appointment including the remuneration of its members, officers and servants would be defrayed by the Local Government and the Board, the Local Government paying one-third of the whole, provided that the remuneration of the members, officers and servants would be paid wholly in the first instance by the Local Government and the portion thereof payable by the Board would be recovered from the Board after the close of each financial year. Any sum due to the local Government under the provisions of sub-section (1) would, if not recovered within a period of three months after the demand had been made, would become recoverable as arrears of land revenue.¹⁰⁰

Let us now discuss its jurisdiction and procedure: (a) it would for the purpose of deciding any matter which it was empowered to decide under the provisions of this Act had the same powers as were vested in a court by the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 and would have jurisdiction unlimited as regards value throughout the Punjab, and would have no jurisdiction over any proceeding other than was expressly vested in that by this act; (b) a decree or order of the Commission would be evacuated or other wise given effect to by the District Court of the district in which the gurdwara in connection with which the decree or order was passed was situated or by the District Court to which the Commission directed that any decree or order would be sent for that purpose, as if the decree or order had been a decree or order passed by such court; (c) the

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

proceedings of the Commission would, so far as might be and subject to the provisions of this act, be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, and saved as otherwise provided by this Act, all orders of the Commission would be final.¹⁰¹

The commission would have its court and office at such place or places as the Local Government might from time to time fix. If a vacancy occurred in the Commission it would be filled by the appointment made by the Local Government of some other qualified person in the same manner as that in which the person whose seat was too filled was appointed. The local Government might remove any member of the Commission; (i) if he refused to act or become in the opinion of the Local Government incapable of acting or unfit to act as a member, or (ii) if he had absented himself from more than three consecutive meetings of the Commission, or (iii) if it was satisfied after such enquiry as it may deem necessary that he had flagrantly abused his position as a member; or (iv) if he had served as its member for more than three years.¹⁰²

It will not be out of place if election of the President of Commission is also discussed here, briefly. Its members would elect one of themselves to be the President. If its members failed to elect a President by a majority of votes within ten days after its formation, the President might be appointed by the Local Government. No proceedings would be taken by the Commission unless at least two members were present and sitting together, provided that notices and summons might be issued by the President or a member nominated by the resident for this purpose, sitting alone. If the President was not present, the two members present, could decide who of the two would preside

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 51.

and perform the duties of the President.¹⁰³ In case of difference of opinion among the members of the Commission the opinion of the majority would prevail: provided that if only two members were present of whom one was the President and if they were not in agreement with the opinion of the President and if the two remaining members were not agreed, the question in dispute would be kept pending, and the opinion of the majority or of the President when only two members were present would be deemed to be the opinion of the Commission. The costs, charges and expenses of and incidental to any of its proceedings would be in its discretion, and the Commission might in disposing of any proceedings direct that the whole or any part of such expenses would be paid by any party to such proceedings or out of the property or income of the notified Sikh gurdwara to which the proceedings related. The Local Government might at any time, when there was no proceeding pending before it, dissolved the Commission.¹⁰⁴ If it was necessary to decide for the purposes of the constitution of the Board or a committee, under the provision of this Act, whether a person had or had not become a patit, the commission would decide the same.

It was made clear in the IX Chapter of this Act that the Board would establish and maintain a fund to be called the 'General Board Fund', and there would be placed by the credit thereof the sums, namely: (i) all the annual contributions paid by the gurdwaras' Committees to the Board under the provisions of section 107; and (ii) all the fees for copies of accounts and of entries in registers levied by the Board under the provisions of sub-section (2) of section (8) of section 137. No sums other than those specified in sub-section (1) would be placed to the credit of the General Board Fund. The General Board Fund

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

would be applied solely to the payment of expenses lawfully incurred by the Board in the exercise of its powers under the provision of this Act, and the discharge of obligation legally incurred, provided that if after paying such expenses and discharging such obligations any surplus sum remained, such surplus sum, up to the amount of three thousand rupees in any year, that might be spend by the Board on any religious, charitable or educational purpose that it might deem fit. No part of the General Board Fund would be expended upon the administration of any trust fund described in section 111 or 112 upon the object of any such trust fund except in so far as mush expenditure might be permissible under the provisions of sub-section (3).¹⁰⁵ However, if any sum was transferred to the Board by the SGPC, then: (i) any portion thereof held on behalf of a notified Sikh gurdwara would be paid as soon as might be, to the committee of such gurdwara, and any portion held on behalf of any other place of worship as the Local Government might approve; (ii) any portion not required to be paid under the provisions of clause (a) would, in the first place, be used to discharge such debts of the SGPC as might be legally recoverable; and (iii) any portion remaining after the debts of the SGPC had been discharged as required by clause (b) would be set apart for such religious, charitable or educational purposes as the Board in general meeting might determine, provided that any portion not so set apart within one year from the constitution of the first Board would be handed over to the committee described in sub-section (2) of section 85 and would form part of the funds of that committee.

Every sum made over to the Board under the provision of this Act by a committee of a notified Sikh gurdwara or otherwise received by the Board for a specified religious, charitable or educational purpose would be held by the Board as a trust and would be devoted to the purpose

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

specified. Every sum other than a sum specified in, sections 107, 109 or 110 or sub-section (2) of section 114 or sub-section (8) of section 137 would be placed to the credit of a fund to be called the 'General Trust Fund'. Out of that the Board in general meeting might from time to time make allotments for the discharge of any obligations legally incurred in connection therewith or for such religious, charitable or educational purposes as the Board might consider proper or for grants in aid for the maintenance or service of notified Sikh gurdwara. The Board would establish and maintain a separate fund in respect of each trust held in accordance with the provisions of clause (iii) of section 109 or of section 110, and might discharge out of each such fund any obligation legally incurred in connection therewith. Every sum received by the Board in connection with any fund would be placed to the credit of the fund in such Bank as the Board in general meeting might direct.¹⁰⁶ The Board would maintain regular accounts showing receipts on account of and expenditure out of the 'General Board Fund' and separate similar accounts for each fund established under the provisions of section 112 and for General Trust Funds. Any person having interest in a notified Sikh gurdwara would on application being made to the board be furnished with a copy, certified to be correct by the President or other member of the executive committee authorized by the President on this behalf, of the whole or of any specified for the time being in force in Punjab.¹⁰⁷ The accounts described in section 114 would be audited and examined once in a year by such auditor as might time to time be appointed by the Local Government.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p. 68.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

The executive committee would lay before the Board at a general meeting to be held yearly at such time as might be prescribed an estimate of the income and expenditure for the ensuing financial year of the Board and of each separate fund administered by the Board. The Board would in general meeting take into consideration every estimate laid before it by the executive committee, and it would be the discretion of the Board to pass or reject such estimate or to modify or alter that and to pass that as so modified or altered.¹⁰⁹

The Act clearly but at length stated the powers and duties of the Board. It would be the duty of the Board to ensure that every committee dealt with the property and income of the gurdwara or gurdwaras managed by it in accordance with the provisions of this act, and for the fulfillment of this duty and subject to the provisions of, and in addition to the powers conferred upon the Board by, this act, the general superintendence over all committees appointed under the provisions of this Act would vest in the Board. However, the Board would not in any manner interfere with or to have any control over or connection with any place of public worship in the Punjab otherwise than as provided in this Act. It would be competent for the Board to hold and administer trust funds for purposes of a religious, charitable or educational nature, whether such funds were derived from allotments duly made by a committee out of the surplus funds or income of a gurdwara under its management or from donations, or contributions or endowments made direct to the Board for such purposes.¹¹⁰

The Act indicated that the Board in general meeting might at any time call upon its Executive Committee to report upon any matter within the jurisdiction of the Board and might require the Executive Committee

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

to take any such action as lied under the provisions of this Act within the powers of the Board. The Board in any of its meeting might consider and discuss any matter with which it had power under this Act to deal any matter directly connected with the Sikhs, but would not consider or discuss, or pass any resolution or order upon any other matter.¹¹¹

When at any time the committee or the Board was of opinion that for the proper administration of the Property, endowments, funds and income of a notified Sikh gurdwara a scheme should be settled, the Board and the committee would consult together and if they agreed upon a scheme, the scheme would be described in writing and the committee would give effect thereto. If at such consultation the committee and the Board did not agree upon a scheme, the committee or the Board might apply to the Commission. And, the Commission after hearing such members of the committee and of the Board respectively as might be deputed for the purpose by the committee and the Board respectively, and any such other persons as it might consider proper to hear, might itself settle such scheme as it considered just and proper and passed an order giving effect thereto. When at any time the committee and the Board, after consultation together, were of opinion that a scheme settled under the provisions of sub-section one or sub-section two should be in the interests of the proper administration of the property endowments funds and income of the gurdwara be set aside or modified, and the committee as well as the Board were in agreement in respect of the matter, the decision of the Board and the committee would be recorded and effect thereto given by the committee. If the committee or the Board was of opinion that in the interests of the proper administration of the property, endowments, funds or income of a notified Sikh gurdwara as scheme settled under the provisions of sub-

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

section (1) or sub-section (2) should be set aside or modified, and the Board and the committee were not in agreement upon the matter, the committee or Board might apply to the Commission to have the scheme set aside or modified as desired, and the Commission after hearing such members of the committee and of the Board respectively as might be deputed for this purpose by the committee and the Board respectively and any such other persons as it might consider proper to hear, and itself set aside such scheme as that consider just and proper and passed an order giving effect thereto.¹¹²

Nothing contained in section 130 would apply to the committee constituted under the provision of sub-section (1) of section 85. The Board might in general meeting make bye-laws not inconsistent with this Act, regulating its procedure and the fees to be levied under the provisions of sub-section (8) of section 137, provided that the Board would not, without the previous sanction of the Local Government, make any bye-law: (a) prescribing the form in which the budgets of the Board and of committees would be presented; (b) providing for the custody and investment of the funds of the Board and prescribing the procedure by which sanction of the Board might be accorded to the deposit of surplus funds in specified banks; (c) prescribing the qualifications of candidates for membership of the Board and committees; and provided further that no bye-law falling within the purview of clause; (d) would impose any disqualification upon a Sikh only because he is Sehajdhari Sikh. All bye-laws requiring the previous sanction of the Local Government under the provisions of sub-section (I) would, when made, be published in the Gazette.¹¹³

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 78.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

Powers and duties of the committees would enable us to understand their working position and significance. Subject to the provisions of this Act, a committee would have full powers to control over the office holders and dependents of all properties and income of whatever description belonging to the gurdwara or gurdwaras under its management and of enforcing the proper observance of all ceremonies and religious observances in connection with such gurdwara or gurdwaras and of taking all such measures as might be essential to ensure the proper management of the gurdwara or gurdwaras and the efficient administration of the property, income and endowments thereof. The committee might suspend or dismiss any office-holder provided that it would not dismiss a hereditary office-holder or minister: (a) makes persistent default in the submission of budgets, accounts, reports or returns, which is his duty to submit, or (b) willfully disobeys lawful orders issued by the committee, or (c) is guilty of any malfeasance, misfeasance, breach of trust or neglect of duty in respect of a trust, or (d) has misappropriated or improperly dealt with, the properties of the gurdwaras, or (e) is of unsound mind or physically unfit to discharge the function of his office, or (f) is guilty of misconduct of such a character as to render him morally unfit for his office, or (g) fails persistently to perform his duties in connection with the management or performance of public worship or the management or performance of any ritual and ceremony in accordance with the teachings of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, or (h) has ceased to be a Sikh.¹¹⁴

Whenever the dismissal of hereditary office-holder or of minister is ordered, the order would, except when it was based on facts or conclusion established at a judicial trial, or when such office-holder or minister was absconding be preceded by a recorded enquiry, and at such

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

enquiry a definite charge in writing would be framed in respect of each offence and explained to such office-holder or minister; the evidence in support of that charge and any evidence which he might adduce in his defense would be recorded in his presence and his defense would be taken down in writing, and on such of the charges framed a finding would be recorded. A committee might suspend a hereditary office-holder or a minister pending an enquiry into the charges framed against him. Any hereditary office-holder who had been suspended or dismissed might within three months of the date of the order of suspension or dismissal, as the case might be, appeal either to the Board or to the Commission as he might elect, if he decides to appeal to the Board the order of the Board would be final, and if he elects to appeal to the Commission a further appeal would be filed to the High Court from the order of the Commission provided that such appeal would be made within ninety days of the date of the order. Any minister other than a hereditary office-holder who had been suspended or dismissed might within ninety days of the date of the order of suspension or dismissal, as the case may be, appeal to the Board and the order of the Board would be final. When no appeal was preferred against an order of a committee suspending or dismissing a hereditary office-holder or a minister, as the case might be, such order would be final.¹¹⁵

If in the opinion of the Board a hereditary office-holder or a minister of a notified Sikh gurdwara may be dismissed in accordance with the provisions of section 134, the Board may move the committee of such gurdwara to dismiss him, and if the committee does not within one month of being so moved to dismiss such office-holder or minister, the Board may apply to the Commission to order his removal, and if the Commission finds that such office-holder or minister may be so

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

dismissed, it may order his dismissal. When an application has been made to the Commission under the provisions of sub-section (6) the Commission may suspend from office, pending its decision, the person against whom the application has been made. Any hereditary office-holder dismissed under the provisions of sub-section (6) may, within ninety days of the date of the order of dismissal, appeal to the High Court. Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (3) or sub-section (4) when the Board acting as a committee under the provisions of sub-section (5) of section 85 orders the suspensions or dismissal of a hereditary office-holder, an appeal from such order would lie only to the commission with a further appeal to the High Court as provided in sub-section (5), and when the Board acting as such committee orders the suspension or dismissal of a Minister other than a hereditary office-holder the order of the Board would be final and nothing contained in sub-sections (6), (7) or (8) would apply to the Board acting as such committee.¹¹⁶

If after the commencement of this Act any vacancy occurred in an office connected with a notified Sikh gurdwara, whether by reason of death, dismissal or resignation of the office-holder or for any other reason, the committee of the gurdwara might appoint any person who in its opinion is qualified for the office to fill the vacancy, provided that if the last holder of the office was a hereditary office-holder who had not before the vacancy occurred received compensation under the provisions of section 20, and there was a presumptive successor of such last office-holder who desired to be appointed and had not received compensation under the provisions of section 20, the committee would appoint such presumptive successor unless, in its opinion he had not been properly ordained or his moral character was such as to render him unsuitable or

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

his education had not been sufficient to render him fit for appointment. If any presumptive successor claimed to be appointed to fill a vacancy in accordance with the provisions of sub-section (1) and the committee rejected his claim, he might, unless the committee was the Board acting as a committee, under the provisions of sub-section (1) of section 85, within thirty days of the date of such rejection appealed to the Board and the decision of the Board would be final.¹¹⁷

The committee of every notified Sikh gurdwara would as soon as might be, prepared registers, in which would be entered the names of past and present ministers of the gurdwara, and the documents, if any relating thereto; particulars of all immovable properties of the gurdwara, and the documents', if any relating thereto; particulars of the scheme of administration, if any; the names of all officers connected with the gurdwara to which any salary, emolument or perquisite was attached and the nature, with their estimated value; and such other particulars as the Board might direct.¹¹⁸

The registers would be submitted through the committee to the Board within such period after the commencement of this Act as the Board might direct. The Board after checking them might direct that the registers be corrected in such manner appeared to be essential. The registers as approved by the Board would be kept by the committee of the gurdwara to which they related, and copied thereof would be kept by the Board. The committee would cause the entries in the registers to be scrutinized annually and would submit to the Board for its approval a verified statement showing the alterations, omissions or additions required therein. The Board might, after checking the statement, direct such alterations omissions or additions to be made in the registers as it

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

found to be essential. A copy of every order passed under the provisions of sub-section (3) or sub-section (6) would be communicated to the committee and the committee would carry out the alterations, omissions or additions ordered by the Board in the Registers. The President of the Board or any servant authorized by him on his behalf or the President of the committee might grant copies of the registers or of entries therein on payment of such fees at the Board might be bye-law prescribed. Such copies would be certified by the President of the Board or committee, as the case might be, in the manner provided in section 76 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872. Nothing contained in sub-section (2), (3), (4), (6) or (7) or in sub-section (5) with the exception of the provision for the annual scrutiny of entries in registers would apply to the committee constituted under the provisions of sub-section (1) of section 85.

No exchange, sale or mortgage or lease for a term exceeding five years of any immovable property belonging to a notified Sikh gurdwara would be valid unless it was sanctioned by the Committee of the gurdwara and by the Board. A committee of a notified Sikh gurdwara might make regulations, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act or with any rules or bye-laws made there under, to regulate its procedure provided that without the previous sanction of the Board no regulation would be made: (i) authorizing by name or office any person to receive, or sign acknowledgments of the receipt of any money on behalf of the committee, or (ii) prescribing the form in which accounts, returns and reports relating to the management of a gurdwara would be maintained or submitted.¹¹⁹

The committee of a notified Sikh gurdwara might from time to time make regulations for the purpose of determining what portion of the offerings made at or in connection with such gurdwara would be

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

deemed to be the property of the gurdwara and regulating the divisions of such officering or any portion of them between the various officeholders of such gurdwara. If not regulations had been made by a committee under the provisions of sub-section (1) all offerings made at, or in connection with, a notified Sikh gurdwara would be deemed to be the property of such gurdwara.¹²⁰

In the end, it is pertinent to mention that the Act in question has been guiding the constituted bodies of the Sikh community. The Sikh gurdwaras had been managed by the SGPC under the provisions of the Act since its passing in 1925.

¹²⁰

Ibid.

CHAPTER-II

SGPC: POLITICAL DIMENSION AND IMPORTANCE

The relations of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee with the British Government upto 1947, with the Indian National Congress (hereafter INC) and some other political parties; its role in the freedom struggle; its role and contribution during the time of partition; its relations with the Shiromani Akali Dal; its role in the creation of Punjabi suba in 1966; its relations with the Punjab government and also the government at the centre as well as its approach towards the politico-economic issues concerning the Sikhs till 1984 have been taken up in this chapter. It is worth mentioning that these issues occupy an important place in the history of the Sikhs in particular and Punjab in general. Moreover, they realized that their struggle for the liberation of Gurdwaras and the freedom struggle were not antagonistic to each other. These could be waged simultaneously.¹ However, the said Sikhs' movement, though possessing several points of contact with the Non-Cooperation Movement, maintained its separate identity. It was not subordinate to the freedom struggle. This was also accepted by the government. An official report stated:²

'It stands to the credit of SGPC that the Sikh movement was not allowed to come under the control of the Congress and Khilfat workers'.

At another place, the report mentioned:³

¹ Sohan Singh Josh, *Akali Morchaya da Ithihas*, p. 121; K.L. Tuteja, '*Sikh Politics*' Kuruksetra, 1983, p. 50.

² *File No. 459/11/1921*, Home Political, NAI.

³ *Ibid.*

'There is little common between the two movements (Gurdwara reform movement and the Non-Cooperation Movement) beyond hatred of British rule'.

Sir Edward Maclagan, Governor of Punjab, said:⁴

'Though the Akalis spoke of themselves as Non-Cooperators and though the movement has been stimulated by the Non-cooperation Movement....still the Akali movement as a whole has developed in the main on lines of its own and independently of the general Non-Cooperation Movement'.

Unlike the Muslim in Khilafat agitation, the Sikhs did not give the rein of the leadership of their movement to the Congress. Besides, the SGPC followed Non-Cooperation only as a technique; through it they wanted to strengthen and advance Gurdwara reform movement.⁵ Therefore the SGPC kept its programme of Non-Cooperation quite separate from the political oriented programme of Congress. For example, in its initial stage, the SGPC only followed the boycott of liquor and British goods. It commended Panchayats with the 'ostensible purpose of resorting to process of purification.'⁶ It never suggested boycott of courts, schools and titles.⁷ Moreover, this, when the Congress decided to boycott the Prince of Wales' visit in July 1921, the SGPC had only adopted it after the confiscation of keys by the government.⁸

The question was why did the Sikhs keep the identity of their religious struggle separate? Why did they not permit that to become

⁴ *File No. 459/1921*, Home Political, NAI.

⁵ Judith Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics, 1915-1922*, Cambridge, 1972, p. 326.

⁶ Teja Singh, *Gurdwara Reform Movement and Sikh Awakening*, Jullundur, 1922, pp. 337-338; also see the statement of Bawa Harkishan Singh in *Akali Leaders Cases*, pp. 831-884.

⁷ K.L. Tuteja, '*Sikh Politics*' Kuruksetra, 1983, p. 50

⁸ *File No. 459/1921*, Home Political, NAI.

part of the Non-Cooperation Movement? Such a posture looked somewhat paradoxical. The fact was that the Sikh struggle for Gurdwara by its very nature was rooted in religion and was; thus, it circumscribed by the religious moulds. Also, that was largely on account of tactical considerations combined with self assertiveness that the Sikhs did not desire the Gurdwara reform movement to be captured and led by political character to their religious reform movement. They were bound to arouse doubts among the Sikh masses and thereby alienating their sympathy for the cause they were fighting. Again the politicalization of the movement would have provided a handle to the government to crush their movement by branding it as ‘political’.

The SGPC always supported the national leaders and their programmes. It actively participated in the freedom movement it stood determine with the nationalists for the cause of India’s freedom. It firmly opposed and protested against commissions appointed at different times to appease the Indians. As has been discussed in the first chapter; the anti-government character of the Gurdwara reform movement had brought the Sikhs close to the national struggle.

It is to be noticed that the Sikhs were divided on the question whether the Simon Commission should be sided with or not. Nationalist leaders like Amar Singh Jhabhal, Baba Kharak Singh, Mangal Singh, Sardul Singh Caveeshar (SGPC officials) were all for boycotting it.⁹ Sardar Ujjal Singh held that by appointing an all-white Commission the British had over-dependend on the Principal of communalism and disunity.¹⁰ An All Sikh Parties Conference at Amritsar on January 29, 1928 to consider the Sikh attitude to the Simon Commission. About 150 prominent Sikhs from various factions such as the Shromani Akali Dal,

⁹ The Rayat, 29,11, 1927.

¹⁰ *The Mauji*, 21.11.1927. *Punjab Legislative Council Debates*,(hereafter PLCD) 13.11.1928, Vol. XI, No. 14, Lahore, 1928, p. 753.

Central Akali Dal and Central Sikh League including Baba Kharak Singh, President of SGPC, S.B. Mehtab Singh, Sardar Mangal Singh, Sardar Bahadur Ujjal Singh, Harbaksh Singh, Sardar Amar Singh Jhabal, Master Tara Singh, Gyani Sher Singh, and Sardar Buta Singh attended it. The decision to boycott it was confirmed.¹¹

The Commission first visited Lahore on March 10, 1928. Its visit was marked by hostile demonstrations by various political parties at the Lahore railway station. The Congress and the Akalis were prominent among the 30,000 demonstrators on this occasion. Baba Kharak Singh, Amar Singh Jhabal and Sardul Singh Caveeshar of the SGPC were in the forefront. Baba Kharak Singh led the demonstrators.¹² When the Commission visited Lahore for the second time in October, 1928 the story of demonstration against it was repeated.¹³

The Nehru Report came out in August, 1928. It purported to provide a frame work of a Swaraj constitution, recommended that there would be no communal representation in Punjab and Bengal.¹⁴ A meeting representing different Sikh schools of thought was held on 19 September 1928 at Shaheed Missionary College, Amritsar to discuss the Nehru Report. Baba Kharak Singh, the President of SGPC, presided over this meeting. There was a heated discussion on a resolution moved by Master Tara Singh, SGPC Vice-President that the Sikhs would not relinquish their rights in so far as special representation had been allowed to minorities in other provinces. The resolution urged that the Sikhs should be considered as an important minority and given the same consideration in Punjab.¹⁵ The Report revealed that assurances given to the Sikhs by the Congress in their Madras resolution were not fulfilled.

¹¹ *The Akali Te Pardesi*, 18.1.1928; 22.1.1928 and 31.1.1928.

¹² *Akali Te Pardesi*, 14.3.1928; *Sher-i-Punjab*, 18.8.1928.

¹³ *Akali Te Pardesi*, 2.11.1928.

¹⁴ *All Parties Conference: Nehru Report*, p. 123.

¹⁵ Master Tara Singh *Meri Yaad*, Sikh Religious Book Society, Amritsar 1945, p. 101.

No doubt, the Lahore session of the Congress was important because it passed a resolution in favour of Complete Independence; and it also marked the end of the Nehru Report as a whole.

With the lapse of the Nehru Report and assurance given by the Congress the agitated Sikh community was pacified. An all parties Sikh meeting passed a resolution appreciating Gandhi's efforts and those of the Congress to meet the Sikh demands.¹⁶ The gulf had thus been bridged and on 26 January 1930, a large number of Sikhs participated in the Independence Day celebrations.¹⁷ Master Tara Singh appealed to the Sikh councilors to resign their seats in defence to the Congress programme.¹⁸ On 6 March 1930, Gandhi launched the Civil Disobedience Movement. The Congressite Sikh leaders Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Amar Singh Jhabbal and others welcomed it. Jaswant Singh led a Jatha of the Sikhs to break the salt law.¹⁹ However, there was a difference of opinion between Master Tara Singh and Baba Kharak Singh of the SGPC over the question of participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement. Baba Kharak Singh complained that despite Gandhi's assurance of including the saffron colour of the Sikhs in the national flag, it had not been done so far. Therefore, he refused to participate in the Movement till the "Sikh Safforon colour" was included in the flag.²⁰ In this connection resolution had been passed on August 30th 1930, in which it was pleaded that the Sikh safforon colour in the National Flag should be included. But Master Tara Singh did not want to boycott the Civil Disobedience Movement, as he considered it suicidal for the Sikh community to keep itself aloof from the national

¹⁶ *The Tribune*, 14 January 1930.

¹⁷ *The Tribune*, 29 January 1930.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ File No. 210/1/1930, *Home Political*, National Archives of India (NAI).

²⁰ Proceeding of the General Meeting of the SGPC dated June 9, 1930, SGPC Library, Sri Amritsar; *The Tribune*, 15 April 1930. Statement of Baba Kharak Singh.

movement.²¹ Therefore, under his guidance, Shiromani Akali Dal resolved to support the Civil Disobedience Movement. They placed at the disposal of Gandhi the immediate services of 5000 Sikhs.²² Similarly, the Central Sikh League also decided to participate in the Movement. Master Tara Singh was taken as a member of the “War Council” formed by the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee to co-ordinate the Civil Disobedience Movement in Punjab.²³ On Kitchlew’s arrest, Master Tara Singh was appointed “dictator” of this body. While leading Sikh Jatha to help the Pathan Satyagrahis at Peshawar, he was also arrested.²⁴

A large number of Sikhs participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement. Out of 7000 satyagrahis 3000 were Sikhs who were convicted in Punjab.²⁵ Duni Chand, a Congress leader from Punjab, also admitted that the “Sikh community has perhaps sent proportionately the largest number to jails and has made glorious sacrifices.”²⁶ The main cause of the participation of the Sikh peasantry was the depression in prices of agriculture goods and the fast deteriorating agriculture conditions in the province.²⁷ But, it was the news of firing at the Sisganj Gurdwara, Delhi, by the police which gave a new turn to the Civil Disobedience Movement among the Sikhs.²⁸ Montmorency, Governor of Punjab, wrote to Irwin, the Viceroy: “The repercussions of this firing

²¹ Durlabh Singh, *The Valiant Fighter* (Lahore: Hero Publications, 1942), p. 103.

²² *The Tribune*, 10 March 1930; *Ibid.*

²³ Kailash Chander Gulati, *The Akalis: Past and Present*, New Delhi: Ashajaneek Publications, 1974, p. 54; *The Tribune*, 6 May 1930.

²⁴ Master Tara Singh, *Meri Yaad*, Sikh Religion Book Society, Amritsar, 1944, p. 105.

²⁵ *The Tribune*, 10 April 1931.

²⁶ Duni Chand, *The Ulster of India* Lahore: 1936, p. 36.

²⁷ File No. 230/1/1930, *Home Political*, NAI; AICC File No. 40/1931, NMML.

²⁸ Proceeding of the General Meeting of the SGPC dated June 9, 1930, SGPC Library, Sri Amritsar; For details, see *Report on the Firing into the Gurdwara Sisganj*.

at the Sisganj Gurdwara at Delhi on the Sikhs have been very unfortunate. I am afraid it has brought in a lot of extremist Sikhs as a body in the movement. Formerly, we only have to deal with individual Sikh agitating for the independence cause. We shall now have to deal with the whole extreme wing.”²⁹

The SGPC, though the supreme religious body of the Sikhs, immediately launched a campaign of boycott and picketing of foreign cloth shops in protest against firing at Sisganj Gurdwara.³⁰ Although Baba Kharak Singh, President of the SGPC, was anxious to maintain the distinct identity of Sisganj agitation, the latter certainly gave strength to the Civil Disobedience Movement.³¹ It cannot, however, be doubted that the Sikh participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement was limited as well as cautious. It is pertinent to write that the Sikhs as per the instruction of the SGPC did not indulge in violence at all. The loyalist Sikhs formed new bodies like Aman Sabha and Sikh Sudhar Committees to hamper the spread of Civil Disobedience Movement in the Sikh community.³² Another straw came over the question of the “flag” which was used by Baba Kharak Singh and his allies to prevent the Sikhs from joining the Civil disobedience.³³ Even the Sisganj firing which once blazed the sky failed to generate much opposition amongst the Sikh community and gradually lost force.³⁴ Another reason why the Sikhs accepted the Civil Disobedience Movement in low key could be found in their continued obsession with the question of communal representation. The government had long been concerned with the

²⁹ Montmorency to Irwin, *Halifax Papers*, NMML, New Delhi.

³⁰ File No. 11/1&KW/1931, *Home Department Political*, NAI, New Delhi.

³¹ AICC File No. G146/1930, NMML, New Delhi.

³² *The Tribune*, 10 June 1930.

³³ Letter from Santanam to AICC, *The Tribune*, 2 November 1930.

³⁴ *The Tribune*, 11 March 1931.

problem.³⁵ The minority psychosis of the Sikhs naturally impelled them to think more in terms of adequate representation than the bigger issues like the Civil Disobedience Movement.

In the meantime, the Simon Commission submitted its report on June 7, 1930. It unanimously decided to continue the separate electorate and reservation of seats. In Punjab it did not disturb the statutory majority of the Muslims. For Sikhs the commission recommended that ‘their representation cannot be certainly reduced through it would be impossible to concede so large a percentage as 30% without doing injustice to the other communities in the province’.³⁶ As a result, the report was not accepted by the moderate and nor by the extremist Sikhs.³⁷ Ujjal Singh, a moderate Sikh leader, said:³⁸

The report is from all points of view entirely unacceptable. The sooner it is buried and forgotten the better for Indian and for the British government.

The government of India also sent to the Home government in England on September 20, 1930, a dispatch containing its fresh proposal for the future constitutional reforms.³⁹ It recommended ‘a majority of two seats for Muslims over Hindus and Sikhs combined a proportion of 49% seats of the house as a whole’.⁴⁰ For the Sikhs, it only suggested

³⁵ D.A. Low, “Civil Martial Law: The Government of India and the Civil Disobedience Movement, 1930-34”, D.A. Low (ed.), *Congress and the Raj*, (New Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1977), p. 167.

³⁶ Indian Statutory Commission, Report, Vol. II, pp. 60-63.

³⁷ File No. 18/7/1930, Home Political; *The Tribune*, July 3, 8, and 13, 1930.
³⁸ *The Tribune*, July 8, 1930.

³⁹ *Government of India Despatch on Proposals for Constitutional Reforms*, 1930.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*; Under this scheme, the total composition of the Punjab Legislative Council would be as under

Existing Population	Population of Punjab without Ambala Division	
Muslim	55.3%	61.8%
Hindus	31.8%	23.6%
Sikhs	11.1%	1.6%
Others	1.8%	2.0%

18% seats, little less than the existing share of representation.⁴¹ Consequently, the dispatch was also strongly criticized by the Sikhs. The Central Sikh League, Shiromanni Akali Dal and SGPC passed resolutions in condemnation of it.⁴²

The Second Round Table Conference opened in London on 7 September 1931. Gandhi was the sole representative of the Congress. Ujjal Singh and Sampuran Singh represented the Sikhs.⁴³ Like the first Round Table Conference minorities Committees were again appointed.⁴⁴ Gandhi presented the Congress Working Committee's formula, which according to Coupland, was a "reproduction of the scheme of the Nehru Report".⁴⁵ As it was acceptable neither to the Muslims nor to the Sikhs, Gandhi did not press for it.⁴⁶ The Congress position on this question, therefore, was one of the greatest possible accommodations.⁴⁷ Finally, in the absence of any solution of the communal problem, the British government was requested to give its own verdict on the communal question.⁴⁸ On 16 August 1932, Ramsay MacDonald, Prime Minister of England, on behalf of His Majesty's government, announced the Communal Award which retained the separate electorates, and three communities in Punjab were represented as follows:⁴⁹

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *The Tribune*, November 21, 27 and December 27, 1931.

⁴³ As there was a dispute between Master Tara Singh and Giani Sher Singh over the nomination of Sikh representatives for Round Table Conference, the government decided to send those Sikh representatives who attended the *First Round Table Conference*.

⁴⁴ *Proceedings of Minorities Committees*, pp. 1340-1345.

⁴⁵ R. Coupland, *The Indian Problem 1833-1935*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1968, p. 126.

⁴⁶ *Round Conference, Second Session, Proceedings of Minorities Committees*, pp. 1347-1349.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Proceeding of the General Meeting of the SGPC date March 1, 1932, SGPC Library, Sri Amritsar; *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Templewood Papers*, NMML, New Delhi.

	<u>Reservation of Seats</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
General (Hindu)	43+1 to women	27.42%
Muslims	86+2 to women	51.42%
Sikhs	32+1 to women	18.85%

The Muslims thus secured a statutory majority, whereas the Hindus and the Sikhs gained nothing by the Award. The Communal Award was strongly condemned by the Sikhs. It was denounced as a “scrap of paper” which should be buried along with the Simon and Nehru Reports.⁵⁰ The position of the Sikhs, therefore, became very untenable in this arrangement. Sardar Bhag Singh, on behalf of the Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee, came out with the statement that the Khalsa would resist to the last man any attempt to establish a communal Raj in the Punjab. A Council of Action was created to cope with the exigency. It consisted of 17 members. They took a vow before the Holy Granth that they would fight against any communal majority that might be unforced upon the Province.⁵¹

A meeting of Council of Action took place on 29th July, 1932 at Shahdara near Lahore. It decided to create a voluntary army called “Akali Shahidi Fauj” (Akali Martyrs’ Army) of one *lakh*. On July 30th, 1932, over thirty leading Sikh leaders belonging to the SGPC executive committee issued a manifesto commenting on the objection taken by Dr. Mohammad Iqbal on its language. The manifesto read that when the Muslims regarded safeguards essential for their own community, so they should not grudge the same to others. The Sikhs, on the conclusion of a

⁵⁰ File No. 41/4/32, *Home Department Political*, NAI, New Delhi.

⁵¹ *Majithia Papers*, File No. 48 and 154, p. 11; *Mitra Register*, 1932, Vol. II, pp. 340-342.

Diwan on July 31st, 1932, also observed the Sikh Rights Day.⁵² Sardar Ujjal Singh, in his letter to the daily *Tribune*, Lahore, also denounced the Award. However, the Governor wanted to win the sympathy of all sections in order to make him look acceptable to all elements in the Province. On August 4, 1932, he called Sardar Ujjal Singh, Sardar Sampuran Singh, Gyani Sher Singh and Gyani Kartar Singh at Shimla and assured them that he would fight against the Communal Award. This made the Sikhs inclined towards Sir Sikandar and their stand, i.e., their united opposition to the Communal Award became weak.⁵³ The Council of Action denounced this action of the Sikh leaders, in its meeting on August 14, 1932.

The sub-committee of the SGPC met on August 11, 1932. This sub-committee had all the important men like Master Tara Singh, Gyani Kartar Singh, Sir Jogendra Singh, Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia, Raja Sir Daljit Singh, etc. The said Sikh leaders issued a statement on August 17, 1932, from Shimla. Criticizing the Award of the Prime Minister, they held that the Sikhs had lost faith in justice and wisdom of the British Government that did not care for the rightful representation of those who paid 40% of the land revenue. The Punjab Government Fortnightly Report to the Government of India or the fortnight ending August 31, 1932, read that the Award “has been received in the rural areas with apathy and in political circles with dissatisfaction by the Hindus and the Sikhs, and on the whole with disguised satisfaction by the Mohammedans”, to observe September 17, 1932, as Anti-Communal

⁵² *The Akali Te Pardesi*, 31.7.1932; *Mitra Register*, Vol. II, Calcuta, 1930, pp. 342-43; P.G.R., Fortnight ending August 15, 1931, G.O.I., *Home Department Political*, File No. 18/10-32, NAI, New Delhi.

⁵³ *The Tribune*, 6.8.1932; *The Akali Te Pardesi*, 6.8.1932; Tarlok Singh, *Social History of Modern India*, Delhi, 1972, pp. 293-94.

Award Day. It also resolved that the Shromani Akali Dal should recruit Akali Shahidi Fauj.⁵⁴ It was decided that a new body called “Guru Khalsa Darbar”⁵⁵ should be created and entrusted with the task of pioneering the agitation against the Award. On August 31, 1932, the Council of Action appreciated the resignations of Sardar Ujjal Singh and Sardar Sampuran Singh from the RTC and the Advisory Committee. On September 17, 1932, the Sikhs observed Anti-Communal Award Day. They passed resolutions asking the Government to take back the Communal Award, as that decision did the greatest injustice to the Sikhs of the Punjab.⁵⁶ The Hindu and the Sikh members walked out of the Punjab Legislature on November 7, 1932. They pointed out the following defects in the Award:⁵⁷ The Award divided Punjab into various groups and obstructed impartial Government; it established permanent majority of a religious group and gave it more than it asked for. It did not give any weightage to the Sikhs as it had given to minorities in other provinces, and it did not give the Hindus even their due (according to population); it discriminated in the matter of weightage; and in other provinces separate constituencies had been proposed to protect minorities but in the Punjab it was proposed to be done to protect a majority. It was, however, found that the Sikhs though unanimous in rejecting the Award, were not agreed on the form of action to be taken in this respect. The extremists wanted to take to the

⁵⁴ *The Khalsa Te Khalsa Advocate*, 20.8.1932; P.G.R., Fortnight ending August 31, 1932, G.O.I., Home Political, File No. 18/11-32; *The Akali Te Pardesi*, 22.8.1932, and *The Akali*, 21.8.1932.

⁵⁵ Harjinder Singh, Dilgeer, *Shiromani Akali Dal, Jullundur*, n.d., p. 126.

⁵⁶ Proceeding of the General Meeting of the SGPC dated October 30, 1932, SGPC library, Sri Amritsar; *The Akali Te Pardesi*, September 2, 1932; *The Tribune*, September 18, 1932.

⁵⁷ P.L.C.D., Vol. XXII, No. I, Lahore, 1932, p. 65; *The Khalsa Te Khalsa Advocate*, 12.11.1932.

Congress creed and tactics of Civil Disobedience. It was realized that if the Sikhs failed to get the Award modified they should refuse to accept the new constitution.⁵⁸ Baba Kharak Singh impressed upon the Khalsa Darbar not to yield on any point in the coming Unity Conference until the interests of the Sikhs even outside Punjab were also safe.⁵⁹

Gyani Sher Singh, Gyani Kartar Singh, Kartar Singh Cambellpuri of the SGPC and a few representatives of the CKD were all present in this conference. The Conference agreed to give in Punjab 51% seats to the Muslims, 20% to the Sikhs, 27% to the Hindus and the remaining 2% to the rest of the communities. It also agreed to give 30% seats to the Muslims in the Central Legislature as well. It was strange that the Sikhs accepted this absolute majority in favour of the Muslims in Punjab. Gyani Sher Singh even issued a statement to the effect that if the safeguards for the Sikhs were satisfactory they should be prepared to agree to the allotment of 51% representation to the Muslims.⁶⁰ The Sikhs might have agreed to such a thing to give a jerk to the British who thought that the Indian leaders could in no case come out with an agreed solution by conceding 51% representation in favour of the Muslims. It meant status quo for the British so far as the exploitation of the Indians was concerned. Or, the Sikhs might have done it to test the good faith of the Muslims. It could also be said that since the Sikh leaders were busy maneuvering in connection with the coming Gurdwara elections, to be held in April, 1933, they might not have been able to pay full attention

⁵⁸ G.O.I., *Home Department Political*, File No. 41-4/32, NAI, New Delhi Punjab Government letter No. 16789, dated 14th September, 1932.

⁵⁹ *Mitra Register*, 1932, Vol. II, pp. 343-45; *Proceedings of the Bengal Sikh Conference* held at Calcutta on 30.11.1932.

⁶⁰ Harjinder Singh, Dilgeer, *Shiromani Akali Dal, Jallundur*, n.d., p. 127; P.G.R., Fortnight ending 31.12.1932, G.O.I., *Home Department Political*, File No. 18/15-32, NAI, New Delhi.

to this problem.⁶¹ This was pointed out by the Nehru Report and the Communal Award. The Sikhs naturally found themselves nowhere. The Sikh Leaders were sore even with the Congress. Sardar Amar Singh held that that was a betrayal of the Sikhs and it was confirmed by the fact that the Congress went against the Sikhs in the RTC. The Sikhs were deceived.

So, in order to eliminate the statutory majority of Muslims, they started demanding a national government with a complete abolition of communal representation.⁶² But they warned that if the communal representation was retained, the Sikhs must secure 30% seats to protect their interest and also identity.⁶³

The demand for a Sikh Home land for the Sikhs had its genesis in the 1930s when India had become a mosaic land of communalism due to the separate communal electorates. The demand was counter-poise against the demand of the Muslim League and the Congress Party. Indian National Congress demanded complete independence for India whereas at the all India Muslim League conference, in his presidential address, Sir Mohammad Iqbal emphasized upon the formation of the “Moslem State” in the north-west part of India consisting of the Punjab, the N.W.F.P., Sind and Baluchistan.⁶⁴ The Sikh leadership had been highly influenced by these developments in the Muslim League politics. Sardar Ujjal Singh presented a memorandum at the Round Table Conference (1937) demanding the re-organisation of Punjab. The

⁶¹ Proceeding of the SGPC dated June 17, 1933, SGPC Library, Sri Amritsar.

⁶² The nationalist Sikh leaders of the Central Sikh League had strongly advocated the complete abolition of separate representation in the national interests.

⁶³ Resolution of Central Sikh League, *The Tribune*, 11, October 1927.

⁶⁴ Proceeding of the General Meeting of the SGPC dated March 1, 1932; for further details see M.V. Hodson, *The Great Divide*, London: Hutchinson & Co., 1969, pp. 81-82.

memorandum was signed by 64 leading Sikhs, mostly the members of the general assembly of the SGPC. It was on the basis of Pakistan resolution that India was divided into two sovereign states i.e., India and Pakistan in August 1947.⁶⁵

Immediately after passing of the Lahore Resolution, the Sikh politics also moved towards the idea of Sikh home land. The Attari conference of the Akali Dal and SGPC in March 1940 passed a resolution stating its opposition to the demand of Pakistan “tooth and nail”. It further emphasized that the power should be transferred to the one central authority. In case the demand of the Muslim League for separate state was acceded to, the separate state for the Sikhs should also be granted, was the firm demand of the SGPC’s leadership.⁶⁶ In one more meeting of October 26, 1945, S. Ajit Singh presented one more resolution (Gurmata) against the partition of the country. This was an annual meeting of SGPC that deemed it a duty to warn the entire Sikh Panth of the impending danger of the partition. The Muslim League’s increasing demand for Pakistan was highly dangerous to Panthik existence.⁶⁷ While Lord Wavell had announced that the structure of the

⁶⁵ For the Original Draft of the Lahore Resolution see C.H. Philips & Others (ed); *The Evolution of India And Pakistan: 1857-1947, Select Documents*, Vol. IV, London: 1962.

⁶⁶ Proceeding of the General Meeting of the SGPC dated April 3, 1940, February 27, 1943, and October 26, 1945; V.N. Narayanan, “The Crusade For Khalistan”, *Express Magazine*, 1 November 1981, p. 2.

⁶⁷ Although the idea of the creation of a Pakistan in India is a product of the communal propaganda of the Two Nation Theory being carried on by patriot like Lala Lajpat Rai, Professor Hardayal M.A. etc. since 1920-24, but this idea took a practical shape in the minds of the Muslims in 1930-32 after the Muslim League presidential speeches of Dr. Mohd. Iqbal. That he delivered under the cunning policy of the British against setting up *Swaraj* or Republic and to keep away Muslims from Hindus. Therefore, majority of the capitalist Muslims, who were already against freedom started advocating this cause and became champions of Pakistans. To hinder the formation of a national government as a Republic at the departure of the English in the near future, they made a plan for the partition of the country area wise on the basis of majority of principle with the help of Muslim Nawabs, affluent people and

Indian Government would be decided through a constituent assembly after the elections of state assemblies, decks were being cleared for the creation of Pakistan through the statements of a prominent member of the Labour ministry, Sir Stratford Cripps. The Muslim League had already declared to contest elections on the question of Pakistan. The Congress opposition to Pakistan was being toned down through Congress President Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's statement at Sri Nagar and Congress Working Committee's resolution at Poona. The communists were openly supporting Pakistan.⁶⁸ These circumstances had increased the danger of Pakistan's creation. On behalf of the entire Panth, this meeting desired to declare in categorical terms that Sikhs would never accept the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan since the Governmental structure of India was to be decided by the representatives of the members of India's assemblies, the meeting appealed to all the country men to send to the assemblies only those persons who were against the idea of Pakistan so that the country and the Sikh Panth could be saved from this danger.⁶⁹ In the end, the meeting appealed to the entire Panth that in order to stop this danger, every Sikh should be ready to make any sacrifice to save the unity of the country and the Panth from this calamity.⁷⁰ This kind of feeling of the SGPC in particular and the Sikhs in general was not only a great service to the Panth and the country but it was indeed a matter of great significance and credit for which the SGPC could feel proud. Again in March 1946, the SGPC stressed upon the establishment of the separate

the fanatic Mullahs. This scheme was almost certain to materialize on 15th August, 1947 with the partition of the country. Being the earliest inhabitants of Punjab, the Sikhs thought it necessary to pass this *Gurmata* in the committee.

