

**SIKH AWAKENING IN THE HISTORICAL WRITINGS
OF GANDA SINGH, HARBANS SINGH AND W.H.
MCLEOD**

**A
THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA
IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
HISTORY**

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2020

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis entitled "**Sikh Awakening in the Historical Writings of Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod**" embodies the work carried out by **Amandeep Kaur** herself under my supervision and that it is worthy of consideration for the award of the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy in the Faculty of Social Sciences.

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CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

“The word Sikh goes back to Sanskrit *shishya* meaning a disciple or learner. In Pali, *shishya* became *sisso*. The Pali word *sekha* (also *sekkha*) means a pupil or one under training in a religious doctrine. This was the Pali form of Punjabi Sikh”.¹ In *Japji Sahib* the term Sikh at one place meant as the “instruction” of the Guru. But also, at another place used as the “disciples” of the Guru. Factually, the followers of Guru Nanak had come to be called Sikhs in his lifespan.² The awakening word is defined by *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* as: “1. a rousing from sleep 2. (a) a rousing from inactivity, sloth, or indifference (b) a revival of religion and 3. a coming into consciousness or awareness”.³ Thus the term Sikh awakening has been used in this research work with two purposes. The first in the context of Sikh Gurus contribution in social-cultural and religious-political awakening of the Sikhs as reflected in the historical writings of Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod. In India, a new awakening was started by Guru Nanak by founding Sikh religion. All the Sikh Gurus contribution in the field of social-cultural and religious-political awakening was distinct and extraordinary. The Sikh Gurus gave Sikh religion a two-sided guidance. The first was to “change the value patterns of the individual and that of the society”. This is known in modern language “a cultural revolution”. The second was to “change the inequitable social, religious and political set-up”.⁴ The Sikh Gurus very well knew the fact that value and ideas cannot become practical without they are institutionalized. As a matter of fact, a religion develops through its institutions. Consequently, the Sikh Gurus started various institutions such as *sangat*, *pangat*, *langar*, *dharmshala*, *manji*, *masand*, *miri-piri* and

¹ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, Second Revised and Updated Edition 1994, p.1. See also Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Volume One (1469-1765), Publication Bureau Punjabi University, Patiala, 2006, p.1.

² *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Ang. 2-3, Manmohan Singh (English & Punjabi Translation), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Volume 1, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandak Committee, Amritsar, Amritsar, Seventh Edition, 2014, pp. 4-8. See also Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikhs*, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, 1956, p.1. See also, J.S. Grewal, *Historical Perspectives on Sikh Identity*, Publication Bureau Punjabi University, Patiala, First Edition 1997, p.1.

³ *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol.1, Encyclopedia Britannica, INC, 1976, p. 152.

⁴ Jagjit Singh, *Percussions of History The Sikh Revolution & in the Caravan of Revolutions*, The Nanakshai Trust, Panjab, 2006, p.84.

above all *Khalsa* to generate social-cultural and religious-political awakening among the Sikhs. The second was in the context of the awakening activities of the Singh Sabha movement that motivated the Sikh scholars to write about their glorious past with new ideology. This is true that the term “Sikh Awakening” is not used for the first time in this research proposal. Before this, Teja Singh had used this term in his pioneer work *The Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening* in 1922. But this book describes the struggle of the Sikhs to liberate their *Gurdwaras* or holy shrines from the *mahants* protected by the British administration.

Arthur Marwick well said that “it is only through knowledge of its history that a society can have knowledge of itself”.⁵ Furthermore, Satish K. Bajaj has rightly said that “the death of history is the death of man not in physical terms but in terms of his identity and roots”.⁶ This was well understood by the Singh Sabha reformers. Consequently, during the later part of the 19th century, they earnestly started to investigate the historical origin and source of their religious tradition and faith. The Singh Sabha movement was started in 1873 with the main objectives “to restore Sikhism to its pristine purity”. In other words, their task was to “rediscover the pure doctrine”.⁷ The wide-awake intellectual leaders of this movement initiated to awake the Sikh masses from their deep slumber. They generated an awakening for religious and social reforms in the society. The first necessity of the time was to educate and enlighten the Sikhs in order to maintain their identity. Thus, they devoted their time and money in the publications of various books, magazines, tracts, handbills and newspapers. Consequently, a number of books were published on the lives and teachings of the Sikh Gurus, the institution of the *Khalsa*, political struggle of the Sikhs against the Mughals and Afghans in *Gurmukhi* script. It is well said by Sangat Singh that “histories of the peoples or of the nations have been written and rewritten continuously. With the rise of nationalism in Europe in the 18th century, histories of various European countries, including that of England, have been rewritten during the 19th century from the respective national perspectives”.⁸ Similarly, history writing became the essential tool for the intellectual members of Singh Sabha movement. Thus, a large amount of literature that was produced by the Sikh historians was impacted by the Singh Sabha ideology. They also made efforts to collect

⁵ Arthur Marwick, *The Nature of History*, Macmillan and Co Ltd, London, 1970, p.13.

⁶ Satish K. Bajaj, *Recent Trends in Historiography*, Anmol Publications, New Delhi, 1998, p. VII.

⁷ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 210. See also N. Gerald Barrier, *The Sikhs and their Literature*, Manohar Book Service, Delhi, 1970, p. XXIV.

⁸ Sangat Singh, *Sikhs in History*, Uncommon Books, New Delhi, Fourth Edition, 2001, See preface.

contemporary source material, analyses it critically and re – write Sikh history from Sikh point of view. Consequently, the normative tradition or the *Tat Khalsa* tradition of historical writing was consolidated during the early twentieth century by Bhai Vir Singh and others also. After partition in 1947 this tradition “increasingly professionalized by a new generation of scholars, most notably Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh”. Moreover, they wrote history what Ballantyne called “corrective histories” works. Furthermore, they “challenged interpretations of Sikhism popular outside the community and disputed evidence that indicated diversity in Sikh identity and practices within the historical record”.⁹ This is a common fact that Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh were influenced by the modern progress and awakening activities of the Singh Sabha movement especially its educational and literary activities. Obviously, both of them were inspired to write Sikh history as a legacy of this movement. But the another historian for the proposed research work is William Hew McLeod, though he was not a Sikh but he had been a western historian of Sikh history, religion and society. Like Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh, he also belonged to the twentieth century. These historians were also contemporary to each other and in truth also good friends. But they had differed perspective on Sikh religion and history. Both Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh had started their work under the inspiration principally from the Singh Sabha movement that had leavened the Sikh community, and also generated among its members a new interest in the research and study of Sikh history. But W.H. McLeod was indebted for his interest in historical research to his western historical methodology.

Ganda Singh was one of the excellent outcomes of the Sikh awakening-started with Singh Sabha movement. He was fascinated to Sikh studies in the milieu of Sikh awakening. He was born on 15 November 1900 at Hariana, an old town close to the city of Hoshiarpur in Punjab.¹⁰ The inter-religious polemical that was started in the Punjab in the early part of the twentieth century also encouraged him to take interest towards Sikh history. The stories of the eighteenth century Sikh heroes, their spirit of brave deeds and sacrifices had left a deep impact on his mind. The liberating impulse and social-cultural reform started by the Singh Sabha movement gave a critical bias to his study of Sikh history. Though his major interest was in the collection of source material yet he wrote on all the significant aspects related to the history of Punjab particularly the Sikh history.

⁹ Tony Ballantyne, “Looking Back, Looking Forward: The Historiography of Sikhism”, *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 4, 1 (June, 2002), New Zealand, p. 9.

¹⁰ Harbans Singh (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Punjabi University, Patiala, Second Edition, Volume 2, 2001, p. 46.

For the proposed research work, the other historian is Harbans Singh who also known as Professor Harbans Singh. He was an educationist, administrator, scholar, editor of the *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* and a leading name in Sikh studies. He was born on 6 March 1921 at Kotha Guru, the ancestral village of his mother in present day Bathinda district of the Punjab¹¹. He wrote Sikh history under the inspiration of Singh Sabha movement particularly the personality of Bhai Vir Singh. Like Bhai Vir Singh, he had constantly desired for his Sikh people to recuperate the glory to which they were heir. Like Ganda Singh, he was also the product of the awakening activities of the Singh Sabha movement. Though Harbans Singh studied in English literature and had good interest in Punjabi literature, principally the works of Bhai Vir Singh, but as the time passed, his interest in Sikh history was also well awakened. He had written books on Sikh history, modern education, Bhai Vir Singh and Punjabi literature.

Another historian for the proposed research work is William Hew McLeod an eminent and leading western historian of Sikh religion and history. He was born on 2 August 1932 in Fielding, a town in the North Island of New Zealand¹². Having graduated from the University of Otago in Dunedin, he came to Punjab in 1958. He was appointed as a teacher in a secondary school in Kharar in Ropar district of Punjab. Soon, he developed his deep interest in the history of the Sikhs. He was trained in western methods of historical research. Consequently, he was adhering to western notion of historiography in his writings. As a whole, he wrote 15 books on Sikh history and religion, these include critical studies, translations and a dictionary. The main subjects of his writings were like *Janamsakhies*, *rahit maryada*, militarization in Sikh *Panth*, Sikh art, Sikh identity, Sikh scriptures, caste and gender issues in Sikh *Panth*.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE: Every researcher begins his research mission with a systematic review of what has been done in the past related to the field of his research proposal. It is well said that doing a research without in-depth review of current literature abandon the researcher with a ridiculous opinion of the research in his area. It can be right to say that review of literature also benefits in reducing the possibilities

¹¹ Dharam Singh (ed.), *Sikhism and Secularism Essays in Honour of Professor Harbans Singh*, Harman Publishing House, New Delhi, First Published, 1994, p. 4.

¹² Pashaura Singh and N. Gerald Barrier, *Sikhism and History*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, First Published, 2004, p. 282.

of repetition. Thus, it is essential to do a rigorous analysis of the formerly researched work in the field of study. Therefore, an exertion has been made here to review the literature as below:

Doctor Ganda Singh (Ik Adhiain) (Punjabi).¹³ This book provides us information about Ganda Singh's life, various aspects of his personality and his writings in brief. The book is in the form of 20 essays written by Harbans Singh, Fauja Singh Bajwa, Piara Singh Padam, Gurbachan Singh Talib etc. in the honour of Ganda Singh. In the end of the book a series of Ganda Singh's writings has also been given.

Essays in Honour of Dr. Ganda Singh edited by Harbans Singh and N. Gerald Barrier.¹⁴ This was in fact festschrift that pays homage to Ganda Singh. This work has discussed biographical introduction about Ganda Singh by Harbans Singh and N. Gerald Barrier. The editors, in their introduction deal with the details of the life of Ganda Singh and his marvelous achievements in Punjab's historical research. Besides this, there are 33 essays by learned scholars on various aspects of Sikhism and Punjab history. In the end, the editors have given an exhaustive list of the literary and historical articles written by Ganda Singh from time to time.

The Panjab Past and Present Dr. Ganda Singh Number edited by Gursharan Singh.¹⁵ This work was the special number of *The Panjab Past and Present Journal*. This was on the life and works of Ganda Singh. This work contained a number of articles on Ganda Singh by noted scholars. The scholars wrote on his life, his works, as disposer of historical controversies, his interests in search for source material, his historical contribution to Khalsa College Amritsar, his perspective of history and historical research and also as a national historian. In the end, the chronology of Ganda Singh's whole life was also given.

A Biobibliography of Dr Ganda Singh by Devinder Kumar Verma and Jasmer Singh.¹⁶ This work gives a brief life sketch of Ganda Singh. This book contained a detailed bibliography of the historical writings of Ganda Singh with complete

¹³ *Doctor Ganda Singh (Ik Adhiain)*, (Punjabi), Punjabi Department, Patiala, March, 1963.

¹⁴ Harbans Singh and N. Gerald Barrier (ed.), *Essays in Honour of Dr. Ganda Singh*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1976.

¹⁵ Gursharan Singh (ed.), *The Panjab Past and Present Dr Ganda Singh Number*, Vol. XXII-II, October 1988, Serial No. 44, Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala.

¹⁶ Devinder Kumar Verma and Jasmer Singh *A Biobibliography of Dr Ganda Singh*, Aman Publishing House, Rajpura Town, Punjab, First Edition, 1989

information about the place of publication, publisher and year of publication. This was a productive effort by the authors to provide the scholars a biographical sketch of Ganda Singh as well as a detailed annotated bibliography of his historical writings. In this book, the authors had categorized the works of Ganda Singh as: (1) Sikh history–I (2) Sikh history-II (3) Biography, Bibliography and Historiography (4) Miscellaneous works.

Sikhism and Secularism Essay in Honour of Prof. Harbans Singh edited by Dharam Singh.¹⁷ In this work, the various aspects of Harbans Singh's early life, his education, about his career, his interest in Sikh studies, his contribution to Punjabi University Patiala as Registrar, founder of Religious Department at Punjabi University, Patiala and his writings are discussed in the introduction of this book. This work also includes 21 essays on different facets of religion particularly its role in the Indian socio – political conditions.

Ernest Trumpp and W.H. McLeod as Scholars of Sikh History, Religion and Culture by Trilochan Singh.¹⁸ In this work, the author tried to expose the intentions of Christian missionaries, Ernest Trumpp and W.H. McLeod and Sikh scholars like Pashaura Singh and Piar Singh in writing about the Sikh history in this work. The book is divided into three parts – first part deals with the Christian missionaries and the works of Ernest Trumpp. The second and third part which has 3 to 16 chapters discussed W.H. McLeod's writings on Sikh history and religion. For him, W.H. McLeod had “professed motive of mutilating and falsifying Sikh history and religion”. However, the work is an excellent study of Sikh history, religion and culture and interpretation of Sikh scriptures.

Sophistry of DR. W.H. McLeod A Critique of his Arguments about Sikh History and Sikh Religion by Amarjit Singh Bal. This is good work to know about the basic arguments made by W.H. McLeod about Sikh history and religion. But this work largely based on W.H. McLeod' only one work *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* and does not based on the primary sources. Other works of W.H. McLeod had been analyzed by him only in a very limited matter. The author characterized W.H. McLeod arguments as “sophistic”. He concluded that W.H. McLeod writing

¹⁷ Dharam Singh (ed.), *Sikhism and Secularism Essay in Honour of Prof. Harbans Singh*, Harman Publishing House, New Delhi, First Published, 1994.

¹⁸ Trilochan Singh, *Ernest Trumpp and W.H.Mcleod As Scholars of Sikh History, Religion and Culture*, International Centre of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, 1994.

style “was highly opinionated and his arguments did not quite fit the logical pattern”. He found his remarks are “offensive regarding Sikh history and religion”.¹⁹

Historical Perspectives on Sikh Identity by J.S. Grewal. Three chapters titled as (1) The Early Sikh *Panth* (2) The Sikh *Panth* and (3) The Singh Sabha Movement in this book was actually the lectures given by J.S. Grewal in February 1997 in the *Department of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Studies* at Punjabi University, Patiala. In the last, two appendix-*Dabistan-i-Mazahib* and *Ham Hindu Nahin* were given or touched upon. The author has made an analysis on the ideas and approaches of W.H. McLeod, Harjot Oberoi, Daljeet Singh and G.S. Dhillon on Sikh identity. However, the author admits the “distinct entity” of the Sikhs. He concluded that “their identity was based on the peculiar doctrines, their institutions and their social attitudes- including their sense of commitment to matters temporal as well as spiritual”.²⁰ In his another work *Contesting Interpretations of the Sikh Tradition*, J.S. Grewal divided the work into three parts- (1) development of Sikh studies (2) the recent controversy (3) extension of the controversy. However, in the second and third part, the author discuss about W.H. McLeod’s writings. The author accepts that W.H. McLeod’s works “proved to be controversial from the very beginning”.²¹ This work is useful to understand the basic arguments of W.H. McLeod but the author had not expressed his own views in this regard. The chapters in this work were further revised and amplified by the author in his another work *Recent Debates in Sikh Studies An Assessment*. Contrary to W.H. McLeod, the author clearly accepted that Guru Nanak founded the Sikh faith and Sikh *Panth*. J.S. Grewal concluded that W.H. McLeod’s hypotheses about the evolution and transformation of the Sikh *Panth* “are the weakest in his treatment of Sikh history”.²²

Dr Ganda Singh’s Biographical Writings-An Overview of his Method and Concerns (M.Phil Dissertation, Department of History, Punjabi University, Patiala,

¹⁹ Amarjit Singh Bal, *Sophistry of Dr. W.H. McLeod A Critique of his Arguments about History and Sikh Religion*, B. Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar, First Edition 2007. See Introduction p. IX.

²⁰ J.S. Grewal, *Historical Perspectives on Sikh Identity*, Publication Bureau Punjabi University, Patiala, First Edition 1997, p. 1.

²¹ J.S. Grewal, *Contesting Interpretations of the Sikh Tradition*, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 1998, p. 299.

²² J.S. Grewal, *Recent Debates in Sikh Studies An Assessment*, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 2011, p. 293

2004) by Tajinder Kaur. This dissertation is basically based on the biographical writings of Ganda Singh. These biographies are- (1) *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur* (2) *Maharaja Kaura Mal Bahadur* (3) *Sardar Sham Singh Attariwala* (4) *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia* (5) *Ahmad Shah Durrani* (6) *Bhagat Lakshman Singh Autobiography*. In this work, the scholar tried to understand Ganda Singh's method and philosophy of history also.

Sikhism and History: Festschrift for Prof. W.H. McLeod edited by Pashaura Singh and N. Gerald Barrier.²³ This book was based on the papers which were presented by prominent scholars in September 2001 at international conference and the book prepared under the auspicious of The Sikh Studies Program, University of Michigan in honour of W.H. McLeod. The book is divided into two sections. The first section of this book had been highlighting W.H. McLeod's contribution in the field of Sikh studies edited by Pashaura Singh. The book also provides a list of W.H. McLeod's writings. The second section dealt with the various essays belongs to Sikh history edited by N.G. Barrier. However the book is in the honour of W.H. McLeod but discuss his life and works briefly. There is no critical analysis of W.H. McLeod's writings in this work.

ANALYSIS OF THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THE PRESENT RESEARCH STUDY: A cursory glance aforementioned review of literature would suggest that they were not significantly and importantly related to the nature and scope of our research proposal. Nonetheless, it cannot be said that there works are completely lacking of importance for the present study. A few scholars particularly J.S. Grewal has focused on the works of W.H. McLeod but there is no critical analysis with the help of primary sources. And there is no comparative analysis of the writings of selected historians. We have discussed some books which tell us Ganda Singh's biography and also give information about his written works but in brief. There is no attempt by any scholars to do critical analysis of his writings on Sikh history. It is true Tajinder Kaur submitted in 2004 his M.Phil dissertation but it did only cover the area of Ganda Singh's biographical works not his other historical writings. There is only one work we have get up to this time that had mentioned about Harbans Singh in

²³ Pashaura Singh and N. Gerald Barrier (ed.), *Sikhism and History: Festschrift for Prof. W.H. McLeod*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, First Published, 2004.

some detail. This is edited work by Dharam Singh. But even, this is not a detailed work on Harbans Singh because this work had discussed Harbans Singh life and writings in brief. It is clear that none of the studies related to the nature and scope of the present study titled Sikh Awakening in the historical writings of Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod. It is quite obvious that no systematic effort has been done to comparative analysis of the historical writings of Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod. This is new and distinct from the previous research works. This research proposal is basically based on the historical writings of Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod. It will discuss the activities, the means and contribution of the Singh Sabha movement which had generated the social-cultural and religious awakening among the Sikhs. And how this awakening era had its impact on the doyen of the Sikh studies Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh? Through this work, an effort has been made to analysis and compares the social-cultural and religious-political awakening generated by Sikh Gurus as reflected in the historical writings of Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod with the primary sources. W.H. McLeod, a western historian has been included in this research proposal to understand, how a non-Sikh historian did treat Sikh history and religion differently than the above stated Sikh historians. An attempt would be made to discuss their methodology, source and approach towards Sikh history.

As above stated, this research thesis is particularly based on the historical writings of the selected historians. Though, Ganda Singh has more than three dozen books in different languages and many articles and research papers to his credit but for the proposed research work, only those works of Ganda Singh have been selected which fulfill the concerned purpose: (1) *Guru Nanak: His Life and Teachings* (1940) (2) *A Brief Account of The Sikhs* (1956) (3) *The Sikhs and Sikhism* (1959) (4) *A Brief Account of The Sikh People* (1971) (5) *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records* (Fourth Edition, 2016). For this proposed research work the study shall also include some of Ganda Singh's articles which were published in *The Panjab Past and Present*. These are as: (1) *Development of Sikh Thought up to the End of the 18th Century*, April 1968 (2) *The Impact of Guru Nanak's Teachings on the Lives of his Followers*, April 1977 (3) *Religion, Language and Emotional Integration- Sikhism*, April, 1980 (4) *The Sikhs*, April 1982.

Harbans Singh had written thirteen books, three of them in collaboration with others and edited another three but for the proposed research work, the scope is limited to these works: (1) *Guru Nanak and Origins of The Sikh Faith* (1969) (2) *The Heritage of the Golden Temple* (1977) (3) *Guru Gobind Singh* (1979) (4) *Guru Tegh Bahadur* (1982) (5) *Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism* (1983) (6) *The Heritage of The Sikhs* (1994).

Though W.H. McLeod had contributed to Sikh history with his vast writings, but for the proposed research only those writings have been chosen which are important to our research work : (1) *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* (1968) (2) *The Evolution of The Sikh Community* (1975) (3) *Sikhism* (1977) (4) *Who is a Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity* (1989) (5) *Exploring Sikhism Aspects of Sikh Identity, Culture and Thought* (2000) (6) *Sikhs of The Khalsa: A History of The Khalsa Rahit* (2003) (7) *Discovering The Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian* (2004) (8) *Essays in Sikh History, Tradition and Society* (2007).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: This research work is based upon the comparative historical analysis methodology. This methodology has prolonged and notable history in the social sciences. It is said that “the founders of modern social science, from Adam Smith to Alexis de Tocqueville to Karl Marx all had used comparative historical analysis as a central mode of investigation”.²⁴ We are told that comparative method is “a mode of scientific analysis that sets out to investigate systematically two or more entities with respect to their similarities and differences, in order to arrive at understanding, explanation and further conclusions.”²⁵ The comparison could be in terms of style, structure and the philosophic observation of the writers. Similarly, the historical writings of Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod have been compared with each other. An attempt has also been made to evaluate and analyse the opinions and assumptions of the aforementioned historians with the help of primary or near- contemporary sources.

CHAPTERIZATION: This research work is divided into six chapters. In the following lines, there is brief introduction about the chapters as:

²⁴ James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (ed.), *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Science*, Cambridge University Press, U.K., First Published in 2003, p.3.

²⁵ Reza Azarian, “Potential and Limitations of Comparative Method in Social Science”, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol.1, No. 4, April 2011, USA, pp. 115-116.

FIRST CHAPTER- INTRODUCTION: In this chapter, a brief introduction of the term ‘Sikh awakening’ is given. And we have also tried to understand how this was related to our research topic. In this chapter, a brief outline of Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh’s and W.H. McLeod’s life is also given. Instead of it, primary sources and research methodology will be discussed. Review of literature is also given, in order to understand what was done before this research proposal and how this is different from them. A brief introduction of all the chapters has also been given.

SECOND CHAPTER- MEANS AND INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITIES OF THE SINGH SABHA MOVEMENT: In this chapter, an attempt has been made to understand the historical background before the birth of Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh. This background was related to the period of Singh Sabha movement, whose main motive was the search for Sikh identity and greatness. To achieve this goal, they used a number of means like *Amrit parchar*, newspapers, tract societies, *updeshaks*, *jathas*, *diwans* and *gurpurbs*. These awakening activities of Singh Sabha movement awakened the Sikh scholars to write about their glorious past with a new approach. It was under the impact of this awakening that a *Singh Sabha School of Thought* was generated. Ganda Singh and Harbans came in this category.

THIRD CHAPTER- LIFE, MOTIVES AND THE WORKS OF SELECTED HISTORIANS: This chapter is about the early life of Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod. This included the information of their birth, family, education, marriage and career. This was given due to it is well known fact that every historian belongs not to the past but to its present age. Instead of their life, an effort has been made to understand why did they write about Sikh history? What type of factors had influenced on them to write Sikh history? What were their motives behind all this?

FOURTH CHAPTER- SOCIAL AND CULTURAL AWAKENING OF THE SIKHS: In this chapter, an attempt has been made to understand the social-cultural awakening of the Sikhs from Guru Nanak up to Guru Gobind Singh period as seen by Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod. First of all, this chapter has discussed the meaning and definition of the word “social and cultural”. The social-cultural condition of the society before the birth of Sikhism would be discussed in brief. What needs to be underlined is that *sangat*, *pangat*, *langar*, *miri-piri* and the *Khalsa* institution played considerable role in shaping the socio-cultural life of the

Sikh community. This chapter is in the form of comparative analysis based on the historical writings of the selected historians and the primary sources.

FIFTH CHAPTER- RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL AWAKENING OF THE

SIKHS: This chapter discusses the religious and political awakening of the Sikhs from the period of Guru Nanak to Banda Singh Bahadur as seen by the selected historians. This chapter has also discussed the meaning and definition of the word religion and political in brief. An effort has been also made to understand how religion and politics were related in the Sikh religion. This chapter is also in the form of comparative analysis of the selected historians' historical writings with the help of primary sources of Sikh history.

SIXTH CHAPTER- HISTORIOGRAPHICAL AND COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GANDA SINGH, HARBANS SINGH AND W.H. MCLEOD:

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to study the similarities and dissimilarities on the issues of socio-cultural and religious-political awakening of the Sikhs in the writings of Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod. For this, we will compare their opinions with primary or near contemporary sources. Furthermore, this chapter will be discussing their approach, methodology and the type of source material they had used in their historical writings. What are the major concerns of these selected historians will be discussed in this chapter.

CONCLUSION: The last chapter of the thesis is entitled conclusion. This must be based on the findings of this research study.

It is well said that "study of source alone does not make history; but without the study of sources there is no history".²⁶ Thus, this research work is basically based on primary sources such as newspapers *Khalsa Akhbar*, *Khalsa Samachar*, *The Khalsa Advocate*, *The Khalsa*, annual reports of *Chief Khalsa Diwan*, the monthly circular of the *Chief Khalsa Diwan*, Amritsar, Census reports of India 1891 and 1921, tracts of *Khalsa Tract Society*, Amritsar, handbills of *Sikh Handbill Society*, *Nirguniaa* periodical published by Bhai Vir Singh, and D. Petrie's *Secret C.I.D. Memorandum on recent Developments in Sikh Politics, 1911* and also files related to Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod in Ganda Singh Collection at Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha Library at Punjabi University Patiala. From the history of Guru Nanak up to Guru Gobind Singh, this research work would be based on *Sri Guru*

²⁶ Arthur Marwick, *The Nature of History*, Macmillan and Co Ltd, London, 1970, pp.131-132.

Granth Sahib (Manmohan Singh translate in English & Punjabi), *Varan BhaiGurdas* (Jodh Singh edited *Varan Bhai Gurdas Text, Transliteration and Translation*, Vol 1&2), *Puratan Janamsakhi Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji* (Bhai Vir Singh edited in Punjabi), *Janamsakhi Meharban Vali* (Kirpal Singh edited), *Janamsakhi Bhai Bala* (Surinder Singh Kohli edited), Mohsin Fani's *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* (Ganda Singh translated in English), *Sri Dasam Granth* (Surinder Singh Kohli translate in English), Saroop Das Bhalla's *Mehma Prakash-Part1*(Shamsher Singh Ashok and Gobind Singh Lamba edited in Punjabi), Saroop Das Bhalla, *Mehma Prakash- Part-II*, (Uttam Singh Bhatia edited in Punjabi), Ganesh Das Badehra's *Chahar Bagh-i-Panjab* (Ganda Singh translate in English), Bhai Rattan Singh Bhangoo's *Sri Gur Panth Prakash* (Kulwant Singh translate in English), *Var 41 of Bhai Gurdas II*, Sainapati's *Sri Gur Sobha*, Koer Singh's *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*, Sukha Singh's *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*, Gyani Gyan Singh's *Panth Parkash* and *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa- Part I&II*, Shahid Bhai Mani Singh Ji Gyani's *Bhai Gurdas Ji di Gyarvi Var da Teeka Arthath Sikan Di Bhagatmala* (Bhai Vir Singh edited in Punjabi), Ganda Singh (ed.), *Bhai Nand Lal Granthawali*, Kesar Singh Chhiber, *Bansawlinama Dasan Patshahia Ka* (Pyara Singh Padam ed.), Attar Singh's *Malwa Desh Rattan Di Sakhi Pothi*, Bhai Santokh Singh's *Sri Gur Partap Suraj Granth* (Ajit Singh Aulakh translated in Punjabi), *Parchian Sewa Das* (Hari Singh ed.), *Rahitname* (Pyara Singh Padam edited in Punjabi), *Hukamname* (Ganda Singh edited in Punjabi). For the period of Banda Singh Bahadur, this research work is based on Persian sources that were translated in English or Punjabi by renowned scholars such as Bhagat Singh (tr.), *Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla* (1707-1718 A.D.) (*The Panjab Past and Present*, October 1984), J.S. Grewal & Irfan Habib (ed.), *Sikh History from Persian Sources Translation of Major Texts*, Balwant Singh Dhillon (translated in Punjabi), *Banda Singh Bahadur Farsi Sarot*, Balwant Singh Dhillon, *Rajasthani Documents on Banda Singh Bahadur*, Muhammad Qasim Aurangabadi's *Ahwal-ul-Khawakin* (Balwant Singh Dhillon translated in Punjabi), Nawab Samsam-Ud-Daula Shah Nawaz Khan's *The Mathir-ul-Umra* (Translated in English by H. Beveridge), Ganda Singh, *Kuj Ku Ithasik Patre* and Ganda Singh (ed.), *Amarnama*.

CHAPTER- II

MEANS AND INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITIES OF THE SINGH SABHA MOVEMENT

Twenty four years after the occupation of Punjab by the British Government, a movement to re-establish the pristine purity of Sikhism was started on 1 October 1873 at Amritsar by leading Sikhs of the day like Thakur Singh Sandhwalia, Khem Singh Bedi and Kanwar Bikram Singh was known as the Singh Sabha movement. This movement initiated at a time, when the Sikh masses were demoralised and dispirited. Beside the loss of political power, they suffered socio-cultural and religious decline too. In fact decline was started in “the very heyday of Sikh power”. It is believed that during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Sikh practices were “utterly subverted”.¹ An editorial in the *Khalsa Advocate* newspaper of 8 March 1905 summed up the state of the Sikhs during the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and after as “with the rise of the Sikh rule there was a synchrononous alteration in the social and religious status of the people and that as the authority of the ruling power waned, so did the united nation disintegrate itself into the component parts, relapse into dissensions and revert to more than its former divisions of caste and creed”.²

Under the meaningless rituals and superstitions, the socio-cultural and religious structure of the Sikh community was started to damage. As Sardul Singh Caveeshar writes that “the purity of the Sikh religion has been debased by the inferior alloys from outside. Idol worship, fetish worship, worships of rivers, stones, tombs and of innumerable imaginary gods and goddess, occupies the attention of a Sikh house-hold as much as that of the devotees of any other debased religion. Educated Sikhs have imbibed ideas of a doubtful culture and regard religion only as a form of belief and not as a rule of life.”³ The main reason behind this as wrote A.H. Bingley was “undeniably the strongly attractive force of Hinduism which is always stronger in days of peace when martial aspirations were comparatively at a discount”.⁴ Even the Brahmans had started to worship the “tiny images of *Ganesh* and *Krishna*, *Saligram*,

¹ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, Second Edition, 1994, p. 206. See also Surinder Kaur, “Superstitions during the Kingdom of Lahore”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XXVI-I, April 1992, Serial No. 51, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 30.

² *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 8 March, 1905, p. 3.

³ Sardul Singh Caveeshar, *The Sikh Studies*, The National Publications, Lahore, 1937, p. 163.

⁴ A.H. Bingley, *Sikhs*, Simla, 1898, p. 57.

picture of the temple of *Badrinarain* and *Tulsi* plant” near the pool of *Darbar Sahib*, Amritsar.⁵ Thus it was believed that Sikhism may be gone back into Hinduism as D. Petrie stated that “Hinduism has strangled Buddhism, which was once a formidable rival to it and it has already made serious inroads on the domain of Sikhism”.⁶ Consequently, day by day as Griffen had stated that “the new faith of Gobind loses its hold over the people and the old creed of Hinduism with its brahmanical sacerdotalism and its worship of strange gods had taken its place”.⁷

Apart from it, the Sikhs also suffered loss from the proselytising activities of the Christian missionaries. They came to Punjab even when Maharaja Ranjit Singh reigned in Lahore. For Christian missionaries, Lahore became a favourable place for their missionary activities. They wanted to make Lahore as a stronghold of their mission works.⁸ In 1833, the mission of the Presbyterian Church was started in India. William Reed and John C. Lowrie were the first missionaries who had arrived at Calcutta in October 1833. They were advised “to select a station in some part of the northern India”.⁹ It should be noted that when John C. Lowrie and his friend William Reed first reached at Calcutta, they learnt from Alexander Duff that at that time there were no missionaries in the Punjab. Thus they select Ludhiana city as their first mission station in Punjab on 5 November, 1834. This is also known as the *American Presbyterian Mission*. They believed that Ludhiana was significant city of the Sikhs. This would be “gateway to the independent Sikh state of Punjab”. The offer from Captain Wade, who was the British political agent at Ludhiana to start a school in this city, was also one more reason which was accountable for their coming to Ludhiana.¹⁰ In truth from Ludhiana they started their “first systematic efforts for the conversion of the Sikhs”.¹¹ The aim of their evangelic activities reflected from the address of Greenfield M. Rose at the *Conference of Lady Missionaries* held at Amritsar in 1888

⁵ John Campbell Oman, *Cults, Customs and Superstitions of India*, London, 1908, pp. 97-98.

⁶ D. Petrie, “Secret C.I.D Memorandum on Recent Developments in Sikh Politics, 1911”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. IV-II, October 1970, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 306.

⁷ Lepel Griffin, “Sikhism and the Sikhs”, *The North American Review*, Vol.172, No. 631, February 1901, United States, p. 303.

⁸ *The Sixty-Fifth Annual Report of the Ludhiana Mission for the year 1899*, Ludhiana, 1900, p. 4.

⁹ John C. Lowrie, *A Manual of Mission: Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church*, New York, 1854, p. 39.

¹⁰ James P. Alter, “American Presbyterians in North India: Missionary, Motives and Social Attitude under British Colonialism”, *Journal of Presbyterian History*, Vol. 53, No. 4, Winter 1975, United States, p. 297. See also John C. Lowrie, *A Manual of Mission: Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 40.

¹¹ Report of the *Punjab Missionary Conference* held at Lahore in December and January, 1862-1863, Ludhiana, p. 266.

that “the chief aim of every missionary society and the one all- absorbing business of every individual missionary had the evangelization of the heathen- the proclamation of the gospel to every creature”.¹²

After a short time, they started their evangelizing activities in the Punjab. The majority of the early Sikh converts to Christianity were from the low caste. They embraced Christianity with the aim of “improving their social status as well as with the hope of insuring a livelihood”.¹³ Up to the year 1891, the greatest number of Native Christians i.e. the persons who convert from other faiths and originally were belong to low caste were from Sialkot, Gujrawala, Gurdaspur, Lahore and Amritsar districts.¹⁴ The result of this was that many Sikhs and Hindus had started to believe that “Christianity to be the true religion and the Christ is their saviour of Sinners”.¹⁵ But when the “*Isai*” word meaning Christian, acquired a pejorative sense and became synonymous with *Chuhra* (the Punjabi word for the untouchables sweepers). Then, they realised that it was not easy for them to eradicate the stigma of untouchability”. Consequently, they turned their consciousness to well-off families of the Punjab. They were succeeded in their mission when several prominent Sikh families of the day accepted Christianity as their religion.¹⁶ For the Christian missionaries, “such a state of things shows the necessity of more active efforts, on the part of the Christian church, in disseminating, and preaching the Word of God to these peoples”.¹⁷

This miserable situation particularly the efforts of Christian missionaries to convert the Sikh masses into their religion awakened the intellectual Sikhs. In 1873, four Sikh students- Aya Singh, Attar Singh, Sadhu Singh and Santokh Singh of the *Church Mission School*, Amritsar declared their purpose to embrace Christianity. This was the precipitating reason responsible for the birth of the Singh Sabha movement. Other was the deprecating comments by Sharda Ram Phillauri at Amritsar on the Sikh

¹² M. Rose Greenfield, *Education Versus Evangelization, An Address to the Conference of Lady Missionaries held at Amritsar*, Punjab, 1888, p. 3.

¹³ *The Sixty-First Annual Report of the Lodianna Mission for the Year 1895*, Lodianna, 1896, p. 106.

¹⁴ *Census of India, 1891*, Volume XIX, Calcutta, p. 97.

¹⁵ *The Sixty-First Annual Report of the Lodianna Mission for the Year 1895*, Lodianna, 1896, p. 17.

¹⁶ For instance, they converted Maharaja Dalip Singh in 1853, Raja Harnam Singh brother of the Maharaja of Kapurthala and Sadhu Sundar Singh, Jat Sikh of Rampur in Patiala state into Christianity religion. See Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs 1839-1974*, Volume 2, Oxford University Press, Delhi, Fourth Impression 1983, p.138.

¹⁷ *Report of the Punjab Missionary Conference held at Lahore in December and January, 1862-1863*, Lodianna, p. 264.

Gurus and the Sikh religion. This was also a time when “under the influence of western education and of the example of Western nations, there was general awakening in India. The various communities wanted to raise the same level of material and moral condition of the west and the Sikhs were not remained unaffected by this universal movement and so the forming of *Sabhas*, *Diwans* and their general desire for advancement was the indication of the awakening of the Sikhs”.¹⁸

After the founding of first Singh Sabha at Amritsar in 1873 a sister organization at Lahore in 1879 was started by Bhai Gurmukh Singh, which is known as Lahore Singh Sabha. The principal purpose of this Sabha was to “represent the Sikh interests, the encouragement of Punjabi Language, and the maintenance of Sikh doctrine and customs”.¹⁹ The members of this Sabha made outstanding contribution in generating distinct social-religious and cultural awakening of the Sikhs through their intellectual activities by used various means. On the social- cultural front, they advocated the Sikh doctrine of equality of man and eradicate the caste distinctions among the Sikh society. On the religious side, they wanted to secure an independent religious status for the Sikhs religion. In truth, they wanted “to restore Sikhism to its pristine purity” by “depreciating all later out- growths and the authority of the *Brahmins*, whose influence on the Sikhs was day by day on increase”.²⁰

An article in the *Khalsa Samachar* stated that for the preaching among the Sikhs there were many means or methods, the most important among them are *updeshaks*, newspapers, tracts and preaching by the *granthis*, *mahants*, *nirmalas* and *udasis*.²¹ The Singh Sabha’s intellectual personalities like Bhai Gurmukh Singh, Gyani Ditt Singh, Bhai Vir Singh, and Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid used the means of *updeshaks*, newspapers, tracts and handbills societies to generate awakening among the Sikhs masses. Apart from this, every Singh Sabha besides those of the Lahore and Amritsar had their own *updeshaks* and *jathas*. They toured the Punjab and outside areas to propagate the aims of the Singh Sabha movement. The Singh reformers particularly the members of the Lahore Singh Sabha, generally known as *Tat Khalsa* also used *Amrit Parchar*, *Gurpurbs*, religious *Diwans* and weekly or annually

¹⁸ *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 15 March, 1904, p. 8.

¹⁹ *Reports on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies for 1881-1882*, p. 277.

²⁰ “The Sikhs in proportion to their numbers, show great activity, and there has been a strong separatist movement in the past decade advocating the abandonment of Hindu customs”. See *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. IV, Administrative, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1909, p. 454.

²¹ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 2 December, 1903, pp. 3-4.

meetings as means to introduce reforms according to the teachings of the Sikh Gurus and to make the Sikh masses familiar to the Sikh doctrine and Sikh history. These means were fully utilized by the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* which was established in 1902 with the aim of the uplift of the Sikhs in all spheres like religious, social, cultural, moral, political and economic also.²²

The first mean or method they used for generating socio-cultural and religious awakening was the propagation of *Amrit*. During the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh as A. H. Bingley writes that “when spiritual fervour and national pride worked in common, a large number of peoples received the baptism of *Pahul*. But after the British conquest of Punjab, Sikhism lost much of its old popularity and the peoples were uncertain of the temper of their new masters and the result of it was that the Sikhs lay low and refrained from bringing their sons to baptism”.²³ Gyani Ditt Singh, Bhai Takhat Singh of Ferozepur, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, Bhagwan Singh and Babu Teja Singh Bhasaurh had made their efforts for the propagation of *Khande de Pahul*.²⁴

The Singh Sabha reformers realized that the best method to eliminate the caste prejudice was the propagation of *Amrit* among the Sikh masses. Through this, they wanted to reintroduce the principle of equality as preached by the Sikh Gurus. It was a time, when some Sikhs tried to be called high status themselves by adopting Hindu religion. The reformers pleaded to this type of peoples that if they want to be called ‘high’ status people, it will be possible only by becoming *Khalsa*, neither in adopting Hinduism. They awakened the Sikhs about the reality of their life that they were nothing in the world. If they had some grace, yet it is only due to Guru Gobind Singh’s *Amrit*. Thus, they had to forget their previous castes and focussed on the true principles of the *Khalsa* religion.²⁵ The Sikhs who had left the *Amrit* by deviate from the Guru and had become ‘*patit*’, so the reformers awakened these types of peoples that they had to remember that by becoming ‘*patit*’, they would be retuned into those castes from which Sikh Gurus had held them out.²⁶ By this mean, they awakened the Sikhs about their separate identity. They told them if they wanted to save themselves

²² *Chief Khalsa Diwan De Mool Sootar Athva Buniadi Kaiede Ate Kanoon*, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, n.d.

²³ A.H. Bingley, *Sikhs*, p. 75. See also D. Petrie, “*Secret C.I.D Memorandum on Recent Developments in Sikh Politics 1911*”, p. 305.

²⁴ Gyani Lal Singh, *Ithas Panch Khalsa Diwan Arthat Khalsa Parliament Kender Panch Khalsa Bhasaurh Sambadhi Soochnava*, Ludhiana, 1967, pp. 175-176.

²⁵ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 22 April, 1898, pp. 3-5.

²⁶ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 25 January, 1901, p.3.

from the onslaught of the Hindus, then it was necessary for them to become *Khalsa* by baptized.²⁷ They awakened the Sikhs that *Khalsa* nation is not a part of any other nation. It is an independent nation, but through the mean of *Amrit parchar*, it can accept any other nation's people into its religion.²⁸ The *Khalsa Panth* would be progressed, if the Sikhs sacrifice their lives and precious time for propagating the *Khande de Pahul* and education in *Gurmukhi* language among uneducated peoples of the country²⁹ and in those communities, who had yet not professed fully any religion.³⁰ The Sikhs had to accept the peoples who belonged to Hindu and Muslim religions and those who wanted to come into Sikh religion as their religious brothers. The peoples, who had left the Sikh religion and went into another religion tried to bring back into the fold of Sikhism by baptized them. By this way the community would be progressed.³¹ The Singh Sabha reformers remind the Sikhs that each nation remained lively on the world with their national symbols and religious sermons. The nation whose national symbols and religious sermons had destroyed, such a nation also eliminated from the world. The life of the *Khalsa* nation on the Indian land is only due to its five *kakaars* and by following the Sikh Guru's teachings. They considered that as long as the propagation of *khande de Pahul* and the intellectual peoples respect the hair until then, the *Khalsa* nation would be remain in progress. So they appealed to the Sikh masses that they had to propagate the *Amrit* among the people to keep the Sikh nation active.³² They suggested to the Sikhs that the only way to avoid the conversion of the Sikh brothers into Hinduism and Muslims was the *Amrit* of Guru Gobind Singh.³³

Sometimes in the weekly meetings of Singh Sabha, Lahore, the peoples were baptized.³⁴ In their *Jorh-mela's* the reformers tried to awaken the Sikhs masses that the generations of the Sikh nation had become '*patit*' from Sikh religion due to the lack of religious education and propagation of *Amrit* among them.³⁵ Some of the Singh Sabha's like the Singh Sabha of Bhinder and Butari also activated to propagate

²⁷ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 4 March, 1898, p. 3.

²⁸ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 24 June, 1898, p. 3.

²⁹ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 5 August, 1898, p. 3.

³⁰ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 15 December, 1899, p. 6.

³¹ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 8 September, 1888, p. 5.

³² *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 6 May, 1898, p. 3.

³³ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 20 May, 1898, p. 3.

³⁴ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 10 November, 1888, p. 1.

³⁵ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 11 December, 1899, p. 7.

the *Amrit* among Sikh masses.³⁶ For this purpose, the *Amrit Parcharni Sabha* was established which gave the lectures on the greatness of *Amrit* among the Sikh masses and baptized many Sikhs.³⁷ The Singh Sabha of Rawalpindi also organised the *Amrit Parchark Jatha*, who had propagated the *Amrit* by going at different places.³⁸ In the programmes of the *Shri Gurmat Parkashak Sabha*, peoples were also baptized and brought back into Sikhism.³⁹ The *Khalsa Tract Society* also published its tracts which awakened the Sikhs about the significance to undergo the initiation ceremony of the *Khalsa*.⁴⁰ The Singh reformers not only at that time propagating *Amrit* among masses but also wrote books on the importance of this in Sikh religion. In 1898, Gyani Gyan Singh describes the significance of Sikh baptism in his work *Amrit Parkash*.⁴¹ Bhai Teja Singh through his book entitled *Singha Da Panth Niyara* in 1901 advocated that the Sikhs had to awake, propagate the Sikh religion on world and to make every person 'Singh' by baptising them.⁴² To propagate the *Amrit* among the Sikhs, Baba Khem Singh Bedi also undertook tour particularly in the Pothohar area of the Punjab, where he baptized thousands of *Sehajdhari* Sikhs. He was so zealous for this *parchar* work that people came from Kabul, Kandhar and Ghazni to receive *Pahul* from him.⁴³ Later on, the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* also devoted its energies to many provinces to getting *Sehajdhari* Sikhs baptised as Singhs.⁴⁴

It was Babu Teja Singh Bhasaurh, the first secretary of Singh Sabha Bhasaurh which was established on 1893, administered *Khande de Pahul* to every people without the discrimination of caste.⁴⁵ In 1898, the *Khalsa Akhbar* published his advertisement which showed his strong inclination to baptized *Khande de Pahul* to every man or woman, though they belong to any country or creed and also those who

³⁶ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 2 April, 1887, p.1. See also *The Khalsa Akhbar*, 26 October, 1900, p. 2.

³⁷ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 5 March, 1900, p. 1.

³⁸ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 28 August, 1900, p. 7.

³⁹ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 18 December, 1899, p. 1.

⁴⁰ *Jindri diya Jindri naal Gallan*, Tract No. 252, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, 1905, pp. 39-40.

⁴¹ Gyani Gyan Singh, *Amrit Parkash*, Arorabans Press, Lahore, 1898. Quoted from N. Gerald Barrier, *The Sikhs and their Literature*, Manohar Book Service, Delhi, 1970, p. 17.

⁴² Teja Singh, *Singha Da Panth Niyara*, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, 1901, p. 15.

⁴³ Gyani Ishar Singh Nara, *Punjab Da Ratan Baba Khem Singh Bedi*, Delhi, n.d., p. 12. See also Joginder Singh, *Sikh Leadership Early 20th Century*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1999, p. 246.

⁴⁴ D.Petrie, "Secret C.I.D. Memorandum on Recent Developments in Sikh Politics, 1911", p. 338.

⁴⁵ In the first *diwan* of Singh Sabha Bhasaurh, which was held on 1894, "13 *Jats*, 6 *Jhivars* (Water-Carriers), two barbers one Khatri and one Musalman" were initiated into Sikh religion. See, Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 212.

had become *patit* from the *Khalsa Panth* and wanted to become the member of *Khalsa*.⁴⁶ From 1899, he openly started to baptize the low-caste people like *Chuhras* and *Chamars* into Sikhism.⁴⁷ In the presence of Sikh synod like Bhai Randhir Singh Narangwal, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha and Bhai Vasawa Singh, Babu Teja Singh Bhasaurh established *Panch Khalsa Diwan* on 13 April, 1907 at *Damdama Sahib*.⁴⁸ Among the so many aims of the *Panch Khalsa Diwan*, one was to propagate the Sikh religion in all countries and merge the peoples into Sikhism by administered them *Khande de Pahul*.⁴⁹

The Sikh baptism is open to all but in 1893 debate was arisen about how to baptize the Sikh women i.e. baptized them with *Kirpan* or *Khanda*.⁵⁰ The Singh Sabha reformers particularly of the Lahore Singh Sabha had advocated that the women's should be baptized in the same way as the men.⁵¹ They were in favour of *Khande De Pahul* for them.⁵² In 1896, *Khalsa Istri Dharam Parcharak Sabha* was established. This sabha helped in the popularising *Khande De Pahul* amongst the Sikh women.⁵³ Babu Teja Singh also advocated the equal way to administered *Khande De Pahul* to men and women of any caste or citizen of any country.⁵⁴ Baba Khem Singh Bedi and others, who were associated with the Amritsar Singh Sabha, were not in favour of same type of baptism for women and the low caste Sikhs.⁵⁵ Bhai Avtar Singh who was the protégé of Baba Khem Singh Bedi believed that the *Tat Khalsa* reformers had no right to baptised the peoples. But the leader of *Takhats* and the peoples, who were related to the Sikh Guru's families that had established their *Gaddies*, had the only right to baptised the peoples.⁵⁶ A correspondence to the *Khalsa Akhbar* on 21 July 1899 stated that if the Muslims had same *Kalama* and the Christians had *Baptisma*

⁴⁶ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 24 June, 1898, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁷ *Aduti Jivan Birtant Panth Ratan Babu Teja Singh Sahib Ji Sahib Lasani Sewak Panch Khalsa Diwan Arthaht Khalsa Parliament*, Patiala, p. 74.

⁴⁸ Ajit Singh, "Panch Khalsa Diwan and Women Education", *Punjab History Conference Proceedings*, Nineteenth Session, March 22 -24, 1985, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 389.

⁴⁹ *Panch Khalsa Diwan Arthaht Khalsa Parliament De 218 Ve Ate Vidya Bhandar De Athve Salana Diwan Da Samachar*, 1907, p. 1.

⁵⁰ Nahar Singh, *Khalsa Istri Ate Sikh Beebian Di Vidya*, Gurbani Sewak Press, Amritsar, 1931, pp. 26-27.

⁵¹ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 19 October, 1900, p. 6. See also *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 18 January, 1901, p. 5.

⁵² *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 25 July, 1902, pp. 6-7. See also *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 15 August, 1902, pp. 6-8.

⁵³ *Gurmat Pathshala, Sri Amritsar Di Tiji Salana Report*, Amritsar, 1898, pp. 1-6.

⁵⁴ Lal Singh, *Kalmi Tasvir*, Staff Khalsa Parliament Gazettee, 1935, p. 16-18.

⁵⁵ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 6 September 1901. Quoted from Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon, *Character and Impact of the Singh Sabha Movement on the History of the Punjab*, unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1973, p. 134.

⁵⁶ Bhai Avtar Singh, *Khalsa Sudhar Taru*, Part-7, Elibeian Press, Lahore, n.d., pp. 292-293.

equal for their men and women, then why the Sikhs discriminate their women in baptizing them. This newspaper favoured that women should be baptised with *Khanda*.⁵⁷ Bhai Manna Singh Hakim penned a pamphlet in which he stated that Sikh women had become superstitious because of they had not received the *Amrit*. To overcome this plight, he advocated the methods for administering the rites of *Amrit* to women and was in favour of baptising the women with *Karad*.⁵⁸ A tract penned by Narain Singh in which he refuted the opinion of Sant Ganesha Singh that Guru Gobind Singh had not baptized the women's during his time by citing the verses from *Suraj Parkash* and by giving the example of Mai Bhago, who had taken *Amrit* during Guru Gobind Singh period.⁵⁹ In 1898, the fifth *diwan* of Singh Sabha Bhasaurh, Bhai Parduman Singh who was the secretary of Singh Sabha Gujrawala, raised a question how to baptize Sikh women with *Khanda* or *Karad*. Then the Sikh intellectuals appointed a committee whose members were Gyani Ditt Singh, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, Bhai Bhagwan Singh Headmaster of Mahindra College, Patiala, Gyani Thakur Singh of Amritsar and Babu Teja Singh was its secretary to solve this issue. In 1899 in the annual *diwan* of Ferozepur Singh Sabha, the committee gave its verdict that the form of baptism with *Khanda* should be the same for all, men and women. They also baptized women with *Khanda* in this *diwan*.⁶⁰ Later on *Chief Khalsa Diwan* also favoured this decision.⁶¹

It was the results of *Amrit Parchar* that large numbers of peoples become the *Khalsa*. The Census of 1911 says that the total number of Sikhs in the Punjab has risen by 37% but *keshdharis* has risen by 15% only. The Census attributes all this to the great Sikh revival and the various *sabhas* of the Sikhs that had spread the doctrines of Guru Gobind Singh amongst all the followers of Guru Nanak. The Census also stressed that by their activities they have "so raised the *keshdharis* in public esteem that they will usually not give their daughters in marriage to *Sehajdharis* until the latter have taken the *pahul*".⁶²

Another method utilized by the intellectual members of Singh Sabha movement was to celebrate the *Gurpurb* day of the Sikh Gurus. We are told that

⁵⁷ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 21 July, 1899, p. 6.

⁵⁸ Manna Singh Hakim, *Mai De Jamey Nu Amrit Shakaun Di Vidhi*, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, 1900, p. 9.

⁵⁹ Bhai Narain Singh Honorary Updeshak, *Khalsa Mat Istri Amrit Mandan*, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, 1904, p. 4.

⁶⁰ *Khalsa Diwan Bhasaurh De Gurmatte Ate Fainsley 1901*, Mufidaam press, Lahore, 1904, pp. 10-11.

⁶¹ *Gurmat Parkash, Chief Khalsa Diwan*, Amritsar, Eighth Edition, 1952, p. 22-25.

⁶² E.A. Gait, *Census of India, 1911*, Volume 1, Part-I Report, Calcutta, 1913, p. 125. See also *Reports of the Census of India 1921*, p. 114.

Gurpurb word signifies in “the Sikh tradition the sacred day commemorating the anniversaries related to the lives of the Sikh Gurus”.⁶³ In fact, “to celebrate the *Gurpurbs* was as one of the foremost duties of a Sikh”.⁶⁴ The *Khalsa Advocate* newspaper stated that “no doubt, the *Gurpurbs* had continued on to be celebrated more or less up to the establishment of the Singh Sabha movement. But they had greatly fallen into disuse”.⁶⁵ As a result, the Singh Sabha reformer realized that the old tradition of celebration of *Gurpurbs* should be prevalent among the Sikhs once again; by this way the Sikhs would keep away from the festivals of the another religions.⁶⁶ *The Khalsa Advocate* newspaper demands the celebration of *Gurpurbs* among the Sikh masses as “who can deny the effect that the *ramlilas* and *raslilas* have produced upon the Hindus? Through their instrumentality alone the Hindu religion has kept its hold on the masses during its vicissitudes. Or who can deny the influence that *Id* and *Muharam* wield on the Mohamdan masses. Every nation has its festivals and so ought the Sikhs and they to have as well.”⁶⁷ In other words, it has been considered that the celebration of the *Gurpurbs* had great influence on the Sikh masses.⁶⁸

Consequently, from the year 1890, the Singh reformer tried to regenerate the celebration of *Gurpurbs* among the Sikh masses.⁶⁹ The celebration of *Gurpurbs* also justified by Karam Singh ‘Historian’ as “every nation understands its dignity to celebrate the *Gurpurbs* of their elders. Likewise, to celebrate the *Gurpurbs* of their Sikh Gurus had been the religion of the Sikhs”.⁷⁰ The past history of any nation is the best mean to keep it alive. So the Singh Sabha’s intellectual reformers realized that the excellent mean to remember the glorious past Sikh history and to save it from

⁶³ Harbans Singh (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol. II, Punjabi University, Patiala, Second Edition, 2001, p. 194.

⁶⁴ Jodh Singh, *Varan Bhai Text, Transliteration and Translation*, Volume One, Vision & Venture Publishers, Patiala & New Delhi, First Edition, 1998, p. 303

⁶⁵ *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 15 June, 1904, p. 5.

⁶⁶ Bhai Sahib Bhai Vir Singh, *Amar Lekh*, Part-1, Bhai Vir Singh Sahit Sadan, New Delhi, Sixth Edition, 2011, p. 51.

⁶⁷ *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 15 June, 1904, p. 5.

⁶⁸ “The celebration of *Baisakhi* festival reminds the Sikhs every year of the work of holy Gurus did for us. It urges the Sikhs to amend themselves by renouncing the defects that are inherent in them and which stand in the way of progress. So the Sikhs, therefore never fail to celebrate it and do some solid and substantial work on this occasion.” *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 6 May, 1905, p. 5.