⁶⁸ Gurdwara *Gazettee*, Amritsar, October 1945, p. 41.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*; also see view of the Local Government's on the Recommendations of the Indian Statutory Commission, October-November 1945, pp. 231-232.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*; Council of State Debates, Fourth Session, Vol. II (Delhi 1945), 148, pp. 156-58, NAI, New Delhi.

home-land for the Sikhs. It was on the basis of this, the Sikhs “bluntly rejected the proposal and regarded that the Sikhs were not treated at par with the Muslims under the proposals of the Cabinet Mission.”⁷¹

At the time of the partition of India, the Sikh leadership was approached by the Congress as well as the Muslim League separately to join India or Pakistan. The Maharaja of Patiala, Hardit Singh Malik, Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh had a meeting with Mr. M.A. Jinnah in Delhi. When Mr. Jinnah was asked about the clearer picture about the share of the Sikhs in the cabinet, the Parliament, the judiciary and the armed forces, he promised them to agree whatever the Sikhs desired.⁷² The Sikhs were also encouraged by the British officials like Penderal Moon to join hands with the Muslim League and to decide to link their fate with Pakistan.⁷³ Similarly Shaukat Hyat Khan (Son of Sir Sikander Hyat Khan) also promised that the justice would be “meted out to all freely and equally” and their rights would be fully secured. But Sikhs and their leadership were not prepared to join Pakistan on the basis of the above stated generalities.⁷⁴ In the month of July 1947, the legislators of the Punjab-the Hindu and Sikhs passed a resolution in favour of the partition of the country.⁷⁵ The resolution further stated: ‘In the divided Indian Punjab special constitutional measures are imperative to meet the just aspirations and rights of the Sikhs’.

⁷¹ Proceeding of the General Meeting of the SGPC dated March 9, 1946; J.C. Hadson, *India Census Ethnography: 1901-31*, Lahore, 1931, p. 155; For further details see Penderal Moon, *Divide and Quit* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961), pp. 81-82.

⁷² For further details see Hardit Singh Malik, “*Khalistan: Let us Keep Gur Cool I*”, *Indian Express*, 12 November 1981, p. 6.

⁷³ For further details about the role played by Penderal Moon see, *Divide and Quit*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1961, pp. 84-87.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82. And also see Gopal Singh, “*Khalistan: A Rajinder to Malik Hardit Singh*”, *Indian Express*, 14 November 1981, p. 6.

⁷⁵ Cited in S. Singh, “*Khalistan: the Politics of Passion*”; *Hindustan Times*, Sunday Magazine, 4 October 1981, p. 1.

Formation of Punjabi suba: Punjab, immediately after the partition, was faced with a number of problems. The SGPC and also the *Akali* party extended its whole-hearted support to the Congress in all political matters.⁷⁶ In fact, Master Tara Singh gave a rebuff to the Pakistan propaganda that there was a demand for a Sikh state in the following words: “The bogey of the Sikh state in the East Punjab, is being conjured up by the Pakistan propaganda machine in order to create ill will and dissensions between the Hindus and the Sikhs. The Hindus and the Sikhs will rise and fall together. Their fates were inextricably linked”.⁷⁷ However, the demand for a Punjabi speaking state was made in February 1948. Master Tara Singh denounced the Government of India’s policy of not referring the question of demarcation of boundaries of Punjab to a Commission. Changing drastically his earlier stance, he observed, “We have a culture different from the Hindus. Our culture is Gurmukhi culture and our literature is also in the Gurmukhi script.” He added. “We want to have a province where we can safeguard our culture and our traditions.”⁷⁸ *The Tribune* in its issue of November 12, 1949, wrote, “Why the Sikhs should show such a dread of the so-called Hindu majority in Punjab, when they are ready to accept the Hindu majority at the Centre which has a far greater power than the provinces, we don’t know? The logic of the communal fanatic defies rational understanding. He is so desperately keen on promoting his own claims and he forgets that other interests and claims are to be reckoned with.”⁷⁹ It was then

⁷⁶ *The Statesman*, 2 December, 1947.

⁷⁷ *The Hindustan Times*, 21 September, 1947.

⁷⁸ *Akali Patrika*, 11 October, 1949.

⁷⁹ *The Tribune*, 12 November, 1949.

and thereafter that the Congress openly started opposing a linguistic state in Punjab.⁸⁰

Amarjeet Singh Ahluwalia, Gursewak Singh and Tarlochan Singh in a meeting interrupted him during his speech by shouting slogans, “Le Ke Rahenge Punjabi suba.” Nehru declared, “I will not allow India to be divided again. I will not allow any further trouble. If there is any trouble in any part of India, I would put it down with all my strength.”⁸¹ But, after many ups and downs the State Reorganisation Commission was set up. It had three members with Syed Fazil Ali as Chairman and H.N. Kunjru and K.M. Pannikar as members. The Akali Dal under the guidance of SGPC leadership submitted memorandum urging the formation of a Punjabi speaking state. It urged the formation of Punjabi suba by merging the Punjabi speaking areas of Punjab, Pepsu and Rajasthan on the basis of language.⁸² The efforts to achieve their end were stepped up by all the political parties, with a view to check the popular upsurge and maintain peaceful conditions. Meanwhile the Punjab government imposed ban on shouting of slogans including that of “Punjabi suba”. It threatened direct action-‘morcha’. But the Government of India declared that it was prepared to meet the challenge.⁸³ On May 10, Master Tara Singh led out the first batch of 10 volunteers in defiance of the ban.⁸⁴ The climax was reached on 4 July, 1955 when the police raided certain buildings attached to the Golden Temple in a bid to flush out the so-called aiders and abettors of the

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 209-10.

⁸¹ A.S. Sarhadi: *Punjabi Suba*, Delhi, 1970, p. 221.

⁸² Devinder Pal Sandhu, *Sikhs in Indian Politics: Study of a minority*, New Delhi, 1992, pp 91-92.

⁸³ Satya M. Rai, *Revolutionary Terrorist Movement in the Punjab, Teaching Politics*, Vol. IV, Delhi, 1976, p. 291.

⁸⁴ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1983, p. 321.

movement from their sanctuaries.’⁸⁵ Later the police teargassed a crowd pressing close to the precincts of the shrine. It was complained by the SGPC authorities that some shells had landed inside the parkarma. The Sikh community took umbrage at the police action and charged it with interference in the religious affairs of the community. SGPC passed a resolution against the police action on Harmander Sahib.⁸⁶ The charge against the Chief Minister was that he had pampered them. So he offered his resignation to Pt. Nehru and it was accepted.⁸⁷

At the Punjabi suba conference held in Chandigarh, Master Tara Singh disclosed his intention of launching a mass movement on a vast scale. In preparation, a silent procession was to be taken out in Delhi on March 5, 1959. The government acted swiftly and took him into custody. The Delhi march did take place with Sikhs participating from all over the country and also from all sections of the community. The procession ended in a religious ‘Diwan’ at Gurdwara Rakab Ganj. Within a week, Master Tara Singh was released from Jail.⁸⁸ Soon after, he declared that he would contest the SGPC’s President Election of 1960. The following resolution was passed proposed by Harnam Singh, retired Judge of the High Court, and seconded by Gurnam Singh and the retired Judge of the High Court, later the Chief Minister of the Punjab, who had just entered active politics:

"This meeting has given anxious consideration to the permutation of the 26 members' language committee to consider the ways and means

⁸⁵ K.C. Gulati, *The Akalis: Past of Present*, Ashjanak Publication, New Delhi, 1974, p. 163.

⁸⁶ Proceeding of SGPC dated 16-10-1955; also Ashok, *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee the Daa Panjah Salah Ithihas*, p. 281.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1983, p. 328.

to solve the linguistic disputes, but after consideration of the whole matter, the committee records:

- (a) That the committee is being organised to unsettle the formula settled several years ago;
- (b) The committee has been formed in utter contravention of the statutory provision formulated in November, 1956;
- (c) That the recommendations of the Good Relations committee (two man committee) had already been rejected by the Shiromani Akali Dal, SGPC and the Chief Khalsa Dewan.

"This being the position, no useful purpose will be served by considering and reconsidering the report that has already been rejected by the Sikhs. The only solution of the linguistic trouble of the Punjab is to bifurcate/ divide the Punjab on the basis of Punjabi and Hindi.

"In these circumstances, the SGPC does not feel justified in participating in the Language committee set up by the Punjab Government.⁸⁹ The Congress nominees in the 1960 election were fielded under the banner of a Sadh Sangat Board.⁹⁰ Shiromani Akali Dal secured 132 seats out of 139. The Board secured 4 seats only, while the pro-communist Desh got only one. Master Tara Singh was elected President of the SGPC for the purpose to achieve its goal. The SGPC boycotted the 26 members committee appointed by the government to consider the language issue.⁹¹

To launch a morcha for the Punjabi suba, it became necessary for the leadership of the Sikhs to first break away from the Congress. The working Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal directed its legislators

⁸⁹ A.S. Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba*, pp.319-320; proceeding of the SGPC date 7-3-1960, S.S. Ashok, p-313.

⁹⁰ K.C. Gulati, *The Akalis: Past of Present*, Ashajanak Publication, New Delhi, 1974, p. 169.

⁹¹ A.S. Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba*, Delhi, 1970, p.318-319.

to resign, but only five of them accepted this directive.⁹² On 30 April, Master Tara Singh announced his intention to march to Delhi. He was going with the avowed object of leading a procession to press for the formation of a Punjabi suba. But he was arrested on 21 May along with five Sikh legislators who had resigned from the Congress party.⁹³ Then a reign of terror was created throughout the state. Despite all this the Shiromani Akali Dal stuck to its programme of sending a 'Jatha' of 11 men to Delhi without Master Tara Singh.⁹⁴ It was opening a war on two fronts. Its volunteers were going to court arrest both in Delhi and Amritsar simultaneously. The movement gained momentum as the time lapsed. Every day Jathas would come out of the precincts of the Darbar Sahib, peacefully and courted arrest. The routine courting of arrest at Amritsar was 21 daily, whereas it was 11 at Delhi. Even government admitted that 26,000 Sikhs were arrested headed by Master Tara Singh, President of the SGPC. In his absence, Sant Fateh Singh, the then Senior Vice President of Shiromani Akali Dal took over as dictator of the 'morcha'. He was then a non-entity, but rose in power and stature in no time. Because of his advisers and admired techniques, he began to clear the position regarding the nature of the Punjabi suba demand.⁹⁵ He stated, "We are not concerned with percentages; that we want the Punjabi suba to comprise the areas where Punjabi language is spoken; that it is immaterial whether the Sikhs are in majority or minority in such an area." On 29 October, 1960, Sant Fateh Singh wrote a letter to Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru drawing his attention to the large scale arrest of the Sikhs on fake charges suppression of the entire Sikh press and reign of terror let loose by the government. In a firm reply, the latter made it

⁹² J.S. Grewal, *The Akalis: Short History*, Chandigarh, 1966, p. 129.

⁹³ K.C. Gulati, *The Akalis: Past of Present*, Ashajanak Publication, New Delhi, 1974, p. 169.

⁹⁴ A.S. Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba*, Delhi, 1970, p. 326.

⁹⁵ A.S. Narang, *Storm over the Satluj in Akali Politics*, New Delhi, 1983, p. 154.

clear to him that there could be no Punjabi suba. On this Sant Fateh Singh announced his decision to go on to fast-unto-death on 18 December, 1960, for the achievement of Punjabi suba.⁹⁶ Sant Fateh Singh began his fast-unto-death on the schedule date in the presence of a huge gathering. Pt. Nehru made a personal appeal to him to give up his fast. He also invited him for talks to Delhi.⁹⁷ Later, on 8 January, 1961, the Prime Minister Nehru said: “.....but essentially Punjabi is the dominant language and should be encouraged in every way. Now I add one word to this because Master Tara Singh mentioned it to me about Sant Fateh Singh’s having an oath and he should not be asked to break it. I do not like asking any person to break a solemn oath, but I am convinced that what I have said and what I am stating today and the fact that I have placed before the country with regard to the Punjabi language, clearly meets the substance of what Sant Fateh Singh said. Oaths are not taken with regard to some legal aspect or statutory ways of looking at things, but about the substance of things. And therefore what I have stated should be quite enough for Sant Fateh Singh to meet this difficulty and give up his fast”.⁹⁸

SGPC’s Working Committee had a brief meeting near the venue of the fast. It requested Sant Fateh Singh to give up his fast as the working committee was satisfied with the statement of the Prime Minister. So he agreed.⁹⁹ After breaking his fast he met the Prime Minister at Delhi on 8 February, 1961. During these negotiations, Sant Fateh Singh emphasized the linguistic basis that made Pt. Nehru more considerate

⁹⁶ Gulshan Rai, *Formation of Haryana*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1987, p. 99.

⁹⁷ Gulshan Rai, *Formation of Haryana*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1987, p. p. 99.

⁹⁸ A.S. Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba*, Delhi, 1970, p. 343-344.

⁹⁹ Gulshan Rai, *Formation of Haryana*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1987, p. 100.

than he had been before.¹⁰⁰ There were two more rounds of talks, one on March 1, 1961 and the second on 12 May, 1961. The negotiations with the government did not bear any fruit. In sheer exasperation, Master Tara Singh undertook to fast-unto-death unless the Punjabi suba was conceded. He began his fast on August 15, 1961 in the ‘sanctuary’ of the Golden Temple. The government refused to yield. After 43 days without food, the old warrior’s spirit was broken and he gave up the self-imposed ordeal. He saved his life but killed his political career.

Sant Fateh Singh met the Prime Minister on February 7, 1963 and presented cheque of Rs. 50,000 on behalf of the SGPc as its contribution to the National Defence Fund.¹⁰¹ Speaking at a conference on February 16, 1963, Sant Fateh Singh said, “Our immediate objective is to drive out Chinese. The movement for the formation of Punjabi suba *has* been slowed down, as it is a domestic problem. This demand will not be pressed during the emergency. We will again take up the issue after the Chinese are driven out.”¹⁰² On the other hand, Partap Singh Kairon, who had checkmated the Punjabi suba movement to a large extent, had to face an enquiry on charges of corruption.¹⁰³ Early a deputation of the joint opposition Sant Akali Dal legislators had given a memorial to the President, Radha Krishnan, enumerating 32 charges of corruption, nepotism and favoritism against the Chief Minister. On 22 October, 1963, the Prime Minister had recommended to the President to have an inquiry made by some high authority into the charges leveled against the Chief Minister.¹⁰⁴ Finally, on the recommendation of the S.R. Dass Commission, Kairon was left with no alternative but to resign from

¹⁰⁰ R. Brass Paul, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (1974), p. 321.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Satya M. Rai, *Revolutionary Terrorist Movement in the Punjab, Teaching Politics*, Vol. IV, Delhi, 1976, p. 390.

¹⁰⁴ A.S. Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba*, Delhi, 1970, p. 394-95.

office. Ram Kishan succeeded him.¹⁰⁵ His departure from the political scene was a major event in Punjab politics, He was the one who had not given way or surrendered despite the tremendous sacrifices, which the Sikhs had made for the attainment of Punjabi suba.¹⁰⁶ Then Sant had two meetings with Shastri Ji on 7 and 8 August, 1965. Home Minister Gulzari Lal Nanda and Home Secretary L.P. Singh were present at these talks. The Sant made clear that his patience had been exhausted and unless the 'justice' to the Sikhs by the centre denying them Punjabi speaking state was quickly righted the Sikhs would be forced to resort to direct action.¹⁰⁷ Shastri assured him that he would do everything possible to remove the sense of grievances from their minds. A similar statement was made by Gulzari Lal Nanda, the then Home Minister of India. But on 16 August, 1965, Sant declared that he would begin his fast-unto-death on 10 September, 1965 and immolate himself on 25 September exactly at 9 a.m.¹⁰⁸ However, in view of the armed conflict with Pakistan, Sant Fateh Singh decided on 9 September to postpone his fast.

The cease-fire took place on September 26, 1965 on the intervention of the Security Council; Soviet Union and U.S.A Soon after the Government of India appointed a Cabinet Committee and a Parliamentary sub-committee for the fresh examination of the Punabi Suba issue.¹⁰⁹ The Cabinet committee consisted of Indira Gandhi (the then Information and Broadcasting Minister) Y.B. Chavan (the then Defence Minister) and Mahavir Tyagi (the then Rehabilitation Minister), would from time to time, advise the Parliamentary Committee to be set

¹⁰⁵ K.C. Gulati, *The Akalis: Past of Present*, Shamsheer Singh Ashok, *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee Daa Panjah Salah Ithihas*, p. 180.

¹⁰⁶ A.S. Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba*, Delhi, 1970, p. 398.

¹⁰⁷ K.C. Gulati, *The Akalis: Past of Present*, New Delhi, 1974, p. 180.

¹⁰⁸ K.C. Gulati, *The Akalis: Past of Present*, New Delhi, 1974, p. 180-81.

¹⁰⁹ A.S. Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba*, Delhi, 1970, pp. 416-17.

up with Hukam Singh, Speaker, as its President.¹¹⁰ How Punjabi could be denied the benefit of the very national principle, while the people of other states were already enjoying the right to have life and work under their own linguistic state”.¹¹¹ Y.B. Chavan being conscious of the Sikhs unqualified support in Indo-Pak war supported Kamraj and he observed, “A decision on the demand for a Punjabi state would not be delayed because of the geographical position of Punjab.”¹¹² Besides, Sant Fateh Singh opposed Master Tara Singh’s demand for independent Sikh State or for self-determined political status of the Sikhs. He also remarked “Our demand has been a Punjabi suba as part of India. Bharat is my country and each particle of this land is sacred to me. How can we leave our home?”¹¹³ A resolution was passed to recognize the sacrifices made by numerous Sikhs in the struggle for achieving for Punjabi suba. Almost all the members present in the meeting not only admired their contribution rather they also highlighted their dedication and devotion to the cause of the achieving the goal i.e. the Punjabi suba.¹¹⁴

The Parliamentary Committee submitted its report on 18 March, 1966. It recommended that the Punjabi speaking region be constituted into a unilingual Punjabi State, the Hindi-speaking region be formed into Haryana State and the hill areas of the erstwhile Punjab be merged with Himachal Pradesh. The recommendation was officially accepted on 21 March, 1966 by the Government of India. A Punjab Boundary Commission under the Chairmanship of Justice J.C. Shah with Subimal

¹¹⁰ Gulshan Rai, *Formation of Haryana*, Delhi, 1987, p. 120.

¹¹¹ P.C. Joshi, “*Triumph of a Just Cause Punjabi Suba: A Symposium*”, National Book Club, New Delhi, n.d., p. 82.

¹¹² *The Hindustan Times*, 10 March, 1966.

¹¹³ A.S. Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba*, Delhi, 1970, p. 449.

¹¹⁴ Proceeding of the general meeting of the SGPC held on 20h March 1966; also coated by Shamsheer Singh Ashok, *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee Daa Panjah Sala Ithisas*.

Datt and M.M. Philip as members was constituted.¹¹⁵ The Commission submitted its report on the division of Punjab to the Central Government on 31st May, 1966. It reorganized the state by giving Hindi speaking area to Haryana, Punjabi speaking area to reorganized Punjab and hill areas (including Kangra and Shimla districts) to Himachal Pradesh. After minor modifications, the Shah Commission report was introduced as 'Punjab Reorganization Bill' (1966) and was approved by both houses of the Parliament in September, 1966.¹¹⁶ On 18 September, 1966, received the President's assent and Punjab was divided once again, this time into three parts.

The SGPC leadership reacted sharply; it put pressure on the Union Government for the inclusion of Bhakra Dam, Punjabi speaking areas Chandigarh in Punjab. The Sikh leader Sant Fetej Singh issued a statement warning that the Government would be responsible for the consequences that might follow if Chandigarh went to Haryana.¹¹⁷ Leadership of the SGPC held that Punjab was the jeweled crown of India at one time and its boundaries extended from Peshawar right up to gates of Mathura. Those who had the good fortune of seeing the glory of Punjab had very sad day when it was cut down to eleven districts. The partition of the county in 1947 had already crippled Punjab. It limped on to resecure place of honour in the country. The 1966 partition impaired it beyond repair for all times to come. What has been the gain, only

¹¹⁵ Satya M. Rai, *Revolutionary Terrorist Movement in the Punjab, Teaching Politics*, Vol. IV, Delhi, 1976, p. 311.

¹¹⁶ Satya M. Rai, *Revolutionary Terrorist Movement in the Punjab, Teaching Politics*, Vol. IV, Delhi, 1976 p. 312.

¹¹⁷ *The Statesman*, 10 June, 1966; for further details also see the proceedings of the general meeting of the SGPC dated November 18, 1966.

sentimental victory of the Akali Dal that they got a Punjabi suba with a majority of the Sikh population? In fact, many people, even from amongst the Sikhs and particularly those who did not see eye to eye with Sant Feteah Singh pointed it as a Punjabi Subi (feminine gender of Suba).

The reorganization of Punjab into two states, i.e., Haryana and the Punjabi suba, was the triumph for the Akali Dal, in fact the SGPC which was looking after the administration of the Gurdwara s. However, the formation of the Punjabi suba did not satisfy the Sikhs because all the Punjabi speaking areas had not been included in it. Moreover, Chandigarh was also kept outside it. It was made a joint capital of Haryana and Punjabi suba. Darshan Singh Pheruman had a fast unto death (August-October 1969). He scarified his life for the inclusion of Chandigarh into the Punjabi suba after 74 days of fast. Realizing the gravity of the issue in January 1970, Mrs. Indira Gandhi announced that Chandigarh would be given to Punjab and a part of Fazilka *Tehsil* and Abohar to Haryana. This award was to be implemented by January 1975. The decision of course remains till day unimplemented. However, this decision was also resented by the Sikhs because Fazilka and Abohar are not contiguous areas to Haryana. Therefore, a corridor would have to be given to Haryana.¹¹⁸

This analysis speaks plainly the role played by the Congress Party. It caused the frustration among the Sikhs as well as other political parties elsewhere in other provinces which laid emphasis the state autonomy. It was this background which led the Sikh leadership to adopt the controversial Resolution at Anandpur Sahib-popularly known as the 'Anandpur Resolution', 1973. The Anandpur Sahib Resolution

¹¹⁸ S. Singh, Dangerous apathy to *Khalistan*". *Patriot*, 1 April 1981, R. No. 14, p. 3.

(1973) was the mile stone in the Sikh politics. It was being considered to be Sikhs 'Magna Carta'. It demanded that:¹¹⁹ "The authority of the Centre should be confined to the defence of the country, foreign relations, communications, railways and currency while all the residuary subjects should be placed under the jurisdiction of a new Punjab. The province of Punjab should have the right to frame its own constitution for these subjects".

It is not out of place rather important to mention in brief about the Nirankari Sant of Delhi who was much different from the successors of Baba Dyal Singh, the founder of the Narankari sect. The Sant Nirankari's based there teachings on the Sikh scriptures. However their leader Baba Avtar Singh also composed his own *Avtar bani* and *yug purush*. Their decreasing reverence for the Granth Sahib, coupled with their belief in the living guru, made the Sant Nirankaris extremely unorthodox in the eyes of the Sikhs nurtured on the doctrines of the Singh Sabhas. The publication of a book on the nature, affluence and influence of the Sant Nirankaris brought them into clearer focus.¹²⁰

On the Baisakhi of 1978 the Nirankari Baba Gurbachan Singh held a congregation at Amritsar. Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindrawale, (who had succeeded to the headship of the Damdami Taksal at chowk Mehta, near Amritsar in 1977), who subscribed to the twin doctrine of Guru Granth and Guru Panth, regarded Baba Gurbachan Singh's congregation in the holiest city of the Sikhs on the day when Guru Gobind Singh had instituted the Khalsa, as an affront to the entire Khalsa Panth.

¹¹⁹ Cited in "Divided *Akalis* Crops in Dark", *Indian Express*, 3 August 1981, p. 6.

¹²⁰ J.S. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History of India*, II.3, The Sikhs of the Punjab, New Delhi, 1994, pp. 215-216; for more details see Balwant Gargi, *Nirankari Baba*, Delhi, 1973.

Encouraged by his open resentment over the Sant Nirankari Congregation, a number of Sikhs went there with the idea of stopping its proceeding. The Nirankaris were ready. Their bullets proved to be more deadly than the traditional swords of the Khalsa. They (the latter) as a result, lost many more lives than their opponents. So the Akali government took legal action. In June, 1978 however, a Hukmnama was issued from the Akal Takht to all the Sikhs that they should not keep any connection with the Sant Nirankaris and they should discountenance their heterodoxy. The Hukmnama referred to Baba Gurcharan Singh's false claims that he was an Avtar and to his turning from the Shabad-Guru to preach the workship of a human being.¹²¹ The SGPC in its resolution denounced the killing of many innocent Sikhs by the supporters of Baba Gurbachan Singh in the said conference.

S. Gurcharan Singh Tohra, President SGPC gave a five point's programme to the members of the SGPC in particular and the Sikhs in general to carry out for the emancipation/ betterment of Sikhism. The Programme he gave to be carried out is as such: (i) To propagate Sikh religion, purity of Sikh ideology and to spread the principles of Sikhism among the Sikh masses; (ii) To protect and safeguard the political existence of the Sikhs; (iii) To strengthen the Sikh institutions and to see that their democratic character remain intact; (iv) To get solve the various problems of the Sikhs living abroad (in various countries); and (v) To reform the management of the Sikh gurdwaras. This programme was unanimously accepted in the general meeting of the SGPC.¹²²

The idea of Khalistan was thrown out by Dr. Jagjit Singh Chauhan through a half page advertisement in the New York Times in

¹²¹ *Gurdwara Gazettee* July, 1978, p. 28.

¹²² Proceedings of the general meeting SGPC held on March 28, 1979 (see appendix III for details).

October, 1971 after his brief spell as a Finance Minister under Lachhman Singh Gill. Whatever the superficial historians or self-interested politicians and public men may say about its antecedents, the idea of Khalishtan was altogether a new idea.¹²³ In the 1970 it was treated as a hoax and Chauhan was treated well by some eminent Congress leaders during his visits to India. In the late 1970s the defunct Sikh Students' Federation, originally founded in the 1940s was revived as the all India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) by Bhai Amrik Singh, son of the deceased Sant Kartar Singh Bhindranwale, who was closely linked with Sant Jarnail Singh.¹²⁴

Meanwhile, separatist ideas began to be aired. An announcement was made on June 16 1980, about the information of Khalistan by Balbir Singh Sandhu who put himself forth as the secretary – General and Jagjit Singh Chauhan as the President of the National Council of Khalishtan. Ganga Singh Dhillon a US citizen addressed the Sikh Education conference at Chandigarh in March 1981 to expound the idea that the Sikhs are a distinct Nation. His links with Jagjit Singh Chauhan and with the President of Pakistan were known to his Indian supporters including Jathedar Jagdev Singh Talwandi and Jathedar Gurcharan Singh Tohra. Nevertheless the SGPC did pass a resolution in 1981 that the Sikhs were a nation.¹²⁵ The National Council of Khalistan and the Dal Khalsa stood for an independent state for the Sikhs.¹²⁶

Sant Harchand Singh Longowal presided over a world Sikh convention in July, 1981 which directed the Akali Dal to plan dharm

¹²³ J.S. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History of India*, II.3, The Sikhs of the Punjab, p. 216.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 219.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

yudh (righteous war) to pursue the Anandpur Sahib Resolution. Early in September the Akali Dal mobilized support for its demands and gave a call for demonstration before the parliament to present their memorandum of grievance to the speaker of the Lok Sabha. Only a few of the volunteers were permitted to enter the capital. On September 21, however the Akalis were able to present a list of forty-five grievances to the prime Minister.¹²⁷

The Shiromani Akali Dal organized to block the canal (nahar roko) an agitation on April 24 1982 with the support of the communist parties' at a village close to Kapuri from where the water of the Satlej was to be diverted to Haryana. Some of the volunteers were arrested. A month later another agitation was launched at Kapuri itself, which also failed to mobilize the peasantry. On July 26, 1982 the Akalis decided at last to launch their righteous war dharma yudh with effect from August 4. It started with Parkash Singh Badal courting arrest with a large number of other volunteers.¹²⁸ The dharm yudh for the political, economic cultural and religious demands of the Akalis gained increasing momentum in August and September. It became more and more difficult for the government to find room for the protesting volunteers in the existing jails. It is worth mentioning that on March 30, 1983, the SGPC not only admired the dharm yudh rather passed a resolution appreciating the passing of this resolution under the supervision of S. Harcharan Singh Longowal President of the Shiromani Akali Dal.¹²⁹

The number of violent incidents had begun to increase steadily before the imposition of President's rule in October 1983. In 1982 about

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

¹²⁸ *The Tribune*, April 25, 1982, p. 7; also *The Hindustan Times*; J.S. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History of India*, II.3, The Sikhs of the Punjab, p. 222.

¹²⁹ Proceeding of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on March 30, 1983.

sixty such incidents had taken place. In 1983 the number rose to nearly 140. The monthly average by September 1983 rose to nine. In October the number of violent incidents rose suddenly to thirty six and in May. 1984 shot up to over fifty. There were bank robberies, thefts of weapons, cutting of telegraph wires, setting fire to railway stations, attacks on policeman, bomb explosions, murders of Nirankaris, murders of public men, and attacks on ministers. There was also the breaking of idols, damage to temple, sacrilege of gurdwaras, firing on Hindu shopkeepers, killing of cigarette seller, firing on Jagrata and Ram Lila crowds, indiscriminate firing and finally, the killing of Hindu passengers taken out of buses.¹³⁰

On February 8, 1984 the Akalis organized a bandh to demonstrate their strength and their trust in non violent agitation. It was a success. A tripartite meeting was held on February 14 and 15, 1984 which was attended by five cabinet ministers and five secretaries five of the Akali leaders and fifteen leaders from the opposition parties.¹³¹ It came close to a successful settlement. It was at this juncture that anti Sikh violence was orchestrated in Haryana to frustrate settlement.¹³² In the absence of any initiative from the centre , Sant Longowal gave call in May for non cooperation with effect from June 3 the day which operation bluestar was to start.

¹³⁰ J.S. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History of India*, II.3, The Sikhs of the Punjab, p. 223; for further details it will be more useful if the newspapers such as *The Tribune*, *The Hindustan Times*, *The Times of India* and even some vernacular papers of this period are consulted.

¹³¹ For the tripartite and also the secret meeting of the Akali leaders and their meetings with the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Minister, see white paper on the Punjab agitation, p 91-97, also coated by Dr. J.S. Grewal in his book, *The New Cambridge History of India*, II.3, pp. 5-6.

¹³² *Ibid.*

The question of army action in the Punjab was first discussed in December 1983¹³³ Indira Gandhi decided finally in favour of the army action in April 1984 however when Sant Longowal declared on May 23 that that morcha for non-cooperation would start on June 3 Indira Gandhi emissaries met Parkash Singh Badal and Gurcharan Singh Tohra on may 27-28 to suggest that Akali leaders should negotiate settlement instead of launching a morcha. The Akali leaders were prepared to pick up the old threads but on June 2 it became clear that nothing short of the demands in the Anandpur Sahib resolution was acceptable to Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.¹³⁴

On June 3 the Punjab was cut off from the rest of the country and movement within the state made impossible by the presence of troops everywhere. On the morning of June 6 tanks were used against 'the enemy' in the Akal Takht. Meanwhile, tanks and helicopter were used, among other things to deter the thousand of agitated villagers from converging upon Amritsar and several other gurdawaras in the state were taken over by the army. The crucial action temple complex was over before the nightfall of June 6. A large number of pilgrims including women and children died in cross firing. The infuriated troops shot some young men dead with hands tied at their backs with their own turbans. Some died of suffocation in the 'prisoners camp' setup in a room of

¹³³ Chand Joshi, *Bhindrawale: Myth and reality*, p. 19. In this discussion the idea figured that army action would consolidate Hindu votes in favour of the Congress; quoted by Dr. J.S. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History of India*, II.3, p. 226.

¹³⁴ The Prime Minister broadcast to the nation on June 2, 1984, referred to settlement through negotiations but there was hardly any point in it by them for the text of the broadcast, white paper on the Punjab Agitation, p. 105-09; also see J.S. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History of India*, II.3, p. 226.

Guru Nanak niwas. According to one estimate the total casualties of officers and men were about 700 and of civilians about 5,000.¹³⁵

The Sikhs were outraged at the attack on the Golden Temple complex and the destruction of Akal Takht. All sections of Sikh opinion from the urban sophisticates sipping scotch in their bungalows in Delhi to the peasants in the fields were horrified at what had happened. Even those who had never condoned secession could not get themselves to justify the army action.¹³⁶ Two congressite Sikhs resigned from the parliament. The two best known historians of the Sikhs returned 'honours' received from the President of India. Operation Bluestar revived the memories of Ahmad Shah Abdali in Sikh imagination. Action from prime minister Indira Gandhi came too late and it proved to be too much.¹³⁷

In its interim committee held on 10.7.1984 the executive committee of the SGPC strongly condemned the army action on Akal Takha, Sri Darbar Sahib and other gurdwaras. By doing so the government of India had not only tried to crush the spirit of the Sikhs but had also violated the fundamental rights of the Sikhs. It also demanded the immediate withdrawal of troops from the Darbar Sahib complex.

Besides the Anandpur Sahib resolution, there are certain other pending demands of the Sikhs in general in which the SGPC is also interested namely, the recognition of the SGPC as the only religious representative body of the Sikhs, enactment of an All India Gurdwara

¹³⁵ Chand Joshi, *Bindrawale: Myth and reality*, p. 161; J.S. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History of India*, II.3, p. 227.

¹³⁶ M.J. Akbar, *India: The Siege within*, Harmondsworth, 1985, p. 205.

¹³⁷ Mark Tully and Satish Jacob, Amritsar: Mrs. Gandhi's last battle, p. 13; also see Chand Joshi, *Bindrawale: Myth and reality*, p. 75.

Act,¹³⁸ declaration of Holy City status to Amritsar, renaming of a train after Harimandir Sahib (Golden Temple), installation of a transmitter at Harmandir Sahib¹³⁹ and the like. The political demand of the Sikhs included the redrawing of the boundaries of the Punjab in such a way as to incorporate contiguous Punjabi speaking areas of Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh, of course, without parting away with Abohar and Fazilka; more autonomy for states, setting up of more industries in Punjab; exclusive control over the waters of the Ravi, Sutlej, Beas and the Bakhra Dam and the like.

¹³⁸ Proceeding of the general meeting held on November 28, 1973.

¹³⁹ Proceeding of the SGPC March 12, 1978.

CHAPTER-III

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CONTRIBUTION

It is a well known fact that the SGPC, when constituted, was considered a supreme religious body of the Sikhs. Since its inception, it has been enjoying the same status and position among the Sikhs, not only of Punjab but by all those Sikhs who live in different part of the country as well as abroad. With its formation, its constitution came into being. Its objective became quite vivid that it was to work for the emancipation of the gurdwaras in particular and the welfare of the Sikh community in general. To uplift, awaken and to make the Sikhs conscious about their duties towards the Sikh Panth as well as the Sikh society/community, the SGPC had to work with commitment. Undoubtedly, this body from the time of its inception has remained busy in such works which could keep the identity of the Sikhs, their religion and ideology of Sikhism intact. The SGPC could give them direction to consolidate their beliefs and traditions, particularly in the region to which they belonged. Above all the SGPC has not only shown but taken keen interest in the various issues relating to the Sikhs in the Punjab and country itself as well as the Sikhs living abroad, in different countries. It has extended its help and played a constructive role for the Sikhs community abroad whenever the latter happened to be in need of it. Whether it was a question of the use or wearing of turban, keeping of hair and Kirpan, in various countries such as Canada, America, England and France, the SGPC extended required help to the Sikhs there. It pleaded and pressurized the Indian Government to side with the

demands of the Sikhs who had been living in the said countries for a pretty long time.

It will not be out of place if references are made to the various resolutions in connection with the socio-religious life of the Sikh community were put forth and passed in the various general meetings of the SGPC held from time to time (or annually) soon after it was constituted. In its general meeting of October 8, 1927, a proposal from Giani Sher Singh and an endorsement from Teja Singh Vakil were introduced in this connection. It was resolved that that meeting of the General Committee directed the Executive Council to publish an appeal and got it signed by prominent persons after visiting different areas, urging the Sangat not to prevent any Sikh from taking water from a well or from participating in Sangat and Pangat in gurdwaras and Diwans on the ground that his earlier caste was Mazbhi, Ramdasia, and others. which were unjustly called low.¹ The meeting authorized the President to get a similar Hukamnama issued by Sri Akal Takht Sahib at a suitable time.² When regular work started after Ardas, the following resolutions were passed:

- (1) About celebrating Jaito Martyrdom Day, as per resolution No 268 of the Executive Council dated 14.7.1928, the following resolution proposed by S Jaswant Singh and endorsed by Giani Kartar Singh was passed unanimously. This general meeting of the SGPC authorized the Executive Council to make necessary

¹ Proceedings of the General Meeting of SGPC held on 8.10.1927, library SGPC Amritsar; S. Shamsheer Singh Ashok, *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee Da Panjah Sala Ithihas* (1926-1976), Published by Sikh Ithihas Research Board, SGPC, Shri Amritsar, 2003, p. 71.

² *Ibid.*

arrangements for celebrating martyrdom day for the martyrs of Jaito on the day of Shahid Gurpurb at gurdwara Gangsar Jaito ³

- (2) Agreements about gurdwaras of Section 7 (1) as per resolution No 271 dated 14.7.1928 of the Executive Council the following resolution was passed after being presented by S Jaswant Singh and seconded by Gian Kartar Singh: “Resolved, that after considering recommendations from the Executive Council the general committee is of the view that there should be very few legal cases about gurdwaras. Agreements should be reached at reasonable conditions wherever possible. Proper enquires should be made about gurdwara properties and agreements arrived at as per rules.”⁴ In fact, this kind of resolution was required to strengthen the religious character of the gurdwaras.

Applications had already been sent under section 7 to bring some gurdwaras under the Gurdwara Act. The Executive Committee should have made satisfactory arrangements about the gurdwaras for which applications had been filled under section 7 to bring them under Gurdwara Act. The gurdwaras it did not think very essential to bring under Part 3 of the Gurdwara Act. It should have arranged to file cases in consultation with the two representatives of the applicants, members of the SGPC constituency in which the gurdwara was located and other local persons. The executive Council had the authority to let some particular gurdwara remain under the control of a particular Sampardai (community) in special circumstances.⁵

³ Proceedings of General Meetings of the SGPC, 15.7.1928, Sri Amritsar.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, for further details see the work of S. Shamsheer Singh Ashok, *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Daa Panjah Saalaa Itihas*, Sri Amritsar, 2003, p. 78; and also Surjit Singh Gandhi, *Perspectives Sikh Gurdwaras Legislation*, New Delhi, 1993.

The Executive Council was also authorized to reach a suitable agreement to maintain a particular gurdwara as a Sikh gurdwara, to ensure a proper utilization of its income, to prevent from becoming a personal property and to ensure good conduct of the *Mahant* and the propagation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib's teachings.⁶

In one of the general meetings held on March 31, 1928 it was made public and vivid that the alterations and changes made in the holy Bani of Sri Guru Granth Sahib by Panch Khalsa Diwan by publishing books titled 'Gurmukhi Course' were a severe blow to the organization of Sikh religion and a threat to the purity of GurBani . This too could harm the identity of the Sikh community. Therefore, the SGPC advised that no one should buy or possess these Gurmukhi Courses published by Panch Khalsa Diwan. Panch Khalsa *Diwan* or anybody else having the books should send them to Sri Akal Takht for its approval. The Committee also requested the four Takhts not to perform the Ardas of Babu Teja Singh and any member of Panch Khalsa Diwan, unless they gave up their willful stand and sought the pardon of the Guru-Panth. To prevent such disputes about the printing of GurBani , arrangements should be made for the accurate printing of Sri Guru Granth Sahib by the Panth and its sale at so low prices that no book seller could compete, was suggested by the SGPC. The purpose of the advice given by the SGPC was to keep the pious character of Sri Guru Granth Sahib intact. This supreme body of the Sikh community wanted to popularize the teachings and ideology of the Sikh Gurus especially among the Sikhs of Punjab; other regions of the country and also even the Sikhs living abroad.⁷

⁶ *Ibid.*, March 31, 1928.

⁷ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on 31.3. 1928, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar.

In this very meeting of the General Committee of the SGPC, the Gurmat Rauh-Reet Committee resolved that since Panch Khalsa Diwan had violated the sanctity of the Bani of Sri Guru Granth Sahib through alterations and changes by printing the book titled 'Gurmukhi Course' and indulged in other anti-Gurmat activities by making changes in Gurmat Ardas, Amrit Maryada, etc., therefore (a) None should purchase or possess Gurmukh Courses (texts) published by Panch Khalsa Diwan; Panch Khalsa Diwan or anybody else having these books should send them to Sri Akal Takht Sahib; (b) Babu Teja Singh Bhasaur and Bibi Niranjana Kaur were expelled from the Panth and the Ardas of the other members of the Panch Khalsa Diwan at Gurdwaras and Takht Sahiban was stopped until they sought the Panth's pardon; (c) To prevent such disputes about the printing of GurBani ; arrangements should be made for the accurate printing of GurBani by the Panth and its sale at low price so that no book seller could compete. Of course, that paragraph appeared to be a repetition but that repetition was essential to establish that the SGPC was seriously concerned with the publication of the religious literature because the committee thought that if that kind of publication was allowed or was not checked, within short period the pious character of the religious literature of the Sikhs would lapse. This would also destroy the religious sanctity of the Sikh community.⁸

In the general meeting of the SGPC of October 28, 1928 it was resolved that the Kesdharies must declare that they were Amrit dharis and strictly abided by 'Rehat-Nitnem' and 'Gur-Maryada'. It was further resolved that Sehajhdharis were supposed to declare that they

⁸ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC dated 28.10.1928, library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; also see S. Shamsher Singh Ashok, *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Daa Panjah Saalaa Itihas*, pp. 70.72.

considered the ten Gurus as their Satguru and their Sarup Sri Guru Granth Sahib as their 'Isht'. They should not deem anyone else as their 'Isht'. They should abstain from tobacco, katha and *illicit* relations with a woman. They abided by Nit-Nem and Gur-Maryada and they were not 'patits.'⁹ After that, the question of breaking relation with gurdwara Dhubri Sahib (Assam) came up, because the said gurdwara was not functioning as per the maryada of Sikh religion. Therefore, the SGPC deputed S Arjan Shah Singh to make necessary arrangements and present a report within three months about the functioning of the said gurdwara. In case he expressed his inability, the Executive Council was directed to discuss the issue and take necessary action to put this gurdwara on the right track¹⁰ so that there should not be any harm to the Sikh maryada in general and Sikh religion in particular.

In another meeting of the SGPC resolution about the release of the Sikh Prisoners was unanimously passed on February 28, 1931. This resolution was adopted after being proposed by Giani Sher Singh and seconded by Master Sujan Singh. This general meeting of Rauh Reet Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee directed the Executive Council to form an effective and powerful Dharam Parchar Committee within a month in consultation with other general members and Panthak heads, in order to carry out Dharam Parchar vigorously in order to strengthen the Sikh Panth and also to spread the teachings of the Sikh Gurus among the masses of various communities. After a proposal from Babu Mal Singh it was resolved that Bhai Randhir Singh should also be included as a member in the Rauh Reet Sub-Committee. This would assist in strengthening the Sikh maryada as well as the working of the sub-committee would become more effective and fruitful. It is pertinent

⁹ *Ibid.*, 28.10.1928.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.2.1931.

to state that the Rauh Reet sub-committee and also the SGPC worked with dedication for not only the spread of Sikh religion, but also the emancipation and betterment of the Sikh community for at least for a period of ten years.

The following resolution was adopted after being proposed by Giani Sher Singh and seconded by Master Sujjan Singh. A general meeting of SGPC directed the Executive Council to form an effective and powerful Dharam Parchar Committee within a month in consultation with other general members and Panthik heads, in order to carry out Dharam Parchar vigorously. After a proposal from Babu Mal Singh it was resolved that Bhai Randhir Singh should also be included as a member in the Rauh Reet Sub-Committee. The members of these committees were required to do work of Dharam Parchar not only in the Punjab but in other parts of India as well. In fact, it was desired by the SGPC that these Dharam Parcharaks should even approach the managements of gurdwaras abroad so that Sikhism in true term should be taught to the Sikhs there.