⁶⁹ N.G. Barrier, “Sikh Emigrants and their Homeland: The Transmission of Information, Resource and Values in the Early Twentieth Century” in N.G.Barrier and Verne A. Dusenbery (ed.), *The Sikh Diaspora Migration and the Experience Beyond Punjab*, Chankya Publications, Delhi, 1989, p. 54.

⁷⁰ Karan Singh Historian, *Gurpurb Nirney*, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, First Edition, 1912, pp. 6-7.

obliteration was to commemorate the *Gurpurbs*.⁷¹ As an article in the *Khalsa Akhbar* stated that gradually, with the propagation of the *Gurmat* and hymns of *Guru Granth Sahib* among the Sikh masses, by the reformers, the celebration of the *Gurpurbs* had also started with great pomp and splendour. By this way, the encomium of Sikh Gurus and articulation of almighty's name had grown up among the Sikh masses.⁷² The Singh reformers awakened the Sikhs that on the *Gurpurb* day, they had tried to conduct friendship between fighting brothers, to reconciliation of the diverse parts of Singh Sabha, to forsake the puissant immoral act of mind, to take *Khande De Pahul*, to recite the *Gurbani* and to give greetings to servants and relatives.⁷³ They considered that *Gurpurbs* had proved as haven for the national, religious and brotherhood mode of living and also like the Magnetic power, amalgamated the parting brothers.⁷⁴ To make *Gurpurbs* more familiar among the Sikhs the *Khalsa Tract Society* also published its tracts particularly on *Gurprab* day of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. They distribute them among the Sikh masses to awaken them about Sikh Guru's life and their teachings.⁷⁵ It had also started publishing greeting cards in *Gurmukhi* language to mark the anniversaries day of Sikh Gurus.⁷⁶ The handbills were also published on the *Gurpurb* day by the *Sikh Handbill Committee* that awakened the Sikhs to remember the graces of Sikh Gurus and follow their teachings.⁷⁷ The Sikh newspapers like *Khalsa Samachar* and the *Khalsa Advocate* were also brought out their special issues to mark the celebration of the *Gurpurbs*.⁷⁸ The most of the editorial of special issues of the *Khalsa Samachar* published on the birth-anniversaries of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh, were written by Bhai Vir Singh himself.⁷⁹

For the celebration of *Gurpurbs*, some Sabha and societies were also organised. For instance, a society under the name of *Khalsa Dharam Updeshak* was

⁷¹ Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid, *Sade Gurpurb*, Tract No. 14, Gurmat Tract Society, Lahore, 1926, p. 4.

⁷² *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 11 December, 1903, p. 3.

⁷³ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 15 January, 1902, p. 2.

⁷⁴ *Gurpurab Guljar*, Part-2, Amritsar, 1914, p. 31.

⁷⁵ *Mera Choji Pyara*, Tract No. 408. *Noorshah Nistara*, Tract No. 477. *Andhitha Pritam*, Tract No. 459. *Sadhara Wala Pursh*, Tract No. 297. *Arshi Noor*, Tract No. 554. *Rasbhinrha Gurpurb*, Tract No. 408. See also *Gurpunam Tract Sanchey*, Part-I, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, 1923.

⁷⁶ There were a number of advertisements in the *Khalsa Akhbar* about these greeting cards. See *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 16 June, 1899, p. 10. See also *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore 30 June, 1899, p. 10.

⁷⁷ *Ji Ayan Nu*, Handbill No. 9, December, 1908, p. 4. See also *Guru Rakha*, Handbill No.21, December 1909, p. 4.

⁷⁸ *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 20 November, 1915. See also *The Khalsa Advocate*, 4 November, 1916. See also *The Khalsa Samachar*, 8 November, 1908.

⁷⁹ Ganda Singh, "Bhai Vir Singh and His Times", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. VI-II, Serial No. 12, October, 1972, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 251.

established at Kapurthala. Its object was to celebrate the *Gurpurbs* and acquainted the Sikh masses with the teachings of the Sikh Gurus.⁸⁰ In September 1891, some students also started the *Khalsa Vidyarthi Sabha* at Amritsar with the efforts of Doctor Sundar Singh Sodhbans. Sardar Partap Singh was its secretary. Its aim was also to celebrate the *Gurpurbs*, popularisation the *Gurmat* by organised *Diwan* and awakened the Sikhs to follow Sikh customs.⁸¹ The *Khalsa Diwan* of Rawalpindi had also made arrangements to celebrate the *Gurpurbs*.⁸²

The *Chief Khalsa Diwan* also started to celebrate the *Gurpurbs* with the aim of giving a distinct identity to the Sikhs. It sent their preachers at various places to celebrate the *Gurpurbs* and to make the Sikhs familiar with the doctrine of the Sikh Gurus.⁸³ The *Khalsa Samachar* also pleaded to the Sikh community that they must celebrate the *Gurpurbs* like *Baisakhi*, the day on which *Guru Granth Sahib* was started to compilation by Guru Arjan Dev and the day which marked the installation of *Guru Granth Sahib* in *Darbar Sahib*, Amritsar. Keeping in view all this, they requested to British Government to announce the holidays on these days.⁸⁴ The Singh Sabha Lahore also petitioned to the Punjab British Government for the demand of the Sikh holidays on Sikh festivals like the holidays of the Hindus and the Muslim festivals.⁸⁵ They demand five holidays* from which two were accepted by the government, one on the birthday of Guru Nanak and second on *Hola Mahalla*. But this was only in those districts where Sikh populations was much.⁸⁶ In 1898, Bhagat Lakshman Singh also demanded from the British government to declared public holiday on the birthday of Guru Gobind Singh and *Hola Mahalla*.⁸⁷ In the year of 1900, the British Government gave the Sikhs only one local holiday on Guru Nanak's birthday which was confined to the districts of Ambala, Ludhiana, Jullundhar, Hoshiarpur, Ferozepur, Lahore, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Sialkot, Gujrawala and

⁸⁰ *The Khalsa*, Lahore, 25 October, 1899, p. 2.

⁸¹ Maha Singh Gyani, *Padam Bhushan Bhai Sahib Bhai Vir Singh Ji Da Gurmukh Jivan*, Amritsar, First Edition, 1977, p. 70.

⁸² *Memorandum Association Ate Niyam Khalsa Diwan Rawalpindi*, May 1901. File No. 170, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

⁸³ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 16 December, 1915, p. 3.

⁸⁴ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 10 August, 1904, p. 10.

⁸⁵ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 15 December 1888, p. 1.

* The Five holidays were- *Hola Mahalla*, birth anniversaries of Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Sing and martyrdom day of Guru Arjan and Guru Teg Bahadur.

⁸⁶ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 4 May 1889, pp. 6-7.

⁸⁷ *File No. F/160*, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala. See also Ganda Singh (ed.), *Bhagat Lakshman Singh Autobiography*, p. 299. It should be noted that the demand for public holiday on *Gurpurbs* made by Bhagat Lakshman Singh was only for Rawalpindi District.

Rawalpindi.⁸⁸ The *Chief Khalsa Diwan* also requested the British Government to announce the public holidays on the *Gurpurb* day of Guru Nanak, Guru Gobind Singh and the *Hola Mahala* under the *Negotiable Instrument Act* of the Punjab.⁸⁹

Upto the year 1914, the Hindus had 11 public holidays, while the Muslims and Christians had 7 and 13 respectively. But the Sikhs had no public holiday.⁹⁰ *The Khalsa Advocate* newspaper reminds the British Government about the sacrifice made by the Sikhs to uphold the honour of British flag. The newspaper urged that they had to give “the same importance and sanctity to the anniversaries of the Sikh Gurus as the Christians do to Xamas and Easter”. They pleaded that by knowing all this, the Punjab British Government had to make holidays on the birth anniversaries of Guru Gobind Singh and Guru Nanak Dev.⁹¹ Even the *Tribune* newspaper also supported their demand. This newspaper stated that the demand of the Sikhs for public holidays particularly on the birthday of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh were not inappropriate and the time has come to accept their legitimate demands.⁹² In 1917, they draw the attention of Michael O’ Dwyer and the Punjab Government about a serious and long standing grievance of the Sikhs for the demand of general holidays on the birthday of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. The Sikhs suggested that these days were not only sacred to the 30 lacs of the Sikhs but also to a very large number of the Hindus and Muslims who hold the Sikh Gurus in great esteem.⁹³ The British Government accepted it on 1 December, 1919 under the Punjab notification no. 26578 of the Gazette of Punjab Government in all the departments of government except the holiday in Post Office Department.⁹⁴

The Singh Sabha reformers also employed the weekly and annual meetings as the mean to bring “together the local Sikhs as well as affording an opportunity for

⁸⁸ *Home/ General Department, Part-A, Nos. 26-28B, October, 1901, Punjab State Archive, Chandigarh, p. 4.*

⁸⁹ *Educational Committee Di Gayarvi Varshak Report, Amritsar, 1918-1919, p. 15. See also Educational Committee Di Teeji Salana Report, 1910, p. 130.*

⁹⁰ *The Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 12 Febuary, 1914, p. 6.*

⁹¹ “Sikh are not only a minority but the most important one. They have a great stake in the province. There devotion and sacrifice to uphold the honour of the British flag are not only magnificent but shine resplendent in the history. More than a half of the landed gentry is theirs. In the face of all these, we wonder, what is it, that stands in the way of the authorities to redress their long-lingering-grievance”. See, *The Khalsa Advocate, Amritsar, 22 December, 1917, p. 1.*

⁹² *The Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 5 Febuary, 1914, p. 2.*

⁹³ *The Khalsa Advocate, Amritsar, 17 November, 1917, p. 3.*

⁹⁴ *Educational Committee Di Tervi Varshak Report, Amritsar, 1920, p. 19. It should be noted that during that time, the Post Office Department was under the command of Government of India and the Local Government had no right to announce holiday in this department.*

visitation by zealots from outside and to gether public support and generate funds.”⁹⁵ The weekly meetings were also known as *Jor- Mela*. These were of two types (1) ordinary and (2) emergent. The ordinary meetings were held after a week to discuss day to day affairs related to Sikhs. The emergency meetings were summoned to discuss certain essential matters which required immediate consideration. The annual meetings also called *Salana jor-Mela* generally held at the end of the year. In it, the Singh reformers took a “stock of their activities and achievements during the year”.⁹⁶ The meetings were started with the usual *kirtan*, reciting the hymns of *Guru Granth Sahib* and *Shabad* were sung by *Bhajan Mandlies*, after that lectures were delivered on various issues. Often in the meetings, the debates were held by the Singh reformers about the ways to controvert the attacks of the Arya Samajists on Sikh religion.⁹⁷ In the meetings, they also tried to awaken the Sikhs about the needs of the Sikh Panth like preaching of *Gurbani*, *Gurmaryada* and *Dasvands* for the maintaince of Sikh colleges, press, *updeshaks* and to educate the girls.⁹⁸

Another method they adopted for their intellectual activites was sending out *Jathas* in various places of Punjab and outside. The *jatha* term signifies in the “Sikh tradition a group of volunteers to carry out a specific task, be it armed combat or a peaceful and non- violent agitation. The term was in common use by the first half of the 18th century when after the execution of Banda Singh Bahadur, the Sikhs had organised themselves into *jathas* to fight against oppressors. During the religious revival of the Singh Sabha the term *Jatha* was generally restricted to bands of preachers and choirs”.⁹⁹ These *Jathas* organised the religious *diwans* to propagate the Sikh ceremonies and *Gurbani*. The *Chief Khalsa Diwan* had also endeavoured an excellent programme to send their *Jathas* on the festivals in the *gurdwaras* for the preaching of *Gurmat* and to remove the un-Sikh practices among the Sikh masses.¹⁰⁰ It had two types of *Jathas* for preaching. The first *jatha* comprised the members and

⁹⁵ N.G.Barrier, “Sikh Emigrants and their Homeland: The Transmission of Information, Resources and Values in the Early Twentieth Century” in N.G.Barrier and Verne A. Dusenbery (ed.), *The Sikh Diaspore Migration and Experience Beyond Punjab*, p. 54. See also N.G.Barrier, “Tradition and Sikh Identity in the Modern World”, *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, Vol. 2, Number 1, January-June, 1995, p. 107.

⁹⁶ Gurdarshan Singh, “*Origin and Development of Singh Sabha Movement: Constitutional Aspects*” in Ganda Singh (ed), *The Singh Sabha and other Socio-Religious Movements in the Punjab (1850-1925)*, Punjabi University, Patiala, Third Edition, 1997, p. 47.

⁹⁷ *The Khalsa*, Lahore, 7 March, 1900, p. 2.

⁹⁸ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 3 November, 1899, p. 2.

⁹⁹ Harbans Singh (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol.II, Punjabi University, Patiala, Second Edition, 2001, pp. 362- 364.

¹⁰⁰ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 15 Febuary, 1905, p. 9.

well wishers of the *diwan* who went at the religious *diwan* for preaching. The second *Jathas* were from the institutions of the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* like from *Khalsa Parcharak Vidyala*, Tarntarn, *Central Khalsa Vidyala*, Amritsar and *Updeshak College Yateemkhana*, Garjakh (Gujrawala).¹⁰¹ It had used to send their *Jathas* for preaching at Amritsar on the festivals of *Diwali* and *Baisakhi*, at Anadpur on the day of *Hola Mahalla* and at Nankana Sahib on the *Gurpunam* day.¹⁰² In 1906, the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* turned his attention towards the *Sehajdhari* Sikhs of the Sindh. For this, the *Diwan* established a *Sindh-Blochistan Parcharak Sub-Committee** to propagate the mission of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh among them. In December, 1906 the first preaching *jatha* of this committee went to Sindh under the leadership of Sundar Singh Majithia.¹⁰³ In spite of this committee, the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* also established other sub-committees for preaching like *Sindh Sagar Sub-Committee* for the Jehlum, Rawalpindi and Kambalpur districts, *Majha Parchar Sub-Committee* for Amritsar, Lahore and Gurdaspur (This was also famous as *Khalsa Diwan Majha*, later mixed with *Chief Khalsa Diwan* and known as *Majha Parchar Sub-Committee*)¹⁰⁴ and *Frontier Sub-Committee* which was for the regions of Peshawar, Attak, Mardaan and Kohat.¹⁰⁵ *Gurmat Parcharak Jatha* was also established at Jehlum for the propagation of *Gurmat* among the Sikhs.¹⁰⁶ When in 1909, the Arya Samaj of Jalandhar shaved the head of Bhai Sher Singh of Kadelia, sold it in market and organised a gathering to purify the Ravidasia at Jalandhar, the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* also send their *Jathas* under the supervision of Bhai Jodh Singh for the preaching in the villages of Jalandhar.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ *Chief Khalsa Diwan Di Chodve Varey Di Salana Report 1 January 1916 to 31 December 1916 Tak*, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, pp. 33-34.

¹⁰² *Chief Khalsa Diwan De Barve Varey Di Salana Report 1 January 1914 to 31 December 1914 Tak*, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, pp. 38-39.

¹⁰³ Mehar Singh Ravel, *Doctor Sir Sundar Singh Majithia Jivan, Udesh Ate Den*, U.P., pp. 145-146. The president of this *Jatha* was Bhai Arjan Singh Bagrian, Sardar harbans Singh Attari was its seceratery and Bhai Jodh Singh M.A. was its Assistant Secretary. See also *Sir Sundar Singh Majithia*, File No. 502, p. 25, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

¹⁰⁴ *Chief Khalsa Diwan De Satve Varey Di Salana Report 1 January 1909 to 31 December 1909 Tak*, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, pp. 31-32.

¹⁰⁵ *The Monthly Circular of the Chief Khalsa Diwan*, Amritsar, No. 4, Vol. 1, 1906, p. 13.

¹⁰⁶ From 1 September 1915 to April 1916 this *jatha* celebrate the 18 *Jorh-Mela* in cities among the Sikh masses. The result of these activities was that the 32 peoples including men and women were baptized. It also organised the *diwan* on *Gurpurb* days. *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 20 April, 1916, p. 6.

¹⁰⁷ Kartaar Singh Updehsak, *Panthak Unti Diya Kuj Abhul Yadan*, New Delhi, 1955, p. 81. Kartaar Singh was also the *updeshak* of *Chief Khalsa Diwan* and he and Labh Singh were sent by *Chief Khalsa Diwan* for propagating Sikh religion in villages of Jalandhar under the supervision of Bhai Jodh Singh. See also *Sir Sundar Singh Majithia*, File No. 502, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

Religious *diwans* were another methods used by the Singh Sabha reformers. “The gathering of the devotees in the presence of the *Guru Granth Sahib* at which holy hymns are sung and the holy name is mediated upon is to be called *diwan*”.¹⁰⁸ The *diwans* were the “republican and democratic” sitting held by the Sikh Gurus also.¹⁰⁹ It had become necessary to organised the early morning *diwan* among the Sikhs to reform and propagate the Sikh religion.¹¹⁰ Through the religious *diwans* efforts were made to bring out the Sikhs from superstition and meaningless customs and baptized them.¹¹¹ The *Chief Khalsa Diwan* also organised *diwans* in whole Punjab, Sindh, Agra, and Oudh and also in frontier provinces.¹¹² The *jathas*, who organised the *diwans*, often published their accouts about their acitivites and their efforts to propagate the Sikh religion. In its issue of 22 February, 1905 the *Khalsa Advocate* published an account of the Pothohar *diwan* which was held on 15, 16, 17 October 1904 as “the first and the most important was the performance of marriages regardless of caste restrictions by the members of the Sikh society. Several betrothals according to Sikh rites were made on the occasion; the parties’ concerned being converts from different castes. This is a movement which seems in the right direction, and we hope that the Sikhs would steadily but carefully work out their way from the trammels of caste system.”¹¹³ The Sikhs attended these *diwans* with enthusiasm as Bhai Randhir Singh wrote that they attended the *diwan* wherever they were organised, sometimes after walking 20-30 *Kohs* on foot, in *diwan* they listen the *Shabad Kirtan*, sometimes to arrange *Guru-Ka-Langar*.¹¹⁴

“Although every Sikh temple is a seat of *parchar* more or less, and all *nirmala* and *udasi sadhus* serve as preachers, they fail to give best results for they do not work in unison and have no constructive programmes.”¹¹⁵ Moreover, the Singh Sabha reformer realised that the *updeshaks* were the best mean to propagate the *Gurmat* by

¹⁰⁸ Harbans Singh (ed), *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Volume I, Punjabi University, Patiala, Third Edition, 1998, p. 591.

¹⁰⁹ *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 9 June, 1917, p. 3.

¹¹⁰ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 4 July, 1912, p. 4

¹¹¹ S.S. Amol, “Bhai Sahib Bhai Jodh Singh Ji Da Singh Sabha Laher Te Chief Khalsa Diwan Nal Sambandh”, *Khoj Patrika*, Ank 20, September, 1982, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 59.

¹¹² *Chief Khalsa Diwan De Satve Varey Di Report 1 January 1909 to 31 December 1909 Tak*, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar. 24.

¹¹³ *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 22 Febuary, 1905, p. 2.

¹¹⁴ Gyani Nahar Singh, *Bhai Sahib Randhir Singh Ji Diya Jail Chithian*, Ludhiana, Fourth Edition, 1965, pp. 134-135.

¹¹⁵ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Bhagat Lakshman Singh Autobiography*, p. 105. To overcome this situation, Bhagat Lakshman Singh also formed association named *Khalsa Dharam Parcharak Sabha* at Rawalpindi.

preaching at different places and inspire the people towards *Guru Granth Sahib*.¹¹⁶ Moreover, the *updeshaks* could be very helpful to prevent the Sikhs from being the follower of *Ramrais*, *Bhairagis*, *Guggas*, *Arya Samaj* and other gods and goddess.¹¹⁷ *The Khalsa Advocate* describes the importance and need of the *updeshaks* among the Sikh *Panth* as “in times, when there was no press, this was the only means of preaching a religion. Augustine through the influence of his good speeches made the whole of England bows its head before Christ. Our Gurus, too, resorted to this mode of preaching. Therefore, if we have competent *updeshaks* to preach our religion in the various parts of the country, we shall be able to do much in the near future.”¹¹⁸

The *Khalsa Akhbar* stated that the *Khalsa Panth* would be progressed; if the *updeshaks* propagate the *Gurbani* and *Amrit* among the Sikh masses in the villages and each Singh Sabha must held *updeshak* for propagate the religion under its vicinity.¹¹⁹ The Lahore Singh Sabha also “sent its *updeshaks* even in the interior of the state to spread message of Sikhism among the hundreds and thousands of the village folks, who constituted the backbone of the Sikh community and without whose cooperation no movement could acquire a mass base.”¹²⁰ Often during the vacations the members of the Singh Sabha were also went at various places for preaching. For instance, during the holidays of *Dusehra* and *Muharam*, the members of the Lahore Singh Sabha Bhai Jawahir Singh and Bhai Ditt Singh went to Peshawar for propagate the Sikh religion.¹²¹ A book was also published entitled *Khalsa Dharam Updesh* that comprised the religious discourse of Bhai Gurmukh Singh which he had delivered on his preaching tours at various places.¹²² The each Singh Sabha had also their *updeshaks*, whom the Sabha sent for preaching at the places in his constituency to instruct the audiences on Sikh doctrines and ritual practices. Upto 1899, there were 28 *updeshaks* in the *Khalsa Panth* for preaching the true gospel of Sikhism, most of among them were honorary* and others were doing their *parchar* among the Sikhs on

¹¹⁶ *Chief Khalsa Diwan De Satve Varey Di Salana Report 1 January 1909 to 31 December 1909 Tak*, Amritsar, p. 39.

¹¹⁷ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 23 June, 1899, p. 3.

¹¹⁸ *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 15 April, 1905, p. 3.

¹¹⁹ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 2 November, 1900, p. 5.

¹²⁰ Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon, *The Sikhs and The British 1849-1920*, Guru Nanak Dev Mission Series- 401& 402, Guru Nanak Dev Mission, Patiala, First Edition, 1991, p. 24.

¹²¹ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 1 October, 1887, p. 6. See also *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 3 September, 1887, p. 1.

¹²² Gurmukh Singh, *Khalsa Dharam Updesh*, Lahore, 1884.

salary.¹²³ They advised the *pujaris* of *gurdwaras* to follow those rituals in the *gurdwaras* which were sanctioned by the Sikh religion.¹²⁴ They also awakened the peoples to abandon discretionary spending and observance of fast. They appealed to the Sikhs to give money for the maintenance of schools.¹²⁵ The *updeshaks* were also sent the reports of their activities like their efforts to baptize the Sikh masses, motivate them to learn *Gurmukhi* language, about how many had abandoned drinking, observance of fast and to get the marriages in conforming to the Sikh rites among the Sikh society.¹²⁶ The preaching activities of the *updeshaks* were also noticed in *Census of India* 1911. The census says that “the Sikh preachers have also been doing a great deal towards the reclamation of the depressed classes, who are being freely admitted to their fold”¹²⁷ The *updeshaks* gives two-fold information. On the one hand, they spread the *Tat Khalsa* ideology among the rural Sikh masses. On the other, they communicate the situation of Sikh faith and Sikh society to the Singh reformers.¹²⁸

The *updeshaks* of *Chief Khalsa Diwan* toured and lectured on several topics- educational, social and religious in the country.¹²⁹ Among the other aims of the *Diwan*, one was also to promote the study of the *Guru Granth Sahib* by providing religious instructors throughout the length and breadth of the country.¹³⁰ It used to send their *updeshaks* at *Jor-Melas*, religious *diwans* and at the time of marriage and death at various places for the propagation of Sikh religion and Sikh ceremonies among the Sikh masses.¹³¹ The *updeshaks* were also sent in rural tracts, where often peoples resistance to the observance of Sikh ceremony at the time of marriage and death.¹³² An article entitled *Panth Unti Da Saukha Parbandh* in the *Khalsa Akhbar*

¹²³ *Khalsa Directory*, Tract No. 58, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, n.d., pp 189-190.

¹²⁴ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 8 February, 1901, p. 2.

¹²⁵ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 16 February, 1900, p. 2.

¹²⁶ *The Monthly Circular of the Chief Khalsa Diwan*, Amritsar, Vol. 6, No. 3- 4, p. 3. See also *The Monthly Circular of the Chief Khalsa Diwan*, Vol.3, No. 2, 1907, p. 5.

¹²⁷ E. A.Gait, *Census of India*, 1911, Part I- Report, Calcutta, 1913, p. 125.

¹²⁸ See the report of Bhai Ganga Singh Updeshak about the state of Sikhs in rural tracts of Saharanpur, Bijnaur, Mujaffarnagar and Merut's District, where he preached about one month. *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 23 May, 1902, p. 2.

¹²⁹ D. Petrie, “Secret C.I.D. Memorandum on Recent Developments in Sikh Politics, 1911”, p. 325.

¹³⁰ *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 8 March, 1905, p. 5. For example the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* send their preachers at various places like Majha, Malwa, Doaba, Dhani, Pothohar, Hazara, Gujrawala, Gujrat, Siyalkot, Sindh, Balochistan. See *The Khalsa Samachar*, 24 January, 1906, p.7.

¹³¹ *Chief Khalsa Diwan De Satve Varey Di Salana Report 1 January 1909 to 31 December 1909 Tak*, Amritsar, p. 37.

¹³² For instance, when Deva Singh who was president of Singh Sabha Duberan (Rawalpindi) wanted to do *Anand* Marriage of his daughter, the village peoples were against him. So he requested to *Chief Khalsa Diwan* to send *updeshaks* and the *diwan* sent Kartaar Singh Updeshak for preaching the Sikh ceremonies among the village folk. Kartaar Singh Updeshak, *Panthak Unti De Pishle Ithas Vicho Kuj Abhul Yandan*, p. 50.

also pleaded the Sikh community to send the *updeshtaks* for preaching the Sikh religion in the army.¹³³ The *updeshtaks* of the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* were often visited the regiments of the Sikhs in Indian army¹³⁴ and also in the gaols for preaching the Sikh religion.¹³⁵

Besides the *updeshtaks*, the women *updeshtaks* had also played important role for the awakening of the Sikh masses particularly of the women. A society named *Istri Updeshtak Sangat* was established at Amritsar. The woman *updeshtak* of this society preached Sikh religion among the Sikh women.¹³⁶ The *Chief Khalsa Diwan* had also employed women *updeshtak* to get access to their woman folk to propagate the *Gurmat* through *Shabad Kirtan* and religious discourse among the Sikh women.¹³⁷ Up to the year 1911, *Chief Khalsa Diwan* had one inspector and fifteen *updeshtak*, from which Mai Ram Kaur was a women *updeshtak*.¹³⁸ Often in their address to the Sikh women, they exhorted them to educate their children in *Gurmukhi* language so that they could read the *Guru Granth Sahib*.¹³⁹

Like other societies of the day, for instances the Lahore Arya Samaj established *Vedic Missionary Fund* on 6 July, 1881 and also founded *Arya Updeshtak Mandali* (Arya Missionary Circle) with the aim “to deal a death blow to Christianity with weapons of reason and fair argument”.¹⁴⁰ The *Chief Khalsa Diwan* also established *Updeshtak Fund* to overcome the paucity of *updeshtaks*.¹⁴¹ Out of its earnings, the salaries and travel expenses of the *updeshtaks* were rewarded.¹⁴² The Singh Sabha of Rawalpindi had also opened a *Khalsa Dharam Prachar Fund* to appoint *updeshtaks* for the Rawalpindi district.¹⁴³ The executive committee of the

¹³³ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 27 July, 1900, p. 7.

¹³⁴ D. Petrie, “Secret C.I.D. Memorandum on Recent Developments in Sikh Politics, 1911”, p. 312.

¹³⁵ Kartaar Singh Updeshtak, *Panthak Unti De Pishle Ithas Vicho Kuj Abhul Yandan*, pp. 90-91. As Name mention, Kartaar Singh was also the Updeshtak of *Chief Khalsa Diwan*, under the guidelines of *Chief Khalsa Diwan*, he preached Sikhism in Borstal Jail, Lahore and in the army. In this book, he also writes about the activities of the *updeshtaks* and the problems which they faced while propagating the Sikh religion.

¹³⁶ *Istri Updeshtak Sangat Da Dhanvad Patr Athva Sacha Daan*, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, 1895, pp. 9-11. See also *The Khalsa Akhbar*, 1 March, 1895, p.6. See also *Khalsa Dharam Parcharak*, Amritsar, 4 May, 1895, p.4.

¹³⁷ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 16 December, 1903, p. 2.

¹³⁸ *Chief Khalsa Diwan Di Athve Ate Nauve Varye Di Salana Report 1 January 1910 to 31 December 1911 Tak*, Amritsar, pp. 18-19.

¹³⁹ D. Petrie, “Secret C.I.D. Memorandum on Recent Developments in Sikh Politics 1911”, p. 326.

¹⁴⁰ Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharm Hindu Consciousness in 19th Century Punjab*, Manohar Book Service, New Delhi, 1976, p. 47.

¹⁴¹ *The Monthly Circular of the Chief Khalsa Diwan*, Amritsar, No. 5, Vol. 2, 1907, p. 4.

¹⁴² *The Monthly Circular of the Chief Khalsa Diwan*, Amritsar, No. 1, Vol. 1, 1906, p. 1

¹⁴³ *An Appeal*, Egerton Press, Rawalpindi, 29 July, 1897. See File No. 170, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

Chief Khalsa Diwan also made regulations for the *updeshaks* like (1) The *updeshak* must be the follower of Sikh religion and had the knowledge of *Gurmat* (2) not less than 20 year old (3) for the propagation of Sikh religion, he must had to do efforts and not involved himself in any political wrangles (4) must have to send his weekly diaries of his service to the secretary of the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* (5) without the permission of the *Chief Khalsa Diwan*, he had no right to preach at any place (6) the *updeshak* who would worked against *Chief Khalsa Diwan* be punished by secretary of the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* (7) the salaries would be given to them according to their rank* (8) he would be responsible for his sermons, subjects and preaching means.¹⁴⁴

According to Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid, it was necessary for the *updeshaks* to have comprehensive knowledge of “(1) *Guru Granth Sahib*, *Dasam Granth* and composition of Bhai Gurdas (2) religious cum historical literature of contemporary scholars like Gyani Gyan Singh, Bhai Ditt Singh, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, Bhai Jodh Singh (3) Histories of the Sikh leaders like Baba Naudh Singh, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Hari Singh Nalwa, Akali Baba Phula Singh, Baba Ram Singh, Kavar Naunihal Singh and Maharaja Dalip Singh (4) Brief history and geography of the world (5) History of the Sikh shrines”.¹⁴⁵ An article entitled *Parchar Diya Jrurta* in *The Khalsa Akhbar* stated that the *Khalsa Panth* needed those kind of *updeshaks*, who had been well acquainted about the Sikh state of affairs, sermons of the Sikh Gurus, able to explain the hymns of *Gurbani* properly, conversant with Sikh history, able to dispel the doubts of the follower of the other religions and must have a good character.¹⁴⁶

Though the Singh Sabha’s and the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* had attempted to reach among the Sikh masses with the principles of reform, but the scarcity of skilled *updeshaks* in Sikh religion and history proved a handicap. Consequently, the *Shri Guru Singh Sabha* of Gujrawala opened a *Khalsa Updeshak Mahavidyala* at Gharjakh on 5 April, 1901.¹⁴⁷ Another institution, to serve the same purpose was *Khalsa Parcharak Vidyala* at Tarn Tarn opened on 6 November, 1906 by the *Khalsa Diwan*,

¹⁴⁴ *The Monthly Circular of the Chief Khalsa Diwan*, Amritsar, No. 6, Vol. 1, 1906, pp. 19-21. There were three ranks of the *updeshaks*, the *updeshak* who had the first rank got 60 to 100 rupees salary, the second rank got 35 to 50 and the third rank *updeshak* got the 20 to 30 rupees salary. It was the committee’s desire to employ the *updeshak* at any rank.

¹⁴⁵ Munsha Singh Dukhi, *Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid*, Tarn Taran, 1939, pp. 510-511.

¹⁴⁶ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 1 May, 1903, p. 3.

¹⁴⁷ *Shimahi Report of the Shri Guru Singh Sabha ate Updeshak School Gharjakh 1 January 1904 to 30 June 1904 Tak*, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, p. 1.

Majha.¹⁴⁸ These institutions produced *ragi*, *parchark*, *updeshak*, *granthis* and *ustad* (teacher) to teach religious education and Punjabi language.¹⁴⁹

In those days, the tract literature became the best tool for propagating a point of view. Tract is “a short pamphlet or essay presenting some religious (political) arguments or doctrine”.¹⁵⁰ To promulgate the Christian religion, the Christian missionaries were the first who had established tract societies. These societies published small tracts and the preaching missionaries distribute these tracts* among the masses.¹⁵¹ The Ludhiana press from 1834 to 1889 printed their scriptures and portions in Urdu, Hindi, Persian, Kashmir, Sindh and other languages nearly six hundred thousands, while the books and tracts approximately five millions.¹⁵² The themes of the tracts were often related to the life of Jesus Christ, stories and translation from the Bible.¹⁵³ Later all the movements in the Punjab adopted tracts as a means of their propaganda. The Arya Samajists also founded *Arya Tract Society*. This was sponsored by Lala Ratan Chand Barry. This society was started with the purpose “to publish tracts in English language containing Vedic doctrine and Arya religion.”¹⁵⁴ Like the Christian and Arya Samaj, the Singh reformers associated with *Tat Khalsa* ideology, organised a variety of tract societies. Among them was the most important called *Khalsa Tract Society* and *Sikh Handbill Society*.

The *Khalsa Tract Society* was founded by Bhai Kaur Singh who was the son of Sadhu Singh Dhupia¹⁵⁵ and Bhai Vir Singh in 1894 at Amritsar. Its aim was “to publish tracts to propagate the principles laid down by Sikh Gurus and to help the

¹⁴⁸ Harbans Singh (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Volume II, Punjabi University, Patiala, Second Edition, 2001, p. 488.

¹⁴⁹ *Educational Committee Di Dasvi Salana Report*, 1917-1918, Amritsar, p. 34.

¹⁵⁰ Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Oxford University Press, New York, Second Edition, 2001, p. 260

¹⁵¹ For example, they formed the *Panjab Tract Society* in 1863. In 1873, its name was changed to the *Panjab Religious Book Society*. See *Conference on Urdu and Hindi Christian Literature* held at Alahabad, 24th and 25th February 1875, Madras, 1875, p. 48. From 1836-1844 they distribute many tracts like *Maseehi Prishonatri*, *Parmeshvar De Das Hukam*, *Ganga Ishnan*, *Yasu Maseh Di Kahani*, *Updesha Di Pothi* etc. See Narinder Singh Kapoor, *Punjabi Patarkari Da Vikaas*, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, 1988, p. 46.

¹⁵² *Gazetteer of the Ludhiana District 1888-1889*, Calcutta, p. 77.

¹⁵³ Ratan Singh Jaggi, *Sikh Panth Vishavkosh*, Part-1, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2005, p. 550.

¹⁵⁴ *Regenerator of Arya Varta*, February 24, 1884, p.6. Quoted from Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharm Hindu Consciousness in 19th Century Punjab*, Manohar Book Service, New Delhi, 1976, p. 121.

¹⁵⁵ *Bhai Kaur Singh Ji Bani Khalsa Tract Society De Chalaney da Shok Pattar*, Tract No. 6, Khalsa Tract Society, Amritsar, Second Edition, 1895, pp. 8-9.

process of social reformation among the Sikh society”.¹⁵⁶ This society was registered on 25th March, 1897.¹⁵⁷ The society also adopted the rules to publish tract like (1) to publish tracts for the reform of religion, to propagate brotherhood, to stop the prevalent bad customs, to propagate good customs and the Sikh history (2) to publish tracts on *Gurbani* (3) to do every appropriate method to propagate the tracts.¹⁵⁸ The society published its two tracts in a month.¹⁵⁹ Soon, this society works on the lines of “National Institutions”.¹⁶⁰

For the religious awakening among the Sikhs, the tract entitled *Sikhi Te Panth Unti* stated that it is the duty of the every Sikh to do works for the progress of Sikh religion. They suggested Sikh *Panth* would be in progresses if the Sikhs follow the wisdom of the Sikh Gurus given in *Guru Granth Sahib* and the *Gurmaryada* as Guru Gobind Singh had said.¹⁶¹ Occasionally, the tracts represent the biographies of the Sikh, who were contemporary of the Sikh Gurus with the purpose to highlight their devotion and service to Sikh Gurus. By this way, they awakened the Sikhs to fulfil all the requirements of being a true Sikh and follow the lead of the Sikh Gurus as the old Sikhs had followed, so that their life would be saved.¹⁶² To get the Sikhs familiar with their glorious history and the determination of the old Sikhs towards Sikh religion, the society published a tract entitled *Sikh Sachi Lai*, which represent the short-life sketch of Baba Deep Singh and his sacrifice for the Sikh religion.¹⁶³ The society also published a tract in which the composition of *Guru Granth Sahib* was written so that Sikhs must familiar with it and helped to those who wants to do deep research on *Gurbani*.¹⁶⁴ The tracts stated that if the Sikhs wants to remain the son of Guru Gobind Singh, then they had to follow the five parts of intrinsic conceptions like unity, fraternity, beneficence, forgiveness and finally meditation by reciting the

¹⁵⁶ Harbans Singh, *Bhai Vir Singh A Short Biography*, Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, New Delhi, First Edition, 1990, p. 19.

¹⁵⁷ *Punjab Administrative Reports, File No. 163*, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 89.

¹⁵⁸ *Kalhaini Deorani*, Tract No. 413, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, p. 24 See also *The Khalsa Samachar*, 15 August, 1906, p. 7.

¹⁵⁹ *Soochi Pattar Arthat Pustaka Di Farhest*, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, 1909. See the title page.

¹⁶⁰ *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 15 October, 1904, p. 3.

¹⁶¹ *Sikhi Te Panth Unti*, Tract No. 279, 1906, Amritsar, pp. 17-18.

¹⁶² *Bhai Mahnga: or The Search After Truth*, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, 1911, p. 120. This tract was first published in Punjabi, but *Chief Khalsa Diwan* published it in English with the permission of *Khalsa Tract Society*.

¹⁶³ *Sikh Sachi Lai*, Tract No. 201, 1903, p. 17.

¹⁶⁴ *Shri Guru Granth Bani Beora*, Tract No. 139, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, p. 5.

Gurbani. They had to wear the five symbols *Kesh, Kangha, Kachchera, Kirpan and Kara* by *Khande De Pahul*.¹⁶⁵

Sometimes, the tracts also suggested the Sikh masses to use the *dasvand* and time for the progress of the Sikh *Panth*.¹⁶⁶ They also reminded the Sikhs about their obligations to the *Panth* like help to the orphanage children, helpless widows and poor peoples who had been in adversities.¹⁶⁷ The tract also awakened the Sikhs to follow those rituals which were sanctioned by the Sikh Gurus. During this time, the Sikh womens like their “Hindu sisters” as A.H.Bingley writes “had started to play the part of a professional mourner on the death of a relative, by beating their breasts, and wailing for the prescribed period”.¹⁶⁸ By the mean of tract, they awakened the Sikhs particularly women that they had to abandon this bad ritual of mourning at the death of any person, because it was forbidden among the Sikh society by the Sikh Gurus. They utilize the hymns of *Guru Granth Sahib* to make an impact on the women to discard this un-Sikh practice. They pleaded the Sikh men to do efforts to remove this worse ritual from Sikh society.¹⁶⁹ Besides citing the demerits of mourning, the tracts awakened the Sikhs by reminding them that the Sikh Gurus had taught the Sikhs to always live in the will of God and follow the obituary ceremonies according to the *Gurmaryada*.¹⁷⁰

To generate social awakening among the Sikhs, the tracts also awakened the Sikhs to abandon the bad habit of gambling¹⁷¹ and drinking. The tract pleaded that instead of spending money on drinking, they had to use it on good works, learn *Gurmukhi* language, recite the hymns of *Guru Granth Sahib*, read the religious newspaper and the tracts of *Khalsa Tract Society*. By this way, they can understand what is *Sikhi* and what had been the graces of Sikh Gurus on them.¹⁷² They also pleaded to the Sikhs that to spend less money on marriage ceremonies, if they follow their advice, it would be the best method to avoid debt on them.¹⁷³ According to the tracts, the reason of the degrading condition of the Sikh society was the caste discrimination with the lower caste people. They pleaded to the Sikhs to do good

¹⁶⁵ *Asi Kalgidhar De Putar Kis Tarah Baney Rahiye?*, Tract No. 223, Amritsar, pp. 5-10.

¹⁶⁶ *Saadi Darauni Dasha*, Tract No. 93, Amritsar, pp. 12-16.

¹⁶⁷ *Faraj*, Tract No. 519, Part-4, Wazir Hind Press, 1916, p. 181.

¹⁶⁸ A. H. Bingley, *Sikhs*, p. 79.

¹⁶⁹ *Siyape Da Siyapa Arthat Siyape De Augun*, Tract No. 118, Amritsar, pp.37- 44

¹⁷⁰ *Mukaan*, Tract No. 278, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, 1904, pp. 18-19.

¹⁷¹ *Juyebaji*, Tract No. 146, Amritsar.

¹⁷² *Ik Dhadhey Sikh Da Sudhar*, Tract No. 551, Wazir Hind Press, 1917, p. 28. See also *Bhikhya Nikhedh*, Tract No. 231, 1904. In this tract, the demerits of use of Tabacoo had been described.

¹⁷³ *Utam Sikhya*, Tract No. 416, Part- 3, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, p. 13.

behave with the lower caste people. They also stated that when the Sikhs would leave the caste prejudices, then they will be able to be called ‘Sikh’ themselves.¹⁷⁴

The tract stated that due to the lack of education among the women, they had become foolish. They had started to follow the un-Sikh practices like worship of *Gugga, Jogis, Sarwars, Rawals, and Seetlas* and entangled in sorcery. To overcome this sad plight, women had to awake in the early morning, to recite the hymns of *Guru Granth Sahib* and follow the teachings of Sikh Gurus.¹⁷⁵ By quoting the hymns of *Guru Granth Sahib*, the tracts also criticised another un-Sikh practice like observance of fast by Sikh women because it was prohibited in Sikh tradition.¹⁷⁶ Often the tracts compared the heroic deeds of eighteenth century Sikh women with the women’s during the Singh Sabha movement. They stated that women had become faint-hearted, unintelligent and superstitious because they had given up following the teachings of the Sikh Gurus and the *Gurmaryada*.¹⁷⁷ The Deputy Commissioner Colonel Gurdon wrote a remark about the prevalence of child marriage in his census report as “among Hindus and Sikhs, girls are generally married between the age of 7 and 12 years”¹⁷⁸ Thus the tracts also described the worst effects of child marriage because it had become the root cause of all evils in society at that time. In addition, they described the demerits of child marriage like it caused women’s ignorance, foolishness and their miserable plight. These were the chief causes for the degradation of family, community and country. Through tracts, they suggested to eradicate this bad evil from the society was the best mean to progress.¹⁷⁹

The society also awakened the Sikhs about the missionary activities of Christians that were caused loss to the Sikh *Panth*. It was a time, when the Christian missionaries were made every effort to convert the low-caste peoples into their faith by assuring them of a better social and economic status. For instance, from 1894-

¹⁷⁴ *Anath Kanya*, Part- 16, Tract No. 546, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, p. 456.

¹⁷⁵ *Deor Bhabi Da Sambadh*, Tract No. 87, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, p. 36

¹⁷⁶ *Aj Mangal Var Hai*, Tract No. 131, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar.

¹⁷⁷ *Sighni Parbodh*, Tract No. 276, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, 1906, pp. 14-36.

¹⁷⁸ *Gazetteer of Jalandhar District*, 1883-1884, Lahore 1884, p. 16. “Girls when they reach their teens are looked upon by their parents as a burden and are generally married before they are properly grown up”. See also *Punjab District Gazetteers*, Volume XXIA. Gurdaspur District, 1914, Lahore, 1915, p. 47.

¹⁷⁹ *Bal Vyah De Dukhrhe*, Tract No. 410, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, pp. 4-5.

1895, they converted the low-caste people of Jalandhar, Ropar and Morinda districts into Christian religion as:¹⁸⁰

	Men	Women	Children	Totals
Jullundar District	72	12	36	120
Ropar	40	21	29	90
Morinda	53	23	52	128
Totals	165	56	117	338

To awaken the Sikhs about their real intentions and loss to Sikh *Panth* from their activities, the society published a number of tracts. The tract also pleaded to the Sikhs that they had to do efforts to turn back into Sikh religion, those, who had left it in deceit or forcibly and when they returned into Sikhism, treat them like brother not hatred.¹⁸¹ The Christian missionaries also send their women in the villages to convert the people particularly women in their faith. These women go daily in the villages, from house to house. They were often welcomed by rural peoples. They taught women the hymns, texts of their religion and needlework too.¹⁸² Therefore, the society published a tract entitled *Jo Patti Suvado Patti*, which gave the suggestion to the Sikhs to open schools and hospitals of the *Khalsa Panth*, because these were also opened by Christians,¹⁸³ where Sikh women's generally went and came under the influence of Christianity. It also stated that the only way to overcome this plight, the Sikhs had to establish *Dharamsalas* in their villages and propagate the Sikh tenets among the women to strength their belief in Sikh religion.¹⁸⁴

Occasionally, the tracts disapproved the tracts and books published by Christian missionaries and Arya Samajists, in which the hymns of *Guru Granth Sahib*

¹⁸⁰ *Sixty-First Annual Report of the Lodhiana Mission for the Year, 1895*, p. 35.

¹⁸¹ *Je Eho Haal Reha Ta Asi Dubey*, Tract No. 28, Anglo Sanskriti Press, Lahore, 1896, p.20.

¹⁸² *Sixty-First Annual Report of the Lodhiana Mission for the Year, 1895*, p.118.

¹⁸³ "In Punjab, they also opened *Zenana* and Bazar school in order to educate the light of Christianity at homes for women, in which they also taught reading, writing and needlework and books were those which taught about their religion and the motive of the teacher was to impress the women about their gospel. They also gave money to girls to persuade their parents to send them schools". M.Rose Greenfield, *Education Versus Evangelization* an Address to the Conference of Lady Missionaries held at Amritsar, Punjab, 1888, pp. 3-4.

¹⁸⁴ *Jo Patti Suvado Patti*, Tract No. 47, Khalsa Press, Lahore, pp. 41-45. See also, *Hae Bachi to Kitho*, Tract No, 17, Anglo Press, Lahore, 1896.

and other Sikh scriptures were misinterpreted.¹⁸⁵ For example, Jagat Singh Updeshak wrote a book in which he misinterpreted the hymns of *Guru Granth Sahib* and quotations from *Suraj Parkash* to rationalize his claim that the Sikh Gurus were Hindus.¹⁸⁶ The *Khalsa Advocate* newspapers also signify the danger to Sikh community from the mispresent statements by the other religion as “for ourselves, we must defend ourselves. To keep quiet would be suicidal. The misrepresenting statements about the Sikh religion and the Sikh affairs generally may not affect the majority of us, for we know what they are worth. But there are ignorant youngsters, our rising generations and others who are not some how or other in touch with the Sikhs who may be mislead.”¹⁸⁷ Consequently, the society published a number of tracts which awakened the Sikhs not to be relied on their deceitful ways and to avoid reading these types of tracts.¹⁸⁸

To enhance the awakening among the Sikhs, the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* also formed Sikh Handbill Committee on 22 December, 1907 at Lahore. Its first president was Bhai Jodh Singh and Tara Singh was its secretary.¹⁸⁹ The aim behind the formation of this committee as the Sikh intellectuals considered that “the Sikh *Panth* was in dire need of preaching, wherever, the *updeshaks* could not reach and religious *diwans* were not organised, in those places, these handbills would gave much advantage to the Sikh masses, particularly in rural areas where the peoples had not read the newspapers and the tracts”.¹⁹⁰ The handbills were first printed in Punjabi language, but later on from 25 October, 1908 the committee decided that in order to propagate Guru Nanak’s mission in another faiths, the handbills would be published in Sindhi, Urdu, English language on *Gurpurbsaptami*.¹⁹¹

Through the mean of handbills, the Sikh intellectual awakened the Sikh masses to remove the social evils from the society. They awakened that the Sikh *Panth* suffered loss due to that they were trapped in the caste prejudice with the low

¹⁸⁵ See *Isaia De Gurbani Te Dushan* in *Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 23 May, 1902, p. 3. *Isaia De Sade Par Halley* in *Khalsa Samachar*, 14 May, 1902, p. 6. See also *Satgur Te Isaia De Hathkandey* in *Khalsa Samachar*, 7 December, 1904, p. 8.

¹⁸⁶ Bhai Jagat Singh Updeshak, *Guru Nanak Dev Ji Se Lekar Guru Gobind Singh Paryant Dasey Guru Sahiban Dev Puran aad Dharam Shasto Ke Manney Vale Pakke Hindu they*, National Press, Amritsar, 1904, p. 109.

¹⁸⁷ *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 15 May 1904, p. 5.

¹⁸⁸ See *Dhokhey to Bacho*, Tract No. 94. *Anarth*, Tract No. 95. *Sacha Guru*, Tract No. 96.

¹⁸⁹ Harbans Singh (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Volume IV, Punjabi University, Patiala, First Edition, 1991, p. 146.

¹⁹⁰ *The Monthly Circular of the Chief Khalsa Diwan*, Amritsar, Vol.3, No.1, 1907, p. 17.

¹⁹¹ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 4 November, 1908, p. 6.

caste people, even those who were baptized. The result of this was that these low caste people had become Arya Samajists for better social status. The person, who is Sikh, had must not belief on the untouchability of the *Rahitias, Ravidasia and Majhabis*.¹⁹² In the handbills, they describe the bad effects of drinking and advised Sikhs to stay away from it in order to save their religion, wealth, dignity, celibacy and body from diseases.¹⁹³

The handbill stated that women's were become superstitious and called *pair di jutti*; because of they had not the ornaments of education. They advocated the importance of education particularly religious education for them.¹⁹⁴ They also published handbills in support of widow remarriage and advocated that it was one of the indispensable mean for the advancement of community and country among the other means.¹⁹⁵ By mean of handbills, they awakened the women to stay away from observance of fast.¹⁹⁶ The handbills were also against the wear of ornaments to the children¹⁹⁷ particularly women.¹⁹⁸ They wanted to educating women and to memorize them *japji Sahib, Sukhmani Sahib* and suggested the Sikhs to bring them in the religious *diwan* so that by listening the religious discourse their life would be reformed.¹⁹⁹

The handbills were also generated the religious awakening among the Sikhs like *Ati Ascharge* describe the virtues of *Sangat* and *Prem Suneha* handbill about the advantage of *Gurmat*.²⁰⁰ With the utilization of incidence related to Sikh Gurus and hymns of *Guru Granth Sahib*, the handbill awakened the Sikhs about their religion and its doctrines. For example, by telling the story of *Khara Sauda*, related to Guru

¹⁹² *Ha! Ha!! Guru Deya Betiyan Nal Aisa Salook*, Handbill No. 12, March 1909, pp. 2-4.

¹⁹³ *Tota, Sher, Hathi Ate Khota*, Handbill No. 2, Second Edition, 1908, 4. See also *Sharab Da Bhiyanak Ate Nashkari Asar*, Handbill No. 41, August 1911, Lahore. See also *La Raghrha*, Handbill No. 11, 1909, p. 4.

¹⁹⁴ *Dil Da Deeva*, Handbill No. 23, Febuary, 1910, pp. 2-4.

¹⁹⁵ *Ik So Terah Amritsar*, Handbill No. 22, Janauary, 1910, p. 4.

¹⁹⁶ *Hae! Ni Main Gai*, Handbill No. 28. Quoted from *Ditt Singh Magazine*, Ropar, Vol. 1, No. 9, 15 September, 1910, p. 4.

¹⁹⁷ *Hae Gaheney!!*, Handbill No. 15, June 1909, p.4.

¹⁹⁸ "Sikh women are difficult to get a good look at, as at the approach of a stranger they disappear or hastily cover their faces. They are often handsome enough, but heavily decorated with silver bangles of all sizes and shapes. The noses always pierced and contain some ornaments. The ears and neck are covered with heavy silver bangles and chains the ankles are generally hidden by heavy silver anklets." R.E. Parry, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, London, 1921, p. 24. See also S.P.S angar, "Female Ornaments of the 19th Century Punjab", *Punjab History Conference Proceeding*, Third session, March 9-10, 1968, Punjabi University, Patiala, pp. 191-198. See also *Punjab District Gazetteers*, Volume XXIA, Gurdaspur District, 1914, Lahore, 1915, p. 47

¹⁹⁹ *Lutey Gaye ! Putey Gaye !!* Handbill No. 7, October 1908, p. 4.

²⁰⁰ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 2 September, 1909, p. 2.

Nanak's life, the handbill pleaded to the Sikhs to help the needy with the use of *Dasvand* from their earnings, left the ills of lying, low measure in shops and tried to become the true Sikh.²⁰¹ It was due to the awakening generated by the handbills that “a large number of Sikhs have been ceased to follow un-Sikh practices. At numerous places educational institutions were opened. The practice of wearing ornaments by the Sikh women in on the way out and thousands of men and women had attentive to *Gurmukhi* language”.²⁰²

Soon, other societies were also sprung up across the Punjab that went into supporting *Tat Khalsa* ideology. *The Khalsa Religious Tract society* was established at Batala for the propagation of Sikh religion. It published tracts in Urdu and *Gurmukhi* language.²⁰³ *The Sikh Book Club* at Peshavar and also its successor, the *Panch Khalsa Agency* at Peshawar had printed various tracts on Sikh themes.²⁰⁴ In 1885, *The Gurmat Granth Parcharak Sabha* established at Amritsar with the intention of to “continue research in Sikh history and to publish those books which would work as means to progress of Sikh religion also published a number of tracts”.²⁰⁵ *The Sikh Tract Society* started at Lahore in 1917 with the aim “of publishing religious or historical literature in non-punjabi languages”.²⁰⁶

Though the mean of tracts was remarkable for generated awakening among the Sikhs, but the Sikh intellectual also utilised newspapers as a powerful method to produce socio-cultural and religious awakening among the Sikhs. The Singh Sabha newspapers particularly *Khalsa Akhbar*, *Khalsa Samachar*, *the Khalsa* and *Khalsa Advocate* helped a lot in this regard. Bhai Gurmukh Singh was one of the first intellectual personalities of the Singh Sabha movement, who had understood the significance of press. He started a number of newspapers like *Gurmukhi Akhbar* (1880), *Vidyarak* (1880), *the Khalsa* (1885), *Sudharak* (1886) and *Khalsa Gazette* (1886) for propagate the purposes of the Singh Sabha Lahore. Among them was also the *Khalsa Akhbar*, which he had started on 13 June 1886 under the editorship* of Jhanda Singh in *Gurmukhi* language with the aims “(1) to propagate the discourse

²⁰¹ *Khara Sauda !* Handbill No.9, November, 1908, p. 4.

²⁰² *Sikh Handbill*, Bombay Machine Press, Lahore, n.d., p. 1.

²⁰³ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 17 April, 1903, p. 9.

²⁰⁴ N.Gerald Barrier, *The Sikhs and their Literature*, p. XXXI.

²⁰⁵ Jagjit Singh, *Singh Sabha Laher 1873-1920*, pp. 14-15.

²⁰⁶ *Second Annual Report of the Sikh Tract Society, Lahore from 1 November 1918 to 31 October 1919*, pp. 5-10.

from the biographies of the Sikh Gurus and sermons of *Guru Granth Sahib* (2) to help in the development of education (3) to utilise the means for progress of the *Khalsa Panth* (4) to propagate the aims and usefulness of Singh Sabha (5) to eradicate the bad evils from the *Khalsa Panth*”.²⁰⁷ On the demand of the Sikh masses for a weekly newspaper in English language dealing with matters related to Sikh faith, Bhagat Lakshman Singh founded *The Khalsa* weekly on 5 January, 1899 at Lahore.²⁰⁸ This paper had done valuable service to the Sikh community by “preaching Sikhism, advocating the Sikh cause and fighting for the Sikh claim”.²⁰⁹ Bhai Vir Singh also started the *Khalsa Samachar* on 17 November, 1899. The aim of this newspaper was “propagating among the Sikh masses the religious and social reform as enunciated by the Singh Sabha movement”.²¹⁰ In 1903, Bhai Jodh Singh also started the *Khalsa Advocate*, a monthly periodical at Amritsar in English language.²¹¹ The reason behind the foundation of this paper was stated by this newspaper as “every non-Sikh paper or community of India is at liberty to attack us or comment upon our working bodies on their own vantage grounds. But we being in a defenceless position have simply to pocket their insult and keep up friendship with oblivion without a stronghold of our own. We are sure to be beaten down sooner or later and therefore every thinking member of our community must hasten to supply the materials wherewith we may achieve our end ere it grows too late. To meet this impending danger some of the educated Sikhs of Amritsar have been convening meetings for the last six months to start a paper in English which would further the the interests of the Sikhs in all quarters.”²¹²

There are a number of hymns in the *Guru Granth Sahib* which forbade the Sikhs to observance of the fast. But as the time past, the Sikhs particularly women started to follow this un-Sikh practice under the Brahmanical influence. The

²⁰⁷ Jagjit Singh, *Singh Sabha Laher 1873-1920*, pp. 34-35.