Here, it is worth mentioning and also will not be out of place if we go back to the days of the British rule in India. The Act of 1935, of which the Communal Award was a part, meant the translation of the statutory majority of the Muslims in the Punjab into a functional reality. Naturally the Sikhs felt very much upset over the prospects of their existence after the introduction of the Provincial Autonomy in the Punjab. They were not satisfied with the provisions concerning the protection of the minorities in the Act of 1935. They had bitter experience in the form of communal riots. Such happenings, they felt, would increase because of the superior position of the Muslims as maintained in the said Act. Further it would make them to disregard the

minorities and create problems for them.¹¹ As a minority the Sikhs and their leading institutions, like SGPC and Shiromani Akali Dal in particular, had many problems that were related to, not only to their representation in services, but also to their socio-religious position and status. Some of the problems were: the status of Gurmukhi language in the Punjab and also in the neighbouring regions Himachal and Delhi as well as the opening of Jhatka meat shops or the serving of Jhatka meat in the kitchens attached to the Government institutions. The Muslims never showed any real consideration to them so far as these issues were concerned. The new constitution had given an added boost to the position of the Muslims. This further increased the anxieties of the Sikh bodies in connection with the position and status of the Sikhs. All these factors were bound to affect the relations between the Sikhs and the then Government in the Punjab after the introduction of the new constitution.

Here it is worth mentioning that the elections of 1937, after the implementation of the Act of 1935, the Sikhs in general and the SGPC as well as the SAD in particular lost their prestige from socio-political point of view in the Punjab, because they felt quite perturbed over the success of the Khalsa National Party. As a result, this type of position led the SAD, in collaboration with the Congress especially and other political parties in general, to declare that they would observe April 1, 1937 as a “Protest Day” against the new constitution. A “Hartal Committee” was constituted by various opposition groups, in order to co-ordinate their activities with reference to the proposed Hartal. A meeting of the Hartal Committee was held at Lahore on March 8, 1937.

¹¹ File No. 41-4/32, G.O.I., *Home Political Department*; also see RNN, for the Month April 1932, NAI, New Delhi.

Besides Master Tara Singh, the representatives of the Shiromani Akali Dal, the Congress Socialists, the Kirtis, the Ittehad-i-Milat, the Students Union and the Punjab Youth League attended this very meeting keeping in mind the proposed Hartal.¹² A resolution denouncing the new constitution was passed.¹³ Consequently this kind of collaboration and support of various political parties to the SAD once again enhanced the position and status of the Sikhs in general and their socio-political bodies in particular.

On April 1, 1937 the proposed Hartal was successfully observed all over the province.¹⁴ The whole thing was, however, marred by an incident at Kot Bhai Dhan Singh, near Rawalpindi. There the Muslims attacked a Sikh congregation in a gurdwara on the pretext that their evening service was being chanted in louder tones than usual. In fact, it was the expression of wrath of the Muslims who had not liked the observance of the Hartal in protest. The police had to resort to firing. six Sikhs were injured, out of whom one died later on.¹⁵ All this confirmed the apprehensions of the Sikhs as well as their leaders about their existence in the Punjab under the new setup. They realized that their social position, status, identity as well as their religion were not only unsafe, rather in danger. Therefore, it gave them another grievance against the then Government in the Punjab. The fears of the Sikhs vis-à-vis the Muslim domination under the new constitution were further

¹² *The Akali Patrika*, 10.3.1937; *The Tribune*, March 10 and 11, 1937.

¹³ *Ibid*; also see RNN of the month of March, particularly after March 10, 1937.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.4.1937. The Government Report, however, says that although the Congressmen had given ninety-five speeches in twenty-two districts of the Punjab, in the last week of March, about the coming *Hartal*, yet it remained a partial affair only P.G.R., Fortnight ending 15.4.1937, G.O.I., *Home Department Political*, File No. 18/4-37, NAI, New Delhi.

¹⁵ P.G.R., Fortnight ending 15.11.1937; *The Tribune*, November 15 and 16, 1937.

whetted by the Sikandar-Jinnah Pact that was concluded on October 15, 1937. It made the Hindus and Sikhs very uneasy in respect with their social position and status in the society, in the province.

Probably no single issue produced so much tension and bad blood between the Government and the SGPC as the Shahid Ganj episode. It was a monument in memory of those men, women and children of the Sikh community who had laid down their lives in defense of their religion during the first half of the eighteenth century. The origin of Shahid Ganj was in the persecution and execution of the Sikhs during the governorships of Abdus Samad Khan and his son Zakrya Khan; moreover, in the martyrdom of Bhai Mani Singh and Tara Singh.¹⁶ Later on Ranjit Singh gave it the shape of a gurdwara. To maintain it he also granted the gurdwara a *Jagir* as well.¹⁷ As has already been stated in the previous chapter, the Gurdwara Act had taken over all the historical gurdwaras and placed them under the Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhik committee in 1925. Notification No. 892-G, dated April 28, 1926 issued by the Punjab Government proclaimed the Shahid Ganj, a scheduled gurdwara and gave it for management to the local Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Lahore.¹⁸

The local Parbandhak Committee then decided to get repair the Shahid Ganj gurdwara which was at that time in a dilapidated condition. The clearance began on May 30, 1935. The northern *bazaar* wall and the southern side wall were got built in the first three days, and a small door connecting the Samadhs (since demolished) and Gurdwara Shahid Ganj

¹⁶ Ganda Singh, *History of Gurdwara Shahid Ganj, Lahore*, Amritsar, 1935, p. 9; *The Tribune*, May 22, 1935.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 41; *Reports on Native Newspapers* (hereafter RNN), for the month May, 1935 (particularly the last week of May).

¹⁸ *Gurdwara Gazettee*, August 5 1935, SGPC Publication, Amritsar, 1935.; *Mitra Register*, 1936, Vol. I, p. 327; RNN, August 5 to 7, 1936; *The Tribune*, August 7, 1936.

Singhnian was erected on June 3, 1935. Most of the general clearance of the general compound was finished by the evening of June 7. The demolition of the dilapidated building in the precincts, including the Shahid Ganj Dharamsala, the so-called mosque, began on June 8. The work of demolition had been carried on for twenty days and all the buildings and the northern portion of the so called mosque had been leveled with the ground without the least obstruction when all of a sudden, on Saturday, June 29, 1935, a large crowd of local Mohammedans, armed with sticks and hatchets, collected near the Shahid Ganj to attack the Sikhs in their temple and to take forcible possession of the building.¹⁹ This created a very complicated situation. The Sikhs, who had a legal right over the building, felt convinced that their action was correct.²⁰ The Muslims, emboldened by their dominant position under the new constitution in the province, became indifferent to the actual position of the place; rather they tried to violate the law. For instance, 10,000 of them stormed the gurdwara to take forcible possession of it.²¹ They tried to terrorize the Sikhs and their leadership. By the end of November, 1937, 18 Sikhs had been killed.²² The Muslims even clashed with the police in which some police officers were also injured.²³ It looked as though the Muslims wanted to intimidate the Sikhs because by such acts of violence they wanted to influence justice in their own favour. Sir Sikandar, as the Punjab

¹⁹ Ganda Singh, *History of the Gurdwara Sahib Ganj*, p. 67.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 75 (On July 9, 1935 the Government conveyed to the Commissioners and the Deputy Commissioners that the legal position was that the Sikhs could not be obstructed even under Section 295 of the Indian Penal Code), Vide. *Multan Gazettee*, 10.7.1935.

²¹ *The Zamindar* (Urdu Daily, Lahore), 5.7.1935 (Hereafter referred to as *The Zamindar*).

²² *The Fateh*, 18.12.1937; *The Tribune*, December 17 and 18, 1937; *Lahore Gazette*, December 15, 1937.

²³ *The Multan Gazette* 7.7.1935; also see *Lahore Gazettee*, 7.7.1935; Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Shiromani Akali Dal*, p. 179.

Premier, tried to take a sober view of the whole situation although other Muslim Unionist M.L.A.s inside the Legislative Assembly supported the Muslim sentiments. Perhaps in the face of the communal electorates then in operation they could not afford to talk in the secular strain. They even charged the Government with having connived with the Sikhs. The Government in turn stoutly denied the charge.²⁴ Malik Barkat Ali introduced a bill in the Punjab Assembly, 'called Muslim Mosques Protection Bill', which set out to secure the mosque to the Muslims Sir Sikandar, however, warned his community that if this bill was passed it could retrospectively open up many socio-religious problems and issues that had since been settled.²⁵ Moreover he said that in other provinces, where the Muslims were in minority, such bills could be passed by the ministries and Muslim monuments could be in jeopardy.²⁶

Some Muslim leaders like Shaukat Ali, Zafar Ali, Syed Habib and Maulana Ghazanvi wanted to have a permanent solution and settlement with the Sikhs.²⁷ The reaction of the Sikh leaders in general and the SGPC in particular was that the issue of Shahid Ganj was not negotiable.²⁸ They were sensitive about the preservation of their religious and cultural heritage and were not prepared to compromise at any cost. Therefore, things were really very complicated. In all this the bureaucracy tried to be neutral although they were charged with the leniency towards one side or the other, by both the camps. There is,

²⁴ P.L.C.D., Vol. XXVII, No. 9, pp. 653-61; No. 10, pp. 733-37, No. 11, pp. 820-51, Lahore, 1935.

²⁵ *Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates* (hereafter P.L.A.D.), March 16, 1938 (Statement of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan), Vol. II, No. 13, Lahore 1938, pp. 808-09; Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Shiromani Akali Dal*, p. 147-152.

²⁶ *Ibid*; also see *Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC* dated October 20 and 29, 1935.

²⁷ *The Preet Lari* (*Gurmukhi Monthly*, Lahore), August, 1935 and October, 1935 (Hereafter referred to as the *Preet Lari*), also *The Tribune*, 30.9.1935.

²⁸ Proceeding of the General Meeting of the SGPC date 20.10.1935 and 29.10.1935, library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; *The Tribune*, 30.9.1935.

however, no doubt that at places the bureaucracy did bungle in this sensitive affair and made the things more difficult.

At one stage the Muslim leaders went to meet the SGPC leaders for discussion and settlement of the subject. During the course of talk, they asked the Sikhs to leave them alone for some time for consultation. It was then that Maulana Zafar Ali revealed to his friends that in the morning a Government Officer had assured him that the building would be handed over to the Muslims. But the Maulana apprehended that such an assurance had also been held out to the Sikhs.²⁹ Even Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy of India, admitted it to Mr. Zetland, the Secretary of State for India that the Government had not succeeded in creating an impression that its policy in the matter of Shahid Ganj was uninfluenced by any one.³⁰ Court after court gave decision in favour of the Sikhs but the Muslims remained undaunted and unmoved. They resorted to intimidation of the Sikhs and even took to violence and at the same time went in appeal to a higher court. The highest court of appeal, i.e., the Privy Council also dismissed their appeal with costs on May 2, 1940.

They exhausted all the legal remedies and yet did not stop browbeating the Sikhs. Sir Sikandar even resorted to ‘dinner-diplomacy’.³¹ He invited leaders of both Communities to dinner at his residence and tried to defuse the situation.³² But such punctuations of sanity and goodwill always proved ephemeral and the problem remained

²⁹ P.L.C.D., November 147, 1935, Speech by Mazhar Ali, Vol. XXVII, No. 10, Lahore, 1935, pp. 750-51.

³⁰ *Zetland Papers*, I.O.L./M2/31, letter dated 6.4.1938 from Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy of India to the S.O.S. (Microfilms) NAI, New Delhi.

³¹ *The Statement* (English Daily, Delhi), 3.5.1940, also *Punjab Government Report.*, (hereafter P.G.R.), Fortnight ending 15.5.1940, G.O.I., Home Department Political, File No. 18/5-40, NAI, New Delhi.

³² Files No. 14 and 61, Oral History Cell (hereafter OHC), *Punjabi University*, Patiala.

inflammable as before. The Sikhs suffered some losses including human lives but they retained their hold on Shahid Ganj. The outbreak of the Second World War in September, 1939 and the launching of Pakistan plan in March, 1940 altered the situation in the Punjab. The attention of both the parties was diverted from this issue. However, gradually the situation calmed down. Still there was no doubt that dispute produced a great deal of bad blood. Relations of the Sikhs with the Muslims further deteriorated considerably on this issue. With this the social position and status of the Sikhs were affected to some extent as they could not enjoy high place in the society where the Muslims were in majority. They realized that not only their properties, but also their religious institutions and even their lives were not secure rather in danger.

The Shahid Ganj issue gave birth to the Kirpan problem which was important for the Sikhs from religious point of view. When the Shahid Ganj agitation was going on the Government put a restriction on keeping of big Kirpans by the Sikhs.³³ Restriction was imposed even on small Kirpans as well. For the Sikhs the sporting or keeping of Kirpan was a religious obligation; it was a very important symbol for their identity. In fact, at the time of the creation of Khalsa, the tenth Guru had made the use of Kirpan compulsory for the men of his new community. Obviously this constraint could not be tolerated by the Sikhs. The Muslims tried to get this right for their own community as well as to appease them the Punjab Government vide their *Gazette* notification dated September 20, 1935,³⁴ exempted swords from Section 13 and 15 of the Indian Arms Act.³⁵ No doubt, the Muslims were happy about it.

³³ Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Shiromani Akali Dal*, p. 141.

³⁴ *The Tribune*, January 3, 1936; *The Fateh* January 3, 1936.

³⁵ Punjab Governments Reports (hereafter P.G.R.), Fortnight ending 15.9.1935, G.O.I., *Home Department Political*, File No. 18/9-35, NAI, New Delhi.

But to the SGPC and the Sikhs it made no difference as the ban on big Kirpan was still there. They went on with their endeavors to get the ban lifted from the big Kirpan. In their joint meetings held on August 26, 1935 and again on December 15, 1935, the SGPC, duly supported by the SAD passed a resolution requesting the Government to remove restrictions on the use of big Kirpan.³⁶ They also asserted that the restriction placed by the Government on the sporting of two small Kirpans by the Sikhs was also unjust.³⁷ The SGPC described the ban on big Kirpan by the Government as interference in the religious life of the Sikhs.³⁸ Mangal Singh appealed to his community to back and strengthen the SGPC at least on the religious issues. On December 13, 1935, a deputation of the Sikh leaders consisting of Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia, Sardar Ujjal Singh, Sardar Kartar Singh, Sardar Bishan Singh and Sardar Boota Singh met the Punjab Governor and, inter alia, requested him to remove the ban on the big Kirpan.³⁹ The Governor, however, replied that he could not lift this ban as he would have to give such permission to other religions also.⁴⁰ Another general meeting of the SGPC was held on October 29, 1935. Amar Singh Sher-e-Punjab observed emphatically that they did not want to break but what else could they do? On one side, Kirpans were being taken from the Sikhs; on the other hand, Muslims had daggers, axes and other sharp weapons with which they were murdering unarmed Sikhs day by day. It was a

³⁶ Resolution No: 44 SGPC, November 15, 1935, *Gurdwara Gazettee* December 1935, Amritsar; *The Akali Patrika*, 28.8.1935 and 17.12.1935.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.8.1935.

³⁸ Proceeding of the General Meeting of the SGPC, December 25, 1935, Library of SGPC, Sri Amritsar; P.G.R., Fortnight ending 15.12.1935, G.O.I., *Home Political Department*, File No. 18/12-35, NAI, New Delhi.

³⁹ *The Fateh*, 31.12.1935, also Tarlok Singh, *Shiromani Khalsa Twarikh*, Amritsar, n.d., p. 326.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

time to make sacrifices. They could not live without Kirpans. S Chanan Singh and Arjan Singh Lahorewala said that Lahore district would be ahead of all other districts in making sacrifices if the Sikhs were not allowed to keep Kirpans because it was symbol of Sikh religion.

On December 30, 1935 the SGPC decided to launch a Morcha for Kirpan from January 1, 1936. Master Tara Singh, Gyani Sher Singh and Teja Singh were associated with this Morcha.⁴¹ On January 1, Sardar Boota Singh who had recently returned to the ranks of the Akali Dal, started the Morcha.⁴² A jatha l left Amrit sar under Master Tara Singh.⁴³ The Morcha lasted till January 31, 1936 when the ban on big Kirpan lapsed automatically. Three hundred ninety-one Sikhs, including seventy-six women, courted arrest during this period.⁴⁴ One thing, however, was clear that the Shahid Ganj crisis left the Sikhs very anxious and distrustful in so far as the Muslim attitude towards Kirpan was concerned. They mentioned this problem in their memorandum to the Sapru Committee. In their replies to the questionnaire of the Committee they made a special mention of the Kirpan and demanded an inalienable right in this respect. They emphasized: “No law shall be enacted and new executive order given to restrict in any manner or to any extent whatever, the manufacture, sale, the keeping and the wearing of the Kirpans by the Sikhs”.⁴⁵ It, however, goes without saying that the

⁴¹ *The Akali Patrika*, 1.1.1936.

⁴² Tarlok Singh, *Shiromani Khalsa Twarikh*, Amritsar, n.d., p. 328.

⁴³ Proceeding of the General Meeting of the SGPC, October 29, 1936, SGPC Library Amritsar; Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Shiromani Akali Dal*, p. 183.

⁴⁴ P.G.R., Fortnight ending 31.1.1936, G.O.I., *Home Political*, File No. 18/1-36. However, Harjinder Singh Dilgeer gives the number of arrests as 1709, *Shiromani Akali Dal*, p. 183.

⁴⁵ Harnam Singh, *Punjab the Home Land of the Sikhs*, Lahore, 1945, p. 74. Earlier in 1937, Lal Chand Nevalrai had also suggested in the Legislative Assembly of India that this right should be universally allowed to the Sikhs irrespective of its size. Legislative Assembly Debates, dated 11.2.1937. V Session of the Legislative Assembly, Shimla, 1937, pp. 758-59.

Kirpan Morcha further embittered the relations between Government and the Sikhs, particularly the SGPC, on one side and between the Sikhs and the Muslims community on the other. The reason was obvious as the Sikhs had been constantly opposing the Muslims demand of separate Pakistan.

The Sikhs were required and desired by their religion to eat only Jhatka *meat*. In this case the animal was killed with one stroke of the sword.⁴⁶ As against this the Muslims ate another type of meat called Halal prepared by killing the animal gradually. The Sikhs had a grievance that Jhatka meat was not allowed in any government institution whereas there were no restrictions on the use of Halal meat. This was regarded as an act of discrimination against the Sikhs. So they demanded that in all Government institutions Jhatka and Halal meat should be served at the same time and given equal treatment. Otherwise, too, in areas or localities where Muslims were concentrated, they would not allow the Sikhs to procure Jhatka. Naturally the endeavors of the Sikhs to have this injustice removed produced friction between the two communities.

Even in a city like Lahore, which was the seat of the Government and where the condition of law and order was expected to be better, the Muslims remained unrestrained and efforts of the Sikhs to gain this liberty only brought trouble for them. The atmosphere at once became tense and grave in August 1935 when a Sikh killed a goat by Jhatka method near the Shahi Mosque.⁴⁷ A similar situation was also created at Lala Musa in the Gujrat district, where the Sikh tried to open a Jhatka shop.⁴⁸ No doubt, at places like Rawalpindi where the Sikhs were

⁴⁶ Sikh Rehat Maryada, SGPC Amritsar 1932.

⁴⁷ P.G.R., Fortnight ending 31.8.1935, G.O.I., *Home Political Department*, File No. 18/8-35, NAI, New Delhi.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Fortnight ending 31.1.1937, File No. 18/1-37.

resourceful they were able to get Common Committees set up from among the influential citizens of both the communities, and secure this right through such committees.⁴⁹ But the overall situation remained the same. The Muslims were not prepared to concede them this right. What happened at Jandiala Sher Khan in Sheikhpura district would amply illustrate the point. Here a Sikh quietly killed a fowl by the Jhatka method in his own house. When the Muslims got wind of it they refused to allow him to draw water from the village well⁵⁰ and ultimately turned him out of the village.⁵¹ Consequently, the Sikhs were very much agitated at that development. Kharak Singh and others held a *Diwan* in this village to assert their right. Things got so complicated that a riot occurred in this village.⁵² Master Tara Singh was greatly shocked and also astonished at this development. He accused Sir Sikandar Hyat that his speeches in the legislature had emboldened the Muslims and they had begun to molest the Sikhs for preparing Jhatka meat.⁵³ The Government had no set policy in that respect.

The students of Government College, Pasrur, were conceded the right to Jhatka in the hostel kitchen after they had resorted to agitation.⁵⁴ A Sikh police man posted in the Gurdaspur Police Lines could have Jhatka right that was not available to his counterpart in the Lyallpur Police Lines.⁵⁵ The meeting of the SGPC learnt with deep regret that the superintendent of police, Lyallpur had taken back the order maintaining

⁴⁹ *The Fateh*, 20.1.1937.

⁵⁰ P.G.R., Fortnight ending 31.8.1937, G.O.I., *Home Department Political*, File No. 18/8-37, NAI, New Delhi.

⁵¹ *The Hindustan Times* (English Daily, Delhi), 25.8.1937 (hereafter referred to as *The Hindustan Times*).

⁵² *Ibid.*, 19.8.1937, also P.G.R., Fortnight ending 31.8.1937.

⁵³ *The Hindustan Times*, 18.9.1937.

⁵⁴ P.L.A.D., dated 12.11.1938, Vol. VI, No. 2, Lahore, 1938, Reply of the Government to Q. No. 3439, p. 116.

⁵⁵ *The Akali*, 13.4.1941.

the previous practice of complete freedom for the use of *the* Jhatka meat in the Police lines which the Sikhs had been enjoying their for a long time. This committee desired to bring to the notice of higher Police authority that that was a direct intervention in the Sikh religion.⁵⁶ The Sikhs were agitated over this indifference of the Government toward their problem.' Even the Khalsa National Party, a partner in the Government of the province, passed a resolution in one of its general sessions and impressed upon the Government that in Government schools and other educational institutions, and cities, restrictions on Jhatka should have been withdrawn because, as per their religion, faith and even as per their social tenets the Sikhs could not take any other meat except Jhatka.⁵⁷ So they felt emotionally hurt.

On December 1, 1938, Sardar Partap Singh introduced the Jhatka Meat Bill in the Punjab Legislature. It aimed at removing restrictions on the preparation and sale of Jhatka meat. Sir Sikandar very cleverly side-tracked the issue and said that since the question involved the allied questions of beef diet also, the bill could not be allowed to be introduced. Consequently the bill was rejected by eighty-four against forty-seven votes.⁵⁸ At the All Sikh Parties Conference held at Roorka Kalan on 15-16 February, 1941, Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke denounced the restriction on Jhatka which he realized was a big handicap to the socio-religious life of the Sikhs in the province.⁵⁹ The problem, however, kept on lingering as the Government could not injure the religious sentiments of the Muslims by any relaxation in favour of

⁵⁶ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, March 28, 1938, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar.

⁵⁷ *The Khalsa Te Khalsa Advocate*, 18.8.1937; Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, October 9, 1938, SGPC library Sri Amritsar; also see Shamsheer Singh Ashok, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee the Daa Panjah Salah Ithihas, pp. 185-86.

⁵⁸ *P.L.A..D*, Vol. VI, No. 13, Lahore, 1939, pp. 821-30.

⁵⁹ *The Akali*, 19.2.1941.

the Sikhs. This right was not unambiguously conceded to the Sikhs even in the Sikandar-Baldev Pact, its acceptance was also made conditional.⁶⁰ In their memorandum to the Sapru Committee the Sikh leadership mentioned it as one of their demands that Jhatka meat be treated on par with the Halal meat.⁶¹ It was, therefore, obvious that in the restriction on Jhatka the Sikhs suffered quite a substantial handicap and their religious feelings were hurt.

Another problem of the same nature, as that of Jhatka, was the handicap suffered by the Sikhs in the matter of taking out their religious processions. The Muslims created difficulties in their way. Some times by creating disturbances to obstruct and mar their processions and some times by arrogantly dictating to the Sikhs to follow a particular route. For instance, on April 16, 1936 a large crowd of Muslims collected to obstruct a sanctioned Sikh procession at Kharian in the district of Gujrat.⁶² All this resulted in great tension. However, the situation was saved with great difficulty. It was very easy for the Muslims to object to a Sikh procession by putting forth the view that the Sikh religious processions accompanied with music tended to mar the serenity of the Muslim mosques that might fall along the route of the processions. At Rawalpindi, Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code was imposed on account of such a demand put forth by the Muslims. On the occasion of Guru Nanak's Birthday procession in 1936,⁶³ clashes took place again in this town on January 18, 1937 when the Sikhs were taking out a

⁶⁰ *Mitra Register*, 1942, Vol. I, p. 344.

⁶¹ Harnam Singh, *Punjab the Home Land of the Sikhs*, Lahore, 1945, p. 74.

⁶² P.G.R., Fortnight ending 30.4.1936, G.O.I., *Home Department Political*, File No. 18/4-36, NAI, New Delhi.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, Fortnight ending 30.11.1936, File No. 18/11-36, NAI, New Delhi; Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, November 12, 1936, SGPC library Sri Amritsar; also see Shamsher Singh Ashok, *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee the Daa Panjah Salah Ithihas*, pp. 170.

procession.⁶⁴ In this very town again the Sikhs could not take out a procession on the eve of Jor Mela in connection with the martyrdom of the fifth Guru, as they were not given permission to follow the route they had so far adopted. They could not tolerate the indignity of a change in the route which the Muslims wanted to dictate them.⁶⁵ On this very ground the Sikhs of Gujrat also could not take out a procession in connection with Guru Nanak's birthday.⁶⁶ More examples can be cited to illustrate the point further. It is, however, enough to say that this high-handedness of the Muslims constituted a great irritant for the Sikhs in general and SGPC as well as SAD in particular. So they remained dissatisfied with the thinking and policy of Government.

In the matter of religious holidays also the Sikhs were given very niggardly treatment by the Government. In 1939, in the Punjab, Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh's birthdays were Government holidays. In that year, however, the Guru Nanak's birthday fell on a Sunday and was omitted from the list of Punjab Government holidays, whereas the holidays of Christian, Hindu and Muslim festivals which fell on Sundays were declared as holidays on the next day, i.e., Monday.⁶⁷ The indifference shown to the Sikhs in the matter of religious holidays may be seen from the fact that till 1941 when the independence of the country was only six years away, even the Jor Mela, the martyrdom day of the fifth Guru, and some very important festivals of the Sikhs, were not observed as holidays in the Punjab. In that year the Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Mughalpura (Lahore) appealed to the Punjab Education Department, and other heads of Government offices, to declare it a holiday in all the educational institutions and offices in the province. But

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, Fortnight ending 31.1.1937, File No. 18/1-37, NAI, New Delhi.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Fortnight ending 15.6.1937, File No. 18/6-37, NAI, New Delhi.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Fortnight ending 30.11.1937, File No. 18/11-37, NAI, New Delhi.

⁶⁷ *The Khalsa Te Khalsa Advocate*, 29.12.1938.

the appeal produced no result.⁶⁸ These things, though small, were yet sensitive enough to produce dissatisfaction among the Sikhs and give them a feeling that their identity was in jeopardy. Their relations with the Government were bound to be strained under such circumstances.

Another issue that caused ripples in the relations between the Sikhs and the Government was the status of the Gurmukhi language in the Punjab. For the Sikhs this language was a symbol of their socio-religious and cultural identity. Refusal of the Punjab Government to grant the request of the Sikhs to treat this language on par with other Indian languages made them sullen and angry. Rather, the Government appeared to have started a systematic discrimination against this language in the province. *Urdu* was adopted as a language for elementary education in the province.⁶⁹ The champions of the Gurmukhi language had off and on tried to plead with Sir Shahabuddin, the Education Minister, in favour of this language, but in vain.⁷⁰ The lovers of the *Punjabi* (Gurmukhi) language held a conference at Rawalpindi on April 28-29, 1940. Resolutions were passed asking the Government (i) to be fair towards the *Punjabi* language, (ii) to give grants for its promotion, (iii) to prefer it to other languages in the Punjab offices, (iv) to introduce it as an elective subject in the Boys', and the Girls Schools and Colleges, and (v) to create *Punjabi* sections in the college libraries as well.⁷¹ The conference, which otherwise was an impressive affair, proved a cry in wilderness because the Punjab Government ignored the *Punjabi* language as a medium of instruction of education in the 'Punjab

⁶⁸ *The Fateh*, 29.5.1941.

⁶⁹ *The Mauji*, 7.11.1938.

⁷⁰ *The Akali Patrika*, 16.8.1936.

⁷¹ *The Panj Darya* (*Gurmukhi* Monthly, Lahore), May, 1940 (Hereafter referred to as the *Panj Darya*).

Primary Education Bill' passed in 1941.⁷² This was quite in consonance with the policy of the Punjab Government they had followed so far.⁷³ At the Roorka Kalan the Sikhs Conference held on February 15-16, 1941, the SGPC demanded an amendment in the Primary Education Bill and the Provision for the teaching of *Punjabi* (Gurmukhi) in all the public schools where at least seven students desired it.⁷⁴ The Shiromani Akali Dal and the Sikhs gave one month's ultimatum to the Government at the termination of which they were to launch a Morcha.⁷⁵ The Punjab Governor sent for Master Tara Singh an invitation in order to discuss the problem. Sir Sikandar was also present at this meeting. But nothing came out of this meeting.⁷⁶ The matter kept on lingering and later on was taken up in the Sikandar-Baldev Singh Pact. It also found a mention in the memorandum submitted by the Sikhs to the Sapru Committee.⁷⁷ Let it be particularly noted that the question of Gurumukhi/Punjabi was closely connected with the betterment of the Sikh community because the adoption, development and spread up Punjabi would give them further independence of identity and strengthen their position in the whole society of Punjab. Above all the religious literature would get boost and might become popular among the masses and even laymen in the Sikh community.

It was also resolved that no individual who did not accept Sri Guru Granth Sahib occupying Gur-Gaddi after the tenth Guru Sri Gobind Singh Ji as eternal Atal Guru, who compared any of the ten Gurus from Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji to Guru Gobind Singh Ji to any

⁷² *The Punjab Code*, Vol. II, 7th edition, Act, XVIII, Shimla, 1953, p. 949, Also *the Akali*, 5.1.1941.

⁷³ *The Akali Patrika*, 9.1.1941, Also *The Fateh*, 2/9.1.1941.

⁷⁴ *The Akali*, 19.2.1941.

⁷⁵ Linlithgow Collections, MSS, 125/90, Doc. No. 7, D.O. No. 323, dated 28.2.1941 from the Punjab Governor to the Viceroy (Microfilms, N.A.I.).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, D.O. No. 330, dated 17.3.1941.

⁷⁷ Harnam Singh, *Punjab the Home Land of the Sikhs*, Lahore, 1945, pp. 69-70.

other corporal being, who visualized any living being occupying Gur-Gaddi of Sri Guru Gobind Singh other than *Sri* Guru Granth Sahib; who added or subtracted some thing from GurBani or deliberately read GurBani in an altered form; who violated the sanctity of Bani by uttering the name of some living persons in the Ardas in place of ‘Ek Onkar Sri WaheGuru Ji ki Fateh’, who prayed to any other living corporal person or persons equating them with the ten Gurus; who proclaimed to exclude the holy Kirpan or deemed that excluded from the Rehat of the Khalsa and violated the Maryada of Amrit ;-was not a Sikh and he should not be a member of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee, a devoted servant of the gurdwaras of the Khalsa and the Takht Sahib, or of any local gurdwara Committee nor should he be allowed to make Ardas in any gurdwara.⁷⁸

There was a comprehensive debate on the resolution by S. Bachan Singh Gujranwala, Giani Kartar Singh Lyalpur, Jathedar Mohan Singh and Jathedar Udham Singh after which it was forwarded to Religious Advisory Committee of the SGPC for further debate so that it could be presented and passed in some future meeting.

Resolution about widening the Parkarma of Sri Darbar Sahib was presented by S. Mohan Singh and supported by S. Basant Singh in a meeting of the SGPC. This meeting of SGPC expressed its deep appreciation for the scheme about widening and beautifying the Parkarma and the surroundings of Sri Darbar Sahib and appealed to the Sangat s to extend maximum assistance to Sri Darbar Sahib Committee in the Panthik work. After voting, the said resolution was passed with majority vote, with only 4 votes going against it.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Proceedings of the General Meeting of SGPC, 7th March, 1942, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, *The Sikh Dunya*, April, 1943.

Another general meeting of the SGPC was held on November 28, 1943 at Sri Akal Takht Sahib, which supported the resolution in respect of the widening of the Parkarma of *Sri Darbar Sahib*.⁸⁰ The meeting of the Shiromani Committee resolved that the Amrit *of Khanda* should be jointly dispensed (ਛਕਾਉਣਾ) to men and women. It meant that men and women equally shared the 'Bata'. No Sikh organization had the right to dispense the Amrit of Khanda to men and that of Kirpan to women. On the contrary the person doing it was declared Tankaiyah by the Shiromani Committee and banned his Ardas and communication in Gurdwaras.⁸¹ S. Amar Singh Sher-e-Punjab presented a resolution about Ragnala in general meeting of the SGPC held on October 26, 1945.⁸² He informed the house that in 1936, the Dharmik Advisory Committee had decided that the Bhog of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib's* Paath should be held at 'Mundawani' but none should dare exclude Ragnala from *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. Some followed this decision while others did not since then the Bhog was held at 'Mundawani' at Sri Akal Takht Sahib, Sri Nankana Sahib and Sri Panja Sahib after their coming under Panthak control. When this issue was again raised by a member of the Dharmik Advisory Committee, a sub-committee was set up to present a report after 'darshan' of Holy Birs: Status Quo would be maintained about Ragnala until some decision was taken in the matter. After a proposal from Giani Kartar Singh which was endorsed by Jathedar Udham Singh, It was unanimously resolved that in the Panth , old traditions should be observed at different places without making any charge until the Dharmik Advisory Committee arrived at a decision about Ragnala.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.11.1943; for further details also see S. Shamsheer Singh Ashok, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, *Daa Panjha Saalaa Itihas*, p. 295.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 5.3.1944.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 26.10.1945.

After India became free, the issue pertaining to the socio-economic position and status of the Sikhs remained there unsolved. Soon after independence on August 15, 1947, the SGPC extended all the required help to the Sikhs who had left their homes in the west Punjab and settled in different parts of the present province of Punjab. It is true that the SGPC extended required help in kind and cash to the refugees who started living in various towns of the Punjab. It gave financial assistance, food, cloths and other essential goods and equipments in sufficient quantity to enable the migrated families to settle down in life.

Due to the disruption caused by the partition of Punjab and the migration of Lakhs of families from one side to another, the general condition of the country had been very bad. Internal administration in every field had been rather poor naturally. SGPC too could not remain unaffected by these developments. Many big historical gurdwaras controlled by it then fell in Pakistan. Consequently, the total property of these gurdwaras worth over rupees 12 crores yielding an annual income of over rupees 25 Lakhs had been left behind.⁸³ Apart from this loss of income and property, the SGPC was hard pressed to look after the refugees who had left behind their households and properties moveable and immovable. Since at that time it was the only Sikh organization actively participating in the welfare activities, every Sikh and non-Sikh expected to be at least temporarily relieved of the worries of food and shelter on coming under its supervision.⁸⁴ Due to its involvement the problems of providing food and shelter to the refugees from West Punjab (Pakistan), the whole staff of the Shiromani Committee had been too busy for the past one and half year or so. It was to be able to

⁸³ Proceeding of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on June 10, 1948, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

pay full attention to the task of overseeing gurdwara management. So the first thing that the newly elected Committee did was to direct the staff responsible for supervision of gurdwara management to get free from all other activities and devote themselves whole heartedly to their main task. Gurdwara inspectors were allotted areas District wise and interim member was made in charge of the inspection Branch.⁸⁵ Then, the inspectors were visiting their respective areas and supervising the management of gurdwaras. Efforts were being made to remove shortcomings wherever found. Moreover, enquiries were being conducted against many selfish and dishonest persons who took advantage of the unrest in the country and misused gurdwara funds. Cases had been filled after due enquiry and were still being filled to serve as an example for one and all propagation of religion.⁸⁶

Due to the loss of income from gurdwaras left behind in Pakistan and increase in expenditure caused by Langar, on the arrival of refugees from Pakistan and on construction, interior decoration, etc., the Committee's funds for religious propagation had suffered a big fall. Despite that, the Committee's existing Parchar missions at Hapur and Aligarh were continued and further propagation programmes were launched in Punjab. *Amrit* Parchar tours were arranged to Ferozepur, Ludhinana, Hoshiarpur and Jalandhar districts as well.⁸⁷ This work was done simply to encourage the Sikhs to come up to the need of the humanity. During the year, 273 refugee boy and girl students were given rupees 22,000 as scholarships from the Committee s' funds. Quilts and beddings worth rupees 6500 were sent for Kashmiri refugees; rupees 10,000 was set apart for providing '*Kakaars*' and baptizing forcibly

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

defied Singhs and Singhanis from Pakistan who sought captivation. Apart from that 'Dastars' and 'Kachhehraas' worth about rupees 2000 were distributed among the prisoners released from Pakistani Jails.⁸⁸ The families of the Singhs' who had died fighting were given the help of rupees 5000/-.

Keeping in mind the interest of the Sikh community as well as Sikh religion, in one of the meeting of the SGPC, discussion started for the first time, about the creation of a separate Sikh-state of its own kind in the country for the protection of Sikh religion and culture. Therefore, with great enthusiasm, Giani Sher Singh presented the following resolution in this connection: "In view of the dangers faced by Sikh religion, this general meeting of SGPC declared that (a) For the protection of Sikh religion, it was essential that efforts should be made for the creation of such a state which covered maximum Sikh population and no single community, Sikh, Hindu or Musalim should enjoy majority in this state; (b) In the opinion of this meeting, creation of Pakistan was extremely harmful; (c) Due to the formation of this suba, some Muslim majority districts were taken away from Punjab, its Sikh majority should enjoy the same rights in the new state or the state of which they became a part, as were enjoyed by the Sikhs and Hindus in Sirhind State, and the Muslims in Central Provinces; and (d) Strict rules should be made for the religious protection of the various communities throughout the country."⁸⁹ After much discussion, the resolution was passed unanimously.

This general meeting of SGPC reiterated its resolution of November 30, 1940 concerning Sikh states and expressed deep pain at the bad treatment meted out to Sikhs especially in Kapurthala state. It

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

requested the Panth to put in bold efforts to maintain Sikh, conduct, the status and dignity of the Sikhs in the states. After a debate by S. Kartar Singh Diwana and S. Natha Singh, the resolution in this respect was unanimously passed. Thus, the Sikh religion as well as the dignity of the Sikh community could be safeguarded and strengthened.⁹⁰ Another general meeting of the SGPC was held on February 27, 1943. When its regular proceedings started, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved. After that discussion started for the first time, about the creation of a separate Sikh-state of its own kind in the country for the protection of Sikh religion and culture, because the religious status and position of the Sikh community was quite dear to the leadership of the SGPC. In this very meeting, it reiterated its resolution of 30.11.1940 concerning Sikh state and expressed deep pain at the ugly and undesirable treatment meted out to the Sikhs especially in Kapurthala state. It requested the Panth to put in bold efforts to keep intact and then maintain dignity and Identity of the Sikhs in the Punjab states.⁹¹ It was realized that it could be possible only if the conduct of the Sikhs were properly watched and they were encouraged to follow the principles once advocated by the Sikh Gurus. After a debate by S. Kartar Singh Diwana and S. Natha Singh, the resolution was unanimously passed.

In another meeting held on October 10, 1954, it was resolved that was, therefore, a matter of great pleasure that the SGPC had taken steps in this direction. Unity and cooperation of all the Sikh sects was a result of the special endeavors of the committee a living example of this unity was provided by the collective participation of the Udasis, Nirmalas, and

⁹⁰ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on November 30, 1940.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

other Sikh sects, in the 'Nagar Kirtan' in the 'Guru ki Nagri' on the Gurburb Sri Guru Ram Das's taking Avtar.⁹² However, the committee had passed without any quarrel or dispute that the Gurdwara Act was solely to maintain religious 'Maryada' and 'Rauh Reet' in the gurdwaras. Those who had tried to use it for political purposes have had to face defeat. How evil it was to raise political slogans of 'Zindabad' 'Murdabad' in gurdwara premises. In the end, the efforts in this respect were appreciated and the concerned individuals, who had cooperated in this noble task, were congratulated on their courage and loyalty towards the Panth. S. Ishar Singh Majhail, President SGPC appreciated and endorsed these noble thoughts expressed by S. Udham Singh.⁹³

It is pertinent to mention that the SGPC made it clear on October 16, 1955 that it never liked the Police intervention, even entry in the premises of the gurdwaras. It held that the Police intervention was against the *Sikh* Maryada and moreover it was direct interference in the religious activities of the gurdwaras. Therefore, in its general meeting of the SGPC, S. Umrao presented the resolution. The general meeting of SGPC held long deliberations over the police action of July 4, 1955 in the premises of Sri Darbar Sahib Amritsar and the situation arising from that, after deep thought, the committee was of the firm opinion that action was totally uncalled for and objectionable. It was carried out with the intention of creating obstacles in the management of Sri Darbar Sahib and SGPC through that objectionable and illegal interference and violation of the sanctity of Sri Darbar Sahib Amrit sar and gurdwara Manji Sahib, the Government has delivered a severe and unbearable blow to the religious sentiments of the Sikhs. The meeting expressed it's strong resentment against this objectionable and uncalled for action of

⁹² *Ibid.*, 17.10.1954.

⁹³ *Ibid*; also see the proceedings of the meeting 4.7.1955.

violating the sanctity of religious places and demanded from the Government to hold an enquiry into the unfortunate event by setting up an impartial commission and suitably punish persons found responsible for it.

S. Umrao Singh further said it was very surprising that despite admitting that the Police action was unjust; the Government was flatly refusing to hold an enquiry. It was the height of injustice and high handedness on the part of the Police as well as the State Government. S. Gursharn Singh said, "Supporting the resolution, I say that no Sikh belonging to any party can tolerate the disrespect shown to gurdwaras. We have made untold sacrifices for the respect of gurdwaras during the British rule. Does the Congress Government demand similar sacrifices from us"? The D.C. stated that Police had to hold Lathi charge and threw brickbats in self-defense. However, the Sikhs followed Guru Arjan Dev's teachings and remained peaceful. Sikh pilgrims arriving on Masya were besieged and arrested. The Government should not have tried to repress the Qaum and desecrated gurdwaras. It would never be able to suppress their spirit with use of force. A wave of anger and resentment had run through the whole Qaum at that act of the Government resorting to Lathi charge and pelting brick bats did not behave a good Government. Supporting the resolution he strongly demanded that an enquiry should be conducted by setting up an enquiry commission consisting of responsible men, in order to identify guilty individuals. The D.C., DIG Ashwani Kumar and other guilty persons should be given severe punishments, it was demanded.⁹⁴ S. Hardev Singh opined, "Those Government officials who have committed these

⁹⁴ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, held on 14 January, 1949, library SGPC, Sri Amritsar.

excesses should be severally penalized.”⁹⁵ The resolution was adopted unanimously. The activity of the SGPC clearly displayed that the protection of the independence of the Sikh gurdwaras and also the feelings of the Sikhs was the primary duty of this supreme body of the Sikhs.

Under the authority of SGPC, the Executive Council passed its first resolution on June 10, 1948 that henceforth, gurdwaras would be made fountain heads of Gursikhi; no factional propaganda would be carried on there. It was further emphasized that the gurdwaras would only deal with religious activities and all sorts of efforts should be made to keep away politics from its vicinity.⁹⁶ Thereafter, S. Ishar Singh Majhail presented the following resolution that was passed: ‘This general meeting of SGPC Committee has heard with dismay and resentment that on the protest day against them on March 2, 1949, Master Tara Singh’s party, disregarding all religious sentiments, ancient traditions as well as dignity and sanctity of gurdwaras and forgetting all fear of Sri Guru Ram Dass and the master of Miri and Piri, Sri Guru Har Gobind Ji, breached the Maryada and discipline of gurdwaras, pelted brick bats at Sri Akal Takht Sahib and tore off the hinges of the door on the upper roof of Sri Harmandar Sahib and snatched the Kirpans of the sewadars of Sri Akal Takht Sahib.’⁹⁷ The meeting strongly condemned Giani Dhanwant Singh and S Jagjit Singh of ‘Khalsa Sewak’, members SGPC, for leading and directing the above-mentioned deplorable activities. The meeting applauded Singh Sahib Jathedar Mohan Singh who performed his duties in the face of danger and got beaten up while persuading these senseless rowdies to be reasonable.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.6.1948.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.1.1949.

Another significant issue was taken up by the SGPC members in one of its meetings held on January 14, 1949 related to the income of the Sikh gurdwaras. “The total income of all the gurdwaras for the coming year (1950) was estimated to be Rs 30 lakh. The total number of gurdwaras in the united Punjab before partition was 751 of which 179 gurdwaras had been left in Pakistan at the time of partition in 1947. With the application of Gurdwara Act on the Pepsu region, 176 more gurdwaras had been included in the list of the gurdwaras as schedule.” It would take more than a year’s time to take charge of these gurdwaras. The 34 gurdwaras of Pepsu which were managed by the Interim Gurdwara Board had then come under the control of the SGPC. The gurdwaras mentioned in Article 85 of the Sikh Gurdwara Act were under the direct management of SGPC but there were separate committee for the management of all other gurdwaras mentioned in articles 85 and 87 of the Sikh Gurdwara Act, 1925 was under the direct management of SGPC. Sri Panja Sahib, Sri Nankana Sahib and *Sri Dehra* Sahib had been left behind in Pakistan. With a recent amendment in the Gurdwara Act, Gurdwara Sri Dhamtan Sahib; Sri Fatehgarh *i* Patiala; Sri Nankana Sahib, Sangrur; Sri Ber Sahib, Sultanpur Lodhi; Gurdwara Sri Tegh Bahadur Sahib, Jind; and Sri Damdama Sahib had been included in the Gurdwaras of article 85 SGPC had not yet taken over the charge of Sri Damdama Sahib. The annual income of these ten gurdwaras of Article 85 was estimated to be Rs 19, 66, 600.⁹⁸ It was resolved that the income of the gurdwaras would be utilized only by the SGPC but this money would be spent only on the religious, socio-cultural and related festivals of the Sikh community only. The amount received in any form in the gurdwaras would be only meant for the

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 5.11.1959; also see S. Shamsheer Singh Ashok, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, *Daa Panjha Saalaa Itihas*, p. 296.

development of Sikh religion and emancipation of the Sikh community, particularly the women.