²⁰⁸ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Bhagat Lakshman Singh Autobiography*, p. 133.

²⁰⁹ *File No. 608*, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala. *The Khalsa* newspaper also said that “we got timely information and to cheque the progress of the cultured-Hindu propaganda in Sikh circles, we started the *Khalsa*”. See *The Khalsa*, 13 September, 1899, p. 3.

²¹⁰ According to Ganda Singh, Bhai Vir Singh was not satisfied with the *Parchar* through the limited scope and circulation of a small monthly tract, so he felt the need of a weekly paper which could pursue a line of thought week after week more vigorously with the view to propagate religious and social reform among the Sikhs. Ganda Singh, “Bhai Vir Singh and His Times”, pp. 250-251.

²¹¹ Joginder Singh, “Emergence of a new Middle Class and Resurgence Among the Sikhs in the early Twentieth Century”, *Punjab History Conference Proceeding*, Twenty Fifth Session, May 5-7, 1992, Part-I, Punjabi University, Patiala, p.147.

²¹² *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 20 September, 1903, p. 4.

newspaper by quoting the hymns of *Guru Granth Sahib* awakened them to give up observance of *pooranmashi* fast on the birthday of Guru Nanak.²¹³ They stated there would be no benefit to follow this hypocrisy.²¹⁴ They encouraged that on this holy day, they had to participate in listening *Shabad Kirtan*.²¹⁵ Frequently, correspondence letters were also published in the newspaper which motivated the Sikh women to give up this practice and read only Sikh scripture and remember only the name of God.²¹⁶

The newspaper was also against the ritual of *arti* which was then followed in *Gurdwaras* like the Hindu temples. This was against the doctrine of the Sikh Gurus.²¹⁷ They stated that Sikhs had forgotten the teachings of their Sikh Gurus against all form of worship.²¹⁸ According to Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, this un-Sikh practice came when the *Gurdwaras* came under the service of *udasi sadhus*, who followed this Hindu practise in Sikh *gurdwaras* in order to please them.²¹⁹ They advocated that the well educated *granthi*'s should spread the genuine purport of *arti* in accordance with the tenets of Sikh *Panth*.²²⁰ But their effort to eradicate this was protested by Avtar Singh Vihiria who considered that the *Khalsa Panth* was part of Hindu religion and Sikhs had to follow the rituals of Hindus.²²¹ On this matter, Gyani Ditt Singh wrote, *Gurmat Arti Parbodh* book in which he writes against the prevalent of this practice and awaken the Sikhs not to follow this and remain true to the *arti* of *Gurmat* as preached by the Sikh Gurus.²²²

The Sikh Gurus were against idol worship but during that time it had become a matter of regret that Sikhism as Lepel Griffin wrote that “as taught by its first prophet Nanak, was so full of promise, and was inspired by a pure morality and a high conception of the Deity, should fall back again into the idolatrous materialism from

²¹³ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 30 June, 1899, p. 5.

²¹⁴ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 16 June, 1899, p. 6.

²¹⁵ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 21 July, 1899, p. 5.

²¹⁶ *The Khalsa Samachar*, 16 December, 1903, p. 6.

²¹⁷ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 12 October, 1900, p. 6.

²¹⁸ “Have you dear brothers ever thought what our Gurus meant when they spoke against all form of worship. What Sri Nanak Dev meant when he spoke against the performance of formal heartless arti, when he said that he has hosts of Heavens to praise him that Suns, moons and systems of stars incessantly moved and performed arti”. See *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 15 March, 1904, pp. 3-4

²¹⁹ Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, *Gurmat Martand*, Part-1, Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, Second Edition, 1978, p. 70.

²²⁰ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 11 July, 1906, pp. 8-9.

²²¹ Avtar Singh Vahiria, *Khalsa Sudhar Taru*, Part-3, Sant Singh Ludar Oriental Press, Lahore, pp. 9-15.

²²² Bhai Ditt Singh Gyani, *Gurmat Arti Parbodh*, Bal Mukand Press, Lahore Second Edition, n.d., p.8 & p. 68.

which for a time he had raised it.”²²³ Through the mean of newspapers the reformer awakened that idol worship was harmful factor to the progress of country. But these days the Sikhs had not left behind in the idol worship as comparable to other communities.²²⁴ This caused great loss to Sikh *Panth*.²²⁵ They followed this due to they had been ignorant about the teachings of their Sikh Gurus who had denied it in Sikh religion.²²⁶ *The Khalsa Advocate* tried to awaken the Sikhs by saying that “Sikhism taught the worship of one *Akal Purakh*- unknown, self existent, omnipotent, omniscient and all pervading. So, all the Sikh rites must be based on these fundamental principles. The Sikhs should involve the worship of one God, the gods and goddess of Hindu mythology should find no room in them”.²²⁷

In those days, the un-Sikh practice *Sharadh* was also prevalent among the Sikh society. Even that the *pujaris* of the Tarn Tarn *Gurdwara* followed this practice in the honour of Guru Arjan.²²⁸ The newspaper awakened the Sikhs that this practice was prohibited by Sikh Gurus and they must have to abandon it.²²⁹ They started that by following this practice which was against *Gurmat*, they would be become *Patit*.²³⁰ So they had to follow those religious beliefs and practices which were sanctioned by *Guru Granth Sahib*.²³¹ Bhai Mohan Singh vaid also wrote a book in which he quote the versus of *Guru Granth Sahib*, to awaken the Sikhs that this un-Sikh practice had no basis in Sikh religion and the Sikh Gurus had forbidden it.²³²

The Singh Sabha reformers were also desired that the Sikhs should celebrate their own festivals. Therefore, through the mean of newspapers they generated awakening among the Sikhs that they had their own separate ceremonies and festivals from the Hindus and Muslims. They must celebrate the *Hola Mahalla* which was

²²³ Lepel Griffin, “Sikhism and the Sikhs”, *The North American Review*, Vol. 172, No. 531, February, 1901, p. 304.

²²⁴ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 2 April, 1887, pp. 3-4.

²²⁵ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 23 October, 1886, p. 4.

²²⁶ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 15 March, 1901, p. 6.

²²⁷ *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 20 September, 1903, pp. 7-8.

²²⁸ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 8 October, 1897. Quoted from Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 205.

²²⁹ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, 18 September, 1886, p. 4.

²³⁰ *The Khalsa Samachar*, 6 September, 1905, pp. 8-9.

²³¹ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 14 July, 1888, p. 8.

²³² Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid, *Manmat Parhar Arthat Sharadh Parbodh*, Anglo Gurmukhi Press, Second edition, 1905, p. 31.

created by Guru Gobind Singh in the place of *Holi* festival of Hindus.²³³ On this day, the Sikhs had to organise the religious *diwans* and listen the *Shabad Kirtan*.²³⁴ It was the result of awakening that at many places the Sikhs had started to celebrate the *Hola Mahalla* instead *Holi* festival.²³⁵ In 1906, Bhai Nihal Singh also wrote a booklet entitled *Amola Hola*, in which he writes about the celebration of *Hola Mahalla* at *Anadpur Sahib* by Guru Gobind Singh and the Sikhs.²³⁶ The *Khalsa Tract Society* also published a tract entitled *Holi Hai* which advocated that Sikhs had to remain aloof from celebrating *Holi* and inspired them not to celebrate it.²³⁷

The preaching of Sikh religion was one of the major motives of the newspaper. They published a variety of articles and historical fictions related to Sikh history with the aim to revive Sikh ethos and tradition. They also published articles full of heroic deeds of the Sikh martyrs for the cause of Sikh *Panth*. Similar, *Khalsa Akhbar* and *Khalsa Samachar* published heroic deeds of martyrs Tara Singh Van, Subeg Singh and Bhai Bota Singh²³⁸ and *Babe Bande Da Haal*²³⁹ respectively. They also kept a special column in their each issue for exposition of hymns of *Gurbani*. For instance, the *Khalsa Akhbar* had column under the title *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji De Updesh*. The *Khalsa* had column entitled *Expositions from Granth Sahib*. This newspaper also published Punjabi to English translation of *Asa Di Var*, *Rehras*, *Bachitar Natak and Kirtan Sohila*. The *Khalsa Samachar* had column entitled *Shri Guru Granth Sahib Vicho Danai De Akhar*²⁴⁰ and also had *Shri Guru Granth Sahib De Updesh*.

Through the mean or method of newspapers the Sikh intellectuals also endeavoured to abolish the social evils such as gambling, drinking and smoking prevalent in the Sikh society particularly in the rural tracts.²⁴¹ To stop the bad evil of

²³³ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 28 December, 1900, p. 5.

²³⁴ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 5 March, 1900, p. 4.

²³⁵ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 22 March, 1895, p. 6.

²³⁶ Bhai Nihal Singh, *Amola Hola*, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, 1906, pp. 30-31.

²³⁷ *Holi Hai*, Tract No. 171, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, pp. 32-34.

²³⁸ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 10 June, 1898, pp. 3-4. See also *The Khalsa Akhbar*, 24 February 1899, p. 4.

²³⁹ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 11 December, 1899, p. 5.

²⁴⁰ Before 1900, the *Khalsa Samachar* newspaper used the word *budhmata* in place of *Danai*, but the word *budhmata* was then considered by many related to *Budhism* so this word replaced with the word *Danai*. See *The Khalsa Samachar*, 2 April, 1900, p. 4.

²⁴¹ *Punjab Temperence Tract Arthat Sharab Ate Hor Nashiya Di Buryiana Da haal*, Coronation Printing Vercus, Amritsar, n.d. pp. 3-4.

gambling²⁴² the British Government also passed Public Gambling Act III in 1867, to provide punishment of public gambling and the keeping of common gaming houses.²⁴³ The newspaper stated about the degenerating effect of their use and make aware the masses that the result of this was race deterioration. By quoting the lines from *Prem sumarg*, they wanted that ignorant peoples must understand that the Sikh Gurus had strongly prohibited the use of all toxics.²⁴⁴ The newspapers also pleaded to the peoples that why they had been badly trapped in the evil of gambling and wasted their earnings on it but in place of it, they had must tried to do efforts for country's progress.²⁴⁵ Often in the newspapers, the demerits of the drinking²⁴⁶ and its bad effects on body were also given.²⁴⁷ The consumption of the intoxicants had increased so much in rural areas²⁴⁸ that an article entitled *Ki Singh Taraqi Kar Rhe Han?* reminded the Sikhs that if they did not make any endeavour to stop this social evil, then there would be no Sikh in coming of 100 or 50 years.²⁴⁹ They also requested to the Singh Sabhas, *updeshtaks* and *diwans* to do more efforts to eradicate this evil from society.²⁵⁰ They stated that the Sikhs had to hatred these bad customs if they wanted the progress of their *Panth* and become the son of Guru Gobind Singh.²⁵¹ Bhai Kahn Singh also wrote a book *Sharab Nishedh* in which he quotes the hymns of *Guru Granth Sahib* to awaken the Sikhs that the Sikh Gurus were also against this practice and also stated that instead of spending money on it; they had to use it for the progress

²⁴² "Several villages of Moga Tahsil and more particularly in the Nathuana Ilaqa the habit of gambling was prevalent to very great extent, the peoples have wasted and alienated their ancestral acres on account of this bad habit". See *Home/Judicial, Part A, Nos. 183-226*, 1918, pp. 12-13.

²⁴³ This act was applied only to the North-West Provinces and Oudh, Punjab, Central Provinces and Lower Burma. See *Home/Legislative, Part A, Nos. 3-5*, March, 1901. See also *The Public Gambling Act, 1867*, Lahore, 1934, p.1.

²⁴⁴ *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 15 September, 1904, p. 8.

²⁴⁵ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 30 October, 1886, p .4.

²⁴⁶ "Like every true religion, it taught abhorrence of the gross pleasures of life, but luxury increasing with the increase of wordly possessions, Sikhs became lax in their principles and then began a decay which has been going on since then. Drunking and debauchery for which the Sikhs have become proverbial in these days became a regular part of their lives and have clung so fast that it it no knowing when there will be an end of them." *The Khalsa Advocate*, 15 December, 1904, p. 3.

²⁴⁷ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 8 May, 1903, p. 8.

²⁴⁸ "The Malwa Sikh are large consumers of opium and *post*, while those of Majha have a great partiality for *bhang*, a Powerful stimulant extracted from wild hemp and foundness for these intoxicants was the cause of a good deal of the indebtedness of the Sikh agriculture class". A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, p. 122.

²⁴⁹ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 25 November, 1908, p .5.

²⁵⁰ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 14 December, 1908, p .7.

²⁵¹ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 1 April, 1904, p. 4.

of education among the Sikh *Panth*.²⁵² It was the result of these awakening activities by newspapers that many people had left this evil.²⁵³ Sardar Gajjan Singh introduced *Juvenile Smoking Bill* in Punjab Legislative Council on 19th April, 1916. The aim of this bill was to prevent children and young persons from smoking tobacco because this habit was increasing by leaps and bounds of late, particularly among the youngsters.²⁵⁴ *The Khalsa Samachar* also pleaded to the peoples of Punjab to support this bill, if they want the sound health of their children and save money.²⁵⁵ The *Chief Khalsa Diwan* also passed their resolution in support of this bill, so that this bad addiction would be eradicated among the students.²⁵⁶

The prevalence of un-Sikh practices related to marriage and death were also came under the reforming zeal of the Singh Sabha reformer. They wanted that the Brahman dominated and Hindunized rites of passage like birth, marriage and death should be replaced with simple ceremonies emphasizing the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The ceremony of singing dirty songs at the time of marriage by women which prevalent at that time also criticised by Sikh intellectuals.²⁵⁷ The newspaper urged the Sikh masses to make their efforts to remove this rite from Sikh society.²⁵⁸

The newspaper also urged the Sikhs to conduct the marriage of their children in accordance with *Anand* ceremony, instead of the Hindu rituals.²⁵⁹ They must not follow the caste prejudice at the time of solemnising marriage.²⁶⁰ They also awakened the Sikhs that they had to married their daughters in Sikh families only.²⁶¹ According to them, by this way the Sikh community would be progressed.²⁶² They were also awakened the Sikhs to follow the death ceremonies accordance with principles of

²⁵² Kahn Singh, *Sharab Nishedh*, 1907, pp. 4-5.

²⁵³ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 16 Febuary, 1895, p. 5.

²⁵⁴ *Home/ Judicial, Case No. 154-Judicial, Nos. 15-27*, June, 1916.

²⁵⁵ *The Khalsa Samachar*, 5 October, 1916, p. 2.

²⁵⁶ *Education Committee Di Nauvi Varshak Report Babat Saal, 1916-1917*, p. 23. See also *Education Committee Di Yarvi Varshak Report, 1918-1919*, Amritsar, pp. 23-24.

²⁵⁷ Babu Teja Singh, *Vihar Sudhar*, 1911, p. 117.

²⁵⁸ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 20 August, 1900, p.3. .See also *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 29 August, 1886, p. 2.

²⁵⁹ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 26 October, 1900, p. 6.

²⁶⁰ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 23 Febuary, 1901, p. 5.

²⁶¹ "How long shall we go on marrying our daughter to Hindus? A community not consisting of more than 2 million of peoples and still continuing to give its daughters to marriage to Hindus must in the near future cease to exist". See *The Khalsa*, Lahore, 23 Febuary, 1905, p. 5.

²⁶² *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 28 October, 1898, p. 3.

Sikh religion.²⁶³ The Sikhs had to shun Hindu-rites performed on the occasion of marriage and death. They substitute in their place those rites in which the name of One Almighty being chanted and praised. They taught them to abide by His will.²⁶⁴ The newspaper also welcomed and published with obvious joy and approval, the news about the performance of the rites of passage in Sikh families according to Sikh customs over against the traditional Brahmanical ways.²⁶⁵ Bhai Partap Singh also wrote a book in 1900 entitled *Khalsa Dharam Sanskar Bidhi* for this purpose, in which he describes the methods to do the birth, *amrit* and marriage ceremonies in accordance with Sikh religion.²⁶⁶ Bhai Thakur Singh Gyani through his work entitled *Gurmat Hulas* mentioned the Sikh ceremonies from birth to death according to Sikh scriptures like *Guru Granth Sahib*, writings of Bhai Gurdas and others.²⁶⁷ Later on, the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* also published *Gurmat Parkash Bhag Sanskar* in 1915 which was a treatise on the Sikh rituals and ceremonies beginning right from the early initiation of a child into Sikhism to the last march according to the doctrines of Sikh religion.

The caste system had no basis in Sikh religion but “change of times and under the influence of Hinduism”, the Sikhs had become victims of caste system which brought about a fall from the ideals of Sikh Gurus.²⁶⁸ The caste prejudices were again prevalent like plague in the Sikh society. This had become the base of all degradations whether religious, moral, social or political among the Sikhs.²⁶⁹ They also regretted that the peoples had boasted about their castes with pride and forget the blessings of Guru Gobind Singh, but they had to keep in mind that their dignity, honour, glory, supremacy had not due to their caste, but the result of Guru Gobind

²⁶³ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 28 October, 1898, p. 5. See also *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 26 October, 1900, p. 6.

²⁶⁴ *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 20 September, 1903, p. 8.

²⁶⁵ There were a number of news about the Sikhs had started to follow Sikh *Maryada* at the time of birth, marriage and death in *The Khalsa Akhbar*, 27 May, 1904, p. 7. See also *The Khalsa Samachar*, 12 Febuary, 1900, p. 7.

²⁶⁶ Bhai Partap Singh, *Khalsa Dharam Sanskar Bidhi*, Khalsa Press, Lahore, 1900.

²⁶⁷ Bhai Thakur Singh Gyani, *Gurmat Hulaas*, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, n.d.

²⁶⁸ “The obliteration of all arbitrary distinctions among the Sikhs had all along been the chief mission of our holy Gurus and the work so nobly carried on by the first nine Gurus reached a happy consummation at the hands of the tenth-Guru Gobind Singh Ji- who knocked the baneful system on the head by ordering the dining together of the five Beloved ones and thus laid the foundation of a great and glorious nation free from all ideas of inequalities and social disparities among its members”. See, *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 14 June, 1913, p. 2.

²⁶⁹ “The caste system, for the abolition of which our Gurus had to suffer so much, for he blowing up of which great conspiracy against the brotherhood of man, they had to sacrifice themselves and their all, unfortunately still exists amongst us”. See *The Khalsa*, Lahore, 14 March, 1900, p. 7.

Singh' grace on them.²⁷⁰ They also appealed to the Sikhs that they should treat the people as their brothers who had taken *Khande De Pahul*. They pleaded to the *Sardars* and *chiefs* of the Sikh *Panth* to do efforts to eradicate the caste distinctions from Sikh *Panth*.²⁷¹ Gyani Ditt Singh through his book entitled *Nakli Sikh Parbodh* advocated the Sikhs that caste distinctions should be eliminated from the Sikh society, because they were not ordained by the Sikh religion.²⁷²

It is well said that "one of the surest tests of the prosperity of a country is the state of its women".²⁷³ The Singh Sabha intellectual truly understand that that all ignorance in the Sikh society was only due to the lack of education. So, they utilize the newspaper as mean to awaken the Sikhs the importance of education among them. They considered that education had the paramount mean for the progress of nation among the other means. They awakened them to understand the importance of education and made efforts to achieve it²⁷⁴ because without it man's born in vain.²⁷⁵

The newspaper also became the best mean to awaken the Sikhs about the need of women education. They reminded the Sikhs that if they had not made any efforts to educate their women from now, then there would be no improvement in the Sikh society in the coming 50 years.²⁷⁶ They awakened the Sikh brother by saying that as we need a lot of other things for progress. Similarly, female education is the highest priority for country's progress. Any country or community cannot headway without it.²⁷⁷ They stated that if they would be educated, then they would read *Gurbani* and visited the *Gurdwaras*, instead of places like *marhi*, *masani* and *seetla* and brought their children on right path.²⁷⁸ They awakened that the female education is the great Herculean pillar, on which the structure of our national development would be raised. They advocated women must know how to read and write Punjabi language, arithmetic, mensuration, some knowledge of geography, history of India, the needle work and the culinary art.²⁷⁹ *The Khalsa Advocate* stated in this way, "the education of both males and females is a healthy sign in a progressive community. Education of

²⁷⁰ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, 24 November, 1899, p. 7

²⁷¹ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 7 June, 1905, p. 6.

²⁷² Gyani Ditt Singh, *Nakli Sikh Parbodh*, Amritsar, 1911, p. 83.

²⁷³ *Punjab District Gazetteers*, Volume XXIA, Gurdaspur District, 1914, Lahore, 1915, p. 46

²⁷⁴ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 25 December, 1886, p. 3.

²⁷⁵ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 18 December, 1886, p. 3.

²⁷⁶ *The Khalsa Samachar*, 16 December, 1908, p. 6.

²⁷⁷ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 6 November, 1886, p. 5.

²⁷⁸ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 18 August, 1899, p. 5.

²⁷⁹ *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 15 August, 1904, pp. 6-7.

males without the necessary training of females is just like to have one eye normal and other blind which not only looks ugly but keeps one side of a view quite hidden".²⁸⁰ They also stated that alongside with secular education, an equally good or even greater stress must lay upon religious education to the women. The ideal of the Sikh girl school should be in harmony with the great Sikh principles.²⁸¹

During this time, lack of education was not only the one social vice but also other like female infanticide, child marriage, *pardah* system was prevalent in the society. These social evils had made their roots deep and firm. These vices were not only responsible for miserable condition of women but also hindering the progress of Sikh community. The Sikh Gurus had given them equal social status but under the Hindu influence, the Sikh women were treated not worth more than a *Pair of Shoes*.²⁸² Accordingly, the Singh Sabha reformers not only tried to raise the status of women but also tried to eradicate the evil practice of female infanticide among the society.

It was reported that the "chief offenders of this custom were the *khatris*, more particularly the Bedis"²⁸³ and the "higher Rajputs, mostly of the hills and the Jats of Jalandhar district".²⁸⁴ According to A.J.O'Brien "poverty, desire for luxury may led to infanticide among the comparatively wealthy; fear of disgrace from the unmarried; while in some places due to a determination to get rid of weaklings were causes which lead to female infanticide".²⁸⁵ There were many way by which the newly born girls were put to death. For instance, "death by starvation, gulp of milk causing colic and exposure to extreme weather and strangulation".²⁸⁶ Often, "the infant was placed in a

²⁸⁰ *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 15 October, 1904, p. 3.

²⁸¹ *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 23 June, 1917, p.3.

²⁸² "Our women, too, have lost the little liberty and elevation of social position, which they secured through the benign influence of Sikhism and are once more brought down to the position of *Sudras* and slaves like Hindu women. They are looked down upon in some families where the Hindu influence prevails as not worth more than a pair of shoes which one can put on or discard at his pleasure". See, *The Khalsa*, Lahore, 14 March, 1900, p. 7.

²⁸³ "The crime of infanticide had become so notorious among the Bedies that they were generally known by the opprobrious title of *Kurimar* or "daughter-slayer". The religious pride and horror of giving a daughter to an inferior caste, not pecuniary considerations were the main causes which led them to adopt this unnatural custom". See, John Cave Browne, *Indian Infanticide: Its Origin, Progress, and Suppression*, London, 1857, pp. 114-115.

²⁸⁴ *Census of India, 1891*, Volume XIX., Calcutta, 1892, p. 219.

²⁸⁵ A.J.O' Brien, "Female Infanticide in the Punjab", *Folklore*, Vol. 19 No. 3, September 30, 1908, p. 262.

²⁸⁶ Satish K. Bajaj, "Status of Women in the Pre-Modern Punjab", *Punjab History Conference Proceeding*, Eighteenth Session, December 2-4, 1983, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 138.

Matt with a morsel of *Gur* and *puni* buried in ground”.²⁸⁷ By the mean of newspaper the intellectuals awakened the Sikhs that they should have kept no alliance with those families who follow this un-Sikh practice. They admired the British Government for their efforts to stop this practice with their stringent legislation.²⁸⁸ Frequently, the hymns of *Guru Granth Sahib* were also utilized to awaken the Sikhs to abandon this evil.²⁸⁹

The custom of child marriage prevalent at that time also tended to lower the status of women in Sikh society. During this time, it had become usual practice that the people had betroth their children in very early age.²⁹⁰ So by the mean of newspapers, the Sikhs were awakened about the demerits of child marriage. The newspaper also regretted that the Sikhs had abandoned the *Gurmaryada* of the Sikh Gurus and had started to marry their children at early age. They awakened them that the country would be progress, if the people educate their girls and teach them household work up to the age of 16 years and to educate and teach some craft to the boys up to 25 years.²⁹¹ They were also in the favour that the option of marriage to be allowed to women same way as to men.²⁹² Often the newspaper also appreciated the remarriage of child widow’s. They inspired others to follow these types of examples for the improvement of society.²⁹³ It is said that “the marriage ceremonies were so costly that a man was often incapable to pay for its expenditure all his life through”.²⁹⁴ They also awakened the Sikhs about the worthless extravagance on wedding and dowry in Sikh society.²⁹⁵ They suggested that dowry should be given to their daughters as much as they can afford without themselves going out of their way for this.²⁹⁶

In the end, we can say that the main motivation of the Singh Sabha movement was the search for Sikh identity and to bring back Sikhism to its original purity. To generate social-cultural and religious awakening among the Sikhs they used a number

²⁸⁷ Babu Teja Singh, *Vihar Sudhar*, 1911, p. 17. See also *The Civil Military Akhbar*, Koeta, 16 January 1907, p. 5.

²⁸⁸ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 27 October, 1899, p.7. See also *Home/ General, Part A, Nos. 16-17*, July 1901.

²⁸⁹ *The Khalsa Samachar*, 8 June, 1916, p. 6.

²⁹⁰ *Gazetteer of the Ferozepur District 1883-1884*, Lahore, p. 40.

²⁹¹ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 21 August 1886, p. 5.

²⁹² *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 15 July, 1904, p.5.

²⁹³ *The Khalsa Samachar*, Amritsar, 11 December, 1901, p .3.

²⁹⁴ R.E. Parry, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, London, 1921, p. 34.

²⁹⁵ *The Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, 21 August, 1886, p .4.

²⁹⁶ *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 15 July, 1904, p. 7.

of means like *Amrit parchar*, newspapers, handbills, tract societies, *updeshaks*, *jathas*, *gurpurbs* and religious *diwans*. Through their various means or methods, they motivated the Sikhs to give up un-Sikh practices that had appeared in Sikh society and go back to *Guru Granth Sahib*. This was also the historical background before the birth of Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh. The awakening activities of the movement not only reform the Sikh society but also exercised impact on the historians to write Sikh history with a new ideology. Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh was also the product of this milieu. This will be further discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER-III

LIFE, MOTIVES AND THE WORKS OF SELECTED HISTORIANS

E.H. Carr, a famous historian, in one of his lectures delivered at University of Cambridge from January 1961 to March 1961 entitled *The Historian and His Facts* had stated a most significant statement: “when we take up a work of history, our first concern should not be with the facts which it contained but with the historian who wrote that history”. It is necessary “to study the historian, before the facts”.¹ These statements facilitates us to delve into and understand the lives, motives and the historical works of Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod prior to evaluate their historical writings for the purpose of this research work. As the past could only be viewed and understood “through the eyes of the present”. So, every historian belongs and is bound to their age as well with their human existence. As E. H. Carr remarked that “the historian belongs not to the past but to the present”.² It is well known fact that every historian has their own style and methods to write history. It is also true that the personality of the historian, to a large extent, influences and determines his style of writings. It is well known that an author leaves the prints of his personality on the pages that he has written. P. Geyl in his *Debates with Historians* wrote that “history cannot be conceived, and it cannot be written or communicated except from a point of view, conditioned by the circumstances of the historians.”³ The early part of the 20th century introduced in Punjab an age of neo-revivalism in the Sikh society. This is also called the “age of awakening” for the Sikhs. Singh Sabha movement mobilized the Sikhs towards that awakening. Under the influence of this awakening *Singh Sabha School of Thought* was produced that also gave rise to Sikh scholars. Among many were Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh who later on became the legends in the Sikh scholarship.

Ganda Singh was a towering figure and most learned historian of Punjab, particularly of Sikh history. Often he was called as the doyen of Sikh history and a

¹ Edward Hallett Carr, *What is History?*, Macmillan & Co.Ltd, London, 1961, pp. 16-17.

² Ibid., p. 20.

³ Subodh Kumar Mukhopadhyay, *Evolution of Historiography in Modern India: 1900-1960*, K P Bagchi & Company, New Delhi, 1981, p. 39.

great Sikh historian. He was born on 15 November, 1900 at his maternal village, Hariana, an old town in Hoshiarpur district of Punjab. His parental home was in the village named Pur Hiran, which was also in Hoshiarpur district. His father Sardar Jawala Singh was a petty official in the Revenue Department of the British Punjab Government. The name of his mother was Hukam Devi.⁴ Ganda Singh was wedded to Amar Kaur also known as Inder Kaur. It is stated that he was the direct offspring of the *Faizalpuria Misal*.⁵ Ganda Singh completed his elementary education at the mosque of his birth-place Hariana.⁶ He gives the year 1907-1908, when he studied in the mosque Rajputan in Hariana⁷. His early education aroused his interest in Persian and Arabic languages. He passed his first examination from Government Primary School at Hariana. Then, he joined the local Government Middle School, but later, he went to the D.A.V. Middle School, Hariana (Hoshiarpur) and passed his Middle standard examination. In this school, Ganda Singh acquired the knowledge of Hindi language from Pandit Sundar Lal. Then, in 1917 for his ninth class, he joined the Government High School, Hoshiarpur. He passed his Matriculation in 1919 from this school. At this time, Ganda Singh also learnt Sanskrit language. During his school days, he had only two hobbies- Hockey and History. After passing his Matriculation, his first choice was to join the Khalsa College, Amritsar but his financial circumstances did not allow him. Finally, he took admission for his F.A. study in the Forman Christian College at Lahore. Father Eoning was the principal of the college. Ganda Singh was able to pass the examination of Bible and succeeded in getting a scholarship of twelve rupees per month.⁸ However, he joined the Indian army in the Third Afghan War in 1919 on the post of Supply and Transport Corps Base Depot at Rawalpindi and later in the Divisional Supplies at Peshawar, which interrupted his study. From 1920 to 1921 he served the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force, first in the Indian Base Depot at Makina (Basra) and later, at the Base Supply Depot at Margil (Basra). In 1921 he joined the Royal Army Pay Corps, British Army at Basra.

⁴ According to Dr. Mohinder Singh, the name of Ganda Singh's mother was Hukam Bibi.

Whenever they met her, they called her *Bibi Ji*. This information given to me by this scholar on 23 October, 2020 during a conversation about Ganda Singh on Mobile Phone.

⁵ Pratap Singh, "Dr. Ganda Singh – A Rare Historian", *The Sikh Review*, December 1988, Calcutta, p. 54.

⁶ Ganda Singh, *Aligarh Muslim University in 1942-1944- A Reminiscence*, File No. 854, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala. p. 8.

⁷ *File No.137*, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

⁸ Gurcharan Singh, "Ganda Singh Ik Sda Bahar Prerna" in *Doctor Ganda Singh (Ik Adhiain)*, Punjabi Vibhag, Punjab (Patiala), 1963, pp. 38-40.

At Basra, during his job, he was also the joint secretary of Gurudwara. In Mesopotamia, he got shot in the thigh while saving the life of his comrade in the battlefield. Although warned against that, he was lucky enough to survive and bring back his friend alive. When he recovered from the wound, he returned home for a brief time.

In 1921, he left the military services. For almost nine years from 1921 to 1930, he joined the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in Iran as an Accounts Officer. In the Christmas week of December 1930, he returned from Persia to India. His first thought was to settle down at Lahore. He joined Giani Hira Singh's *Phulwari*, a Punjabi journal of Lahore as Joint Editor in January 1931 that was dedicated to Punjabi letters and history. However, he left Lahore in May 1931 due to health issues. Then, he went to his village Pur Hiran.⁹ At that time, his works in Sikh history attracted the notice of the authorities of the Khalsa College, Amritsar. He was appointed the editor of the *Khalsa Advocate* on 20 October 1931. He was also designated as the Research Scholar in Sikh history in the newly organized *Sikh History Research Department* of the college. This offer proved to be a life changing event for him. But this scheme could not work well as Ganda Singh wrote, "the work of research in history at the college and of editing a weekly paper in the office of the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* near the Majithia House at a distance of about two miles was not an agreeable combination." Therefore, he was relieved of his editorial work from the first week of December 1931. Now, he was freed to devote his undivided attention to research in Sikh history.¹⁰ He also served the Khalsa College, Amritsar as Head of the Research Department from 1933 to 1949 and also Lecturer in Divinity and History. He was also the Lecturer in Military Science from 1944 to 1949.¹¹

From the first day of his appointment to the *Sikh History Research Department*, Ganda Singh decided to collect all the historical material rare, old, out of print, biographical, manuscripts and journals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries related to Punjab history and Sikh history. He made vigorous endeavor to

⁹ Ganda Singh (Ed. & Annotated), *Bhagat Lakshman Singh Autobiography*, The Sikh Cultural Centre, Calcutta, 1965, p. III.

¹⁰ Ganda Singh, *A History of the Khalsa College, Amritsar*, Amritsar, 1949, p. 109.

¹¹ Devinder Kumar Verma and Jasmer Singh, *A Biobibliography of Dr Ganda Singh*, Aman Publishing House, Rajpura Town (Punjab), First Edition, 1989, p. 4.

collect all the available manuscripts in different languages on the history of the Punjab from the various libraries' particularly at "Rampur (U.P), Patna, Hyderabad, Deccan and Poona". He placed all that material in the Research Department of the Khalsa College, Amritsar.¹² From 1920 to 1972, Ganda Singh visited Iraq, Persia, Peshawar, Abadan, Afghanistan, Karachi, Pakistan, Malaysia, Singapore, Uzbekistan, Moscow, Leningrad, Canada, U.S.A, England and London in search of the sources.¹³ He also collected historical books and manuscripts from England, Germany, France, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and other countries. It is also necessary to mention here that he donated his personal collections of maps, rare books, manuscripts and documents to Punjabi University, Patiala. He was also In-Charge of N.C.C. Unit of the Khalsa College, Amritsar.¹⁴ During this time, he achieved Bachelor of Arts Degree from the Panjab University, Lahore as a private student.

In 1941, Ganda Singh with Bawa Prem Singh Hoti established *Sikh History Society* with the aim to write and promote Sikh history.¹⁵ In 1944, he did his Master of Arts Degree in the discipline of History from the Muslim University, Aligarh as a regular student with first division. He had chosen this institution due to Professor Muhammad Habib was there. But also, in the words of Ganda Singh, "one of the greatest attractions for me in the Aligarh Muslim University was its rich repository of the manuscripts". In the words of Ganda Singh, which he wrote on 16-01-1971, "July 15, 1942 was an historic and memorable day in my life. It was on that day that in my forty-first year I joined Aligarh Muslim University as a student for a Master's Degree in History. While making this decision, I had to choose between St. Xavier's College (Bombay University) and the Aligarh Muslim University. I looked upon both places as outstanding centres of learning and had great regard for some of their teachers whom I know personally, especially Professor H. Heras, S.J., the Head of the History Department at Bombay and Professor Muhammad Habib at Aligarh. I finally chose Aligarh – a choice which I thought was an entirely happy one." He further wrote that in this course, he secured a "first division topping the list of candidates for the M.A.

¹² Ganda Singh, "Inaugural Address", *Punjab History Conference Proceeding*, 15th Session, 13-15 March, 1981, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 3.

¹³ File No. 137, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

¹⁴ *Dr. Ganda Singh Souvenir* issued at the time of the presentation of a festschrift entitled *Punjab Past and Present: Essays in Honour of Dr Ganda Singh* on November 27, 1976, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 8.

¹⁵ *The Panj Dariya*, Lahore, March 1941, pp. 15-16.

examination in History in the year 1944". In the words of Shaikh Abdur Rashid, this was "a rare distinction in this University won after 19 years".¹⁶ Here, he also took copious notes from Persian manuscripts on the eighteenth century history of Punjab.

In 1949 he came to Patiala, where he worked on very significant positions. From 14 February 1956 to 2 March 1956, he acted as the Director of Archives and Curator of Museum at Patiala. His appointment as the director of PEPSU archives widened the field of his activities. At this place, he rendered great service to the cause of history by saving the records of the princely states. Simultaneously, from 1950 to 1953 he was the Director of the Punjabi Department of Patiala and East Punjab State Union. He also acted as Deputy Secretary to Government of PEPSU from 1 July 1950 to February 1953. In 1954 he was awarded Ph.D degree on the topic *Ahmad Shah Durrani* by Panjab University, Chandigarh. He was Office-in-Charge of Central Public Library at Patiala from 10 February 1956 to 31 October 1956. In the meantime, he also joined the Rotary Club of Patiala in 1952. He was elected its president for the year 1958-1959.¹⁷ He was the editor of *Seva Chakra*, Bulletin of the Rotary Club of Patiala.¹⁸ In 1959 he joined *The Singh Sabha, Patiala* as a member.¹⁹ After his retirement from the PEPSU Government services, he served the Khalsa College, Patiala from 1 June 1960 to 15 September 1963 as the Honorary Founder Principal and Professor of History. It should be noted that while in the Khalsa College, Patiala as Principal, he refused to accept any salary. His nexus to Khalsa College, Patiala broke, when the authorities of Punjabi University, Patiala invited him to organize for it a *Department of Punjab Historical Studies*. He worked as Director of this department from 16 September, 1963 to 15 September 1966.²⁰ This post at Punjabi University, Patiala was confirmed "a fitting reward for the great work he had done in the sphere of research in the history of the Punjab". This department was set up with avowed "object of intensifying researches into the regional history in order to present

¹⁶ Ganda Singh, *Aligarh Muslim University in 1942-1944- A Reminiscence*, pp. 1-8.

¹⁷ Partap Singh Kaintel, "With Pen and Tongue he Served Us", *The Seva Chakra Rotary Club*, Vol. X, No.8, April 1963, Patiala, p.14.

¹⁸ File No. 137, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University Patiala.

¹⁹ Dharminder Singh Ubha (Chief Editor), *Khalsa College, Patiala (1960 to 2010) Mudd To Hun Tak*, Khalsa College, Patiala, 2010, p. 33.

²⁰ Ganda Singh, "Inaugural Address", *Punjab History Conference Proceeding*, Fifteenth Session, 13-15 March, 1981, pp. 4-5.

a complete and coherent account of the past”.²¹ Furthermore, Ganda Singh started the *Punjab History Conference* in 1965. In the words of Ganda Singh this conference “has been broad based on the lines of the Indian History Congress to include in its scope the ancient, the medieval and the modern periods of the history of the Punjab so as to make it a forum for all earnest students and scholars of history to meet their co-workers, to discuss their problems and to benefit from experience of others.”²² Another purpose, was “promoting the study and research in the history of the Punjab”.²³ This was not enough for him. He also suggested his idea of “occasionally holding international conference of scholars” interested in the history of Punjab.²⁴ He started *The Panjab Past and Present*, bi-annual journal of international rank in 1967. In its first issue, Ganda Singh throws light on the object of the journal that this was devoted “to the history and culture of India, with particular emphasis on the Punjab”. Its main object was “to encourage the study of and research on the subjects in its aspects from the pre-historic past to the present day”.²⁵ The name of the Journal was borrowed from the Journal of Bengal (Calcutta) named *Bengal Past and Present*.²⁶ After his retirement from this post, Punjabi University, Patiala’s authority in recognition of his outstanding work in the field of Punjab historical research decided to confer him Honorary Research Fellowship.²⁷ He also welcomed the idea of starting

²¹ Gurbux Singh, “Preface”, *Punjab History Conference Proceeding*, Third Session, 9-10 March, 1968, p. III.

²² Ganda Singh, “Welcome Address”, *Punjab History Conference Proceeding*, Second Session, 28-30 October, 1967, p. 192. However, the starting of the conference was “an old dream” of Ganda Singh that was become in reality. It was in 1925 when Ganda Singh had an idea of the establishment of a *Historical Research Society*, when he was in Persian Gulf. This idea was forward by him in his another work in 1928. See Ganda Singh, “Welcome Address” of *Punjab History Conference Proceeding* Seventh Session, 29-30 September, 1972, p. 1. Again, he suggested the idea of annual conference of those who were interested in Punjab History to Giani Hira Singh Dard in a note dated 14 October 1930. But nothing came out of it. Though in 1945 *Sikh History Society* was established at Amritsar. But due to lack of financial support, this society had suspended its activities in the early fifties of twentieth century. By this way the idea of a conference remained dormant till 1964. See Ganda Singh, “Introduction”, *Punjab History Conference Proceeding*, First Session, November 12-14, 1965, p.7

²³ Ganda Singh, “Inaugural Address”, *Punjab History Conference Proceeding*, Eighteenth Session, December 2-4, 1983, p. 4.

²⁴ Ganda Singh, “Welcome Address”, *Punjab History Conference Proceeding*, Fifteenth Session, March 13-15, 1981, p. 3.

²⁵ Ganda Singh, “Editorial”, *Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. 1, Part 1, Serial 1, April 1967, p.1.

²⁶ Devinder Kumar Verma, “Doctor Ganda Singh Ji- The Panjab Past and Present Rasale De Sansthapak”, *Punjab History Conference Proceeding*, Twenty-Two Session, Part 1, 25-27 March, 1988, p. 93.

²⁷ File No. 267, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

a *History Society* at Patiala. Fauja Singh was its Permanent Secretary. The society was founded with two objectives. These are: “(1) search for fresh historical evidence in every form, viz. archeological, archival, oral, etc., and evaluation of the existing works of history especially those related to the Punjab history (2) organizing the seminars, lectures and discussions on the basis of original research and to publish the results thereof”.²⁸ In 1968, he became the first Principal of the Gurmat College, Patiala where he devoted his services free of remunerations.²⁹

Now the question arises, how Ganda Singh got attracted towards the Sikh history? Was it his passion or impacted by others? In fact, there were so many factors, which influenced the young Ganda Singh’s mind toward Sikh studies. It should be noted that in his teen age, he also had some interest in poetry. This was reflected from his poem entitled *Sanu Khich Hai Ik Mahboob Wali, Asi Gali Prem Di Chalian Ni*. This poem appeared in *The Pritam* monthly magazine of the year 1925.³⁰ Even Ganda Singh translated the Persian work *Saif-ul-Maluk* (This is a famous folk tale written by Mian Muhammad Bakhsh) into Punjabi language. It will be useful to recall that when Ganda Singh started writing in his young age he used the pen-name *Kewal*, but later he dropped it. Gurcharan Singh suggested that Ganda Singh used the surname *Kewal*, because he wanted to become a poet, but soon he felt his passion for history and left this surname.³¹ His father Sardar Jawala Singh was also a good student of history. One of the elders from his maternal family was a part of the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh that had conquered Lahore in 1799.³² From his childhood days, he was inspired by the stories of the campaigns of Maharaja Ranjit Singh that were narrated to him by his grandmother. It is said that the ancestors of Ganda

²⁸ The first meeting, for the starting of this society was convened by Fauja Singh with the scholars and teachers of history at Patiala at the residence of Dr Ganda Singh on 6th April, 1968. That was welcomed by one and all. This society also decided that there should be regular monthly meetings of the society on a fixed day. They also decided the monthly meeting have been held regularly either at the *Punjab State Archive* or at the *Central Public Library* in Patiala. In each meeting, a research paper was presented by some scholars. Fauja Singh, “History Society, Patiala”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol.5, Part II, October 1971, p. 454.

²⁹ File No, 137, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala

³⁰ *The Pritam*, Vol .5, No. 2, March 1925, Amritsar, p.16. See also File No.564, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

³¹ Gurcharn Singh, “ Ganda Singh Ik Sda Bahar Prerna”, *Doctor Ganda Singh (Ik Adhiain)*, p. 45. See also Shiromani Sikh Ithaskar Dr.Ganda Singh Nu Sanman, *Chardikala Marg*, Patiala, 22 November 1979, File No. 240, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

³² Gurcharan Singh, “Ithaskaar Dr. Ganda Singh”, *Doctor Ganda Singh (Ik Adhiain)*, p.87.

Singh's grandmother had served in the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.³³ The tales of the 18th centuries Sikh heroes, their brave achievements and sacrifices made a deep impression on the imagination of Ganda Singh. Moreover, the history of eighteenth century Punjab became in the words of Ganda Singh "my special field of study".³⁴ We can assume that Ganda Singh learned the ability of perseverance towards Sikh history as an inheritance from his elders.

During his School days, two personalities from the Government High School, Hoshiarpur, aroused his interest in the subject of history. The first was Headmaster of the school Jemaj Marr and the second one was Master Bhagwan Das.³⁵ Ganda Singh began to read a number of historical works and chronicles in order to know about great Sikh heroes and saints. Ganda Singh's life's this period can be called the beginning of his curiosity in the Sikh scholarship. At Abadan, he came in contact with Sir Arnold T. Wilson who was the General Manager of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company at Maohammerah. He was a good scholar of Arabic and Persian languages. At that time, he was engaged with working on the *Bibliography of Persia*. He inspired Ganda Singh's curiosity in the oriental studies and also initiated him to learn Persian language. And Ganda Singh succeeded in the mission of learning Persian language and astonished Arnold T. Wilson.³⁶ It should be noted that from him Ganda Singh received an inspiration to prepare *Bibliography of the Punjab*. It is also said that Ganda Singh was "the finest product of Singh Sabha movement and its educational and intellectual renaissance".³⁷ The emancipating urge generated by this movement excited his "spirit of enquiry". Accordingly it can be right to say that he was attracted to Sikh studies in the wake of renaissance among the Sikhs in the early part of the twentieth century. Ganda Singh accepted Bhai Vir Singh, the prominent personality of Singh Sabha movement as a "source of inspiration and solace". Ganda Singh's vision of Sikh history is greatly shaped by "the historical novels of Bhai Vir Singh such as

³³ Devinder Kumar Verma and Jasmer Singh, *A Biobibliography of Dr Ganda Singh*, p. 3.

³⁴ Ganda Singh, *Aligarh Muslim University in 1942-1944- A Reminiscence*, p. 8.

³⁵ Jeet Singh Jeetal, "Jiwan Te Ghaal", *Doctor Ganda Singh (Ik Adhiain)*, p. 5.

³⁶ Deepinder Kaur, "Dr. Ganda Singh-My Grandfather", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XXII-II, Serial No. 44, October 1988, p. 222.

³⁷ Nazer Singh, "Our National Historian Dr Ganda Singh", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XXII-II, Serial No. 44, October 1988, p. 86. See also File No. 666, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

Bijai Singh and Sundari". Obviously, under the influence of such contemporary writings that Ganda Singh decided to write on 18th century Punjab history. It is suggested that Bhai Vir Singh's writings in his newspaper *Khalsa Samachar* provided themes to Ganda Singh to write "on the history of Punjab in the late eighteenth century and early twentieth century".³⁸ He was much inspired by Karam Singh Historian, who was the "first to undertake the study of Punjab history, particularly Sikh history seriously and scientifically".³⁹ It was Ganda Singh's aim to work with Karam Singh Historian but before he could meet him, the later had died on 10 September, 1930. Ganda Singh had great appreciation for Karam Singh's "interest in empirical evidence and his open minded research".⁴⁰ In other words, Ganda Singh carried forward the tradition of "systematic historiography" started by Karam Singh Historian.⁴¹ During his six month stay at Lahore, Ganda Singh frequently met Bhagat Lakshman Singh who was a "devoted social worker and educationist".⁴² For the first time, Ganda Singh met Bhagat Lakshman Singh on the programme of anniversary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Lahore organized by the *Sikh History Society*. It should be noted that when in 1931, he returned from Iran, it was with the inspiration and efforts of Bhagat Lakshman Singh that he had joined the *Sikh History Department* of Khalsa College, Amritsar.⁴³ We are also told that it was Bhagat Lakshman Singh who had wrote a letter to Kishan Singh, Principal of Khalsa College, Amritsar, that it will be very beneficial to include Ganda Singh in the mission of Khalsa College for Sikh history. The writings of Karam Singh Historian, Bhagat Lakshman Singh and Bhai Vir Singh had deep impact on Ganda Singh's mind. These writers were also

³⁸ Nazer Singh, "Our National Historian Dr Ganda Singh", *The Panjab Past and Present*, pp.80-81. See also Kirpal Singh, "Historical Significance of Bhai Vir Singh's Sundari and Other Works", *The Sikh Review*, Vol. 43:7, July 1995, Calcutta, p. 47.

³⁹ Devinder Kumar Verma, "Dr Ganda Singh as Disposer of Historical controversies", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XXII-II, October 1988, p. 40.

⁴⁰ Ganda Singh, "Editorial", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. IV, Part 2, October 1970, pp. I-II. See also Kirpal Singh & Kharak Singh (ed.), *The Guru Period (1469-1708 CE)*, Vol.1, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Sri Amritsar, Second Edition 2012, p. XVIII. See also, J.S. Grewal, *Contesting Interpretations of the Sikh Tradition*, Manohar Publisher & Distributors, New Delhi, 1998, p. 84.

⁴¹ Farewell Address to Dr Ganda Singh M.A., PH.D, D.Litt., Director of Department of Punjab Historical Studies, at the time of his retirement from the Punjabi University, Patiala. See File No. 267, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

⁴² Ganda Singh (Ed.& Annotated), *Bhagat Lakshman Singh Autobiography*, p. III.

⁴³ Ganda Singh, *Banda Singh Bahadur*, Sikh Ithaas Research Board, Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 2016, p. 14.

associated with Singh Sabha movement. We can say that Ganda Singh continued the process of writing Sikh history like the above scholars by taking inspiration from the ideology of Singh Sabha movement.

It should be noted that “the inter-religious polemic which raged in the Punjab in early part of the 20th century also stirred Ganda Singh’s mental curiosity towards Sikh history. He had started reading Sikh literature. The stories of the 18th centuries Sikh heroes, their spirit of brave deeds and sacrifices had left a deep impression on his mind. This was all responsible for his origin of interest in Sikh scholarship”.⁴⁴ We are also told that “the last factor, but not least, was the impact of the colonial rule, which contributed to Punjab’s self-awareness. The colonial rule brought in the Punjab an educational system with western subject matter and supplied fresh modes for organizations, literary efforts, historiography and ideological debate. The intellectual challenges inherent in the new milieu soon led the western-educated Punjabis to re-examine their traditions and civilization”.⁴⁵ It is right to say that all these factors awakened Ganda Singh’s mind towards Sikh history. Consequently, Sikh history became his lifelong passion.

What was the year, when Ganda Singh started his research mission? Bakhshish Singh, editor of the *Mauji* has said that Ganda Singh from the very young age in 1916 had started to send articles in the weekly English newspaper titled *The Sikhs and Sikhism* edited by Sohan Singh from Lahore.⁴⁶ He also wrote that he had written a couple of articles for the *Haq* edited by Sh. Abdul Aziz from Lahore in 1918. His first booklet entitled *My First Thirty Days in Mesopotamia* was written at Basra in 1921.⁴⁷ It can be said that he has a rare combination of “pen and rifle- the scholar and soldier”. In fact, he had started his career as a historian in the trenches of the Middle East during the First Great war. It seemed that the desire to take up historical research in a more systematic method brought Ganda Singh back to India.

⁴⁴ Harbans Singh, “Dr Ganda Singh- The Historian of the Punjab”, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, 28 March, 1964, pp.1-2.

⁴⁵ Harbans Singh and N.G. Barrier (ed.), *Essays in Honour of Dr Ganda Singh*, Punjabi University, Patiala, Second Edition, 1996, p. XIX.

⁴⁶ Bakhshish Singh Editor ‘Mauji’, “Patarkar Ganda Singh”, *Doctor Ganda Singh (Ik Adhiain)*, p. 58. From this source, it is appeared that Ganda Singh’s research mission when he was 16 years old.

⁴⁷ According to Ganda Singh, copies of some of these articles published in various newspapers, that he had kept came to be destroyed at his village during his absence from India during 1920-1930. See *List of Books and Papers on Historical Subjects by Ganda Singh*, File No. 564, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

He himself wrote that while in Persia, he had written two books the *Inkishaf –i-Haqiqat* (1926) in Urdu and the *Sikhi Parchar* (1928) in Punjabi language.⁴⁸ In Iran, he wrote his first books in Punjabi, Urdu and Hindi languages, which were published in Punjab. *Sikhi Parchar* was his first work in Punjabi. *Inkishaf –i-Haqiqat wa Dayanandi Tehzib aur Sikh Mazhab* was his first work in Urdu language. In Hindi language, he wrote two books (1) *Baisakhi Ka Khalsa Sandesh* and (2) *Guru Gobind Singh Ke Sahibjadan Ke Jivan Birtant*. Both of these were published in 1930. In 1925, his article entitled *Satguru Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj Di Aduti Kurban* appeared in *The Pritam*, the monthly magazine from Amritsar.⁴⁹ In 1929, *Sikh Tract Society* of Lahore published another work entitled *Bhai Gurdas: His Life and Work*. However, Ganda Singh believed that his two essays *The Last days of Maharaja Kharak Singh and Kanwar Nau-Nihal Singh* and *A Bibliography of Sikh History*, which were published in the *Sikh Itihas* Number of *Phulwari*, winning for him the first prize made him prominent name among the Sikh historians.⁵⁰ The first paper was in Punjabi language entitled as *Maharaja Kharak Singh Te Kanwar Nau-Nihal Singh Di Maut De Akhi Dithay Hal*. The second was a bibliography entitled as *Bibliography of Sikh Religion and Historical Literature*.⁵¹ Ganda Singh wrote these papers in Abadan (Iran), because in the *Phulwari* Journal his name appeared as Ganda Singh Ji ‘Kewal’- Abadan (Iran). It can be right to say that the *Sikh Itihas* Number of *Phulwari* of December 1929 to January 1930 marked the first noteworthy achievement of Ganda Singh’s research mission.

What were the motives of Ganda Singh to write Sikh history? Did he want to propagate the authentic history of the Sikhs? Did he take Sikh history as a theme of his lifelong research mission for his passion to become a historian like his predecessor Karam Singh Historian? It seemed that he had from a very tender age written about Sikh history due to his love and devotion to the Sikh religion.⁵² It can be assumed that from 1925, he felt the need to propagate about Sikhism in India and abroad. It is reflected from his work *Sikhi Parchar Di Zarurat* which was appeared in the issue of

⁴⁸ Ganda Singh, *A History of the Khalsa College, Amritsar*, p. 108.

⁴⁹ *The Pritam*, Vol.5, No. 4, April 1925, Amritsar, pp. 23-26.

⁵⁰ Ganda Singh, *A History of the Khalsa College, Amritsar*, p. 109.

⁵¹ *Phulwari*, Sikh Itihas Number, Lahore, Vol. 5 & 6, 1929.

⁵² Bakhshish Singh Editor ‘Mauji’, ‘Patarkar Ganda Singh’, *Doctor Ganda Singh (Ik Adhiain)*, p. 58.

Sher-i-Punjab, Lahore on 22 August, 1925 in Urdu language.⁵³ In 1926, he wrote a pamphlet entitled *Inkishaf-i-Haqiqat* in Urdu language. This was published by *Sikh Tract Society* of Lahore under the tract No. 9. In this work Ganda Singh refuted the allegations of Swami Dayanand that he made in his book *Satyarth Parkash* against Guru Nanak and other Sikh Gurus. In the same year 1926, he wrote article *Dharmik Parchar Di Lorh*, published in *The Panjab* magazine on 25 October 1926.⁵⁴ In 1928, he also wrote a book under the title *Sikhi Parchar* of 100 pages at Abadan (Iran) but got it published in Amritsar (Punjab). The aim to write this book, in the words of Ganda Singh was: “it is a request to Sikhs particularly *Diwans*, Singh Sabhas, the chiefs of *Akali Jathas* and *updeshaks*, *granthis* and *raghis* to read this book and make efforts to propagate the Khalsa religion.” To achieve this target, Ganda Singh advocated various means like the establishment of *Sarbat Khalsa Conference*, Sikh Missionary Society i.e. *Shiromani Khalsa Parcharak Dal*, Sikh Historical Research Committee and also a Sikh Library.⁵⁵

Ganda Singh was not only a scholar of Sikh history, but was also its great propagator and even preached his views about Sikh history in the religious and educational functions. For some time, Ganda Singh also attended the campus of Sikh students at various places and gave lectures on different topics of Sikh history.⁵⁶ He also delivered lectures in the *diwans* of *Sikh History Society*, which were organized on the occasion of special days of Sikh history.⁵⁷ Pratap Singh, the pupil of Ganda Singh, has said that on *Gurpurb* days, Ganda Singh used “to explain the significance of the particular day from the history’s point of view during the celebrations in Khalsa College’s *Gurdwara*”.⁵⁸

He wanted to write Sikh history with a scientific approach. In this regard, Karam Singh Historian was his predecessor. In other words, his chief purpose was “researching and re-writing the history of the Sikhs”. His purpose was also to dispose the historical controversies (He began this in 1926 when he wrote a work entitled

⁵³ His Another articles- (1) *Guru Nanak Sahib Ka Alamgir Mission Ishyat Ki Zarurat* appeared in *Akali* newspaper on 28 December 1925 (Urdu) (2) *Rahit –i- Haqiq Ka Wahid Paigamber*, in *Sher – i- Panjab*, Lahore on 8 November 1925 (Urdu) (3) *Akali Satguru Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj: Ek Lasani Qurbani* also appeared in *Sher-i-Punjab*, Lahore on its April 1925 issue in Urdu language.

⁵⁴ *List of Books and Papers on Historical Subject By Dr Ganda Singh*, File No. 564, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

⁵⁵ Ganda Singh, *Sikhi Parchar*, Amritsar, 1928, pp. 38-55.

⁵⁶ Fauja Singh Bajwa, “Ithaskar Doctor Ganda Singh”, *Doctor Ganda Singh (Ik Adhiain)*, pp. 50-51.

⁵⁷ File No. 314, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

⁵⁸ Pratap Singh, “Dr. Ganda Singh – A Rare Historian”, *The Sikh Review*, December 1988, p. 54.

Inkishaf-i-Haqiqat in Urdu language) and to give object account on the basis of the primary sources. In fact, his scholarship provided the Sikhs “a new sense of identity”. As Khushwant Singh wrote, “no scholar living or dead has done so much in making the Sikh community conscious of its glorious past and the great traditions of the Khalsa *Panth* as Ganda Singh.”⁵⁹

We are told that though his major works appeared after independence i.e.1947, yet the content of his works was based on “the interests pursued in the colonial period”.⁶⁰ He prepared a number of bibliographies. In fact, his interest in this field was started in 1919 at Abadan.⁶¹ In Abadan, he was influenced by Arnold T. Wilson’s *Bibliography of the Persia*. This encouraged him to prepare a bibliography of Punjab history. After nearly fifty years of his efforts, his *Bibliography of Punjab* came out in 1966, published by Punjabi University, Patiala. He also wrote other bibliographies like *A Bibliography of the Patiala and East Punjab States Union* (1954), *A Select Bibliography on Sikhs and Sikhism* (1965) and also *Bibliography of Guru Nanak* (1969). Ganda Singh also prepared the bibliographical information about the Sikhs in Canada and California under the title *The Sikhs in Canada and California: a Bibliography*. He prepared this during his six-week visit to these countries from 28 October - 9 December, 1969. According to Ganda Singh the inspiration to prepare this type of bibliography came from a letter of his friend, Dr. Kerar Singh of Tofield, Alberta. In the letter he wrote, “most of the materials on the history of the Sikhs in Canada are available in Vancouver.”⁶²

But before the publication of his all above mentioned bibliographies, Ganda Singh’ scholarship had become widely known to the Indian academic world with his another works. It had become for Ganda Singh a continued job to write the biographical sketches of memorable Sikh leaders and heroes, especially from

⁵⁹ *Dr Ganda Singh Souvenir*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1976, p. 15. See File no. 137, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

⁶⁰ J.S.Grewal, *Historical Writings on the Sikhs (1784-2011)*, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 2012, p. 444.

⁶¹ Later on this was became his lifelong mission. He awakened the scholars about the need of more comprehensive bibliography of the Punjab and also analytical bibliographies of different subjects in history, economics and political science. See Ganda Singh, “Welcome Address”, *Punjab History Conference Proceeding*, Seventh Edition, 29-30 September, 1972, p. 8.

⁶² File No. 854, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

eighteenth century. He also wrote some biographies of non – Sikh personalities of important and political men associated with the past of the Punjab history. It is very interesting to note that Ganda Singh’s approach from the time, when he had started writing in the year 1925 was biographical. It remained so right up to 1969 i.e. the year in which his last major biography of *Jassa Singh Ahluwalia* (1969) appeared on the scene. His other biographical works are *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur* (1935), *Maharaja Kaura Mal Bahadur* (1942), *Sardar Sham Singh Attariwala* (1946), *Ahmad Shah Durani* (1959 this was his Doctoral Thesis), *Banda Singh Bahadur* (1965). He wrote a number of books in English and Punjabi languages on the themes of Sikh history. These are *Guru Nanak: His Life and Teachings* (1940), *Sikh Ithas Bare* (1942), *Sikh Ithas Val* (1946), *A Brief Account of the Sikh People* (1956), *The Sikhs and Sikhism* (1959), *A Brief Account of the Sikhs* (1956) and *A Short History of the Sikhs* (1950). This book Ganda Singh wrote jointly with Teja Singh. Besides, these works in Punjabi and English language, Ganda Singh also edited in Urdu and Persian language primary sources. For instance, in 1949, he wrote *Makhiz-i-Tawarikh-i-Sikhan, Araq-i-Parishan, Mukhtasar Nanak Shahi Jantri*, which was useful as tool for comparative chronology. He also edited *Awraq-i-Persian-i-Tawarik-i-Panjab*. This was an account of the conquest of Multan, Peshawar and Kashmir and the annexation of Mankera by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It also talked about the states of affairs from the murder of Dhian Singh up to Hazara affair. Apart from this Ganda Singh also translated, edited and annotated certain significant sources of the Punjab History.

Ganda Singh was honored by many institutions of the country for his contribution in the field of Sikh scholarship. The Government of Punjab honored him on 31 March, 1963 with the *Punjab State Award* for his service to the cause of Punjabi Language and literature. *The Rotary Club* of Patiala also honored him in 1963. In 1964, *Sikh Ithas Research Board* in its first *Sikh Ithas Samelan* in 1964 awarded Ganda Singh “*The Role of Honour*”.⁶³ On 28 March, 1964 *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee* honored him for his monumental work on Sikh history. On 19 December, 1964 the Muslim University, Aligarh conferred him the honorary degree of D.Litt. (*Honoris Causa*) for his work in the field of research. He

⁶³ File No. 236, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

was similarly acclaimed by the *Sikh Education Conference* at its 52nd annual session at Kanpur on 25-27 October, 1974. On 25 February, 1978 Punjabi University, Patiala conferred him degree of D.Litt. (*Honoris Causa*). In 1981, Ganda Singh awarded with the *Macauliffe Award* for his outstanding research on the post-Guru Gobind Singh history of the Sikhs by the *Kendri Shri Singh Sabha*, in the first *Sikh History Conference* at Anadpur Sahib.⁶⁴ On 24 March 1984, the Government of India honored him with *Padma Bhushan* in recognition of “his research to the cause of Punjab and Indian history”. The President of India, Giani Zail Singh presented him the award.⁶⁵ But he returned the award in his protest against the operation Blue Star. In 1984, Ganda Singh became the chairman of the *Regional Record Survey Committee*, which the President of India constituted “to bring in light and to ensure a systematic survey and salvaging historical material and manuscripts in the possession of the prominent persons and private institutions”.⁶⁶ On the Golden Jubilee Session of the *Indian History Congress* held at Goa University, Panaji (Goa) on 5 November - 7 November 1987 Ganda Singh was honored as “one of the five distinguished historians of India”.⁶⁷ On 17 December, 1987 historical scholarship became poorer, when Ganda Singh travelled to “that world whose bourn no traveller return.”

Professor Harbans Singh, a well-known Sikh historian was greatly esteemed in literary and social circles due to his momentous contribution to the Sikh studies and the Punjabi literary studies. He was born on 6 March 1921 at Kotha Guru village in Bathinda district of Punjab, in the house of Shri Ram Lal Uppal and Roop Kaur. Kotha Guru was his maternal village. His parental home was in the Mukatsar district. His father Ram Lal was a high official in the Irrigation Department of the state Government at that time. After his retirement, Ram Lal with his family resided in Kotha Guru village.⁶⁸ Harbans Singh passed his primary education from the Primary School of Kotha Guru village. He passed his Matric from Government High School, Mukatsar. His father Ram Lal wanted to see him in life as a doctor. So he put him into

⁶⁴ *Punjabi Tribune*, 15-04-1981. See File No. 599, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

⁶⁵ File No. 137, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala. See also File No. 666, Ganda Singh Collection. Punjabi University, Patiala.

⁶⁶ File No. 69, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

⁶⁷ Devinder Kumar Verma and Jasmer Singh, *A Biobibliography of Dr Ganda Singh*, pp. 5-6 .

⁶⁸ Gyani Balwant Singh Kotha Guru, *Kotha Guru Di Gaurav Gatha*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, First Edition 2004, pp. 200-207. See also Dharam Singh (ed), *Sikhism and Secularism Essays in Honour of Prof. Harbans Singh*, Harman Publishing House, New Delhi, First Published 1994, p. IX.

the Medical School in Jalandhar. But Harbans Singh had no passion for this stream. Soon, he left the Medical School.⁶⁹ In 1937, he joined the foremost Sikh educational institution Khalsa College, Amritsar as a first year student. In 1941, he completed his graduation with Honors in English. In 1943, he completed his Master's in English Literature. Harbans Singh's Khalsa College days "were embellishment by all round distinctions in extra-curricular activities as also in academics". He was the President of the College Student Association in the year 1942. From the year 1942-1943, he was the editor of *Darbar* at Khalsa College, Amritsar. *Darbar* was the Khalsa College's magazine, whose editor was appointed among the students under the supervision of the teachers. During his study in the Khalsa College, Amritsar Harbans Singh also got interested in Hockey game. His love for this game received for him, the Presidentship of the Khalsa College Hockey Club from the year 1943-1944. But afterwards, he did not play much of it.⁷⁰

Harbans Singh started his profession as a Lecturer of English at the Khalsa College, Amritsar for one year from 1943-1944. The Khalsa College authorities offered him this post as they were familiar with his "academic potential". It should be noted that they offered him this post of teaching even before his exam result was out. On 23 April, 1944 Harbans Singh married to Kailash Kaur. Kailash Kaur was a deeply religious and well educated lady. She was born on 23rd April 1924 in the house of Bawa Vir Singh Trehan at Kasur (Pakistan). She received her primary education from Ludhiana. She did her 10th class from Khalsa School, Ferozepur. After that, she passed her B.A. from Government Rajindra College, Bathinda.⁷¹ Her daughter Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh, credits her for her interest in Sikh religion. She writes, "from my mother I received an aesthetic appreciation of Sikh literature. I would wake up in the morning to her melodious recitation of the Sikh scripture. I was too young to know what the verses meant, but their beautiful rhythms and melodies were to reverberate in my being for many years to come."⁷² In September 1944, he joined the Faridkot State's Educational Service as class II gazette cadre. On 13 April 1947, he

⁶⁹ Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh, *The Birth of the Khalsa: A Feminist Re-Memory of Sikh Identity*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2005, p. XIII.

⁷⁰ Dharam Singh (ed), *Sikhism and Secularism Essays in Honour of Prof. Harbans Singh*, p. IX.

⁷¹ Dharam Singh, "Homage to a Multi-Splendid Personality- Mrs. Kailash Kaur", *The Sikh Courier*, Vol. 32, No. 74, Autumn-Winter 1992, London, p. 25. See also Dharam Singh (ed), *Sikhism and Secularism Essays in Honour of Prof. Harbans Singh*, p. IX. See also Paramvir Singh (ed.), *Professor Harbans Singh A Legend in Sikh Studies*, Gracious Books, Patiala, 2020, p. 7.

⁷² Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent*, Cambridge University Press, USA, 1993, pp. XI-XII.

was promoted to class 1 as the Dean of Arts Faculty in the Brijindra College, Faridkot. He had also joined the Brijindra College at Faridkot as the Head of the Department of English. This offer was made to him by the ruler of this state Raja Harinder Singh, whose “zeal to make his state important in all fields like education, public health, sports and administration was legendary”. On 12 September, 1947 he became the tutor to Tikka Sahib of Maharaja of Faridkot.⁷³ During this time, he used his leisure time “to study and reflect on the cultural heritage of the Sikhs.” At this time, he was also motivated towards the “literature related to Sikhism and other religions.”⁷⁴

It seemed, in 1948 Harbans Singh had passion to join Indian Administrative Service. His plan appeared in his letter to Ganda Singh on 24 June 1948.⁷⁵ It may be very useful to recall that in his all letters to Ganda Singh though the subject was academic or personal relations, Harbans Singh called Ganda Singh as ‘*My Dear Sardarji*’. This shows his respect and relation with Ganda Singh. From 1958-1960, he served as the Principal of Government College at Mukatsar. In 1960 he left this post to become the Member- Secretary of the Punjabi University Commission. This 13 member commission was set up in 1960 by the Punjab Government under the chairmanship of Maharaja Yadvindra Singh of Patiala. Bhai Jodh Singh was the Vice-Chairman and Harbans Singh was the Secretary. The chief object of the university was “the advancement of Punjabi Studies and the development of Punjabi language with multi-faculty to provide instruction in humanistic as well as scientific subjects”.⁷⁶ In 1962, he became the first Registrar of this newly created Punjabi University, Patiala. When he gave up this most important post, the Punjabi University, Patiala’s authorities appointed him an Officer on Special Duty. His deep devotion to the cause of letters reflected, when in 1977, he refused the proposal to be the Vice-Chancellor of Punjabi University, Patiala. He declined this offer to be able to continue his work on the *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*.

⁷³ *Dr. Harbans Singh Ji De Likhe Pattar*, File No. 265, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

⁷⁴ Dharam Singh (ed.), *Sikhism and Secularism Essays in Honour of Prof. Harbans Singh*, p. X.

⁷⁵ File No. 265, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

⁷⁶ *The Report of the Punjabi University Commission*, File No. 557, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala, pp. 1-2. See also “How I become Head of the Sikhs”- From the Maharaja of Patiala’s Memoirs As told to Professor Harbans Singh”, *The Sikh Review*, May 1999, Calcutta, p. 54

Harbans Singh was also the forerunner to set up a *Department for the Comparative Study of Religion* in 1970 at Punjabi University, Patiala. The encouragement for the establishment of this type of department, where religion as a subject of academic pursuit came from Harbans Singh's visit in 1968-1969 as a Fellow in the *Centre for the Study of World Religions* of the Harvard University in the United States. From there, Harbans Singh made a clear idea of the establishment of such a department. He wanted to introduce religion as subject of academic study at the college and university level. There were other factors which were responsible for the creation of this department. The first according to Harbans Singh was the "academic support" from the report of the Kothri Commission (1964-1966). This commission recommended the "introduction of teaching about religion in universities as distinguished from religious teachings".⁷⁷ The second was from a seminar on the *Study of Religion in Indian Universities* held at Bangalore in 1967. There were number of participants, the most famous distinguished thinker of comparative studies was Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith, he was the Director of *Centre for the Study of World Religions*, Harvard University. There also were participants representing Indian Universities such as *Vishva Bharti*, Banaras, Delhi, Madras and Mysore. From Punjabi University, Patiala Sardar Kirpal Singh Narang, who was then Vice Chancellor of the University, took part in this seminar. It should be noted that Punjabi University had by then worked out a pattern of starting a department of religious studies. Finally, a *Department of Religious Studies*, the first among the Indian universities was materialized at Punjabi University, Patiala.⁷⁸ Harbans Singh presented a paper on Sikh Studies at this seminar.⁷⁹ On 1 January 1970, Harbans Singh was appointed as Professor and Chairman of this newly created department. In fact, he was the moving spirit behind the vision of Guru Gobind Singh Bhawan, a monumental structure at the Punjabi University, Patiala. He was also the founder-editor of the *Journal of Religious Studies* a bi-annual journal which was launched in 1969. From its beginning, this journal published articles on the various religious traditions of the world.

⁷⁷ Harbans Singh, "Welcome Address" in Harbans Singh (ed.), *Approaches to the Study of Religion*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1972, pp. 1-2.

⁷⁸ Harbans Singh, "Preface", Harbans Singh (ed.), *Approaches to the Study of Religion*, See Preface.

⁷⁹ File No. 265, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

Why did Harbans Singh become intensively interested in Sikh history? There are some circumstances that awakened Harbans Singh's mind towards the historical research of Sikh history. First of all, the influences of his parents also encouraged him to work in this direction. His father Ram Lal was a man of "literary taste". His mother Roop Kaur was a religious lady. She played a great role in "moulding the religious and moral *Zeitgeist*" of Harbans Singh.⁸⁰ It is said that his mother belonged to the Sodhi family. She traced her lineage to the Hari Singh Nalwa pedigree. It should be noted that although Harbans Singh did his Graduation and Master degree in English literature yet his interest got shifted to Punjabi literary renaissance. It can be right to say that Punjabi study became his first love at that time. Later, in his life, he has never totally forgotten it. In fact, he was born in the village of Kotha Guru. He was educated in Punjabi medium school. So, he had a genuine sensitivity for Punjabi literature. He communicated it in faultless English language.⁸¹ Though he wrote a book entitled *Maharaja Ranjit Singh* in 1952, but he also wrote a book on Punjabi literature that appeared in 1961 entitled *Aspects of Punjabi Literature*. He wrote the book, when he was the Principal of the Government College, Mukatsar. It should be noted that the material in this book first appeared in the form of essays in various journals and newspapers such as *The Spokesman*, *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, *The Times of India*, *The Tribune* and *The Hindustan Standard*. Thus, it can be useful to say that Harbans Singh got interested in Punjabi literature even before 1961. It is said that Harbans Singh both by "association and aesthetic inclination was more sensitive to the writings of Nanak Singh, Gurbaksh Singh, Kartar Singh Duggal, Mohan Singh, Sant Singh Sekhon, Kulwant Singh Virk and Surinder Singh Narula".⁸² But the grown up years of his life, which may be called "the day of enthusiastic and dispassionate scholarship", he had devoted to enriching the field of Sikh studies. In his tribute to Harbans Singh, Kartar Singh Duggal stated that "Prof. Harbans Singh belongs to that tribe (class) of eminent Punjabi literatures that constitutes the likes of Principal Teja Singh and Prof Gurbachan Singh 'Talib'. Men of no mean literary talent themselves; they were interested more in projecting others and thus enriching the Punjabi literary

⁸⁰ Dharam Singh (ed.), *Sikhism and Secularism Essays in Honour of Prof. Harbans Singh*, p. IX.

⁸¹ Nikky Guninder Kaur Singh, "Prof Harbans Singh (1921-1988) A Daughter's Homage", *The Sikh Review*, Vol. 56:8, August 2008, Calcutta, p. 61.

⁸² Attar Singh, "A Reliable Translation", *Indian Literature*, Vol. 31, No.2 (124), March- April, 1988, pp. 149-150.

milieu. This is exactly how Prof. Harbans Singh started his scholarly career as a teacher by profession. He translated into English a number of promising contemporary writers, whether they were the like Mohan Singh, Amrita Pritam or Gurmukh Singh 'Musafir' and Kulwant Singh Virk, the writer of short stories. Later he also rendered into English excerpts from Bhai Vir Singh's *magnum opus*, *Rana Surat Singh* for the UNESCO with distinction. And then on the lines of his illustrious precursors Teja Singh and Gurbachan Singh 'Talib', he switched to Sikh studies."⁸³

Harbans Singh had friendly relations with some of the prominent Sikh historians and theologian like Gurbachan Singh 'Talib', Fauja Singh and Ganda Singh. Whenever they would meet in the conferences and academic affairs, they discussed on the themes of Sikh history and helped each other with their knowledge about it. The impact of Ganda Singh, whom Harbans Singh accepted as his "revered teacher", is reflected from the words of Harbans Singh. He writes, "I must also repeat here my grateful thanks for the help received from my revered teacher Dr. Ganda Singh on whose advice and generosity I have continuously drawn those many years."⁸⁴ Harbans Singh learnt so much from this environment and we saw the influence of these personalities on him. The Khalsa College, Amritsar, where he studied and taught one year, make an effect on him with its "zealous spirit to raise Sikh history at the peak of the highest glory". In fact, he was like Ganda Singh the product of this leading Sikh institution. The impact of the literary activities of the Singh Sabha movement, mainly of Tat Khalsa' prominent personalities, who were involved in writing Sikh history from new viewpoint *Ham Hindu Nahin* was no less. It can be useful to recall that the understanding of Harbans Singh of Sikh history i.e. his historiography had immersed from the Tat Khalsa ideology.⁸⁵ He was also influenced from Bhai Vir Singh, who was the prominent figure of the Singh Sabha movement. All these factors influenced Harbans Singh to write Sikh history that had earned for him a distinctive honor in the world of learning.

⁸³ Kartar Singh Duggal, "Uniquely Talented", *The Sikh Review*, Vol. 43:2, No. 494, February 1995, p. 54 .

⁸⁴ Harbans Singh, *Bhai Vir Singh Makers of Modern Indian Literature*, Sahitya Akademi, Delhi, 1972. See the Preface.

⁸⁵ Hew McLeod, *The Tat Khalsa and Sikh Historiography*, [http: www.indis-seminar.com /2006/567/Hew McLeod.htm](http://www.indis-seminar.com/2006/567/Hew%20McLeod.htm).

It is a widely acknowledged fact that Harbans Singh had “a vital and pervasive influence in the field of religious studies particularly to Sikhism”. A number of books on Sikh Gurus and Sikh history had written “with incisive insight and meticulous thoroughness” by him. He dedicated his whole life to the cause of Sikh studies, as his daughter Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh wrote that “my father’s life had been entirely dedicated to the Sikh scholarship.”⁸⁶ Khushwant Singh has eloquently said, “a great deal of research has been done by the Indian theologians and historians which has widely expanded the knowledge of Sikhism and the social, political and economic development of the Sikh community. Outstanding among them were also the historians like Ganda Singh, Hari Ram Gupta and Fauja Singh. Amongst those who have explored the hitherto untapped material on Sikh religion, a place of honor has to be accorded to Harbans Singh, who has written on several aspects of Sikh history. He is regarded today as the ablest exponent of the Sikh scriptures and their uniqueness in the body of sacred literatures of other religious systems”.⁸⁷ In fact, the motives of Harbans Singh were to “promote Punjabi studies, Sikh history and the Sikh studies.”⁸⁸ He also wanted to forge from traditional sources the life stories of Sikh Gurus in the “form intelligible to his contemporaries whose minds had been shaped by modern historiography”.⁸⁹

Harbans Singh toured widely lecturing on many aspects of the Sikh religion and history. He also held discourses with the eminent scholars from a wide variety of cultures, regions and religions. He was the visiting Fellow of the *Centre for the Study of World Religions* at Harvard University for the year 1968-1969. He was also the member of the *World Conference on Religion and Peace*. He attended its session at Kyoto (Japan) in 1970.⁹⁰ The second *World Conference on Religion and Peace* was held at Leuven (Belgium) in 1974. The message of this conference was that “the

⁸⁶ Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh, *The Birth of the Khalsa A Feminist Re-Memory of Sikh Identity*, p. XII. See also John C B Webster, “Sikh Studies in the Punjab” in Mark Juergensmeyer and N. Gerald Barrier (ed.), *Sikh Studies Comparative Perspectives on a Changing Tradition*, Berkeley Religious Studies Series, Berkeley, 1979, p. 27. See also Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh, *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent*, pp. XI-XII.

⁸⁷ Khushwant Singh, “Foreword” in Gurdev Singh (ed.), *Perspectives on the Sikh Tradition*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, Second Edition, 1996, pp. 11-12.

⁸⁸ Darshan Singh, “Our Beloved Sardar Sahib”, *The Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. XXIX, Autumn 1998, p. 5.

⁸⁹ Donald G. Dawe, “Professor Harbans Singh- A Remembrance”, *ibid.*, p. 8.

⁹⁰ Harbans Singh, “Widening Concerns of World Religions”, *The Sikh Review*, Vol. XIX, No. 214, September 1971, p. 7.

values of love, equality and justice in the world religions enshrined should be realized in practice”.⁹¹ In 1972 he was also invited in the *Conference on Non-Violent Transformation of Society* at Driebergen (Holland). In this conference, Harbans Singh presented “the Sikh perspective of religion’s role in the creation of a non-violent and peaceful egalitarian social structure”.⁹² In 1977 he had also joined the *International Consultation in Search of Non-Violent Alternatives* in Derry, Northern Ireland.⁹³ In 1979 he attended the *World Conference on Religion and Peace* held at Princeton from 29 August to 7 September, 1979 and read a paper on *The foundation and Scope of Human Dignity According to Sikhism*. In this paper, he presented his views that “the scope of human dignity in Sikhism is co-extensive with the realization of the value of freedom, equality and justice”.⁹⁴ In 1982 he was invited by the University of California, Berkeley to deliver a series of lectures on Sikhism. He had delivered three lectures in the summer of 1982- “(1) Sikhism: The Beginning (1469-1708), (2) Sikhism: Challenge and Response (1849-1873) and (3) Sikhism: The Creative Half-Decade (1965-1969)”, at the University of California, Berkeley. In the imprimis of this work, Donald G. Dawe stated that “the presence of the Sikh people around the world forces upon us the question of their identity, their faith, and their future. No one is better able to deal with these questions than Professor Harbans Singh.”⁹⁵ Later on, these lectures were published in a book form under the title *Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism*.

Harbans Singh’s procurements as a prolific writer of Sikh history have been accepted in the circle of Sikh scholarship. Instead of his thirteen books, three of them in association with others and has also edited another three. He had contributed articles to different national-international journals and newspapers. He also translated the work of prominent Punjabi authors like Bhai Vir Singh, Amrita Pritam, and Ajit Cour into English language. The most excellent and enduring contribution to the Sikh studies by Harbans Singh was his book under the title *The Heritage of the Sikhs*,

⁹¹ Harbans Singh, “World Religions Meet at Leuven” , *The Sikh Review*, Vol.XXIII, No. 254-255, Feb-March 1975, p. 29.

⁹² Dharam Singh (ed.), *Sikhism and Secularism Essays in Honour of Prof. Harbans Singh*, p. XVI.

⁹³ Nikky Guninder Kaur Singh, “Coming Home! To The Punjabi University Patiala”, *Nishan*, Issue III/ 2012, New Delhi, p. 53.

⁹⁴ Harbans Singh, “The foundation and Scope of Human Dignity according to Sikhism”, *The Sikh Review*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 375, March 1985, pp. 5-7.

⁹⁵ Donald G.Dawe, “Imprimis”, Harbans Singh, *Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism*, Manohar Publisher &Distributors, New Delhi, Second Corrected Edition, 1995, pp. XI-X.

which can be called “the first consolidated account of the religious, cultural and political history of the Sikhs”. This book was first published in 1965, but has undergone into some “additions and revisions” up to the period of 1984. As the registrar of the Punjabi University, Patiala in 1964, he received from the United State Government an invitation to visit America to see the “the working of American Universities and to study in that country”. He left Patiala on 24 March, 1964 with the three other Registrars of Indian Universities. Those invited by U.S. Government were- (1) Shri P.V.C. Mallik of Jadavpur University (2) Shri Meenakchisundram of Annamalai University and (3) Shri K.C. Parikh of Gujarat University. Harbans Singh with these personalities visited almost 18 Universities of U.S. The result of this was that Harbans Singh compiled his opinions of this visiting tour in a book entitled *Higher Education in America* (1966).⁹⁶ The year 1966, was the year of the birth tercentenary of Guru Gobind Singh, saw another publication on the biography of *Guru Gobind Singh*. This book was originally published in English by the Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, Chandigarh. Later on this was translated into major languages of India. In 1969 he also organized the international seminar on the theme *Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak* from 3 September to 5 September 1969, which was held at Punjabi University, Patiala. This seminar was the part of a series of occasions that celebrated the 500th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion. The result of this seminar was the book that Harbans Singh edited under the title *Perspectives on Guru Nanak* published in 1975. During this time, Harbans Singh was already regarded the well-known authority on Sikh studies. The senate of Punjabi University, Patiala made proposal for the scholarly works to be brought out in commemoration of the 500th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak. Consequently, the senate hands over this work to Harbans Singh. To complete this work, Harbans Singh gave up the post of Registrar of Punjabi University, Patiala. Harbans Singh wrote the larger portion of the book, when he was the visitor at the Harvard University’ *Centre for the Study of World Religions*. Finally in 1969, the book appeared under the title *Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith*. The year 1972 saw the first birth centenary of Bhai Vir Singh, the Punjabi poet and Sikh sage. To honor the occasion *Sahtya Akademi* included a monograph on him in its series entitled *Makers of Indian*

⁹⁶ Harbans Singh, “Introduction”, *Higher Education in America*, Parentice-Hall of India Private Limited, New Delhi, 1966, pp. 1-2.

Literature. Harbans Singh was selected for this job. The book appeared in 1972 under the title *Bhai Vir Singh: Makers of Indian Literature*. In 1972, he also edited the *Bhai Vir Singh Shatabadi Granth*, which was published by *Bhai Vir Singh Shatabadi Samiti*. After introducing religion as a subject of academic study at the Undergraduate and Post-Graduate level in Punjabi University, Patiala, Harbans Singh felt the paucity of reading material for the students, so he with the association of Lal Mohan Joshi in 1973 prepared a book titled *An Introduction to Indian Religions*. In 1976, Harbans Singh along with Gurbachan Singh Talib wrote *Bhai Vir Singh: Poet of the Sikhs*. This book deals with the life and works of Bhai Vir Singh besides giving an English translation of excerpts from his epic *Rana Surat Singh*. This book was later accepted by UNESCO and was published under the UNESCO collection of representative work. In the foreword of this book Harbans Singh (This Harbans Singh was the Honorary General Secretary of *Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan*, New Delhi at that time) wrote that “the work of translation was entrusted to two eminent scholars and writers, Prof. Gurbachan Singh Talib and Prof. Harbans Singh, both of the Punjabi University, Patiala. Besides possessing felicity of expression in the English language, they are saturated with the spirit of Punjabi Literature both in its sacred and secular aspects”.⁹⁷ In 1976, with N.G. Barrier, Harbans Singh edited festschrift in honor of Ganda Singh under the title *Panjab Past and Present: Essays in Honour of Dr Ganda Singh*. His other edited work was *Approaches to the Study of Religion*. This was the outcome of the seminar organized by Harbans Singh on the theme *Approaches to Study of Religion* in his department at Punjabi University, Patiala. He also wrote biography of the ninth Sikh Guru entitled *Guru Tegh Bahadur* in 1982.

Harbans Singh’s contribution to the Sikh studies with his *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* was great. Though he wrote a number of books and research papers but by becoming the Editor-in-Chief of the *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, “his scholastic stature rose in the Sikh scholarship”.⁹⁸ In the words of Harbans Singh, “*the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* was the brainchild of Professor Kirpal Singh”, who was then the Vice-

⁹⁷ Harbans Singh, “Foreword”, Gurbachan Singh Talib and Harbans Singh (Trans. from the Punjabi), *Bhai Vir Singh: Poet of the Sikhs*, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1976. See Foreword.

⁹⁸ Dharam Singh (ed.), *Sikhism and Secularism Essays in Honour of Professor Harbans Singh*, p. XVII.

Chancellor of Punjabi University, Patiala.⁹⁹ He chose Harbans Singh's to complete this mission. The aim of this work in the words of Harbans Singh was, "the Encyclopaedia is intended to be a work of International readability."¹⁰⁰ He had planned to project Sikhism to the English readers through the *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*. It was true because though the Sikh scholarship had monumental work like *Gurshabad Ratnakar Mahankosh* of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, but it was in Punjabi Language. So, this was not accessible to those, who did not know Punjabi language. About this Noel Q King in his paper read at *Conference of Sikh Studies* at Los Angles in December 1988 said that "of course, Sikh Encyclopaedia will do a great deal for us, perhaps then we will not need Kahn Singh Nabha's work so much after the Encyclopaedia appears".¹⁰¹ Therefore, by this work an endeavor has been made to contribute reliable history about the Sikhs as Harbans Singh wrote, "the burgeoning of interest in the study of Sikhism brought to light the grave paucity of material on Sikhism, highlighting at the same time the need for serious academic research and study. The present publication aims at supplying the gap."¹⁰² This project was started in 1971 and was completed in the form of four volumes in 1998. Harbans Singh worked on it with a "rare single mindedness". He very well knew that it was "absolutely necessary for the successful completion of this dream project". For his "dream project", he made his mind to free himself from all the administrative activities. His daughter Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh remarked about his father's devotion as, "my father's life had been entirely dedicated to the Sikh scholarship and even during his very last weeks, he immersed himself to complete the four volumes of *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*."¹⁰³ In this regard, Pritam Singh stated that "twentieth century has produced a few Encyclopaedia minds among the Sikhs, such as Bhai Vir Singh, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha and Professor Teja Singh. The last in this illustrious

⁹⁹ Harbans Singh, "Preface", Harbans Singh (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol.1, Punjabi University, Patiala, Third Edition, 1998, p. XI.

¹⁰⁰ File No 521, *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

¹⁰¹ Noel Q King, "Capax imperii- Scripture, Tradition and European Style Critical Methos" in Jasbir Singh Mann and Harbnas Singh Saraon (ed.), *Advanced Studies in Sikhism*, Sikh Institute of North America, U.S.A., 1989, p. 12.

¹⁰² Harbans Singh, "Preface", Harbans Singh (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol.1, p. XIII.

¹⁰³ Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh, *The Birth of Khalsa: A Feminist Re-Memory of Sikh Identity*, p. 12.

series was Sardar Harbans Singh".¹⁰⁴ In fact, this was his last and classic work, which gave him immortality in Sikh scholarship.

On 17 January, 1981 Panjab University, Chandigarh, awarded Life Fellowship to Harbans Singh in view of "his outstanding works in the field of Sikh history, religion and literature".¹⁰⁵ Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar conferred to Harbans Singh a D.Litt. Degree (Honoris Causa) for his unique contribution in the fields of literature, Sikh religion and philosophy.¹⁰⁶ *The Academy of Sikh Religion and Culture* of Patiala conferred him Fellowship for the year 1994.¹⁰⁷ The death of Prof. Harbans Singh on 30 May 1998 caused a huge void in the field of Sikh scholarship. By knowing his scholarly sagacity, his dedication spirit to Sikh scholarship, his contribution to Punjabi University, Patiala and his hard work for completing the *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, the Syndicate of Punjabi University Patiala on 26 June 1998 changed the name of the *Department of the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* to *Professor Harbans Singh Department of Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* to honour him posthumously. He was also invested with the *Order of the Khalsa* during the Khalsa tercentenary celebration in 1999 posthumously.¹⁰⁸

William Hew McLeod was a renowned western historian of Sikh religion and history. On the other hand, his scholarly career as a historian of Sikh religion and history, however, was not without criticism. Much of what he had written caused considerable controversy amid the Sikh scholars. Today, he is regarded as a "highly controversial author because of his extreme opinions expressed in his publications on Sikh religion and history". In fact, he was controversial from the very beginning of his scholarly career. He created controversy regarding the authenticity of some important principles and parts of Sikh religion, history and traditions than any other western scholar in the twentieth century. A significant number of Sikh scholars have cast serious suspicion on W.H. McLeod's scholarship, peculiarly on the questions he raised and the conclusions in his writings he drew, which altered the established Sikh

¹⁰⁴ Pritam Singh, "Professor Harbans Singh", *The Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. XXIX, No. 2, Autumn 1998, Patiala, p. 15.

¹⁰⁵ Gur Rattan Pal Singh, "Professor Harbans Singh A Great Connoisseur of Literary Excellence", *Abstract of Sikh Studies*, Vol.1, Issue 4, October-December 1998, Chandigarh, p. 80.

¹⁰⁶ H.S. Virk, "Professor Harbans Singh: in Memorium", *The Sikh Review*, Vol. 46:08, No. 536, August 1998, p. 77. See also Paramvir Singh (ed.), *Professor Harbans Singh A Legend in Sikh Studies*, p. 216.

¹⁰⁷ *The Spokesman Weekly*, January 1996, p. 36.

¹⁰⁸ Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh, *The Birth of Khalsa: A Feminist Re-Memory of Sikh Identity*, p. XIV.

tradition. It should be noted that in Punjab, he worked in close association with many prominent Sikh scholars and historians of the time like Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh, but his interpretations and conclusions were his own, in which he often held different perspectives from his Sikh friends. In his autobiography, he mentioned about the sympathetic help he received from Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh and “owed a considerable debt of gratitude both of them”.¹⁰⁹ In the preface (p. IX) of his work titled *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, he wrote that though he received help from Ganda Singh, J.S. Grewal, Jodh Singh and many more, but for the opinions expressed in the work, “I alone am to be held responsible”.

He was born on 2 August, 1932 in Feilding a town in the North Island of New Zealand. All of his ancestors were Scottish. His father’s name was Bruce McLeod and the mother’s was Margaret Hewat. He had started his schooling in the small one – teacher school at Waiata North-East of Feilding. But soon this school was closed. Then, he joined the Lytton Street School in Feilding. For Sometimes, he also studied in the St. George’s Preparatory School in Wanganui. Two years later, in 1946, he joined the Secondary school at Nelson College (According to W.H. McLeod, the term “college” applies in New Zealand to Secondary schools) in the South island town of Nelson and studied there for five years until the age of eighteenth.¹¹⁰ During his school days, he was the Regimental Sergeant-Major of the school’s Cadet Corps. He also won the South Island prize for best cadet. He left the Nelson College at the end of the year 1950.

At Nelson College, W.H. McLeod made his decision not to follow his father’s step as a sheep farmer. Instead, he chose to be a “school teacher”. In 1951, he joined the University of Otago, Dunedin as an undergraduate student. From here, he completed his graduation and post-graduation. He took History as his principal subject, with English, French and Geography as minors. Here, he was elected as the Student Executive of Knox College, which was the residential place in University. He gained a place in the *Otago University Student Association*. In the beginning of the year 1955, he started his theological course. At this time, he learnt about the discipline called history and finally made his perspective on it. Professor Rex was the person

¹⁰⁹ Hew McLeod, *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2004, pp. 46-47.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

who was taught them the church history in the Knox College's Theological hall. Here, he had made four firm basic features about history. The first was that "the information available to any historian is but a fragment of the past, never in the whole range". The second was that "all history amounts to interpretations of the past and that therefore it is important to know, as best one can". The third was that "what one leaves out is often as important as what one includes". The last was that "every generation produces new interpretations that reflect the characteristic features of the time".¹¹¹ In May 1955, he married to Margaret Wylie in Geraldine. She was then the lady Vice-President of the *Student Christian Movement* (Hereafter as SCM). It will be useful to recall here that after entering the University of Otago, he was greatly attracted by this SCM. According to W.H. McLeod in SCM everything of Christian faith was open to question. In it nothing was held as sacrosanct. Here, he developed his habit to question the religion as he wrote that "in the SCM I greatly enjoyed questioning and disagreement and I still enjoy them."¹¹² At Dunedin, he belonged to Presbyterian Church.

In 1958, W.H. McLeod and his wife Margaret travelled to Punjab. There were two factors which effected his decision to come in Punjab that would become his "*asli ghar*".¹¹³ The first factor was the inspiration and encouragement of Rev. Alan Brash about the want of young New Zealand peoples to take up the work in Asia in the areas of education and medicine. According to him, during that time, "New Zealand was one of the four wealthiest countries in the world". This was also a time when, Alan Brash's message that "peoples of New Zealand should feel compelled to share something of their good fortune with the less privileged neighbors" was prevalent in New Zealand. The second was the retirement of Dr. Morton Ryburn from the Christian Boys Higher Secondary School in Kharar near Chandigarh. Dr. Morton Ryburn did a lifetime missionary service in India. Accordingly, *The Overseas Mission Committee of The Presbyterian Church* was seeking someone in his place. W.H. McLeod was appointed on this post. In 1958 he came to Punjab as an English teacher at the Christian Boys Higher Secondary School in Kharar. During his time in Punjab, from almost 1958-1963, he learnt Punjabi language from Giani Jaimal Singh

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 26.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 22-23.

¹¹³ File No. 294, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

and also learnt Hindi language. But soon he became dissatisfied with his occupation. He wanted to do a “meaningful occupation” which brought him to his earlier training in history. Consequently, this was the time, when his interest in Sikh history was aroused.

Why was W.H. McLeod attracted to Sikh history? What were his motives behind it? According to him, he was attracted to the Sikh history and religion due to his interest and his gradual consciousness of the significance of this field. And finally, because he wanted to become “some sort of specialist”. The reason, according to him, was “namely the historian’s quest for truth”. During his initial employment in Punjab, he felt the need to change the direction of his life. He wanted to do something “more meaningful”. So he started searching the history of the Punjab, with the hope that if his interest develops, it might lead him “in a different and more satisfying direction”. Then also as “an occupation, it was interesting and he thought, if he equipped himself as a historian, he would be eligible for employment in Baring Union Christian College at Batala”.¹¹⁴ Afterwards, the question was in front of him, what area should he choose? Soon, he examined the field of Punjab history. The field of Sikh history attracted him. He found out that the history of the Sikhs “was much the more interesting and potentially rewarding”. It should be noted that his interest also developed in the *Arya Samaj* movement. Though, he considered it as a “fruitful field”, yet, “in comparison with Sikh history it seemed to offer little” for him.¹¹⁵ He thought of the Sikh history and religion “absolutely fascinating.” Consequently, from 1960, he started the study Sikh history and Punjabi language. In 1963, he was completely absorbed in Sikh history.

In W.H. McLeod views, he wanted to work on the theme to “communicate an understanding of the Sikh people and their religion to the educated western readers”. He wanted to tell inquistic westerners, “what Sikhism apparently means in terms that they can understand.” He argued that all his work on Sikh history and religion was “directed at westerners or others who have been educated by western methods and who think in western mode”.¹¹⁶ Another purpose for him to venture into the field of Sikh studies was that he realized that though the Sikhs were a significant presence in

¹¹⁴ Hew McLeod, *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, pp. 3-5.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

Punjab yet there was relatively little trustworthy literature that concerned them.¹¹⁷ However, he was also considered as a Christian missionary with the intention to destruct the Sikh traditions. He was criticized by the Sikh scholars about his Christian missionary bias, cultural insensibility, political motives and Euro-Centricism. His works are considered as a threat to the Sikh community, their traditions and practices. Gurdev Singh said that W. H. McLeod was involved in the activities of Christian Missionaries for a number of years in Punjab. He realized that after the partition of India in 1947, the works of Christian missionaries “has no future in Punjab unless the faith of the new generations in its own traditions is undermined”.¹¹⁸ He also attributed “extra-academic motives” to him on the assumptions that Christian missionaries were out to weaken the non-Christian traditions. Similarly, Trilochan Singh with his conviction and certainty wrote that “if a million Trumpps backed by imperialistic power and a million Hew McLeod backed by missionary groups, try to wipe out the slate carrying the facts and truth of Sikh history and doctrines and dreams of re-inscribing it with malicious assumptions, absurd conjectures, and utterly false statements, they cannot succeed”. He stressed that W.H. McLeod had “missionary motives”. Furthermore, he was guided by “cheap and shallow motives” that were inspired by his missionary passion. Furthermore, he wrote with “a professed motive of mutilating and falsifying Sikh history and religion”.¹¹⁹

But W.H. McLeod on his part has always maintained that he has a concern for sympathetic understanding. In his letter to Ganda Singh dated 6 December 1965, on the subject of his work *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* W.H. McLeod wrote that “I have nowhere sought to engage in destructive criticism simply for the sake of criticism. My aim was to make a sympathetic study and I have sincerely tried to fulfill this aim”.¹²⁰ In his autobiography, W.H. McLeod wrote that he lived the life of a Christian missionary “briefly”. In his statement which was published by Ranjit Singh in a booklet form titled *Proposed Sikh Seminar: Some Sidelights* in 1990, W.H. McLeod said, “I am not a Christian, I ceased to be Christian when I was at Baring

¹¹⁷ W.H. McLeod, *Essays in Sikh History, Tradition, and Society*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, First Published, 2007, p. 1.

¹¹⁸ Gurdev Singh, “Introduction”, Gurdev Singh (ed.), *Perspective on the Sikh Tradition*, p. 19.

¹¹⁹ Trilochan Singh, *Ernest Trumpp and W.H. McLeod As Scholars of Sikh History Religion and Culture* International Centre of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, 1994, p. 294-337 and See preface , pXXVII.

¹²⁰ File No. 774, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

College, Batala.” In this matter, W.H. McLeod stated that in 1966, he realized that he and his wife were not Christians.¹²¹ But, we are told that despite his disclaims as a Christian missionary he in the year 1998 “became associated with Presbyterian Church. As per the records of the church, he became Convener of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand (PCANZ) Records Committee from 1998 to 2000. He also was the member of PCANZ, Historical Records Reference Group from 2000. In the Presbyterian Church records his title as “Reverend”.¹²²

Many learned scholars believed that W.H. McLeod was the leader of the “Anti-Sikhism School”. It is stated that the writers of this school produce literature to falsify Sikh history, philosophy and culture.¹²³ Similarly, Trilochan Singh coined the term “Batala-Berkeley Group of Christian Missionaries” in which he included W.H. McLeod.¹²⁴ Batala was the place, which was related to Christian missionaries even before the arrival of W.H. McLeod. Though in Punjab, earlier, Christian missionaries established their center’s at Ludhiana, Amritsar and Lahore. However, they converted maximum backward peoples from Batala. Later on, they established a school and subsequently a college there.¹²⁵ From 1968-1969, W.H. McLeod was the director of the *Christian Institute of Sikh Studies* in Batala. Dr. Ram Singh formally organized the institution in 1966 with a number of aims like “(1) to engage in study and research in the field of Sikh history, religion and culture; (2) to encourage interest in the study of Sikhism and the Sikhs by the Christian Church, and to impart an understanding of Sikhism, both historical and contemporary, to members of the church; (3) to stimulate and maintain dialogue and communication between Christians and Sikhs; and (4) to produce and distribute relevant literature”. The first director of this institute was Dr. Loehlin.¹²⁶

¹²¹ W.H. McLeod, *Essays in Sikh History, Tradition, and Society*, p. 15.

¹²² ‘Rev. Hew AS I Know’- www.Sikhnet.com See also [http:// www.presbyterian.org.nz/archive/page 181.htm](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/archive/page 181.htm)

¹²³ Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *The Sikh Reference Book*, The Sikh Educational Trust, Canada, 1997, p. 528.

¹²⁴ Trilochan Singh, *Ernest Trumpp and W.H. McLeod As Scholars of Sikh History Religion and Culture*, p. 83.

¹²⁵ In 1914, *The Church Missionary Society* had occupied the Batala Tehsil as a mission field. They made Batala as their Head –quarter. See, *Punjab District Gazetteer*, Volume XXIA, Gurdaspur District, 1914, Lahore 1915, p. 63.

¹²⁶ “A Short History of the Christian Institute of Sikh Studies”, *Bulletin of the Christian Institute of Sikh Studies*, Vol.1, No. 1, Jan 1972, Batala (Punjab), p. 5.

In 1963, he went to the *School of Oriental and African Studies* in the University of London. Thus, W.H. McLeod entered the main stream of the western university and European thought. Later in his life, he took great pride in being a “Western historian” who was trained in this eminent institution. He did his Ph.D. in London under the supervision of Professor A. L. Basham. The title of his doctoral thesis was *The Life and Doctrine of Guru Nanak*. It was published in 1968 by Clarendon Press at Oxford under the revised title *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*. Having received his Ph.D degree in 1965, he came to Punjab, which for W.H. McLeod was his “second home” as a Lecturer of Punjab History at Baring Union Christian College at Batala (Punjab). After four years, in 1969, he left Batala (Punjab) for England, where he was awarded Smuts Fellowship at Cambridge University for a year. In 1970, he had taken up the post of Associate Professor at the University of Otago in Dunedin. In 1976, he attended in Mexico City *Congress of Human Sciences in Asia and North Africa* and delivered a paper titled *Kabir, Nanak and Early Sikh Panth* in a seminar on *Religious Change and Domination*.¹²⁷ In 1982, he received a commonwealth Fellowship from the University of Toronto. From 1988 to 1992, he worked at Toronto as a visiting Professor for five terms. In 1990, University of London awarded him *Doctor of Literature*. In 1994, he once again came to India and lived in the *Indian Institute of Advanced Study* in Shimla and wrote a book titled *Historical Dictionary of Sikhism*. In the same year, he also appeared as an expert witness on the behalf of the Sikhs in the court hearing of the *Royal Canadian Mounted Police* (Hereafter RCMP) turban case in Calgary, Alberta in 1994. The Canadian Sikhs achieved a major victory in this case. They won the right to wear turbans as part of their dress as RCMP officers. In 1999 he appeared for Canadian Human Rights Commission in a hearing involving Sikh *kirpans* on aircraft as “an expert witness supporting the Sikh claim.”¹²⁸

The bulk of his work consists of lectures, essays, articles and translations. By and large, his publications relate to religion, history, literature, society, identity, art and historical methodology. He is the author of 15 books, four edited translations, two edited volumes, three booklets and more than seventy articles published in academic national and international journals and books. In his publications, he is not satisfied

¹²⁷ Hew McLeod, *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, p. 85.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 118-120.

with the traditional theories of Sikh history and had attempted a “fresh and very bold interpretations” in his writings. Though he offered new perspective and interpretations on many fundamental issues in Sikh religion and history but diverged sharply from established traditions. In 1966, he started his mission to write on Sikh history. His first work was an article *Guru Nanak and Kabir* which was published in the proceedings of *Punjab History Conference*. Then in 1967, an article titled *Procedures in analyzing the Sources for the Life of Guru Nanak* appeared in the (*Journal of Indian History*, Vol. XLV: 1, April 1967). Another article *The Teachings of Guru Nanak* was published in (*The Sikh Review Journal XVI: 172*, November 1967). The first published work of W.H. McLeod was a thirty-two pages booklet titled *The Sikhs of the Punjab* that was published by Graphic Educational Publication of Auckland, New Zealand in 1968. This book was intended for the secondary school pupils. Its Indian edition was published by Lyall Book Depot in Ludhiana. But his first major work on Sikh religion appeared in 1968 titled *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*. In 1975, the Oxford University Press published his book titled *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*. This book is a collection of five essays out of which four represent the revised version of his lectures delivered at the University of Cambridge during 1970. The series of lectures was held under the auspices of the *Faculty of Oriental Studies*. One of the essays is based on his paper read at the 1969 session of the *Punjab History Conference*. These essays deal with the broad dynamics of the evolution of the Sikh community as assumed by W.H. McLeod. In this year, he also got published a booklet of 58 pages titled *The Way of the Sikhs*. The year 1980 saw his two publications *Early Sikh Tradition: A Study of the Janam-Sakhis* which he had considered “the best that he had written” and *The B40 Janam-Sakhi*, this was the English translation with introduction and annotations of the *Gurmukhi* manuscript related to Guru Nanak actually compiled in 1733 by Daya Ram Abrol. This book was published by Guru Nanak Dev University. In 1984, The Manchester University Press of Chicago published another work titled *Textual Sources for the Study of Sikhism*. In 1986, Guru Nanak Dev University published his book *Punjabis in New Zealand: A History of Punjabi Migration*. The year 1987, saw his translated work *The Chaupa Singh Rahit Nama* with introduction and notes. His concentration on textual analysis marks him as he stated “a distinctive variety of historian”. The year 1989 saw his two books, the first was *The Sikhs: History, Religion and Society* of 119 pages. Five out of the seven

chapters were the lectures that he delivered under the auspices of the *American Council of Learned Societies* in the series of *Lectures on the History of Religion*. The second was: *Who is Sikh?: The Problem of Sikh Identity*. This book contains the text of six lectures prepared for *Radhakrishnan Lectures for 1986-1987*. These lectures could not be delivered but were later published by the trustees. In this work, he labors hard to define a Sikh, for this he looks everywhere except at the source, *Guru Granth Sahib*. His another work *Popular Sikh Art* was published in 1991, which was a collection of 41 posters that he had purchased in Delhi Bazars with accompanying text and lengthy introduction of 48 pages. In 1995, he got published his *Historical Dictionary of Sikhism*. In 2002, he wrote a book titled as *Exploring Sikhism: Aspects of Sikh Identity, Culture and Thought*. The year 2003 saw his scholarly work *Sikhs of the Khalsa: A History of the Khalsa Rahit*. In this subject he had much interest than in anything else, so he wrote, “indeed my fascination with the *rahit* of the *Khalsa* is something that will always remain with me”.¹²⁹ Lastly, his autobiography titled *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian* was appeared in 2004, published by Permanent Black, Delhi in 2004. Through it, he communicated his opinions regarding the nature of his interest in Sikh studies, his conception of history and its methodology and his growth in understanding of the nature and value of historical studies. He passed away on 20th July, 2009 at the age of 76.

While concluding we can say that the social, cultural and religious environment of any country or society do influences on its historians. In other words, every historian is a by-product of the milieu of his society, culture and education. Similarly, Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both were influenced by the environment of their society in Punjab. In this case, W.H. McLeod was not exempted, from his days in University of Otago, he developed his interest to question everything even religion. It grew more when he joined the *Student Christian Movement*. There are different factors which influenced the historians to write Sikh history. Ganda Singh from his very young age was devoted to Sikh religion and history. Harbans Singh also had deep faith in Sikh religion. Though at first he was attracted towards Punjabi literary studies, but later in his life, he immersed himself to the cause of Sikh history and religion. However, the case of W.H. McLeod is different; he was not born in

¹²⁹ Hew McLeod, *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, p.83.

Punjab. He was not fascinated to Sikh history from his young age in New Zealand. But it was possible, when he came to Punjab as a Christian missionary of Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. When he was doing his teaching job at Kharar, he was not satisfied with it, wanted to do something which would make him a specialist. So he finally chose to do research on Sikh history. This became his lifelong mission. Unlike Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh, W.H. McLeod's background was Christian and he developed his interest in the Sikh history. Seeing in this background, we will find out the different approaches of these selected historians towards the Sikh history. This we will be discussed in the next chapters.

CHAPTER-IV

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL AWAKENING OF THE SIKHS

What is the meaning and significance of the term social-cultural? How is it related to our research? It is indispensable to discuss the dictionary meaning of the term social-cultural. According to *Cambridge Dictionary* the term socio-cultural meant as “related to the different groups of people in society and their habits, traditions, and beliefs”.¹ The term “socio” means an endeavor to reorganize the society in the fields of social customs, behavior and structure or control. But it is not easy to define culture. The meaning of the term “culture” varies with the change in context. It has been derived from the Latin word, *colera* meaning “to till, to cultivate”. In a general sense, it has been used for all human efforts and ventures. But in a narrow sense, it has also been used to specify the consequences in human society of “the cultivation of the liberal arts”.² Yet, in ethnographic sense, the term “culture” has taken the complex shape which includes “knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by humans as a member of society”.³ Though, the meaning is broad enough to communicate all forms of spiritual life in humans such as religious, intellectual and ethical. Nevertheless it is best to understand as the efforts of humans to claim their “inner and independent being”.⁴ It must be made clear that religion came first or culture. T.S. Elliot asserted that “no culture has appeared or developed except together with a religion: according to the point of view of the observer, the culture will appear to be the product of religion, or the religion the product of the culture”.⁵ It is reflected from his statement that development of culture and religion cannot be isolated from each other. Religion is the essential part of culture. Both are fundamentally related to each other. Collingwood has said that “the fundamental mode of cultural expression is derived from religious foundation of society”.⁶ In fact, culture of any society is its way of life. It is always based on certain principles. Originally, these principles were drawn from

¹ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org>

² Geddas Macgregar, *The Everyman Dictionary of Religion and Philosophy*, J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., London, 1990, p. 160.

³ Edward B. Taylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol., John Murray, Albemarle Street, London, Third Revised Edition 1891, p. 1.

⁴ James Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Volume IV, New York, Latest Impression 1967, p. 358.

⁵ T.S. Elliot, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, Faber and Faber Limited, London, Fifth Impression, 1954, p. 15.

⁶ Pritam Singh Gill, *Heritage of Sikh Culture, Society, Morality, Art*, New Academic Publishing, Jullundur, First Published, 1975, p. XIV.

the religious faith of the community. Similarly, by starting Sikh religion Guru Nanak provided a new social order with new social institutions and social doctrine. On the whole, Guru Nanak aimed to build an alternate culture, while abandoning the religious and socio-cultural life of that time. In fact, Guru Nanak's cultural consciousness had started a real community. So, we can say that the culture of the Sikhs is the direct product of their religion by origin.

It may be quite useful to discuss in brief about the socio-cultural milieu of Punjab before the origin of Sikhism. Hinduism and Islam were the two chief religions in the Punjab before the birth of Sikh religion. Both these religions had been degraded into "sets of formalities and ceremonials, which were performed by their votaries like mere automatons".⁷ The Hindus were perverted into the worship of stocks and stones, even Guru Nanak said that the Hindus had forgotten the Primal Lord, went to wrong way and worshipped the idols.⁸ The Muhammadans, particularly *Qazies*, *Shaiks* and *Fakirs* in their religious robes called themselves great but were affected with ego⁹ and they plundered and looted the people.¹⁰ Bhai Gurdas clearly described this in his *var* 1, *pauri* 21, which reflected the degenerated socio-religious condition of both the religions as "there are four castes of Hindus and four sects of Muslims in the world. The members of the both religions are selfish, jealous, proud, bigoted and violent. The Hindus make pilgrimages to Haridwar and Banaras, the Muslims to the *Kaaba* of Mecca. Circumcision is dear to the Muslims, sandal mark (*tilak*) and sacred thread to the Hindus. The Hindus invoke Ram, the Muslims, Rahim, but in reality there is only one God. Since they have both forgotten the Vedas and the *Katebas*, worldly greed and devil have led them astray. Truth is hidden from both; the *Brahmans* and *Maulvis* kill one another by their animosities. Neither sect shall find liberation from transmigration".¹¹

Undoubtedly, there were a number of reformers before the origin of Sikh religion who had tried to purify the religion. But they were impressed by the

⁷ Sewaram Singh, *The Divine Master A Study of the Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak Dev*, Rai Sahib M. Gulab Singh & Sons, Lahore, 1904, p.8.