In one of the meetings of the SGPC held on November 5, 1959, S. Kartar Singh proposed and his proposal made was endorsed and finally passed in this meeting that the committee should make a declaration about the fifth Takht Damdama Sahib (Talwandi Sabo). After deep thought and deliberations over the matter, SGPC expressed the view that all discussions on the printing of Sri Guru Granth Sahib should be stopped immediately. Regarding the printing of *Sri* Guru Granth Sahib, the Damdam Sarup Bir completed by Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji and bestowed upon with Guruta (Guruship) should be made the basis for the printing. Thus it may be said that the SGPC was very serious in keeping the religious literature intact. The SGPC felt that that was its primary duty to upgrade the religious literature and also to see that literature reached the hands of the Sikhs, safely. Also its purpose was to develop religious institutions such as Gurdwaras and keep the Pawan Birs of Guru Granth Sahib as pious.⁹⁹

A sub-committee consisting of the President, SGPC, and its five gentlemen as well as five other gentlemen from the Sant Samaj was being appointed by the SGPC to do whatever was required in this connection. The said sub-committee of the SGPC decided that further printing of Sri Guru Granth Sahib should be done only as per the above committee's decision. They requested all other printers of Birs to abide by the SGPC's this decision. In this respect Prof. Satbir Singh presented a resolution that was passed unanimously.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Proceedings of the general meeting of the SGPC dated 5. November, 1959, library SGPC, Sri Amritsar.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

With great agony, the general meeting of SGPC of October 18, 1965 expressed strong resentment against the heinous act of consigning the Holy Bir of Sri Guru Granth Sahib to fire at Doraha on March, 23rd 1965. Owing to the sheer negligence of duty shown by the Punjab Government in arresting and punishing the guilty persons in the earlier incidents of this kind, the occurrence of such incidents was increasing day by day. There was also news of the beard of a Singh named Avtar Singh of Village Mangpure, Thana Kalait *Tehsil* Narwana, District Sangrur being forcibly clipped by the *Thanedar* of Kalait on March 14, 1965. Despite repeated appeals made to the concerned officials there was no report of any enquiry being conducted to punish the guilty *Thanedar*.¹⁰¹

Similarly, at Ludhiana, some misguided Arya Samajis had raised a dispute to hand over to Hindus the possession of Wadehrian Wali Sehaj Sikh Dharmashala. There were also reports about Police reaching and violating the Akhand Path of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Dozens of such reports had been recorded by the SGPC which showed that in free India deliberate efforts were being made under a well thought out plan to weaken and disgrace Singhs. With great pain, SGPC wanted to bring to the Government's notice that tragic state of affairs and to warn that to address to those incidents on war footing to win the trust of the Sikhs otherwise evil consequences were bound to follow.¹⁰² Here, it is worth mentioning that the SGPC though registered resentment very firmly and aggressively but its method to get the needful done was non-violent and peaceful. It always remained amicable in its approach while dealing with the Government and its officials. It is particularly worth mentioning that the SGPC since its inception had been following the

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 18.10.1965.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

policy of non violence and it never liked to indulge in violent activities at several times even when the situations were grim. In brief let it be stated that its main objective was to safeguard and protect the just character of the Sikh religion and Sikhism.

Fully endorsing the appeal issued by Sant Baba Fateh Singh to Sarbat Sikh Sangat , the meeting on March 31st, 1965 strongly urged that complete but peaceful strike should be observed. Resolutions should be passed and sent to the Government; their copies should be sent to the press and SGPC to atone for the disrespect shown to Sri Guru Granth Sahib, every Sikh should make an extra Path of Japuji Sahib in addition to the daily recitation.¹⁰³ It was also resolved that SGPC should publish a white paper in this respect and send it to Government officials, Sikh representatives, the entire Sikh world, and other religious institutions. This meeting of SGPC strongly denounced the act of the Police officials in breaching the Akhand Path of Sri Guru Granth Sahib at Dharamshala Wadehrian, Ludhiana and entering there with their shoes on. It urged upon the Government to take appropriate and immediate action against the guilty Police officials whose nefarious acts had distressed the entire Sikh nation. The meeting strongly demanded that the Police should immediately hand over the possession of Dharamshala, Wadehrian to the former management.'

S. Gurnam Singh, S. Gultar Singh, S. Lachhman Singh Gill, S Kartar Singh Takkar. S, Darshan Singh Sultanwind, S. Surjan Singh Ludhiana, S. Mewa Singh, S. Santokh Singh Delhi, etc. gave clear-cut proofs of the excesses being committed against the Sikhs not only in Punjab but also in other regions of the country as well. S. Gurnam Singh's resolution was therefore passed unanimously amidst loud

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, March 31, 1965.

slogans. Hence, that became quite clear that the SGPC, being the supreme body of the Sikh community always felt concerned about the sanctity of the Sikh gurdwaras, Sikh religion and also its identity.¹⁰⁴ In brief, has remained very sincere to the cause for which it was constituted. Even it's Presidents, Vice Presidents, other members of the general council and also executive council, were very seriously protecting their faith, its institutions and also watching the interests of their community. It will not be out of place if some more facts about the mission of the SGPC are cited here in order to make and understand its objectives and activities more clearly. The income of the gurdwaras could be used only for their management and for other humane works such as charitable, religious and educational purposes.

The SGPC has explained the meaning of details word Sikh. It has also explained the duties of a true Sikhs towards Sikh religion and institutions. It has also made clear what the 'Amrit dhari Sikh' meant and included every individual who had taken Khande-Ka-Amrit or Khands Pahul prepared and administered according to the tenets of Sikh religion and rites at the hands of five pyaras or 'beloved ones'. "Patit" meant a person who being a Keshadhari Sikh trimmed or shaved his beard or Keshas or who after taking Amrit *committed* any one or more of the four kurahits.¹⁰⁵

SGPC, the supreme organization of the Sikhs was greatly perturbed over intended demolition of the Central Sikh gurdwara by the Singapore Government under the pretext of modernizing the urban habitat. The proposed action of the Singapore Government was highly unjust and condemnable, because it hurt the religious feelings of the

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ See Appendix No. I.

Sikhs. The SGPC, therefore, strongly urged the Government of India to apprise the Singapore Government of the Sikh sentiments, and impress on that Government through its diplomatic channel to desist from implementing this proposed demolition. The Sikhs of Singapore had made a significant contribution both in its defense and freedom struggle; indeed, it was unbecoming to reward them in that manner. The SGPC hoped that the Singapore Government would take cognizance of all those factors and would not implement its ill-advised and provocative decision of dismantling Sikh gurdwaras, which was bound to create world-wide repercussion among the Sikhs.¹⁰⁶

That General meeting of the SGPC which commanded the Supreme statutory positions as the controlling and co-ordinating organization of Sikh gurdwaras demanded that a High Powered Radio Station be set up at Amrit sar for the exclusive purpose of broadcasting to the entire world the hymns of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and GurBani of the Sikh Gurus. The SGPC assured the Government of Indian that that station would not be used for any political propaganda except the relay of Shabad Kirtan, and the station might be manned by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India. The Cost of proposed project involving considerable foreign exchange and the expenditure on building etc. would be financed by the Indian emigrants in U.K. as voluntary contribution, and it would not be a burden on the Government of India. The SGPC, therefore, requested the Government of Indian to accord its approval to that project at the earliest.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ *Gurdwara Gazettee*, April 1978, pp. 7-19; proceedings of the general meeting of the SGPC held on March 12, 1978.

¹⁰⁷ *Gurdwara Gazettee*, April 1978, pp. 7-19; proceedings of the general meeting of the SGPC held on March 12, 1978.

The SGPC also demanded that restrictions imposed by the previous Government of Smt. Indra Gandhi, on the entry into India of certain Sikhs, be removed forthwith, and they might be allowed to visit India without any restriction or condition, what so ever. The General Body of SGPC urged the Government of India to halt with immediate effect the grossly atrocious, unwarranted and humiliating steps being taken by the Enforcement authorities in Punjab, particularly in the Hoshiarpur, Jullundur and Kapurthala Districts. Such steps were taken under the provisions were relating to remittances from abroad with retrospective effect that amended during the discredited Emergency regime of Mrs. Indra Gandhi. Respective and arbitrary measures had been let loose by the Enforcement Staff of the Ministry of Finance, Government of India in the province of Punjab in the name of alleged violations of the Reserve Bank of India rules changed into authoritarian style by the undemocratic rulers now discarded by the masses.¹⁰⁸

The persons of Punjab origin, settled in far off land of the world, had been enriching their mother-land and depended on their families left behind with remittances of their legally-earned wealth over the past few decades and the same had been well-utilized for development works, like education, house-building, agriculture, industry and business for the ultimate and collective progress of the State and the country instead of appreciating and rewarding them for their spirit of self-reliance and sturdy progressivism for the economic improvement of their relations as well as their motherland. Their relations were being harassed, implicated in false and flimsy cases and humiliated through inquiries, arrests and trials, away from their normal places of residence. The SGPC unanimously resolved to demand of the Government of India, the

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

notorious amendment of the Reserve Bank Rules in this connection should be immediately scrapped by the Government of India and the policy of which-hunt of *Punjabis*, who constituted the bulk of emigrants from India, should be abandoned forthwith by the Enforcement Staff.¹⁰⁹

The SGPC placed on record its grave concern for non-inclusion of Sikh representatives in the Minority Commission. This action of the Government added to their long list of grievances for the discriminatory treatment against the Sikhs. It is relevant to add that the Sikhs were a separate community having their own religion, philosophy, customs and way of living which happen to be basically different of Hindus. They, therefore, refused to be treated as such. Under the circumstances the SGPC earnestly demanded that two Sikhs be included in the Minority-Commission on the recommendation of the SGPC. The meeting of the General body of the SGPC unanimously resolved to request the Government of India to take immediate steps for the conferment of the rights of Dual Citizenship upon the emigrants of Indian origin then settled abroad to do so in future. The Governments of Italy and Pakistan had set international precedents for according dual citizenship. This is a worthy example to be followed by our Government. These feelings of the SGPC would not only help Indian swell her foreign exchange reserves tremendously but would also go a long way in stepping up investments in industry, business and other economic development of the country; since the curbs and restrictions on their hard-earned money would evaporate; once the status of Dual Citizenship was made available to the emigrants and settlers abroad of Indian origin.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Another meeting of the SGPC resolved to express its grave concern over the ban imposed upon the entry of the Sikhs into Saudi Arabia by its Government. All the facilities available to the other nationals had been denied to the Sikh residents of the country. As a result of that discriminatory action of the Government the Sikhs had started defacing their Sikh identity either to get entry in Saudi Arabia or to keep their stay in that country. In this meeting of August, the representative body of the Sikhs (SGPC) strongly condemned the biased attitude of the Government of India's efforts to exercise its full influence through diplomatic channels to persuade the Government of Saudi Arabia to lift the ban on the entry of the Sikhs into that country. Lastly let it be noticed that the SGPC always remained vigilant and when ever there seemed any danger to the identity of the Sikhs, whether with in the country and outside, the SGPC at once registered its protest and resistance. Above all this body succeeded in all of its activities related to religion of the Sikh community.¹¹¹

If any Sikh, may be of any stature, status and position, has gone against the principles and ideology of Sikhism, without any discrimination he has been taken to task. Such men (without caring for their status) have been summoned to the Akal Takht from time to time and asked to apologise; where as some proclaimed tankhahiya and as religious atonement have been asked to clean the utensils in the common kitchen; or to serve in the common kitchen; or to clean the pair of shoes of the visitors to the Golden Temple; SGPC gave full support to implementation of the edicts of the Akal Takht. Defiance of edicts of Akal Takht has led to the excommunication from Sikh Panth. This way SGPC could keep intact the socio-economic position, religious identity of the Sikhs and also maintain the prestige of Sri Akal Takhat.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER-IV

SGPC AND EDUCATION

The Wood's Dispatch of 1854, laid the base of modern education in India. With it began a new era in the history of education not only in India but also in Punjab.¹ Organizations of the Sikhs like the Kuka and the Singh Sabha soon after their formation began to take interest in the field of education. Both these bodies had realized the worth of educating the individuals of their community. Thus, due to the efforts made by them this impulse could be noticed in the Sikh community. Arya Samaj and some other Hindu organizations too had starting taking keen interest in the field of education. The Sikh leadership began to realize that without the spread of education among the Sikhs, they would not be able to rise and compete with other social segments of the province. Before the formation of the Singh Sabha, Namdhari or Kuka organization had not only undertaken the work of socio-religious emancipation among the Sikhs but it had started taking keen interest in the field of education. It also made some efforts to develop education among the Sikhs; to enable them to understand and follow the true path of their religion and philosophy of life. However, it was some time in 1856, the Punjab Government constituted a separate department of education. It was required to open schools independent of Mosques, temples and gurdwaras, to which they had been previously attached.² The chief purpose was to free education from the religious influence and to make it effective and secular in its character. The Sikh intelligentsia responded

¹ *Despatch of 1854*, Para 50 quoted in monograph No. 5 (PSAP); for further details see, Harbans Singh, 'Beginning of Modern Sikh Education', *The Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. VIII, April 1974, p. 127.

² Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.II, Delhi, 1990, p. 145.

to these gestures of Government under the auspices of Singh Sabha, the Chief Khalsa Diwan and then Sikh Educational Conference. Soon these organizations established a large number of educational institutions for primary, middle and high schools education.³ Arya Samaj educational institutions too had influenced and motivated the Sikh leadership to open their own educational institutions on the same pattern and lines, as they had realized and felt convinced that education was must for the proliferation of their faith.⁴

During the Sikh rule Maktabas (schools), Madrasas and Pathshalas existed where Persian, Arabic, Gurmukhi and Sanskrit were taught; also elementary knowledge was imparted to the young scholars as per their need.⁵ By this time the individuals of the Sikh community began to realize that only those, who were acquainted with Gurmukhi script, would be able to know, understand and follow the religious writings- Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Janamsakhis and the vars of Bhai Gurdas.⁶ Thus, the development and spread of education at advanced level became essential for the Sikhs. During Ranjit Singh's period there were schools founded with the aid of the state. In Amritsar, e.g. there were Bhai Joone Singh schools, where both the Adi Granth and the Dasam Granth; Gur Bilas and some other religious books, along with arithmetic, grammar and

³ V.P. Rana, *Dilemma of Growth*; Education and Punjabi Society, Delhi, 1982, p. 106.

⁴ *Ibid*; for further details see, H.R. Mehta, *A History of the Growth and Development of Western Education in the Punjab*, Language Department, Patiala, 1927, p. 12.

⁵ H.R. Mehta, *A History of the Growth and Development of Western Education in the Punjab*, Language Department, Patiala, 1927, p. 12; *Punjab Administration Reports 1849-51*, p. 143; *Report on Progress of education in India (1887-88 to 1891-92)*, para. 195.

⁶ *Punjab Administration Reports 1849-51*, p. 143; *Report on Progress of education in India (1887-88 to 1891-92)*, para. 195; E.W. Leiter, *History of Indigenous Education in Punjab*, Calcutta, 1882, pp. 98-99; *Report on Popular education in Punjab and its dependencies*, 1862-63. Lahore, 1863, para, 62.

Puranas, were taught.⁷ Similarly, there were Bhai Kahan Singh's schools where the teachers held the class in their own respective houses. There they taught religious texts.⁸ Bhai Ram Singh, known for his learning, also established school. The students from distant parts of the province came there to take lessons and to receive primary education and of other subjects as well. Scriptures, Vyakaran, Kavya, Alankar, Pingal, literature, history, Niti Shastra, arithmetic and astronomy were the major subjects of teaching in these schools. These schools were endowed with Jagirs and grants by the Maharaja.⁹

The Nirmalas and the Udasis sects of the Sikhs had founded schools in deras or monasteries; there a kind of elementary and primary education was given to all the pupils who lived there. The local communities supported the primary education in villages. Some teachers were paid in cash, but majority of them in kind. Pupils usually paid a *pie* or two per month as fees in addition to the goods they used to give as gifts or as token of respect and affection on festivals or some special occasions in their family like births and weddings.¹⁰ The average income of a teacher scarcely exceeded Rupees. 2 a month in cash, but offerings in kind and fees for performing religious ceremonies considerably supplemented his means of subsistence.¹¹

⁷ *Report on the Indian Government Progress of Education in India 1887-98 to 1901-02* by R. Nathan, para, 912.

⁸ Y.B. Mathur, *British Administration of Punjab, 1848-1901*, Delhi, 1973, p. 100.

⁹ *Home Department (education) Proceedings*, 17th May, 1864, No. 25-28; *Selection from the Government of India Home Department Records*, No. CIV, para, 214.

¹⁰ *Selection from the records of the Government of India Home Department Records*, No. LXVIII, p. 56; *Khalsa Akhbar* (Lahore) Saturday, November 6, 1886.

¹¹ *The Arya Gazette (Lahore) 28th April, 1898-Selection from the Vernacular News papers* published in Punjab, received up to 7th May, 1898, Vol. XI, Reference No. 19; *Report on Indian Government progress of education in India 1897-98 to 1901-02*, para, 929.

Under the new set up some notable changes were introduced in the existing education system. Some new secular or religiously neutral vernacular schools were opened; there Urdu, elementary arithmetic, geography and history were mainly taught. English schools for higher studies were also established by the British.¹² Another variety consisted of the missionary schools set up by Christian missionary's organizations. In 1856 the Punjab Government constituted and set up the Department of Public Instruction with T.W. Arnold as Director.¹³ This Department opened thirty single-teacher primary schools in different districts at a monthly expense of rupees 15 per school. Soon, the education scheme was revised; it was decided to open aided schools with a grant of rupees 5 per to each school. This enabled the Department to have 90 schools instead of 30 as originally planned. Then the government freely invited individual's cooperation in promoting primary education.¹⁴

It was an important reality that the Sikhs as a result of their own inherent genius first endeavored in this respect. They first got themselves educated particularly to primary education that was the founding stone.¹⁵ For the evolution of primary education the Singh Sabha played a vital role which the SGPC undertook and continued at later stage. The Singh Sabha did spread literacy, education and religious continuousness among the Sikhs. Various Singh Sabhas worked for promotion of education in the Sikh community. It opened a large number of primary schools in different parts of the province. The Sikh educational conference too realized the significance of primary

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Education committee, Chief Khalsa Diwan, 7th Annual Report for the year 1914-15, Amritsar (for further details).

¹⁵ *Ibid*; Harbans Singh's *The Punjab past and present*,.

education; therefore it paid special intention to it. So, many schools were opened during 1914-1915. The number of primary schools for boys was quite large in comparison to girls' schools. These were governed by the educational committee constituted by the Educational Conference.¹⁶

The aims of the Sikh Educational Conference were: promotion of new education, women education; religious education, Punjabi language or Gurmukhi script. The system of education as envisaged by the education conference was a well founded one. It laid much emphasis on both male and female education, and also equally on Sikh religion, Sikh history, Sikh traditions and the western ideas. It further emphasized on liberal education, professional education; on learning of English and vernacular language. It too emphasized that the medium of instruction should be the mother tongue along with the English. A chain of Khalsa primary schools was founded especially in Amritsar, Lahore and Ferozpur. Almost each and every village in Punjab had a school of its own. It provided elementary and primary education to both male and female. Bhai Takht Singh founded Sikh Kanya Maha Vidyalaya in Ferozpur in 1892. The number of Sikh educational institutions constantly increased during the first ten years of the Sikh educational conference i.e. from 7 in 1908-09 to 110 in 1914-15 and to 210 in 1917-18.¹⁷ The campus of each school had a gurdwara where the students gathered for morning and evening prayers.¹⁸ Gurmat Vichar or Sikh teachings constituted curriculum. The Sikh intellectuals like Teja Singh (1895-1977), Bhai Jodh Singh (1882-1981), Sahib Singh (1892-1977),

¹⁶ *Report on the Indian Government Progress of Education in India: 1901-02 to 1914-15*, R. Nathan, para, 918.

¹⁷ Kahan Singh Nabha Gurshabd Ratnakar Mahankah, Bhasha, Vibhay, Patiala, 1974, p. 16-17.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

and some others served as teachers of Gurmat at Khalsa schools. Syllabi taught there was later developed by Dharam Parchar Committee on behalf of the SGPC in form of elaborate teaching material (Dharam Pothis).

When the SGPC was constituted, it considered its religious duty not only to look after the educational institutions set by the Singh Sabha and other Sikh organizations/societies but to assist them financially so that education could reach the Sikh masses. The SGPC was convinced that education was essential for the development of its society; for the emergence of reformative movements, political consciousness and considerable economic growth in the province. The educational programme carried out by the SGPC and some other Sikh organizations so vigorously motivated the Sikh masses, particularly the youth to undertake social welfare works, especially the emancipation of women, opening of orphanages, houses for the poor and relief work during the famines and epidemics.¹⁹

The impact of education and the social transformation in the Punjab left deep imprint on Sikhs' minds, especially their leadership. Consequently, the leading organizations of the Sikhs i.e. SGPC and Shiromani Akali Dal decided to work together for the emancipation of their community. They realized that they could achieve that only through the development and spread of education. They also felt that that could be possible if after independence they paid more attention to the spread and evolution of education particularly for the Sikh community. The SGPC too did much in the field of education even before partition. Here, it is pertinent to mention that during the period of our study the SGPC founded 10 senior secondary and high schools their

¹⁹ *Ibid*; Proceedings of the general meeting of the SGPC held on February 21, 1929, Library SGPC (reference section), Sri Amritsar.

names are as such: Sri Guru Ram Das Khalsa Senior Secondary School Sri Amritsar; Sri Guru Nanak Girls Senior Secondary School, Sri Amritsar; Khalsa Senior Secondary Schools Beer Sahib, Thatha (Sri Amritsar); Bhupinder Khalsa Senior Secondary School, Moga; Guru Gobind Singh Senior Secondary School, Khanna; Kallar Khalsa Senior Secondary Schools, Haryana (Hoshiarpur); Guru Nanak High School Takhtupura (Moga); Sri Mata Ganga Girls High School Baba Bakala (Sri Amritsar); Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Khalsa High School Baba Bakala (Sri Amritsar); Khalsa High School Guru Ka Bagh, Sri Amritsar. These schools get 95% grant in-Aid. To this it may be added that 21 public schools were set up by the efforts of the SGPC.²⁰ However, no grant-in-aid has been given to them. It also founded 22 Colleges in different parts of the province which were supported financially by the SGPC. It will be appropriate if some of the resolutions passed by the SGPC (pertaining to education) before and after independence are cited here:

In one of the general meetings of the SGPC, S. Chanan Singh presented the resolution that a rule should be implemented by the committee that the Sikh boys of Khalsa Biradari i.e. Rehtias Mazhabis and other untouchables should be given free education at Sikh National College, Lahore.²¹ S. Harnam Singh further suggested an amendment that not only Sikh National College, Lahore but all the Sikh Educational Ashrams should be urged to give special consideration to the wards of the so-called untouchable Singh's while granting scholarships and fee concessions. His amendment was also accepted and finally unanimously resolved that the management of Sikh Educational Ashrams would pay special attention to the wards of the so-called untouchables.²²

²⁰ For details see, appendixes II and III.

²¹ Proceedings of the general meeting of the SGPC held on February 21, 1929, Library SGPC (reference section), Sri Amritsar.

²² *Ibid.*

In the general meeting of the SGPC of November 28th, 1937, it was resolved that rupees 10,000 should be given to the Sikh Education Society, Lahore out of the annual budget of Sri Akal Takhat Sahib, Amritsar as to open Sikh National College at Lahore.²³

The general meeting of the SGPC of June 29, 1939, resolved that hence forward three-year programmes should be chalked out to promote the economic, fraternal and educational progress of the Sikh Panth. It also resolved that in order to implement the above resolution, adult education should be started through out Punjab under the three-year programme to raise the level of education in the Panth. The working committee prepared a Scheme for Adult Education and presented that it in the next meeting of the committee. It further instructed all the local committees not to make any expenditure apart from the routine expenses without the permission of the SGPC and every local committee should contribute 20 percent of its annual income every year to this three-year programme of adult education of the SGPC. In view of the experiences and the difficulties encountered during the previous years, this meeting of the SGPC unanimously resolved that necessary amendments should have been made in the Gurdwara Act to ensure that the Panthic fund was accumulated at one place and the SGPC had the sole authority to disburse that. A sub-committee should be set up to achieve this very end. Further it was also resolved that a part of the accumulated fund should be spent on the progress of education²⁴ meant for the Sikh community only.

²³ Proceedings of the general meeting of the SGPC held on November 28th, 1937, visit library SGPC (reference section), Sri Amritsar; for resolution also see, Shamsheer Singh Ashok, *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee da Panjah Saala Itihas (1926-1976)*, Amritsar, 2003, p. 174.

²⁴ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on June 29, 1939, Library SGPC reference section, Amritsar; *Government Gazettee* of the year

Another General Meeting of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee was held on March 3rd, 1942 which criticized the school syllabus proposed by the Education Department of the Punjab Government. It was to be implemented in the coming year i.e. 1943. It totally stopped the teaching of the second vernacular language which means that that Urdu being the language of the courts would have to be studied by all but nobody would be able to study Pinyati which was the official language of the state and the language of the religious and cultural books of the Sikhs.²⁵ This attitude of the Punjab Government was totally unjustified and contrary to the assurances given by the Prime Minister (ਦੱਡਾ ਵਜ਼ੀਰ) about maintaining status quo. Presenting strongly against this attitude, the meeting demanded that the study of the second vernacular language be incorporated in the syllabus as before. The meeting also appealed to all the Gurdwara Committees, Singh Sabhas, Managing Committees of schools and colleges, other Sikh Societies and the press to launch a mighty agitation against this unfair attitude so that it became impossible for the Punjab Education Department to implement this unfair and incomplete syllabus.²⁶

In its general meeting of March 3rd 1942 a resolution was unanimously passed about the teaching of Punjabi to the Sikh students at the School level. In this resolution it was decided to (a) Step up efforts for the study of Gurmukhi and also particularly adult education; (b) To Step up a Sikh University which should arrange education in Medicine, Medical Sciences, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, Chemistry, etc; (c) To lay emphasis on the study of Sikh history, religious education

1939, Khalsa College Library, Amritsar; for more details also see the work S. Shamsheer Singh Ashok, p. 199.

²⁵ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on March 3rd, 1942, Library SGPC reference section, Amritsar; *Government Gazettee* of the year 1942, Khalsa College Library, Amritsar;

²⁶ *Ibid.*

and Punjabi in Sikh Schools and Colleges and (d) To open libraries in villages to enable the masses to acquire at least elementary education to read the books available in such libraries.²⁷

Another important feature of its policy and attitude regarding education, the SGPC began to award divinity scholarships to students from March 1945 onwards who won the top positions in competitive examination held every year. It provided financial assistance and also teams for Amrit Parchar in order to strengthen the Sikh religion among the illiterate Sikh masses. It established a Central Sikh Museum where hand-loom, old manuscripts and paintings were displayed. The Central Sikh Ithas Research Board happened to be one of its main departments. It also began to maintain a research and reference library on Sikh history.

In one of the general meetings of the SGPC in 1945, it was resolved that the Qaum should have its own university for the study of Sikh culture and traditions and also the education of every type. This meeting authorized the Executive Council to form a three-member committee to cooperate with it to seek help from other Sikh bodies and all the concerned institutions to accomplish this. It too resolved that such schools should be opened as early as possible for providing Gurumukhi education and also for the spread of religious education among Mazhabi Sikhs, etc. It was further pointed out, due to the lack of such education; the missionaries tried to detract them from Sikh faith. During this period, the SGPC set up the following institutions: Sri Guru Ram Das Library, Sikh Reference Library, Gurdwara Printing Press, Khalsa College Bombay, Guru Nanak Engineering College, Ludhiana, Guru Ram Das High School, Sikh Missionary College, Amritsar, Khalsa

²⁷ *Ibid*; Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on March 10, 1945, Library SGPC, reference section, Amritsar.

College, Sh. Damdama Sahib Talwandi Sabo, Mata Gujrai College, Fatehgarh Sahib, Sirhind, etc.²⁸ These were founded for the convenience of the Sikh students. Greater emphasis was laid on propagation of elementary, primary and higher education.²⁹ From this work it was quite clear that the SGPC, though a religious body, but it had fully realized that its community, particularly the youth (both male and female) could not be successful if they remained illiterate. It obviously thought it its duty to take interest in the development and spread of education in the Punjab in particular and also in other parts of the country in general to enable the Sikhs to obtain education without much difficulty and compete the youth of other communities in all walks of life.

The general meeting of the SGPC held on January 1, 1949 resolved that schools of Gurmukhi education should be opened as early as possible for the spread of religious education among Mazhabi Sikhs, etc. In this meeting the committee had also decided to open a technical school at Amritsar to provide training in wireless and Telegraphy, Radio Engineering and electrical engineering.³⁰ For the economic progress of the girls of these classes, it had also been decided to set up Hand-crafts Training Schools at various places to teach them Handloom work and Leather Tanning. Thus the SGPC was taking special interest in the female education so that the Sikh women should not remain illiterate, rather they should compete with the women of other communities.³¹

Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee held another meeting on March 8, 1953. In this meeting a decision was taken to provide financial aid to Engineering College, Ludhiana. It was also

²⁸ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on March 3, 1948 and November 16, 1948, Library SGPC, reference section, Amritsar.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on January 1, 1949, Library SGPC, reference section, Amritsar.

³¹ *Ibid.*; also see *Government Gazette* of 1949.

decided that out of the Handicrafts Fund of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee rupees. 2 Lakh be given to Nankana Sahib Education Trust as aid to open Engineering College Ludhiana. The Trust should also be given rupees 8 Lakhs from the funds of Sri Nankana Sahib and Sri Panja Sahib by making the requisite amendment in the Gurdwara Act.³² This resolution was passed unanimously. The budget of the educational ashrams under the management of SGPC was presented and passed in its general meeting held on March 7, 1959 as under:³³

	Income in Rs.	Expenditure in Rs.
1. Khalsa College, Bombay	8, 16, 751	(769748) 87
2. Sri Guru Ram Das High School, Amritsar	69,000	103590
3. Bhupinder Khalsa High School, Moga	26000	48000
4. Sri Guru Nanak Kanya Pathshala, Amritsar	30,000	42,000

In the same general meeting of the SGPC a proposal for Mata Gujri College Fatehgarh Sahib, Sirhind was introduced. It was decided to set apart an amount of rupees 50,000 for setting up the said College in the name of Shahid Mata Gujri. Similarly, with the President's permission, S. Dhanna Singh Gulshan presented a resolution: 'keeping in view the importance of Sri Damdama Sahib (Talwandi Sabo), District Bathinda and the need of a Khalsa College in the Guru Kashi. This meeting of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee on 7th of March 1959 recommended that a college be set up there'.³⁴

³² Proceeding of the General Meeting of the SGPC dated March 8, 1953.

³³ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on March 7, 1959, reference section Library SGPC, Amritsar.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

Grant of Rupees 40,000 to Guru Nanak Engineering College Ludhiana was recommended by the executive committee vide its resolution No 1923, dated 11/11/1961. It was unanimously decided to sanction this grant of rupees 40,000 from the leased Land Account, when the said resolution was presented.³⁵ At the end of the five years term of the previous trustees on December 31, 1962 six new trustees were unanimously appointed by the committee for the above trust under Article (1) (B) of the Trust Deed.³⁶ Similarly Rs 5,22,000 were approved as total income and expenditure in the Educational Fund. Accounts of some other funds were also passed, in the general meetings of the SGPC held on March 3, 1963 and August 1, 1964. It was done to boost education in the province of Punjab keeping in mind the need of the Sikh masses.³⁷ Resolution regarding SGPC taking over the management of Mata Gurji College Sri Fatehgarh Sahib was taken up along with the interim committee's resolution No. 10 and 12 dated October 1, 1964. It was resolved that the interim committee be fully authorized to take any decision regarding the takeover of the College management and preparing its plan.³⁸

When the issue of the nomination of 10 members by the SGPC under 4 (c) of Sikh Education Society, Sikh National College Kadia (Gurdaspur) and Sikh National College Banga (Jalandhar), came up, S. Lachhman Singh Gill, General Secretary SGPC proposed ten names in the general meeting of the SGPC held on March 20, 1966 which were

³⁵ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on November 30, 1961, reference section Library SGPC, Amritsar

³⁶ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on October 10, 1962, and also of December 31, 1962, reference section Library SGPC, Amritsar.

³⁷ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on March 3, 1963 and also of August I, 1964, reference section Library SGPC, Amritsar

³⁸ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on October 1, 1964, reference section Library SGPC, Amritsar

unanimously approved. In this respect a resolution was unanimously passed and appointment of the members of Sikh Education Society was approved.³⁹ In another general meeting of the SGPC held on January 1, 1968 the issue concerning trustees of Sri Nankana Sahib Education Trust, Ludhiana was raised due to the completion of five-year term of the trustees of the said Trust. Principal Bharpur Singh proposed the names of new trustees, which were seconded by S. Rawail Singh Advocate. Since no other names were proposed, they were nominated trustees of Sri Nankana Sahib Education Trust, Ludhiana on January 1, 1968 for the coming five years.⁴⁰ This way the SGPC was particular about the functioning of the trust and the institutions that functioned under a particular trust. Another worth mentioning fact was that only men of caliber and who were interested in the field of education were appointed. They were expected that they must not indulge in politics rather look after advancement of the concerned institution for which they were appointed as trustees.

In one of its meetings held on November 12, 1967 the SGPC approved the supplementary budget of rupees 28968-98 as an additional education fund for Mata Gujri College, Fatgehgarh Sahib Sirhind for the year 1967-68 and 1968-69. Similarly, it approved supplementary budgets for some other educational institutions in the Punjab.⁴¹ It was made clear that the SGPC wanted to improve the infra structure of these institutions and also desire to improve the standard of education, particularly teaching. It is equally important to mention that a sum of

³⁹ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on March 20, 1966, reference section Library SGPC, Amritsar

⁴⁰ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on January 1, 1968, and also of August I, 1968, reference section Library SGPC, Amritsar.

⁴¹ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on November 12, 1967, reference section Library SGPC, Amritsar.

rupees 2500 was year- marked in the year 1971-72 for getting prepared two trophies to be given to Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar as per the decision taken by the Executive Council through its resolution 65 on December 5, 1971. A sum of Rs 25,000 was also approved for the emancipation of the Sikh community living in U.P.⁴²

The SGPC was not only concerned to develop and spread education in different parts of the country, rather it equally felt concerned with the different happenings that took place in educational institutions in different parts of the province and also in other states. For instance, general meeting of the SGPC held on October 20, 1972, expressed profound grief at the tragic incident of the police mercilessly shooting down innocent and unarmed students at Moga on 5th and 7th October, 1972. It strongly condemned the act of atrocity and prayed to the Akal Purkh to grant peace to the souls of these young martyrs and courage to the parents and relatives to accept Gods' will.⁴³ Now, let us narrate in brief the development of the education in the form of higher educational institution setup by the SGPC. These institutions are situated in 14 districts of the Punjab and looked after by the SGPC.

A few visits were made to the Directorate of Education recently constituted by the SGPC leadership. The information about the institutions of higher education run by the SGPC has been collected from the records maintained by this organization as well as from the interviews with some prominent personalities.⁴⁴ It is pertinent of

⁴² Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on December 5, 1971, reference section Library SGPC, Amritsar.

⁴³ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC held on October 5 and 7, 1972 and also of October 20 and 23, 1972, reference section Library SGPC, Amritsar

⁴⁴ Jathedar Avtar Singh Makkar (President, SGPC) Dr. G.S. Walia (Director, Directorate SGPC), S. Manjit Singh (In charge of Educational Trust of SGPC), Sram Singh (Head of Publication Department of SGPC), S. Skatter

mention here that not only degree colleges have been established by the SGPC but it has also made a significant contribution in the field of professional education, in the main being engineering and medical education.

Technical/ Professional Institution: Guru Nanak Dev Engineering College, Ludhiana, (presently affiliated to Punjab Technical University) was established by the Nanakana Sahib Education Trust (NSET) in memory of the most sacred temple of Nankana Sahib, Guru Nanak's birth place. It was the main force behind the mission of “Removal of Economic Backwardness through Technology”. With this mission, a Polytechnic was started in 1953 and then Guru Nanak Dev Engineering College was established in 1956. It was to uplift the vast weaker section of Sikh community comprising rural India by admitting 70% students every year from rural areas. This commitment was made to the nation on 8th April, 1956, the day when the foundation stone of the College building was laid by Late Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the First President of India. Nearly 10,500 Graduate and 350 Post-Graduate Engineers have passed out from this College till 1984 and are at present successfully employed in different parts of India and abroad. It has signed MOU with IOWA University (USA). The Institute has been accredited by NBA (National Board of Accreditation) New Delhi. The College was initially started with three conventional degree level engineering courses only i.e. Civil, Mechanical and Electrical. The College kept pace with the unending fast expansion in the field of engineering. Degree courses in

Singh (Supervisor of Educational Trust) and also Principals of different institutions run by the SGPC and above all the Chairman Punjab school Education Board Dr. Dalbir Singh Dhillon are the persons whom I have interviewed. (The various documents published by the SGPC regarding education and educational institutions have been examined and also analyzed) (First, an information sheet was prepared to collect needed information and then documentary analysis and interview technique have been applied to gather the required information).

Electronics & Communication Engineering and Production were started in 1981, 1986 respectively. Another two courses in emerging branches of engineering i.e. CSE & IT were also introduced. While introducing new branches, employability and need of the industry was given top priority. The following courses of study i.e. B.Tech., M.Tech., Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Production Engineering are offered by the College.⁴⁵ It may be observed that this institution is properly fulfilling its mission that is removal of economic backwardness through technology for which this college was established. It is working for the emancipation of poor students in this global world by providing them education of international level. The technical education developed by the SGPC is a remarkable contribution in the field of education. So, it deserves a special credit for the interest it has shown in the field of professional education.⁴⁶

Medical Education: Sri Guru Ram Das Institute of Medical Sciences and Research was established in 1971. The institute is coming up fast at the Amritsar Mehta Road with a sprawling new campus in about 65 acres of land. It has been named after the name of fourth Sikh Guru, Sri Guru Ram Das, the founder of the holy city of Amritsar. The classes in the above institute of Medical Sciences and Research practically started in the year 1997. The first batch of MBBS passed in December 2002. The institute presently has all Para-clinical departments and four lecture theaters of 150 seat capacities each. Ultra modern 992-beds new hospital building had been constructed within the new campus of the Medical Institute. It is functional with all the facilities required of a modern hospital in various specialties and super-specialties at an estimated cost

⁴⁵ Interview with the Principal Mrs. M.S. Sahni in his office conducted by the candidate on May 15, 2005; also the office record of the college shown to the scholar by the college office.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

of rupees 50 crores. The clinical teaching of nursing and Medical students was conducted in the old Sri Guru Ram Das Charitable Hospital, which were 400 bedded in the heart of the city near Sri Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple). At the new campus, a cancer hospital, named Sri Guru Ram Das Rotary Cancer Hospital had started functioning. Free Radiotherapy and Chemotherapy by a latest cobalt unit Service of Brach therapy had been started recently. From the above discussion it seems that the College has all the required facilities for medical education. The College has been running B.Sc. Nursing as well as MD and MS courses. It is pertinent to mention that this is being maintained by the SGPC and the most important point worth mentioning is that it is primarily meant for the minority community i.e. the Sikhs. No doubt this premier institution of Medical Sciences developed after the close of the period of the present study, yet it became imperative and essential to highlight the achievements of this institute. Indeed it is a tremendous work that has been done by the SGPC in the field of education.⁴⁷

Educational Institutions of General Studies: Envisaging keen interest in education, the SGPC has been setting up degree colleges from time to time. A few of these institutions deserve a special mention. Guru Nanak Khalsa College, King Circle, Matunga, Mumbai (Maharashtra) was established in 1937 by the SGPC. It is affiliated to Mumbai University, Mumbai. There are two wings- junior and senior Colleges. The junior wing runs +2 and under-graduate courses whereas the senior wing is having post-graduate courses. Though, it was founded to educate the Sikh's students in particular but its door has been kept opened for the

⁴⁷ Interview with Principal Dr. Geeta Sharma on May 25-26, 2005, in the college premises, her statement pertaining to the establishment, mission courses run etc. was recorded by the scholar; records pertaining to various characteristics of the college were also recorded from the written records of the college.

students of other communities as well. It is worth mentioning that several professional and technical courses are also being taught there.

In 1966, Khalsa College, Gardhiwala was set up in Hoshiarpur District. It was got affiliated to the Punjab University Chandigarh. It offers under-graduate courses and also post-graduate courses. Guru Nanak College for Girls, Muktsar, affiliated to Punjab University, Chandigarh was established in 1969. The town Muktsar happened to be educationally sleepy, situated in remote and backward Malwa belt was roused when the then Chief Minister S. Parkash Singh Badal declared the opening of a College for the women folk under the mass celebrations project to mark the 500th birthday of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. The College emerged as a boon for the people of the region and has been radiating education in the town and its rural proximity.⁴⁸ Soon the SGPC took over the institution. It began leaping towards progress and had touched the great zeniths in the fields of education, sports and cultural activities. Being situated away from the din and noise of the city, it began to provide an ideal ambience to the students who came there in endeavor to polish their intellect and bring their potential to light. It is known for its religious, co-curricular, yoga for health and as well as youth festival activities. It is equally known for its sports activities.

Thus the history of the college displays the work done by the SGPC in the field of education and the financial assistance given to this institution from time to time in order to strengthen its academic, sports and extra curricular activities.

Babbar Akali Memorial Khalsa College, Garshankar, Hoshiarpur (Punjab), affiliated to Punjab University Chandigarh was set up by the

⁴⁸ Interview with Dr. Tejinder Kaur, Principal of the college on June 9, 2005. She not only narrated verbally the history of the college instead record of the college activities was shown.

SGPC in 1969. The College provides education of +2, under-graduate courses and also PGDCA. In fact, it was founded to feed the rural area and to enable the boys and girls to compete in life with the urban students. Guru Nanak Co-Education Khalsa College, situated at village, Drolly Kalan, 25 kilometer from Jalandhar, affiliated to, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar was established in 1971. The SGPC purpose to open this college was to provide education to the rural boys and girls. Besides running the traditional courses like B.A., B.Com, the college has also been running post graduate (P.G) diploma in computer application. Special emphasis has always remained on sports, co-curricular activities, social service and moral values to ensure the all round development of the personalities of the students.

Mata Gujri College, Fatehgarh Sahib, affiliated to Punjabi University, Patiala was founded in 1957 to commemorate the supreme martyrdom of Mata Gujri, the revered mother of the tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh. Bibi Gurcharan Kaur Mann, the founder of the college was a lady of great determination, dedication and vision. Her sole ambition was to promote and highlight the contribution of the SGPC in the field of education. The college has been functioning under the management of the SGPC. It has made tremendous achievements and rapid progress under the able guidance, dynamic leadership, far-sighted vision and unstinted dedication of the Panth Ratan, Late Jathedar Gurcharan Singh Tohra. He remained the President of the college managing committee as well as the SGPC for a record period of more than 25 years. Development of the college in various fields could be achieved due to his dynamic guidance and over all supervision. A man with a deep religious bent of mind and very seasoned and committed leader S. Avtar Singh, President of the college managing committee. S. Dilmegh Singh, Secretary of the SGPC who was an able administrator

and committed to the cause of education, was the secretary of the local managing committee. A senior Akali leader and well known philanthropist, eminent industrialist and a renowned transporter S. Ranjit Singh Libra was the Additional Secretary of the local managing committee.⁴⁹ The college has a huge campus comprising of research centre, management and commerce block, a modern computer laboratory equipped with IBM computer server, Internet facilities, a well maintained Administrative Block, a stadium with all modern amenities, a well furnished canteen, boys hostel and modern parking facilities. Besides running the traditional courses the college has also been running successfully the prestigious professional courses also.⁵⁰ The college has also started much sought after professional courses like PG Diploma in Insurance and Risk Management, PG Diploma in Mass communication. The college has unique distinction of introducing three UGC sponsored career oriented courses in the field of Seed Technology, Food science and quality control and Mass communication with effect from the last three academic years. The classroom teaching has been supplemented with ultra modern teaching aids and methodologies.⁵¹

Babbar Akali Khalsa Memorial College, Garhshankar, affiliated to Punjabi University, Patiala, was opened on July 1, 1969 to perpetuate the memory of dauntless Babbars who made scarifies for the liberation of their motherland. The college prepares students for the Pre University and the Three year Degree course in Arts. There was a provision for training in the National Cadet Corps (NCC). The National Service Scheme (NSS) was also introduced in the college in 1974. The college

⁴⁹ Interview with Dr. Gurmohan Singh, Principal of the college on June 15, 2005; also the college records pertaining to the number of students, various activities and achievements of the college was consulted.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

also started PGDCA for providing computer education. The college has a computer laboratory, a well stocked library with more than 16,300 Books, a stadium with all modern amenities, a well furnished canteen. Special emphasis has been laid on sports, co-curricular activities, social service and moral values to ensure the over all development of the Sikh students.