⁸ *Mahalla 1, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 556* in Manmohan Singh (trans. English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 4, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandak Committee, Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 1996, p.1830.

⁹ *Gauri Mahalla 1, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 227* in Manmohan Singh (trans. English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 2, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandak Committee, Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 1994, p. 752.

¹⁰ *Salok Mahalla 1, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 951* in Manmohan Singh (trans. English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 6, Shiromani Gurdwara Pabandak Committee, Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 1996, p. 3119.

¹¹ *Bhai Gurdas, Var 1, Pauri 21* in Jodh Singh, *Varan Bhai Gurdas Text, Transliteration and Translation*, Vol.1, Vision and Venture Publisher, Patiala and Delhi, 1998, p. 51.

nothingness of life. Thus, they never tried to build up a new order of society as Cunningham had described, “Ramanand and Gorakh had preached religious equality, and Chaitan had repeated that faith leveled caste. Kabir had denounced images, and appealed to the people in their own language, and Vallabh had taught that effectual devotion was compatible with the ordinary duties of the world. But these good and able men appear to have been so impressed with the nothingness of this life, that they deemed the amelioration of man’s social condition unworthy of a thought.”¹² There is no denying the fact that Guru Nanak understood this situation quite well and generated the social- cultural awakening amongst his followers.

It should be noted that the society that was taking shape with a new awakening of socio-cultural modes during Guru Nanak’s period was “the precursor of historical Sikhism”. Ganda Singh sees Guru Nanak as “a revolutionary religious and social reformer”.¹³ For him, the period of Guru Nanak’s ministry was that “of the education and enlightenment of the people”.¹⁴ On the other hand, Harbans Singh has stated that Guru Nanak “reshaped the social mores and bringing into play new elements”.¹⁵ Both the Sikh historians Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh accepted Guru Nanak as the founder of Sikh religion. But unlike them, W.H. McLeod argues that it is misleading to say Guru Nanak the “founder” of the Sikh religion. He argued that Guru Nanak put forward the “clearest and most highly articulated expression of the *Nirguna Sampradaya*, the so-called *Sant* tradition of the North India”. He asserted that Guru Nanak’s teachings or thoughts were not original. Furthermore, Guru Nanak merely expressed “the influence of *Nath* doctrines and practice”. But it should be noted that W.H. McLeod apparently fails to notice that Guru Nanak enthusiastically criticized the escapist belief and ascetic practices of *Nath* tradition. Guru Nanak also did condemn the idolatrous worship of lower deities of *Vaisnava* Bhakti. In his another work, he acknowledged that in a certain sense, Guru Nanak is legitimately described as a founder. But he does not dwell much on this issue.¹⁶ However, Harbans Singh proposed that the Sikh religion started with “the revelation brought to light” by Guru

¹² Joseph Davey Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, H.L.O. Garrett (ed.), Low Price Publications, Delhi, Reprinted 1997, p. 34.

¹³ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikhs*, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, n.d. ,p. 1.

¹⁴ Ganda Singh, *Guru Nanak: His Life and Teachings*, Sikh Missionary Tract Society, Singapore, 1940, p. 49.

¹⁵ Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and Origins of The Sikh Faith*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1969, p. 209.

¹⁶ W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1975, pp. 5-6.

Nanak. Further, he rejected the very thing of relating Guru Nanak's religion with the precedent schools of thought. He explicitly asserted that indeed Guru Nanak was the founder of Sikh religion. In his words, "attempts have been made to split Guru Nanak's doctrine into various strands and to trace their origin to precedent schools of thought. But to understand Guru Nanak fully, we have to look at the totality of his tenet and at what impact it made on history. In this perspective, we shall see that Guru Nanak historically is the founder of Sikh faith." Furthermore, he accepted that the *Nathpanthis*, the *Sahajanyani*, the *Kapalikas*, the *Bhaktas* and the saints of the *Nirguna Sampradaya* like Namdev, Kabir and Ravidas were part of Guru Nanak's inheritance yet he stressed that Guru Nanak belonged none of these. For him Guru Nanak could not be placed in the organization of aforementioned reformers. He also proposed that though Guru Nanak's teachings shared some of the features of Hindu and Muslim practice, yet his teachings had its own "transcendent and dynamic character".¹⁷ Ganda Singh accepted that though Guru Nanak was born in a Hindu family, yet he stressed that the Sikh religion was founded by Guru Nanak. This was "stabilized by his successors was as separate from his ancestor religion as were Christianity and Islam from the religions of the ancestors or parents of Lord Jesus Christ and Prophet Muhammad". He suggested that "under divine inspiration Guru Nanak had broken away from his ancestral faith and had not embraced any other religion". Further, he emphasized that Guru Nanak's religion was his "own, independent of Hinduism and Islam".¹⁸ Similarly, Harbans Singh argued all the great religions of the world had their founders, so the Sikh religion had too.¹⁹ However, J.S. Grewal also rejects the *saint* theory of W.H. McLeod. He accepted that Guru Nanak is the founder of Sikh religion. He justifies this as "the use of common concepts by Guru Nanak and the saints does not mean that they occupy the same position. No institutionalization can be attributed to any saint before we come upon the Sikh movement. For the saints, liberation in life was a personal project; for Guru Nanak it was a social project. It was aimed for the redemption of others. The foundation of the Sikh faith and Sikh *Panth* can thus be attributed to Guru Nanak."²⁰ Even Bhai Gurdas

¹⁷ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, Second Revised and Updated Edition, 1994, p.4.

¹⁸ Ganda Singh, "Editorial", in Ganda Singh (ed.), "Sources on the Life & Teachings of Guru Nanak", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. III, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, p. 22.

¹⁹ Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and Origins of The Sikh Faith*, p. 222.

²⁰ J.S. Grewal, *Recent Debates in Sikh Studies An Assessment*, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 2011, p. 292.

in his *var 1* proposed that Guru Nanak had started a new religion (*Panth*) in this world.²¹

While writing about reforms of Guru Nanak in the society, Ganda Singh stated that to raise the social rank of women was Guru Nanak's "another reform". He argued that Guru Nanak felt women have been suffering a lot. Consequently, Guru Nanak stood up for their defense. He quotes Guru Nanak's hymn's *Asa Di Var* in which Guru Nanak advocated women's equality with men. He argues that woman gained dignity and respect in Sikh religion. They were placed on equal terms with men. Ganda Singh regarded Guru Nanak's this reform "an unprecedented improvement" in relation existing between the sexes in India. Moreover, this reform brought about a magnificent change for women's advancement.²² Like Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh has also used the same source and holds similar opinion. He has stated that Guru Nanak was acutely conscious of the inferior position of women in the society. Guru Nanak had made "many bold and sympathetic" statements for women. He agreed with Ganda Singh that among Guru Nanak's followers women were "given full equality with men".²³ On the other hand, W.H. McLeod suggested that Guru Nanak's hymn in *Asa Di Var* favors to equality for women with men had "carry us well beyond the conventional view" of his time. Significantly, he rightly observed because Guru Nanak held different views about women than the medieval poet-saints of North India.

But on the other hand, W.H. McLeod believed that Guru Nanak conferred equal opportunity on both men and women but in the sphere of spiritual liberation. For him, this was Guru Nanak's "radical beliefs". He argued that this equality "certainly marked a considerable step forward". But he did not accept that Guru Nanak wanted to "reorder the society". He further wrote that Sikh Gurus gave equality to women not in the sense that "woman might do everything that might be open to men".²⁴ But Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh accepted that Guru Nanak gave full equality to women with men. We are told that women were allowed to attend Guru Nanak's homilies along with men. Ganda Singh in one of his article entitled as "*Religion, Language and Emotional Integration-Sikhism*" wrote that the *langar*

²¹ *Bhai Gurdas Var1, Pauri 45* in Jodh Singh, *Varan Bhai Gurdas Text, Transliteration and Translation*, Vol.1, p. 75.

²² Ganda Singh, *Guru Nanak: His Life and Teachings*, pp. 45-46.

²³ Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and Origins of The Sikh Faith*, p. 210.

²⁴ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, Penguin Books, London, 1997, pp. 242-244.

institution was introduced by Guru Nanak. Food in the *langar* was cooked and served by men and women belonging to all classes and professions. He also argued that Guru Nanak gave women the “fullest responsibility” in all the matters including spiritual and social. Furthermore, Guru Nanak regarded women equal in every way in the sight of God.²⁵ Thus it can be right to say that Guru Nanak gave women equality not only for spiritual liberation as assumed by W.H. McLeod but women’s were treated at par with men in social sphere too.

Ganda Singh suggested that at the social and political level Guru Nanak saw caste as “incurable evil”. Guru Nanak understood that the caste system was accountable for moral and social humiliation and political collapse of the country. Ganda Singh stressed that by his own example as well as by his teachings, Guru Nanak taught to treat all human beings on terms of equality. He cited the examples of Guru Nanak’s friendship with minstrel Mardana, of the lowest caste of Muhammadans and Bala, a Jatt as Guru Nanak was from a high caste of Hindus. Guru Nanak abolished once for all the distinctions of caste in the constitution of his religion. By quoting Guru Nanak's hymns of *Prabhati*, *Sri Raag* and *Var Majh*, he proposed that Guru Nanak recognized no special privileges for the high caste peoples and nor did he held the low ones in compulsory subjection. Furthermore, Ganda Singh advocated that Guru Nanak considered untouchability as an evil practice. Guru Nanak criticized the very idea of uncleanness attached to God’s creations. He refused to admit of any divisions between the high caste Hindus and the so called untouchables.²⁶ According to Ganda Singh the “freedom of conscience” is the first requisite for the upliftment of down-trodden. He regarded that Guru Nanak laid the greatest stress on it. He argued that Guru Nanak’s institutions of *sangat* and *pangat* had brought awakening among the people about the vision of a “casteless democratic society”. In these institutions, all could claim an equal status.²⁷ Ganda Singh also pointed out that these institutions had not only “leveling and equalizing” influence upon the Sikhs. But strengthen their cohesion as a “separate nationality” too. These

²⁵ Ganda Singh, “Guru Nanak’s Impact on History” in Ganda Singh (ed.), *Sources on the Life & Teachings of Guru Nanak, The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. III, 1969, p. 414.

²⁶ Ganda Singh, *Guru Nanak: His Life and Teachings*, p.11-44.

²⁷ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Board, Delhi, 1971, pp. 10-11.

institutions also democratized their “social, religious and political organizations”.²⁸ Similarly, Harbans Singh on the basis of Guru Nanak’s words “there is no Hindu, there is no Muslim” stated that Guru Nanak rejected distinction between men on the basis of religion or caste. He believed that through this declaration, Guru Nanak was not disproving any religion or its followers. But, he was only saying that “all men were creatures of God, and hence equal”.²⁹ By quoting Guru Nanak’s hymns against caste practices, he stated that Guru Nanak did not accept any division among men on the basis of birth, caste and country. According to him, in Guru Nanak’s scheme of reforms “emphasis on equality and ethical conduct took precedence”. Furthermore, Guru Nanak preached the masses that “one, eternal and infinite God as the creator of all things. All His creatures were equal before Him.” Therefore to make divisions among His creatures was sinful.³⁰ Significantly, W.H. McLeod accepted that Guru Nanak vigorously condemned “pride based upon caste status, notions of purity and contamination arising out of the caste distinctions”. Furthermore, Guru Nanak also criticized any suggestion that “caste system was either necessary or advantageous in the individual’s approach to God”.³¹ Though, he had quoted a number of Guru Nanak’ hymns which criticized caste system yet he asserted that Guru Nanak was against this because it was obstacle to spiritual salvation. He concluded that the Sikh Gurus opposed the vertical distinctions of caste distinctions. But they also accepted this in terms of “horizontal linkage”.³² In his opinion, when the Sikh Gurus “compared with what they wrote about caste, were being insincere”. Because, according to him, Sikh Gurus were not in opposition to caste distinctions in all its aspects. The Sikh Gurus, according to him, indeed “advocated the renunciation of caste as a religious duty, but, they were prepared to retain it as a social convention”.³³ Obviously, he held different views from the selected Sikh historians as both of them accepted that Guru Nanak was against all features of caste system and wanted to abolish it. But it should be noted that Guru Nanak had started a number of institution in Sikh religion in which his

²⁸ Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of his Followers”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XI, April 1977, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 77.

²⁹ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 16 & p. 32.

³⁰ Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith*, p. 209.

³¹ W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, p. 209.

³² W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, pp. 85- 88.

³³ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 231.

hymns found “historical manifestation”. Harbans Singh rightly asserted that if Guru Nanak said all men are equal, he established the *langar* institution. This emphasized “in the common meal, true fellowship and equality”.³⁴

Furthermore, these selected historians discussed social-cultural awakening from *langar* institution. Ganda Singh proposed that it was in the institution of *langar* where all sat and ate together in the same row (*pangat*), irrespective of any caste and creed in life. In his opinion in this way, Guru Nanak brought all the Hindus, the Muslims, the Brahmans and the *sudras* to a common “social level”.³⁵ Unlike, Ganda Singh and W.H. McLeod, Harbans Singh also discussed the origin of the word *langar*. For him, *langar* was a Persian word that means “an almshouse, an asylum for the poor and the destitute or a public kitchen kept by a great man for his followers and dependents”.³⁶ Though, Kapur Singh and Sudarshan Singh are of the opinion that *langar* word is derived from Sanskrit word *analgrah* meaning “the cooking place”.³⁷ But in all the Persian and Urdu dictionaries it is mentioned as a Persian word.³⁸ Harbans Singh assumed *langar* institution as “of far-reaching importance”. Moreover, this institution meant equality, brotherhood and humbleness. For him, it, specifically, abolished the caste system.³⁹ He considered it as “an instrument of a far – reaching social revolution”.⁴⁰ Though, W.H. McLeod significantly accepted that *langar* institution was “developed as a deliberate attack on caste distinctions”. But, he raised doubtful questions about who started *langar* institution in Sikhism. He was in favor of the third Guru Amardas that this Guru had started *langar* institution. However, he accepted that *langar* express an ideal, which is clearly expressed in Guru Nanak’s works.⁴¹ Both the Sikh historians accepted that *langar* institution was first started in Sikh religion by Guru Nanak.⁴² However, both, on the basis of Guru Nanak’ hymns, stated that Guru Nanak rejected polytheism, idolatry and the attendant sacerdotalism.

³⁴ Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith*, p. 215.

³⁵ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikhs*, p. 2.

³⁶ Harbans Singh, *Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, Second Corrected Edition 1995, p. 23.

³⁷ Kapur Singh, *Parsharprasna or the Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, Hind Publishers Ltd, Jullundur, First Edition, 1959, p. 339. See also Sudarshan Singh, *Sikh Religion Democratic Ideals and Institutions*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2009, p. 85

³⁸ Parkash Singh, “Guru Amar Das and the Institution of *Langar*”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XIII-II, October 1979, p. 431.

³⁹ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 21.

⁴⁰ Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 4-5.

⁴¹ W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and The Sikh Religion*, p. 210.

⁴² Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and Origins of The Sikh Faith*, p. 180.

Significantly, W.H. McLeod also had similar views.⁴³ The selected historians agreed on the point that Guru Nanak did not advocate asceticism. Guru Nanak wanted that his disciples must live a householder life. This was identical with Guru Nanak's own hymns and the source *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*. This author of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* stated that "among the Sikhs there is nothing of the austerities and worship as enjoined by the religious laws of the Hindus".⁴⁴

Furthermore, Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh also assumed social awakening from *sangat* institution in their writings. But W.H. McLeod does not write much on this. Ganda Singh accepted Sikh *sangat* (mixed congregation) as an "important and powerful Sikh institution". The origin of *sangat* was seen by Ganda Singh at Talwandi, when Mardana played upon the *rabab* and Guru Nanak sang his hymns and imparted divine instructions to the growing congregation of his admirers of all castes and creeds. In Ganda Singh's opinion, Guru Nanak felt the "real cause of the misery of the people was their disunity born out of diversity of beliefs". Guru Nanak wanted to bring people together both "in thought and deed". Consequently, Guru Nanak started a "common social organization" based on the equality of humans. To fulfill his object, Guru Nanak established the *sangat* institution.⁴⁵ Ganda Singh also proposed that *sangat* institution eradicated all the distinctions of race, religion, caste, creed, high and low among the people. Moreover, this also "brought together the jarring elements of the various warring communities of India". By this way, this institution helped to knit the people into a "compact homogenous brotherhood of Sikhs".⁴⁶

About this, Harbans Singh also expressed similar views. According to Harbans Singh, the *sangat* institution united the Sikhs into a "brotherhood of fraternity". He had seen the *sangats* as "the Sikh communities in formation". The *sangats* for Harbans Singh like the "melting pot" that was for the high and the low, the twice born and the outcaste.⁴⁷ Harbans Singh, unlike Ganda Singh, accepts the origins of *sangat* institution from Guru Nanak's preaching, where all were admitted without

⁴³ W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and The Sikh Religion*, p. 210.

⁴⁴ Ganda Singh (tr.), "Nanak-Panthis or The Sikhs and Sikhism of the Mid-Eighteenth Century (Translated from the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*)", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. 1, Part 1, April 1967, p. 70.

⁴⁵ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, pp. 9-11. See also Ganda Singh, *Guru Nanak: His Life and Teachings*, p. 6.

⁴⁶ Ganda Singh, *Guru Nanak: His Life and Teachings*, pp. 11- 44.

⁴⁷ Harbans Singh, *Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism*, pp. 20-22.

dissimilarities of caste and creed.⁴⁸ W.H. McLeod makes a short reference about *sangat* institution in his writings as compared to Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh. But he on the basis of Bhai Gurdas's *Var* 28 mentions that the practice of gathering as a *satsang* for regular *kirtan* was a "specific and essential feature of the Nanak-panthi identity". Unlike Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh, he proposed that it was derived "from the traditional *Sant* emphasis on the value of associating with the truly devout".⁴⁹ In one of his writings, W.H. McLeod assumed that *sangat* is the place where food was taken together in absolute equality. But this was not his right assertion. However he was right when he wrote that in the *pangats*, "brahman does not have the right to sit forward nor should the outcaste withdraw to the rear".⁵⁰ It should be noted that *sangat* is the place in which the Sikhs mediate on the Name of the Lord.⁵¹ The institution of *sangat* means the mixed congregation of the Sikhs, while *pangat* is the place where all persons sit together in a row for dine. Harbans Singh stated that though in *sangat* institution "Sikhs gathered for prayer or religious ceremony" but it had "social implication" as well. *The sangat's* role in social awakening was also seen by Bhai Gurdas in his *Var* 18, *Pauri* 14 when he wrote "Guru Nanak accepted disciples from all the four *varnas* and founded the abode of truth in the form of holy congregation".⁵²

During his lifetime, Guru Nanak waved the canopy of Guru Seat on the head of Lahina as Guru Angad and merged his own light into him.⁵³ Both Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh agreed that Guru Angad consolidated the organization that he had inherited from his predecessor, Guru Nanak. Similarly, W.H. McLeod also admits that the Sikh *Panth* followed the pattern during Guru Angad's time as established by Guru Nanak.⁵⁴ Ganda Singh had seen Guru Angad as a "zealous preacher". He suggested that this Guru also strengthened the institutions of *sangat* and *pangat* that were started by Guru Nanak.⁵⁵ Both the Sikh historians agreed on the point that *langar* institution

⁴⁸ Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and Origins of The Sikh Faith*, p. 215.

⁴⁹ W.H. McLeod, *Who is Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1989, p. 19.

⁵⁰ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, pp. 230-231.

⁵¹ *Sri Raag Mahalla 3, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 26* in Manmohan Singh (trans. English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 1, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandak Committee, Amritsar, Seventh Edition, 2014, p. 90.

⁵² *Bhai Gurdas, Var 18, Pauri 14* in Jodh Singh, *Varan Bhai Gurdas Text, Transliteration and Translation*, Vol.1, p. 443.

⁵³ *Bhai Gurdas, Var 1, Pauri 45*, *ibid.*, p.75.

⁵⁴ W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, p. 7.

⁵⁵ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, p. 14.

was more strengthened by Guru Angad. Both accepted that this institution was presided over by Guru Angad's wife. But both do not mention her name as Bibi Khivi in their major writings.⁵⁶ But in his work *Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism* (pp.23-24), Harbans Singh provides the readers with her name. It seems W.H. McLeod does not accept the historical fact that Bibi Khivi assisted in the *langar*. For him, it was "tradition". In his words, "tradition relates that in this respect he was ably assisted by his wife, Khivi".⁵⁷ But it should be noted that even, contemporary source *Ramkali Ki Var* composed by Balwand and Satta, the *rabab*-players of Guru Angad and is incorporated in *Guru Granth Sahib*, gives a reference about Guru Angad's *langar* institution. They tell us that Mata *Khivi* used to look after all the details of *langar* personally and served the food to every person who came to see Guru Angad.⁵⁸ In this way, we can say that the example set by Guru Nanak to distribute *langar* to all persons regardless of any caste at Kartarpur was monitored with same meaning by Guru Angad.

Another contribution of Guru Angad for the socio-cultural awakening of the Sikhs was to popularize the *Gurmukhi* script among them. In fact, language is very vital element of human culture. In the development of culture, language is crucial constituent. It is most important factor in regard to the landscape of a culture.⁵⁹ Ganda Singh suggested that religion and language are "close co-coordinators". They have always played a "conspicuous part in the transformation of society into a well-knit unit of a people". According to him, Guru Angad popularized new Punjabi alphabets in *Gurmukhi* script to record compositions of Guru Nanak. He had also discussed the impact of the introduction of *Gurmukhi* script. According to him, this helped in the growth of literacy among the people of Punjab. By this way, the Sikhs acquainted themselves with the lives and doctrines of the Sikh Gurus. Consequently, Ganda Singh suggested that they no longer needed to depend on the Brahmin priests. Therefore, the *Gurmukhi* script transformed the people into a "new united society,

⁵⁶ Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, pp. 4-5.

⁵⁷ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 17.

⁵⁸ *Ramkali Ki Var*, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Ang 967 in Manmohan Singh (Tran. in English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 6, p. 3175.

⁵⁹ S. Datta, "Culture and Language" in Sneh Pandit (ed.), *Perspectives on the Philosophy of Culture*, S. Chand and Company Ltd., New Delhi, First Published, 1978, p. 61. See also Tengu Sepora Mahadi and Sepideh Moghaddas Jafari, "Language and Culture", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol. 29, No. 17, September 2012, Centre for Promoting Ideas (CPI), USA, p. 234.

independent of the *Brahmanical* priesthood”.⁶⁰ The statements of Ganda Singh are justified with references from Muhsin Fani’s *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*. He wrote that in the middle of seventeenth century Guru Nanak’s disciplines were not familiar with the Sanskrit language. He writes that “they have no regard for the Sanskrit language which, according to the Hindus, is the speech of the gods”.⁶¹ But for Harbans Singh, popularization of *Gurmukhi* script was Guru Angad’s “distinctive contribution”. It had promoted the “literary culture”. Moreover, it marked the commencement of the written literature in *Gurmukhi* script.⁶²

On the other hand, W.H. McLeod stated that it is believed that Guru Angad invented the *Gurmukhi* script. But according to him, “this conviction is comparatively a late development”. Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh also suggested that *Gurmukhi* script was popularized by Guru Angad not invented by him. For Ganda Singh it was invented by Guru Nanak “to meet the requirements of the Sikhs spread over different countries, speaking and writing in different languages, and to create and preserve a cultural unity”. Furthermore, Guru Nanak invented this to serve as a common scriptural medium among them.⁶³ Additionally, it was Guru Nanak who had modified the *Sharda* and *Tankri* letters, known as *Lande* to express the Punjabi sounds properly.⁶⁴ Harbans Singh also believed that this language was “refined and used by Guru Nanak for his own hymns”.⁶⁵ Sangat Singh shared his views: “Guru Nanak preached in the language of the people, Punjabi, which had its own *Gurmukhi* script. Guru Nanak perfected the script with acrophils, and laid down the rules of grammar closely following those of *Prakit*.”⁶⁶ However, W.H. McLeod assumed that this script was similar to the one that was used by the traders of the Punjab at that time. Thus, Guru Angad used to write in this language because he was *khatri* by caste.⁶⁷ But he does not give a reference about which script was used by the traders of the Punjab at

⁶⁰ Ganda Singh, “Religion, Language and Emotional Integration- Sikhism”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XIV-I, Serial No. 27, April 1980, pp. 47-51. See also Indubhusan Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol.1, A. Mukherjee & Co. (Private) Ltd., Calcutta, Third Edition, 1972, p. 157.

⁶¹ Ganda Singh (tr.), “Nanak-Panthis or The Sikhs and Sikhism of the Mid-Eighteenth Century (Translated from the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*)”, p. 57. See also, Saroop Das Bhalla, *Mahima Prakash*, Part- 1, Shamsheer Singh Ashok and and Gobind Singh Lambha (ed.), Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, 1970, p. 282.

⁶² Harbans Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, p. 10.

⁶³ Ganda Singh, *Guru Nanak: His Life and Teachings*, p. 48.

⁶⁴ Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of his Followers”, p. 44.

⁶⁵ Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith*, p. 15.

⁶⁶ Sangat Singh, *The Sikhs in History*, Uncommon Books, New Delhi, Fourth Edition, 2001, p. 22.

⁶⁷ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 19.

that time. We are told that the traders of the Punjab at that time used *Landa* language.⁶⁸ But it should be noted that this was not used for “literary purposes”. Furthermore, *Landa* alphabets “were used for household and trade purposes.”⁶⁹ We can say that though Guru Angad had not invented the *Gurmukhi* language but neither way the Guru adopted this language from traders because he was *khatri* by caste as W.H. McLeod had stated.

It is often believed that the status of women in a particular society is one of the main criteria to judge its culture and greatness. But with the change in times, the position of women also changes. *Pardah* and *sati* were one of the many social evil customs related to women in those times, which restricted not only their self-determination but in fact led to their social-cultural and intellectual stagnation. Guru Nanak was also a strong advocate of the cause of women whom the society had lessened to a state of subjection. Guru Nanak awakened the masses that they are in no way inferior to men.⁷⁰ But it was Guru Amardas, who opposed *pardah* and *sati* practices and awakened his followers not to follow them. Ganda Singh accepted Guru Amardas as a “great social reformer”.⁷¹ Both the Sikh historian Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh holds opinion that social emancipation of women was Guru Amardas’ “urgent concern”. Both accepted that Guru Amardas opposed the practice of *pardah*. Harbans Singh based his opinion on Saroop Das Bhalla’s *Mahima Prakash*. Both agreed that Guru Amardas led a zealous movement against the custom of *sati*. On the other hand, W.H. McLeod wrote that Guru Amardas “took a clear stand against *suttee*, by changing the meaning of the word to one which upheld the rights of women”.⁷² But he remains silent about the eradication of *pardah* by Guru Amardas. Harbans Singh also suggested that Guru Amardas gave special attention to the “amelioration of the position of women”. Furthermore, the Guru also gave women accountability of overseeing the communities of disciples but only in “certain

⁶⁸ G.B. Singh, *Gurmukhi Lippi Da Janam Te Vikas* (Punjabi), Panjab University, Chandigarh, Third Edition, 1981, p. 110. See also G.W. Leitner, *History of Indigenous Education in the Punjab Since Annexation and in 1882*, Language Department, Punjab, Reprinted April 1971, p. 37.

⁶⁹ Neo-Brahmi Generation Panel (NBGP), “Proposal for a Gurmukhi Script Root Zone Label Generation Ruleset (LGR)”, p. 5. See <https://www.icann.org>

⁷⁰ *Mahalla 1, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 473* in Manmohan Singh (trans. English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol.3, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandak Committee, Amritsar, Fourth Edition 1995, p.1562.

⁷¹ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, p. 14.

⁷² Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p .242.

sectors”.⁷³ But he does not mention the areas in which women were given authority by Guru Amardas to supervise community of disciples. However, according to Duncan Greenless, Guru Amardas trained and sent out 52 women as itinerant preachers to different parts of India.⁷⁴ But Ganda Singh and W. H. McLeod remain silent in this regard.

All the selected historians discuss the social-cultural awakening form *langar* institution during Guru Amardas period. Both Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh agreed on the point that Guru Nanak’s *langar* institution became more prominent during Guru Amardas’ period. Ganda Singh suggested that the eradication of caste and class distinctions preached by Guru Nanak received further impetus from Guru Amardas.⁷⁵ Further, Harbans Singh wrote that *langar* together with *sangat* institution helped “to establish a positive equalitarian tradition among the Sikhs”.⁷⁶ Both the Sikh historians agreed that while Guru himself lived on very simple food purchased with his own scanty earnings but his public kitchen was supplied with butter and refined eatables. This is also identical with Satta and Balwand’s reference of that in *Ramkali Ki Var*. The *Var* states that in Guru Amardas’ public kitchen clarified butter and refined wheat flour was served to eat.⁷⁷ Both the above mentioned Sikh historians had similar views that Guru Amardas made it compulsory for every visitor, though he was Hindu or Muslim or of any caste to partake food from Guru’s kitchen before seeing him. For Harbans Singh, by this way, Guru Amardas wants to “minimize the distinctions of caste and rank”. However, Harbans Singh had quoted *Mahima Prakash* to mention that even *Mughal* emperor Akbar had to eat *langar* from Guru Amardas’s kitchen like any other pilgrimage.⁷⁸ In one of his article entitled *Guru Gobind Singh and Untouchability*, W.H. McLeod wrote that actual date of founding of *langar* is obscure. But he proposed that it was functioning during Guru Amardas' period.⁷⁹ It is well known historical fact that the *langar* institution was started by Guru Nanak. Harbans Singh justified that Guru Nanak had started practical reform. If the Guru said that all

⁷³ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 33.

⁷⁴ Duncan Greenless, *The Gospel of The Guru-Granth Sahib*, The Theosophical Publishing House, Madras, Second Edition, 1960, p. IXV.

⁷⁵ Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of his Followers”, p. 44.

⁷⁶ Harbans Singh, *Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism*, p. 24.

⁷⁷ *Ramkali Ki Var, Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Ang. 968 in Manmohan Singh (trans. English & Punjabi) *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 6, p. 3178.

⁷⁸ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 33.

⁷⁹ W.H. McLeod, “Guru Gobind Singh and Untouchability”, *The Sikh Review*, Vol. XVI-XVII, No. 163-164, Feb-March 1967, Calcutta, p. 77.

men are equal, he established *langar* institution emphasizing in the common meal true fellowship and equality”⁸⁰ Even Guru Nanak in one of his aphorisms gives the importance of common commensality when he said that “only that person knows the right path who works for what he eats and gives some of what he has”.⁸¹ Though in his another work *Who is Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity* (p.13), W.H. McLeod again reiterated his supposition that “the *langar* is a particularly obscure institution as far as its period of introduction is concerned”. Significantly, he noted its impact on caste system. Further, he sees this as “advancing the process of defining a distinctive Sikh identity”. On the other hand, he asserted *langar* institution as a “second innovation”, which he attributed to Guru Amardas. Moreover, he proposed that Guru Amardas had probably borrowed this practice from the Sufis in order “to give practical expression to Guru Nanak’s ideal”.⁸² Harbans Singh though, accepted that some *Sufi khankahs* ran *langar* yet he asserted that in Sikh tradition, *langar* institution became fundamental part of Sikh community.⁸³ It is the view of Gurinder Singh Mann that “the *langar* was also an important part of the Sufi *khanqahs*. The Nath Yogis had their counterpart of *langar* in what they called the *bhandara*. The difference, however, is that Sikh *langar* was and continues to be maintained through voluntary contributors and never depended on the grants of local rulers or the charity of local people as in the case of the *khanqahs* and the *bhandaras*.”⁸⁴

Ganda Singh proposed that during Guru Amardas period, the Sikhs were to become more and more self-contained in “social matters” because Guru Amardas integrated the Sikh doctrine. He states that Guru Amardas introduced the system of using Guru’s hymns in performance of social ceremonies like marriage and death.⁸⁵ On the other hand, Harbans Singh accepted that Guru Amardas laid down for the Sikhs “simple ceremonies and rites for birth, marriage and death”. He observed that

⁸⁰ Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and the Origins of the Sikh Faith*, p. 215.

⁸¹ *Salok Mahalla 1, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 1245* in Manmohan Singh (trans. English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 7, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandak Committee, Amritsar, Sixth Edition, 2003, p. 4108.

⁸² Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 23. See also W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, p. 86.

⁸³ Harbans Singh, *Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism*, p. 23.

⁸⁴ Gurinder Singh Mann, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001, p. 140. However, for Arvind-Pal Singh Mandair that “the idea of a free common kitchen was not entirely new. Various Sufis orders and the Gorakhnath other in Punjab already operated free kitchens, but for Nanak the *langar* was an intrinsic part of the institutional framework he was developing”. Arvind-Pal Singh Mandair, *Sikhism A Guide for the Perplexed*, Bloomsbury, New Delhi, First Published, 2013, p.27.

⁸⁵ Ganda Singh, “The Sikhs”, p. 17.

these were the developing signs of a well-marked “social group”.⁸⁶ Their statements are identical with Bhai Gurdas' opinions. Bhai Gurdas described the way of living of the Sikhs of that period, which justified the statement of Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh as “weeping and wailing are there for the dead, but the *gurmukh* (the Guru-oriented) recite the *sohila* in the company of the saints on such occasions. The Sikh goes beyond the holy books of the Hindus and Muslims i.e. the Vedas and the *Katebas*, and neither rejoices at a birth nor mourns at a death. In the midst of desires he remains free from them.”⁸⁷

Harbans Singh considered that the Sikh faith began developing the signs of a well-marked “social group” when Guru Amardas appointed the opening days of *Baisakh*, *Magh* and also on the occasion of *Diwali* for the Sikhs “to forgather at Goindwal”. But Ganda Singh does not mention about this. On the other hand, W.H. McLeod had very different views from the above mentioned Sikh historian. He wrote that the Sikh *Panth* was growing during Guru Amardas' period; second generation of Sikhs came, thus the bond of immediate personal commitment with Guru Amardas was to become weak. He thinks that “bonds other than those based upon religious belief” became necessary. Thus Guru Amardas found the solution in recourse to “traditional Indian institution” by providing “new pilgrimage centre, but also distinctive festival days, distinctive rituals and collection of sacred writings”. He further wrote that Guru Nanak had rejected all of these, but Guru Amardas was “in different and more difficult circumstances and was compelled to return to them”.⁸⁸ He stated that the “new practices, together supplying a distinctive *panthic* ritual, might well seem to be in conflict” with the status quo. Further, Guru Nanak had stressed the interior nature of devotion and dismissed the various kinds of external ritual associated with conventional Hindu tradition or the orthodox *Islam* false and dangerous. So the decision of Guru Amardas was the kind of thing which Guru Nanak “abandoned and roundly condemned”.⁸⁹ In fact W.H. McLeod assumed that Guru Nanak only expressed the doctrines and ideals of the *sant* tradition of Northern India. According to him *sant*'s devotion was strictly an interior discipline. They spurned “all

⁸⁶ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 33.

⁸⁷ *Bhai Gurdas, Var 5, Pauri 14* in Bhai Jodh Singh, *Varan Bhai Gurdas Text, Transliteration and Translation*, Vol. 1, p. 154.

⁸⁸ W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, p. 8.

⁸⁹ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 24.

the exterior customs and practices as a means to liberation”.⁹⁰ By assuming, Guru Nanak was a *sant*, W.H. McLeod suggested that Guru Nanak was against the institutionalization of any kind. Thus he called these works of Guru Amardas as “innovation”. He assumed Sikh gathering on *Diwali*, *Maghi* and *Baisakhi* at Goindwal were not innovations at all. But Guru Amardas did little more than reintroduce “traditional Hindu festivals”.⁹¹ Ganda Singh observed in this regard that: “but for all practical purposes of history many a principle and reform which were only in the form of aphorisms in the utterance of the founder-prophet were either expounded, or propagated, or given a practical shape during the ministration of his successors. They are, therefore, only the subsequent links in the development of Sikh thought and belong to the periods of the later Gurus, and can only be introduced into history at their respective places”.⁹² The gathering of the Sikhs at particular days was not originated as the same way of Hindus as W.H. McLeod had believed. Even Guru Amardas ordered his Sikhs that on the day of *Gurpurbs*, *Baisakhi* and *Diwali* they must pray to God together, prepare *parsad* and *karah* and give the *parsad* and clothes to the needy.⁹³

On the other hand, Harbans Singh wrote that sacred *baoli* built by Guru Amardas became “an important point of pilgrimage attraction”. For the Sikhs, Goindwal became the “religious centre”.⁹⁴ But unlike the selected Sikh historians, W.H. McLeod believed that it was tradition which ascribed the digging of *baoli* at Goindwal at the command of Guru Amardas. Later on, he admits this tradition as “accurate”. W.H. McLeod assumed that purpose of the well was “more than mere provision of drinking water”. But he does not mention the purposes. He had seen all this as against the teachings of Guru Nanak. He has also included this in “distinctive *panthic* rituals”. He writes, “if we set this new well against the teachings of Guru Nanak we find an apparent contradiction. Guru Nanak, with all the characteristic Saint emphasis upon interiority, had declared in very plain terms that there was only *tirth*, only one pilgrimage-centre for the true devotee, and that was within his own heart”.⁹⁵ But, it should be noted that hymns of Guru Amardas were in complete harmony with

⁹⁰ W.H. McLeod, *Who is a Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity*, pp. 7-8.

⁹¹ W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, p. 9.

⁹² Ganda Singh, *Guru Nanak: His Life and Teachings*, p. 32.

⁹³ Shahid Bhai Mani Singh Ji Gyani, *Bhai Gurdas Ji Di Gyarvi Var Da Teeka Arthat Sikhian Di Bhagatmala*, BhaiVir Singh (ed.), Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 1966, p. 67.

⁹⁴ Harbans Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, p. 11.

⁹⁵ W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, pp.8-9.

the Guru Nanak' hymns and his doctrinal lines. Guru Amardas had never abandoned the teachings of Guru Nanak. Even in one of his hymns, Guru Amardas have importance to heart as the place of God in human body. Guru Amardas says, "in this mind are found Banaras, all sacred shrines of pilgrimage and the *Shastras*; the True Guru has explained this. The sixty-eight places of pilgrimage remain with one, whose heart is filled with the Lord."⁹⁶ However, W.H. McLeod accepts that "a strong element of distinction appeared" as he wrote the pilgrimage centre is in Goindwal, not at Hardwar, Kurukshetra or at any of the other places which Guru's followers might have visited. He also accepts that at that time Sikh *Panth* was developing a "consciousness of its own separate nature". But he thinks, "this point should not be emphasized too strongly", because he still believes that people followed the Hindu practices, within the Sikh beliefs and practices.⁹⁷ Harbans Singh tried to justify that there was no departure from Guru Nanak's teachings as "the development of Sikh thought and life may be understood as the outcome of the interaction of the original impulse imparted by Guru Nanak and the exigencies of contemporary social environment. Challenges arose: new situations demanded and elicited new answers. Points of transfiguration were reached and worked out. Yet it is possible to discern in this process a basic harmony and continuity attributable primarily to the ever-present Nanak legend".⁹⁸

Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod all agreed on the point that during Guru Amardas' time, the number of the Sikh followers considerably increased. Consequently, Guru Amardas felt that it is necessary to organize the scattered *sangats* into a system. Thus, Guru Amardas started *manji* system. All the selected historians agreed that each *manji* was under the charge of devoted *Sikh* whose work was to preach the mission of the Guru and to keep the local body in touch with the centre. Harbans Singh also stated that the *manji* holder also transmitted the disciples' offering to Goindwal.⁹⁹ W.H. McLeod considered that the *manji* system was an "innovation" made by Guru Amardas. Further, he regarded this system was established "for

⁹⁶ *Gujri Mahalla 3, Panchpade, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 491-492* in Manmohan Singh (Trans. English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 3, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandak Committee, Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 1995, p. 1622.

⁹⁷ W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, pp. 8-9.

⁹⁸ Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith*, p. 225.

⁹⁹ Ganda Singh, "The Impact of Guru Nanak's Teachings on the Lives of his Followers", p. 45. See also, Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 32. Ganda Singh also listed the 22 *manjis*. See Ganda Singh, "The Twenty-two Manjis Established by Guru Amardas", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XIII-II, October 1979, pp. 467-468.

administrative purposes”.¹⁰⁰ It should be noted that *manjis* are given as “reward for selfless and devoted service rendered by the devotee”. In fact this is a “missionary order.”¹⁰¹

The fourth Sikh Guru, Guru Ramdas succeeded as the Guru in 1574. Guru Ramdas made significant contributions for the development of Sikh religion. Ganda Singh considered that Guru Ramdas gave to the Sikhs “a rallying centre” at Amritsar.¹⁰² On the other hand, he assumed that the city of Amritsar gave to the Sikh organization “compactness and solidarity”. According to him, this was needed the most at this stage of the development of Sikh religion.¹⁰³ By quoting the *Amritsar Gazetteer*, Ganda Singh wrote that “in 1577 he obtained a grant of the site, together with 500 *bighas* of land, from Emperor Akbar, on payment of Rs 700 *Akbari* to the *zamindars* of Tung who owned the land”. He further wrote that Guru Ramdas dug the tank and laid the foundation of Amritsar city.¹⁰⁴ Harbans Singh observed that Guru Ramdas propagated a religion of “loving devotion and service to humanity”. He considered the development of Amritsar by Guru Ramdas as the “development of another seat of Sikh faith” and this became “the principal seat” of Sikhism. But he does not mention like Ganda Singh that Guru Ramdas had taken 500 *bighas* land from Akbar. He only wrote that in 1577 Guru Ramdas purchased land from the farmers of Tung village. W.H. McLeod remains silent in this regard. While Ganda Singh wrote that this place was called *Chak Guru*, *Chak Ramdasor* Ramdaspur. Harbans Singh wrote that this place came to be known as Ramdaspur or *Guru Chakk*. But he had similar views like Ganda Singh that Guru Ramdas at this place dug a tank called Amritsar – “the pool of immortality”.¹⁰⁵ Like the Sikh historians, W. H. McLeod has called this new centre *Chak Guru* or Ramdaspur. According to him, later it came to be known as Amritsar. But the historians had different views on the intention behind this move. W.H. McLeod believed that the hostility of Guru Amardas’ sons was

¹⁰⁰ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 23.

¹⁰¹ Though, Fauja Singh also called “innovation” but he proposed this was “an urgent need of the time and immensely helped in the spread of Sikhism”. Fauja Singh, “Institution of Manjis by Guru Amardasji”, *The Sikh Review*, Vol. 42.5, May 1994, pp. 15-20.

¹⁰² Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, p. 14.

¹⁰³ Ganda Singh, The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of his Followers, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XI-I April 1977, p. 46.

¹⁰⁴ Ganda Singh, “The Sikhs”, pp. 17-18.

¹⁰⁵ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, pp. 35-36.

responsible for the move of Guru Ramdas to Amritsar from Goindwal.¹⁰⁶ Ganda thinks that in order to avoid any possible unpleasant with the relatives of Guru Amardas, Guru Ramdas shifted his residence to Amritsar. But Kesar Singh Chhiber wrote that Guru Ramdas considered the necessity of a pilgrimage for Sikhs. The Guru received the land from Akbar. In 1633 *Sammatt* i.e. in 1576 Guru Ramdas came to Amritsar and began the construction of city and named it *Chak Guru*.¹⁰⁷

Ganda Singh wrote that Guru Ramdas invited men of 52 various trades to open their business in the *Guru-ka-bazar*. But Harbans Singh does not mention like this. But he assumed that soon *Guru-ka-Chak* was “throbbing with a new life”. He further wrote that the merchants and artisans came to Amritsar to settle from distant places. Consequently, trade increased. In this way, Guru Ramdas had created a town which became the “religious capital of the Sikhs”.¹⁰⁸ Ganda Singh observed that it was the influence of the teaching of Sikh Gurus that all prejudices against hard work and trade were abolished. People began to take active part in worldly affairs. He also wrote that Guru Ramdas encouraged his Sikhs to help “their fellow businessmen in their work”. Further, he assumed that from that time onwards the trades “of horse-dealing, banking, embroidery and carpentry in addition to agriculture became prevalent among them”.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, W.H. McLeod remained silent in this regard.

All the selected historians accepted that Guru Ramdas started *masand* system. Harbans Singh accepted this as “another factor” which contributed in the consolidation of the Sikh *Panth*.¹¹⁰ Harbans Singh and Ganda Singh both agreed that the *masands* went from place to place within their districts preaching Sikhism. They also collected the offerings from the Guru’s disciples. These offerings they offered to the Guru every six month, on the occasion of *Baisakhi* and *Diwali*.¹¹¹ According to W.H. McLeod, Guru Ramdas appointed the *masands* who acted on the behalf of the Guru “in the more dispersion of his *sangats*”. The intention of Guru Ramdas to set up

¹⁰⁶ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 26.

¹⁰⁷ Kesar Singh Chhiber, *Bansawlinama Dasan Patshahia Ka*, Pyara Singh Padam (ed.), Singh Brothers, Amritsar, First Edition, 1997, pp. 70-71.

¹⁰⁸ Ganda Singh, “The Sikhs”, p. 18. See also Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 36.

¹⁰⁹ Ganda Singh, “The Sikhs”, p. 18.

¹¹⁰ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 36.

¹¹¹ Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of his Followers”, pp. 45-46. See also Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 36.

masand system was to “care for the needs of the scattered *sangats* and remit their offerings to the Guru”.¹¹²

Ganda Singh thinks that the Sikh Guru’s teachings engendered the “spirit of service and self-sacrifice”. This was crystallized during the time of Guru Arjan, but into “distinct national traits”.¹¹³ He admits, Guru Arjan as “a great scholar and a devoted Sikh proficient” in the doctrine of the Sikh faith.¹¹⁴ Harbans Singh proposed that the works done by first four Sikh Gurus was “preparatory”. The Sikh faith assumed “more definite form” in the hands of Guru Arjan. He regarded that “religious and social ideals” of Sikhism received permanency in practice during Guru Arjan’s period.¹¹⁵ Both Harbans Singh and Ganda Singh proposed that Guru Arjan laid the foundation of *Darbar Sahib* with four door opening on all sides. This signified that Sikh worship and worship place was open to all. Ganda Singh suggested that *Darbar Sahib* is unlike the old Indian temples because they had a single entrance, but the *Darbar Sahib*’s four doors offered welcome to all people without any discrimination of caste and creed.¹¹⁶ He suggested that *Darbar Sahib* is a symbol of the “culture and conduct of the Sikh people”. Moreover, it expressed a “liberal religious tradition consecrated by noble deeds of piety, sacrifice and heroism”.¹¹⁷ Harbans Singh stated that the first mission of Guru Arjan was the finalization of the Amritsar pool. He wrote that on “15 Oct, 1588 Guru Arjan laid out a temple in the middle of the tank”. By quoting Giani Gian Singh’s *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Gulam Muhay-ud-din also known as Bute Shah’s *Tawarikh-i-Punjab* (MS) and Sohan Lal Suri’s *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Harbans Singh has highlighted the role of Miyan Mir in the construction of *Darbar Sahib*. But Ganda Singh and W.H. McLeod had been silent on this issue. Ganda Singh proposed that Guru Arjan, helped the people to sink wells and undertake several other works but for “public weal”. This was particularly due “to alleviate the hardship caused by famine” which then gripped the Punjab. Furthermore, he assumed that the founding of Tarn Taran and Kartarpur was Guru Arjan’s contribution “to the life of Punjab”.¹¹⁸ Harbans Singh asserted that Guru Arjan’s works like foundation of

¹¹² Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 26 & 50-51.

¹¹³ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, p. 16.

¹¹⁴ Ganda Singh, “The Sikhs”, p. 18.

¹¹⁵ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 37.

¹¹⁶ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikhs*, p. 6. See Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Golden Temple*, The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, 1977, p. 5.

¹¹⁷ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikhs*, p. 6.

¹¹⁸ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of The Sikh People*, p. 16.

Tarn Tarn, sink wells and construction of *Baoli* at Lahore showed his “concern and leadership extended to social and economic spheres as well”.¹¹⁹ W.H. McLeod offered his hypothesis that in the period of Guru Arjan, “expanding numbers of converts” was continued but in “rural areas” because the towns like Tarn Tarn, Kartarpur and Sri Hargobindpur first appeared in rural areas. In other words, a large number of convert was from *Jat* territory.¹²⁰ But for Kanhaiya Lal, Guru Arjan did all this for the benefits of people.¹²¹ In this way, W.H. McLeod discuss about the sudden shift in the social constituency of the Sikh *Panth*. But it is well known that the process of the entry of rural peoples within the Sikh *Panth* had already initiated during the time of Guru Nanak at Kartarpur and it continued under his successors Sikh Gurus. We are told that “the settlement at the village of Kartarpur certainly represented the rural headquarters for the nascent Sikh community. It was founded in the midst of a wide expanse of cultivated land that Guru Nanak had managed to purchase for himself”.¹²²

Ganda Singh had suggested that renunciation of the world was not part of the Sikh doctrine. There was no prejudice against any kind of trade and occupation in Sikhism.¹²³ In his opinion, Guru Arjan wants to keep the Sikhs away from the Hindu ascetic way of life. Consequently, Guru Arjan motivated the Sikhs to follow the usual professions of life.¹²⁴ Though Harbans Singh accepted Guru Arjan’s contribution to the encouragement of trade and agriculture, but he had also believed that through this “a stable economic base was secured”.¹²⁵ But he does not elaborate this more. W.H. McLeod remains silent on this issue. We are also told that Guru Arjan sent his disciples to Kabul, Kandhar and Sindh even Turkistan not only to propagate the Sikh faith but also for the motive of trade.¹²⁶

“Guru Arjan gave to Sikhs a scripture of their own, the holy *Guru Garnth Sahib* in which he compiled the hymns of the preceding Gurus along with his own

¹¹⁹ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 38.

¹²⁰ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 29.

¹²¹ Kanhaiya Lal, *Tarikh-i- Punjab*, Jeet Singh Seetal (Translated), Punjabi University Patiala, 1968, p. 24.

¹²² Pashaura Singh, “Revisiting the “Evolution of the Sikh Community”, *Journal of Punjab Studies*, Vol.17, Number 1& 2, Spring-Fall, 2010, University of California, Santa Barbara (USA), p. 56.

¹²³ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, p. 15.

¹²⁴ Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of his Followers”, pp. 46-47.

¹²⁵ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 37.

¹²⁶ H.A. Rose (Compiled), *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province*, Language Department, Punjab, Second Reprint 1990, p. 683. See also Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.1, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi, 2008, p. 133.

compositions and of a number of Hindu and Muslim saints, including some belonging to the so called untouchables class". Ganda Singh accepted that, the compilation of *Guru Granth Sahib* was to keep up with the "cosmopolitan nature of the Sikh faith" as enunciated by Guru Nanak and his successors. He suggested that Guru Arjan rejected the compositions of some others as "unsuitable for the Sikh scripture because of their *vedantic* learning or because of their hatred for the world or for women". But he does not give their names. It should be noted that as Ganda Singh stated Guru Arjan wanted "only healthy optimism and joy in worldly duties and responsibilities but not mere tearful ecstasism or other- worldliness".¹²⁷ We are told that Shajju Bhagat, Kana and Shah Husain's compositions were rejected due to their ego.¹²⁸ Ganda Singh called *Guru Granth Sahib* as the "bible of the people". He also noticed the "cosmopolitan character and outlook" of *Guru Granth Sahib*. In his opinion, the central temple at Amritsar and *Guru Granth Sahib* gave to Sikh religion "the shape of a regular church".¹²⁹ According to Harbans Singh, *Guru Granth Sahib* is a "perennial fountain of inspiration and the means of self-perpetuation" for the Sikh community. He admits that *Harimandir Sahib* and the *Guru Granth Sahib* are the two concrete statements for the "crystallizing Sikh faith". In his opinion, the *Harimandir Sahib* provided a "central place of worship", whereas the *Guru Granth Sahib* became "a key factor in the organization of the Sikh community".¹³⁰ Up to the period of Guru Arjan, Ganda Singh stated in his article titled *Religion, Language and Emotional Integration – Sikhism* that Sikhs were completely "liberated from the Hindu fold". Because, they had their own religious centre and a scripture which assisted them to censure the *Brahmanical* fold. On the other hand, Harbans Singh proposed that both of these institutions played a great part in "moulding Sikh self-consciousness and in the reification of Sikh life and society". Harbans Singh had seen *Guru Granth Sahib* role as "the guide of the Sikhs in spiritual and religious matters for all time". He regarded *Guru Granth Sahib* as "the source of their literary tradition". It shaped their "intellectual and cultural environment". Further, he suggested that *Guru Granth Sahib*

¹²⁷ Ganda Singh, "The Sikhs", p. 19.

¹²⁸ Kanhaiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, p. 24.

¹²⁹ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikhs*, p. 7.

¹³⁰ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 43.

gave form and meaning to their “religious style and social customs”.¹³¹ Significantly, W.H. McLeod like the Sikh historians proposed that Guru Arjan made a contribution of “fundamental significance” with the compilation of *Guru Granth Granth* for the Sikh community.¹³² He accepted the centrality of the *Guru Granth Sahib* in “Sikh customs” and its importance to the Sikh *Panth*. He stressed the function of *Guru Granth Sahib* in customary usage as “of fundamental importance”. For him, this function had maintained the Sikh *Panth*’s cohesion.¹³³ Harbans Singh has also expressed his views on the need for the compilation of the *Adi Granth*. Unlike him, W.H. McLeod proposed that it was a “tradition” that Guru Arjan decided to prepare *Guru Granth Sahib* due to the circulation of the spurious works by Prithia. Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh claimed that *Guru Granth Sahib* “is the only scripture which has come down through the generations in its original form without the change of a single letter or a vowel sign”. But W.H. McLeod has stated the “unsolved textual problems associated with the *Granth*”.¹³⁴ He proposed that the authentic version of *Guru Granth Sahib*, which is used by the Sikhs today, is open to question. As he assumed, there are three manuscripts which are not entirely identical. But, both Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh considered that *Guru Granth Sahib*’s first manuscript is preserved in *Gurdwara Sheesh Mahal* at Kartarpur in the Jalandhar District.¹³⁵

After Guru Arjan, Guru Hargobind became the sixth Guru of the Sikhs in 1606. Guru Hargobind was succeeded by his grandson Guru Har Rai, son of Baba Gurditta in 1644. Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both agreed that Guru Har Rai had “a rare combination of strength and tenderness”. On the other hand W.H. McLeod does not believe this. He stated that Guru Har Rai was a person of very gentle nature, but only for the “Sikh tradition”. He believed that what happened to the Sikh *Panth* during Guru Har Rai’s period “is exceedingly difficult to tell”.¹³⁶ Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both suggested that Guru Har Rai kept daily practice of *langar* like his

¹³¹ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 39-43.

¹³² W.H. McLeod, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, p. 8.

¹³³ W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, pp. 60- 69.

¹³⁴ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikhs*, p. 7. See also W.H. McLeod, *Who is Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity*, p. 14.

¹³⁵ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikhs*, p.7. See also Harbans Singh, “Sri Guru Granth Sahib: Guru Eternal for the Sikhs”, *The Sikh Review*, Vol. XXXVI, No.417, September 1988, Calcutta, p. 9.

¹³⁶ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 40.

predecessors Sikh Gurus.¹³⁷ Both agreed on the point that Sikhism made good progress under Guru Har Rai, but W.H. McLeod without citing any source asserted that with Guru Har Rai's succession, the Sikh *Panth* "retired into obscurity for at least twenty-five years".¹³⁸ But Ganda Singh proposed that Guru Har Rai spent most of his time in preaching the Sikh religion in the Jalandhar *Doab* and the *Malwa* territory. Consequently, it helped in deepened the influence of the Sikh Gurus teachings on the minds of people. He writes, "it is an undeniable fact of history that it was the result of this impact that the Sikhs of these areas not only stood by Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Singh Bahadur in their days of adversity but also acted as bulwark and shelter for their brothers-in-faith during the first half of the eighteenth century when the Sikhs were outlawed by Emperor Bahadur Shah (1707-1712) and his successors, and were ordered to be killed at sight".¹³⁹ But W.H. McLeod had quite different views. For him, periodic tours in Malwa of Guru Har Rai's increased the number of followers but there was decline in number in *Doaba*, mostly in *Majha* area due to the loss of essential contact with their Guru.¹⁴⁰ But he does not cite any source in this regard.

Guru Har Rai was succeeded by his younger son HarKrishan in 1661. Ganda Singh and W.H. McLeod wrote very little about this Guru in their writings in comparison to Harbans Singh. Harbans Singh proposed that Guru HarKrishan carried on the teachings of the Sikh Gurus and kept their legacy intact.¹⁴¹ Guru HarKrishan was followed by Guru Tegh Bahadur in 1664. Ganda Singh thinks that due to the teachings of Guru Tegh Bahadur "an unprecedented sense of cohesion" was created among the Sikhs. For Sikhs, Guru Tegh Bahadur was as "their beau-ideal of life".¹⁴² Harbans Singh also holds opinion with him. He proposed that Guru Tegh Bahadur's leadership provided the Sikh community "further cohesion and strength".¹⁴³ Ganda Singh believed that Guru Tegh Bahadur undertook extensive tours in the country due to keep the flame of Sikh religion lightened up. It was also to "enthuse and

¹³⁷ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p.53.

¹³⁸ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 40.

¹³⁹ Ganda Singh, "The Impact of Guru Nanak Teachings on the Lives of his Followers", pp. 51-52.

¹⁴⁰ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 40.

¹⁴¹ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 57.

¹⁴² Ganda Singh, "The Sikhs", p. 31.

¹⁴³ Harbans Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, p. 2.

strengthen” the *sangats* established by the previous Sikh Gurus.¹⁴⁴ But W.H. McLeod questioned the journeys of Guru Tegh Bahadur. He does not give his views in this regard. For him, it is a matter of “conjecture”. Moreover, these were the “traditional sources”, which declared it as “missionary journey”. However, he does not clarify his stand. We are told that Guru Tegh Bahadur started his travels across the country for the emancipation of the world.¹⁴⁵ Ganda Singh suggested that during his journey in Bangar area, Guru Tegh Bahadur preached people to relinquish violence and stealing. The people should live in harmony with their neighbors.¹⁴⁶ For Harbans Singh, Guru Tegh Bahadur’s teachings and practice moulded “religious and social conduct of the Sikhs”. This Guru created a new “zeal and environment for moral and energetic living”. Harbans Singh proposed that the result of Guru Tegh Bahadur’s journey at Southeastern Punjab and the Bangar area that “a new awakening was spread” in the country. Consequently, many people were attracted towards Sikh religion. In fact as said by Harbans Singh “it was the beginning of a vital social and religious transformation for them”. Guru Tegh Bahadur redeemed the people from the worship of Muslim *pir*, Sultan *Sakhi Sarvar*. This Guru encouraged the peoples to give up the superstitions. They should have to worship only the one Supreme Lord.¹⁴⁷ This is also identical with the source *Malwa Desh Rattan Di Sakhi Pothi* which tells that Guru Tegh Bahadur prohibited Bhai Desu to become the follower of *Sakhi Sarvar*.¹⁴⁸

Ganda Singh suggested that up to the period of Guru Gobind Singh the Sikh community passed through “all the stages required for its growth to full stature”. It was Guru Gobind Singh who had given it the final shape.¹⁴⁹ Harbans Singh proposed that the *Khalsa* institution by Guru Gobind Singh was “the climax of the 230 years of spiritual and social awakening” since Guru Nanak. But he argued that in the *Khalsa* it came “to fruition of basic impulse”.¹⁵⁰ But on the other hand, W.H. McLeod had very different assumption from above mentioned Sikh historian. He asserted that the

¹⁴⁴ Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak Teachings on the Lives of his Followers”, p.52.

¹⁴⁵ Sir Sardar Attar Singh Ji Rais Bhadour, *Sahib Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji Ate Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji De Malwa Desh Rattan Di Sakhi Pothi*, Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, Second Edition, January 1968, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶ Ganda Singh, “The Sikhs”, p. 31.

¹⁴⁷ Harbans Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, pp. 54-93.

¹⁴⁸ Sir Sardar Attar Singh Ji Rais Bhadour, *Sahib Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji Ate Sahib Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji De Malwa Desh Rattan Di Sakhi Pothi*, pp.15-16.

¹⁴⁹ Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of his Followers”, p. 59.

¹⁵⁰ Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 51.

institution of the *Khalsa* with its conspicuous external symbols could not be reconciled with Guru Nanak's "adamant insistence that external features must necessarily stand squarely in the way of liberation through the divine Name".¹⁵¹ Moreover, for him the "external symbols of *Khalsa* is the direct antithesis of Nanak's insistence upon the interior nature of religious belief".¹⁵² However, Teja Singh rightly remarks that "the institution of *Khalsa* entails certain additional disciplinary outfits in the shape of baptismal forms and vows which are often misunderstood".¹⁵³ Ganda Singh believed that with the institution of *Khalsa*, there came no change in the fundamental tenets of Sikh faith. In his opinion, Guru Gobind Singh had completely identified himself with Guru Nanak's teachings. He carried out both in letters and spirit "his mission of religious and social reform".¹⁵⁴ In the words of Ganda Singh, "indeed Nanak had already taken to farming and was sowing the seed of which the harvest was irrigated and tended by his nine successors and true to his prediction was ripe, in the form of the *Khalsa* during the time of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru."¹⁵⁵ Similarly, Harbans Singh like Ganda Singh gives a valuable remark that the institution of *Khalsa* was, not against the Sikh religion as propagated by Guru Nanak. Though he proposed that the faith founded by Guru Nanak became a "political force", but he also accepted that there was "no departure from the essential tenets" preached by Guru Nanak. According to him, all the features of *Khalsa* discipline "were traceable to the doctrines sanctioned by Guru Gobind Singh's predecessors".¹⁵⁶ Sainapati also underlined the unity of Sikh Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. Bhai Nand Lal Goya also emphasizes the harmony in the teachings of all the

¹⁵¹ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 55.

¹⁵² W.H. McLeod, *Historical Dictionary of Sikhism*, The Scarecrow Press, Maryland, 2005, pp. 8-9.

¹⁵³ He also stressed that as flags, drills and uniforms are necessary for discipline, so the "certain forms and ceremonies are in religion". Furthermore, "the forms are art of the religion". Teja Singh, *Sikhism Its Ideals and Institutions*, Khalsa Brothers, Amritsar, Reprinted 1970, pp. 30-31.

¹⁵⁴ Ganda Singh, "Development of Sikh Thought up to the End of the 18th Century", p. 2. Hari Ram Gupta proposed that "Guru Gobind Singh did not introduce any change in the essential principles established by Nanak. He made certain change in their interpretation". See Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 331. See also, Indubhusan Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. II, A. Mukherjee & Co Private Ltd, Calcutta, Second Edition, 1962, p.128.

¹⁵⁵ Ganda Singh, *Guru Nanak: His life and Teachings*, p.6.

¹⁵⁶ Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 51. Niharranjan Ray also believed that what Guru Gobind Singh did, in fact was the logical culmination of the process started by Guru Nanak himself. Niharranjan Ray, *The Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Society*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi, Second Revised Edition, 1975, p. 69.

Sikh Gurus. He says, “Guru Gobind Singh is also the same as Nanak is also the same”.¹⁵⁷

The creation of the *Khalsa* on 30 March 1699¹⁵⁸ was an epoch-making event in Indian history. In Ganda Singh’s opinion, the first thing for Guru Gobind Singh was to “change the psychology of followers”. For this, Guru Gobind Singh introduced a new form of baptism called *Khande de Pahul*.¹⁵⁹ The purpose of Guru Gobind Singh in founding the *Khalsa* institution according to Ganda Singh was to “build up a united nation of purified ones” that “would be free from the social evils and prejudices and would be devoted to the service of the country”.¹⁶⁰ But Harbans Singh considered that the creation of the *Khalsa* institution was the realization of Guru Gobind Singh’s “divinely inspired vision and of its design for the upliftment of the people”. He regarded it as “a grand creative deed of history” which had produced a “revolutionary change” in the mind of peoples. Further, the “amelioration of man in relation to society” was also the main object for the creation of the *Khalsa*. Harbans Singh’s this statement is identical with Guru Gobind Singh’s autobiography *Bachittar Nattak* which was completed in 1698.¹⁶¹ This source tells us that Guru Gobind Singh was sent into this world by the preceptor Lord to propagate righteousness. The Lord asked him to spread *Dharma*, and vanquished the tyrants and evil-minded persons.¹⁶² Considerably, W.H. McLeod accepted that the creation of the *Khalsa* by Guru Gobind Singh was “an event of absolutely primary importance in the life of the *Panth*” and “the most important event in all Sikh history”. But unlike Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh, he does not accept the year 1699 as the creation of the *Khalsa*. He considered that it was “tradition” which relate the year 1699, in which Guru Gobind Singh took a “decisive action”. In his own words, “the year 1699 is not definitely established as the date of foundation, but it is overwhelmingly accepted by the Sikhs today.” Yet he in the footnote of his work *Sikhism* on page 304 accepted that 1699 year is strongly

¹⁵⁷ Sainapati, *Sri Gur Sobha*, Kulwant Singh (Trans. English.), Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, 2014, pp. 18-19. See also Bhai Nand Lal ‘Goya’, “Jot Bigas”, Ganda Singh (Trans.), *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. III, 1969, p. 360. See also Hari Singh (ed.), *Parchian Sewa Das* (Punjabi), Bhasha Vibhag, Patiala, Second Edition, 1978, pp. 49-50.

¹⁵⁸ Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Volume One (1469-1765), p. 67. See also Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 44.

¹⁵⁹ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, pp. 20- 21.

¹⁶⁰ Ganda Singh, “The Sikhs”, p. 41.

¹⁶¹ Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 43-51.

¹⁶² Guru Gobind Singh, *Bachhittar Nattak* in Surinder Singh Kohli, (tr.) *Sri Dasam Granth Sahib*, Vol. 1, The Sikh National Heritage Trust, U.K., First Edition, 2003, p. 132.

supported by Ganda Singh as a result of his interpretation of certain *hukamnamas*. Significantly, he further admits that there can be no doubt concerning the corporate view of the Sikh *Panth* and 1699 is definitely the approved date of the foundation of the *Khalsa* institution. For him, without any doubt the year 1699 is “the high point of Sikh tradition”. He considered that at the end of 17th century the world was very awry. The powerful assumed “more than their share of authority”. Thus the weak compelled to suffer. For this reason, according to him, Guru Gobind Singh created the *Khalsa* so that “every Sikh who enlisted as a member was thereafter committed to the public struggle for justice” so that justice might be upheld and truth maintained.¹⁶³ It seems that he did not consider the social factors as the reason for the creation of the *Khalsa* as Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh had assumed but he observed it from political perspectives.

Both Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh agreed that after the baptism of five Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh made it mandatory for them to wear the five symbols, all beginning with the letter K: *kesh* (uncut hair), *kangha* (a comb), *kachchera* (a pair of shorts), *kara* (an iron bracelet) and *kirpan* (a sword). Ganda Singh considered that these symbols aided “to unify the community”. Moreover, they also helped the wearer to be on the path of both “internal and external disciplines”.¹⁶⁴ Both the historians also agreed on the point that promulgations of code of discipline was made by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. But, for W.H. McLeod this was “tradition”. According to him, those who believed in the traditional scholarship accepted that the declaration of the Five K’s was the part of *Baisakhi* day in 1699. In his opinion, the *rahit* was not the part of *Baisakhi* day of 1699 but was the “result of gradual growth during the course of the eighteenth century”. According to him, five K’s reflect the “complex of *Jat* cultural pattern and contemporary historical events”. He considered that keeping uncut hair and bearing arms was the two items which included in the *rahit* has close similarities to *Jat* pattern of behavior. He asserted that uncut hair was the *Jat* practice which was observed during and prior to 1699 “by the Hindu and Muslim *Jats* as well as by Sikh *Jats*”. The bearing of arms was also a *Jat* practice which “received ample encouragement from the events of 18th century”. He also included comb, bangle and

¹⁶³ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, pp. 47-51 & pp.104-109 & pp. 131-132 & p. 218.

¹⁶⁴ Ganda Singh, *The Sikhs and Sikhism*, Sikh History Society, Patiala, 1959, p. 13.

even breeches to relate in this same situation.¹⁶⁵ Further, he stated without quoting any contemporary fact that the *Jats* have been distinguished by the militant traditions and by their hair uncut. The influences of both these operated in the Sikh *Panth* before the formal inauguration of the *Khalsa* in 1699. All this were fusing with the aim of Guru Gobind Singh. Consequently, these two items emerge as “significant features of the *Khalsa* nucleus”.¹⁶⁶ Though, Harbans Singh did not use the word *Jat* but he discussed about the “Punjabi peasants” who came in Sikh *Panth*, when they founded in Guru Gobind Singh “a leader completely after their hearts-strong, chivalrous and daring”.¹⁶⁷ Though Ganda Singh does not discuss about the *Jat* theory as stated by W.H. McLeod but he underscores the *Kesh* as “an indispensable” and “main symbol” of the Sikh faith. He had quoted *hukamnamas* of Guru Gobind Singh, *rahitnamas* and other contemporary and near contemporary and later sources of 18th century and also of 19th century to emphasize that the command of Guru Gobind Singh about essentiality of *Kesh* for the Sikhs.¹⁶⁸ According to J.S. Grewal, “the evidence on *kesh* suggested that the *Jats* at one time used to keep their hair long, but they attached no sanctity to their hair. Long hair is not the same as uncut hair. For Guru Gobind Singh sanctity of the *kesh* was all important”.¹⁶⁹ According to Fauja Singh, the confusion about this has arisen mainly because all the five K’s does not find mention jointly in contemporary or near contemporary works.¹⁷⁰ J.S. Grewal also accepts that early primary sources did not mention the convention of the five Ks introduced by Guru Gobind Singh. However, in contrast to W.H. McLeod, he believed that the five Ks

¹⁶⁵ W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, p. 51-52. Khushwant Singh also said that the five K’s “were obviously crystallized into a code at a later date”. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Volume 1: 1469-1839, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, Second Impression, 1978, p. 84.

¹⁶⁶ W.H. McLeod, *Who is Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity*, p. 40. See also W.H. McLeod, *Sikhs of the Khalsa A History of the Khalsa Rahit*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p. 6.

¹⁶⁷ Harbans Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, p. 54.

¹⁶⁸ Ganda Singh, “Hair and Turban: Their Importance for the Sikhs”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol.XVI, April 1982, pp. 201-204.

¹⁶⁹ J.S. Grewal, “Role of Ideas in Sikh History”, *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 6(2), 1999, p. 139-153.

¹⁷⁰ Fauja Singh, “Book Review- The Evolution of the Sikh Community by W.H. McLeod”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XI, Part 1, April 1977, p. 182. The source *Guru Kian Sakhian* moves closer to the Five *Kakkars*. These are- *kangha*, *karad*, *kesaki*, *kara* and *kachchera*. .Swarup Singh Kaushish, *Guru Kian Sakhian*, Piara Singh (ed.), Singh Brothers, Amritsar, Seventh Edition, 2014, p.123. Bhai Koer Singh only mention four K’s -*Kachchera*, *kesh*, *karad* *Kanga* but not describe anywhere *Kara*. Bhai Koer Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*, Shamsheer Singh (ed.), Punjabi University, Patiala, Third Edition 1999, p. 111.

were already part of the *Khalsa* institution during the creation of the *Khalsa* in 1699.¹⁷¹ But Gobind Singh Mansukhani in his article *Sikh-Rehat-Maryada and Sikh Symbols* gives a reference of Guru Gobind Singh's *hukamnama* issued to the *sangat* of Kabul on 26th Jeth, 1756 Bikrami i.e. 23rd May 1699 i.e. soon after the founding of *Khalsa*, in which Guru Gobind Singh mentioned the *rahit* particularly of Five K's- *kesh, kachchera kirpan, kara* and *kangha*.¹⁷² However, Ganda Singh in his work *Makhuje Twarikhe Sikhian* refers lines from *Sarabloh Granth*. In which the five K's are mentioned- *Kesh, Kangha, Kara, Karad* and *Kachchera*.¹⁷³

The most remarkable episode after the baptism of five Sikhs into Singh through *Amrit* ceremony came when Guru Gobind Singh "himself also went through the same initiation ceremony at the hands of the Sikhs and was similarly baptized to the new fold". Ganda Singh considered this event as "a thing unknown in the history of religions". In his views this was "remarkable event" that annihilate for the *Khalsa*, all distinctions of high and low, of rich and poor and of the teacher and disciple. He regarded the humility of Guru Gobind Singh and his voluntary submission to the discipline, as "unique standard of religious fraternity". It was also "a unique example of humility and self-discipline".¹⁷⁴ In his opinion, this was an example of the spirit of "democratization in socio-religious institution of the Sikhs".¹⁷⁵ Ghulam Hussain Khan also wrote that "when a person is admitted into their fraternity they make no scruple of associating with him, the person could hitherto be related to any tribe, clan or race. They do not betray any of those scruple and prejudices so deeply rooted in the Hindu mind".¹⁷⁶ Harbans Singh observed that by this way Guru Gobind Singh merged himself into the *Khalsa*. Furthermore, Guru Gobind Singh endowed it with the

¹⁷¹ He also thinks that "the *Khalsa Rahit* evolved essentially on the lines laid down in the time of Guru Gobind Singh". J.S. Grewal, *W.H. McLeod on the Sikhs: A Critical Assessment*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2011, p. 37

¹⁷² Gobind Singh Mansukhani, "Sikh Rahat Maryada and Sikh Symbols" in Jasbir Singh Mann and Harbans Singh Saraon (ed.), *Advanced Studies in Sikhism*, Sikh Community of North America, U.S.A., 1989, pp. 175-177.

¹⁷³ However, Ganda Singh clarified that these words of *Sarabloh Granth*, he had not seen by himself but was given to him by his friend who had copied it from *Sarabloh Granth*. See Ganda Singh (compiled), "*Makhuje Twarikhe Sikhian*" in Harchand Singh Bedi (edited in Punjabi), *Khalsa College, Amritsar*, first Edition 2000, p. 204. Hari Ram Gupta quoted the same stanza but attributes to Bhai Nand Lal Goya, but does not refer to its source. See Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.1, Munshiram Manohar Lal Publishers, New Delhi, 2008, p. 275.

¹⁷⁴ Ganda Singh, *The Sikhs and Sikhism*, p. 13 & p. 27. Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, p. 21. Hari Ram Gupta called this an act of "spiritual liberation". See Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.1, p. 272.

¹⁷⁵ Ganda Singh, "The Impact of Guru Nanak's Teachings on the Lives of his Followers", pp. 60-61.

¹⁷⁶ Mir Gholam Hussein Khan, *The Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, John Briggs (tr.), Allahabad, 1924, p. 73.

“charisma of his own personality”.¹⁷⁷ However, W H. McLeod does not believe this. For him, this was “maintained by the Sikhs or who had accepted this tradition”.¹⁷⁸ It seems that he does not believe this as fact in history, but regarded it as “tradition”. However, Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both accepted that Guru Gobind Singh administered himself into *Khalsa* institution by taking *Amrit* from the *panj pyare* (Five beloved). They both had quoted Bhai Gurdas II to substantiate their claims. Bhai Gurdas II has written that Guru Gobind Singh was a venerable preceptor as well as a humble disciple, which indicate that Guru Gobind Singh had also accepted the *Khanda de Pahul* as a disciple.¹⁷⁹ This is also identical with the source of *Guru Kian Sakhian*.¹⁸⁰

All the selected historians had discussed in their writings and articles about the social awakening generated by *Khalsa*'s institution. Ganda Singh assumed that although the teachings of Sikh Gurus and the unique examples of martyrdom of Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur “elevated the spirits of the Sikhs”. But, the old shackles had not been completely broken. That was hindering “the growth of a homogenous well-knit class of people inspired by a common national ideal”. Ganda Singh was of the view that the abolition of prejudices of high and low could only be brought about by a radical reformer. Furthermore, he asserted that Guru Gobind Singh proved to be that “radical reformer”. This scholar considered that the *Amrit* ceremony was a “great socio-religious leveler”. In his opinion, through this institution Guru Gobind Singh had not only to liberate the Sikh community from the *Brahmanical* shackles of “keep away and touch me not” caste and creed but also treated all its members including Guru himself on an equal level.¹⁸¹ He also suggested that this brought about a marvelous change not only in the physical look of the people but also in their mental outlook and character. Similarly, Harbans Singh like Ganda Singh argued that Guru Gobind Singh preached the common brotherhood of man. He rejuvenated the “social order” freed it of all types of inequalities.¹⁸² Even Harbans

¹⁷⁷ Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 48.

¹⁷⁸ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, pp.52-53.

¹⁷⁹ *Bhai Gurdas II Var 41 in Varan Bhai Gurdas Ji*, p. 436.

¹⁸⁰ Swarup Singh Kaushish, *Guru Kian Sakhian*, Piara Singh (ed.), pp. 121-122. See also Rattan Singh Bhagoo, *Sri Gur Panth Prakash*, Vol.1, Kulwant Singh (English Translation), Institute of Sikh Studies, Second Edition, 2017, p. 87.

¹⁸¹ Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of his Followers”, pp. 59-60.

¹⁸² Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 105.

Singh had seen the *sangat* as the precursor to the *Khalsa* institution. For him *Khalsa* institution was “the highest point in the evolution of the casteless Sikh commonwealth originating in the institution of the *sangat*”.¹⁸³ In his opinion, after the initiation ceremony, Guru Gobind Singh ordered all his Sikhs to abolish caste differences. Furthermore, on the equality of men, Guru Gobind Singh has always spoken “explicitly and emphatically”.¹⁸⁴ Significantly, W.H. McLeod held some similar views. According to him, the first practical expression to abolish the notions of ritual cleanliness and untouchability was through *langar* institution introduced by the Sikh Gurus. Yet, he considered that the second practical expression in this direction was the particular contribution of Guru Gobind Singh. He regarded *Khalsa* institution “more significance” than the *langar* institution. Because, it sets the renunciation of caste distinctions in the very heart of the Sikh baptismal ceremony. As with the *langar*, he wrote, the institution of *Khalsa* was clearly intended to serve several purposes. But its primary purpose was “the destruction of the caste distinctions”. He further wrote that many have preached equality, but few have actually provided effective means of sustaining the ideal. Guru Gobind Singh succeeded where so many others have failed.¹⁸⁵ It should be noted that Guru Gobind Singh also criticized the shackles of caste system and class in his writing entitled *Akal Ustat* and advocated that all men are equal. Guru Gobind Singh stated that “someone is Hindu and someone Muslim, then someone is Shia and someone Sunni, but all the human beings as a species are recognized as one and the same”.¹⁸⁶ The prevalence of the spirit of equality, brotherhood and fraternization among the Sikhs is confirmed by Bhai Koer Singh also, when he wrote that Guru Gobind Singh made the four *varans- brahman, khatri, vaish* and *shudars* into one being and they all at one place could eat together.¹⁸⁷

All the three selected historians agreed on the point that during Guru Gobind Singh’ time, *masands* “neglected their religious office and became corrupt and

¹⁸³ Harbans Singh, *Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism*, p. 23.

¹⁸⁴ Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, pp. 46-50.

¹⁸⁵ W.H. McLeod, “Guru Gobind Singh and Untouchability”, *The Sikh Review*, Vol. XVI-XVII, No. 163-164, Feb-March 1967, p. 77.

¹⁸⁶ Guru Gobind Singh, “Akal Ustat” in Surinder Singh Kohli (tr.), *Sri Dasam Granth Sahib*, Vol. 1, p.48.

¹⁸⁷ Koer Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*, p. 136.

oppressive”. Consequently, Guru Gobind Singh abolished this. Guru Gobind Singh also sent his *hukamnamas* to various *sangats* at different places in which Guru Gobind Singh instructed his Sikhs not to follow the *masands*, not to give offerings to them and not keep any social relation with them.¹⁸⁸

While discussing the *rahit*, Ganda Singh along with Teja Singh proposed that Guru Gobind Singh instructed his Sikhs “to shun the use of tobacco”, because it was “injurious to health could make one lazy”.¹⁸⁹ Harbans Singh also proposed that after baptismal ceremony Guru Gobind Singh laid down injunctions for the Sikhs never smoke tobacco.¹⁹⁰ According to W.H. McLeod *rahit* stipulates “many more items both in principle of belief and features of behavior” which also included that all *Khalsa* Sikhs abstain from smoking.¹⁹¹ About *rahit*, W.H. McLeod considered that it involved three features. The first was that certain features of *Khalsa* discipline were derived from “the earliest days of the Nanak-panth”. The second was it emerged in response to “the cultural influence operating within the *Panth*’s constituency”. Lastly, the “pressure of political circumstances during the course of the 17th century” led to this.¹⁹² It should be noted that Sikh historians Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both agreed that Guru Gobind Singh prohibited the use of tobacco. But W.H. McLeod unlike them questioned the ban on smoking. For him, the origin of ban on smoking tobacco “is not altogether clear”. The possible reason for W.H. McLeod was that *hookah* would encumber a soldier, so Guru Gobind Singh prohibited it. He assumed that if this hypothesis would be right it meant the many military injunctions were incorporated in *rahit*. The second was that W.H. McLeod asserted *hookah* may have been identified as a “distinctively Muslim artifact”. He proposed that if the second theory is correct, then it becomes one of the numerous anti-Muslim injunctions of the *rahit*. However, he was in the favors of second theory.¹⁹³ In one of his writing, he accounted the “complex *Jatt* culture and contemporary circumstances” for this explicit prohibition in the *Khalsa* discipline. He assumed that this situation was

¹⁸⁸ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Hukamname*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967, pp. 161.

¹⁸⁹ Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Volume One (1469-1765), p. 69.

¹⁹⁰ Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh* , p. 49.

¹⁹¹ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 110.

¹⁹² W.H. McLeod, *Who is Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity*, p. 43.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*,p. 32. See also W.H. McLeod, *Sikhs of the Khalsa A History of the Khalsa Rahit*, p. 223.

probably accounted for the prohibition on the use of tobacco.¹⁹⁴ We are told that Guru Gobind Singh had “particularly the moral and social aspects” in mind, when he prohibited the use of tobacco.¹⁹⁵

Furthermore, Harbans Singh wrote that Guru Gobind Singh also ordered his Sikhs, after the *Khalsa* ceremony, that they must not think of another woman except his own wife. They should not eat the flesh “of an animal killed slowly in the Muslim way”. Further, he admitted that Guru Gobind Singh also forbidden his Sikhs “to have anything to do with those who worshipped images, killed their daughters or countenanced *sati*”.¹⁹⁶ It should be noted that Harbans Singh only wrote the word women. W.H. McLeod considered that the prohibition against the consumption of *halal* meat and intercourse with Muslim women was not reflected in 1699 situation. But they were according to him, most certainly accord well with 18th century struggle against the *Mughals* and more particularly against the Afghans. But he assumed *rahit* as “other important cohesive institutions”.¹⁹⁷ Even he regarded *rahit's* concerns with meat-eating were “anti-Muslim”.¹⁹⁸ He does not provide any supporting fact in his assumption, how the *rahit* became anti-Muslim by when Guru Gobind Singh prohibited not to intercourse with Muslim women. Though, Ganda Singh has remained silent in this regard but significantly, he had quoted a relevant information from Bhai Santokh Singh’s *Gur Partap Suraj Granth* that “when once questioned why he had particularized the Muhammadan women for prohibition of sexual intercourse in the *rahit* of the Khalsa, when he had already said that a Sikh should not go to the bed of another man’s wife even in dream, then Guru Gobind Singh replied that as he wished to raise the Sikhs to a much higher level of moral conduct, he had to cautioned them specifically against this misconduct so that they might not indulge in it even in rage and revenge against the Muslims who at times misbehaved towards Hindu women”.¹⁹⁹

In the end, we can say that both the Sikh historians, Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh agreed on the major issues of socio-cultural awakening of the Sikhs from the

¹⁹⁴ W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, p. 52.

¹⁹⁵ Kapur Singh, *Parasharprasma or The Baisakhi of Guru Gobind Singh*, Hind Publishers Ltd, Jullundur, First Edition 1959, pp. 113.

¹⁹⁶ Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 49.

¹⁹⁷ W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, pp. 50-52. W.H. McLeod, *Sikhs of the Khalsa A History of the Khalsa Rahit*, p. 254.

¹⁹⁸ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 127.

¹⁹⁹ Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of his Followers”, p. 62.

period of Guru Nanak up to Guru Gobind Singh in their writings. But W.H. McLeod had quite different views. Both the selected Sikh historians accepted social-cultural awakening in Sikh religion from the period Guru Nanak. But W.H. McLeod's major interest was Guru Nanak's religious concerns. After discussing, the role of *Gurmukhi* language in social cultural awakening, the selected historians focused on the Guru Amardas period with much interest. Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh accepted that Guru Amardas made the Sikhs more and more self-control in social matters and the Sikh faith developed the sign of well-marked social group. However, without quoting any source, W.H. McLeod called Guru Amardas' activities as innovations and recourse to traditional Indian institution. All the selected historians accepted social-cultural awakening from *Guru Granth Sahib* and *Darbar Sahib*. All the selected historians gave much space to Guru Hargobind's *miri-piri* policy and battles but do not discuss this Guru's role in socio-cultural awakening in their writings. In comparison to Harbans Singh, Ganda Singh and W.H. McLeod wrote in brief about Guru Har Rai, Guru Harkrishan and Guru Tegh Bahadur. Again all the selected historians accepted the role of *Khalsa* institution in the social cultural awakening. However, regarding the five *kakkars* and *rahit*, W.H. McLeod's understanding is radically different than the selected Sikh historians.

CHAPTER-V

RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL AWAKENING OF THE SIKHS

This chapter comprises the discussion on the idea of the relation between religion and politics in Sikhism, whether interlinked or contradictory to each other. Furthermore, the chapter also discusses the positions that the selected historians assumed regarding the religious and political awakening of the Sikhs from Guru Nanak up to Banda Singh Bahadur in their historical writings. However, to go any further religion and politics need to be dealt with. Religion is a way of life. It teaches the person to live their daily lives in a practical manner. Religion is not merely related with ethical ideals and spiritual beliefs, but also has a social philosophy. In fact, as Balraj Puri stated, “every religion is a social community”.¹ William P. Alston has also talked about the societal significance of religion. He in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* has described the characteristic aspects of religion. He called these as the “religion-making” characteristics. These are- “(1) belief in supernatural beings (gods) (2) a distinction between sacred and profane objects (3) ritual acts focused on sacred objects. (4) a moral code believed to be sanctioned by the gods (5) characteristically religious feelings (awe, sense of mystery, sense of guilt, adoration), which tend to be aroused in the presence of sacred objects and during the practice of ritual, and which are connected in idea with the gods (6) prayer and other forms of communication with gods (7) a world view, or a general picture of the world as a whole and the place of the individual therein (8) a more or less total organization of one’s based on the world view (9) a social group bound together by the above”.² On the other hand, Patrick H. Nowell Smith underlines what is necessary to every religion as “(1) belief in supernatural powers which may be thought of either as persons or impersonally, as “forces”; (2) appropriate emotional attitudes, a sense of the sacred or numinous or uncanny, and an attitude of humility or reverence in its presence; (3) rites, ceremonies, and other religious duties are the essential things for religion”.³ It is asserted by Victor W. Turner that “religion is a multi-vocal term whose range of

¹ Balraj Puri, *Religion and Politics*, File No. 25, Typed Papers, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha Library, Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

² William P. Alston, “Religion” in Paul Edwards (Editor-in-Chief), *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. Seven, The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, New York, 1967, pp. 141-142.

³ Patrick H. Nowell Smith, “Religion and Morality” in Paul Edwards (Editor-in Chief), *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. Seven, p. 152.

meanings varies in different social and historical contexts. Nevertheless, most definitions of religion refer to the recognition of a trans-human controlling power that may be either personal or impersonal”.⁴ However the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, gives the definition of the word religion as: “belief in or sensing of some superhuman controlling power or powers, entitled to obedience, reverence, and worship, or in a system defining a code of living especially as a means to achieve spiritual or material improvement; acceptance of such belief (esp. as represented by an organized church) as a standard of spiritual and practical life; the expression of this in worship etc. in plural, religious rites.” It further describes the word religious as “one who is devoted to religion; one who exhibits the spiritual or practical effects of religion and followed the requirements of a religion; godly, devout”.⁵ Thus it can be argued that the term “religion” has no certain definition. Yet, every definition clearly refers to certain specific features such as “beliefs, practices, feelings, moods, attitudes”.⁶ The idea of religion in Sikhism is not concerned only with the description and philosophy about God, life and death. The scope of religion in Sikhism also covers human’s temporal concerns and social accountability too. Though, Sikh religion aims at individual’s reunion with the ultimate reality. It does not preach the idea to disavow the world. In fact, the Sikh Gurus prohibited the practice of renouncing the world. The Sikh Gurus preached and advocated the idea that the world is worth living. They also preached in favor of the active participation in different domains of life but in a rightful mode.

However, the scholars have different perspective regarding the relationship between politics and religion. Moreover, Mahatma Gandhi had strongly underlined the significance of the mixture of religion and politics in society. He accepted that “my [Gandhi’s] politics and all other activities of mine [Gandhi’s] are derived from my [Gandhi’s] religion”. He explicitly clarified that “politics bereft of religion is absolutely dirt, ever to be shunned. Politics divorced from religion have absolutely no meaning”.⁷

⁴ David L. Sills (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol.13, The Macmillan Company & the Free Press, U.S.A., 1968, pp. 437-438.

⁵ *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, Vol. 2, Oxford University Press, New York, Sixth Edition, 2007, p. 2522.

⁶ Stanley A. Cook, “Religion” in James Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Volume X, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, New York, Latest Impression, 1967, p. 662.

⁷ Ravindra Kumar, “Religion in Politics Constructive or Destructive” in Ravindra Kumar (ed.), *Religion & Politics*, Utkarsh Printers, Meerut (India), 1994, p. 96.

However, the Sikh scholars held different views on the nature of the mixture of religion and politics in Sikhism. J.S. Ahluwalia rightly proposed that the question of relationship between religion and polity has “led to a lot of confusion even among the scholars and interpreters”. But he believed that the nature of relationship between religion and polity in Sikhism is “of correlation and not coalescence”.⁸ Interestingly, J.S. Grewal too suggested that the relation between Sikh religion and Sikh polity demands “a careful consideration at the outset”.⁹ From the Sikh point of view, Dharam Singh asserted that religion and politics are complementary and not contradictory forces. Further, he proposed that in Sikhism, religion and politics had a “perfect amalgamation”. However, the nature of this amalgamation was spiritual and secular. He argued that the signs of this mixture can be seen in the hymns of Guru Nanak.¹⁰ G.S. Dhillon considered the inseparability of religion and politics as “one of the chief characteristic of Sikhism”.¹¹ Sher Singh also holds the opinion that religion and politics can and should go together. Further, he argued that there is no contradiction between Sikhism and politics. He claimed that “religion is a system of values and a criterion of values and politics is a system of policies and plans for making arrangements for the practical realization of those values”.¹² However, the well-known scholars like Bhagat Singh,¹³ Dharam Singh, and Gurdeep Kaur¹⁴ also agreed on the point that the “active politics was not the field of Sikh Gurus”. The Sikh Gurus had not offered any systematic theory of state like Western scholars such as Hobbes, Plato and Rousseau. Most of the scholars believed that Sikh polity began from the pontificate of Guru Hargobind. In other words, Sikh polity was the direct outcome of Guru Hargobind’s policy of *miri-piri*. However, a careful, detailed and analytical study of Guru Nanak’s hymns and successive Sikh Gurus showed that Guru

⁸ Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia, “The Conception of Polity in Sikh Religion”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XXIII-I, April 1989, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 64. See also, Madanjit Kaur, “Religion and Politics in Punjab: A Case Study of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur’s Hukamnamas”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XXXXII- Part I, April, 2011, p. 18.

⁹ J.S. Grewal, “Eighteenth –Century Sikh Polity” in Kehar Singh (ed.), *Perspectives on Sikh Polity*, Dawn Publisher Distributors, New Delhi, First Published, 1993, p. 118.

¹⁰ Dharam Singh, *Sikhism Norm and Form*, Vision & Venture, Patiala & New Delhi, 1997, pp. 134-135. See also Pritpal Kaur, “Religion and Politics in Sikhism: Historical Survey from the Period of Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh”, *Punjab History Conference Proceeding*, Vol. XXII, Part 1, March 1988, Punjabi University, Patiala, p.73.

¹¹ G.S. Dhillon, *Researches on Sikh Religion and History*, Sumeet Prakashan, Chandigarh, 1989, p.1.

¹² Sher Singh, *Social & Political Philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh*, Delhi, 1967, pp. 246-268.

¹³ Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Oriental Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, First Edition, 1978, p. 14.

¹⁴ Gurdeep Kaur, *Political Ideas of the Sikh Gurus*, Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1990. See the preface.

Nanak had already laid down the foundation of awakening the masses towards political abuses.

Ganda Singh proposed that Guru Nanak had the firsthand knowledge of the religious, social and political conditions of his times.¹⁵ He pointed out that Guru Nanak “awakened them to a new political consciousness”.¹⁶ He considers the impact of Guru Nanak’s teachings “marvelous indeed” on the lives and minds of the people of Punjab. The teachings and preaching of Guru Nanak not only raised the peoples spiritually, but also provided them with strength to stand against and protect the poor and helpless against the tyrannical aggressors rampant at that time.¹⁷ Harbans Singh argued that though the central theme in Guru Nanak’s teachings and preaching was “piety and loving devotion” for attaining the state of liberation, yet Guru Nanak was well aware about “the degradation and corruption” in the society also. He is of the view that Guru Nanak exposed “social and political abuses” of his period with “unusual insight”. He considered Guru Nanak’s this protest as the “most potent heard at that time”. This is also accepted by Ganda Singh.¹⁸ In Ganda Singh’s views, Guru Nanak observed that the political and cultural ascendancy of the people by the ruling and priestly class was the main cause for their degeneration.¹⁹ For him, Guru Nanak was nothing like many other reformers and saints of India. Furthermore, Guru Nanak refused to “sit idle in slumbering meditation”, while the people were suffering under the tyranny of the ruling class. Ganda Singh argued that Guru Nanak awakened the people to a “new consciousness”. Moreover, Guru Nanak upbraided the rulers of his time. However, Ganda Singh’s above statement is based on the authority of Guru Nanak’s hymns, “kings are butchers, cruelty their knife, dharma or the sense of duty has taken wings and have vanished”, “it was only idiots who ruled without having the good of their people at heart” and lastly, “the kings should be the dispersers of equity and justice”. He argued that in this way Guru Nanak gave “a message of hope to the

¹⁵ Ganda Singh, “Development of Sikh Thought up to the End of the 18th Century”, *Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. II, Part 1, April 1968, Punjabi University, Patiala, p.1.

¹⁶ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Board, Delhi, 1971, p. 10. See also Ganda Singh, *Guru Nanak: His Life and Teachings*, Singapore Sikh Missionary Tract Society, Singapore, 1940, p. 46. See also Ganda Singh, “The Sikhs”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XVI-I, April 1982, Punjabi University, Patiala, p.13.

¹⁷ Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of his Followers”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XI, Part-1, April 1977, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 32.

¹⁸ Harbans Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, Sterling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi, 1982, p.5. Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of his Followers”, p. 39.

¹⁹ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh Peoples*, Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Board, Delhi, 1971, p. 9.

people”. In addition to the hope, Guru Nanak inspired the people “to shake off their cowardice and dependence”, and to have faith in God. He suggested that the determination of Guru Nanak raised a symbol and a tradition of “manly independence and self-reliance”. On the basis of Guru Nana’s hymns, Ganda Singh argued that Guru Nanak’s attitude helped to raise in people the sense of “indomitable courage and dogged tenacity in war and peace”. However, he also qualifies that the people of that nature had yet to be seen. Clearly, his indication was towards the eighteenth century Sikhs.²⁰ Ganda Singh hailed Guru Nanak as a “true son of India” as he shed the tears of blood, when he witnessed the devastation by the invasion of Babur caused at Saidpur in 1521. Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both holds the opinion that Guru Nanak felt outraged at the spectacle of Eminabad, during the third invasion of Babur in 1521. Both assumed that Guru Nanak was an eye-witness to Babur’s third invasion. And for some time Guru Nanak was held as a prisoner of war at Eminabad.²¹ But contrary to the views of Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh, W.H. McLeod denied Guru Nanak’s visit to Saidpur. For him, the hymns in *Babarvani* related to all battles of Babur rather than to this single battle. According to him, the verses in *Babarvani* clearly refer to the capture of Lahore by Babar in 1524. Moreover, Guru Nanak’s compositions in *Babarvani* do not establish that Guru Nanak witnessed the sack of Saidpur in 1521.²² Clearly, unlike, Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh, he does not believe that Guru Nanak was present at Saidpur during the invasion of Babur in 1521. But Harbans Singh on the authority of *Puratan Janamsakhi* mentioned that Guru Nanak and Mardana were captured at Saidpur. Ganda Singh on the authority of *Memoirs of Babur* and Muhammad Qasim’s *Tarikh-i-Farishta* discuss the sack of Saidpur and its destruction by Babur’s troops. Harbans Singh argued that the Indian literature of that time “records no more virile protest against the invading hordes” than Guru Nanak’s composition *Babarvani*. In fact, Guru Nanak’s attitude towards Babur makes the “only strongly vocal protest in India against Babur”.²³

On the other hand, Ganda Singh understands Guru Nanak’s protest against tyranny as “a demand for liberty, for freedom from foreign yoke”. He proposed that

²⁰ Ganda Singh, *The Sikhs and Sikhism*, Sikh History Society, Patiala, 1959, p. 11.

²¹ Ganda Singh, *Guru Nanak: His Life and Teachings*, pp. 26-28. See also Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of his Followers”, p. 39. Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, pp. 19-20.

²² W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, p.7 & pp.137-138.

²³ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 4. See also Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith*, p. 206.

“attack on any type of slavery is born of a yearning for liberty. The freedom of conscience is the first requisite for the upliftment of the down-trodden people”. He argued that Guru Nanak focused on this. This encouraged the people “to shake off their cowardice and dependence on others” and to have faith in God.²⁴ Ganda Singh on the basis of Guru Nanak’s hymn in *Asa* 1 remarked that Guru Nanak rebuked the Lodhi Sultans of India for their “treachery and cowardice” and also condemned them “for their unpatriotic behavior”. On the other hand, Harbans Singh reads the Guru Nanak’s this criticism as history’s judgment upon a corrupt and tyrannical rule of Lodhi monarchy. Furthermore, Harbans Singh stated that nothing was outside the scope of Guru Nanak’s contemplation. He talked almost about everything “from the high handedness of the kings to the injustices and inequalities” that were rampant in the system of that period. Further, he stressed on the point that Guru Nanak “frankly censured the state”. Even Guru Nanak held the state accountable “for many of the sins” in the society during his time.²⁵

Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both assumed that Guru Arjan was “the first martyr of the Sikh faith”. However, W.H. McLeod without the basis of any historical fact, stated that it was later traditions, which had proposed “Guru Arjan’s death as martyrdom at the hands of Muslims”. It was a tradition that led to the idea that “Muslims feared Guru Arjan’s growing power as a religious leader”. Significantly, he accepted the martyrdom of Guru Arjan as the “turning point in the development of the *Panth*’.²⁶ He accepted that Mughals antagonism was rising during Guru Arjan’ time, yet unlike Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh, he did not attribute to Jahangir’ orthodoxy or to the prompting of the *Naqashbandis* as reasons for Guru Arjan’s martyrdom. Harbans Singh believed that Chandu Shah played a slander role against Guru Arjan at the court of Jahangir. Ganda Singh and W.H. McLeod remain silent in this regard.²⁷ Ganda Singh has refuted the allegation that Guru Arjan helped prince Khusrau with money and *tikka*. For him, this was “a pure concoction of some

²⁴ Ganda Singh, “Development of Sikh Thought up to the End of the 18th Century”, pp. 15-17.

²⁵ Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith*, p. 206.

²⁶ W.H. McLeod, *Who is a Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1989, pp. 3-14.

²⁷ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 44. However, Ganda Singh in 1981 reasons that the name of Chandu Shah is not to be found in the *Tuzuk* or any other contemporary or semi-contemporary works written on the reign of Jahangir. See Ganda Singh, “The Martyrdom of Guru Arjan”, *The Sikh Review*, June 1981, Calcutta, p. 18.

conspirator's fertile imagination to paint the Guru as a sympathizer of the rebel prince to exploit the emperor's emotion against him". For him the charge on Guru Arjan "does not stand the test of historical scrutiny". Furthermore, Ganda Singh argued that Guru Arjan was "not a politician to be in any way interested in the success of prince's rebellion".²⁸ Even Mohsin Fani only wrote that "Guru Arjun prayed for the welfare of the prince Khusrau, he had not mentioned anything about the money or *tilk*".²⁹ Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod remain silent on this issue. However, W.H. McLeod without any supportive source has stated that Jahangir afraid of the increasing influence of *Jats* within the Sikh *Panth*. In other words, the *Mughal* authorities were not afraid of Guru Arjan's religious influence but of the increasing numbers of *Jats*. He stated that Guru Arjan had "in some manners incurred the displeasure of the *Mughal* authorities and died in 1606 in *Mughal* custody". However, he also does not explain how the entry of *Jats* in Sikhism could be a cause of fear for the *Mughals*. In this regards, he assumed that "later traditions tolerated no doubts".³⁰ Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both hold the opinion that Guru Arjan attained martyrdom to uphold his faith. They believed that the rising popularity of Guru Arjan and Sikh teachings among the Hindus and Muslims aroused the apprehensions of Jahangir that caused Guru Arjan' martyrdom. They both support their claim with a reference from *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, an autobiography of Jahangir, a source that reflects that the prejudices of Jahangir against Guru Arjan was due to his religious work and his popularity among both the Hindus and the Muslims. They also discuss the negative role played by Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi was another major reason. The role and intent of Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi could be seen from the letters that Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh had quoted in their writings. Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi in his letter to Sheikh Farid Bukhari entitled as *Maktubat-i-Imam-i-Rabbani*, I-III letter No.193 (pp. 95-96) has stated that "the execution of Guru Arjan was a very good achievement for them. It had become the cause of a great defeat of the hateful Hindus". Both agreed that Guru Arjan was subjected to various inhuman tortures like

²⁸ Ganda Singh, "The Sikhs", p. 2. See also Ganda Singh, "The Impact of Guru Nanak's Teachings on the Lives of his Followers", p. 50.

²⁹ Ganda Singh (tr.), "Nanak-Panthis or The Sikhs and Sikhism of the Mid-Eighteenth Century (Translated from the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*)", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. 1, Part 1, April 1967, p. 59.

³⁰ W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, pp. 3-12.

Guru was made to sit on a hot iron plate, burning sand was poured on his naked body. He was made to sit in the boiling water and then his blistered body was poured in the cold water of river Ravi.³¹ Ganda Singh has stressed on the point that the execution of Guru Arjan for his religious activities under the order of Emperor Jahangir was “the worst type of tyranny answering to the observations of Guru Nanak” that “the kings are butchers and cruelty their knife. Sense of duty and responsibility has taken wings and fled”.³²

Ganda Singh argued that Guru Hargobind initiated the Sikhs into the “cult of sword”.³³ He assumed that the sayings of Guru Nanak that had upbraided the rulers of the day were “a heritage to Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh”. He also figure out that Guru Nanak’s attitude helped for “the gradual transformation of Sikhism into a militant church”. Ganda Singh understood this militancy, as “sanctifying the use of arms” but only “in the service of the weak and the helpless”. He argued that this was also reflected in Guru Hargobind’s conversation with saint Samarth Ramdas at Srinagar in Garhwal. Harbans Singh has also referred to this. It was a time, when Samarth Ramdas was astonished to see Guru Hargobind “armed, riding a horse and accompanied by a large number of followers”. Samarth Ramdas found it difficult to reconcile the two seemingly opposite phases of Guru Hargobind’s life. He asked Guru Hargobind: “I had heard that you occupy the *gaddi* of Guru Nanak. Nanak was a *tyagi sadhu*- a saint who had renounced the world. You are wearing arms and keeping an army and horses. You allow yourself to be called *Sacha Padshah*, a true king. What sort of a sadhu are you?” To this Guru Hargobind replied: “internally a hermit and externally a prince. Arms mean protection of the poor and helpless and destruction of the tyrant. Guru Nanak had not renounced the world but had renounced the *maya*, the self and ego.” Samarth Ramdas was pleased to hear this and said: “this appeal to my mind.”³⁴

³¹ Ganda Singh, “The Sikhs”, pp. 20-21. See Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, pp. 40-45.

³² Ganda Singh, “Guru Nanak’s Impact on History” in Ganda Singh (ed.), *Sources on the Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak, The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. III, 1969, p. 417. Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of his Followers”, p. 50.

³³ Ganda Singh, *The Sikhs and Sikhism*, p. 12.

³⁴ Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of his Followers”, p. 32. See also, Ganda Singh, “Guru Hargobind and Samarth Ramdas”, *The Sikh Review*, Vol. XXXV, 1987, pp. 24-25. See also Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 49.

After Guru Arjan's martyrdom, Guru Hargobind felt that "the tyranny of the Mughal authority in India had become unbearable". Thus the Guru granted the permission "to the use of steel". However, Ganda Singh argued that it was "in defence of *Dharma* and for the protection and well-being of the oppressed".³⁵ Ganda Singh thought it was the "first step towards the transformation of the Sikhs into a class of saintly-warriors".³⁶ Harbans Singh also had similar views. Like Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh thinks that Guru Hargobind had foreknowledge that the serious methods were necessary "to meet the growing oppression of the *Mughal* authority". Consequently, Guru Hargobind adopted the style of a soldier. Harbans Singh also suggests that for this, Guru Hargobind had the permission of his father, Guru Arjan. He had trained him in "manly skills and also advised him to bear arms". However he does not refer to any source. Harbans Singh thinks that Guru Hargobind's mission became easy owing to the awakening that his predecessors Sikh Gurus brought through their teachings. However, Harbans Singh does not specify and explain much on this topic.

Harbans Singh commends Guru Hargobind's "remarkable" feat for generating a warlike spirit among the people who were under political subjugation. In this manner, Guru Hargobind had forged "the instruments of a mighty revolution".³⁷ W.H. McLeod considered this as "significant shift" in the nature and policy of Sikh *Panth* under Guru Hargobind's *Guruship*. However, the actual reason for this remains "a subject of debate" for him. On the other hand, he also did not agree with the above mentioned historian's opinions but termed it as "tradition".³⁸ Guru Hargobind wore two swords *miri* and *piri*. For Ganda Singh that was "the first step towards the transformation of Sikhism into militant church".³⁹ Harbans Singh accepted it as "a significant act crucial for the future evolution of the Sikh *Panth*".⁴⁰ Thus, both Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh agreed on the issue that Guru Hargobind wore two swords

³⁵ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikhs*, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, n.d., p. 8. Ganda Singh, "Guru Nanak's Impact on History" in Ganda Singh (ed.), *Sources on the Life & Teachings of Guru Nanak*, p. 419.

³⁶ Ganda Singh, "The Impact of Guru Nanak's Teachings on the Lives of his Followers", pp. 40-56.

³⁷ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 46.

³⁸ W.H. McLeod, *Who is Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Community*, p. 25.

³⁹ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikhs*, p. 8.

⁴⁰ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 46

on the occasion of his accession on *Gurgaddi*. These two swords represented the emblems of spiritual and temporal authority. W. H. McLeod proposed the idea that the use of the terms *miri* and *piri* was a part of a “later tradition”. He proposes a possibility that Guru Hargobind may not actually have been called *miri piri da malik*. He also raised questions on the nature of the dual role of Guru Hargobind and with how much success the Guru occupied this dual role.⁴¹ Moreover, he had quite different views from the Sikh historians, when he proposed that Guru Hargobind adopted “new policy” by donning two swords *miri* and *piri*. To elaborate his assertion, he stated that Guru Hargobind inherited the spiritual authority (*piri*) from his five predecessors Sikh Gurus. On the other hand, the temporal authority (*miri*) was a new thing that Guru Hargobind had adopted.⁴² When W.H. McLeod refers to Guru Hargobind’ policy as “new policy”, he indicated to the policy of arming the Sikhs to fight against oppression.

Unlike the selected Sikh historians, W.H. McLeod does not believe in the fact that arming of the Sikh *Panth* was the decision of Guru Hargobind. He attributes its credit to the “*Jat* cultural patterns”. According to him, *Jats* did not join the Sikh *Panth* empty-handed. They were armed even during Guru Arjan’s period. However, it should be noted that he had not based his conjecture on a single source. He partly, accepts that “death” (in his writings, W.H. McLeod has used the word “death” and instead of martyrdom) of Guru Arjan “may” have induced Guru Hargobind of the necessity for “tighter organization”. He considered that the growth of militancy in the Sikh *Panth* was due to “the impact of *Jat* cultural patterns and the economic problems which prompted a militant response”. He considered the martial traditions as a vital part of the “*Jat* cultural patterns”. He writes, “with their strong rural base, their martial traditions, their normally impressive physique, and their considerable energy the *Jats* have for many centuries constituted the elite of the Panjab villages. They are also noted for their straightforward manner, for a tremendous generosity, for an insistence upon the right to take vengeance, and for their sturdy attachment to the land.”⁴³ He suggested that on the inclusion of *Jats* in the *Panth*, they became Sikhs but they remained *Jats* at heart. In other words, they had not abandoned their militant

⁴¹ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 33-35.

⁴² W.H. McLeod, *Who is Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity*, p. 24.

⁴³ W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, pp. 11-13.

traditions.⁴⁴ However, he does not throw light on the issue how economic problems prompted militancy in Sikh *Panth*. Harbans Singh differs from W.H. McLeod and admits that Sikh faith turned militant under the “Mughal persecution”.⁴⁵ Similarly, Ganda Singh considered that the “autocratic governments, influenced and guided by narrow- minded religious fanatics, can hardly tolerate the rise and development movements other than of their own persuasion”. Hence at that time, the only alternative for the Guru Hargobind was to “mould the outlook and attitude of his disciples” and also focus on “their physical strength along with their spiritual attainments”.⁴⁶ For Ganda Singh it was for “defending themselves against tyrannical aggression without being aggressive themselves.”⁴⁷ In other words, both the Sikh historians had accepted that Sikh militancy started due to the *Mughal* persecution. Charles Gough has also suggested that Guru Hargobind in addition to his *Guruship* as the religious light of the Sikhs was “forced by circumstances to adopt a military training.” Thus the Guru consequently gave his followers a “martial character”.⁴⁸ Jagjit Singh, on the other hand, argued that “there is no data to infer this or that the *Jats* were the prominent element among the Sikhs when Guru Hargobind decided to militarize the movement, or that the *Jats* used to come armed when they came to pay homage to the Guru”.⁴⁹ However, W.H. McLeod had seen Guru Hargobind’s policy as different from Guru Nanak’s teachings. For him, it is the “orthodox Sikh interpretation” which insists that it was in complete accord with the teachings and the intention of Guru Nanak.⁵⁰ We are told that Guru Arjan ordered his Sikhs Bhai Sigaru and Jaitta that “the dark age is going to occur. After learning the use of weapons we will take over the *miri* of a *mir* and by understanding the meaning of Guru’s message, we will grab the *piri* of a *pir*. I ask you to stay in the attendance of the sixth Lord (Guru Hargobind)”.⁵¹ Harbans Singh proposed that some scholars have assumed the *miri-piri* policy of Guru Hargobind against the teachings of Guru Nanak. Thus, he

⁴⁴ W.H. McLeod, *Who is Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity*, p. 25.

⁴⁵ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 49.

⁴⁶ Ganda Singh, “The Sikhs”, p. 21.

⁴⁷ Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of his Followers”, pp. 50-51.

⁴⁸ On the other hand, Gough proposed that it was Guru Arjan in whom “the gems of a political leadership comes to be recognized”. See, Gen. Sir Charles Gough, *The Sikhs and the Sikh Wars*, Language Department, Punjab, Reprinted, 1970, p. 18.

⁴⁹ Jagjit Singh, “The Militarization of Sikh Movement” in Gurdev Singh (ed.), *Perspectives on the Sikh Tradition*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, Second Edition, 1996, p. 383.

⁵⁰ W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, p. 3. See also Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzib*, Vol. III, S.C. Sarkar & Sons, Calcutta, Third Edition, 1928, p. 302.

⁵¹ Shahid Bhai Mani Singh Ji Gyani, *Bhai Gurdas Ji Di Gyarvi Vaar Da Teeka Arthat Sikha Di Bhagat Mala*, Bhai Vir Singh (ed.), Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, Fifth Edition, 1979, pp.139-140.

writes “his work (Guru Hargobind) has sometimes presented as a reversal of the principles proclaimed by his predecessors. But this is a point which requires a more patient and deeper study. Especially relevant in this context will be the Sikh tradition’s own self-understanding in so far as this development in concerned. Guru Hargobind took up arms only to defend the spiritual and social values established by the Gurus before him.”⁵² Ganda Singh also upholds similar views that “the successors of Guru Nanak accepted his teachings in full and made no changes in them whatever. They only lent additional support to them by way of explanation and amplification”.⁵³

It seems that W.H. McLeod does not accept the unity, continuity and consistency of the doctrines and teachings of all the Sikh Gurus. Harbans Singh has very clearly described this as “the development of Sikh thought and life may be understood as the outcome of the interaction of the original impulse imparted by Guru Nanak and the exigencies of contemporary social environment. There were some developments and amid those arising new situations demanded and elicited new answers. In order to tackle those situations, points of transfiguration were reached and worked out. Yet it is possible to discern in the process a basic harmony and continuity attributable primarily to the ever-present Nanak legend”.⁵⁴ Ganda Singh proposed that “the Sikh Gurus had in mind the duties of a nation as much as the duties of an individual. He argued that studied from this point of view, there would seem to be no break or digression in the programme of Sikh life”.⁵⁵ In fact this is also justified from the hymn of Guru Amardas as there is but one *Baani*, one Guru and one *Shabad* to contemplate.⁵⁶ W.H. McLeod thinks that no one can be sure about the exact time period during which *Akal Takhat* was first erected. Furthermore, he believes that the erection of *Akal Takhat* during Guru Hargobind’s period was a “tradition” and not a historical fact. Harbans Singh, however quotes *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevi*, which is according to him, “the oldest account of Guru Hargobind’ life” states that Guru Hargobind himself had laid the cornerstone of *Akal Takhat*.⁵⁷ Contrary to this, Ganda Singh remains silent in this regard.