Sant Baba Dalip Singh Memorial Khalsa College, Domeli, Kapurthala, affiliated to Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, was started in 1972 in the memory of Sant Baba Dalip Singh. It prepares students for the +2 and the Three Year Degree Course in Arts. The college also started PGDCA for providing computer education. The university allotted 25 seats for this course. A number of cultural and literary societies also function in the college. The college has modern computer laboratory and a well stocked library with more than 3300 books. The college lacks in modern courses as well as modern facilities which were the need of time and the SGPC is required to do the needful.⁵²

Khalsa College, Garhdiwala (Hoshiarpur), affiliated to Punjabi University, Patiala was opened in July 1966. Being co-educational institution, it prepare students for the +2 and the three year degree course in Arts, science as well as pre-engineering courses. Guru Nanak College, Moga, spread over an area of 7.5 acres and got affiliated to Punjab University, Chandigarh and was established in the year 1971 to celebrate 500th birthday of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. Besides running the traditional courses, the college also started PGDCA course. Special emphasis was laid on sports, co-curricular activities, social service and

⁵² Statement given by Dr. Kirpal Kaur, the Principal of college on June 25, 2005, was noted. Also the records concerning various features of the college shown by the college office were recorded.

moral values to ensure all round development of the personalities of the students.

Guru Nanak College, Batala Gurdaspur, affiliated to Guru Nanak Dev University; Amritsar was established in 1971 as a co-educational institution. Guru Nanak College, Bhudlada Mansa, affiliated to Punjabi University Patiala was established in the year 1971 in the memory of 500th birthday of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. Being situated away from the din and noise of the city, it provided an ideal ambience to the students who came there in endeavor to polish their intellect and bring their potential to light.

Guru Gobind Singh Khalsa College for Women, Jhar Sahib, Ludhiana, affiliated to Punjab University, Chandigarh was established in 1975. It emerged as a boon for the female folk of the area. It began to radiate education in the town and its rural proximity. The college provided education to girls only. The main purpose of opening the college was to increase literacy among women in the area.

General Shivdev Singh, Divan Gurbachan Singh, Khalsa College, Patiala, affiliated to Punjabi University Patiala was established by the efforts of Dr. Ganda Singh and Dr. Khusdeva Singh in 1965. General Sukhdev Singh Devan Gurbachan Singh trust played an important role in establishing and working of the college. But soon it was taken and governed by the SGPC. During the session 1984-85 the strength of the college began to rise and touched the figure 1789 out of them 1063 in Humanities group, 202 in Science group and 262 in commerce group. Besides running the traditional courses, the College was also running professional courses like Biotechnology, Computer Maintenance, Computer application Information technology and BCA. There was provision for NCC in the College. During the session 1984-85 a sum of rupees 90,000 and again an amount of rupees 1,30,498 were spent on

new books for library. The college management chalked out a program for initiating a few new courses. From the above information it may be gathered that the College had good infrastructure; it had been paying attention to both curricular and co-curricular activities. It may be concluded that the college had all the required facilities. Indeed, the SGPC had been taking keen interest in this college because the college had to compete with other colleges in the city of Patiala. The SGPC has made clear to the local management of the College that there would not be any paucity of funds if certain modern courses were introduced in the College to enable the students to compete with the students of the main stream in the country.⁵³

Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Khalsa College, Anandpur Sahib, Ropar, affiliated to Punjabi University, Patiala, was established in 1968. The college has good infrastructure. It may be observed that college is paying attention to both curricular and co-curricular activities, but it lacked in modern courses.⁵⁴

Of course, the development of education after 1984 does not form the part of the present study, but still some additional information about the institutions established by the SGPC may be mentioned. In 1993 Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Engineering College, Fatehgarh Sahib, affiliated to Punjab Technical University, Jalandhar; in 1997 Mata Sahib Kaur Girls College, Talwandi Bhai Ferozepur, affiliated to Punjabi University, Patiala; Mata Ganga College for Women, Kotan Ludhiana, affiliated to Punjab University, Chandigarh; Sri Guru Ram

⁵³ Interview with Dr. Dharminder Singh, in his office of the college on July 10, 2005, his statement was recorded by the scholar. College records pertaining to various features of the college activities and functioning were also shown to the scholar

⁵⁴ Statement made by S. Jatinder Singh, Principal of the college on April 28, 2005 in the college office; also the records maintained by the college office and regard with its activities.

Das of Dental Sciences and Research, Amrtisar, affiliated to Baba Farid University, Faridkot; in 1999 Tri Satabadi Guru Gobind Singh Khalsa College, Amrtisar, affiliated to Guru Nanak Dev University; in 2000 Mata Damodri Kanya Mahavidalya, Droli Bhai Moga, affiliated to Punjab University, Chandigarh are some of the premier institutions set up by the SGPC with a definite mission.

Thus, the SGPC has taken special interest in the higher education after 1966 when the present Punjab was constituted. Again it is important to mention that 68 percent educational institutions of the SGPC are functioning in urban areas whereas 32 percent educational institutions function in rural areas. No doubt it is because of the efforts of the SGPC the Sikh students who belong to the minority class have been able to achieve their goals and at present can compete with other students belonging to different classes. The Sikh youth can be seen in almost all streams, may be defense, finance and home departments, private sectors, government offices, higher education centers, like universities, etc. The detail of the education budget is given in the form of appendix-II in the end of the thesis. Directly and indirectly credit goes to the SGPC for introducing the Sikhs in all walks of life of the country because of its efforts in the field of education.

Chapter V

SOME OTHER CONSTRUCTIVE WORKS

Undoubtedly, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee (here after SGPC) was a supreme religious body (institution). Indeed, it was performing mainly religious duties and looking after the management of the Sikh gurdwaras for which it was actually formed for this very purpose. However, it did participate in the political activities of the province and also country which has already been discussed analytically in the second chapter. The SGPC did perform some other duties and these have been considered its constructive works. The present chapter deals with such works like the establishment of historical memorial and museums, socio-religious organizations and political conferences, economic issues and assistance given to various forums of the Sikhs, its contribution in the development and spread of Punjabi language and literature, its help to the Government particularly during the Indo-China (1962) and Indo-Pak wars (1965 and 1971), etc. These issues have been explored and examined critically in order to understand its character. This chapter also throws ample light on its various achievements and contribution made by the SGPC in various walks of life of the Sikh community. Now, let us cite various resolutions passed unanimously in its different general meetings since the day of its inception till 1984. The SGPC soon after its formation made it clear to the Sikh community that the Sikhs of the Gurus living all over the world, were expected to provide food to the hungry, rest to the tired ones, treatment to those who were ailing, direction to those gone astray, courage to the dispirited ones and freedom from worry to the anxious soul so that the

motto: ‘Degh Tegh Fateh’ of ‘Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh’ Panth could be realized. Also the bewildered humanity could find roots in truth, contentment, compassion, religion and natural repose.¹ The SGPC wanted to see the Sikh community quite responsible, mature and also answerable to the Sikh Panth and the Gurus’ ideology.² It will be desirable if its various achievements and contributions in different walks of life are discussed in detail under separate heads:

An important resolution was passed in its meeting of October 9, 1938 to remove fictitious titles of Gur Shiromani. With the chair’s permission, S. Avtar Singh Barrister presented the resolution which was passed unanimously. In it, it was resolved that Punjab Government be asked to prosecute the writer of a Gutka named ‘Bhagti Sarovar’ Swami Jyotirmayanand, Tirath Yogiray (Kashi) published by Diwan Chand Ganga Ram Book Sellers, Lohari Gate, Lahore for insulting the holy Shiromani of Satgurus by improperly using words like ‘True Japuji’, ‘True Rahras’, ‘True Ardas’, ‘True Sukhmani’ etc. The publication of the Gutka sent a wave of unrest and resentment among the Sikhs that might threaten public peace.³ A general meeting of the SGPC was held on February 12, 1940. When a proposal concerning the Sarovar of Takht Kesgarh (Anandpur), came up, it was unanimously approved that permission was granted to make a Sarovar

¹ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee* (hereafter SGPC), dated March 10, 1925, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; also see for further details S. Shamsheer Singh Ashok, *Panjah Saala Ithihas* (1926 to 1976), Sri Amritsar 2003; also see S.S. Gandhi, *Perspectives on Sikh Gurdwaras Legislations*, New Delhi, 1993,

² Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated March 10, 1925, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; *The Tribune*, Lahore March 11, 1925; *the Manji*, March 14, 1925.

³ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated October 9, 1938, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar.

covering about twenty Kanals of the Takht Sahib's land adjacent to Bunga of Kathagarhian Sardar' in the north-west corner of the gurdwara of the Takht. Sant Hari Singh Kaharpuri had undertaken the responsibility to conduct the entire Kar Sewa for that work.⁴

At this time the Sikhs, particularly their religious minded leaders did not approve of the activities of Namdhari Darbar. Under the circumstances a meeting of the SGPC was convened on October 26, 1941. In it after an affectionate advice from the leaders of SGPC Namdhari Darbar withdrew Patras. The Darbar also expressed regrets at the pain caused to their brothers. But some gentlemen were still not satisfied. Therefore, the Namdhari Darbar declared once again that they considered it their duty to show to Sri Guru Granth Sahib the reverence it deserved. They promised they would respect the sentiments of the Panth and not permit any such thing to happen again.⁵ Thereafter, Giani Kartar Singh read out the following resolution which was endorsed by S. Ajit Singh:

This meeting of SGPC was of the view that the Panth of separate 'Patras' from Sri Guru Granth Sahib was against the accepted Maryada of Panth and doing so amounted to showing disrespect to Sri Guru Granth Sahib. Therefore, the meeting fully endorsed the action taken by the Shiromani Committee to stop this practice. After the declaration made by the Executive Council of Namdhari Darbar and S. Atma Singh's statement in

⁴ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated February 12, 1940, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; *The Tribune*, February 15, 1940; *Majithia Papers*, File No. 134, NMML, New Delhi.

⁵ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated October 26, 1941, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; RNN, for the month October November 1941, pp.551-60.

this meeting, it felt no need for any further action in the matter.⁶ The resolution was accepted with majority vote. This very meeting drew the attention of the responsible officials of the Police department to the fact that taking off a Sikhs' turban-as was being done in Punjab jails-was an insult to the Sikhs and their religion. The SGPC, therefore, demanded that that practice prevalent in lockups should be immediately withdrawn and the Sikhs recruited in police should be made to observe Sikh rules of conduct (Sikh Rehat Behat) as was done in the case of Sikhs recruited in army. They would then prove to be better policemen and there would be no religious objection against them. Another significant work done by the SGPC was to start a religious monthly magazine. It was decided by a resolution that was introduced in its meeting of March 7, 1942. It read, "This general meeting of SGPC resolves that it should publish a religious monthly magazine which should exclusively contain articles about Sikh principles and religious Maryada. It should be beautiful and low-priced and contain articles of great philosophers and thinkers".⁷ In the meeting of November 28, 1943, it was brought to the notice of the members present that the Maharaja of Patiala, who was a Sikh yet, was retaining the office of the President of Sanatan Dharam Sabha; that was against the principles and detrimental to Sikh religion. He was asked to give up that office immediately.⁸ In the opinion of this very general meeting of the SGPC the last four chapters of the Satyarth Parkash contained caustic, false, hurtful, baseless attacks on Sikh gurus and

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated March 7, 1942, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; *The Tribune* March 9, 1942; for further details also see, Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Shiromani Akali Dal*, Punjabi Book Company, Jullundur, undated.

⁸ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated November 28, 1940, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; *The Khalsa*, Lahore December 3, 1940.

their religion. This meeting appealed to their Arya Samaji brothers to think over the matter calmly and not to publish these four chapters in future because that had, encouraged communal disputes in the Punjab in particular and country in general.⁹ It would be a great service to the Sikh community in particular and the country in general. This general meeting of SGPC fully agreed with the views expressed by S. Kapur Singh through the general meeting's resolution No. 22 on November 6, 1942 that had been sent to Dharmik Advisory Committee which subsequently endorsed it through its resolution no. 6 on November 2, 1943, that no contrived or foreign rhymes, illustrations or interpretations were added to the Gur Shiromani.¹⁰ It was also made clear that: ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਨਾਲ ਬਾਹਰਲੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਨਾਂ ਲਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਮਨਾਹੀ¹¹ Jathedar Mohan Singh spoke about printing Gur Shiromani and observed, "The Muslims have presented a Bill in the Punjab Assembly that no non-Muslim should be allowed to print or sale the Holy Quran. There is no such thought in the minds of the Sikhs but I feel that full attention is not being paid to the correct printing and the sanctity of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. We want that this task should be entrusted to the SGPC not because we want to draw out profits but because unfair profits are being made at present. Under strict supervision, the SGPC will get the printing done with great care and supply it to the Sangats at cost price".¹²

So in this connection a resolution was passed unanimously. This meeting of the SGPC also resolved that the 'Panj Piaras' and Parcharaks for

⁹ *Ibid*; *The Mauji*, November 30, 1940; *The Punjabi Punch*, Amritsar, November 30, 1940.

¹⁰ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated November 6, 1942 and November 2, 1943, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar.

¹¹ *Ibid*; *The Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, November 1942 and November 1943.

¹² *Ibid*.

Amrit Parchar among Mazhabi and Ravidasia Sikhs should be selected out of Mazhabi and Ravidasias Sikhs themselves because there was a great need of Amrit Parchar elsewhere also.¹³ Similarly, resolution about recruitment of Rai Sikhs was passed unanimously; through it the SGPC wished to bring it to the notice of the Punjab Government that Rai Sikhs, Mazhabi Sikhs etc. like other Sikhs should also be recruited in the police department¹⁴

Next general meeting of the SGPC took place on March 5, 1944. S. Harnam Singh presented a resolution saying that Bhai Randhir Singh had urged the meat eating Amritdharis to take Amrit afresh because taking of meat was contrary to Gurmat. He also suggested that a proper action should, therefore, be taken against him. Giani Sher Singh suggested that suitable decision should be taken only after enquiring of him why he did so.¹⁵ The resolution was therefore forwarded to the Executive Council of the SGPC. Discussion on some other issues took place. For instance, the issue of getting four 'Samulas' of Satyarth Parkash confiscated in view of the communal hatred provoked by them, came up. After that discussion went on regarding issues like removing the misgivings in the public mind about gurdwara management and its Parcharaks, expanding the work of the publicity department, increasing the issuance of circulars through Gurdwara Gazette, encouraging primary education in the Sikh Panth through Gurdwara Parchar, appointing competent engineers for consultation on about gurdwara buildings, setting up a Dharmik Advisory Committee for Dharam Parchar, and making plans for the publication of religious literature.¹⁶ After that a

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid*; The Hindustan Times, March 7, 1944; The Sant Sipahi, Amritsar, March 6, 1944.

¹⁶ *Ibid*; *The Khalsa*, Lahore, see second half of the Month October 1944.

resolution was passed for the Parchar of GurSikhi among the ‘untouchable’ classes.¹⁷ In its general meeting of March 10, 1945, it was made clear to the Sikh Sangat that the Parchar of Sikhi should be carried out with in the Punjab and also in other regions of the country. It was also decided that efforts be made to raise the numbers of Sikhs to 1 crore in the Census of 1951. Helping 5 lakh Sikhs to learn Japji *Sahib* and the names of the ten Gurus; Serving Amrit (Baptising) to 5 lakh new Sikhs; Making at least 5 lakh Sikhs to give up drinking; Persuading 5 lakh new persons to have ‘kes’ (sport long hair); Launching a vigorous campaign against cigarettes, Tobacco. Removing the use of ‘Katha’ among Sikhs; reviving the old practice of Katha in village gurdwaras; Setting up a broadcasting station at Amritsar; Starting training programmes to produce good Parcharaks, Granthis, Ragis and Dhadis; Trying to uplift backward classes; Starting a system of honorary Ragis were some of the other important works which were to be carried out by the Sikh Samaj and also some other bodies which functioned under the guidance of the SGPC.¹⁸

In honour of the country’s freedom and the bright future of Guru Panth, Jathedar Sri Akal Takht Sahib issued the following Hukamnama on the Deepmala of November 1948: “A message from Sri Akal Takht Sahib to the Sikh Sangats coming from far and wide to the annual gathering at Amritsar Deepmala was that India has become free from foreign rule and the Sangats have made great sacrifices for this freedom. We have always to keep the Panth in ascendancy (ਚੜਦੀਕਲਾ) in free India and take the country to the heights of progress. Therefore, the Sangats should pay special attention to

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated March 10, 1945, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar

the following things in the coming year: (i) holding Ardas to the Akal Purkh for the freedom of the gurdwaras and our innocent Indian sisters left back in Pakistan; (ii) keeping and making efforts for the rehabilitation of our brothers who have left behind everything in Pakistan; (iii) receiving military training for the defense of the country; (iv) giving up drinking.”¹⁹

Another important work done by the SGPC was sending the pilgrimage Jatha to Sri Nankana Sahib. This Jatha constituted only 75 instead of 110 pilgrims; they were allowed that year to visit Nankana Sahib to celebrate Guru Nanak Dev’s Janam utsav on Kattak Sudi Purnamasi in November. This Jatha returned after celebrations of the Janam utsav for three days from 22/11/1950 to 24/11/1950.²⁰

Let it be stated that earlier in its general meeting of March 13, 1966, “Resolution No 939 of the executive Committee , dated March, 13, 1966 was presented and approved that the core Committee and the Dharam Prachar Committee are fully authorized by the SGPC to take suitable decisions to ensure observance of the rules and regulations of the Gurdwara Act in the day-to-day working and management of the 500th Parkash Utsav Committee formed to celebrate the 500th Avtar Gurburb of Sri Guru Nanak Dev and 300th Parkash Utsav of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji; under Resolution No. 38, dated March, 28, 1965, of the General Committees’²¹

¹⁹ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated November 1948, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; *The Tribune*, November 27, 1948.

²⁰ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC (hereafter SGPC), dated February 26, 1950, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; for further details see *Gurdwara Gazette* of 1950; *the Akali*, February 27-28, 1950; *The Tribune*, February 28, 1950.

²¹ *Ibid*; March 28, 1965.

In the general meeting of the SGPC on March 31, 1973, its members expressed great pain and sorrows that in Zahiruddin Farook's English book: 'Aurangzeb and His Times', historical events had been presented in a distorted manner and great disrespect had been shown to the Sikh Gurus through totally false statements. It had deeply hurt the religious statements of the Sikhs. Attempts had been made to spread communal hatred in the country. Such books should never remain in circulation. The meeting, therefore, strongly demanded from the Government that that book's sale should be stopped and the unsold books should be immediately confiscated; Moreover, legal action should be taken and guilty be severely punished so that no one dared to do any such thing in future.²² With the Chairman's permission and the consent of the house, S. Kartar Singh Takkar presented one very important resolution that was passed unanimously after endorsement from S. Karnail Singh Pakka. This resolution stated that keeping in view the sanctity of Amritsar, which was the centre of Sikhism and religious place of the Sikhs founded by Sri Guru Ram Das Ji, the Punjab government should take immediate steps to keep wine and cigarette shops outside this holy city just as such shops were not allowed in the holy cities of the Hindus like Kurukshetra, Haridwar, etc. in view of their religious sanctity.²³

The lower classes which included Mazhabi Ravidasias and Kabir Panth had been looked down upon in villages since ancient times for being poor and untouchable. Since members of the Shiromani Committee could be chosen only through elections held under strict rules, the Committee

²² Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated March 31, 1973, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar.

²³ *Ibid.*

reserved 12 seats for them through Gurdwara Amendment Bill for giving them social and religious equality and strictly declared that none should call them 'Harijans'. This word, a new invention of the Congress, was in itself, indicative of a 'lower' class and was being misused to be fool and exploit these people for personal gains. Thus 13 persons from this class-12 elected and one nominated-had become members of the Shiromani Committee since then. S. Gurbakhsh Singh Rahi of Ludhiana District was unanimously elected member of the Executive Council and a Dharam Parchar movement was started among these classes.²⁴

Apart from granting substantial financial help to the lower classes and scholarships to their wards who were students, the SGPC highly commended and gave encouragement to S. Sher Singh Ludhiana for writing a book of 60 pages in Punjabi condemning untouchability and another book of 200 pages in English about Sikh religion, the Painter Thakar Singh for receiving an award from Indian President, S. Gian Singh Nakkash (engraver/ etcher) for preserving the paintings of *Sri Darbar Sahib* and the famous poet Lala Dhani Ram Chatrik for the service of the mother language *Punjabi*.²⁵

Then, the SGPC set up a Sub-Committee with Jathedar Udhan Singh as President, S Basant Singh Moga as Acting President, S. Umrao Singh as General Secretary, and S Sarmukh Singh Chamak and S Prem Singh as executive members to look after Sikhs' rights in the Government Services. It had been corresponding with the concerned departments and many Sikh Government servants could get their due rights with its help. It must be mentioned that it was because of the Committee's effort alone that the

²⁴ *Ibid*, May 28, 1948

²⁵ *Ibid*; *Gurdwara Gazette*, August 1948, p. 60.

Government of East Punjab had declared to give these classes' concessions in land, scholarships, jobs etc. at par with those given to Harijans. Actions had already been initiated in this matter. They wished these poor Sikhs to make progress in every field so that there was no need to term them as backward classes.²⁶

On February 26, 1950, a general meeting of the SGPC was held. The meeting confined itself to the resolutions of the executive Committee. These resolutions were in connection with distributing Gutkas, Karas, and Kanghas among the prisoners in Punjab Jails, printing of Sri Guru Granth Sahib in Hindi, discussing the SGPC equity Committee 's report on the accident of November 4, 1949 at Delhi, the Committee 's holding correspondence with the Defense Minister S. Baldev Singh for the inclusion of Kirpan in Sikh uniform, emphasizing the need of religious propagation in U.P. urging the Government to concede the demands of the Mazhabi, Ravidasis and the other so-called untouchables who had embraced Sikhism and to grant scholarships to their wards, and arranging 'Sanskar' of 'Birdh Birs ' of Sri Guru Granth Sahib at Goindwal,²⁷ etc. Then the Hukamnama issued by the Akal Takhat on 13 June 1949 about giving equal treatment to the Singhs of the backward classes was presented with the directions to implement it immediately.

When the census was conducted in 1951, the issue of *Punjabi* versus Hindi cropped up. The SGPC noted with great regret and agony that a very large part of a majority class living in Punjab and PEPSU though having

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated February 26, 1950, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; Gurdwara *Gazettee*, March 1950, p. 37.

Punjabi as their mother tongue got recorded *Hindi* as their mother tongue in its place. As a result, communal tension and distrust had increased and statistics about language was no longer correct. Therefore, this general meeting wished to make it clear to the Indian Government that the figures about mother tongue should not be deemed correct and cases should be filled against those prominent people who had violated law and got made false entries in respect of mother tongue.²⁸ Presenting this resolution S. Mahinder Singh said, “The resolution is very clear. One’s mother tongue is what one has been speaking since childhood. Tensions have increased only because of the wrong entries about language. It is surprising that the Hindus in Bengal are not recording *Hindi* as their language. In Madras, Madrasies too are not doing so. Here Hindus are promoting communalism by recording *Hindi* as their language. We are not against *Hindi*. If a person cannot become a Christian by reading English or a Musalman by reading *Urdu*, how can one become a Sikh by reading *Punjabi* or a Hindu by reading *Hindi*? All of us are to read *Hindi* as our national language and *Punjabi* as the language of the state and as their mother tongue. Therefore, the Hindus have done a great wrong by creating communal tensions through false entries about their mother tongue.”²⁹ S. Narinder Singh Advocate recorded the resolution pointing out that this low mentality of the fanatic Hindus of Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur would lead to evil consequences.³⁰ After being strongly supported by S. Harcharan Singh Bajwa, Jathedar Udham Singh, S. Ishar

²⁸ *Ibid*; for more details also see Jagjit Singh, *Shiromani Akali Dal Itihas*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1975; Harminder Singh, *The Problems of the Sikhs in the Punjab*, Lucknow, 1947.

²⁹ *Ibid*.; *The Tribune*, October 15 and November 11, 1950; *The Punjabi Punch*, Amritsar for the month November, second half 1950.

³⁰ *Ibid*; *The Tribune*, November 11 to 13, 1950.

Singh Majhail, S. Amar Singh Dosanjh, S. Bachittar Singh etc. the resolution was adopted unanimously.

In the meeting of March 10, 1955, the SGPC threw light on various aspects of the budget like the provisions made for backward class, education, propagation of religion, writing of History, training of employees, supplying Gurmat literature at cheap rates, opening *museums*, preserving ancient traditions of Kirtan, making records³¹ etc. The enquiries made by the members were officially answered by Prof. Waryam Singh. He suggested that the SGPC should get the history of Punjab written afresh. In reply, Giani Kartar Singh observed that it would be an act of great service to the Qaum even if, for the time being, only history of the Sikh period could be got written. S. Gurmej Singh proposed that the help of the other societies and scholars engaged in historical research should also be sought in writing history.³² Then in the meeting of October 16, 1955, the Committee decided to provide a social work substantial financial aid to the flood victims in different parts of the state. Also, S. Rajinder Singh presented a resolution stating. "This Annual convention of the SGPC expresses deep grief at the great havoc caused by floods in Punjab and Pepsu. It expresses full sympathy with the flood-hit people and demands from the Government of India to handle the issue of the flood victims of Punjab and Pepsu at national level and sanction maximum possible financial assistance for them. This meeting appeals to Sikh Sangats and local Gurdwaras Committees, to contribute generally to the Relief Fund set up by Shiromani Committee. The Committee assures its suffering brethren to make efforts to provide them

³¹ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC (hereafter SGPC), dated March 10, 1955, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar.

³² *Ibid*; The Spokesman, (misc. issues), Delhi, 1955; The Sikh Review, Calcutta, November, 1954 (article relating to the writing of Sikh history).

maximum help.”³³ After being supported by S. Amar Singh Dasanjh and S. Mohan Singh Mahawa, the resolution was passed unanimously.

This very meeting of Shiromani Committee viewed with great concern the growing trend under which certain sections of the majority community had been for the past few months indulging in incidents and activities to down grade the Sikhs and hurt their sentiments. The meeting drew the Government’s attention to the fact that a strong wave of anger and resentment against the Government and the people of the majority community was sure to flare up in the Sikh Panth if that situation was not brought under control. It would be highly detrimental to the defense of the country in the then crisis.³⁴ Some examples of that trend are forcible trimming of the beard of a Sikh truck driver in Calcutta named Charan Singh by some employees of the Bihar Government, publication of novel titles Aavaran by a New Delhi Writer named Guru Datt in which Sikh principles, culture and way of life had been made fun of. Similarly, sometime ago, the Sikhs honoured Sant Vinoba Bhave at a Diwan but he made some ugly comments about the Sikhs’ Kirpan; then Sushila Nair, Health Minister, India made fun of the Sikhs’ long hair while speaking at a Gurburb in Delhi. Similarly, disrespect was shown to the Birs of Sri Guru Granth Sahib at various places.³⁵ Thus the SGPC and its leadership in particular and the Sikh masses in general took serious note of the said issues. They felt concerned and got registered their resentment at appropriate times with the central Government. They felt due to these happenings, the security and identity of

³³ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated October 16, 1955, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; *The Tribune*, October 17, 1955.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Sikhism was not simply harmed but the identity of Sikhism fell in absolute danger.

On June 1, 1964 the general body of the SGPC held its meeting. Here, it clearly displayed that it had never acted the way that could isolate this body from the main social stream of the country. That was its biggest contribution and achievement. At that time, with the permission of the chair, Rai Sardar'a Singh gave an eye witness account of the massacre at Gurdwara Paunta Sahib and presented the following resolution:³⁶ “The enquiry report about the desecration and massacre perpetrated by the Government servants at Gurdwara Paunta Sahib (Himachal Pardesh) on May 22, 1964 by murdering Singhs with bullets and lathi blows was presented on May 30, 1964. Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee was deeply pained at the incident. It strongly denounced that act of the Government officials of showing disrespect to the Gurdwara and Sri Guru Granth Sahib and killing innocent Sikhs. It urged upon the Central and Himachal Governments that the guilty officials should immediately be dismissed. The matter should be enquired into by a retired judge of High Court and the guilty should be punished”

In the same meeting, the SGPC strongly denounced those Congress leaders and ministers who were calling a brave and patriotic Qaum like Sikhs traitors to the country. After this, a resolution was passed which had been presented by Shiromani Akali Dal demanding the release of the war prisoners of Pakistan. Leaders of all the progressive parties of the country were demanding this release of war prisoners.³⁷ However, the Congressmen

³⁶ *Ibid*, June 1, 1964.

³⁷ *Ibid*; Gurdwara *Gazette*, March-April, 1973, p. 48.

did not call them traitors. Only Sikhs were being called traitors out of communal fanaticism simply because they were Sikhs. The Congress Government at the centre itself was talking about the release of war prisoners. It should not be deemed traitor for that. However, it had certainly betrayed the country by vacating 5 to 6 square miles of Pakistani territory, when hundreds of soldiers and Generals had sacrificed their lives to gain this territory, and even the Congress Government had promised the country that it would not return even an inch of this territory to Pakistan. It had played false with the countrymen by breaking that promise and returning this territory. The souls of the martyrs who conquered these territories at the cost of their lives were being insulted and put to unrest through such acts.³⁸ Sikhs had won the war of independence and later on in 1962 war against China and the Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971 for the country and proved that there was no Qaum more patriotic than the Sikhs in the whole country. Therefore the Congress rulers should never doubt the Sikhs' loyalty and patriotism.³⁹

The SGPC showed its concern on certain important issues from time to time. Another resolution was unanimously passed that sympathized with the Arya Samaji Satyagrah at Hyderabad (Deccan). In its opinion their demand regarding, Socio-religious and cultural liberty of the Hindus in the dominions of His Exalted Highness, the Nizam of Hyderabad were legitimate and reasonable. So the SGPC assured them that they had complete sympathy in their Satyagrah campaign.⁴⁰ This clearly showed that the moderate element among the Sikhs had been always taking the Hindus with

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid*; India, 1938-1939, Government of India Publications, Calcutta: 1931, pp. 34-35.

them. After that a resolution was passed about helping the famine hit people of Hisar district.⁴¹ Thus the SGPC was concerned with issues related to humanity and welfare of all the sections of society.

In its general meeting of March 11, 1938 the SGPC demanded of Gurdwara Committee Lahore to raise Gurdwara Shahid Ganj, a memorial for those innocent Sikhs who had become victim to Muslim fanaticism from July 1935 until then in connection with Gurdwara Shahid Ganj agitation.⁴² At the same time, SGPC expressed its appreciation for Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan, Dr. Khan Sahib and his ministers for condemning the murder of innocent Sikhs and demanded of the frontier government to take effective steps to prevent its repetition.⁴³ On March 1, 1939 (18 *Faggan*, 470 NS) the general meeting of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee under the Chairmanship of Master Tara Singh discussed some important Panthik matters, issues of Gurdwara Shahid Ganj and proposed amendment in the Gurdwara Bill that came up for discussion.⁴⁴ It held that the Gurdwara Amendment Bill, purposed to be presented by Tikka Jagjit Singh, was not needed as it was against Panchayati principles and Panthik unity. It was felt that its real motive was to deprive the SGPC of its legal rights and to defeat the basic purpose of the Gurdwara Reform Movement by permitting the Government to interfere in the management of gurdwara.⁴⁵ Its purpose was to thwart all the beneficial schemes proposed by the SGPC which had been

⁴¹ *Ibid*; *Manji*, June 30, 1939; *Akali Te Pardesi*, July 2, 1939.

⁴² Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated March 11, 1938, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar.

⁴³ *Ibid*.

⁴⁴ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated March 1, 1939, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; *The Tribune*, March 3, 1939; also see *Majithia Papers* File No. 151, NMML, New Delhi; *The Akali*, March 8, 1939, October 10, 1939; *The Akali Patrika* October 2, 1939.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*.

declared in the election manifesto of Shiromani Akali Dal. It was hoped that Tikka Jagjit Singh would appreciate the sentiments of the Panth on this vital issue and desist from presenting this Amendment Bill in the Assembly. The SGPC hoped from the members of Punjab Assembly, particularly from Sikh members, to oppose the Bill till the last, if it was presented in the Assembly. It also appealed to the entire Sikh Panth to beware of the impending danger and to be prepared even to sacrifice their lives to prevent its implementation if it was passed. The meeting authorized the Executive Council of the SGPC to take necessary action to prevent the passage of the Bill and its implementation if at all it was passed. The SGPC directed that 19th March, 1939 be observed as a protest day to oppose this Bill.⁴⁶

In its general meeting held on January 30, 1949, the SGPC decided to send a deputation of the Committee, led by S Basant Singh Moga to the Premiere of Bihar to demand that there the Sikh gurdwaras should not come under the preview of the Bihar Religious Trust Bill. A separate Act like the Punjab Gurdwara Act was needed for their management. The Premiere promised a full consideration to their demand.⁴⁷ The deputation also emphasized the need of changing the name of the Patna Railway Station from Patna city to Patna Sahib. It was to be done in view of the convenience of common Sikh travelers' and avoid any confusion. The government was

⁴⁶ This resolution was endorsed by Giani Kartar Singh MLA. S. Bhag Singh, Advocate Gurdaspur, S. Atma Singh Rawalpindi, S. Avtar Singh Barrister Gujranwala, S. Sampuran Singh MLA Barrister Lyalpur and Jathedar Udhham Singh spoke in favour of the resolution while S. Amar Singh 'Sher-e-Punjab' and Giani Sher Singh opposed it when put to vote, the resolution was finally carried unanimously. Vide Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated March 19, 1939, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; The Preet Lari, March 20 to 23, 1939; *The Khalsa Samachar*, October 18, 1939.

⁴⁷ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC (hereafter SGPC), dated January 30, 1949, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar. *The Tribune*, February 2, 1949; also see *Desh Sewak*, of the same date.

urged to declare holidays on the birthdays of Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh.⁴⁸ Another general meeting of the SGPC was held on March 2, 1949, which discussed the issue about making *Punjabi* the language of courts in east Punjab. In this respect S. Mahinder Singh Sidhwan presented the following resolution, which was passed unanimously after being seconded by S. Prem Singh Prem and S. Umrao Singh. It demanded of the Government of India that without any delay, Punjabi written in Gurmukhi script should be declared the official language of the courts in 'East Punjab'. After being proposed by Sant Inder Singh Chakkarvarti and seconded by S. Mahinder Singh Sidhwan, another resolution in this regard was passed unanimously which strongly urged the Government of Patiala and East Punjab States, Union that Punjabi should be promptly implemented as the official language in the courts of Patiala and East Punjab States, Union.⁴⁹

Expressing his views in the meeting of twenty six representatives of different communities called by the Government on 15/3/1960 to discuss the report sent by the 'Punjabi Boli Sadbhavan Committee', S. Harnam Singh, (Retd. Judge), High Court said that it was pointless even to consider the question of declaring two scripts for Punjabi language when Punjabi had been accepted as the language of the Punjab and every language in every country has only one script. Quoting Sri Ray Gopalacharia, Pandit Nehru, Dr Sampurna Nand and Sir George Grearson, he asserted that the best way to kill a language was to kill its script. This humbling of setting up a Committee had been created with the intention of sowing disaffection

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated March 2, 1949, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar.

among Punjabis on the question of language- Hindi and Punjabi languages.⁵⁰ He asked why should Punjabi not be the language of Punjab when it had accepted as a principle that primary education could not be imparted so easily and effectively in any other language other than the mother tongue in its own scripture? With these words, he presented the following resolution: ‘this meeting of SGPC has given serious consideration to the 26 members’ language Committee set up to consider ways and means to solve linguistic disputes. After consideration of the whole matter, the meeting records:⁵¹ (a) That the Committee is being organized to unsettle the formula that was settled several years ago; (b) That the Committee has been formed in utter contravention of the statutory provisions that were formed in November, 1956; (c) That the recommendations of good relations Committee had already been rejected by Shiromani Akali Dal, SGPC and Chief Khalsa Diwan. That having the position matters, no useful purpose would be served by reconsidering the report that had already been rejected by the Sikhs; (d) That the only solution of the linguistic trouble in the Punjab was the bifurcation of the Punjab on the basis of the language of the *Punjabi* zone and *Hindi* zone In these circumstances, the SGPC did not feel justified in participating in the language Committee set up by the Punjab government.’

S. Gurnam Singh, Retd. Judge High Court asserted, ‘I fail to understand the purpose of the meeting of March 15th called at this stage. It is to take a decision about Punjabi language when the Congress Government has already agreed to form language based states. The Central Government has included Punjabi at No 10 in the list of 26 languages. Bombay is being

⁵⁰ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated March 15, 1960, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; Gurdwara *Gazette*, March and April, 1960.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

reorganized into two states on the basis of language; Punjab has already been divided into Hindi and Punjabi zones under the regional formula'. With these words, he strongly supported the resolution. Master Tara Singh, President, SGPC told the meeting that:⁵² (i) The Punjab Government had no right to interfere and consider the Regional Formula, which had emerged as a result of an agreement between the Government of India and Shiromani Akali Dal; (ii) What was the purpose of S. Partap Singh Kairon, Chief Minister Punjab calling a meeting to discuss the report which had already been rejected by all the Sikh bodies. All that was being done to put off the demand for a Punjabi State; (iii) The question of Punjabi language had already been settled, the Government had accepted it and it enjoys the blessings of the central Government also thinking over the matter then would mean starting fresh disputes; (iv) He was sure that neither Giani Kartar Singh nor S. Gian Singh Rarewala would join the Committee because that partisan Committee would be an anti-Punjab Committee ; (v) Creation of a Punjab state was the only solution to all the issues. There would surely be a morcha against the Government, which was creating hurdles to stall the formation of Punjabi state. Therefore, anti-Punjab Committee' should be boycotted. Thus, in the midst of resounding slogans, resolution was passed unanimously.

On March 28, 1965, a general meeting was held in which it further viewed with disgust the fact that under the influence of communal mentality and machination many sided efforts were being made to undermine the national pride of the Sikhs using the title 'Sri' instead of 'Sardar' in writing or speaking out the name of a Sikh was a part of this conspiracy. This

⁵² *Ibid; The Tribune*, November 28, 1961.

meeting therefore, urged upon the Government, non-Sikh communities, newspapers correspondents only to use ‘Sardar’ before a Sikh name.⁵³ The question of the Punjab Government once again declaring holidays on Hindu festivals only after it had stopped holidays on Ram Naunmi, Janam Ashtami, Shivratri, Martyrdam day of Guru Aryan Dev and Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, and Shahid Jor Mel, Sri Fatehgarh Sahib came up before the general meeting. It was resolved that the Government be urged to undo this discrimination by declaring holidays at Government level on the martyrdom days of Sri Guru Arjan Dev, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, Baba Zorawar Singh, Baba Fateh Singh who made supreme sacrifices to free the country from the fetters of slavery. The meeting demanded of the Government of India that office of the Central Government too should observe holiday on the Avtar Purab of the great Protector of the country Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji.⁵⁴

The general meeting of SGPC expressed deep agony at the fact that instead of giving to Punjabi the status it deserved, a step motherly treatment was being meted out and it was being pushed back day by day. Although decision had been taken to implement Punjabi at district level but no sincere efforts had been made to act on it. Wherever some action was taken, things were changing then and languages other than Punjabi was being used in offices and courts at district level. The meeting urged upon the government to fulfill its promise by implementing the decision to use Punjabi in Gurmukhi script at state level so that the injustice being done to Punjabi could be removed.⁵⁵ This general meeting of SGPC felt greatly distressed that the issue of the maintenance of the gurdwaras left in Pakistan and their

⁵³ *Ibid*; also see *The Tribune*, March 28, 1965.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*; also see *Gurdwara Gazettee*, March – April 1965, p. 31.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*.

income and property had not been settled yet at Government level by India and Pakistan. Indian Government had reserved the properties left in India by Muslim institutions for the sole benefit of the Muslims and set up Wakf Boards for their management. Those places and properties were looked after and maintained by these Boards. However, the Sikh gurdwaras left in Pakistan had big properties. The Wakf Boards constituted for them were totally dependent on the representatives of the Government of Pakistan. The representative body of the Sikhs- SGPC had not been given any representation on the boards nor had the interests of Sikh religious places taken into consideration. This meeting therefore strongly demanded that the Government of India should prevail upon the Pakistani Government to include the representatives of SGPC and gurdwara Sri Dehra Sahib in the Wlwf Board that was responsible for the repairs, maintenance and management of the properties of gurdwaras left behind in Pakistan. These representatives should be authorized to utilize the income of the gurdwara properties for the benefit of Sikh religious places and their repair and maintenance.

In the general meeting of March 20, 1966, the SGPC strongly demanded that the properties of religious places and Sikh gurdwaras be exempted from Punjab Tenancy Act. The meeting regretted to say that despite the Committee's long correspondence and several memoranda and deputations sent by it, no steps had been taken by the Government to exempt the gurdwara properties from articles regarding ceiling and lease. The Committee expressed displeasure at this negligence of the Government and

strongly demanded that gurdwara properties should be immediately exempted from these articles of the Punjab Tenancy Act.”⁵⁶

Then Justice Gurnam Singh presented a resolution of support for the Sikhs serving in England on the question of turban and sporting a beard demanding that the British Government should pass an order about turban and beard which went against the Panthik Rehat Maryada. This resolution was in English which was passed unanimously and sent to the British Government.⁵⁷ The SGPC expressed concerned in connection with S. Lachhman Singh Gill's unjust attitude after becoming the Chief Minister of Punjab. Therefore, the following resolution was introduced about the statements made by S. Lachhman Singh Gill against Sant Chanan Singh and Sant Baba Fateh Singh in the press and in the general meeting after assuming office as Chief Minister, Punjab: “Claims are being made that after taking over as Chief Minister Punjab, S Lachhman Singh Gill, General Secretary, Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee has issued threats to Sant Chanan Singh, President and Sant Baba Fateh Singh, member Shiromani Committee and Dharam Parchar Committee in the press and on public platforms. They were asked to leave SGPC failing which they and their supporters will be humiliated and forced out of gurdwaras and SGPC. He made such remarks against the Sants from public platform on Dec., 9, 1967.”⁵⁸ These were published in the press one or two days later. He in the press and on public platforms was repeatedly making such threatening and objectionable statements. Later on, at his behest, false cases were instituted

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated November 2, 1967, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; also see Gurdwara *Gazette* of November-December, 1967; *The Tribune*, November 2 to 5, 1967.

by the police against the President, office bearers and other officials of the Committee. By doing so, S Lachhman Singh Gill had grossly misused his position and he had done it with the intention of maligning gurdwara management and then office bearers to serve his selfish interests. Despite being a member of SGPC, he had committed a highly deplorable act of under mining the Sikh's respect and devotion for gurdwaras. He had made a fatal attack on Sikh religion and religious places at the bidding of the central Government. Willfully ignoring his duties in the capacity of a member of SGPC, he had tried to bring down the dignity of the institution of which he himself was member; in a very disgraceful manner. It was contrary to tradition, Maryada and article 144 of Sikh Gurdwara Act. As a Chief Minister, he had made a direct intervention in Gurdwara Management. The Sikh Panth had made great sacrifices for the freedom of gurdwaras, no interference by the Government in gurdwaras could ever be tolerated nor would these evil policies of S. Lachhman Singh Gill and the Delhi Government be ever tolerated.⁵⁹

This meeting of SGPC being held on February 12, 1968 strongly condemned the policies and disgraceful act of S. Lachhman Singh Gill; it directed the Committee to take suitable action against him immediately amidst slogans of Sat Sri Akal. In connection with Resolution No 179 dated April, 15, 1967 of the Core Committee; the issue of the SGPC of Delhi state came up. It was unanimously resolved that "This general meeting of SGPC fully authorizes the Committee to fight legal cases about the SGPC of Delhi state replacing the old Committee with a new one if need be and of holding

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

elections”⁶⁰ At this juncture, after a pause, it sincerely felt that after the country’s partition, large number of Punjabis, especially Sikhs had got settled in many states like Haryana, Delhi, Chandigarh, Himachal Pardesh, Jammu-Kashmir, Ganganagar District of Rajasthan and some areas of U.P. They had contributed substantially to the development of these states. However, sadly enough nothing worthwhile had been done by these states to recognize Punjabi language, literature and culture. Consequently, the wards of Punjabi families were facing great difficulties in the field of education and they were being alienated from the roots of their culture. This meeting strongly urged the governments of the above mentioned states to recognize and accept Punjabi language in Gurmukhi script so that the Punjabis settled there could get school and college education in their mother tongue as per their desire.⁶¹ The SGPC realized that the Jalandhar station of All India Radio was very important for Punjab since it was situated in the middle of Punjabi Suba. It should, therefore, be run in such a manner that it truly represented the voice of the Punjabis. The meeting was of the view that then that station was not doing justice to Punjabi language, literature, culture and history. It strongly demanded from the central government that that station should assign the same status to Punjabi language as was enjoyed by other regional languages at regional radio stations in different states. Programmes being broadcast for Haryana and Himachal Pardesh from Jalandhar Radio Station should then be broadcast from Delhi Radio Station.⁶²

In the general meeting of the SGPC of November 23, 1969, S. Gurcharn Singh Tohra read out the budget for the year 1969-70 and told the

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, February 12, 1968.

⁶¹ *Ibid*.