⁵² Harbans Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, p. 18.

⁵³ Ganda Singh, “Development of Sikh Thought Upto 18th Century”, p. 3.

⁵⁴ Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith*, p. 225.

⁵⁵ Ganda Singh, “The Sikhs”, p. 6.

⁵⁶ *Mahalla 3, Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 646 in Manmohan Singh (trans. English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 4, p. 2120.

⁵⁷ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 47.

On the authority of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, a contemporary Persian source of Guru Hargobind's period, which mentions that "Guru Hargobind had seven hundred horses in his stables and that three hundred cavalries and sixty artillery men were always present in his service", Ganda Singh has named it "the first corps of Sikh volunteers raised by the Guru at Amritsar". But it should be noted that with all this Guru Hargobind's activities, Ganda Singh stressed on the point that Guru Hargobind was not a mere soldier. In fact, as Ganda Singh wrote he was primarily a guru. According to Ganda Singh that the reason behind Guru Hargobind's all above mentioned activities was to "create among his people a will to resist and prepare his peoples to stand up against the tyranny and oppression of the ruling race".⁵⁸ He observed that the hunting expeditions, wrestling matches and symposiums of martial music and ballads put "new life into the drooping hearts of the Sikhs".⁵⁹ But W.H. McLeod asserted that all these along with *Akal Takhat* represent the growing militancy of the *Panth*.⁶⁰ However, for some scholars *Akal Takhat* represents "awareness and the resolve to withstand the oppression".⁶¹ Harbans Singh and Ganda Singh asserted that Guru Hargobind Singh spent most of his time to "religious devotion and in strengthening the Sikh faith". Harbans Singh assumed that "the synthesis of the heroic and spiritual" was Guru Hargobind's unique and distinctive contribution to the evolution of the Sikh *Panth*. Like Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh also pointed out that in spite of Guru Hargobind's soldiery style Guru Hargobind lived accordance with the "simple standards established by his predecessors Sikh Gurus". He did his religious duties of *Guruship* with the "same purity and dedication".⁶² In other words, both the Sikh historians agreed on the point that Guru Hargobind had devoted his times to religious activities too. W.H. McLeod had quoted Bhai Gurdas's *var 26* as "reliable source" to assert that Guru Hargobind's way of life was totally unlike from his father, Guru Arjan. It should be noted that Bhai Gurdas in his *var1, pauri 48* have very clearly described that "Guru Arjan transformed himself

⁵⁸ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, p. 18.

⁵⁹ Ganda Singh, "The Sikhs", p. 22.

⁶⁰ W.H. McLeod, *Who is Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity*, p. 24.

⁶¹ Darshan Singh, *Sikhism Issues and Institutions (In the Context of Dr.W.H. McLeod, Dr. Pashaura Singh and Dr. H.S. Oberoi and the Likes...)*, Sehgal Book Distributors, New Delhi, 1996, p. 21.

⁶² Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, pp. 47-51.

into Hargobind and sat majestically”. Bhai Gurdas has considered Guru Hargobind as the “vanquisher of armies, and very brave as well as benevolent”.⁶³

Ganda Singh suggested that Guru Hargobind had won four battles, but these were forced upon him. Guru Hargobind participated in the battles in sort of self-defense. He has reasoned that though Guru Hargobind fought four battles, yet he did not occupy an inch of territory.⁶⁴ Harbans Singh also accepts the idea that “none of the battles Guru Hargobind fought was of his seeking, nor did he attempt to annex any power” but it was to fight against intolerance and tyranny. He also linked Guru Hargobind’s battles in accordance with the spirit of the teachings of Guru Nanak. Harbans Singh argued that “Guru Nanak had expressed himself strongly against oppressive and tyrannous practices of the invading armies of Babar. The inner principles of Sikhism determined by the founder Guru Nanak were fully worked out during the lives of the nine succeeding Sikh Gurus. Guru Hargobind’s actions were response to the situation that he confronted”.⁶⁵ On the other hand, W.H. McLeod has not given much importance to the battles of Guru Hargobind. He does not accept these as battles. In one of his work *The Way of the Sikhs* (p.23), he argued that the battles of Guru Hargobind were “very small”. He has only used the words like “skirmish” or “conflicts” to describe them. He proposed that these “conflicts” were presented as “mighty battles” showing noticeable bravery in “the most modern accounts”. These are cases of “exaggeration” for him. His conjecture also proposed that there is no need to magnify these “conflicts” into full-scale battles. But he does not throw light on the point that, why he considered these battles merely “conflicts”. He gives the two reasons of these “conflicts”. The first was the disturbed circumstances in the Punjab. The second was the growing numbers of turbulent *Jats* in the Sikh *Panth*. He proposed that many of the *Jats* brought their unruly ways when they enter in the *Panth* is an “assumption”, yet he considered it as “eminently reasonable one”.⁶⁶

Ganda Singh accepted that Guru Har Rai provided “assistance to fugitive prince Dara Shikoh”. But what type of assistance, Ganda does not throw light. For

⁶³ Jodh Singh, *Varan Bhai Gurdas Text, Transliteration and Translation*, Volume 1, Vision & Venture, Patiala & Delhi, 1998, p. 78.

⁶⁴ Ganda Singh, “The Sikhs”, p. 24.

⁶⁵ Harbans Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, pp. 18-19.

⁶⁶ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 38.

him, this had stirred the “royal wrath”.⁶⁷ Furthermore, Guru Har Rai sustained to “maintain a corps of volunteers.”⁶⁸ Harbans Singh asserts that Guru Har Rai pursued the style that was started by Guru Hargobind. He stated that Dara Shikoh sought “his blessings”. The meeting between Dara Shikoh and Guru Har Rai was “misrepresented to Emperor Aurangzeb”. Unlike Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh has also discussed about the meeting of Ram Rai elder son of Guru Har Rai with Aurangzeb. He relied on sources like *Shri Gur Partap Suraj Granth*, *Bhatt Vahi Multani Sindhi*, *Guru Kian Sakhian*, *Mahima Prakash* for that.⁶⁹ Instead of these sources, Gyani Gyan Singh had also similar opinions.⁷⁰ But for W.H. McLeod all this was “anecdote” related to Guru Har Rai.⁷¹

Harbans Singh wrote, “the line of prophetic successor came down to Guru Tegh Bahadur. The Sikh character and organization had been nurtured by eight successive spiritual teachers, each emphasizing on the lessons truly exemplified through their life style, or contributing a new distinctive trait rehearsed under the stress of changing times and environment”. Further, he asserted that Guru Tegh Bahadur with his doctrines and travels across the country generated a “new zeal and environment for moral and energetic living.” He argued that Guru Tegh Bahadur was “sensitive to people’s suffering”. Consequently, Guru Tegh Bahadur taught the people to be fearless. Thus, the Sikhs acquired further “cohesion and strength as community”.⁷² He suggested that Guru Tegh Bahadur’s daily sermons at Anandpur originated “a spirit of daring and resistance” among the Sikh masses. Moreover, he links the origin of this, with the teachings and messages of Guru Nanak.⁷³ Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both agreed that Guru Tegh Bahadur wants to awaken the people “out of their lethargy”. Both the historians have assumed that Guru Tegh Bahadur felt that the case of “freedom of conscience” needed a sacrifice. The sacrifice would shame the *Mughal* Emperors into reason.⁷⁴ Kehar Singh⁷⁵ and J.S. Ahluwalia⁷⁶

⁶⁷ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikhs*, p. 11.

⁶⁸ Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak on the Lives of his Followers”, p.56.

⁶⁹ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 55.

⁷⁰ Gyani Gyan Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part -1, p. 623 & pp. 641-649

⁷¹ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 41.

⁷² Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 19-60.

⁷³ Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 14.

⁷⁴ Ganda Singh, “The Sikhs”, p. 32.

⁷⁵ Kehar Singh, “Sikh Political Values: An Analysis” in Kehar Singh (ed.), *Perspectives on Sikh Polity*, Dawn Publishers, New Delhi, 1993, p. 47.

also had similar views that Guru Tegh Bahadur offered his life due to the “freedom of conscience”. Significantly, W.H. McLeod had proposed that in the later years of Guru Tegh Bahadur some “serious troubles again appeared”. These were related to the *Mughals*. He concluded that the “Sikh tradition” attributed these directly to the bigoted policy of the Aurangzeb. Though W.H. McLeod had quoted Harbans Singh’s *Guru Tegh Bahadur* and Trilochan Singh’s *Guru Tegh Bahadur: Prophet and Martyr*, yet he considered that the decision of Guru Tegh Bahadur “to confront *Mughal* power in response to a plea from Kashmiri Brahmans” as the “dominant tradition” in the Sikh *Panth*.⁷⁷ By quoting *Chaupa Singh Rahitnama*, dated near the middle of the 18th century, he stated that this source makes no mention of the Kashmiri Brahmans.⁷⁸ So, for him it was the Sikh tradition; because the early sources do not support this. Harbans Singh on the basis of *Bhatt Vahi Talunda*, *Gurbilas Patshahi 10* and *Shahid Bilas* accepted that 16 men, disputation of the Kashmiri Brahmans, under the leadership of Kirpa Ram Dutt came to Anandpur on 27th *Jeth Sudi* 11, 1732 *Bikrami* i.e. 25 May 1675. Ganda Singh also accepted this.⁷⁹ However, for W.H. McLeod the cause of Guru Tegh Bahadur’ execution was not clear. According to him the influence of Guru Tegh Bahadur’ martyrdom was that *Mughal* administration was regarded by the Sikhs as the “greatest enemy of the *Panth*.” However, Harbans Singh and Ganda Singh both held Aurangzeb responsible for Guru Tegh Bahadur’s martyrdom. Harbans Singh had quoted Guru Gobind Singh’s these words *Thikar phor dilis sir prabh pur kia pyan*. However, he does not refer to the source of it. In fact, these are lines from *Bachittar Nattak*, autobiography of Guru Gobind Singh.⁸⁰ Significantly Ganda Singh has also used this source with the same purpose.⁸¹ However, Harbans Singh considered Guru Tegh Bahadur’s sacrifice as a “deeply humanitarian act”, that is “unprecedented in history”. He discusses in details the influences of Guru Tegh Bahadur’s martyrdom than Ganda Singh and W.H. McLeod. For Harbans Singh, Guru Tegh Bahadur’s martyrdom pointed towards a new future and society for humans that would be free from tyranny and intolerance. In fact, it brought about a widespread

⁷⁶ J.S. Ahluwalia, “Sociological Role of Sikhism”, *ibid.*, p. 78.

⁷⁷ W.H. McLeod, *Who is Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity*, pp. 25-26.

⁷⁸ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 46.

⁷⁹ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 71. See Ganda Singh, “The Sikhs”, p. 32.

⁸⁰ Guru Gobind Singh, *Bachittar Nattak* in Surinder Singh Kohli (English Translation), *Sri Dasam Granth Sahib*, Vol.1, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, New Delhi, 2005,p.128.

⁸¹ Ganda Singh, “The Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Studies in Historical Setting”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XI, Part 1, 1977, p. 212.

“moral and political awakening.” Harbans Singh argued that after Guru Tegh Bahadur’s martyrdom Sikhism became “the symbol of the rising spirit of resistance”. With Guru Tegh Bahadur’s martyrdom, the Sikhism acquired a “new consciousness of its strength and self-sufficiency”. Finally, it had entered upon “the final stage of its evolution”.⁸² Significantly, W.H. McLeod accepted that martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur had a continuous effect on the Sikh *Panth*. Thus he writes, “there can be no doubt concerning the effect of the Guru’s death on the *Panth*”.⁸³ But what were the effects, he remains silent.

Ganda Singh asserted that Guru Gobind Singh has been rightly called “the soldier-saint of India”. For him, the mission of Guru Gobind Singh was to save the peoples that were “suffering under the yoke of religious and political tyranny”.⁸⁴ This could be proven from Guru Gobind Singh’s autobiographical account, *Bachittar Nattak*, in which Guru Gobind Singh says, “while I was busy in austere devotion, the Lord called me and sent me to this world with these words, “I have adopted you as my son and created you for the propagation of the path (*Panth*). You go therefore, to spread *dharma* (righteousness) and cause people to reduce their steps from evil actions”.⁸⁵ Ganda Singh proposed that just as the martyrdom of Guru Arjan inspired Guru Hargobind to transform his Sikhs into a militant church. Similarly, the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur encouraged Guru Gobind Singh “to see it come to fruition”. For Ganda Singh, it was Guru Gobind Singh who had infused in Sikhs “greater political consciousness”. Guru Gobind Singh unites his Sikhs together into a “compact national brotherhood”. Ganda Singh believed that the significant achievement of Guru Gobind Singh’s life was “to create out of the humblest of peasants and artisans a body of brave patriots and martyrs ever ready to sacrifice their all at the altar of their faith and country”.⁸⁶ Similarly Harbans Singh believes that Guru Gobind Singh built upon the heritage of preceding Sikh Gurus. Guru Gobind Singh brought about a “remarkable change” in the character of the people. Harbans Singh stated that Guru Gobind Singh raised a “strong voice of protest against political tyranny and religious intolerance”. In fact Guru Gobind Singh encouraged “dispirited and politically subdued people into bold and confident actions”. Furthermore, Guru Gobind Singh turned them into very “potent force in history”. Harbans Singh also

⁸² Harbans Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, pp. 106-110.

⁸³ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 46.

⁸⁴ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, p. 20.

⁸⁵ Surinder Singh Kohli (Trans. English), *Sri Dasam Granth Sahib*, Vol.1, See Introduction p. XVII.

⁸⁶ Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of the Followers”, pp. 24-59.

argued that “the warlike cult” was not an innovation of Guru Gobind Singh. In truth, it was inherited from Guru Hargobind’s *miri-piri* policy. Moreover “the spiritual and temporal, the religious and the martial spirit mixed in the *Khalsa Panth* brought to fulfillment” by Guru Gobind Singh. He stated that faith during Guru Gobind Singh’s period became “a political force”. But he also underlines that it never meant the departure from the indispensable doctrines that he practiced.⁸⁷ Similarly, Ganda Singh argued that the religious tenets of Guru Gobind Singh was the same as that of his predecessor Sikh Gurus.⁸⁸

Ganda Singh had seen the purpose of the Guru Gobind Singh’s endeavors as “National reconstruction”. He pointed out that Guru Gobind Singh was not motivated from selfish political aims in his creation of *Khalsa*. Ganda Singh thinks that Guru Gobind Singh wanted “to build up a nation of the Purified Ones” that would be “free from fear and selfishness”.⁸⁹ For Harbans Singh, Guru Gobind Singh initiated *Khalsa* institution “to fight oppression”.⁹⁰ Furthermore, W.H. McLeod wrote that Guru Gobind Singh wants to transform his Sikhs into a powerful force that would wage war in the cause of righteousness. This was done by Guru Gobind Singh by inaugurating a new brotherhood of *Khalsa* in 1699.⁹¹ Ganda Singh stated that the rulers of the Guru’s time, the priest-ridden Hindu Hill Rajas of the Shivaliks and the power mad great *Mughal* of Delhi were threatened with and insecure of this new kind of socio-religious integration of the *Khalsa*. Consequently, Guru Gobind Singh fought as many as fourteen “defensive battles” against them.⁹² Even, in his biographical account *Bachittar Nattak*, Guru Gobind Singh stated that “the king Fateh Shah became angry and fought with him without any reason”.⁹³ On the other hand, though, W.H. McLeod had accepted that Guru Gobind Singh himself fought wars, but believed that Guru Gobind Singh faced “defeat”. In his words, “if detached observers see these wars, they would regard that as defeats”. But he does not quote any fact to justify his conjecture. He stated that the interpretations transform these events through stressing and focusing on the heroism and inflexible determination of Guru Gobind Singh.⁹⁴

⁸⁷ Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, pp. 50-52& p.105.

⁸⁸ Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of the Followers”, pp. 24-59.

⁸⁹ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, p. 23.

⁹⁰ Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 50.

⁹¹ W.H. McLeod, “Sikhism”, in A.L. Bhasham (ed.), *A Cultural History of India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, Twelfth Impression, 2008, p. 299.

⁹² Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of the Followers”, p.62.

⁹³ Surinder Singh Kohli (English Translation), *Sri Dasam Granth Sahib*, Vol.1, p. XII.

⁹⁴ W.H. McLeod, *Who is Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity*, p. 48.

Further, Ganda Singh stressed on the point that Guru Gobind Singh was fighting his crusades against “the religious intolerance and political iniquities of his time”.⁹⁵ Moreover, he also argued that Guru Gobind Singh had not taken to military ways for the purpose of “political aggrandizement or territorial conquests”. His intentions were not of that kind. Ganda Singh has reasoned that although Guru Gobind Singh had won about a dozen battles both against the neighboring Rajas and the Imperial chiefs, but Guru Gobind Singh had not occupied an inch of their land. Not only this, neither they plundered their treasury nor carried prisoners. In fact, Guru Gobind Singh’s all battles were “defensive”. Ganda Singh pointed out that Guru Gobind had to take to sword as “the last resort”. He had based on the authority of Guru Gobind Singh’s historic letter, the *Zafar-Nama*, addressed to Aurangzeb. Guru Gobind Singh said that “helplessly, as a last resort, I came forward and took to arms. When all other means have failed, it is lawful to resort to the sword.”⁹⁶ Harbans Singh also agrees on this point. He stated that Guru Gobind Singh took up arms only to “defend the religious values” established by the Sikh Gurus. Like Ganda Singh, he also proposed that Guru Gobind Singh did not seek or even tried to annex territory in consequence of his military success. His struggle was against injustice and tyranny. Harbans does not fail to mention that all this was in keeping with the spirit of the message and teachings of Guru Nanak, who had, in his times, condemned the oppression that the *Mughal* invaders practiced.⁹⁷ Guru Gobind Singh in a conversation with Jait Ram, recorded in *Guru Kian Sakhian*, has also stated that he had taken up the sword as the last resort.⁹⁸ This is also justified from Sainapati’s account that Guru Gobind Singh had taken up the sword for “noble cause” of protecting the virtuous and saints.⁹⁹

In his writings, Ganda Singh has accepted Banda Singh Bahadur as “the greatest hero and martyr of the early eighteenth century”. He argued that Banda Singh was “one of the most remarkable men that India has produced in the eighteenth century”. However, W.H. McLeod thinks Ganda Singh’s this remark as “high praise” of Banda Singh. This remark could not be rationalizing with his life events, for W.H. McLeod.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, Ganda Singh has admitted that after Guru Gobind Singh,

⁹⁵ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, Punjabi University, Patiala, Fourth Edition, 2016, p.6

⁹⁶ Ganda Singh, “The Sikhs”, p. 39.

⁹⁷ Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 110.

⁹⁸ Swarup Singh Kaushish, *Guru Kian Sakhian*, Piara Singh Padam (ed.), p. 192.

⁹⁹ Sainapati, *Sri Gur Sobha*, Kulwant Singh (trans. English), pp. 336-337.

¹⁰⁰ W.H. McLeod, *Essays in Sikh History, Tradition, and Society*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, First Published, 2007, p. 4.

Banda Singh was the first person who had introduced the Sikhs towards “practical demonstration of staunch nationalism”. He had considered Banda Singh as the “first man to deal a severe blow to the intolerant rule of the *Mughals*” in Punjab. He pointed out that Banda Singh was the first “to break the first sod in the conquest of Punjab”. He argued that Banda Singh laid the foundation of the “Sikh empire in 1710”.¹⁰¹ He had seen Banda Singh as “the first Sikh political leader” who had proclaimed the independence of his people in Punjab.¹⁰² He argued that Banda Singh was a “great political leveler and a thorough social uplifter”.¹⁰³ On the other hand, Harbans Singh accepted Banda Singh as “the Sikh leader”.¹⁰⁴ However, W.H. McLeod had quite different views regarding Banda Singh than these Sikh historians. He accepted Banda Singh as “an enigmatic figure” in Sikh history. But it seems that he does not accept him as “great hero” of the eighteenth century. In the words of W.H. McLeod, “for some he is great hero, second only to the Guru.”¹⁰⁵ Unlike Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh, he had considered Banda Singh as the “leader of uprising”. Contrary to Sikh historians, he had seen Banda Singh’s struggle as “disturbance”. He stated that Banda Singh has been incorporated in the *Khalsa* tradition and is seen as one who loyally upheld *Khalsa* as its ideals. But for him, the contemporary situation of Banda Singh’s time period was “probably rather more ambiguous”. However, he has not provided any fact to support his assumption. It would be not out of place to mention here that in his whole writings, W.H. McLeod wrote the name of Banda Singh Bahadur as Banda or Banda Bahadur, instead of Banda Singh Bahadur.¹⁰⁶

W.H. McLeod proposed that Banda Singh started a “peasant revolt”. In other words, he saw Banda Singh’s struggle for independence only as a “peasant revolt”. Significantly, it is interesting to note that although he considered it a “peasant revolt” yet he assumed that at one stage the *Mughal* authority was nearly wholly destroyed in the Punjab. In fact he has taken into consideration the influence of agrarian issues on the eighteenth century of Punjab history in general, and on the Sikh *Panth* in particular. Therefore, he termed the struggle of Banda Singh as “agrarian uprising”.¹⁰⁷ He argued that Banda Singh was the head of a “growing army of peasants” in the Punjab.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, without quoting any source, he stated that Banda Singh had

¹⁰¹ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, p. 171.

¹⁰² Ganda Singh, “Raj Karega Khalsa”, *The Sikh Review*, July -1978, Sikh Cultural Centre, Calcutta, 7.

¹⁰³ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, 1971, p. 28.

¹⁰⁴ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 106.

¹⁰⁵ W.H. McLeod, *Essays in Sikh History, Tradition and Society*, p. 78.

¹⁰⁶ W.H. McLeod, *Who is Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity*, p. 48.

¹⁰⁷ W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, pp. 17-19.

¹⁰⁸ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 63.

ordered the peasants to unite with his movement in opposition to the Mughal authorities.¹⁰⁹ Muzaffar Alam also termed the Sikh uprising under Banda Singh as a “peasant revolt”.¹¹⁰ Another noted historian, Irfaan Habib proposed that militancy developed in 17th and 18th century was due to the intolerable “economic pressure”.¹¹¹ Harbans Singh remains silent in this regards. Ganda Singh has observed that “peasantry” was not a part of Banda Singh’s army. Furthermore, he stated even during the victory of Samana, the “infuriated peasantry” of the neighboring villages that joined the Banda Singh’s troops, as a chance “to wreak vengeance upon their personal enemies”. Similarly, at Sadhaura also “the aggrieved peasantry” joined his army as a “favorable chance”. Ganda Singh had categorized the army of Banda Singh into “three classes of men”. The first class comprised the “true and loyal Sikhs”. The second class consisted of “paid soldiers”. Lastly, the third class was completely composed of “irregulars” who had joined Banda Singh for the “love of booty and plunder”. Most of them were professional robbers and dacoits, men of reckless daring. These men hailed the movement of Banda Singh as a “golden opportunity” for looting cities and towns. Ganda Singh thinks that “persecuted peasants” may be counted among these “irregulars.” They joined Banda Singh’s army to “to wreak their vengeance upon their personal enemies”. He concluded that these “irregulars” were mainly accountable for indiscriminate murder and plunder during the expeditions of Banda Singh. He regarded them as “the most dangerous and unreliable allies”.¹¹² It is pertinent to side with Harpreet Kaur’s assertion that the “economic pressure on the *Jats*” might be one of the causes for their joining in the army of Banda Singh but more dominant object was the “religious persecution suffered by the Sikhs at the hands of the *Mughal Government*”.¹¹³

Ganda Singh proposed that Guru Gobind Singh retrieved the misdirected energies of the ascetic Banda and made him part of the *Khalsa* brotherhood. It was

¹⁰⁹ W.H. McLeod, *Essay in Sikh History, Religion and Tradition*, p. 83.

¹¹⁰ Muzaffar Alam, “Sikh Uprising under Banda Bahadur 1708-1715” in J.S. Grewal & Indu Banga (ed.), *The Khalsa Over 300 Years*, Tulika, New Delhi, 1999, p. 45.

¹¹¹ Irfaan Habib, “Presidential Address to the Medieval Section”, *Punjab History Conference Proceeding*, 1972, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 54.

¹¹² Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, pp. 38-39. The similar categories of Banda Singh’s army also mentioned by Gokul Chanda Narang. See Gokul Chanda Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, New Book Society, Lahore, Third Edition, 1946, pp. 166-167.

¹¹³ Harpreet Kaur, “Analysis of the Liberation Movement under Banda Singh Bahadur against the Mughals”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Oct 1983, Punjabi University, Patiala. Balwant Singh Dhillon also argued that it is erroneous to see the struggle of Banda Singh only from the perspective of “agrarian crisis”. See Balwant Singh Dhillon (ed.), *Banda Singh Bahadur: Farsi Sarot*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2011, p. 20

due to Guru Gobind Singh that Banda Singh worked for the emancipation of the people that have suffered under the iniquities and tyrannies of the age. On the authority of Ahmad Shah of Batala's *Zikr-i-Guruaan wa Ibatida-i-Singha wa Mazhab-i-Eshan*, a source of early nineteenth century, Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh have mentioned the conversation between Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Singh. On the authority of this source, both agreed that Guru Gobind Singh had initiated Banda Singh into *Khalsa* on 3 September, 1708 at Nander.¹¹⁴ W.H. McLeod has not provided much information in this regard, but has raised some questions regarding the trust that Guru Gobind Singh had shown towards Banda Singh. He also poses question about the initiation of Banda as a member of *Khalsa*. In his view, these questions arise due to the "lack of the source material." Nevertheless, it should be noted that W.H. McLeod does not efforts to mention even a single source, though secondary, which refers about the initiation of Banda Singh by Guru Gobind Singh. He proposed that Banda was initiated to *Khalsa* is "essentially an opinion dictated by the Singh Sabha notions of the faith".¹¹⁵ Ganda Singh well known about this so he stated that still some writers doubt on the baptism of Banda Singh. He has mentioned 14 sources of Persian, *Gurmukhi* and English languages of 18th and 19th centuries that have agreed on the point that Banda Singh was administered with *Khande-de-Pahul*.¹¹⁶ Swarup Singh Kaushish in *Guru Kian Sakhian* has mentioned that the *Khande-de-Pahul* was administered to Madhudas and Guru Gobind Singh gave him a new name "Banda Singh".¹¹⁷ Gholam Hussein Khan, in his work *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin* has stated that "Banda was of the Sikh persuasion, attached to the tenets of Guru Gobind".¹¹⁸ As for reliability and trust that Guru Gobind Singh has shown in Banda Singh has also left W.H. McLeod confused. He wonder on the Guru Gobind Singh's decision to hand over such authority to him, solely based on the first impression. Though he himself does not provide any further information related to the query and remains silent. Consequently, he stated that there can be no definite answer to this

¹¹⁴ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 95. See also Ganda Singh (ed.), *Hukamname*, p. 33. See also, Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, pp. 5-14.

¹¹⁵ W.H. McLeod, *Essays in Sikh History, Tradition and Society*, p. 80.

¹¹⁶ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, pp. 11-13. See also Ganda Singh, *Banda Singh Bahadur* (Punjabi), Sikh Ithas Research Board, Sri Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 2016, pp. 24-25.

¹¹⁷ Swarup Singh Kaushish, *Guru Kian Sakhian*, Pyara Singh Padam (ed.), p. 199.

¹¹⁸ Mir Gholam Hussein Khan, *The Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, Johns Briggs (tr.), Allahabad, 1924.

question.¹¹⁹ But a Persian source of early eighteenth century titled *Amarnama*, written by Dhadi Nath Mall in 1708 has mentioned that the first meeting between Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Singh happened on 3 September, 1708.¹²⁰ From this date, we could assume that Banda Singh remained in the company of Guru Gobind Singh approximately one month and that is not a short span of life. The author of *Tarikh-i-Mujaffari*, Muhammad Ali Khan Ansari, who had completed his work in 1800 in Persian language, has considered that Banda Singh was one of the special one of Guru Gobind Singh's followers.¹²¹ In one of his article titled *The Sikhs*, Ganda Singh has stated that it was a time when sacrifice of a saint was required to inspire and rouse the spirit and anger of the people for their independence from the yoke of *Mughal* tyranny. The leader for that purpose came to be found in the person of Banda Singh.¹²² He considered Guru Gobind Singh as "sagacious" in selecting Banda Singh "for carrying on his struggle for the independence of his people".¹²³

About the mission of Banda Singh W.H. McLeod has raised some questions. He sees him as "a warlord, one ready to take advantage of a break-down of law and order to carve out a principality of his own" and also as a "Punjabi peasant without clear objectives but faced with a situation of opportunity". He on his part was not sure about the mission of Banda Singh. But he himself had not tried to answer them. For him, Banda Singh had presented "something of a problem" to his contemporaries and the modern historians have been puzzled by him. The author of *Mir'at -i-Waridat*, Muhammad Shafi has written in 1734 that "after the assassination of Guru Gobind Singh, the leaders of his community (*Khulafa-i-millat-ash*) consulted among themselves and sent Banda Singh to Punjab".¹²⁴ But Ganda Singh argues that the news of an attack on Guru Gobind Singh by a Pathan deputed by Wazir Khan, the *faujdar* of Sirhind, infuriated Banda Singh. He pleaded to Guru Gobind Singh to allow him "to proceed to the Punjab and pull down the tyrannical rulers". Ganda Singh' views are identical with Rattan Singh Bhangoo, who has believed that Banda

¹¹⁹ W.H. McLeod, *Essays in Sikh History, Tradition and Society*, p. 79.

¹²⁰ Ganda Singh (Edited), *Amarnama Farsi Mool, Punjabi Utara Te Arth*, Sikh History Society, Patiala, 1953, p. 9. See also Swarup Singh Kaushish, *Guru Kian Sakhian*, Pyara Singh Padam (ed.), p. 196.

¹²¹ Muhammad Ali Khan Ansari, "Tarikh-i- Mujaffari", in Balwant Singh Dhillon (ed.), *Banda Singh Bahadur Farsi Sarot*, p.256.

¹²² Ganda Singh, "The Sikhs", p. 47.

¹²³ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, pp. 160-161.

¹²⁴ Irfan Habib (English Trans.), "Banda Bahadur and his Followers from Muhammad Shafi "Warid", Mir'at -i-Waridat" in J.S. Grewal and Irfan Habib (ed.), *Sikh History from Persian Sources Translations of Major Texts*, p. 160.

Singh “begged for any kind of service that he could render unto the Guru”.¹²⁵ Further, Ganda Singh has suggested that as Guru Gobind Singh’s dialogues with Emperor Bahadur Shah generate no tangible result. Therefore “no other course” was left to Guru Gobind Singh than to agree to Banda Singh’s request. Consequently, Guru Gobind Singh assigned the “military command of his people to his charge”.¹²⁶ Moreover, Guru Gobind Singh ordered him “to continue his struggle for freedom of Panjab against the oppressing yoke of the Mughals”.¹²⁷ On the other hand, Harbans Singh only wrote that Banda Singh came to Punjab “armed” but with the blessings of Guru Gobind Singh.¹²⁸ The author of *Amarnama* also tells us that Guru Gobind Singh allowed Banda Singh to go to Punjab.¹²⁹

The mission of Banda Singh was “to carry on the campaigns against the cruelty and injustice of the provincial governors” argued Harbans Singh.¹³⁰ But W.H. McLeod considered Banda Singh commissioned to Punjab “to wreak vengeance on Wazir Khan, who had executed Guru Gobind Singh’s two sons”.¹³¹ Ganda Singh has tried his best to throw light on the mission of Banda Singh. Ganda Singh has proposed that the mission of Banda Singh has usually been “misunderstood by the historians”. He suggested that Banda Singh has been represented as a person commissioned by Guru Gobind Singh to take revenge the murder of his sons. He argued that those who are familiar with the doctrines of Sikhism, the compositions of Guru Gobind Singh and the many events of his life, cannot accept that Guru Gobind Singh could ever have thought to ask anyone to avenge the murder of his own sons. If this was Banda Singh’s aim his work must have been completed after the defeat and death of Wazir Khan and the sack of *Sirhind*. But he “led on the expeditions against the rulers of *Saharnpur*, *Nanauta* and *Jallalabad*, the *Ram Rayias* of *Ghudani*, and the *faujdar*s of *Batala* and *Sultanpur*”. In truth, Guru Gobind Singh has entrusted him to “the noble cause of continuing the war against the tyrannies and oppressions of his time”. While executing this plan, Banda Singh, “punished the wrong-doers for the cold-blooded murders of Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh”. Ganda Singh has marked that Banda Singh had “purest of motives” for the “liberation and independence of his people.” He has argued that Banda Singh had taken to war purely from “patriotic motives.” Ganda

¹²⁵ Rattan Singh Bhangoo, *Sri Gur Panth Prakash*, Vol.1, Kulwant Singh (English Translation), p. 195.

¹²⁶ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, p. 17.

¹²⁷ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, p. 25.

¹²⁸ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 106.

¹²⁹ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Amarnama Farsi Mool, Punjabi Utara Te Arth*, p. 26.

¹³⁰ Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 98.

¹³¹ W.H. McLeod, *Historical Dictionary of Sikhism*, Scarecrow Press Inc., U.S.A., Second Edition, 2005, p. 29.

Singh, on the authority of Guru Gobind Singh's words "to take up the sword when all other means have failed is lawful," has argued that Banda Singh used the "sword" as his "last recourse".¹³² Furthermore, he justifies Banda Singh Bahadur's role, when he writes that "the Mughals wished to put an end to the Sikh movement by terrorizing it with the flash of their sword. They had lost the meaning of godliness, religious catholicity and humanism. In fact, self-conceit and exclusiveness had become the only maxim of their power-mad lives. As they knew no language other than that of the cold steel, it was only in that language that they could be spoken to, thought Banda Singh."¹³³

Ganda Singh has suggested that in such a short time, Banda Singh became popular for his "saintly blessings and princely generosity". The common people knew him as a "deputy of Guru Gobind Singh". Further, Banda Singh's victory on the dacoits of Bangar had seen by Ganda Singh as "the beginnings of the glorious, though short, career" of Banda Singh. Banda Singh's victory over Sonipat and on the *amils* of Kaithal was a "small" but successful beginning of his career, for Ganda Singh. Moreover, these "small" victories increased the confidence of the Sikhs.¹³⁴ A report from *Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla* of 31 January 1709 to 20 January 1710 mentions that "the sect's riots should not be considered insignificant.....by then [rebels] had emerged triumphant everywhere".¹³⁵ Ganda Singh has stated that these victories won for Banda Singh "great fame". Now, he was occasionally called upon to defend the villagers from the plundering parties. Ganda Singh proposed that from the villages of *Sehri* and *Khanda*, Banda Singh had dispatched Guru Gobind Singh's letters to the Sikhs of *Malwa*, *Doaba* and *Majha* regions of Punjab. Through, these letters, he called upon the Sikhs to join him in the "laudable object of uprooting the tyrannous rule of the intolerant Mughals".¹³⁶ Once again, W.H. McLeod only raised questions but does not provide answers. He questions about the growing popularity of Banda Singh. He looks it through three angles. He became popular because he was the "designated successor" of Guru Gobind Singh. The second was due to he presented leadership in a state of agrarian disturbance in the Punjab. The final query was about

¹³² Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, pp. 18-19 & pp. 167-169

¹³³ Ganda Singh, "The Impact of Guru Nanak's Teachings on the Lives of his Followers", p. 64.

¹³⁴ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, pp. 21-26.

¹³⁵ Bhagat Singh, (Trans. & ed.), "Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla" (Mughal Court News- letters relating to the Panjab, A.D. 1707-1718), *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XVIII-II, October 1984, Serial No. 31, Punjabi University, Patiala, pp. 25-26.

¹³⁶ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, pp. 21-26.

the attitude of people that whether they were genuinely following him or just the prospects of victory or at least of loot.¹³⁷ However, Ganda Singh refutes this by stating that Banda Singh was not designated successor of Guru Gobind Singh but the “deputy”. He mentioned about the letters of companions of Banda Singh from Nander that were dispatched to Sikhs all over the country stating that Guru Gobind Singh has appointed Banda Singh as “the *Jathedar* of Khalsa”.¹³⁸ According to *Guru Kian Sakhian*, on 1765 *Bikrami*, Guru Gobind Singh appointed Banda Singh as the *Jathedar* of the *Panth* and ordered him to go *Madar* country.¹³⁹ Ganda Singh stated that there is no contemporary or the initial accessible records that would show that Banda Singh never proclaimed himself to be the “Guru” in succession to Guru Gobind Singh. Ganda Singh, to further justify his stance, refers to the authority of Banda Singh’s letter of 26th December, 1710 addressed to the *Khalsa* of Jaunpur. In this letter Banda Singh issues the order in the name of the Guru and not in capacity of a Guru. In the words of Banda Singh, as quoted by Ganda Singh, “the Guru shall save the entire *Khalsa* of Jaunpur. Repeat Guru, Guru.....I enjoin that he who lives according to the *Rahit* of the *Khalsa* shall be saved by the Guru”. Ganda Singh has considered this letter of Banda Singh as “the most conclusive evidence” on this point.

Ganda Singh, like other historians, agrees to the fact that the victory of *Samana* was the “first regular conquest of Banda Singh”. Banda Singh became the “head of considerable number of crusaders” that were keen to either win the crown of victory or to drink the cup of martyrdom. After the battle of *Sadhaura*, *Ropar* and the arrival of Sikhs of *Majha* and *Doaba* regions, the camp of Banda Singh fell into “great rejoicing.” Now, the Sikhs looked forward to start the “holy crusade” against the condemned city of Sirhind and its governor Wazir Khan. For the Sikhs, it was their “honor to participate in the holy war” proclaimed against the old opponents of their people and faith. Moreover, this inspired “a new spirit in the minds” of the Sikhs. A report from the Jaipur Records, written before the battle of Sirhind notes that “the Sikhs, under the command of Banda Singh, had a deep-rooted hatred for Wazir Khan, the *faujdar* of Sirhind for the murder of the young sons of Guru Gobind Singh.”¹⁴⁰ Consequently, after the battle of Chappar Chiri on 22nd May, 1710, Banda

¹³⁷ W.H. McLeod, *Essay in Sikh History, Tradition and Society*, pp. 81-82.

¹³⁸ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, p. 22& p. 164.

¹³⁹ Swarup Singh Kaushish, *Guru Kian Sakhian*, Piara Singh Padam (ed.), p. 199.

¹⁴⁰ “Jaipur Records (1710-1711 A.D.)”, in Balwant Singh Dhillon (ed.), *Banda Singh Bahadur Farsi Sarot*, p. 47. About the Wazir Khan, Malcolm also remarked that “the man of all others most abhorred by the Sikhs, as the murderer of the infant children of Guru Gobind.” See, Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, London, 1812, p. 77.

Singh and his army entered the city of Sirhind on 24th May, 1710. Although, Ganda Singh has accepted that the population of the city was subjected to indiscriminate plunder. He suggests that the sentiments of the crusaders had been much excited by the cold-blooded murders of the young sons of Guru Gobind Singh. And that “inflamed the fire of their fury”. On the authority of Muhammad Qasim’s *Ibrat Nama*, Kanwar Khan’s *Taskirat-us-Salatin Chugtya*, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* of Sohan Lal Suri and lastly Irwin’s *Later Mughals*, Ganda Singh has accepted that every Muslim resident of Sirhind was made a prisoner. But Ganda Singh, stressed on the point that this was done not because they were Muslims but because of the “political persecution” of the innocent and religious intolerance towards the poor and helpless subjects. To justify this, Ganda Singh said that even the Hindus responsible of above mentioned offences were not spared. For this, he gives the example of Sucha Nand.¹⁴¹ Ganda Singh’s claim was also supported by the author of *Ibratnama* written by Muhammad Kasim Lahori in 1723.¹⁴² But W.H. McLeod argued that there are “several accounts” that has described the outcome of the battle and capture of Sirhind. Further, he argued that all these accounts stressed the “terrible destruction” by Banda Singh’s troops.¹⁴³ He does not mention a single primary or secondary source to justify his stance. But Ganda Singh thinks that the details of Sikh atrocities mentioned by the historians like Khafi Khan in his *Muntakhabu’l Lubab*, Gulam Husain Khan in his work *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin* and Muhammad Latif’s *History of the Punjab* were “very much exaggerated or baseless”. W.H. McLeod proposed that after the victory of Sirhind Banda Singh’s activities kept the Punjab in a “state of alarm”. He has raised eyes on the extensive use of killing and other violent methods throughout the campaign of Banda Singh. However, he gives the answer that “effective breakdown of order leads to all manner of cruelty”. According to him, Banda Singh had summoned the peasants to join his movement against the authorities. But when the movement spread, he was compelled to follow events as much as to dictate their future.¹⁴⁴ However, he has refrained from citing the sources to strengthen his point. Ganda Singh wrote that the accounts of Persian histories like *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab* of Khafi Khan and the *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin* of Gulam Hussain Khan are under the influence of their “pro-Islamic prejudices against the non-Muslims.” They had accepted “false and flimsy rumors as historical truths”. Consequently, they charged Banda Singh with

¹⁴¹ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, pp. 30-46.

¹⁴² Muhammad Kasim Lahori, “Ibratnama” in Balwant Singh Dhillon (ed.), *Banda Singh Bahadur: Farsi Sarot*, p. 142. See also Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, pp. 46-47.

¹⁴³ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 64.

¹⁴⁴ W.H. McLeod, *Essay in Sikh History, Religion and Tradition*, p. 83.

“the blackest cruelty and barbarism”.¹⁴⁵ However, Kesar Singh Chhiber in *Bansawalinama* justifies Banda Singh’s action stating that “Banda Singh avenged the atrocities perverted by the Turks on the Sikhs. Furthermore, he says that the deeds of one generation affect the fate of another”.¹⁴⁶ Ganda Singh has written that after the conquest on Sirhind, Banda Singh and the Sikhs were hailed as the “defenders of the faith”. People began to come to Banda Singh, “for the redress of their grievances”.¹⁴⁷

Ganda Singh suggested that the victory of Sirhind as “a signal for a general Sikh rising” all over the country. In fact, it had revised “a new spirit of independence among the Sikhs”. Consequently, the Sikhs had started to believe that they have been “providentially elevated to the position of conquerors and rulers”. Accordingly, they rejected to accept the authority of their *Mughal* masters.¹⁴⁸ Harbans Singh observed that Banda Singh came to Punjab like a “whirlwind” that had swept away the authority of the Mughals.¹⁴⁹ Iradat Khan in his work *Tarikh-i-Iradat Khan* that was completed in 1714 has observed something similar to Ganda Singh. He wrote that from “Punjab to Saharnpur, there was no able person to stand against Banda Singh”.¹⁵⁰ After the occupation of Sirhind, Ganda Singh has stated that the *Doaba* of *Bist* Jalandhar “was the first to be electrified with the spirit of rising and independence”. The Sikhs of this area also took arms against the Mughal authorities and worked on their way to Independence.¹⁵¹ Iradat Khan also stated that “after the conquest of Sirhind, the Sikhs conquered the areas from Lahore up to both the sides of Jamuna”.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁵ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, p. III.

¹⁴⁶ J.S. Grewal, *Lectures on History, Society and Culture of the Punjab*, p. 238.

¹⁴⁷ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, pp. 38-51.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

¹⁴⁹ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 107. The victories of Banda Singh noticed by everyone. Even Malcolm said that, “if Bahadur Shah had not quitted the Dek’hin, which he did in A.D. 1710, there is reason to think the whole of Hindustan would have been subdued by these merciless invaders” See Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, London, 1812, p. 79.

¹⁵⁰ Iradat Khan, “Tarikh-i-Iradat Khan”, in Balwant Singh Dhillon (ed.), *Banda Singh Bahadur Farsi Sarot*, p. 61. See also Muhammad Qasim Aurangabadi, “Ahwal-ul-Khawak” Bhalwant Singh Dhillon (Translated), Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2012, p. 37. Rattan Singh Bhangoo observed that “the fear of Banda Singh was so much that nobody wants to accept the offer of governorship of Punjab. There was no Mughal commander volunteered to confront Banda Singh”. Rattan Singh Bhangoo, *Sri Gur Panth Prakash*, Vol.1, Kulwant Singh (English Translation), p. 263.

¹⁵¹ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, p. 77.

¹⁵² Iradat Khan, “Tarikh-i-Iradat Khan”, in Balwant Singh Dhillon (ed.), *Banda Singh Bahadur Farsi Sarot*, p. 59. See also Mirza Muhammad Harsi, “Ibratnama” in Balwant Singh Dhillon (ed.), *Banda Singh Bahadur Farsi Sarot*, p. 65. See also Nawwab Samsam-ud-Daula Shah Nawaz Khan, *The Maathi-ul-Umra*, H. Beveridge (Translated), Bainsi Prashad (Revised, Annotated and Completed), Vol. 2, Janaki Prakashan, Patna, 1979, p. 553. See also Muhammad Qasim Aurangabadi, “Ahwal-ul-Khawakin”, Bhalwant Singh Dhillon (Translated), Singh Brothers, Amritsar, p. 36. This author proposed that at that time Banda Singh wants to conquer Delhi also.

With the establishment of power, Banda Singh came to assume what Ganda Singh calls a “regal state”. He made the fort of Mukhlispur as his capital and also a base depot for his future “military operations”. Ganda Singh believed that Banda Singh’s first choice for the capital was Sirhind, but it was on Grand Trunk Road and prone to the attacks of the Mughal forces. Therefore, Banda Singh made Mukhlispur his capital. He renovated the fort and changed the name to Lohgarh. It soon became the “capital of the Sikh territories”.¹⁵³ Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod have remained silent on the issue of construction of the capital. Gulam Muhiuddin in his work *Fatuhatnama-i-Samdi*, completed in 1722, had also mentioned about Banda Singh’ Lohgarh fort.¹⁵⁴ Ganda Singh has argued that Banda Singh became “a king in all but name”. Indeed, he proposed that Banda Singh had conquered many territories. He administered them through his “deputies” and had a large army of devoted followers. The author of *Mir’at-i-Waridat* wrote that, “when the power of that chief [Banda Singh], of that cruel and iniquitous army reached its peak, with the Sikhs gathering around him from all parts of Hindustan, *Dakhin*, Bengal, Kabul, Kashmir and other places—for no village or city is without this topsy-turvy sect—he in a very short time completed the building of a stone fort of great strength at the foot of the Siwalik hills near Shahdaura [sadhaura], of which he laid the foundation. He made that fort his seat and sent his officials to administer every city and village far and near.”¹⁵⁵ However, Ganda Singh points out the inscriptions on the coins and the seal of Banda Singh referred to the authority of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. He refers to the English translation of the Persian inscription on the coins that reads as “coins struck in the world by the grace of the True Lord; victory to Gobind Singh, the king of kings; the sword of Nanak is the granter of desires’.¹⁵⁶ Harbans Singh also refers to the inscription of the coins but only writes that Banda Singh “struck the coins in the name of the Gurus”. And he does not mention the name of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh.¹⁵⁷ Usmani Bilgrami, author of the Persian work *Hadikut-La-*

¹⁵³ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, pp. 55-56.

¹⁵⁴ Gulam Muhiuddin, “Fatuhatnama-i-Samdi”, in Balwant Singh Dhillon (ed.), *Banda Singh Bahadur Farsi Sarot*, p. 107. See also Rattan Singh Bhangoo, *Sri Gur Panth Prakash*, Vol.1, Kulwant Singh (English Translation), p. 317.

¹⁵⁵ Irfan Habib (tr.), “Banda Bahadur and his Followers from Muhammad Shafi ‘Warid’, *Mir’at-i-Waridat*”, pp. 161- 162.

¹⁵⁶ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, p. 56-57.

¹⁵⁷ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 107.

Akalim (1780), has also mentioned that the words “Guru Nanak is the king of the world and also the true Lord” were inscribed on the coins issued by Banda Singh Bahadur.¹⁵⁸ According to Ganda Singh, on the reverse side of the coin words “coined at the model city, the refuge of the world, and the ornament of the fortunate throne” were written. Indeed, Ganda Singh thinks that these “titles and epithets” were used for Lohgarh. Similarly as “each imperial city had its appropriate honorific name” so Banda Singh also introduced an official seal for his *hukamnamas*, *farmans* or orders and letters. Ganda Singh mentions that, “Kettle (symbol of the means to feed the poor), Sword (symbol of power to protect the weak and helpless), victory and unhesitating patronage have been obtained from Nanak- Guru Gobind Singh” were inscribed on the seal. He has also discussed about the new *sammat* that Banda Singh introduced after his victory at Sirhind. Ganda Singh based his assumption on Banda Singh’ Jaunpur *hukamnama* that mentions *sammat* 1. He proposed that after Banda Singh’s victory on Sirhind, he had started a new *sammat* to commemorate the victory and the conquest.¹⁵⁹ A report entry from the *Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla* of 9 January, 1711 states that “the *Khalsa* Sikhs had adopted strange practices for themselves. They called one person-an army. In their records or dispatches they wrote that an army of the Sikhs had arrived. Some people said that the Sikhs had struck their own coins and in the *hukamnama* that they had addressed to the *amals*, they had written *samat* one.” Again, the report also throws light on the matter that they had inscribed on their *mohars* reads as, “the Greatness of Guru Nanak is apparent and secret. He is the King of this world and the world hereafter and he is the True Lord.”¹⁶⁰ Although according to Ganda Singh it was an imitation of the Mughal rulers, still it was an “explicit object” that infused the minds of the Sikhs with “a spirit of equality with the ruling people”. Another object of this was to “impress the Sikhs that they were in no way inferior to the Mughals”. If the Mughals had their capital, seal, coin and *Sann-i-Jalus*, the Sikhs too had their own. However there was “most striking” difference between the two. The *Mughal* emperors struck coins and engraved seals and ruled in their own names. But, Banda Singh being an enthusiastic disciple of Sikhism, instead of engraving his own name on the seal and coins, engraved his seal in the name of Guru

¹⁵⁸ Murtaza Husain Allah Yar Usmani Bilgrami, “Hadikut-La-Akalim” in Balwant Singh Dhillon (ed.), *Banda Singh Bahadur Farsi Sarot*, p. 240.

¹⁵⁹ Ganda Singh, “Hukamnameya Sambandi”, in Ganda Singh (ed.), *Hukamname*, p. 34.

¹⁶⁰ Bhagat Singh, (Trans.& ed.), “Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla” (Mughal Court News- letters relating to the Panjab, A.D. 1707-1718)”, pp. 51-52.

Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. These Gurus wrote Ganda Singh, were for Banda Singh the “guiding angels”. From them Banda Singh proclaimed to have obtained all his power and prosperity, *Degh* and *Tegh*.¹⁶¹ W.H. McLeod and Harbans Singh are silent in this regard.

Ganda Singh proposed that the establishment of “Sikh Raj”, though small in its extent, yet brought a “tremendous change in the outlook of the Sikhs”. Now, they had been seen by the non-Muslims as “defender of the faith and country”. The Sikhs considered it their “religious duty” to help their suffering brothers. The Sikhs understood that “their task could only be accomplished by the removal of *Mughal* deputies”. Consequently, they throughout the country started a career of conquest. The reports of *Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla* of 1 July 1710 and 7 April 1711 have noted that “the Sikhs had set up their own *thanas* and established their forces in it”.¹⁶² Indeed, Ganda Singh believed that their spirits were lighted with the religious power. He argued that the “religious instinct of the Sikhs drove them to these gallant deeds”.¹⁶³ On the other hand, W.H. McLeod assumed that devotion to Guru Gobind Singh played significant role in inspiring the masses. Consequently, they used their energies towards the opponents of their Sikh *Panth*.¹⁶⁴ Harbans Singh remains silent in this regard.

Ganda Singh thinks that up to this stage there was a general Sikh rising throughout the Eastern and South-Eastern Punjab, except in the city of Lahore. Further the whole of the Majha, the Rerki, the Kandi and Pathankot lying down at the feet of the Sikhs. He considered that the escape of Banda Singh and the Sikhs and the evacuation of the fort of Lohgarh could not be considered “a defeat for them”. It was, for Ganda Singh, a defeat of the emperor Bahadur Shah, as his every attempt to capture Banda Singh was “failed”. Ganda Singh reasons that Banda Singh very well knew that he was laboring under a disadvantage of numerical strength against the imperialist odd. He suffered the loss, due to the “want of ammunition and provisions”. He has argued that the conquered area of Banda Singh was purely “militant occupation”. Actually, he was not in a position to set up “an indisputable mastery over

¹⁶¹ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, pp. 57-58.

¹⁶² Bhagat Singh, (Trans. & ed.), “*Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*” (*Mughal Court News- letters relating to the Panjab, A.D. 1707-1718*)”, p. 28 & p. 58.

¹⁶³ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, pp. 59-60.

¹⁶⁴ W.H. McLeod, *Sikh History, Tradition and Society*, p. 82.

them”. Ganda Singh has stated that Banda Singh was not disappointed at the loss of his stronghold at Lohgarh. He very well knew that it was not the chief source of his strength. He knew that his strength lay primarily in the “indomitable spirit of *Khalsa*”.¹⁶⁵ Like Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh has also argued that even after the loss Banda Singh was far from vanquished.¹⁶⁶ Ganda Singh proposed that religion was the source of their power and heightened spirit. He suggested that Banda Singh had “indomitable courage and unsurpassable activity” and it was coupled with “the invincible spirit and dogged tenacity” of the Sikhs. He considered all of these as the “secret” of Banda Singh’s success. He believed that the religious zeal was nourished from “purity of motives and disinterested patriotism”. Indeed, Ganda Singh also underscored that Banda Singh’s passion for the spread of Sikhism was incomparable. On the authority of *Prachin Panth Prakash* and Banda Singh’s *hukamnama* to *Khalsa* of Jaunpur, Ganda Singh has stated that Banda Singh offered prayer for all whoever “appealed to him for assistance or joined his forces, and inculcated the *Simran* or Jap of *Waheguru*.”¹⁶⁷ Banda Singh’s devotion to Guru Gobind Singh’s prescribed code of conduct could be reflected from his remarks, as stated by Kesar Singh Chhibar, “according to the Holy *Granth* the best worship for a ruler it to be just...if you call yourself Sikh of the Great Man (Guru Gobind Singh) do not do anything that is sinful, irreligious or unjust. Advance the cause of true Sikhism and smite those who behave in an un-Sikh manner”.¹⁶⁸

It was Khafi Khan, who stated that “the Sikhs raised cry of *Fateh Darshan* and *Sacha Padshah* during the battle of Sirhind”.¹⁶⁹ Ganda Singh, on the other hand, has proposed that Khafi Khan is “mistaken” about the remark of *Fateh Darshan* and *Sacha Padshah*. Ganda Singh has accepted that Banda Singh introduced *Fateh Darshan* but it was a “war-cry”. Moreover, Ganda Singh believed that it was introduced after the battle of Sirhind, in fact even after the establishment of his capital at Mukhlispur. But he argued that it was replaced, when the *Khalsa* condemned this practice.¹⁷⁰ Harbans Singh remains silent on this issue. But W.H. McLeod held

¹⁶⁵ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on the Contemporary and Original Records*, p. 83 & pp.103-104.

¹⁶⁶ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 108.

¹⁶⁷ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on the Contemporary and Original Records*, pp. 161-169.

¹⁶⁸ Kesar Singh Chhibar, *Bansawalinama Dasan Patshahia Ka*, p. 136.

¹⁶⁹ Majida Bano (tr.), “Banda Bahadur and his Followers – Fron Khafi Khan, Muntakhu’I Lubab” in J.S. Grewal and Irfan Habib (ed.), *Sikh History from Persian Sources Translations of Major Texts*, p. 156.

¹⁷⁰ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, pp. 44-45 & p. 165

different views regarding *Fateh Darshan* than Ganda Singh. He has argued that Banda Singh changed the *Panth's* salutation from *Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa* to *Fateh Darshan*. He further asserted that through this, Banda Singh wanted to set up a *Panth* of his own and abandoned the practices that Guru Gobind Singh had instituted.¹⁷¹ However, Saiyid Ghulam Ali Khan Naqavi, author of *Imadu's Sa'adat*, wrote in 1808 that "the salutation on this sect [Sikh] is *Wahi Guru Di Fateh*".¹⁷²

W.H. McLeod also discusses about the dispute between Banda Singh and so-called *Tat Khalsa*. But he asserted that it was mainly related with "the proper form of *Khalsa* observance".¹⁷³ He thinks that this was "the most puzzling problem about Banda".¹⁷⁴ He proposed that although, Banda Singh is greatly admired, yet he is regarded as having tried to lead the "*Panth* astray". But Ganda Singh has argued that there was no "regular schism" existed during the lifespan of Banda Singh. He further wrote that there was no "active cleavage" between the *Bandais* and the other *Khalsa*. However, he accepted the dispute between Banda Singh and Baba Binod Singh. He maintained that it occurred due to the "difference of opinion". Moreover, Ganda Singh has stated that the division arose in a council of war over the matter of evacuating the enclosure and following old tactics of cutting through the enemy's lines for a place of safety. It was, Ganda Singh proposed, "only one solitary exception" in the case that Baba Binod Singh left the *ihata* of Gurdas Nangal on account of a "difference of opinion" in a council of war. In this case, Ganda Singh has rejected Saroop Das Bhalla's account presented in *Mahima Prakash*, as it provides "a very frivolous cause". According to this source, Banda Singh wanted to marry for the second time during the battle of Gurdasnagal. Ganda Singh argued that the source could not be believed as Banda Singh would never have thought of marriage in that "pitiable plight" where he was "starving to the point of death."¹⁷⁵

Ganda Singh assumed that Banda Singh was a "great political leveler and a thorough social uplifter".¹⁷⁶ Moreover, Banda Singh raised "the down-trodden to the position of authority and social prestige". Ganda Singh justifies his remark by quoting a lengthy note from Irwin's work *Later Mughals*. Muhammad Shafi 'Warid' also observed something similar. He wrote, "strange it was how through God-decreed fate,

¹⁷¹ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 64.

¹⁷² Irfan Habib (tr.), "An Account of the Sikhs, 1808 From Ghulam Ali Khan, *Imadu's Sa'adat*", p. 214.

¹⁷³ W.H. McLeod, *Who is Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity*, p. 48.

¹⁷⁴ W.H. McLeod, *Essays in Sikh History, Tradition and Society*, p. 83.

¹⁷⁵ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, p. 140 & p. 164.

¹⁷⁶ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh Peoples*, p. 28.

the courage and bravery of the inhabitants of those places had departed. If a lowly sweeper or cobbler (*chamar*) more impure than whom there is no caste (*quam*) in Hindustan, went to attend on that rebel. He would be appointed to govern his own town and would return with an order (*sanad*) of office of government in his hand. The moment he stepped into the territory, or town, or village, all the gentry and notables went out to receive him, and after his alighting at his house, stood with folded hands before him.”¹⁷⁷ Ganda Singh regarded abolishment of *Zamidari* system by Banda Singh in Punjab as the “greatest fiscal reform” in matter of his government.¹⁷⁸ He has also suggested that although Banda Singh had no time to organize any regular administration. Yet he was well aware of the miseries of the peasantry that they were groaning under the cruelty of the landlords. To eradicate this Banda Singh abolished *Zamidari* system. He considered it as a “revolutionary measure”, which impacted on “the future fiscal history of Punjab”. He opines that Banda Singh was a “socialist in his thinking and a communist in his methods.” In fact, Ganda Singh has even argued that Banda Singh was over two centuries ahead of his times.¹⁷⁹ Harbans Singh like Ganda Singh has accepted that Banda Singh abolished the *Zamidari* system. He has observed this as “a revolutionary change in the social order” of the Punjab. He proposed that Banda Singh’s this step helped in the emergence of peasants as a “potent force in the political life of the country”.¹⁸⁰ W.H. McLeod has posed a question on the claim that Banda Singh was responsible for the abolition of the *Zamidari* system in Punjab. However, he did not try to throw light on this issue.¹⁸¹

Ganda Singh has written that “little is known” about the government that Banda Singh established and about his deputies. However, he assumed there was “no regular” form of government established by Banda Singh. He has reasoned that there was hardly any time for Banda Singh to establish a regular form of government. For him it was merely a “military government”.¹⁸² A report from *Akhbar-i- Darbar-i- Mualla* of 19 March 1715 has stated that “the rebels had set up their own

¹⁷⁷ Irfan Habib (tr.), “Banda Bahadur and his Followers from Muhammad Shafi ‘Warid’.Mir’at –i- Waridat”, p. 162.

¹⁷⁸ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur based on Contemporary and Original Records*, p. 28 & p. 162.

¹⁷⁹ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, p. 27.

¹⁸⁰ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 107.

¹⁸¹ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 65.

¹⁸² Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, p. 58

government.” However, the report remains silent on the nature of the government.¹⁸³ Harbans Singh has also not talked about the civil government of Banda Singh. He, like Ganda Singh, also accepted that Banda Singh’s rule was short-lived, yet he argued that it had “far-reaching impact on the history of Punjab”. He proposed that Banda Singh’s rule initiated the “decay of *Mughal* authority and feudal system of society”.¹⁸⁴ Ganda Singh argued that Banda Singh failed in his temporal achievements to maintain the “principality” that he carved out of his “warlike career.” The reason behind this was that the great *Mughals* were too strong and never gave Banda Singh time to get settle. They had unlimited temporal resource. But Banda Singh and his Sikhs had “to face extremes of hunger and want of food and fodder”. Ganda Singh’s statement was also echoed from the words of Sikhs that were soon to be executed at Delhi. Mirza Muhammad Harsi in his work *Ibratnama* has written, “if any one told them that they would now be executed, they replied, “let them kill us! We do not fear death. Had we feared it, how could we have fought so many battles with you? We have fallen in your hands only because of hunger and lack of provisions; otherwise you would have come to know of our bravery far more than has been witnessed till now.”¹⁸⁵ On the authority of *Tazkirat-us-Salatin*, Ganda Singh has proposed that even the noticeable Hindus did not help him, but were against him. The Hindus of Lahore even “financed the voluntary efforts of the *sayyads* of Lahore to fight against the Sikhs”. The author of *Futuhhat Nama-i-Samdi* stated that they showered “pocketful of coins on the soldiers as mark of the recognition of their service and sacrifice.”¹⁸⁶

Ganda Singh thinks that, though, Banda Singh was not fully succeeded in the emancipation of his people, yet the “fire of independence that Guru Gobind Singh ignited and Banda Singh fanned was never to be extinguished”.¹⁸⁷ Though his successes were temporary, nevertheless, they worked as a revolution that affected the

¹⁸³ Bhagat Singh, (Trans.& ed.), “Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla” (Mughal Court News- Letters relating to the Panjab, A.D. 1707-1718), p. 146.

¹⁸⁴ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 107.

¹⁸⁵ Mirza Muhammad Harsi, “Ibratnama” in Balwant Singh Dhillon (ed.), *Banda Singh Bahadur Farsi Sarot*, p. 77. See also Janak Singh (Translated), *Asrar-i-Samdi*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1972, p. 8.

¹⁸⁶ Ghulam Muhiuddin, “Futuhhatnama-i-Samdi” in Balwant Singh Dhillon (ed.), *Banda Singh Bahadur Farsi Sarot*, p. 103.

¹⁸⁷ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, pp. 169-170.

minds of the people. Moreover, a will was generated in the masses to struggle against tyranny and to live and die for the “national cause”. The idea of “national state” became a living aspiration during Banda Singh Bahadur time. This was fulfilled after some forty years.¹⁸⁸ While concluding, W.H. McLeod had argued that there are many problems while writing about Banda Singh. There is less or no information available about many features of Banda Singh. However, it is important not to exaggerate the difficulties. The early 18th century was a “period of rapidly growing unrest”. For him, Banda Singh played his role like any other disciple of Guru Gobind Singh. However, he confessed that there can be no doubt on Banda’s “great daring and of his eventual death at the hands of ruler of Delhi”.¹⁸⁹

In the end, we can say that Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh hold similar opinions on various aspects of religious and political awakening of the Sikhs from Guru Nanak to Banda Singh Bahadur. The Sikh historians based their writings on the contemporary or near contemporary sources. However, W.H. McLeod does not base his assertion on any source whatsoever. Both the Sikh historians assumed Guru Nanak initiated people to political consciousness. But W.H. McLeod was more concerned with religious aspect of Guru Nanak’s life. It should also be noted that both the Sikh historians proposed that Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh were not politically motivated. They fought their crusade in the manner of self-defense and against the religious intolerance and political inequalities. But W.H. McLeod held quite different views from them. He attributed some of the developments in Sikh *Panth* to the inclusion of *Jats* and their cultural patterns into the Sikh *Panth*. For the Sikh historians Banda Singh was the first political leader of the Sikhs. W.H. McLeod, on the other hand, has seen Banda Singh as the leader of uprising. He does not write in detail about Banda Singh. He only raised doubtful questions regarding Banda Singh’s political career. In this chapter, the religious–political awakening of the Sikhs is considered, analyzed and looked upon through the writings of the selected historians. The next step is to analysis major disagreements about the socio-cultural and religious-political awakening in the historical writings of the selected historians with the help of primary or near contemporary sources.

¹⁸⁸ Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh Peoples*, p. 33.

¹⁸⁹ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 65.

CHAPTER-VI

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL AND COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GANDA SINGH, HARBANS SINGH AND W.H. MCLEOD

Some historians regarded historiographical studies as “difficult, controversial and at the same time dangerous”.¹ It is well known fact that historians had distinct opinions on the same matter. In fact, it can be right to say “every historian has his own definition of history”. However, J.S. Grewal proposed that “debate and disagreement is a common feature of historical writing”.² It is well said by John C B Webster that “the understanding of a historian of what actually happened is influenced not only by the evidence before him but also by the way in which he himself thinks about and deals with that evidence”. Why the historians are hardly agreed in their interpretations of the past history? He gives three reasons of it. These are- “(1) disagreements are rooted in just in differences in the evidence itself but more often in their own evaluations of the past (2) due to the influence of the ethos of the particular periods in which they lived and wrote (3) in their own skills, techniques, standpoints and purposes”.³ J.H. Hextor assumed historiography as means “for communicating in writing what the historian thinks he knows about the past”.⁴ On the other hand E.H. Carr called historiography a “progressive science” because, it provides “constantly expanding and deepening insights into a course of events which is itself progressive”.⁵ *Oxford Dictionary of English* gives the meaning of the word historiography as “the study of the writing of history and of written history”. The same source gives the meaning of word comparative as “involving the systematic observation of the similarities or dissimilarities between two or more branches of science or subjects of study”.⁶ In other words, in this chapter an attempt has been made to compare the similarities and dissimilarities on the issues of socio-cultural and religious-political

¹ Subodh Kumar Mukhopadhyay, *Evolution of Historiography in Modern India: 1900-1960*, K.P. Bagchi & Company, New Delhi, 1981, p. XII.

² J.S. Grewal, *The Sikh Ideology, Institutions and Identity*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2009, p. 334.

³ John C B Webster, *An Introduction to History*, The Macmillan Company of India Limited, Delhi, 1977, pp.14-25.

⁴ J.H. Hextor, “Historiography: The Rhetoric of History” in David L. Sills (ed.), *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol.6, The Macmillan Company & The Free Press, U.S.A., 1968, p. 373.

⁵ Edward Hallett Carr, *What is History?* Penguin Group, Australia, 2008, p. 124.

⁶ Catherine Soanes and Augus Stevenson (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of English*, Oxford University Press, New York, Reprinted 2006, p. 823 & p. 351.

awakening of the Sikhs in the writings of Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod with the help of primary and near contemporary sources. Another purpose of this chapter is to discuss their approach, methodology and their source material too.

What was the approach of selected historians towards Sikh history? What was common in the approach or concerns of Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh? How these two Sikh scholars had different views from W.H. McLeod, a non-Sikh historian? These are the major questions, when we started to discuss their approach. The differences between the Sikh historians and non-Sikh historian W.H. McLeod are many but also deep. However, Ganda Singh approached the history of the Punjab with the sense of *Babania Kahania Put Sut Karein* (stories of the wise turn progenies into able inheritors). This has been oral way of looking at reality or truth in Punjab. Ganda Singh used it as his method of History writing. He presented it in the context of the words of Prof. Puran Singh *Punjab Jinda Gura De Naam Te*. It found favor with Ganda Singh while exploring Sikh History and Religion.

Though by religion he was Sikh and later became as a celebrated Sikh historian, but his approach was not biased. He used the sources both the Sikhs and even non Sikh historians' writings. In fact, he was an unbiased seeker of historical facts. He has been free from the object-oriented conclusions based on traditions and estimations. He has taken the initiative to maintain the harmony between tradition and modernity. He did not let them dominate to each other.⁷ He in his writings constantly struggled against misrepresentations that were related to Sikh history. It is well known fact that Ganda Singh's major interest was in the collection of primary sources related to Punjab history particularly Sikh history. But, he used them with critical methodology in his writings. In fact, his method of writing history was mainly "modern one". His foremost emphasis was on "objectivity" in his writings. To achieve this, he was very well known about the method of "rigorous enquiry". We are told that though Ganda Singh was a "religious man and his approach religious too" yet he was "least sectarian, communal and political".⁸ It is said that Ganda Singh's "attitude is scientific and he narrates events in simple but forceful language without caring for literary embellishment."⁹

⁷ Balkar Singh, "Ithaskar Da Sidantak Parpekh", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Part II, 1981, pp. 128-129.

⁸ Nazer Singh, "Our National Historian Dr Ganda Singh", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XXII-II, October 1988, p. 81. See also *Chonvian Sikh Jeevnia*, Sikh Missionary College, Ludhiana, n.d.

⁹ Kirpal Singh, "Historical Research in Punjabi" in J.P. De Souza and C.M. Kulkarni (ed.), *Historiography in Indian Languages*, Oriental Publishers, Delhi, 1972, pp. 250-251.

On the other hand, Harbans Singh's approach of Sikh history is "non-analytic and narrative". He approached the traditions with historian's "critical and objective eyes" in his writings. Though he had objective approach in his writings yet he presented it with literary style. Some historians agreed that though Harbans Singh immersed in traditional scholarship, yet he has taken the Sikh tradition "into the world of modern scholarship and given it strong and clear expression".¹⁰ Even, he was considered by some scholars as "true embodiment of Sikh tradition."¹¹ He is also regarded as a "teacher and interpreter of Sikh traditions".¹² His excellent contribution in the "scholarly exploration of Sikh tradition" was accepted by some scholars.¹³ According to K.S. Duggal the supreme contribution of Harbans Singh was that "while taking due cognizance of the latest researches, he made fullest use of the traditional and scriptural evidence obtaining on the subject".¹⁴ In fact, he adopted a "mediating position" between the traditional approach and modern method of history writing.¹⁵ His interpretation of events and facts is characterized by objectivity and catholicity.

Some scholars believed that W.H. McLeod's had a "biased approach". He had done "prejudiced analytical studies". His statements in his writings are considered as "hearsay stories and scandal mongering gossip". In fact, his methods and theories have been called as "clap-trap based on skepticism and conjecture".¹⁶ For some his approach towards Sikh studies was "empirical research". However, this approach is "too single-track and in a way too rigid to take a comprehensive view of reality".¹⁷ His arguments considered as "sophistic" by the scholars. His remarks about the Sikh history are considered as "intemperate", "offensive" that are based on "fallacious reasoning's".¹⁸ Gurdev Singh considered his approach "being wholly negative" and

¹⁰ Donald G. Dawe, "An Interpretation of Harbans Singh", *The Sikh Review*, February 1995, Calcutta, p. 56.

¹¹ A.S. Bhatia, "Professor Harbans Singh: A True Embodiment of Sikh Tradition", *The Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. XXIX, Autumn 1998, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 22.

¹² Donald G. Dawe, "Imprimis" in Harbans Singh, *Berkeley Lectures on Sikhism*, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, Second Corrected Edition, 1995, p. X.

¹³ Dharam Singh (ed.), *Sikhism and Secularism Essays in Honour of Prof. Harbans Singh*, Harman Publisher House, New Delhi, 1994, p. XVIII.

¹⁴ K.S. Duggal, "Uniquely Talented", *The Sikh Review*, February 1995, p.5.

¹⁵ S. Cromewell Crawford, "Review-Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith by Harbans Singh", *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 21, No.3, July 1971, University of Hawaii Press (United States), p. 349.

¹⁶ Trilochan Singh, *Ernest Trumpp and W.H. McLeod As Scholars of Sikh history, Religion and Culture*, International Centre of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, 1994, pp. 8-295.

¹⁷ These views were expressed by Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon in his review of Arvind Pal S. Mandair's book *Religion and the Specter of the West: Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality, and the Politics of Translation*. See <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org>

¹⁸ Amarjit Singh Bal, *Sophistry of Dr W.H. McLeod A Critique of his Arguments about Sikh History and Sikh Religion*, B. Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar, First Edition, 2007, pp. IX-XVI.

his conclusions in his works are “entirely unjustified”.¹⁹ After the critical analysis of W.H. McLeod’s writings, J.S. Grewal concluded that his approach and method “have resulted in premature hypothesis”.²⁰ Even W.H. McLeod called himself “interfering foreigner”. Though, he had controversial assumptions on the significant facets of Sikh history, but he wants “a concern for systematic understanding”.²¹ He wants his efforts should not be considered as “a covert intention to subvert the Sikh faith”.²² He called himself western historian who had followed the western historical methodology. Thus, he clearly confessed that he had applied western historical method in his writings.²³ He clarified that he approached the Sikh religion as a historian who had no spiritual sense. Moreover, he belongs to skeptical camp. In addition, he makes an obvious difference between the skeptical and traditional historian’s. He stated that the former have “the insecurity of doubts” and free “intelligence”. The later have “the certainty of faith” and a “closed mind”. He feels proud to say himself as a “sceptical historian”.²⁴ However, E.H. Carr concluded his views on skepticism as “the current wave of skepticism and despair, which looks ahead to nothing but destruction and decay, and dismisses as absurd any belief in progress or any prospect of a further advance by the human race, is a form of elitism-the product of elite social groups whose security and whose privileges have been most conspicuously eroded by the crisis, and of elite countries whose once undisputed domination over the rest of the world has been shattered”.²⁵ On the other hand, John C B Webster called the foreign non-Sikh scholars are on “the periphery of Sikh studies”. For him this was due to two reasons- “(1) their geographical distance from the center of Sikh scholarship (2) but also their intellectual and maybe spiritual distance from it”.²⁶ This is true in the case

¹⁹ Gurdev Singh (ed.), *Perspectives on the Sikh Tradition*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, Second Edition, 1996, p. 26. For the Sikh academic scholarship his perspectives are regarded as “superficial” with an axe to grind. However, for the English speaking world he enjoys the image of a “know it all”. See Sarjit Singh, “Recent Developments in Sikh Studies in the West”, *The Sikh Review*, Vol. 42:5, May 1994, p. 48.

²⁰ J.S. Grewal, *W.H. McLeod on the Sikhs: A Critical Assessment*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2011, p. 40.

²¹ W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1975, p. VIII.

²² W.H. McLeod, *Exploring Sikhism Aspects of Sikh Identity, Culture and Thought*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, First Published in 2000, p. 277.

²³ W.H. McLeod, *Essays in Sikh History, Tradition and Society*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, First Published in 2007, pp. 1-17.

²⁴ W.H. McLeod, *Exploring Sikhism Aspects of Sikh Identity, Culture and Thought*, pp. 271-277.

²⁵ Edward Hallett Carr, *What is History?*, p .5.

²⁶ John C B Webster, “Sikh Studies in the Punjab” in Mark Juergensmeyer and N. Gerald Barrier (ed.), *Sikh Studies Comparative Perspectives on a Changing Tradition*, Berkeley Religious Studies Series, Berkeley, 1979, p. 25. See also Kirpal Singh & Kharak Singh (ed.), *The Guru Period (1469-1708 CE)*, Vol.1, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Sri Amritsar, Second Edition 2012, pp. XXXV-XXXVI.

of W.H. McLeod. Sometimes, he overlooks the trustworthy primary sources, but also called them as “orthodox views”. Occasionally, he rejects the historical facts, by saying that it is “Sikh tradition”. For him the interpretation of Sikh history by the renowned historians was traditional history. J.S. Grewal considered this as “a gross oversimplification, a caricature” of modern Sikh historical writing. Though, he had followed western historical method. But he also established his own approach: “Tradition versus History”. But J.S. Grewal argued that “besides becoming more or less eristic, this approach restricts the scope of historical inquiry”.²⁷ N.P. Williams gives the meaning and definition of the tradition as “the word tradition means, etymologically handing over”. The conception of tradition therefore implies “(a) a deposit, which is handed over, and (b) ‘depositories’, i.e. persons who are in possession of the deposit, and are commissioned to preserve it and transmit it to successors”. He included “ceremonial myth, dogma, ethics or their elements which are revealed by some ultimate divine or quasi-divine authority” in the term deposit.²⁸ For, Indubhusan Banerjee “a tradition cannot be ignored simply because it is a tradition, when we have nothing positive against it”.²⁹ However, E.H. Carr confessed that “history begins with the handing down of tradition; and tradition means the carrying of the habits and lessons of the past into the future. Records of the past begin to be kept for the benefit of future generations.”³⁰ It is necessary to quote the statement of John Malcolm. He wrote, “in every research into the general history of mankind, it is of most essential importance to hear what a nation has to say of itself; and the knowledge obtained from such sources has a value, independent of its historical utility”.³¹ In his writings, on every issue he says: it is likely, presumably, it may have resulted, perhaps, it may have been, it seems, traditionally, whatever and so-called. This reflects the want of sources about the statements he has made in his writings. In his whole writings, his hypothesis regarding the growth of Sikh *Panth* was not in favor of the purposeful aim of the Sikh Gurus, but in terms of impact of various elements like social, economic, cultural and historical environment. He suggested that the evolution of Sikh *Panth* cannot be summarized in terms of “simple generalization”. This must be “unravelling and examined”. His purpose was, “to seek a

²⁷ J.S. Grewal, *W.H. McLeod on the Sikhs: A Critical Assessment*, p. 33.

²⁸ N.P. Williams, “Tradition” in James Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. XII, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, Sixth Impression, 1967, p. 411.

²⁹ Indubhusan Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol.1, A.Mukherjee & Co. (Private) Ltd., Calcutta, Third Edition, 1972, p. 156. However, J.S. Grewal also argued that “tradition is not merely to be accepted or rejected but meaningfully interpreted”. J.S. , *W.H. McLeod on the Sikhs: A Critical Assessment* ,p. 33.

³⁰ Edward Hallett Carr, *What is History?* p.108.

³¹ Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, London, 1812, p.5.

more radical concept of development, one which will express a much more intricate synthesis of a much wider range of historical and sociological phenomena.” He termed the views of those scholars who believed that subsequent development in Sikh religion was in total unity with the teachings of Guru Nanak (This view was also accepted by Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh) as “orthodox Sikh interpretation”.³² In this regards, Jagjit Singh has emphasized that the “working of a movement or a system cannot be evaluated merely by taking into account the objective or environmental factors”. Moreover, “for the purpose of any assessment, the directive purpose and the levers of power have to be correlated with the objective conditions”.³³ However, Harbans Singh stated that each Sikh Guru contribute “a new national trait” that was rehearsed under the “stress of changing times and environment”.³⁴ Ganda Singh accepts that Sikh *Panth* passed through “various but regular stages of evolution” during the period of Guru Nanak’s nine successor Sikh Gurus. He argued that the teachings of Guru Nanak “formed the corner stone of the religious, social and political structure of the Sikh Nation”.³⁵ He claimed that “the teachings and precepts of the Sikh Gurus Nanak to Gobind Singh (1469-1708) had brought about the tremendous change in the religious, social and political outlook of the people of the Punjab”.³⁶ He accepted that the doctrines of Sikhism continued the similar, but it endured a “constant transfiguration”. It assumed a great variety of forms that were caused by “local and occasional circumstances”.³⁷

The most obvious differences between Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod are in matter of methodology. Ganda Singh changed numerous “old and prejudiced theories” with his scientific treatment of the issue.³⁸ For him “history is an objective narrative written in a plain unembellished forthright style aiming at truthful presentation of the past uninfluenced by the writer’s emotions and prejudices. History is not history unless it is truth.”³⁹ Though his interest was in regional history but he

³² W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, pp. 1-5.

³³ Jagjit Singh, “Militarization of the Sikh Panth” in Gurdev Singh (ed.), *Perspectives on the Sikh Tradition*, p. 331.

³⁴ Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1979, p. 6.

³⁵ Ganda Singh, *Guru Nanak: His Life and Teachings*, Singapore Sikh Missionary Tract Society, Singapore, 1940, p. 32.

³⁶ Ganda Singh, *Contemporary Sources of Sikh History*, Khalsa College, Amritsar, Reprinted 1938, p .1.

³⁷ Ganda Singh, “The Sikhs”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XVI-I, April 1982, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 6.

³⁸ Devinder Kumar Verma, “Obituary Dr. Ganda Singh”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XXI-II, October 1987, p. 471.

³⁹ Ganda Singh, “The Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. X-I, April 1976, p. 210.

was not biased. This is reflected from his words that “workers in the field of history need not fight shy of regional histories or of biographies of local heroes. I am an advocate of regional histories, but not from any narrow parochial point of view.”⁴⁰ He had encouraged a “plural approach”. Thus he writes: “quest for truth, which is the essential purpose of history, demands a plural approach which must take into account the total life of the individual or the community, social behavior, religious aspirations, economic pursuits, ideas and ideals leavening his conduct”. For him, true history could be written by “objective approach only”, that must be free from “all biases, individual, group or ideological”.⁴¹ He advocated that “an honest historiographer should not be deflected from objectivity under the pressure of traditionalistic critic. He should keep to the right path in the interest of truthful history”.⁴² Furthermore, he pleaded that “objective history required persons and events to be seen in the atmosphere and circumstances of their own times. It was unfair to judge them by the changed ideas and standards of the second half of the twentieth century by projecting them back into the seventies and eighties or the nineteenth century.”⁴³ Though Harbans Singh values modern historiography, yet this does not lead him to “dismiss myth and legend as the fantasies of pious imagination”. He believes, “in the legend we are also dealing with history, but with history not arranged in the usual linear, chronological order”.⁴⁴ For Harbans Singh poetical works in Sikh history “not linear history; yet they contain kernels of factual information.”⁴⁵ We are told that Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh had “normative tradition” of historical writing. This was the term, which Harjot Oberoi termed as *Tat Khalsa* tradition. In fact, both the Sikh historians wrote what we can be called it “corrective histories”. Their writings challenged the interpretations of Sikh history and religion outside their community. Both also quoted that evidence, which specified diversity in Sikh practice and identity within the historical record. Tony Ballantyne called this “corrective approach”.⁴⁶ But

⁴⁰ Ganda Singh, “Presidential Address”, *Institute of Historical Studies*, 12th Annual Session, Shillong, 7-10 October, 1974, File No. 454 (A), Ganda Singh Collection, Punjabi University, Patiala.

⁴¹ Ganda Singh, “Presidential Address”, Thirteenth Session, Institute of Historical Studies, Panji (Goa), November 7-10, 1975, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. X, Part I, April 1976, pp.4-5.

⁴² Ganda Singh, “Presidential Address”, *Punjab History Conference Proceeding*, Thirteenth Session, March 24, 1979, p.8.

⁴³ Ganda Singh, “Introduction”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. VI, Part. I, April 1973, p. X.

⁴⁴ Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and Origins of the Sikh Faith*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1969, p.22.

⁴⁵ Harbans Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, p.VI.

⁴⁶ Tony Ballantyne, “Looking Back, Looking Forward: The Historiography of Sikhism”, *Journal of Asia Studies*, New Zealand, June 2002, p. 29.

W.H. McLeod called his own methodology as “emphatically historical”. Furthermore, he stated that he had learned this during 1950, when he was doing his undergraduate courses in the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand. This was more enlarged when he stayed some years at the *School of Oriental and African Studies* in London. The result of this was that he “emerged as an explicitly western historian”.⁴⁷

Now, we discuss what type of the sources? The selected historians used in their historical writings. About the selection of the sources, Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh had some similarities. Ganda Singh largely based his account of ten Sikh Gurus on the sources such as on the hymns of *Guru Granth Sahib*, Persian sources and *Gurmukhi* sources. While, Harbans Singh frequently based himself on various versions of *Janamsakhis* like *Puratan Janamsakhi*, *Meharban Janamsakhi*, *Bhai Bala Janamsakhi* and *Bhai Mani Singh Janamsakhi*. He also used *Mahima Prakash* (prose), *Mahima Prakash* (verse) and *Nanak Prakash* by Bhai Santokh Singh. Among the many sources of Guru Nanak’s life such as *Guru Granth Sahib*, *Vars of Bhai Gurdas*, the *Janamsakhis* and the two versions of *Mahima Praksah*, the *Janamsakhis* appeared to W.H. McLeod as the “most promising source”. He applied rigorous historical methodology in dealing with many *Janamsakhis*. Though, he analyses all the *sakhis* yet he conclude that from them we cannot accept the reliable detail about Guru Nanak’s life. For him, the sources related to Guru Nanak’s life are unreliable so “a brief outline of his life” can be written with “some assurance”. Though, he discusses the hymns of Guru Nanak yet in terms of “nature of God, the divine self-expression, the nature of unregenerate man and the path to reach the goal”. In fact, he wanted “to gather into a systematic form the various beliefs” and “to reconstruct a coherent theology” from his teachings.⁴⁸ But Harbans Singh remarked that “for the critical historian, the *janamsakhi* material will always pose severe problems. The application of modern methods of analysis will reduce their historical structure to the barest of outlines.” He justified the *Janamsakhis* as source of Guru Nanak’s life in this way: “How will the *janamsakhi* material meet the requirements of critical techniques of modern historiography? These accounts were written by men of faith.

⁴⁷ Pashaura Singh and N. Gerald Barrier, *Sikhism and History*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, First Published in 2004, pp. 8-11.

⁴⁸ W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford University Press, London, 1968, p.5.

They wrote for the faithful- of a theme which had grown into their lives through the years as a real, vivid truth. Straightforward history was not their concern, nor was their description objective and conceptual.” This was the view which W.H. McLeod does not understand.⁴⁹ Ganda Singh cautioned “hagiographical literature has to be handled with care” because “the lives of some of the Hindus. Muslims and Sikh saints of medieval days are thickly overlaid with pious and supernatural accretions. In them fact and fictions are so closely interwoven that it becomes difficult to sift one from the other. It is not denied that myth and legend have their value in awaking and interpreting a religious personality”.⁵⁰ However, Ganda Singh’ account on Guru Angad is brief than Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod. It was the opinion of W.H. McLeod that about Guru Angad’ period “we know very little that can accept with anything approaching assurance”.⁵¹ Though in one of his work, he quotes *Mahima Prakash* (poetry), but he concluded that this source only discuss the traditions that are related to Guru Angad period. He also suggested that “the *Adi Granth* communicates relatively little information concerning the life of Angad”.⁵² While, Harbans Singh based himself on *Puratan Janamsakhi* and *Mahima Prakash*, Ganda Singh does not refer to any source on Guru Angad period. For the period of Guru Amardas, Ganda Singh had used Guru Amardas hymn *Suhi Var, III*, (this was also used by W.H. McLeod) and composition of *Satta and Balwand*. Harbans Singh had used *Mahima Prakash* frequently. Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both used Mohsin Fani’ *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, Jahangir’s *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, letter of Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi for the history of Guru Arjan. Instead of it, Ganda Singh used another primary sources such as hymns of Guru Arjan and *vars* of Bhai Gurdas. But Harbans Singh had used the later authorities such as: Giani Gian Singh’s *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Gulam Muhayy-ud –din also known as Bute Shah’s *Tawarikh –i- Punjab*, Sohan Lal Suri’s *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, *Mahima Prakash* and *Gurbilas Chhevin Patshahi*. On the other hand, W.H. McLeod does not quote any primary or secondary source. For the period of Guru Hargobind, Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both based on *Dabistan-*

⁴⁹ Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and the Origins of the Sikh Faith*, pp. 5-21.

⁵⁰ Ganda Singh, “Welcome Address”, *Punjab History Conference Proceeding*, Fifteenth Session, March 13, 1987, *The Panjab Past and Present*, April 1987, p. 270.

⁵¹ W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, p. 7.

⁵² Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 16.

i-Mazahib, Panjah Sakhia and *Sri Ramdasasvami' Bakhar* by Sri Hanumantswami. Instead of it, Harbans Singh also based himself on *Gurbilas Chhevin Patshahi, Bhatt Vahi Multani Sindhi, Guru Kian Sakhian*. Furthermore, W.H. McLeod used only one source *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*. Ganda Singh accepts that Sikh sources on the subject of martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur are “very unsatisfactory”. He stated that “fact and fiction are so inextricably woven by hagiographical poets and epic writers into the details of the Guru’s journey to and imprisonment at Delhi, and about his martyrdom there, that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to get at the truth”.⁵³ For the period of Guru Tegh Bahadur, he basically based himself on Persian sources: Saqi Musta’d Khan’s *Maasir-i-Almgiri*, Khafi Khan’s *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, Mirza Inayat Ullah ‘Ismi’s *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*, Ghulam Hussain Khan’s *Siyar-ul-Mutakhirin*, Sujan Rai Bhandari’s *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh, Bachittar Natak*. Ganda Singh used the later sources like: *Travels of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh* translated by Attar Singh, P.N.K. Bamzai’ *A History of Kashmir*, William Irvine’s *Later Mughals* (This was also used by Harbans Singh) only in support of the earlier ones for the period of Guru Tegh Bahadur. But, Harbans Singh largely based on *Gurmukhi* sources such as *Gurbilas Chhevin Patshahi, Sri Gur Partap Suraj Granth, Gurbilas Dasvin Patshahi, Bhatt Vahi Talaunda, Mahima Prakash, Sakhi Pothi, Guru Kian Sakhian, Bhatt Vahi Multani Sindhi* and Kesar Singh Chhiber’ *Bansavalinama*. However, W.H. McLeod based himself on *Bachittar Nattak* and *Chaupa Singh Rahitnama*. Ganda Singh based himself on the source: *Bhai Gurdas II, Akal Ustat*, last lines of *Krish Avtar, Ramavtar. Thirty-three Swayyas, Twenty four Avatars, Swayyas, hukamnama*’ of Guru Gobind Singh and works of Ahmad Shah Batalia and Ghulam Muhay-ud-Din Bute Shah, *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri, Tarikh –i-Bahadur Shahi, Bachittar Nattak*, Munshi Sujan Rai Bhandari’s *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh* and Bhai Santokh Singh’s *Gur Partap Suraj Granth* for the history of Guru Gobind Singh. Harbans Singh used these sources *Bachittar Nattak, Jaap Sahib, Khalisa Mahima* (in *Dasam Granth*), *Bhai Gurdas II, Zafarnama, Ahkam-i-Alamgiri, Guru Kian Sakhian, Bhatt Vahi Talaunda Parganah, Sri Gurpartap Suraj Granth*, Devaraja Sharma’s *Nanakacandrodayamahakavya* (an old Sanskrit manuscript). The treatment accorded to Banda Singh by Harbans Singh

⁵³ Ganda Singh, “The Impact of Guru Nanak’s Teachings on the Lives of his Followers”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XI, Part-I, April 1977, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 54.

and W.H. McLeod is “comparatively brief” than Ganda Singh. For the period of Banda Singh, Harbans Singh used these primary sources like reports of *Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*, *hukamnama* of Banda Singh, Muhammad Qasim’s *Ibratnama* and report of John Surman and Edward Stephson about the execution of Banda Singh. It seems that W.H. McLeod had not adequate knowledge on Banda Singh. So, he stated that “it is not the intention of this essay to seek definite answers” because it “properly belongs to scholars with adequate qualifications in this field”. He concluded that “there is little more” that can be added to “our imperfect knowledge” about Banda Singh. Thus the historians had to satisfied with “sketchy answers or informed guesses”.⁵⁴ But Ganda Singh for the history of Banda Singh had used the contemporary and original sources- mostly unpublished Persian manuscripts. He had dealt it on “scientific lines”. In fact, he had followed the *Later Mughals* of William Irvine as “a model of historical”⁵⁵ In the bibliography of his another work on Banda Singh titled as *Banda Singh Bahadur* in Punjabi language, he had listed 38 Persian contemporary and near contemporary sources.⁵⁶ This is clear from the above discussion that Ganda Singh basically based on primary sources in his writings. Harbans Singh though used primary sources, but less than Ganda Singh. In fact, Harbans Singh based on the *Janamsakhis* and later *Gurmukhi* sources. But contrary to Sikh historians, W.H. McLeod used very few sources.

While discussing about the social-cultural awakening brought by Guru Nanak, Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both included in it the role of *sangat*, *pangat* and *langar* institution. But W.H. McLeod underlines Guru Nanak’s contribution in “spiritual liberation”. Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both accepted that Guru Nanak gave women equality with men in religious and social matters. For this, they based themselves on Guru Nanak’s hymn *Asa Di Var*. W.H. McLeod for the first time discuss this in his article titled as *Gender and the Sikh Panth* in 1996. But his purpose was not to give definite answer but to raise questions. He concluded that the Sikh *Panth* imposed subordination on women. But it must be kept in mind that in this regard he focused partly on the society of Sikh Guru period but based himself largely

⁵⁴ W.H. McLeod, *Essays in Sikh History, Tradition and Society*, p. 79.

⁵⁵ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, p. VII.

⁵⁶ Ganda Singh, *Banda Singh Bahadur* (Punjabi), Sikh Ithaas Research Board, Sri Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 2016, pp. 248-250.

on his contemporary society.⁵⁷ Though he had quoted *Asa Di Var*, yet he argued that Guru Nanak gave women equality only in “spiritual liberation”.⁵⁸ But *B40 Janamsakhi* makes it clear that the path enunciated by Guru Nanak was open to women also.⁵⁹

On the matter of Guru Nanak’s protest against caste system, W.H. McLeod’s perspective is different than the selected Sikh historians. In fact, his approach in this matter is not positive. Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both accepted Guru Nanak wants to abolish the caste system. Both had quoted Guru Nanak’s hymns to support their views. Though, W.H. McLeod had also quoted Guru Nanak’s hymns like *Var Siri Rag 3:1*, *Asa 3* and *Malar 8* in which Guru Nanak had criticized caste. And mentioned other hymns of Guru Nanak in footnote such as *Var Majh 10*, *Var Asa11:3*, *Sarang 3*, *Prabhati 10* which are according to W.H. McLeod “other examples of Guru Nanak’s pronouncements on caste”.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, he underscores that the Guru Nanak was against it, because it was hindrance to “spiritual salvation”. He concluded that the Sikh Gurus wanted to abolish the caste system in the religious sphere totally, but in matter of social only partially. But it should be noted W.H. McLeod basically based himself on modern Sikh social order. He does not throw light on the social order of Punjab during the 16th century. It is the view of Fauja Singh that “he has taken a static and not dynamic view of things, so that he finds no material difference between the position under the Gurus and that which marked the later periods of Sikh history. The correct position appears to be that the process of liquidation of caste differentiations started by Guru Nanak reached to culmination under Guru Gobind Singh when a completely casteless society was established in the form of the *Khalsa*”.⁶¹ It should be noted that Sikh religion advocated, “there is one

⁵⁷ W.H. McLeod, “Gender and the Sikh Panth” in Pashaura Singh and N.Gerald Barrier (ed.), *The Transformation of Sikh Heritage in the Diaspora*, Manohar Publisher & Distributor, New Delhi, First Published in 1996, pp. 37-43. The same issue discussed by him in another article under the title *Sikhism and Gender* in his work *Sikhism*.

⁵⁸ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 243.

⁵⁹ Piar Singh (ed.), *Janamsakhi Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji* (Punjabi), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1974, pp. 57-58 & 78-79. See also Sewaram Singh, *The Divine Master*, Lahore, 1930, p. 295. See also J.S. Grewal, “A Gender Perspective of Guru Nanak” in Kirn Pawar (ed.), *Women in Indian History*, Vision & Venture, Patiala & New Delhi, First Edition, 1996, p. 147.

⁶⁰ W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, p. 85.

⁶¹ Fauja Singh, “Book Reviews – The Evolution of the Sikh Community by W.H. McLeod”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol.XI, Part 1, April 1977, p. 184.

Lord is the father of all and we are the children of the one Lord”.⁶² But if we study the contemporary sources such as hymns of Guru Nanak and *Vars* of Bhai Gurdas, we can conclude that W.H. McLeod’s assumption is wrong. Bhai Gurdas clearly confessed in his *Var 1, Pauri 23* that Guru Nanak converted the four castes into one caste. Bhai Gurdas makes the point clear about the Sikhs of Guru Nanak period in his *Var 1, Pauri 55* that the distinct features of “the Sikhs of the Guru is that they goes beyond the framework of caste classification and moves in humility”.⁶³

Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both assumed social awakening from the *langar* institution. Both agreed that it helped in the eradication of caste system. Both agreed that it was first started by Guru Nanak in Sikh religion. But it seems W.H. McLeod was confused about the *langar* system and its functioning. He writes, “actual date of founding the *langar* is obscure, but it was functioning during Guru Amardas period.”⁶⁴ Without basing himself on any source, for him it is more likely that it was started by Guru Amardas. On this point, we assumed that he was wrong in his assumption. It is undeniable historical fact that it was started by Guru Nanak and was functioning during his lifetime. Even the source *Puratan Janamsakhi*, mentioned about the establishment of *langar* institution in the country of Sivnabh Raja by Guru Nanak during his *udasi* in this land.⁶⁵ The sources *Kanhaiya Lal* in his *Tarikh-i-Punjab* and *Saroop Das Bhalla* in his *Mahima Prakash* both agreed that *langar* institution was started by Guru Nanak and it was functioning during his time at Kartarpur.⁶⁶ Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both discuss about *sangat* institution. Both accept its role in the eradication of distinctions based on religion, caste, race and creed. W.H. McLeod has given very short space in his writing to this institution. He does not like Sikh historians discuss its role in social awakening.

⁶² *Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Ang.* 611 in Manmohan Singh (trans. English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 4, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandak Committee, Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 1996, p. 2009.

⁶³ *Bhai Gurdas, Var 1, Pauri 55* in Jodh Singh, *Varan Bhai Gurdas Text, Transliteration and Translation*, Vol.1, pp. 53-55. See also M. Macauliffe, “The Sikh Religion” in *The Sikh Religion A Symposium*, Susil Gupta (India) Private Ltd., Calcutta, 1958, p.13.

⁶⁴ W.H. McLeod, “Guru Gobind Singh and untouchability”, *The Sikh Review*, Calcutta, Vol. XVI-XVII, Feb-March 1967, p. 77.

⁶⁵ Bhai Vir Singh (ed.), *Puratan Janamsakhi Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji*, Bhai Vir Singh Sahit Sadan, New Delhi, 17Edition, 2010, p. 167.

⁶⁶ Kanhaiya Lal, “Tarikh-i-Punjab”, Jeet Singh Seetal (Translated in Punjabi), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968, p. 11. See also Saooop Das Bhalla, *Mahima Prakash*, Part-1, Shamsheer Singh Ashok and Gobind Singh Lamba (ed.), Bhasha Vibag Punjab, 1970, p. 290.

Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh agreed that Guru Angad consolidated the Sikh religion established by Guru Nanak. For W.H. McLeod, at the death of Guru Angad the Sikh *Panth* was “loosely organized fellowship of Sikhs”.⁶⁷ Furthermore, it was “an informal organization”. Besides Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh, Khushwant Singh and J.S. Grewal also accepted that Guru Anagd Dev consolidated the Sikh *Panth*.⁶⁸ All the selected historians accepted that *langar* institution was strengthened by Guru Angad and it was distributed to all castes in one *pangat*. Saroop Das Bhalla also wrote that Guru Angad came in the *langar*, with all his followers, where food was distributed to all peoples and there was no discrimination of four *varans-brahman, khatti, vaish* and *shudars* and all were treated as equal human beings.⁶⁹ All the selected historians also discuss about the *Gurmukhi* language in Guru Angad’s period. The Sikh chronicles unanimously attribute the invention of *Gurmukhi* to Guru Angad. It was Gyani Gyan Singh who had estimated that *Gurmukhi* was invented by Guru Angad in 1598 *Bikrami* i.e. 1541 A.D.⁷⁰ Saroop Das Bhalla wrote that with the command of Guru Nanak, the *Gurmukhi* script was invented by Guru Angad.⁷¹ But this claim has not been accepted by the three selected historians. They agreed that it was popularized by Guru Anagd, not invented by him. Even, Guru Nanak also composed thirty-five letters of acrostic called the *patti* or tablet in the *Rag Asa* in which Guru Nanak used the *Gurmukhi* language. The author of *Chahar-Bagh-i-Panjab*, Ganesh Das Bedehra⁷² and Kavi Kankan⁷³ suggested that Guru Nanak

⁶⁷ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 42.

⁶⁸ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs, Vol.1: 1469-1839*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, Indian Edition 1977, p. 50. See also, J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, Manas Saikia, New Delhi, Second Edition, 1999, p. 47.

⁶⁹ Saroop Das Bhalla, *Mahima Prakash-* Part II, Uttam Singh Bhatia (ed.), Bhasa Vibhag , Punjab, Third Edition, 1999, p. 85.

⁷⁰ Gyani Gyan Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa-* Part 1, K.S. Raju (ed.), Bhasa Vibhag , Punjab, Fourth Edition, 1999, p. 319. Another source also stated that it was invented by Guru Angad in 1533. See also H.A. Rose (compiler), *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North-west Frontier Province*, Vol.1, Language Department, Punjab, Second Reprint 1990, p. 68.

⁷¹ Saroop Das Bhalla, *Mahima Prakash-* Part II, p. 80. See also Sirdar Daljit Singh, “The Sikhs”, *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, Vol.64, No.3322, 21 July, 1916, London, p. 625. See also Kanhaiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Jeet Singh Seetal (Translated in Punjabi), p. 13.

⁷² Ganesh Das Bedehra, “Chahar Bagh-i-Panjab”, Ganda Singh (tr.) in Ganda Singh (ed.), “Sources on the life & Teachings of Guru Nanak”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. III, 1969, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 383.

⁷³ Kavi Kankan, *Sakhep Das Gur Katha*, Gurmukh Singh (ed.), Ragubir Rachna Prakashan, Chandigarh, 1991, p. 31. See also Sher Singh Kashmir, “Gurmukhi Akhar” in Karam Singh Historian (ed.), *Bahu Mulle Itihasak Lekh*, Second Edition, 1991, p. 62. See also Khazan Singh, *History of the Sikh Religion*, Department of Languages Punjab, Reprinted 1970, p. 18.

invented the *Gurmukhi* script. Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh noticed the impact of *Gurmukhi* script on Sikh society. For Ganda Singh, it helped in making the Sikhs independent from the *Brahmin* priests. Furthermore, it had also encouraged the growth of education among the masses of the country. But Harbans Singh assumed its impact in “literary culture”. Their opinions are identical with Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha’s viewpoint. He wrote that Guru Angad had started the propagation of education in *Gurmukhi* language in 1598 *sammat* i.e. 1541 irrespectively of caste.⁷⁴ The founding of Khadur Sahib by Guru Angad was not pointed by the selected historians. But this was mentioned in the primary source *Ramkali ki Var*.⁷⁵

All the selected historians accepted that Guru Amardas opposed the evil practice of *satti*. Ganda Singh and W.H. McLeod based themselves on Guru Amardas hymn in *Suhi Var* to support their views. Harbans Singh does not quote any source. Both the Sikh historians agreed that Guru Amardas was also against the *pardah* practice. W.H. McLeod remains silent in this regard. However, Ganda Singh does not refer to any source. In this regard, Harbans Singh had quoted Saroop Das Bhalla’s *Mahima Prakash* account about the visit of Raja of Haripur and his wife to Goindwal escorted by Sawan Mall, nephew of Guru Amardas to behold the Guru Amardas. Then, Guru Amardas made a condition that the “ladies must come dressed in white with their face uncovered”.⁷⁶ Gyani Gyan Singh in his *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa* gives the similar account, but he also mentioned that the Raja of Haripur came to Goindwal in 1613 *Bikrami* i.e. 1556.⁷⁷ Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both discuss the social awakening brought by *langar* institution in Guru Amardas times. But unlike them, W.H. McLeod assumed that Guru Amardas borrowed the *langar* institution from the *sufis*. However, he does not quote any source. Was there no *langar* institution during Guru Nanak period? First thing, that W.H. McLeod failed to understand that the *langar* institution was started in Sikh religion by Guru Nanak. The institution that was started from the period of Guru Nanak and continued by Guru Angad then, how is it possible Guru Amardas borrowed it from *Sufis*. We are told that though “various *Sufis*

⁷⁴ Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, *Gurushabad Ratnakar Mahankosh*, Vol.1, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2009, p.257. See also Lal Singh, *Guru Khalsa Tawarikh*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, Third Edition, 1955, p. 184.

⁷⁵ *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Ang 967 in Manmohan Singh (trans. in English& Punjabi), Vol.6, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandak Committee, Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 1996, p. 3176.

⁷⁶ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, pp. 33-34. See also Saroop Das Bhalla, *Mahima Prakash- Part II*, p. 162.

⁷⁷ Gyani Gyan Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa- Part 1*, p. 344.

and Gorakhnath orders in Punjab already operated free kitchen. Even the Buddhism, Jains and Islam had free kitchen with their pronounced emphasis on social equality but these earlier efforts were not succeed in their attempt to break the barrier that divided the people”.⁷⁸ It is said that the *langar* institution has doctrinal values such as that of “social interaction, social participation, social responsibility to feed hungry, share with the needy, and to promote social service without selfishness. These values were unknown to Sufis”.⁷⁹ Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both discuss the introduction of using Guru’s hymns on social ceremonies like marriage and death by Guru Amardas. For Ganda Singh, this became the Sikhs “more self-contained in social matters”. On the other hand, Harbans Singh thinks, these were signs of emerging Sikh faith into “well marked social group”.⁸⁰ Their opinions were also authenticated from Sundar Das’s account *Ramkali Sad* and Guru Amardas’ own masterpiece *Anand Sahib*. Before his death, Guru Amardas left guidelines with regard to the rites to be done after his demise that were recorded by his great-grandson Sundar Das as *Ramkali Sad* that is incorporated in *Guru Granth Sahib*. Guru Amardas says, “after me sing the praise of the Pure Lord, alone Call-in only saints of the Lord of beauteous hair, instead of *Pandit* and read God’s gospel instead of *Puran*. Read only the God’s gospel; hear only the God’s Name. The Guru likes the Lord’s Love, instead of the lofty bier, barley rolls, food on leaves, Hindu funeral rites, lamps and throwing the bones into the Ganga.”⁸¹ Furthermore, after composing his masterpiece *Anand Sahib* on the birth of his grandson Sidh Jogi, Guru Amardas ordered his Sikhs that “from that day forward it should ever be recited on festive occasions”.⁸²

⁷⁸ Sudarshan Singh, *Sikh Religion Democratic Ideals and Institutions*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2009, p. 86. We are told that though the institution of *langar* was “already among the *yogis*. But in their free kitchen system, the criterion of hierarchy was still as some *yogis* were the Gurus. Some other sub-Gurus, while many were disciples. So everybody got their share according to his spiritual status”. Jodh Singh, “Religion: As Instrument of Social Change”, *The Sikh Review*, August 1999, Vol. 47:08, Calcutta, p. 46.

⁷⁹ Darshan Singh, *Sikhism Issues and Institutions (In the Context of Dr. W.H. McLeod, Dr. Pashaura Singh, Dr. H.S. Oberoi and the Likes...)*, Sehgal Book Distributors, New Delhi, 1996, p.46. See also Kapur Singh, *Me Judice*, B.Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar, 2003, p. 44.

⁸⁰ Indubhusan Banerjee called Guru Amardas these efforts as “social reconstruction”. See Indubhusan Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol.1, A. Mukherjee & Co. (Private) Ltd., Calcutta, Third Edition, 1972, p. 178.

⁸¹ *Ramkali Sad, Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Ang 923 in Manmohan Singh (trans. English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 6, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandak Committee, Amritsar, Sixth Edition, 2003, p. 3013.

⁸² Max Arthur Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors*, Vol. II, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1909, p. 130.

Harbans Singh remarked that Guru Amardas appointed the opening days of the month of *Baisakh*, *Magh* and *Diwali* for the Sikhs “to forgather at Goindwal”. But Ganda Singh remains silent in this regard. However, W.H. McLeod assumed Guru Amardas’ these works as “innovations”, “recourse to traditional Indian Institutions” and “reintroduce Hindu festivals”. Even, he also included the digging of Baoli at Goindwal in this category. Though Khushwant Singh also called “innovations” as W.H. McLeod had said, but he considered that “these were tended to break the close affiliation of the Sikhs with the Hindus.”⁸³ We are told that one day Bhai Paru, Balu and many more Sikhs requested to Guru Amardas that particular fair should be started so that the Sikhs would assemble on that place in order to become acquaints and fraternize with each other. On hearing this, Guru Amardas sent *hukamnamas* to various Sikhs. The Sikhs for the first time on *Baisakhi* day in 1624 *Bikrami* i.e. 1567 gathered at Goindwal.⁸⁴ However, Hari Ram Gupta gives the year 1554, when for the first time the Sikhs gathered on *Baisakhi* day.⁸⁵ Further, W.H. McLeod believed by doing this, Guru Amardas did, what Guru Nanak “abandoned and roundly condemned”. Ganda Singh along with Teja Singh rejected this opinion as “the whole movement was gradual and at no stage was there any sudden or uncalled for departure from the original one”.⁸⁶ Even the source *Ramkali Ki Var* emphasizes that all the Sikh Gurus were identical in spirit with first Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak. From this *Var*, this view also supported that there is no individual distinction about the conduct of the Sikh Gurus. Bhai Nand Lal ‘Goya’ also underscores this when he says in his *Jot Bigas*, “Nanak is also the same, and Angad also; the virtues and glorious Amardas is also the same.”⁸⁷ It should be noted that during Guru Amardas period Sikhism had

⁸³ Indubhusan Banerjee, also used the word “innovations” but he meant these are brought due to for the “existence a new brotherhood, social as well as religious, self-sufficient and independent” Sikhism. See, Indubhusan Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol.1, p. 163. See also Dalbir Singh Dhillon, *Sikhism Origin and Development*, Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 1988, p. 328.

⁸⁴ Gyani Gyan Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*- Part 1, pp. 360-361. See also Lal Singh, *Guru Khalsa Tawarikh*, p. 212.

⁸⁵ However, Hari Ram Gupta proposed that when Guru Amardas and his followers visited the places like Hardwar and Kurukshetra they realized that there is “need of such gathering of the total population of Sikhs at the Guru’s headquarters. River Beas was to provide a holy dip”. Guru Amardas appointed two festivals *Diwali* and *Baisakhi* for such gathering with the purpose of “establish close personal bond with men, women and children”. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. 1, p. 119.

⁸⁶ Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, See preface. See also Harbans Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, pp. 9-10. See also J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, Cambridge University Press, New York, First Paperback Edition, 1998, p. 59.

⁸⁷ Bahi Nand Lal ‘Goya’, “Jot Bigas”, Ganda Singh (trans.), *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol.III, 1969, p. 359

become wholly a religion of householders. In order to save its followers from captivity in other sects, it was become indispensable to augment the work of religious organization by social improvement.

Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both discussed Guru Ramdas' role in the formation of Amritsar. For W.H. McLeod, most of the information regarding Guru Ramdas period was from traditions. Consequently, he concluded that very little can be positively affirmed.⁸⁸ But on the basis of primary sources, we can assert that Amritsar was founded by Guru Ramdas. Guru Arjan in one of his hymns praised that "by bathing in the nectar tank of Ramdas, all sins previously committed are washed off. Having an ablution from this tank one become pure, the perfect Guru has given this gift".⁸⁹ Bhai Gurdas also stated that "Guru Ramdas got dug complete holy tank at Amritsar, and settled there".⁹⁰ Ganda Singh quoted Gango's conversation with Guru Ramdas to say that Guru Ramdas asked his Sikhs to help their fellow businessman in their work. One day Gangu, a *khatri*, asked Guru Ramdas, "what shall I do to save myself, lord, the Guru told him to "open a bank at Delhi". But Ganda Singh does not refer to its source. Further, he wrote "horse-dealing, banking, embroidery, carpentry and agriculture" prevalent among the Sikhs at that time.⁹¹ But he does not quote any source in this regard. We are told that "Guru Ramdas and Guru Arjan helped their devotee to become economically sound by giving them financial aid to establish their trades. Dignity of labour was a novel idea infused by the Sikh Gurus."⁹² Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod remain silent in this regard. Guru Ramdas's great contribution of introducing *ghorian* and *lavan* hymns remained unnoticed by all the three selected historians. This was in truth Guru Ramdas's contribution in the awakening of the Sikhs towards distinct identity.

Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both agreed that Sikh faith assumed "more definite" form during Guru Arjan's times. Both discuss about the foundation of

⁸⁸ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 26

⁸⁹ *Sorath Mahalla, 5, Ghar 3 Dupade, Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Ang. 625 in Manmohan Singh (Trans. English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 4, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandak Committee, Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 1996, p. 2053. See also *Phunhas Mahalla 5, Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Ang.1362 in Manmohan Singh (Trans. English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 8, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandak Committee, Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 1996, p. 4496.

⁹⁰ *Bhai Gurdas, Var 1, Pauri 47*, in Bhai Jodh Singh, *Varan Bhai Gurdas Text, Transliteration and Translation*, Vol. 1, p. 77.

⁹¹ Ganda Singh, "The Sikhs", p. 18. See also Ahmad Shah Batalwi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Gurbakhash Singh (translated), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, p.7.

⁹² Dalbir Singh Dhillon, *Sikhism Origin and Development*, p. 156. See also J.S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, p. 52.

Darbar Sahib by Guru Arjan. However, both the Sikh historians highlight that the four doors of *Darbar Sahib* meant Sikh worship is open to all. All the selected historians accepted *Guru Granth Sahib's* fundamental importance to Sikh religion and its role in social-cultural awakening of the Sikhs. W.H. McLeod stated that it was a tradition that "Guru Arjan decided to prepare *Guru Granth Sahib* due to the circulation of the spurious works was began to be generated by Prithia". But he does not refer to any source. Ganda Singh does not throw light in this regard. But it should be noted that Guru Amardas⁹³, Guru Ramdas⁹⁴ and Guru Arjan⁹⁵ in their *