⁶² *Ibid*.

members that the Committee had made efforts to make up the loss that the Committee had suffered for the last 41 years. The total income then stood at rupees 1,39,67,990 (Rupees One crore, thirty-nine Lakh, Sixty Seven thousand, Nine Hundred and ninety rupees), whereas that was rupees 60 to 62 thousand before the present office bearers took charge.⁶³ Then he spoke about the special income, general expenses, expenses of great importance, special expenses etc. concerning with the General Board Fund, and dwelt in detail, on the celebration of the 500th Parkash Utsav of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji.⁶⁴ He told, “the Committee is faced with a large number of important tasks like publicity campaign about Sri Guru Nanak Dev Jis’ 500th Parkash Utsav, publicity through films, Sikh Shahid Missionary College, Government literature about the *Gurus*, special issues of *Gurdwara Gazette* and *Gurmat Parkash*, U.P. Sikh Mission Hapur, Religious examinations, scholarships to students, Guru Nanak Mission etc. It is with the co-operation of the Sikh Sangats that the income of the Committee, as stated above, has risen from 60-62 thousand rupees to rupees 1, 34, 67,990”.⁶⁵ This speech of S. Gurcharan Singh Tohra was applauded and endorsed by several members like S. Kartar Singh Takkar, S. Pritam Singh Rajgarh, S Ajaib Singh Mormdo, S. Narain Singh Khurana, S. Tara Singh Laylpuri, S. Kartar Singh Joshilla, S Karnail Singh Farwali, S Jagir Singh Poohla, and others. Then the budgets of the following: The general Board Fund of SGPC; Darbar Sahib, Mukatsar; Gurdwara Dukh Nivaran Sahib, Patiala; Gurdwara, Sultanpur Lodhi; Takht Kesgarh Sahib, Anandpur; Gurdwara Nanakana Sahib,

⁶³ *Ibid*, November 23, 1969.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*.

Sangrur; Takht Damdama Sahib, Talwandi Sabo, Bathinda; Dhamtan Sahib and Sikh Historical Research Board, for the year 1969-70 were passed:⁶⁶

S. Jiwan Singh Umranangal presented the following resolution, seconded by S. Jagdev Singh MLA that this general meeting of the SGPC expressed its concern at restrictions about loose beards imposed on Sikhs on Indian Navy ships and the punishments meted out in that connection. It considered that to be a very serious matter that the Sikh employees of Indian Navy ships were not only being dismissed but also court martialled and sentenced to imprisonment. It was an unbearable act of injustice to the Sikhs and the principles of Sikhism.⁶⁷ This meeting of the SGPC strongly demanded from the Defense Department of the Indian Government to immediately withdraw these restrictions, release the imprisoned Sikhs and reinstate them. Beard is religious symbol of the Sikhs and the restriction imposed by the Navy was unbearable to them keeping in view the religious sentiments of the Sikhs; the Government should immediately remove these restrictions⁶⁸ and full liberty should be given to them to follow the principles of Sikhism.

In the general meeting of November 12, 1967, the SGPC demanded a quota of sugar from the Government for Karha Parshad in all the gurdwaras. It also approved the supplementary budget of rupees 28968-98 as education fund for Mata Gujri College, Fatgegarh Sahib Sirhind for the year 1967-68 or 1968-69.⁶⁹ The meeting felt that on the occasion of the 500th Parkash Utsav of Sri Guru Nanak Dev which fell in the coming year i.e. 1969;

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, November 12, 1967.

centers should be set up to organize the Sikhs living in foreign countries and to propagate Sikh religion among them. This meeting approved the setting up of Sikh Missions by the SGPC in at least five countries with considerable Sikh population in the memory of the founder of Sikh religion. The Quancentenary Committee appointed by President, SGPC being given full authority to chalk out programmes in this connection’’⁷⁰

Another meeting of the SGPC took place on March 30, 1971, in which Principal Joginder Singh Manpur Khand (Ludhiana) was nominated member of the History Board in place of S. Shiv Singh Jhawan. After that S Santokh Singh, Delhi presented one resolution about declaring Punjabi the second language after Hindi in Himachal Pardesh and Haryana. It strongly appealed to the Indian Government that Punjabi should be the second language in the said two states. As large number of Sikhs lived in Delhi, therefore Punjabi should be accepted as the second language there and to remove the discrimination against Punjabis.⁷¹ This general meeting of SGPC felt deeply distressed to see that such sign boards had been set up at the Government roadways bus stands of Amrtisar and on the buses, which encouraged smoking Biris and Cigarette. That type of advertising was causing great pain to the Sikhs and insults to their religion. Smoking was as serious a violation of religious vows (ਕੁਰਹਿਤ) Sikhs as beef-eating was for Hindus and Pork eating for the Muslims. The Shiromani Committee, therefore, asked the High officials of the Roadways and the Punjab Government to immediately stop this hurtful advertisement; take off such boards from Government

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated March 30, 1971, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; *The Tribune*, April 2-3, 1971; *Desh Bhagat*, March 31 and April 1, 1971.

institutions and stop sticking such posters on them.⁷² In the general meeting of the SGPC on November 28, 1973, it expressed pain and sorrow at the British Government's refusal to exempt Sikhs from wearing helmets while riding motor-cycles. It was all the more sad that the U.K. Government had not granted this exemption despite knowing that religious and historical fact that wearing any type of cap was prohibited to Sikhs. A feeling was gaining ground in the Sikh world that by not exempting Sikh motor-cyclists, the British Government was not merely hurting religious sentiments of the Sikhs but also indirectly interfering in Sikh religion and doing injustice and discrimination against them. The meeting strongly demanded from the central Government to safeguard the interests of the Sikhs living abroad.⁷³ Then, raising a voice against the detention of Giani Bakhshish Singh, General Secretary, U.K. Akali Dal on his coming to Amritsar from England to attend the Bhog of late Sant Baba Fateh Singh; this general meeting of SGPC strongly condemned the Punjab Governments decision to re-detain Giani Bakhshish Singh, for a week and the central Governments' strange decision to exile him and not to allow him to return to India. In free India, it seemed discriminatory order to exiling a respectable Sikh living abroad. Earlier S. Sohan Singh Sodhi had been exiled in the same manner. The meeting wanted to tell the Government of India that exile orders were nothing new to Sikh Panth. The English Government had also issued exile orders against patriotic Sikhs. However, the Sikh Panth had always fought bravely against such acts of discrimination.⁷⁴ The meeting desired to make it

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated November 28, 1973, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; *The Tribune*, November, 28-29, 1973.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

clear to the Indian Government that the Khalsa Panth would never give up struggle until it had secured its religious, political and socio-cultural rights through self sacrifices. Resolutions were unanimously passed about getting Punjabi declared the second official language in Haryana, Himachal and Delhi in view of the large Punjabi population there; getting joint and simultaneous elections of the SGPC held as per the Reorganization Act, 1969; Upgrading and strengthening the All India Radio station, Jalandhar for promoting Punjabi Programs; ending atrocities on Muslim minorities of Malerkotla Tehsil; warning of Sikhs against pseudo-Nirankari Gurcharan Singh-a tout of the Delhi Government; and ending excesses being committed against the American soldiers in Germany who had recently embraced Sikhism for sporting beards and turbans.⁷⁵

In the general meeting of the SGPC of March 10, 1974, Bhai Gopal Singh, Ragi Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar; Sant Bishan Singh, Manji Sahib Wale; S. Chanan Singh Wasale (Jalandhar); K. S. Bela Singh Jandhu Singh (Jalandhar) and Master Harnam Singh (Ludhiana) ex-members, Shiromani Committee felt concerned and were indeed upset regarding one of the decisions taken by the Defense Ministry of the country regarding the policy of recruitment in the Army.⁷⁶ S. Ajaib Singh MLA, Member Shiromani Committee presented the following resolution: "This general meeting of SGPC expresses deep concern at Defense Minister Sri Jag Jiwan Ram's announcement in the Lok Sabha about limiting the army recruitments of martial Qaum s of northern India-which include Sikhs also in proportion to their population. SGPC deems its duty to point out well in time, that policy

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated March 30, 1973, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; *The Tribune*, March 30-31, 1973; *Gurdwara Gazette*, March-April, 1973.

will under mine the Country's security. At the same time, this policy will do great injustice to this martial Qaum s by ignoring their fighting Skills. While civil recruitments are made by the Government on the basis of the candidate's merit, it will be totally unjust not to make army recruitment solely on the basis of competitive skills. Nor will it be in the country's interest. The security of the country demands that this announcement made in the Lok Sabha about limiting Army recruitment of martial Qaum s should be immediately withdrawn and justice be done to the martial Qaum s of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pardesh".⁷⁷ In fact, it was presented in the meeting of November 25, 1974. After an eloquent speech, Principal Harchand Singh presented the following resolution demanding the return of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's 'Kalgi' and Maharaja Dalip Singh's 'Asthis':⁷⁸ "It is a historical fact that after Punjab's occupation, the English Government took away from the Royal treasury at Lahore, the tenth Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh's 'Kalgi', the gold throne and the invaluable Sri Sahib of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Kohinoor diamond and other priceless relics. No steps have been taken by the Government of India after the country's independence to get back these relics from the English." So, this meeting resolved that through Punjab Government and the Government of India, the British Government should be urged to return these objects, which were of historic significance to the people of Punjab in general and the Sikhs in particular.⁷⁹

In the general meeting of the SGPC held on October 30, 1975, it deeply resented the government's action in imposing income tax on the

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated November 25, 1974, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, October 30, 1975.

offerings made at Gur Dhams and strongly condemned it. In no civilized country was income tax imposed on the income of religious places because this income was spent on public welfare. The meeting therefore urged the Government not to belittle itself by levying income tax on the offerings made at gurdwaras. This income was being spent on Langar, education, hospitals, and public lodging places for the benefit of the people. This income was for the welfare of mankind and did not belong to any individual.⁸⁰ Even at present, the same argument can be given in respect of the income tax on the earnings of the Sikh gurdwaras. It pointed out with great resentment that by charging tax at the rate of rupees 30 per truck and rupees 10 per trolley carrying pilgrims to Sri Anandpur Sahib on the occasion of Hola Mohalla, the congress Government of Punjab had not only revived the memories of *Jazia* imposed by Aurangzeb on Hindus but also made an unpardonable attack on the freedom of pilgrimage to religious places. This general meeting wished to tell the Government that the freedom of religious places was very dear to the Sikh Panth. It was not ready to accept any *Jazia* on visits to religious places. If the government stuck to its decision to impose tax, the Sikh Panth would be constrained to launch a struggle against it.⁸¹

The SGPC took some important decision pertaining to the historical events. Another important task of the SGPC was directly related to the death Anniversary of Sher-e-Punjab Maharaja Ranjit Singh. As proposed by Giani Kartar Singh, it was unanimously passed that a holiday should be observed in its office and all the Panthik Ashrams and the Punjab Government should be urged to declare a public holiday in Punjab on his 100th death anniversary

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

on 29th June, 1939 (15 *Haarh*) and Ardas should be held in all the Gurdwaras on that very day at 5pm-the time of the Maharaja's passing away-for the peace of his soul and the Panth s' ascendancy to glory.⁸²

On July 7, 1948, the Shiromani Committee made it clear that it had set up Dharamarth branch on 1st April, 1945 with the primary object of public welfare. As the name indicated, Education and Dharam Parchar were given the highest importance. Therefore, a separate department under the name Dharam Parchar came into being in the Shiromani Committee. The primary job of the department was to send Parcharaks far and wide in the country and abroad and to award scholarships to Gurmat students. And it had been performing this duty sincerely since then.⁸³ Keeping in view this noble objective S. Mohan Singh Nagoke, Jathedar Sri Akal Takht Sahib, under the directions of the Shiromani Committee held Diwan s and did Amrit Parchar at a large number of Malwa villages like Ajitwal, Salina, Nathewal, Sekha, Faullewal, Deena, Takhtupura, Badhni, Darauli Bhai ki, Bagha Purana, Gaziana, Paka, Masse, Raoke Kalan etc. with great foresight and devotion and with the cooperation of his Ragi Jatha and Parcharak Singhs. The Sikh History Society organized a series of lectures on history. Professor Ganda Singh, S. Randhir Singh, gurdwara Inspector, S. Mahna Singh, Headmaster, and S. Sarmukh Singh Amol were the eminent speakers in this series of lectures.⁸⁴ Similarly, Singh Sahib Giani Bhupinder Singh, Granthi Sri Harmandar Sahib enlightened Sikh Sangats through his highly informative

⁸² Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated June 29, 1939, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; *Manji*, June 30, 1939; *The Tribune* July 5, 1939; *The Khalsa Te Khalsa Advocate*, June 30, 1939.

⁸³ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated July 7, 1948, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; RNN, for the month July, 1948.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*; also see RNN, for the month July and August, 1948.

lectures on Sikh way of life, Sat Sangat, Gur Shiromani, *Kakaar*, Philosophy, Amrit Sikhi Rehat, Nam-Simaran and Spirit to serve at religious Diwan s held at Guru ka Bagh every Sunday. These lectures were effective from the point of view of Dharam Parchar.⁸⁵

On November 11, 1956, the SGPC in its general meeting unanimously passed that that was very essential to build a be-fitting gurdwara at the historical place in Gwalior Fort, commemorating the Sixth Guru of the Sikhs, Sri Hargobind Sahib, *Data Bandi-chhor*. The General House had come to know that the Archives Department wanted to consign it to oblivion through constant neglect. Therefore the General House made a strong demand that that historical place should be maintained and the Sikhs should be permitted, at the earliest, to make a gurdwara there.⁸⁶ Some miscellaneous issues regarding Gurdwara management were also discussed as the SGPC wanted to purify managements of various gurdwaras in order to strengthen the Sikh religion as well as its characteristics and identity.⁸⁷

The general meeting of the SGPC held on February 17, 1957, was equally important as Prof. Satbir Singh presented the resolution: “Today’s general meeting appeals to the whole Sikh Sangat and all the ‘Sabhas’ and societies that from now onwards, they should get Sri Guru Granth Sahib printed only as per the pawan Bir printed by Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee . It is in accordance with the pawan Adi Bir of Sri Kartar Sahib and the historical ‘Bir’ of *Sri Damdama Sahib*. A list of the ‘Pothis’ different from the Birs of *Sri kartarpur* and *Sri Damdam Sahib*

⁸⁵ *Ibid*; Gurdwara Gazette, for the year 1948.

⁸⁶ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC (hereafter SGPC), dated November 11, 1956, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; *The Tribune*, November 12, 1956.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*.

contained in the Birs printed earlier than the one got printed by the SGPC, should be prepared and sent to all Singh Sabhas and societies so that they could make required amendments in all the Birs to ensure a correct recital of Shiromani.” The core Committee’s recommendation for the sanction of rupees 20,000 out of the General Board Fund in the current financial year for the construction of Guru Nanak Sarai at Gurdwara Sri Ber Sahib, Sultan Pur Lodhi was presented and passed⁸⁸ in the general meeting of the SGPC, held on November 27, 1959.

On November 30, 1961, the general meeting of the SGPC was held in which the General Secretary presented the supplementary Budget for 1961-62. It also included the budgets of Dharam Parchar Committees, Haryana and U.P; Sikh Mission; General Board; Fund for Guru Nanak Girls Higher Secondary Schools, Amritsar; Gurdwara Ber Sahib, Sultanpur Lodhi; Gurdwara Mukatsar; Dhanatan Sahib; Tarn Taran,⁸⁹ etc.. Also during discussion Prof. Satbir Singh observed that the Shiromani Committee should spend less on litigation and allot more funds for propagation of Sikh religion and research of Sikh History. A comprehensive and constructive scheme should especially be prepared for conducting research in Sikh History. He also emphasized the need of raising memorials for Guru Sahiban and persons related to Sikh history to serve as lighthouses bringing out the glory and greatness of the history of the Sikh Qaum.⁹⁰ He also suggested that two separate Presses should be set up for the printing of Gur Shiromani and Sikh history. He pointed out that greater stress should be laid on constructing

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, November 27, 1959.

⁸⁹ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated March 10, 1962, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; Gurdwara *Gazette*, March- April, 1962.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

halls for Sikhi Parchar in big cities; publishing research works on Sikh History, giving suitable encouragement to their writers, engraving pictures from Sikh History on the walls of the Parkarma of Harmandir Sahib, Sri Darbar Sahib, arranging lighting of modern type to enhance the beauty of the Darbar Sahib, sending good Parcharaks district wise for Gurmat Parchar, producing good illustrated literature for children's recreation,⁹¹ etc. Then resolutions regarding educational aid to Damdama College and Sikh History Board were presented and passed.

In the meeting of March 3, 1963 of the SGPC, Prof. Satbir Singh put forward the following constructive proposals:⁹² (i) In the side corridors of the Parkarma scheme of Sri Darbar Sahib, pictures of the martyrs of Sikh Misl, Sikh Rule and Akali Movements should be installed after preparing comprehensive list from Guru Nanak Dev time to Guru Gobind Singh time; (ii) In view of the great demand for shabad records, the Shiromani Committee should immediately get prepared recordings of chosen 'Shabads'; (iii) It should immediately set up a separate communication department. A circular should be sent to all the Singh Sabhas, organizations and leaders to report to this department whatever and wherever they read about the Sikhs, and the Sikh objectives, Sikh religion and Sikh history so that the department could take necessary action; (iv) A reception office should be set up in the office of the SGPC so that the visitors could be helped in getting required information about the religion and religious institutions set up by the SGPC after the partition; (v) It should arrange to reconstruct dilapidated gurdwaras other wise many relics of the Sikhs like the samadh of Nawab Kapur Singh would be destroyed; (vi) Propagation of

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*, March 3, 1963.

religion was not being conducted satisfactorily. Parcharks should not be paid workers. It should produce devoted workers like Dr. Kartar Singh Bariwale; (vii) The Missionary College had done good work and produced excellent Parcharaks but its working during the past 5 to 6 years had not been up to the mark; (Viii) They wished to see excellent printings being done in the gurdwara Printing Press at cheap rates as was done in the case of Hindu religious Granths in Geeta Press Gorakhpur. Efforts should be made to bring it to the level of Geeta Press, Gorakhpur; (ix) The 300th Janam utsav of Sri Guru Gobind Singh fell in 1966, so it was decided to spend rupees 5000 on its celebration; and (x) The sum of rupees 10,000 was set apart to celebrate the 500th Birthday of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, though it was too meager sum, it was realized by the SGPC's leadership. It should be increased, was suggested by Sahib Singh. It is worth mentioning that the SGPC gave an assurance to act upon these constructive proposals made by Prof Sahib Singh.

This general meeting of the SGPC too viewed with concern the continuous degradation coming over the daily conduct of the common Sikhs and Sikh Ashrams. It was decided:⁹³ (a) a deep thought should be given to the matter. To remedy the situation, a Committee of selected and capable Panth ik leaders and scholars should be set up to prepare a manuscript of proposals to improve the conduct of Dharam Parchar. It should give its report within a fixed period of time. The matter should then be presented before the interim Committee for necessary action; (b) the meeting felt that a grand Memorial should be set up at a suitable place in Sri Amritsar in the memory of the Singhs who attained martyrdom in the Akali Movement,

⁹³ *Ibid.*

Gurdwara Reform Movement, in the war of liberation and during the course of partition of the Punjab. A Committee of scholars and thinkers should be formed to prepare a comprehensive scheme in this regard. It should present its report within a fixed period of time. The Committee is fully authorized to implement that Report; (c) the meeting felt that the Committee initiated a movement to install marble slabs at religious places and gurdwaras in the concerned mohallas, towns and cities on which the names of the Singhs and Singhnis of the areas who had made sacrifices in the Gurdwara Reform Movement, should be engraved; (d) Sign Boards should be put up at suitable places in the cities in Punjab where the Panth had set up morchas during the Gurdwara Reform Movement and Singhs had laid down their lives. These Boards, set up before gurdwara or at gates of forts, should contain a brief account of these sacrifices. The office should present to the core Committee its reports regarding the items (a) and (b) at the earliest; (e) an authentic history of the Gurdwara Reform Movement should be got written. A collection of memorable photographs and films of the movement should be completed. The writings reports and opinions of well-known non-Sikh personalities like Pt. Madan Mohan Malvia, Prof. C.F. Andrews, C. R. Das, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Gandhi, etc. should be made for inclusion in this history. The office should immediately prepare a scheme in this regard and also present it to the core Committee ; (f) an authentic report of the efforts made, until date, by the Shiromani Committee for the propagation of Sikhi (including the efforts of the All India Sikh mission) should be got prepared. The office should take necessary action in this regard at the earliest; (g) Gurdwara Reform Movement and Akali Movement had been accepted as a part National Movement for the country's freedom. Therefore, a Committee should be formed to hold consultations with the Punjab and Central

Government to construct be-fitting memorials for those patriots who sacrificed their lives in the movements like the Gurdwara Reform Movement, the Kamaghata Maru incident, the Gadar Movement (which included 3 cases of Lahore conspiracy 1913-15 and Gurdwara Rakabganj Movement), Babbar Akali Movement, etc. This Committee should submit its report to the interim Committee; and (h) The Committee knew it very well that the Punjabi culture included virtues like humility, tolerance, fraternity free from social and religious bigotry, bravery, spiritual leanings, service doing good to others, reciting god's name (a gift of India's Bhagti Lehar), patriotism, love for zealous tool, constructive thinking and good health, healthy entertainment, cheerfulness etc. These contours of this grand culture bore an imprint of the sacred Shiromani of the Sikh Gurus and the Sikh traditions, which stood true to the standards of secularism. This healthy Punjabi culture was the most prominent rose in the garden of the composite culture of India. The Committee, therefore, drew special attention of the Punjab and Central Governments and the officials of the All India Radio to the need to allotting maximum time slot at all the Radio stations in general and the Jalandhar Radio station in particular. It was for the daily broadcast of GurShiromani Kirtan and historical programmes about Sri Guru Nanak Dev and Sri Guru Gobind Singh for the all-round benefit of the country.⁹⁴ Necessary correspondence should be carried on in that regard and the President was authorized to set up a Committee of competent individuals with the honorary secretary of the Shiromani Committee as its convener for the fulfillment of that object.

⁹⁴

Ibid.

It was further made clear by the SGPC that it was also its duty: (i) To institute research scholarships about Sikh religion, literature, philosophy, history and way of living; (ii) This department would be directly responsible to SGPC; (iii) If need be the President may set up a Sikh Literary Publication Advisory Committee of scholars to advise this department. It may consist of at least five and at the most eleven members. Their service would be honorary and whose term would be of 5 years like the term of the Shiromani Committee. This Committee would be responsible to the Executive Council; (iv) The Executive Council of the SGPC would have the right to create temporary or permanent posts for the help of the publication officer. Employees from other departments of Shiromani Committee may be transferred to this department and vice-versa. President, Shiromani Committee will have the right to do so; (v) its rules, regulations and service rules would be applicable to this department like other departments. All the articles of Sikh Gurdwara Act would also apply to members of this Committee as well as the employees, the scholars, etc. appointed for the Committee. They are not members of the Shiromani Committee. They would submit a certificate in writing at the time of appointment that they would work in the interest of the SGPC; (vi) This department will hold at least six meetings in a year. The concerned Publication officer would issue the notice of the meeting after consulting President, SGPC. Fifteen days notice would be enough for a meeting but only a three days notice was required for a special (emergency) meeting. The Quorum of the meeting would be 1/3 of the total members; (vii) the department will have a separate account in a bank approved by the Shiromani Committee. The Executive Council (ਅਕਿੰਗ ਕਮੇਟੀ) would authorize its operation; (viii) Separate accounts would be maintained by the department which was to be checked

by the audits appointed by Punjab Government under Sikh Gurdwara Act.; (ix) The Interim Council (ਅਤਿਰਿਕਾ ਕਮੇਟੀ) of the Shiromani Committee was authorized to issue and to take necessary decisions about the working, supervision, purchases, payment of bills, accounts etc. of the department; and (x) All the property, literature and staff of Gurdwara Printing Press and Gurmat Literature Department shall be handed over to this department the assets. Liabilities of these departments would then be the responsibility of this department.

On October 3, 1926, resolution was unanimously adopted that dates as per Khalsa year should be used in the Boards work of every kind. But there would be no objection to using dates as per English Calendar along side.⁹⁵ Another meeting of Gurdwara Central Board (SGPC) supported the resolution that had been passed earlier in connection with English calendar.⁹⁶ A general meeting of the SGPC held on October 8, 1927 resolved that a monthly newspaper should be published to communicate correct information about the functioning of the Sikh festivals, Local Gurdwara Committees and the gurdwaras. This newspaper should be called '*Gurdwara Gazette*' like the *Government Gazette*. The Executive Council should take decision about raising funds for it and other matters' related to the printing of religious and other literature.⁹⁷

Influence of Sikhism was declining in Sikh states as a result of the Maharaja of Nabha, Partap Singh becoming Patit. If it was not stopped

⁹⁵ Proceeding of the General Meeting of SGPC dated October 2, 1926.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated October 8, 1927, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; *The Tribune*, October 9, 1927; Punjab Government Report, (hereafter PGR), Fortnight ending October 15, 1927, Government of India (hereafter GOI), Home Political File No. 18/6-1927.

immediately, it would cause a severe setback to Sikhism and also the Sikh community.⁹⁸ Thus this meeting had been called to think over this important issue. Presenting a resolution, S. Harnam Singh Advocate said: ‘There might be serious differences about several issues among us but so far as I can gauge the feelings of the various groups, there is not even a single individual in this meeting who does not agree that no Patit should be made *Maharaja* of any Sikh state’. S. Kartar Singh Diwan expressed support for the resolution and it was passed unanimously. In view of the sentiments of the Panth, 26th May was fixed as the protest day to exert moral pressure on Maharaja of Nabha. A resolution against helmets for Sikh army men was introduced in this very meeting. At Jathedar Udham Singh’s proposal and endorsement from S. Partap Singh it was unanimously passed that the proposed helmet for Indian army personnel was like the English cap and negated Sikh Rehat Maryada and Sikhs sentiments. Its wearing therefore was not permitted.⁹⁹ The SGPC held another general meeting on April 3, 1940; in it a resolution urging Maharaja Partap Singh of Nabha to sport ‘Kes’ (long hair) was introduced. Resolution to set up a press for printing Gur Shiromani and history was placed in its meeting of November 30, 1940 by S. Harcharan Singh. It read, “Even a casual look at Gur Shiromani and history books reveals that the paper used is of inferior quality and no attention is being paid to correct writing and printing. Gur Shiromani and Gur-history is the fountain heads of the Panth s’ glory. For the preservation and propagation of Gur Shiromani and Gur-history, it is essential to bring it under Panthik control and SGPC must have its own press for this purpose.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*; N.N. Mitra, Indian Register, 1940, Vol. I, pp.316,323.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*; *The Akali Te Pardesi*, Febuary 22, 1940; for further details also see *Majithia Papers*, File No. 2, NMML, New Delhi.

Gur Shiromani and Gur-history should be correctly printed on paper of superior quality and made available to the Sangat at cost price for propagation of Sikh religion and teachings of the Sikh Gurus".¹⁰⁰ The resolution was endorsed by S. Gurdit Singh Jhang. After some discussion another resolution came up after S. Fumman Singh's proposal and Giani Dhanwant Singh's endorsement that the Committee should get written the history of the Gurdwara Reform Movement afresh. At S. Amar Singh's recommendation it was decided to entrust this work to Sri Darbar Sahib Committee for necessary action.¹⁰¹ Giani Kartar Singh told the house that due to paucity of funds, SGPC could not for some time undertake that work. Therefore, this resolution should be forwarded to Sri Darbar Sahib Committee after recommendation. Sri Darbar Sahib Committee had already reserved some funds for the purpose so it was unanimously resolved that the resolution was forwarded to Sri Darbar Sahib Committee.¹⁰²

He further said with emphasis that the following things should also be incorporated in the programme:¹⁰³ (i) The same Rauh Reet should be observed in all the gurdwaras; (ii) The historical gurdwaras where Sangats were in small number should be properly looked after; (iii) The history of each gurdwara should be got written and printed so that the visitors could get full information about the concerned gurdwara; and (iv) Pucca roads should be constructed up to Sri Anandpur Sahib.

¹⁰⁰ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated November 30, 1940, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; *The Tribune*, December 1 and 3, 1940.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

This very meeting adopted another resolution for the help and release of the soldiers of the Indian National Army. The following resolution was presented by Jathedar Udham Singh: “This general meeting of SGPC records its appreciation for the help of rupees 5,000 given by the Executive Council out of the Shiromani Committees charitable fund for pleading the cases of the Indian National Army and resolves that the amount be raised to rupees 7000/-. At the same time the meeting strongly urges the Government of India not to file cases against these soldiers but to release them immediately.” This meeting of the Shiromani Committee demanded that if there were any other prisoners in Indore Jail or any other Jail, they should also be released. Those soldiers of Indian National Army who had been released outside the country should be immediately brought back to India”.¹⁰⁴

The resolution was unanimously passed after endorsement by Sant Prem Singh and strongly supported by Giani Kartar Singh and S. Sardul Singh. On June 10, 1948, a sum of rupees 7000 was sanctioned to be sent for providing Kachhchras, Dastars, Soap, oil, combs etc. to the refugees of Kashmir and the suffering Sikh prisoners in West Punjab Jails, through resolution No. 283, passed in SGPC general meeting. A sub-Committee was constituted of 5 prominent Sikhs, who were also the member of the SGPC, to get the complaints and grievances of the Sikh employees in India and to redress to their satisfaction. Through Resolution No. 3182, rupees 5000 were given as relief fund to the refugees of Kashmir and rupees 5000 to those of Poonch. It was also resolved that the next of the relatives of the Gurdwara

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*; File No. 5/46-1945, Home Political, GOI concerning Punjab, Week ending October, 1945; also Home Political File No. 18/11-1945, also see Fortnight ending October 30, 1940.

Sewadars in West Punjab who lost their lives while performing their duties, should be given substantial help as salons.¹⁰⁵

Demands were being made since long that the SGPC should set up a press for the error free printing of Gur Shiromani and Gurmat literature. It had thus decided to fulfill this demand and set up the press. A small machine had already been purchased. Another big machine would soon be purchased and the press be started in order to produce flawless printing of the Gur Shiromani and other religious literature pertaining to the Sikh religion. Secondly, the question of state language had assumed great significance in those days owing to several political considerations which left impact on the state Government. As a result a large number of people decided to go to Punjab, because their religion and culture were closely linked with this question since most of their religious scriptures were in their mother tongue. The Sangats had been, from time to time, drawing the attention of the SGPC to this vital question; therefore it had allotted sum of rupees 700 from its Panthik Bhalai Fund to the Sabha of Punjabi speaking people to address this important question.¹⁰⁶

A general meeting of the SGPC held on March 7, 1960, decided after detailed deliberations that (i) Suitable action should be taken after proper enquiry against those employees of the gurdwara of, Dharam Parchar Committee s and the concerned *Ashrams*, who instead of performing the duties assigned to them, carried on open propaganda in favour of the previous ruling groups. However, this was not allowed by the SGPC. It decided to take appropriate action against them. It was also decided that due

¹⁰⁵ Proceeding of the General Meeting of the SGPC dated June 10, 1948.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

punishment should be given after proper enquiry to those employees who, with the intention of illegal, occupying Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib, Gurdwara *Bangla Sahib*, and other Gurdwaras of Delhi attacked the Gurdwaras and indulged in condemnable activities. They showed disrespect to Gurdwaras. They breached Gurdwara discipline and brought bad name to SGPC;¹⁰⁷ (ii) Enquiries should be held against those employees of the gurdwaras of Schedule 25, Dharam Parchar Committee s and the concerned *Ashrams*, who had been given undue promotions over and above the due annual increments in their grades, or given higher grades and positions, or illegally confirmed and given more concessions, allowances and other undue benefits. All these decisions should be set aside; they should be recovered and proper action should be taken against such officers and employees.¹⁰⁸

1. All those employees who were recruited by the ruling group in contravention to the earlier decisions, rules and conventions without any consideration or merit, only to serve the interests of their group by creating extra posts in order to give undue benefits out of gurdwara funds, should be immediately dismissed. Amount given to them, as salaries, allowances etc. should be recovered and legal action should be taken against guilty persons. Enquiries should be held against those employees who were employed by the ruling group, after being convicted of various charges and used for party propaganda against the interest of gurdwaras. They should be immediately dismissed and action should be initiated as above.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated March 7, 1960, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar; Gurdwara *Gazette*, March 1960.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

2. Similarly enquiries should be held against those members of the ruling group who had unduly been fitted their favorite persons by deliberately letting gurdwara properties at low rents without inviting tenders according to prevailing customs or by unnecessarily purchasing new properties much above market rates, thus causing heavy loss to gurdwara funds. Action should be taken against persons responsible for this recurring loss.¹¹⁰
3. Some members of the ruling group have misused Gurdwara funds by giving educational help, loans, etc to ‘patits’ and non-believers in Sikh religion against the existing rules and traditions of the SGPC. Proper enquiries should be conducted in the matter and suitable action should be taken to recover the amounts thus disbursed.¹¹¹
4. During the last days of its term, the previous Committee unnecessarily disbanded the Committee of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa High School, Baba Bakala and formed a new Committee of incapable persons of their choice. It might cause a severe damage to the school reputation. Therefore, the Committee should take immediate steps to form a new Committee of competent persons, so that the school could further develop.¹¹²

Thereafter, S Gurcharan Singh presented a resolution about the ‘Deras’ of Pepsu (Patiala). It read ‘There is a general talk that when the gurdwaras of Pepsu came under SGPC through an amendment in the

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

Gurdwara Act, the previous ruling group deliberately got some gurdwaras excluded from the Act in collusion with their mahants leaving to them their property which caused a heavy loss to the Committee. This general meeting of the SGPC directs the core Committee to hold enquiries in the matter, initiate actions against the persons responsible for this loss and make efforts to bring under Parbandhik control, the property of the gurdwara.’¹¹³ Another resolution was passed demanding that the properties left behind by Muslim Bodies be given to the Shiromani Committee as a compensation for the gurdwara properties left in Pakistan. However, the Government did not accept the demand. So, the SGPC felt concerned and expressed unhappiness on government’s decision.¹¹⁴

In the meeting of November 18, 1966, the SGPC expressed deep pain at the ban imposed by the Punjab Government on holding Sikh Dharmik Diwan at gurdwara Singh Sabha, Grain Market, Ambala at Bawan Duadshi Fair. This Diwan had been held on Bawan Duadshi for many years and the SGPC had been writing to the Government in this matter for a long time but the Government was adamant and imposed ban on this Diwan every year. It was openly violating Indian Constitution by encouraging Hindu Communalism by holding gathering with Police help.¹¹⁵ This general meeting of SGPC strongly condemned this one sided policy of the Government. It asserted that that ban was totally unjust especially when it allowed every party to hold Diwans and gatherings during the Jor Melas at Sikh religious places like Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib, Gurdwara Sri Baba Balaknath; Sri Darbar Sahib Amrtisar, Mukatsar Sahib, etc. The meeting

¹¹³ *Ibid; The Tribune*, March 14, 1960.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid; The Tribune*, March 16, 1960.

¹¹⁵ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated November 18, 1966, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar.

strongly demanded that the Government should immediately withdraw that ban. Then a resolution was passed declaring Damdama Sahib Talwandi Sabo, (Bathinda) the Fifth Takht of Guru Khalsa. It was recommended that the Jathedar of Damdama Sahib be deemed member of SGPC in the Gurdwara Act so that there was no legal hurdle in future.¹¹⁶

Another resolution in connection with the restriction imposed by the British Transport Company on the use of turbans by the Sikhs was a matter of serious concern and regret. The meeting of the SGPC expressed strong resentment against that. The English were not ignorant of the religious 'Roah Reet' of the Sikhs. They knew that turban was a religious symbol of the Sikhs and any restriction on it was unbearable to them. It was sad that despite knowing that, they had imposed that restriction. This meeting drew the Indian government's attention to this issue. It demanded that it should hold talks at the High commissioner's level and got the restrictions removed by the British Government.¹¹⁷ In a brief speech, Giani Bhupinder Singh pointed out that grave injustice had been done to the Sikhs by cleverly excluding Bhakhra Dam, Chandigarh and some Punjabi speaking areas from the Punjabi Suba formed after so many sacrifices made by them. The Central Government should have immediately handed over these areas to Punjab without putting forward any excuses. So, a resolution in this connection was passed and forwarded in the form of demand charter to the centre government.¹¹⁸ This general meeting of the SGPC firmly demanded that the Governments of Jammu-Kashmir, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan should assign a suitable place to Punjabi in these states and make

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

special arrangements to teach it in schools and Colleges because Lakhs of Punjabi-speaking people lived there.¹¹⁹ It was made clear that was a just demand which should be accepted without any further delay. Also it demanded from the Government that registration deeds of the lands leased by Dera Mahants for long terms should be cancelled and they should be prevented from leasing lands in future. Receivers should be appointed for those religious places for whose take-over the SGPC was fighting legal cases so that their properties were not disposed of by unfair means.¹²⁰

In the general meeting of the SGPC held on November 26, 1970, a resolution was presented by S. Baldev Singh Mahilpuri which expressed deep sympathy with the Pakistan Government, the flood victims and their families at the heavy destructions caused by the terrible sea waves which had killed or rendered homeless lakhs of people. It urged the Pakistan Government to give rupees 5 Lakhs as aid to flood victims on behalf of the SGPC out of the income of Pakistan Gurdwaras which was in their trust. During his pilgrimage, Jathedar Mohan Singh Tur, state Minister Punjab, Member Shiromani Committee got information that some local officials created hurdles in the construction work undertaken by Sant Gurmukh Singh to set up memorial for Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib, Bandi Chhor at Gwalior Fort. It was placed before the Executive Council in its meeting of November 25, 1970. After thinking over the matter, this meeting of the SGPC had set up a Committee consisting of, S. Gurcharan Singh Tohra, S. Pritam Singh Srinh, S. Surjan Singh, Ludhiana, S. Kartar Singh Takkar and Karnail Singh Pakka to visit Gwalior, and meet the Chief Minister of Madhya Pardesh and

¹¹⁹ *Ibid; The Tribune*, February 24, 25, 1969.

¹²⁰ *Ibid; The Tribune*, February 27,28, 1969.

other concerned officials in connection with the construction of the memorial and resolve the matter.¹²¹

Also S. Jiwan Singh Umarangal presented a resolution about the freedom struggle of Bangla Desh. The meeting viewed with great concerns the atrocities, carnage and massacre being perpetrated by the West Pakistan on the unarmed and innocent people of Bangla Desh. In this age of culture and civilization, this kind of barbarous attitude and policy as well as oppression was indeed a dark blot on the fair face of religion, justice and freedom. Every justice loving country man and freedom-loving Qaum should have condemned that. The meeting heartily applauded the people of Bangla Desh who were valiantly fighting for self-defense and for the cause of freedom. Undoubtedly, the freedom movement of Bangala Desh added a new chapter of the complete unity, dedication and spirit of sacrifice of the Bangla people to the history of freedom movements.¹²² It also appealed to the Indian Government and the governments of other countries to help the freedom fighters of Bangla Desh in every possible manner and prevent this bloodshed for the safety of mankind. They should make efforts to create an atmosphere of peace. It too appealed to all the fellow citizens and especially to the Sikhs living in different states and countries for financial help to the people of Bangla Desh.¹²³ At the same time it appealed to the rulers of Pakistan to settle all disputes through negotiations with the elected leader of the people and Pakistan nominated Prime Minister, Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman in an atmosphere of peace and desist from the use of force and

¹²¹ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated November 25-26, 1970, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*

oppression.¹²⁴ It also advised the Indian Government to be completely vigilant and ready for the defense of India's borders.¹²⁵

In the light of the demand made by S. Gurcharan Singh Tohra, President SGPC letter No 23165 dated October 8, 1974, the meeting strongly urged the central Government to ask the Government of England to hand over the 'Asthis' of Maharaja Dalip Singh to Punjab so that the 'Sanskar' of the 'Asthis' of the Maharaja who was deprived of his crown and throne, could be performed according to Sikh rites as desired by him.¹²⁶ In another general meeting of the SGPC held on March 30, 1975, it strongly denounced (i) Haryana Government's act of applying ceiling law on gurdwara lands because the income from the lands of historical gurdwaras was spent on Langars, Education, orphans' look after and other acts of public welfare. Gurdwara properties should therefore be kept out of the preview of the Ceiling Act. The meeting appeals to the Central Government to use its influence to persuade Haryana Government to exempt gurdwara lands from the application of ceiling laws;¹²⁷ and (ii) This general meeting of SGPC thought it necessary to make that clear to the Congress Government at the centre that the Sikh Gurdwara Act secured by it from the British Government by making countless physical and financial sacrifices, therefore, no amendment should be made in the Sikh Gurdwara Act, 1925. Immediate elections should be held without breaking up the Committee as Shiromani Committee had been repeatedly demanding it since 1969.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Proceedings of the General Meeting of the SGPC, dated March 30, 1975, Reference Section, Library SGPC, Sri Amritsar

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

Another resolution was passed to stop the propaganda carried on by some communal miscreants after a patient suicide in the Amrit Sarovar. After that a resolution was passed asking improvement Trust, Amritsar to formulate and implement a new scheme providing approach road to Gurdwara Guru ke Mahal. After that, a resolution was passed asking British government in England to exempt Sikh living there from the legal restriction of wearing a helmet on their turbans while riding a motor cycle.¹²⁹ Its copies were sent to the Punjab Government, the Central Government and the British Government for their kind consideration.

The general meeting of the SGPC held on February 28, 1976 was deeply concerned to know that the Government of Maharashtra was bent on making amendments in the Act concerning Sri Hazoor Sahib, the central religious place of the Sikhs and one of the five Takhts. By doing so, it desired to reduce Shiromani Committee's representation and induct non-Sikh elements and stooges of the Government into the Board. It strongly condemned that proposed act of the Maharashtra Government.¹³⁰

It is pertinent to mention that the works in various walks of life carried out by the SGPC show its character and nature. Its achievements and contribution made from time to time give special credit to this supreme body of the Sikhs it worked for the identity as well as evolution of the institutions of the Sikh community and Sikhism. Though when constituted it was made clear that this body would manage the Sikh Gurdwaras, but it, soon after its formation, realized its duty towards its community, the province of Punjab

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

and also to the country. Though it happens to be an institution in itself, yet it represents the whole Sikh community.

Hence, it becomes clear that whenever anything happened against the principles of Sikhism or anything harmed the existence and identity of the Sikh community and their religion, the SGPC was seen on the for front to protect and safeguard the Sikhs as well as Sikhism.

Chapter-VI

CONCLUSION

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee (hereafter SGPC) was constituted in the midst of the religious 'reform movement, having strong political moorings, popularly known as the 'Gurdwara Reform Movement' in the history of the Sikhs as well as of the Punjab. Initially SGPC was constituted for the avowed purpose of superintendence and also the control of the Sikh gurdwaras which had been under the domination of the mahants who had been enjoying the support of the British, since very long time.

The Gurdwara Reform movement infact, mass agitation. It was started by the Sikhs against the mahants, supported by the British Government, for the liberation of the religious places i.e. gurdwaras. The mass movement which was started to liberate the religious institutions of the Sikh community soon mingled with the 'Akali Movement'. A Hukamnama was issued from the Akal Takht summoning a general assembly of the Sikhs which met on 15th November, 1920 at Akal Takht for the purpose of electing a representative committee of the Panth to control the Golden Temple as well as all other gurdwaras.

But two days before the meeting was held the government hastened to appoint a Managing Committee with the help of loyalist Sikhs, consisting of 36 members. As already announced a meeting a held on 15th and 16th November. Which resolved to constituted a committee known as 'Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhik Committee' (SGPC) with the object of 'controlling the Sikh Gurdwara or religious institutions. It was also to provide the policy as other norms for their management on the lines acceptable to the Sikh Panth. Initially it had 175 members including 36 members of the provisional committee constituted by the government.

Some members were also elected to represent the Sikh states and the Sikh bodies in Burma, Malaya, China and America. Sardar Sundar Singh Majithia, Harbans Singh Attari and Sardar Sunder Singh Ramgarhia were appointed President, Vice President and Secretary respectively, in December 1920. With the establishment of SGPC, a month later, i.e. December 14th, 1920 a new organization known as Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) came into existence. It was also to liberate gurdwara from the control of the mahants.

The Gurdwara Reform Movement continued for five years. The British who earlier against the movement and made all possible efforts to suppress it, had to concede to its demand of handing over the management of the gurdwara's to Sikhs. An Act known as Sikh Gurdwara Act 1925 was passed by the Punjab Legislative Council with this the SGPC became a legal institution of the Sikhs for managing the Sikh Gurdwaras in the Punjab. It became the supreme body of the Sikhs which was directly elected by the Sikhs to manage their religious affairs for themselves. It came to be appropriately and rightly as a government within the government or a mini parliament of the Sikhs.

Its working achievement and contribution of the last sixty years clearly display that the SGPC has played a significant role in the affairs of the Sikhs as well as in the politics of Punjab. In the course of time, with its huge economic resources (its income depends primarily on religious offerings) and large managerial staff, this body was gradually but strategy assumed greater significance in the Sikh affairs than before.

The SGPC generally supported the national leaders and also their programmes, it actively participated in the freedom struggle as it stood determined with the nationalists for the cause of India's liberation. When the Simon Commission visited India in 1927, to determine the next

installment of constitutional reforms which could be granted to the Indians, 18% representation given to the Sikhs recommended that was by the aforesaid commission was denounced by Baba Kharak Singh the President of the SGPC because they had demanded 30% representation. But it was denied by the ruling masters.

The Nehru Report came out in August 1928. It purported to provide a framework of a Swaraj Constitution. It too recommended that there would be no communal representation in Punjab and Bengal. At this the SGPC passed a resolution stating that the Sikhs should be considered as an important minority, so they should be given the same consideration in Punjab. The SGPC stood for a non-communal government and for complete independence of the country.

Ramsay MacDonald, the Prime Minister of England on behalf of His Majesty's government, announced the Communal Award, on August 16, 1932. It retained separate electorates. The Muslims thus secured a statutory majority (51.42%), whereas the Sikhs gained nothing by this Award. Sardar Bhag Singh, on the behalf SGPC, came out with a statement that the Khalsa would firmly resist to the last man any attempt to establish a communal Raj in the Punjab.

The Act of 1935 of which the communal award was a part meant the translation of statutory majority of the Muslims in the Punjab into a functional reality. Obviously the Sikhs felt very much upset over the prospects of their existence after the introduction of the Provincial Autonomy in the Punjab. They were not satisfied with the provisions about the protection of minorities in the Act. They had bitter experience in the form of communal riots which, they realized would increase because of the dominant position of the Muslims. It would further make them to disregard the minorities and create problems for them. The SGPC had several

problems relating to issue of Shahid Ganj, their socio religious position such as Status of Gurmukhi language in the Punjab, their representation in-service, question of religious holidays and the opening of Jhatka meat. The new position of the Muslims further increased an anxiety of the SGPC in connection with the position and status of the Sikhs.

The Shahid Ganj Gurdwara issue produced a lot of tension and bad blood between the government and SGPC in 1935-40. Their relations became bitter. The SGPC decided to repair the Shahid Ganj Gurdwara which was at that time in a dilapidated condition. On June 29th, 1935 a crowd of local Muslims attacked the Sikhs in their temple and took forcible possessions of the building. By the end of November 1937, eighteen Sikhs had been killed. The SGPC expressed deep grief and agony at the murder of innocent Sikhs. It started a morcha for the liberation of Shahid Ganj. The Sikhs suffered some losses including human lives but they retained their hold on Shahid Ganj. The Shahid Ganj issue gave birth to Kirpan problem which was the most important for the Sikhs from religious point of view. When the Shahid Ganj morcha was going on the government put a restriction on the sporting of big Kirpans by the Sikhs. Restriction was imposed on small Kirpan also. The Kirpan was the most important symbol of the identity of the Sikhs as a community. The SGPC passed a resolution requesting the British government to remove restrictions on the Kirpan. On December 30, 1935 the SGPC launched another morcha for Kirpan; the morcha lasted till January 3, 1936 when the ban on big Kirpan was lifted or finally lapsed. Three hundred ninety sikhs including seventy six women courted arrest during this period.

Immediately after passing of the Lahore Resolution the Sikhs politics also moved towards the idea of Sikh homeland. The Atari conference of the SGPC and Akali Dal in March 1940 passed a resolution

stating its opposition to the demand of Pakistan "tooth and nail". It further emphasized that the power should be transferred to one central authority. In case the demand of the Muslim league for separate state was acceded, the SGPC stressed upon the establishment of the separate home land for the Sikhs. It was on the basis of this, the Sikhs 'bluntly rejected the proposal and regarded that the Sikhs were not treated at par with the Muslims under the proposals of the Cabinet Mission.

The SGPC urged the Punjab Government to reserve three seats from the Sikh seats in Punjab legislature for those individuals of scheduled castes who had embraced Sikh religion. The SGPC reserved 12 seats for Scheduled Castes through Gurdwara Amendment Bill 1944 for giving them social and religious equality and strictly declared that none should call them 'Harijans'. Thus 13 men from this class- 12 elected, and one nominated had become members of the SGPC since then.

Due to the disruption caused by the partition of Punjab in 1947 and the migration of lakhs of families from one side to another the general condition of the country became disturbed. Naturally, internal administration in every field had been rather poor. The SGPC too could not remain unaffected by these developments. Many important historical gurdwaras controlled by it fell in Pakistan. Consequently, the total property of these gurdwaras worth over rupees 12 crores yielding annual income of over rupees 25 lakhs had been left behind. Apart from this loss of income and property, the SGPC was hard pressed to look after the refugees who had left behind households and properties moveable and immovable. At that time since, it was the main Sikh organization actively participating in the welfare activities, every Sikh and non Sikh expected to be at least temporarily relieved of the worries and burden of food and shelter on coming under its supervision. Due to its involvement in the problems of

providing food and shelter to the refugees from West Punjab, the whole staff of the SGPC remained busy.

Punjab, immediately after the partition was faced with a number of problems. The SGPC extended its whole hearted support to the Congress in all political matters. In fact Master Tara Singh gave a rebuff to the Pakistan, propaganda that there was a demand for a Sikh state in the following words. "The bogey of the Sikhs state in the East Punjab is being conjured up by the Pakistan propaganda machine in order to create ill will and dissensions between the Hindus and the Sikhs. The Hindus and the Sikhs will rise and fall together. Their fates are inextricably linked". He further observed, "Our culture is Gurmukhi culture and our literature is also in the Gurmukhi script. We want to have a province where we can safeguard our culture and our traditions."

In October 1955 SGPC opposed the states' reorganization commission's report' and appealed to the center government to make the Punjab suba as soon as possible. Master Tara Singh contested the SGPC elections in 1960 on the Punjab Suba, issue Shiromani Akali Dal secured 132 seats out of 139 and Master Tara Singh was elected President of the SGPC. The SGPC boycotted the 26 members committee appointed by the Indian Government to consider the language issue.

The SGPC strongly urged the government of Patiala and the East Punjab State Union that Punjabi should be promptly implemented as the official language in the courts of Patiala and the East Punjab State Union. It sincerely realized that after the partition, large number of Punjabis especially Sikhs had got settled in many states like Delhi, Jammu-Kashmir, Rajasthan and some areas of U.P. They had contributed substantially to the development of these states. However, sadly enough nothing worthwhile had been done by these states to recognize Punjabi language, literature or

culture. Consequently, the wards of Punjabi families were facing great difficulties in the field of education and felt alienated from the roots of their culture. The SGPC firmly urged the governments of those states to recognize and accept Punjabi language in Gurmukhi script so that the Punjabis settled there could get school and college education in their mother tongue as per their liking and choice.

The SGPC strongly demanded the government jobs for the Sikhs. This body felt convinced that if the Sikhs were given their due their social position and status would be enhanced in the eyes of all communities not only in Punjab but also in other states of the country.

The Shiromani Akali Dal launched struggle for the attainment of Punjabi Suba and against the intervention of government in the Sikh religious affairs. The overwhelming majority being Akalis, the SGPC also championed the cause of Punjabi Suba and extended whole hearted support to the demand for Punjabi Suba in 1966. The reorganization of Punjab into two states i.e. Haryana and Punjabi Suba was the triumph for Akali Dal, and also the SGPC as the latter was not only looking after the administration of the Gurdwara rather it was also interested in the politics of the state.

The SGPC fully realized the significance of the education of the Sikh masses; it had therefore, started taking been interest in the development and spread of education. It established several institutions in various regions to provide education on modern lines. The SGPC set up "Shahid Sikh Missionary College" at Amritsar in 1927 for education of granthies, ragis and missionaries for the propagation of Sikhism. The Khalsa College in Bombay was established in the year 1937 for higher education. The SGPC gave Rupees 10,000 to Sikh Education Society Lahore for free education of Khalsa Biradari students from 1929 onwards

annually. The SGPC also expressed its concern in the field of primary education giving grants to about thirty seven schools in different areas of Punjab from 1935 onwards. The amount of these grants ranged from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 50,000/- annually. It is significant to mention that the SGPC set rupees 86,000 for education in its budget of 1945-46, which was increased to Rs. 8,61,000 in 1980. It increased more than 10%. The SGPC, doubtlessly, has made a significant contribution in the field of education during the period of the present study. By the 1980s the schools run by SGPC numbered, school-11 (Punjab 8, Haryana1, UP2), College-15, Missionary College-3 (Punjab 1, UP 2).

The SGPC soon after its inception made it clear to the Sikh community that the Sikhs of the Gurus living all over the world were expected to provide food to the hungry, rest to the tired ones, treatment to those who were ailing, direction to those gone astray, courage to the dispirited ones and freedom from wrong to the anxious soul so that the motto: "Desh Tegh Fateh" of "Guru Nanak- Guru Gobind Singh" Panth could be achieved and the bewildered humanity could find roots in truth, contentment, compassion, religion and natural response. In fact the SGPC wanted to see the Sikh community quite responsible and also answerable to the Sikh Panth and the Gurus' ideology.

The SGPC resolved that all work of the committee be carried out in Punjabi, dates as per Khalsa year should be used in the committee works of every kind, a monthly newspaper to be published by the SGPC known as "Gurudwara Gazette."

This way the SGPC could keep intact the socio-economic position as well as religious identity of the Sikhs. The SGPC was seriously concerned with the publication of the religious literature of the Sikhs by the private unauthorized agencies. It thought that if this kind of publication was

allowed and not checked at once the pious nature and character of the religious literature on Sikhism would lose its sanctity and soon lapse. Besides, this would also destroy the religious sanctity of the Sikh community. Therefore, it was decided and resolved that total religious and spiritual Sikh literature, for instance, Sri Granth Sahib, Pothians, Gutkas, etc. should be published by the SGPC only. It should be sold at low price so that it becomes popular with the masses naturally prestige of Sikhism would be enhanced and kept intact.

The SGPC set up 'Dharmarth' branch on April 1st, 1945 with the object of Public Welfare. As the name indicated, education and Dharam Parchar were given the highest importance. A separate department under the name 'Dharam Parchar', was established to send parcharaks for dharam parchar within the country as well as abroad and to award scholarships to students of Gurmat study.

The SGPC expressed its deep appreciation for the scheme about widening and beautifying the parkarma and surroundings of Sri Darbar Sahib and also the roads lead to it. It appealed to the sangats to extend maximum help in this work. SGPC resolved that the Amrit of Khanda should be jointly dispensed to men and women. It meant that men and women equally shared the 'Bata', No Sikh organization had the right to dispense the Amrit of Khanda to men and that of Kirpan to women. On the contrary the person doing it was declared Tankaiyah by Akal Takht. In the time of natural calamities like, floods and earthquakes, the SGPC appealed to Sikh Sangats and local Gurdwara committees to contribute the relief fund set up by the SGPC. It thus assured its suffering brethren to make efforts to provide them maximum help.

The SGPC has remained busy in such works which could keep the identity of Sikhs and their religion intact and could give them direction to

consolidate their beliefs and traditions, particularly in the region to which they belonged. Regarding its socio-religious contribution especially the identity of the Sikh Community, tenets of the Sikh Gurus and their socio-cultural traditions, have been properly looked after by SGPC.

The SGPC on November 5, 1959 declared the Sri Damdama Sahib as fifth Takht. Another pertinent work done by the SGPC was to seek permission for pilgrimage Jathas to Sri Nankana Sahib, Pakistan to celebrate Guru Nanak Dev's Jaman Utsav and Dehra Sahib Lahore ever year. The SGPC has set up same Rauh Reet in all the Gurdwaras. A Printing Press has been set up by the SGPC for printing of Gurbani, Gurmat literature and Sikh historical books.

Above all the SGPC has also taken due interest in the various issues relating to the Sikhs living abroad in different countries. It has extended its help and played constructive role to its community abroad when ever the latter was in need of it. Whether it was a question of the use of turban, keeping of hair and Kirpan, in various countries such as Canada, America, England, France and Singapore, the SGPC extended required help to the Sikhs there. It also pleaded and pressurized the Indian Government to side with the demands of the Sikhs who live in the said countries.

S. Gurcharan Singh Tohra, President SGPC gave a five point's programme to the members of the SGPC in particular and the Sikhs in general to carry out for the emancipation/ betterment of Sikhism. The Programme he gave to be carried out is as such: (i) To propagate Sikh religion, purity of Sikh ideology and to spread the principles of Sikhism among the Sikh masses; (ii) To protect and safeguard the political existence of the Sikhs; (iii) To strengthen the Sikh institutions and to see that their democratic character remain in tact; (iv) To get solve the various problems of the Sikhs living abroad (in various countries); and (v)

To reform the management of the Sikh gurdwaras. This programme was unanimously accepted in the general meeting of the SGPC.

In its interim committee held on 10.7.1984 the executive committee of the SGPC strongly condemned the army action on Akal Takha, Sri Darbar Sahib and other Gurdwaras. By doing so the government of India had not only tried to crush the spirit of the Sikhs but had also violated the fundamental rights of the Sikhs. It also demanded the immediate withdrawal of troops from the Darbar Sahib complex.

During the period of 1970-84 the SGPC emphasized on the following demands: the SGPC as the only supreme religious body of the Sikhs to be recognized; enactment of an 'All India Gurdwara Act; to declare Amritsar as Holy City of the Sikhs; remaining of a train after Harmandir Sahib installation of a transmitter at Harmandir Sahib, telecast of Gurbani, etc. some of these demand were met in 1985, when Rajiv Longowal agreement was signed. Some of its political demands included the re-demarcating the boundaries of the Punjab in such a way as to incorporate contiguous Punjabi speaking areas of Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh; more autonomy for states; setting up of more industries in Punjab; exclusive control over the water of Ravi, Satluj, Beas and Bakhra Dam and the like.

Its achievements and contribution made from time to time give special credit to this supreme body of the Sikhs. It worked for the identity as well as evolution of the institutions of the Sikh community and Sikhism. Though when constituted it was made clear that this body would manage the Sikh Gurdwaras, but it, soon after its formation, realized its duty towards its community, the province of Punjab and also to the country. Though it happens to be an institution in itself, yet it represents the whole Sikh community.

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Appendix-I
SIKH GURUDWARAS ACT VIII OF 1925

Chapter I

1. **Board:** “Board” means the Board constituted under the provisions of Part III of the *Gurdwara Act VII of 1925*.
2. **Commission:** “Commission” means the Judicial Commission constituted under the provisions of Part III of the *Gurdwara Act VII of 1925*.
3. **Committee:** “Committee” means a committee of management constituted under the provisions of Part III of the *Gurdwara Act VII of 1925*.
4. **Office:** (i) “Office” means any office by virtue of which the holder thereof participates in the management of performance of public worship in a *Gurdwara* or in the management in the management or performance of any rituals or ceremonies observed therein and “Office holder” means any person who holds an office.
(ii) **Present Office-holder:** “Present office-holder means a person who, on the commencement of this Act holds an office.
(iii) **Past Office-holder:** “Past office-holder’ means a person who has been an office-holder but ceased to be an office-holder before the commencement of this Act.
(iv) **Hereditary office:** “Hereditary office” means an office the succession to which before the first day of January 1920 devolved, according to hereditary right or by nomination by the office-holder for the time being, and “hereditary office-holder” means the holder of a hereditary office.

(v) **Present hereditary office-holder:** “Present hereditary office-holder” means a person who on the commencement of this Act is a hereditary office-holder.

(vi) **Past hereditary office-holder:** “Past hereditary office-holder” means a person who has been a hereditary office-holder but ceased to be such office holder before the commencement of this Act.

(vii) **Minister:** “Minister” means an officer holder to whom either solely or along with others the control of the management or performance of public worship in a *Gurdwara* and of the rituals and ceremonies observed therein, is entrusted.

5. **Sikh:** “Sikh” means a person who professes the Sikh religion. If any question arises as to whether any person is, or not to be a Sikh, he shall be deemed respectively to be or not to be a Sikh according as he makes or refuses to make in such manner as the Local Government may prescribe the following declaration:-

I solemnly affirm that I am a Sikh, that

I believe in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, that

I believe in the Ten Gurus and that I have no other religion.

6. **Notified Sikh Gurdwara:** “Notified Sikh *Gurdwara*” means any *Gurdwara* declared by notification by the Local Government under the provisions of this Act to be a Sikh *Gurdwara*.

7. **Treasury:** “Treasury” means a Government treasury or sub-treasury and includes any bank to which the Government treasury business has been made over.

8. **Tribunal:** “Tribunal” means a Tribunal constituted under the provisions of section 12.

Chapter III

Appointment of and Proceedings before a Tribunal

Constitution and procedure of tribunal for the purposes of the Act

- 1) For the purpose of deciding claims made in accordance with the provisions of this Act the Local Government may from time to time by notification direct the constitution of a tribunal or more tribunals than one and may in like manner direct the dissolution of such tribunal or tribunals.
- 2) A tribunal shall consist of a president and two other members appointed by notification by the Local Government.
- 3) The president of a tribunal shall be a Judge of the High Court and each other member shall be- a District Judge or a Subordinate Judge of the first class, or a barrister of not less than ten years standing, or a person who has been a pleader of any High Court for an aggregate period of not less then ten years.
- 4) The members of a tribunal while they continue as such shall be paid by the Local Government such remuneration as may from time to time be fixed by the Local Government and shall be deemed to be public servant within the meaning of section (21) of the Indian Penal Code.
- 5) The Local Government may by notification remove any member of tribunal.
 - (i) if he refuses to act or becomes in the opinion of the Local Government incapable of acting, or unfit to act, as a member, or if he absented himself from more than three consecutive meetings of the tribunal, or if he is an undischarged insolvent.
- 6) Whenever a vacancy occurs in a tribunal by reason of the removal, resignation or death of a member, the Local Government

shall by notification appoint a person qualified within the meaning of sub-section (3) to fill the vacancy.

- 7) A change in the membership of a tribunal under the provisions of sub section (5) or sub-section (6) shall not invalidate any matter pending before it, nor shall it be necessary for a tribunal on account of such change to recommence any enquiry into any matter pending before it for disposal.
- 8) The Local Government may from time to time appoint such, officers and servants as it may deem to be necessary for the due performance of its duties by a tribunal; and the officers and servants so appointed shall, while they continue as such, be deemed to be public servants within the meaning of section (21) of the Indian Penal Code.
- 9) A tribunal, for the purpose of deciding any matter that it is empowered to decide under the provisions of this Act, shall have the same powers as are vested in a court by the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, and shall have jurisdiction, unlimited as regards value, throughout the Punjab, and shall have no jurisdiction over any proceedings other than is expressly vested in it by this Act.
- 10) Save as otherwise provided in this Act a decree or order of a tribunal shall be executed or otherwise given effect to by the district court of the district in which the *Gurdwara* in connection with which the decree or order was passed is situated or by the district court to which the tribunal directs that any decree or order shall be sent for this purpose, as if the decree or order had been a decree or order passed by such court.
- 11) The proceedings of a tribunal shall, so far as may be, and subject to the provisions of this Act, be conducted in accordance with provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.

- 12) If more tribunals than one are constituted, the local Government may by notifications direct which tribunal may entertain petitions relating to a particular *Gurdwara* or *Gurdwaras* situated in any specified areas, and may at time transfer any proceedings from one tribunal to another as it may deem proper.
- 13) **Procedure on difference of opinion.**
 1. No proceedings shall be taken by a tribunal unless at least two members are present, provided that notices and summons as may be issued by the president or a member nominated by the president for this purpose.
 2. In case of a difference of opinion between the members of a tribunal, the opinion of the majority shall prevail; provided that if only two members are present of whom one is the president and if they are not in agreement, the opinion of the president shall prevail: and if the president be not present, and the two remaining members are not agreed, the question in dispute shall be kept pending until the next meeting of the tribunal at which the president is present; the opinion of the majority, or of the president when only two members are present, shall be deemed to be the opinion of the tribunal.
14. **Tribunal to dispose of petitions under section 5.6.8.10 and 11.**
 1. The local Government shall forward to a tribunal all petitions received by it under the provisions of sections 5,6,8,10, or 11, and the tribunal shall dispose of such petitions by order in accordance with the provisions of this Act.
 2. the forwarding of the petitions shall be conclusive proof that the petitions were received by the local Government within the time prescribed in section 5,6,8,10, or 11, as the case may be, and in the case of a petitions forwarded by worshippers of a *Gurdwara*

under the provisions of section 8, shall be conclusive proof that the provisions of section 8 with respect to such worshippers were duly complied with.

15. Power of tribunal to join parties and award costs.

1. In disposing of any matter in which it has jurisdiction a tribunal may order any dispute arising there from to be dealt with in one proceedings separately or more such disputes than one to be dealt with in one proceeding and may by public advertisement or otherwise enquire if any person desires to be made a party to any proceeding, and may join in any proceedings any person who it considers ought to be made a party thereto.
2. the tribunal may order any person to submit within a fixed time a statement in writing setting forth the nature of his claim or objection and the grounds thereof.
3. if any person fails to comply with an order passed under the provisions of sub-section (2) and duly notified him, the tribunal may decide the matter in dispute against him: provide that the tribunal may at any time extend the time fixed by its order for the submission of the statement if the person satisfies it that he had sufficient cause for not submitting the statement within the time fixed.
4. A tribunal may pass any such order as to costs of a proceeding as a court might pass under the provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.

16. Issue as to whether a *Gurdwara* is a Sikh *Gurdwara* to be decided first and how issue is to be decided.

1. Notwithstanding any thing contained in any other law in force, if in any proceedings before a tribunal it is disputed that a *Gurdwara* should or should not be declared to be a Sikh

Gurdwara, the tribunal shall, before inquiring into any other matter in dispute relating to the said *Gurdwara*, decide whether it should or should not be declared a Sikh *Gurdwara* in accordance with the provisions of sub-section (2).

- (2) **If the tribunal finds that the *Gurdwaras*.**
- (i) was established by, or in memory of any of the Ten Sikh Gurus, or in commemoration of any incident in the life of any of the Ten Sikh Guru, and is used for public worship by Sikhs, or
 - (ii) owing to some tradition connected with one of the Sikh Gurus, is used for public worship predominantly by Sikh, or
 - (iii) was established for use by Sikhs for the purpose of public worship and is used for such worship by Sikhs, or
 - (iv) was established in memory of a Sikh martyr, saint or historical person and is used for public worship by Sikhs, or
 - (v) owing to some incident connected with religion is used for public worship predominantly by Sikhs,

PART III

CHAPTER V

39. Suit for relief claimable by application under this Act, barred

Notwithstanding anything contained in any Act to the contrary, no suit shall be instituted or continued in any court claiming any relief in respect of the management or administration of a notified Sikh *Gurdwara* if such relief might be or might have been claimed in an application made under the provisions of this Part.

40. Board, Committees and Commission to be constituted for the purposes of this Act.

For the purpose of this Act there shall be constituted a Board and for every notified Sikh *Gurdwara* a committee of management, and there shall also be constituted from time to time a Judicial Commission, in the manner hereinafter provided.

41. Control of Sikh *Gurdwaras*

The management of every notified Sikh *Gurdwara* shall be administered by the committee constituted therefore, the Board and the Commission in accordance with the provisions of this Part.

CHAPTER VI

THE BORAD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

42. Name of Board

1. The board shall be known by such name as may be decided upon at a general meeting of the first Board constituted under the provisions of this act, provided that, not less ten three-fifths of the members present at thee meeting have voted in favour of the name selected, and that such name has been approved by the Local Government.
2. if the Board fails to select a name in accordance with the provisions of sub-section (1) or the name selected is not approved by the Local Government, the Board shall be designated the Central Board.
3. The Board shall by such name be a body corporate and shall have a perpetual succession and a common seal and shall by such name sue and be sued.

43. Composition and Constitutions of the Board

1. The Board shall consist of-
 - i. one hundred and twenty elected members;

- ii. the head ministers of the *Darbar Sahib*, Amritsar, and the following four Sikh *Takhts*, namely-

The *Sri Akal Takht Sahib*, Amritsar, the *Sri Takht Kesgarh Sahib*, Anandpur, the *Sri Takht Patna Sahib*, Patna, and the *Sri Takht Huzur Sahib*, Hyderabad, Dekkan;

- iii. twelve members nominated by the *Darbars* of the Indian States specified in sub-section (2);
- iv. fourteen members resident, in India, of whom not more than five shall be residents in the Punjab, co-opted by the members of the Board as described in clauses (i), (ii) and (iii).

- 2. The Local Government shall invite the *Darbars* of the Indian States specified in the list following to nominate the number of members stated therein against their respective names:-

Patiala	...	...	...	4
Nabha	...	...	...	2
Faridkot	...	...	...	2
Kapurthala	...	...	...	2
Jind	...	...	...	1
Kalsia	...	...	...	1

- 3. If the *Darbars* of any Indian State fails to nominate members in response to an invitation by the Local Government, the Board shall be deemed to be duly constituted notwithstanding such failure.
- 4. The Local Government shall, as soon as may be, call a meeting of the members of the Board described in clause (i), (ii) and (iii) of sub-section; and after the members have been co-opted the Local Government shall notify the fact of the Board having been duly constituted; and the date of the publication of the

notification shall be deemed to be the date of the constitution of the Board.

44. Constituencies for election of members of Board

The elected members of the Board shall be elected by the constituencies specified in Schedule IV, and the number of members to be elected by each constituency shall be as stated therein against that constituency, provided that the Local Government may, from time to time, and after such consultation with the Board as it considers proper, by notification alter the local limits of any consistency.

45. Qualification of elected members

1. A person shall not be eligible for election as a member of the Board if such person-

- i. is of unsound mind,
- ii. is an undercharged insolvent.
- iii. is a *Patit*,
- iv. is a minister of a notified Sikh *Gurdwara*, other than the nead minister of the *Darbar Sahib*, Amritsar, or of one of the four Sikh Takhts specified in clauses (ii) of subsection (1) of section 43,

46. Qualification of nominated members

A person shall not be nominated or co-opted to be a member of the Board if he-

- i. is less than twenty-one years old,
- ii. is not a Sikh,
- iii. is of unsound mind,
- iv. is an undischarged insolvent,
- v. is a *patit*

- vi. is minister of a notified Sikh *Gurdwara* other than the head minister of the *Darbar Sahib*, Amritsar, or of any of the four Sikh *Takhts* specified in clause (ii) of subsection (1) of section 43,]
- vii. is a paid servant of any notified Sikh *Gurdwara* or of the Board other than a member of the executive committee of the Board.

47. Date of Board election

Election of members of the Board under the provisions of this Act shall be held on dated to be fixed by the Local Government.

48. Electoral roll

An electoral roll shall be prepared in such manner as may be prescribed for every constituency, on which shall be entered the names of all persons entitled to be registered as voters in that constituency.

49. Qualification of electors

Every person shall be entitled to have his name registered on the electoral roll of a constituency for the election of a member or members of the Board who-

- i. is a resident is that constituency and either.
- ii. is on the electoral roll for the time being in force of persons entitled to vote for the election of member to represent a Sikh Government of the Punjab, or
- iii. is a Sikh more than twenty-one years of age, who has had his name registered as a voter in such manner as may be prescribed.

50. Right to vote

Every person registered on the electoral roll for the time being in force for any constituency for the election of a member or

members of the Board shall be entitled while so registered to vote at an election of a member or members for that constituency, provided that no person shall be entitled to vote at an election in more than one constituency.

51. Term of membership

The members of the Board shall hold office for three years from the date of its constitution or until the constitution of a new Board whichever is later.

52. Vacancy in Board, how to be filled

When a vacancy occurs in the Board owing to the death or resignation of a member or for any other reason, a new member shall be elected, nominated or co-opted, as the manner in which the member whose seat is to be filled was elected or nominated or co-opted.

53. First meeting of the Board

The first general meeting of the Board shall be held at a time not later than one month after the Local Government has notified that the board has been constituted, and notice therefore shall be given by notification by the Local Government.

54. Annual General meeting

Annual general meeting of the Board shall be held in every year.

55. Notice of meeting

Meetings of the Board other than the first meeting shall be called by twenty day's notice in writing served on every member of the Board in such manners as may be prescribed by bye-laws made by the Board.

56. Power of members to call meeting.

Any ten or more members may by application in writing made to the President demand that a general meeting of the Board be held,

and if notwithstanding such demand, notice of a meeting is not given within fifteen days of the date on which the application was received by the President the applicants may themselves call a meeting to be held at the office of the Board by ten days' notice served in the manner described in section 56.

57. Office of Board

This Board shall have an office in Amritsar for the transaction of not be exercised except by the Board at a meeting at which thirty-one or more members are present.

58. Quorum of Board in general Meeting

The powers vested by this Act in the Board in general meeting shall not be exercised except by the Board at a meeting at which thirty-one or more members are present.

59. Chairman at meetings of the Board.

The President shall be the chairman at the meetings of the Board and of the executive committee: if the President is absent the Vice-President shall be chairman, and if neither the President nor Vice-President is present the members present shall elect one of themselves to be chairman for the purposes of the meeting.

60. Decision of questions before Board

Except as otherwise provided by this Act or prescribed all questions which come before the Board or its executive committee shall be decided by a majority of the votes of the members present and in the case of an equality of votes the chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

61. Office-bearers and Executive Committee of Board

The Board shall at its first general meeting elect by ballot one of its members to be President and another to be Vice-President of the Board, to be known as office-bearers of the Board, and shall

also at the same meeting in like manner elect not less than five and not more than eleven of its members, as the Board may deem fit, to be members of the executive committee of the Board, and the office-bearers and members so elected shall be the executive committee of the Board.

62. Vacancy in Executive Committee, how to be filled

If a vacancy occurs in the executive committee, the remaining members of the executive committee may, if the vacancy is that of an office-bearer, appoint one of themselves, or if the vacancy is that of any member other than an office-bearer, nominate any member of the Board temporarily to fill the vacancy until the next following general meeting of the Board, and the Board shall at such meeting elect a member of the Board to fill the vacancy.

63. Member of committee of management not to be member of executive committee of Board.

A member of a committee of management shall not be eligible for election as a member of the executive committee and if any member of the executive committee at any time becomes a member of a committee of management he shall forthwith cease to be a member of the executive committee.

64. Resignation of member of executive committee

A member of the executive committee may resign his office by giving notice to President and an office-bearer may resign his office by giving notice to the executive committee, and such resignation shall have effect from the date on which the resignation was accepted by the President or executive committee as the case may be.

65. Remuneration of members of executive committee

Any member of the executive committee may receive out of the funds of the Board such salary or other remuneration as may from time be fixed by the Board in general meeting.

66. Servants of the Board their appointment and punishment.

The executive committee of the Board may appoint such servants as it may deem to be necessary of the due performance by itself of its duties, and may from time to time determine the number, designations, grades and scales of salary, or other remuneration of such servants, and may at any time fine, reduce, suspend or remove any servant.

CHAPTER VII

THE JUDICIAL COMMISSION

67. The Judicial Commission

1. The Judicial Commission shall consist of three members who shall be Sikhs appointed from time to time as may be necessary by the Local Government.
2. No person shall be appointed to be a member of the Commission unless he-
 - i. is, or, at the time of his retirement or resignation from Government service, was a District Judge or a Subordinate Judge of the first class or of not less than ten years standing, or
 - ii. is a barrister of not less than then years' standing, or
 - iii. is a person who has been a pleader of any High Court of ran aggregate period of not less than ten years.
4. Two of the members of the Commission shall be selected by the Local Government out of a list of qualified persons prepared and maintained as described in section 71.

68. **Appointment of members of the Commission**

1. for the purpose of the appointment of members of the Commission the Board shall be soon as may be after its constitution submit a list of the names of seven persons nominated by the Board and the Local Government shall after being satisfied that the persons are qualified as required by section 70 record the list: provided that if the Board fails to submit a list within ninety days from the constitution of the board, the Local Government may itself complete a list a qualified persons.
2. A Person whose made is on the list described in subsection (7) shall be entitled to have his name retained thereon for two years after his nomination has been recorded, provided that the Local Government may at any time remove his name, if it is satisfied upon a report made by the Board and any enquires it may see fit to make, that he is incapable of acting as a member of the Commission.
3. if any person whose name is on the list dies, or applies to the Board to have his name removed there from, the Board shall inform the Local Government and his name shall be removed from the list.
4. The local Government shall on request being made to it for this purpose by the Board remove from the list the name of any person whose name has been on the list for more than three years, provided that the name of any person shall not be so removed while such persons is a member of the Commission.

5. When a name has been removed from the list the Board shall nominate a qualified person for the purpose of filling the vacancy, and the Local Government shall after being satisfied that such person is qualified.
6. If the Board fails to nominate a person to fill a vacancy as required by sub-section (5) the Local Government may after giving one months' notice of its intention to the Board place the name of any qualified person on the list to fill the vacancy.

72. Member of the Board or a committee to resign if appointed a member of the Commission

If any person who is a member of the Board or of a committee or of both is appointed to be a member of the Commission and accepts the appointment he shall forthwith cease to be a member of the Board or committee or of both, as the case may be.

73. Remuneration of members of the Commission

The members of the Commission, while they continue as such, shall receive such remuneration as may be fixed from time to time by the Local Government and shall be deemed to be public servants within the meaning of section 24 of the Indian Penal Code.

74. Officers and servants of the Commission.

The Local Government may from time to time appoint such officers and servants as it may deem to be necessary for the due performance of its duties by the Commission, and the officers and servants so appointed shall, while they continue as such, be deemed to be public servants within the meaning of section 21 of the Indian Penal Code.

75. Expenses to be shared by Government and Board.

1. All expenses arising from the appointment of the Commission including the remuneration of its members, officers and servants shall be defrayed by the Local Government and the Board, the Local Government paying one-third of the whole, provided that the remuneration of the members, officers and servants shall be paid wholly in the first instance by the Local Government and the portion thereof payable by the Board shall be recovered from the Board after the close of each financial year.
2. Any sum due to the local Government under the provisions of sub –section (1) shall, if not recovered within three months after a demand has been made, be recoverable as if it were arrears of land revenue.

76. Jurisdiction and procedure of the Commission.

1. the Commission shall for the purpose of deciding any matter which it is empowered to decide under the provisions of this Act have the same powers as are vested in a court by the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908,. And shall have jurisdiction unlimited as regards value throughout the Punjab, and shall have no jurisdiction over any proceedings other than is expressly vested in it by this act
2. A decree or order of the Commission shall be evacuated or otherwise given effect to by the District Court of the district in which the *Gurdwara* in connection with which the decree or order was passed is situated or by the District Court to which the Commission directs that any decree or order shall be sent for this purpose, as if the decree or order had been a decree or order passed by such court.

3. the proceedings of the Commission shall, so far as may be and subject of the provisions of this act, be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, and save as otherwise provided by this Act, all orders of the Commission shall be final.

77. Court and office of the Commission.

The commission shall have its court and office at such place or places as the Local Government may from time to time fix.

78. Vacancy in Commission.

If a vacancy occurs in the Commission it shall be filled by the appointment by the Local Government of some other qualified person in the same manner as that in which the person whose seat is too filled was appointed.

79. Removal of member of the Commission.

The local Government may remove any member of the Commission-

1. if he refuses to act or becomes in the opinion of the Local Government incapable of acting or unfit to act as a member, or
2. if he has absented himself from more than three consecutive meetings of the Commission, or
3. if it is satisfied after such enquiry as it may deem necessary that he has flagrantly abused his position as a member or
4. if he has served as a member of more than three years.

80. Election of President of Commission.

1. The members of the Commission shall elect one of themselves to be president of the Commission.

2. If the members of the Commission are unable within ten days of the constitution of the Commission to elect a president by a majority of votes, a president may be appointed by the Local Government.
3. No proceedings shall be taken by the Commission unless at least two members are present and sitting together: provided that notices and summons may be issued by the president or a member nominated by the president for this purpose, sitting alone.
4. If the presidents is not present the two members present shall decide which of them shall preside, and member decided upon shall perform the duties of president.

81. Settlement of difference of opinion in the Commission.

In case of difference of opinion between the members of the Commission the opinion of the majority shall prevail: provided that if only two members are present of whom one is the president and if they are not in agreement the opinion of the president and if the two remaining members are not agreed, the question in disputes shall be kept pending, and the opinion of the majority or of the President when only two members are present shall be deemed to be the opinion of the Commission.

82. Costs in proceedings may be made payable out of income of Sikh Gurdwaras.

The costs, charges and expenses of and incidental to any proceedings of the Commission shall be in the discretion of the Commission, and the Commission may in disposing of any proceedings direct that the whole or any part of such expenses shall be paid by any party to such proceedings or out of the

property or income of the notified Sikh *Gurdwara* to which the proceedings relate.

83. Dissolution of Commission

The Local Government may at any time, when there is no proceeding pending before the Commission dissolve the Commission.

84. Decision as to whether a person is or is not a *patit*

If it is necessary to decide for the purposes of the constitution of the Board or a committee, under the provision of this Act, whether a person has or has not become a *patit* the question shall on application being made there to for this purpose be decided by the Commission.

85. Constitution of committee of management of section *Gurdwara*.

Subject to the provision of section 88-

1. the committee for the *Gurdwaras* known as the *Sri Akal Takht Sahib*, Amritsar, and *Sri Takht Kesgarh Sahib*, Anandpur, shall be the Board, provided that the Board shall not transact any business as such committee except in a general meeting:
2. there shall be one committee for the *Gurdwara* known as the *Darbar Sahib*, Amritsar and the *Baba Atal Sahib*, and all other notified Sikh *Gurdwaras* situated within the municipal boundaries of Amritsar other than the *Sri Akal Takht Sahib*, and it shall consist of-
 - i. three members elected by the electors of the municipal areas of Amritsar registered under provisions of section 92.

- ii. Four members elected by the election of the Amritsar District registered under the provisions of section 92 other than the electors so registered of the municipal areas of Amritsar.
- iii. Three members elected by the Board in general meeting:
 - 3. there shall be one committee of the notified Sikh *Gurdwaras* at Nankana and it shall consist of-
 - i. one member elected by the electors of the Notified Areas of Nankana registered under the provisions of section 92.
 - ii. Two members elected by the electors of the Sheikhpura District registered under the provisions of section 92 other than the electors so registered of the Notified Areas of Nankana.
 - iii. Two members elected by the electors of the Gujranwala District registered under the provisions of section 92.
 - iv. One member elected by the electors of the Lahore District registered under the provisions of section 92.
 - v. Two members elected by the electors of the Lyallpur District registered under the provisions of section 92.
 - vi. Five members elected by the Board in general meeting:
 - 4. there shall be one committee of the notified Sikh *Gurdwaras* at Anandpur and the *Gurdwaras* connected therewith other than the Sri Takht Kesgarh Sahib, and it shall consist of-
 - i. two members elected by the electors of the revenue estates of Anandpur, Tarapur, Lodhipur, Basali and Chak registered under the provisions of section 92,
 - ii. two members elected by the electors of the Hoshiarpur District registered under the provisions of section 92, other than the electors specified in clause (i),

- iii. one member elected by the electors of the Ambala District registered under the provisions of section 92,
 - iv. one member elected by the electors of the Jullunder District registered under the provision of section 92.
 - v. Three members elected by the Board in general meeting.
 - vi. Two members residents in the Kapurthala State, co-opted by the members described in clauses (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v):
5. there shall be one committee for the notified Sikh *Gurdwaras* at Muktsar, and it shall consist of-
- i. one member elected of the electors of the municipal areas of Muktsar registered under the provisions of section 92,
 - ii. two members elected by the electors of the Ferozepore District registered under the provision of section 92 other than the electors so registered of the municipal areas of Muktsar,
 - iii. one member elected by the electors of the Ludhiana District registered under the provisions of section 92,
 - iv. three members elected by the Board in general meeting.
 - v. Two members residents one in the Nabha State and one in the Faridkot State co-opted by the members described in clauses (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv):
6. there shall be one committee for the notified Sikh *Gurdwaras* within the limits of Hassan Abdal Samll Town and its shall consist of-
- i. two members elected by the electors of the Rawalpindi District registered under the provision of section 92,
 - ii. one member elected by the electors of the Attock District, registered under the provisions of section 92,
 - iii. one member elected by the electors of the Jhelim District, registered under the provisions of section 92.

- iv. Two members elected by the Board in general meeting.
 - v. Three members co-opted by the members described in clause (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) two of whom shall be residents in the North-west Frontier Province and the third a Sehijdhari Sikh resident in the Rawalpindi district, or in the Attock district, or in the North-West Frontier Province.
8. there shall be one committee for the notified Sikh *Gurdwaras* within the municipal limits of Lahore and it shall consist of-
- i. three members elected by the electors of the municipal area of Lahore, registered under the provision of section 92,
 - ii. three members elected by the electors of the Lahore District registered under the provisions of section 92 other than the electors so registered of the municipal areas of Lahore.
 - iii. Two members elected by the Board in general meeting.

86. Committee of *Gurdwara* other than those specified in section 85.

For every notified Sikh *Gurdwara* other than a *Gurdwara* specified to section 85 a committee shall be constituted after it had been declared to be a Sikh *Gurdwara* under the provisions of this Act, or after the provisions of part III have been applied to it under the provisions of section 38; provided that that Local Government may by notification direct that there shall be one committee for any two or more such *Gurdwaras* specified in the notification, and may in like manner cancel or modify such notification; provided further that the Local Government shall not issue, cancel or modify any such notification after the constitution of the first Board except upon recommendation being made to it in this behalf by the Board.

87. Constitution of committee not specially provided for.

Every committee other than a committee for which provision is made in section 85 shall consist of four elected members and one member nominated by the Board, who shall be representing the district in which the *Gurdwara* or one of the *Gurdwaras* to be managed by the committee is situated.

88. Constitution of committees, publication of constitution of effect thereof.

The committees described in sections 85 and 86 shall be constituted as soon as may be after the constitution of the Board; provided that no committee shall be constituted for any *Gurdwara* under the provisions of this Act unless and until it has been declared to be a Sikh *Gurdwara* under the provisions of this Act or the provisions of Part III have been applied to it under the provisions of section 38.

2. When all the members of any committee described in section 85 have been elected or co-opted as the case may be, according to the provisions of that section, the Local Government shall notify the fact that the committee has been duly constituted, and the date of the publication of the notification shall be deemed to be the date of the constitution of the committee.
3. When all the members of any committee described in section 87 have been elected or nominated, as the case may be according to the provisions of that section, the Commissioner of the Division in which the *Gurdwara* or *Gurdwaras* is or are situated shall notify the fact that the committee has been duly constituted, and the date of the publication of the notification shall be deemed to be the date of the constitution of the committee.

98. Election of members.

1. the elected members of a committee constituted for a *Gurdwara* specified in Schedule I shall be elected by the constituency specified in the Schedule against the *Gurdwaras*:

Provided that the Local Government may, from time to time, and after such consultation with the Board as it consider proper, by notification alter the local limits of any constituency.

2. The elected members of a committee constituted for a *Gurdwara* other than a *Gurdwara* specified in Schedule I or in section 85, shall be elected by a constituency formed subject to the approval of the Local government by the Board in general meeting, provided that for the election of such a committee before the constitution of the first Board under the provisions of this Act the Local Government shall, if necessary, from the constituency.
3. the Board may in general meeting, and subject to the approval of the Local Government from time to time vary any constituency formed under the provisions of sub-section (2).

89. Qualification for election to a committee.

Every person shall be entitled to have his name registered on the electoral roll of a constituency for the election of a member or members of a committee who-

- i. is a resident in that constituency, and either
- ii. is on the electoral roll for the time being force of persons entitled to vote for the election of a member to represent Sikh

rural or the urban constituency of the Legislative Council of the Governor,

- iii. is a Sikh more than twenty-one years of age and has had his name registered as a voter in such manner as may be prescribed.

93. Right to vote.

Every person registered on the electoral roll of a constituency for the election of a member or members of a committee shall be entitled while so registered to vote at an election of a member or members for that constituency.

94. Period of continuance of committees.

Every committee shall continue for three years from the date of its constitution or until a new committee has been constituted, whichever is later.

95. Effect of subsequent disability.

If any person having been elected or nominated a member of a committee becomes, subject to any of the disabilities stated in section 90 or 91, as the case may be, or absents himself from three consecutive meetings of the committee, he shall cease to be a member by reason of such absence applies to the committee within one month of the third consecutive meeting at which he was not present to be restored to membership, the committee may at the next following the date of the receipt of such application restore him to office, provided further that no member shall be so restored more than three times to the same committee.

96. Vacancies in committees other than those specified in section 85.

On the occurrence of a vacancy in a committee other than one of the committees specified in section 85 a new member shall be elected or

nominated, as the case may be, in the manner in which his predecessor was elected or nominated, and if no member is duly elected to replace an elected member the Board may appoint any qualified person to fill the vacancy.

97. Vacancies on committees specified in section 85.

If a vacancy occurs in the committee of a *Gurdwara* specified in section 85 a new member shall be elected or co-opted to fill the vacancy in the manner in which his predecessor was elected or co-opted, provided that if the predecessor was elected by the Board in general meeting the executive committee may temporarily fill the vacancy until the next general meeting of the Board when the Board shall elect a member permanently to fill the vacancy.

98. Committees to meet at least three times year.

Every committee shall meet at least three times in each year.

99. Notice of meetings.

A meeting of a committee shall be called by the president by seven days notice in writing provided that if the office of president is vacant, the vice-President shall, and if the office of Vice-President is also vacant, any two members, of a committee may, by giving reasonable notice to the other members, convene a meeting for the election of a President.

100. Quorum of committee.

No business shall be conducted or any proceeding held by a committee except at a meeting at which three or more members are present.

101. Presidents and Vice-Presidents of Committees.

1. Every committee shall at its first meeting elect a member to be president and another member to be vice-president and each of the members so elected shall hold

office during the continuance of the committee or until he resigns or ceases to be member of the committee.

2. An outgoing President or Vice-President shall, if otherwise qualified, be eligible for re-election.
3. At meetings of the committee the president shall be chairman; if he is absent, the vice-president shall be chairman and if both the president and vice-president are absent, the members present shall elect one of themselves to the chairman of the meeting.

102. Decisions of question before committees.

All questions which come before a committee shall be decided by a majority of the votes of the members present, and in cases of an equality of votes the chairman shall have a second or casting vote.

103. Minutes to be recorded.

All resolutions and orders of a committee shall be recorded in writing in a minute book and the record shall be signed by the chairman of the meeting.

104. Resignation of president and members of committee.

1. A member of a committee other than the president may resign his office by giving notice to the president and a president may resign his office by giving notice to the committee,
2. the resignation shall take effect in the case of a member from the date of its acceptance by the president, and in the case of a president from the date of its acceptance by the committee.

105. Exclusion of Board acting as committee from operation of this chapter.

Nothing contained on this Chapter except sub-section (1) of section 85 shall apply to the committee constituted under the provisions of that sub-section.

106. **Object on which the funds of a *Gurdwaras* may be spent.**

1. Subject to the provision of this Act all properties and income of a notified Sikh *Gurdwara* shall be used, in the first place, for the maintenance or improvement of the *Gurdwara* for the maintenance of religious worship and the performance and conduct of religious and charitable duties, ceremonies and observances connected therewith; for the payment of allowances or salaries of dependants, officers and servants thereof; for the fulfillment of the objects of the endowments thereof; for the maintenance of the *Langar*, for such religious, charitable or educational purposes as the committee may consider necessary in connection therewith or for the discharge of any obligations legally incurred.
2. When after providing for the purposes specified in subsection (1) there remains or appears likely to remain any surplus sum or any income not required for any such purposes, the committee may, by resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of its members, propose to allocate a part or the whole of such surplus sum or income to a particular religious, educational or charitable purpose and may, if the Board in writing sanctions such proposal act in accordance therewith, provided that any proposal so sanctioned to devote to such purpose income accruing during a period of more than three years may at any time not sooner than three years after the proposal was sanctioned be rescinded or

varied by a subsequent resolution of the committee passed in like manner.

3. notwithstanding any thing contained in sub-section (2) when it appears to the Board that after providing for the purposes specified in sub-section (1) there remains or is likely to remain any surplus sum or income not required for any such purposes and the committee is not willing to devote such surplus sum or income to other purposes, the Board may apply to the Commission for an order allowing the Board to devote the whole or part of such surplus sum or income to a particular and specified religious, educational or other charitable purpose.
4. When application has been made in accordance with the provision of sub-section (3), the commission may after hearing the objections, if any of the committee or of any person having interest in the *Gurdwara* concerned, if it is satisfied that the application is reasonable, determine what portion if any of such surplus sum or income shall be retained as a reserve fund for the *Gurdwara* concerned and direct the remainder of the surplus sum or income to be devoted to any such religious, educational or charitable purpose as it may deem proper and the Commission may from time to time on the application of the Board or of the committee of a person having interest in the *Gurdwara* concerned, rescind or vary any order passed under the provisions of this sub-section.
5. A committee or the Board if it is aggrieved by an order passed under sub-section (4) may not later than ninety

days after the passing of the order, appeal to the High Court and the High Court may confirm the order as the Commission might have passed instead of the order appealed against.

107. Annual contribution to Board

1. Every committee shall pay annually to the Board for the purpose of meeting the lawful expenses of the Board a contribution in money out of the income of the *Gurdwara* or *Gurdwaras* under its management.
2. The proportion which such contribution shall bear to the annual income of a *Gurdwara* shall be fixed for each *Gurdwara* by the Board provided that the first contribution levied under the provisions of this section shall not exceed one-length of such income, and that contributions levied subsequently income s the Local government after considering the income and expenditure of the Board during the previous year, may from time to time prescribe.

108. Formation of General Board Fund.

1. The Board shall establish and maintain a fund to be called the General Board Fund, and there shall be placed by the credit there of the sums, namely-
 - i. all the annual contributions paid to the Board under the provisions of section 107;
 - ii. all the fees for copies of accounts and of entries in registers levied by the Board under the provisions of sub-section (2) of section (8) of section 137.
2. No sums other than those specified in sub-section (1) shall be placed to the credit of the General Board Fund.

3. The General Board Fund shall be applied solely to the payment of expenses lawfully incurred by the Board in the exercise of its powers under the provision of this Act, and the discharge of obligation legally incurred, provided that if after paying such expenses and discharging such obligations any surplus sum remains, such surplus sum, up to the amount of three thousand rupees in any year, any be spend by the Board on any religious, charitable or educational purpose that it may deem fit.
4. No part of the General Board Fund shall be expended upon the administration of any trust fund described in section 111 or 112 upon the object of any such trust fund except in so far as mush expenditure may be permissible under the provisions of sub-section (3)

109. **Funds transferred to Board by *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak* committee.**

If any sum is transferred to the Board by the *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak* Committee, then:-

- i. any portion thereof held on behalf of a notified Sikh *Gurdwara* shall be paid as soon as may be, to the committee of such *Gurdwara*, and any portion held on behalf of any other place of worship as the Local Government may approve,
- ii. any portion not required to be paid under the provisions of clause (i) shall, in the first place, be used to discharge such debts of the *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak* Committee as may be legally recoverable;
- iii. any portion remaining after the debts of the *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak* Committee have been discharged as required by clause (ii) shall be set apart for such religious,

charitable or educational purposes as the Board in general meeting may determine, provided that any portion not so set apart within one year from the constitution of the first Board shall be handed over to the committee described in sub-section (2) of section 85 and shall form part of the funds of that committee.

110. Funds held in trust by the Board for specified purposes

Every sum made over to the Board under the provision of this Act by a committee of a notified Sikh *Gurdwara* or otherwise received by the Board for a specified religious, charitable or educational purpose shall be held by the Board as a trust and shall be devoted to the purpose specified.

111. General Trust Fund.

Every sum other than a sum specified in, sections 107, 109 or 110 or sub-section (2) of section 114 or sub-section (8) of section 137 shall be placed to the credit of a fund to be called the General Trust Fund out of which the Board in general meeting may from time to time make allotments for the discharge of any obligations legally incurred in connection therewith or for such religious, charitable or educational purposes as the Board may consider proper or for grants in aid for the maintenance or service of notified Sikh *Gurdwara*.

112. Separate Funds to be maintained for each Trust

The board shall establish and maintain a separate fund in respect of each trust held in accordance with the provisions of clause (iii) of section 109 or of section 110, and may discharge out of each such fund any obligations legally incurred in connection therewith.

113. Trust Funds to be deposited in banks.

Every sum received by the Board in connection with any fund shall be placed to the credit of the fund in such bank as the Board in general meeting may direct.

114. Board to maintain accounts of all Trust funds and of General Board Fund.

- i. The Board shall maintain regular accounts showing receipts on account of and expenditure out of the General Board Fund and separate similar accounts for each fund established under the provisions of section 112 and for General Trust Funds.
- ii. Any person having interest in a notified Sikh *Gurdwaras* shall on application being made to the board be furnished with a copy, certified to be correct by the president or other member of the executive committee authorized by the president on this behalf, of the whole or of any specified the time being in force in the Punjab.

115. Audit of accounts.

1. the accounts described in section 114 shall be audited and examined once in every by such auditor as may time to time be appointed by the Local Government.

119. Budget of Board

1. The executive committee shall lay before the Board at a general meeting to be held year at such time as may be prescribed an estimate of the income and expenditure for the ensuing financial year of the Board and of each separate fund administered by the Board.
2. The Board shall in general meeting take into consideration every estimate laid before it by the executive committee, and it shall be

n the discretion of the Board to pass or reject such estimate or to modify or alter it and to pass it as so modified or altered.

120. Accounts to be maintained by committees.

1. The committee of every notified Sikh *Gurdwara* shall maintain a regular account, showing all sums received on behalf of and all disbursements made out of the funds and income of the *Gurdwara*.
2. Any person having interest in the *Gurdwara* shall on application to the secretary of the committee, be furnished with a copy of the whole or any part of such account.
3. The committee shall charge for copies furnished under the provisions of sub-section (1) such fees as are charged for copies of records under the control of Deputy Commissioners of districts under the rules for the time being in force in the Punjab.

121. Audit of committee's accounts.

1. Subject to the provisions of sub-section (5) every account described in section 120 shall be audited and examined once in every year by an auditor appointed by the Board.
2. The accounts of the committees described in sub-section (2) and sub-section (4) of section 85 shall be audited by an auditor who may act as an auditor under the provisions of section 144 of the Indian Companies Act, 1913.
3. The Board shall maintain a list of not less than five auditors nominated by the Board with the previous sanction of the Local Government for the purpose of the audit of the accounts of committees other than those specified in sub-section (2), and no auditor, whose name is not on the list, shall be appointed to audit such accounts.

4. If within six months of the constitution of the Board the Board has failed to nominate auditors as required by sub-section (3) the Local Government may appoint such number of auditors as are necessary to complete the list.
5. The committee of any notified Sikh *Gurdwara* whose gross annual monetary income does not exceed two thousand rupees, may with the sanction of the Board cause the account of such *Gurdwara* to be audited less frequently than once in every year or may with like sanction dispense with the audit and examination of such account.
6. For the purpose of any such audit and examination the auditor may by a demand in writing require from the committee or any member or servant of the committee of the production before him of all books, deeds, vouchers and all other documents and papers which he deems necessary, and may require any person holding or accountable for any such books, deeds voucher documents or papers to appear before him at any such audit and examination and to answer all question which may be put to him with respect to the same or to prepare and submit any further statement which such auditor may consider necessary.

CHAPTER X

POWER AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD

125. Power and duties of the Board generally

It shall be the duty of the Board to ensure that every committee deals with the property and income of the *Gurdwara* or *Gurdwara* managed by it in accordance with the provisions of this act, and for the fulfillment of this duty and subject to the provisions of, and in addition to the powers conferred upon the Board by, this act, the general

superintendence over all committees appointed under the provisions of this Act shall vest in the Board.

126. Restriction of powers of the Board.

The Board shall not in any manner interfere with or have any control over or connection with any place of public worship in the Punjab otherwise than as provided in this Act.

127. Board may hold and administer trusts.

It shall be competent for the Board to hold and administer trust funds for purposes of a religious, charitable or educational nature, whether such funds are derived from allotments duly made by a committee out of the surplus funds or income of a *Gurdwara* under its management or from donations, or contributions or endowments made direct to the Board for such purposes.

128. Control by Board over Executive Committee.

The Board in general meeting may at any time call upon its Executive Committee to report upon any matter within the jurisdiction of the Board and may require the Executive Committee to take any such action as lies under the provisions of this Act within the powers of the Board.

129. What matters may be discussed by Board in General Meeting.

The Board in any meeting may consider and discuss any matter with which it has power under his Act to deal any matter directly connected with the Sikh , but shall not consider or discuss, or pass any resolution or order upon, any other matter.

130. Settling of schemes of administration.

1. When at any time the committee or the Board is of opinion that for the proper administration of the Property, endowments, funds and income of a notified Sikh *Gurdwara* a

scheme should be settled, the Board and the committee shall consult together and if they agree upon a scheme the scheme shall be described in writing and the committee shall give effect thereto.

2. It at such consultation the committee and the Board do not agree upon a scheme, the committee or the Board may apply to the Commission, and the Commission, after hearing such members of the committee and of the Board respectively as may be deputed for the purpose by the committee and the Board respectively, and any such other persons as it may consider proper to hear, may itself settle such scheme as it consider just and proper and pass an order giving effect thereto.
3. When at any time the committee and the Board, after consultation together, are of opinion that a scheme settled under the provisions of sub-section (1) or sub-section (2) should in the interests of the proper administration of the property endowments funds and income of the *Gurdwara* be set aside or modified, and the committee and the Board are in agreement in respect of the matter, the decision of the Board and the committee shall be recorded and effect thereto given by the committee.
4. If the committee or the Board is of opinion that in the interests of the proper administration of the property, endowments, funds or income of a notified Sikh *Gurdwara* as scheme settled under the provisions of sub-section (1) or sub-section (2) should be set aside or modified, and the Board and the committee are not in agreement upon the matter, the committee or Board may apply to the Commission to have the

scheme set aside or modified as desired, and the Commission after hearing such members of the committee and of the Board respectively as may be deputed for this purpose by the committee and the Board respectively and any such other persons as it may consider proper to hear, any itself set aside such scheme as it considers just and proper and pass an order giving effect thereto.

131. Exclusion of Board acting as Committee from operation of section 130.

Nothing contained in section 130 shall apply to the committee constituted under the provision of sub-section (1) of section 85.

132. Power of Board to make bye-laws.

1. The Board may in general meeting make bye-laws not inconsistent with this Act, regulating its procedure and the fees to be levied under the provisions of sub-section (8) of section 137, provided that the Board shall not, without the previous sanction of the Local Government, make any bye-law-
 - a. prescribing the form in which the budgets of the Board and of committees shall be presented:
 - b. providing for the custody and investment of the funds of the Board and prescribing the procedure by which sanction of the Board may be accorded to the deposit of surplus funds in specified banks:
 - c. prescribing the qualifications of candidates for membership of the Board and committees;

and provided further that no bye-law falling within the purview of clause (c) shall impose any disqualification upon a Sikh only because he is Schejdhari Sikh.

2. All bye-law requiring the previous sanction of the Local Government under the provisions of sub-section (i) shall when made be published in the Gazette

CHAPTER XI

POWERS AND DUTIES OF COMMITTEES

133. General Powers of committees.

Subject to the provisions of this act, a committee shall have full powers of control over the office holders and dependents of and all properties and income of whatever description belonging to, the *Gurdwara* or *Gurdwara* under its management and of enforcing the proper observance of all ceremonies and religious observances in connection with such *Gurdwara* or *Gurdwaras* and of taking all such measures as may be necessary to ensure the proper management of the *Gurdwara* or *Gurdwaras* and the efficient administration of the property, income and endowments thereof.

134. Powers of committee to dismiss office-holders

The committee may suspend or dismiss any office-holder provided that it shall not dismiss a hereditary office-holder or minister-

- a. makes persistent default in the submission of budgets, accounts, reports or returns, which it is his duty to submit, or
- b. willfully disobeys lawful orders issued by the committee, or
- c. is guilty of any malfeasance, misfeasance, breach of trust or neglect of duty in respect of a trust, or
- d. has misappropriated or improperly dealt with, the properties of the *Gurdwaras*, or
- e. is of unsound mind or physically unfit to discharge the function of his office, or

- f. is guilty of misconduct of such a character as to render him morally unfit for his office, or
- g. fails persistently to perform his duties in connection with the management or performance of public worship or the management or performance of any rituals and ceremonies in accordance with the teachings of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, or
- h. has ceased to be a Sikh.

135. Procedure when hereditary office-holder or minister is dismissed.

1. whenever the dismissal of hereditary office-holder or of minister is ordered, the order shall, except when it is based on facts or conclusion established at a judicial trial, or when such office-holder or minister is absconding be preceded by a recorded enquiry, and at such enquiry a definite charge in writing shall be framed in respect of each offence and explained to such office-holder or minister; the evidence in support of it and any evidence which he may adduce in his defense shall be recorded in his presence and his defense shall be taken down in writing, and on such of the charges framed a finding shall be recorded.
2. A committee may suspend a hereditary office-holder or a minister pending an enquiry into the charges framed against him.
3. Any hereditary office-holder who has been suspended or dismissed may within three months of the date of the order of suspension or dismissal, as the case may be, appeal either to the Board or to the Commission as he may elect: if he elects to appeal to the Board the order of the Board shall be final, and if he elects to appeal to the Commission a further appeal shall lie to the High Court from the order of the Commission provided that such appeal shall be made within ninety days of the date of the order.

4. Any minister other than a hereditary office-holder who has been suspended or dismissed may within ninety days of the date of the order of suspension or dismissal, as the case may be, appeal to the Board and the order of the Board shall be final.
5. When no appeal is preferred against an order of a committee suspending or dismissing a hereditary office-holder or a minister, as the case may be, such order shall be final.
6. if in the opinion of the Board a hereditary office-holder or a minister of a notified Sikh *Gurdwara* may be dismissed in accordance with the provisions of section 134, the Board may move the committee of such *Gurdwara* to dismiss him, and if the committee does not within one month of being so moved dismiss such office-holder or minister, the Board may apply to the Commission to order his removal, and if the Commission finds that such office-holder or minister may be so dismissed, it may order his dismissal.
7. When an application has been made to the Commission under the provisions of sub-section (6) the Commission may suspend from office, pending its decision, the person against whom the application has been made.
8. Any hereditary office-holder dismissed under the provisions of sub-section (6) may, within ninety days of the date of the order of dismissal, appeal to the High Court.
9. Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (3) or sub-section (4) when the Board acting as a committee under the provisions of sub-section (5) of section 85 orders the suspension or dismissal of a hereditary office-holder, an appeal from such order shall lie only to the commission with a further appeal to the High Court as provided in sub-section (5), and when the Board

acting as such committee orders the suspension or dismissal of a Minister other than a hereditary office-holder the order of the Board shall be final: and nothing contained in sub-sections (6), (7) or (8) shall apply to the Board acting as such committee.

136. Appointment of ministers and office-holders.

If after the commencement of this Act any vacancy occurs in an office connected with a notified Sikh *Gurdwara*, whether by reason of the death, dismissal or resignation of the office-holder or for any other reason, the committee of the *Gurdwara* may appoint any person who in its opinion is qualified for the office to fill the vacancy: provide that if the last holder of the office was a hereditary office-holder who had not before the vacancy occurred received compensation under the provisions of section 20, and there is a presumptive successor of such last office-holder who desires to be appointed and has not received compensation under the provisions of section 20, the committee shall appoint such presumptive successor unless, in its opinion he has not been properly ordained or his moral character is such as to render him unsuitable or his education has not been sufficient to render him fit for appointment.

- 2 If any presumptive successor claims to be appointed to fill a vacancy in accordance with the provisions of sub-section (1) and the committee rejects his claim, he may, unless the committee is the Board acting as a committee, under the provisions of sub-section (1) of section 85, within thirty days of the date of such rejection appeal to the Board and the decision of the Board shall be final.

137. Registers to be kept for *Gurdwaras*.

1. The committee of every notified Sikh *Gurdwara* shall as soon as may be, prepare registers, in which shall be entered-
 - a. the names of past and present ministers of the *Gurdwara*, and the documents, if any relating thereto;
 - b. particulars of all immovable properties of the *Gurdwara*, and the documents', if any relating thereto;
 - c. particulars of the scheme of administration, if any;
 - d. the names of all officers connected with the *Gurdwara* to which any salary, emolument or perquisite is attached and the nature, with their estimated value; and
 - e. such other particulars as the Board may direct.
2. The registers shall be submitted through the committee to the Board within such period after the commencement of this Act as the Board may direct.
3. The Board after checking them may direct that the registers be corrected in such manner as appears to be necessary.
4. The registers as approved by the Board shall be kept by the committee of the *Gurdwara* to which they relate, and copies thereof shall be kept by the Board.
5. The committee shall cause the entries in the registers to be scrutinized annually and shall submit to the Board for its approval a verified statement showing the alterations, omissions or additions required therein.
6. The Board may after checking the statement direct alterations omissions or additions to be made in the registers as it finds to be necessary.
7. A copy of every order passed under the provisions of subsection.

3. or sub-section (6) shall be communicated to the committee and the committee shall carry out the alterations, omissions or additions ordered by the Board in the Registers.
8. The president of the Board or any servant authorized by him on this behalf or the president of the committee may grant copies of the registers or of any entries therein on payment of such fees at the Board may by bye-law prescribe: such copies shall be certified by the president of the Board or committee, as the case may be, in the manner provided in section 76 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872.
9. Nothing contained in sub-section (2), (3), (4), (6) or (7) or in sub-section (5) with the exception of the provision for the annual scrutiny of entries in registers shall apply to the committee constituted under the provisions of sub-section (1) of section 85.

138. Power of committee to make regulations.

A committee of a notified Sikh *Gurdwara* may make regulations, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act or with any rules or bye-laws made there under, to regulate its procedure provided that without the previous sanction of the Board no regulation shall be made-

- i. authorizing by name or office any person to receive, or sign acknowledgments of the receipt of any money on behalf of the committee, or
- ii. prescribing the form in which accounts, returns and reports relating to the management of a *Gurdwara* shall be maintained or submitted.

139. Power of committee to make regulations Re-offerings at Sikh *Gurdwara*.

1. The committee of a notified Sikh *Gurdwara* may from time to time make regulations for the purpose of determining what portion of the offerings made at or in connection with such *Gurdwara* shall be deemed to be the property of the *Gurdwara* and regulating the divisions of such officering or any portion of them between the various office-holders of such *Gurdwara*.
2. If not regulations have been made by a committee under the provisions of sub-section (1) all offerings made at, or in connection with, a notified Sikh *Gurdwara* shall be deemed to be the property of such *Gurdwara*.

Appendix-II
Educational Institutions running under Shiromani Gurdwara
Parbandhak Committee

Schools

Senior Secondary Schools & High Schools (95% Grant in- Aid)

1.	Sri Guru Ram Das Khalsa Senior Secondary School Sri Amritsar
2.	Sri Guru Nanak Girls Senior Secondary School, Sri Amritsar.
3.	Khalsa Senior Secondary Schools Beer Sahib, Thatha (Sri Amritsar)
A4.	Bhupinder Khalsa Senior Secondary School, Moga.
5.	Guru Gobind Singh Senior Secondary School, Khanna
6.	Kallar Khalsa Senikor Secondary Schools, Haryana (Hoshiarpur).
7.	Guru Nanak High School Takhtupura (Moga)
8.	Sri Mata Ganga Girls High School Baba Bakala (Sri Amritsar).
9.	Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Khalsa High School Baba Bakala (Sri Amritsar)
10.	Khalsa High School Guru Ka Bagh, Sri Amritsar

Public Schools

1.	Sri Guru Ramdas Public School, Sultanwind Road, Amritsar	Pb. School Edu. Board
2.	Maharaja Ranjit Singh Public Schools, Tarantarn (Amritsar)	C.B.S.E.+ PSEB
3.	Maharaja Ranjit Singh Public School, Rattoke, Via Khernkarn, Tehsil Patti (Amritsar).	Pb. School Edu. Board
4.	Maharaja Ranjit Singh Public School, Diyalpura, Tehsil Patti (Amritsar)	Pb. School Edu. Board.
5.	Baba Budha Ji Public School, Beer Sahib, Thatha, Via Jhabal (Amritsar)	Pb. School Edu. Board
6.	Sri Guru Hargobind Sr. Secondary Public School, Ramdas, Tehsil Ajanala (Amritsar)	Pb. School Edu. Board.
7.	Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib Khalsa Girls High School, Chheharta Sahib (Amritsar)	Pb. School Edu. Board
8.	Guru Nanak Dev Academy, Jalandhar Road, Batala (Gurdaspur).	Pb. School Edu. Board.

9.	Guru Arjun Dev Public School, Barath Laarhi, Dr. Sama, Tehsil Pathankot (Gurdaspur)	Pb. School Edu. Board
10.	Sahibjada Ajit Singh Public School, Mahalpur, Ladhewal (Hoshiarpur)	Pb. School Edu. Board.
11.	Baba Makhan Shah Public School, Tanda Ram Saria, Mukkerian (Hoshiarpur)	Pb. School Edu. Board
12.	Sri Guru TEg Bahadur Khalsa High School, GARh Shankar (Hoshiarpur)	Pb. School Edu. Board.
13.	Bhai Nandd Lal Public School, Sri Anandput Sahib (Ropar)	C.B.S.E.
14.	Parivaar Vishoda Public School, Sirsa, Nangal (Ropar)	Pb. School Edu. Board
15.	Khalsa Public School, Hafizabad, Guru Beer Jhand Sahib (Ropar)	Pb. School Edu. Board.
16.	Dashmesh Public School, Tahilana Sahib, Raikot (Ludhiana)	Pb. School Edu. Board
17.	Guru Gobind Singh Public School, Khanna (Ludhiana)	Pb. School Edu. Board.
18.	Dashmeshi Sr. Secondary School Kapal Mochan, Distt.	HKaryana School Edu. Board

	Yumnanagar (Haryana)	
19.	Baba Gurditta Ji Public School, Jindvari (Ropar)	Pb. School Edu. Board
20.	Bibi Rajni Public School, Sen. Sec. School Patti (Tarn Taran)	Pb. School Edu. Board.
21.	Bibi Rajni Sec. Sec. School, Patti (Tarn Taran)	Pb. School Edu. Board

Colleges

1.	Guru Nanak Khalsa college Kings Circle Matunga Mumbai	Mumbai University
2.	Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Khalsa College, Sri Anandpur Sahib (Ropar)	Punjabi University, Patiala
3.	Mata Gujri College Fatehgarh Sahib	Punjabi University, Patiala
4.	General Shivdev Singh Diwan Gurbachan Singh Khalsa College, Patiala	Punjabi University, Patiala
5.	Guru Nanak College Budlada (Mansa)	Punjabi University, Patiala
6.	Mata Sahib Kaur Girls College Talwandi Saboo, Bathinda	Punjabi University, Patiala.
7.	Sant Baba Dalip Singh Memorial Khalsa College Dumelli (Kapurthala).	Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar

8.	Guru Nanak Khalsa College Darolli Kallan (Jalandhar).	Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.
9.	Trai-Shatabdi Guru Gobind Singh Khalsa College, Amritsar	Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.
10.	Guru Nanak College, Moga	Punjab Univesity, Chandigarh.
11.	Guru Nanakk College For Girls, Mukatsar.	Punjabi University, Chandigarh
12.	Babbar Akali Memorial Khalsa College, Garshankar (Hoshiarpur).	Punjab University, Chandigarh
13.	Khalsa College Gardhiwala (Hoshiarpur).	Punjab Univesity, Chandigarh.
14.	Mata Ganga Khalsa College For Girls Kottan (Ludhiana).	Punjab University, Chandigarh.
15.	Guru Gobind Singh Khalsa College (for Women) Jhaar Sahib (Ludhiana).	Punjab University, Chandigarh.,
16.	Mata Damodri Kanya Mahavidyala, Darolli Bhai, (Moga).	Punjab Univestity, Chandigarh.
17.	Mata Sukndri Tri-Shatadi Khalsa College for Women, Karnal (Haryana).	Kurukshetra University, (Haryana).
18.	Guru Nanak College Batala (Gurdaspur)	Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.
19.	Mata Sahib Kaur Girls College	Punjabi University, Patiala

	Talwandi Sabho, (Ferozpur)	
20.	Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College, Vill. Aakar, Patiala	Punjabi University
21.	Guru Nanak Girls Intermediate College, Kankarkhera, Meerut Cantt. U.P.	
22.	Sikh Intermediate College Narangpur, Joya, J.P. Nagar (U.P.).	

Appendix-III

ਨਵੀਂ ਚੁਣੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੇ

ਪਾਲਿਸੀ ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮ

ਸੰਬੰਧੀ

ਪੰਜ-ਨੁਕਾਤੀ ਨੀਤੀ-ਨਿਰਨਾ (1979)

ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਚੋਣਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਨਦਾਰ ਪੰਥਕ ਜਿੱਤ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਮਾਰਗ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਮੋੜ ਸਿੱਧ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ।

ਚੋਣ ਨਤੀਜੇ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਠੋਸ ਪੰਥਕ ਏਕਤਾ ਉਭਰ ਕੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਈ ਹੈ। ਜੇਕਰ ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਨਾਜ਼ੁਕ ਸਮੇਂ, ਜਦ ਕਿ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਤੇ ਬਾਹਰੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਨੂੰ ਨਵੇਂ ਚੈਲਿੰਜ ਵਾਪਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ, ਪੰਥਕ ਏਕਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਤਰੇੜਾਂ ਪੈ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਤਾਂ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦਾ ਏਹੋ ਫਤਵਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ:

ਬੇੜਾ ਬੰਧਿ ਨ ਸਕਿਓ ਬੰਧਕ ਕੀ ਵੇਲਾ ॥

ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਚੋਣਾਂ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਤੇ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਰਖਦੇ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਮਸਲੇ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ, ਸੋ ਅਵੱਸ਼ਕ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਚੋਣ-ਨਤੀਜੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਨਵੀਂ ਸੇਧ, ਨਵਾਂ ਬਲ, ਨਵਾਂ ਮਾਰਗ-ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰੇਗੀ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਰ ਰਹੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਲਈ ਨਵੇਂ ਸਿਰਿਓਂ ਨਵੇਂ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਨਾਲ ਵਚਨ-ਬੱਧ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਅਵਸਰ ਹੈ।

ਚੋਦਾਂ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਇਹ ਚੋਣਾਂ ਮੀਰੀ ਤੇ ਪੀਰੀ ਅਥਵਾ ਧਰਮ ਤੇ ਸਿਆਸਤ ਦੀ ਏਕਤਾ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਲੜੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਜਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ। ਇਕ ਪਾਸੇ ਇਹ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਸੈਕੂਲਰ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਤਕਾਜਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਪੂਰਾ ਉਤਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਇਸ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਫਿਰਕੇ (ਸਿੱਖਾਂ) ਨੂੰ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਕੌਮ ਦਾ ਸੰਸਥਾਈ ਰੂਪ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਇਹ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਲਈ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਤਾਕਤ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਿਜ ਲਈ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਇਹ (ਸਿਆਸੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ) ਤਾਂ ਇਕ ਸਾਧਨ ਹੈ, ਸਰਬੱਤ ਦੇ ਭਲੇ ਖਾਤਰ ਮਨੁੱਖੀ ਏਕਤਾ, ਸਮਾਜੀ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਤੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਇਨਸਾਫ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਕਦਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਲੀ ਰੂਪ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਨਵੇਂ ਸਮਾਜ-ਸਿਆਸੀ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ 'ਹਲੇਮੀ ਰਾਜ' ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਅਸੀਂ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਵਿਚ 'ਰਾਜ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ' ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਹਰ ਰੋਜ਼

ਚਿਤਵਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਇਹ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪਾਰਲੀਮੈਂਟ, ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਰੋਲ ਹੈ।

ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਲਹਿਰ ਦੇ ਫਲਸਰੂਪ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਨਵਾਂ ਮੋੜ ਸਿੱਧ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਲਹਿਰ ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਮੱਤ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਮਹਾਨ ਅਸੂਲ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਵਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਮਸਲਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਅੰਤਮ ਨਿਰਨਾ-ਜਨਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ 'ਸੰਗਤ' ਹੈ, 'ਸਰਕਾਰ' ਨਹੀਂ। ਆਪਣੇ ਅਰੰਭ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਨੇ ਸਰਬੱਤ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਲੋਕ ਤੰਤਰੀ ਅਸੂਲ ਨੂੰ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ, ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਨੁਮਾਇੰਦਗੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਉਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਆਦਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਦਾ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਬੁਲੰਦ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਹੋਏ, ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਦੇ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਦਸ ਦਹਾਕਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਪਾਇਆ ਹੈ। ਕੌਮ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਕ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ। ਇਖਲਾਕੀ, ਸਮਾਜੀ ਤੇ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਨੂੰ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੀਕਲਾ ਵੱਲ ਲਿਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਯਤਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਕਰੈਡਿਟ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਲਹਿਰ ਵੇਲੇ ਲਵੰਟੀਅਰ ਸੈਨਾ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਥਾਂ ਥਾਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਜੱਥਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਲੜੀ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰੋਣ ਲਈ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਦਲ ਦੀ ਬੁਨਿਆਦ ਰੱਖੀ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਪਲੇਟਫਾਰਮ ਪ੍ਰਾਦਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਜਥੇਬੰਦੀ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਮਹਾਨ ਰੋਲ ਅਦਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਆਜ਼ਾਦ ਹਸਤੀ ਕਾਇਮ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ, ਆਪਣੇ ਕੌਮੀ ਸਰੂਪ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਰਹਿੰਦਿਆਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਲਈ ਥਾ ਇਜ਼ਤ, ਵਾ-ਵਕਾਰ ਦਰਜਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ, ਤੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਭਾਗ ਵਿਧਾਤਾ ਆਪ ਬਣਨ ਲਈ ਜੋ ਸੰਗਰਾਮ ਕਰਨੇ ਪਏ ਹਨ, ਜੋ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਲੜਨੇ ਪਏ ਹਨ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਨੇ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਦਲ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਾਨਾ ਬਸ਼ਾਨਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਿਆਂ ਇਕ ਜਾਂ ਦੂਸਰੀ ਸ਼ਕਲ ਵਿਚ ਅਹਿਮ ਰੋਲ ਅਦਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ।

ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਪਿਛਲੀਆਂ ਰਵਾਇਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਖੀ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹੋਏ, ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਦੇ ਤਕਾਜ਼ਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਤੇ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਦੀਆਂ ਲੋੜਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਾਵਧਾਨ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਨਵੀਂ ਚੁਣੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਲਈ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਪੰਜ-ਨੁਕਤੀ ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਲੀ ਰੂਪ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਹਰ ਸੰਭਵ ਯਤਨ ਕਰੇਗੀ।

1. **ਧਰਮ ਪਰਚਾਰ: ਸਿੱਖ ਮਤ ਦੀ ਨਿਰਮਲਤਾ, ਪਵਿੱਤਰਤਾ ਤੇ ਮੂਲ-ਪਛਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਬਰਕਰਾਰ ਰੱਖਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਅਕੀਦੇ, ਅਸੂਲ ਤੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਚਾਰ**

ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ, ਰਹਿਣੀ ਬਹਿਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਜਾਤ-ਪਾਤ, ਰੰਗ-ਰੂਪ ਨਸਲ ਮੁਲਕ ਆਦਿ ਦੇ ਵਿਤਕਰਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤ ਜੀਵਨ ਜਾਚ ਨੂੰ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਬੱਲ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ।

ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਤੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਓਟ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਜੋ ਸੰਪਰਦਾਵਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਦੇ ਮੂਲ ਤੱਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਲੰਘਣਾਂ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਢਾਉ ਰੋਲ ਅਦਾ ਕਰ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਹਰ ਸੰਭਵ ਪੱਧਰ ਤੇ ਮੁਕਾਬਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਸਾਹਿਤ (ਖਾਸ ਕਰ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ) ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ, ਸਿੱਖ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਖੋਜ ਤੇ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਦੇ ਠੋਸ ਪ੍ਰਾਜੈਕਟ ਹਥ ਵਿਚ ਲਏ ਜਾਣਗੇ ਤਾਂਕਿ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਲੋੜਾਂ ਤੇ ਵੰਗਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਟਾਕਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਨੂੰ ਨਵੀਂ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਕ ਸੇਂਧ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ, ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਇਕ ਪਾਸੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਫਲਸਫਾ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਫਲਸਫਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣਾ ਯੋਗ ਸਥਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰ ਸਕੇਗਾ ਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਮਜ਼ਹਬ ਦਾ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਯਕੀਨੀ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਤੇ ਬਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਾਹਿਤ, ਖਾਸ ਕਰ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ, ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕਰਾਹਿਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ। ਇਕ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਸੰਸਥਾ (ਪਬਲੀਕੇਸ਼ਨ ਬਿਊਰੋ) ਨੂੰ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੇ ਕਦਮ ਉਠਾਏ ਜਾਣਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਲਾਭਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਘਟ ਕੀਮਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ। ਸਿੱਖੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੀਆਂ ਲਾਇਬ੍ਰੇਰੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਜਾਲ ਬਿਛਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ। ਜਤਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਜਲਦੀ ਹੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਇਕ ਅੰਤਰ-ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਕੇਂਦਰ (International Institute of Sikh Studies) ਕਾਇਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ ਜੋ ਅੰਤ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਸਿੱਖ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦਾ ਰੂਪ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰੇਗਾ। ਅੰਤਰ-ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਵਾਰਤਾਲਾਪ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰੋਤਸਾਹਨ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੇ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਇਕ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਨੇੜੇ ਆ ਸਕਣਾ ਤੇ ਸਰਬ-ਸਾਂਝਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਸਭਿਅਤਾ ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ। ਸਮੇਂ-ਸਮੇਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ, ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਕੇਂਦਰਾਂ ਸਥਾਨਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਬਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੈਮੀਨਾਰ, ਵਰਕਸ਼ਾਪ, ਗੋਸ਼ਟੀਆਂ ਆਦਿ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ। ਸਿੱਖ ਮਤ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਲਈ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਅਥਵਾ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਵਿਜ਼ਿਟਿੰਗ ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ ਭਾਰਤ ਤੇ ਬਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਭੇਜੇ ਜਾਣਗੇ। ਸਿੱਖ ਅਜਾਇਬ ਘਰ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਰੈਫਰੈਂਸ ਲਾਇਬ੍ਰੇਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਨਵੀਂ ਰੂਪ-ਰੇਖਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ।

ਸਿੱਖ-ਮਤ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਲਈ ਸੰਚਾਰ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਨਵੀਆਂ (ਆਡਿਓ-ਵਿਡੀਓ) ਤਕਨੀਕਾਂ, ਸਾਧਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਵਿਧੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਣਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ। ਪਾਵਨ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਨੂੰ ਰੀਲੇਅ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਗੋਲਡਨ ਟੈਂਪਲ ਬ੍ਰਾਡਕਾਸਟਿੰਗ ਸਟੇਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਯਤਨ ਜਾਰੀ ਰੱਖੇ ਜਾਣਗੇ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਲਾਸਕੀ ਰਾਗਾਂ ਤੇ ਧੁਨੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਗਾਇਨ ਦੇ ਟੇਪਾਂ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ

ਲਾਇਬ੍ਰੇਰੀ ਬਣਾਈ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡਰ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਵਾਏ ਜਾਣਗੇ। ਭਾਰਤ ਤੇ ਬਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਖਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਛੋਟੇ ਅਕਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਟੀ.ਵੀ. ਫਿਲਮਾਂ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਵਾਈਆਂ ਜਾਣਗੀਆਂ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਮਤ, ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਣੀ-ਬਹਿਣੀ, ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ, ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਅਸਥਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਾਗਤ ਜੋਤ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਅਗੇ ਭਲੀ ਭਾਂਤ ਰੱਖੀ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ।

ਬਾਣੀਆਂ, ਰਾਗੀਆਂ, ਢਾਡੀਆਂ, ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕਾਂ ਆਦਿ ਦੀ ਯੋਗ ਸਿਖਲਾਈ ਵੱਲ ਉਚੇਚਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਏਹ ਵਰਗ ਨਾ ਸਿਰਫ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਠਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਸਗੋਂ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਨਯੋਗ ਸਥਾਨ ਵੀ ਹਾਸਲ ਕਰੇਗਾ। ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਕਲਾ ਕੌਸ਼ਲਤਾ ਤੇ ਨਿਪੁੰਨਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੋਂ ਸਨਮਾਨਿਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ। ਗ੍ਰੰਥੀਆਂ, ਪਾਠੀਆਂ, ਰਾਗੀਆਂ, ਢਾਡੀਆਂ, ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕਾਂ ਆਦਿ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਡਾਇਰੈਕਟਰੀ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ। ਪੰਜੇ ਤਖਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਰ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਯੋਗ ਥਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਤ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਰੋਲ ਅਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪੂਰੇ ਪੂਰੇ ਯਤਨ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣਗੇ।

2. ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਤੌਰ ਇਕ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਕੌਮ ਤੇ ਹਸਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਰੱਖਿਅਤ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ

ਇਕ ਕੌਮ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਤੇ ਹਸਤੀ ਬਰਕਰਾਰ ਰੱਖਣ ਦੀ ਅਭਿਲਾਸ਼ਾ ਲਈ ਲੜੇ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਕ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਰਹੇਗੀ। ਇਹ ਇੱਛਾ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਸਮੇਂ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਦਮਾਨ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਅੱਜ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਅਭਿਲਾਸ਼ਾ ਦਾ ਰੂਪ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਫੰਡਰਲ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਵਿਚ ਸੂਬਾਈ ਖੁਦਸਖਤਾਰੀ (ਅਟਾਨੌਮੀ) ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਦਲ ਨੇ ਅਕਤੂਬਰ 1978 ਨੂੰ ਲੁਧਿਆਣੇ ਵਿਖੇ ਹੋਈ। ਸਾਲਾਨਾ ਕਾਨਫਰੰਸ ਵਿਚ ਮਤਾ ਪਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਦੀ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਤੇ ਸੰਗਠਤ ਅਵਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਬੁਲੰਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਫੰਡਰਲ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਕੌਮਾਂ, ਕੌਮੀਅਤਾ ਤੇ ਅਕਲੀਅਤਾ ਦਾ ਸਵੈ ਨਿਰਭਰ ਹਸਤੀ ਕਾਇਮ ਰਹਿ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੀ ਸਹੀ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁ-ਕੌਮੀ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਏਕਤਾ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਅਖੰਡਤਾ ਯਕੀਨੀ ਬਣਾਈ ਜਾ ਸਕੇਗੀ।

3. ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਨਿੱਧ ਕਿਰਦਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਨਾ

ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਜੋਕੀਆਂ ਲੋੜਾਂ ਤੇ ਵੰਗਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਨਿੱਧ ਕਿਰਦਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਤੇ ਸਰਬ ਪੱਖੀ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇ। ਇਸ ਨਜ਼ਰੀਏ ਤੋਂ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੇ ਹਰ ਵਰਗ, ਖਾਸ ਬੁੱਧੀ ਜੀਵੀ ਵਰਗ ਦੀ ਕੌਮ ਦੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਅਮਲ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਮੂਲੀਅਤ ਤੇ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਤੇ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਬਲ ਦੇਵੇਗੀ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ

ਜਾਗ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਦੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਹੋਰ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਹੋ ਸਕੇਗੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੌਮ ਦੀ ਨੁਮਾਇੰਦਗੀ ਕਰ ਸਕਣਗੀਆਂ।

4. ਪੰਜਾਬ ਅਥਵਾਂ ਭਾਰਤ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਮੱਸਿਆਵਾਂ ਵੱਲ ਧਿਆਨ

ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਦੇ ਤਕਰੀਬਨ ਹਰ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਆਬਾਦੀ ਦੇ ਦਿਨ ਬਦਿਨ ਵਾਧੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਮਤ ਦੇ ਫੈਲਾਓ ਤੇ ਉਥੋਂ ਦੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਇਕ ਅੰਤਰ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਭਾਈਚਾਰਾ ਬਣਦਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਸੋ ਸਮੂਹ ਸਿੱਖ ਜਗਤ ਦੀ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ, ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦਾ ਫਰਜ਼ ਬਣਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਵਸਦੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਧਿਆਤਮਕ, ਸਮਾਜਕ ਤੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਲੋੜਾਂ ਤੇ ਸਮੱਸਿਆਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਹਲ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਯੋਗ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਪਾਵੇ ਤੇ ਏਸ ਪਾਸੇ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੇ ਯਤਨ ਕਰੇ। ਇਸ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਲਈ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ ਕਿ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਸ਼ਕਲ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਅੰਤਰ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਕਾਇਮ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ, ਜਿਸ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਭਰ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਸਾਂਝੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਤੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਸਮੱਸਿਆਵਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਵਟਾਂਦਰਾ ਕਰ ਸਕਣ।

ਸੰਸਾਰ ਭਰ ਦੇ ਗੁਰਧਾਮਾਂ ਦੇ ਇੰਤਜ਼ਾਮ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਲਮੇਲ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਅੰਤਰ-ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਬੋਰਡ (International Board of Sikh Shrines) ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਉਪਰਾਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ। ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿ ਗਏ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਬੋਰਡ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਮਨੋਰਥ ਲਈ ਯੋਗ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਧਰ ਤੇ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਦੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ।

5. ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਸੁਧਾਰ

ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਚਲ ਰਹੇ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਦਾ ਸਿਲਸਿਲਾ ਜਾਰੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਗਾਰਾਮ ਰੂਹਾਨੀ ਜਾਗ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਮਤ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਜੀ ਕਰਤੱਵ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਭਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਹੋਣ।

ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਘੱਟੋ-ਘੱਟ ਇਕ ਮਹੀਨਾ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਹਲਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਫੇਰੀ ਪਾਉਣ, ਧਰਮ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਗ ਲੈਣ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਿੱਧਾ ਰਾਬਤਾ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰੇਰਿਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸੰਗਤ ਦੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਈਵਾਲੀ ਦਾ ਲੋਕਤੰਤਰੀ ਅਸੂਲ ਅਮਲੀ ਰੂਪ ਇਖਤਿਆਰ ਕਰ ਸਕੇਗਾ ਤੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਨਿਜ਼ਾਮ ਵਿਚ ਸੁਧਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਨਵੀਆਂ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋ ਸਕਣਗੀਆਂ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਗਤ ਦੇ ਮਿਲਵਰਤਣ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਨੀਤੀ ਨਿਰਣਾ ਸਿਰੇ ਚਾੜ੍ਹਣ ਦੀ ਸਨਿਮਰ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਹੈ।

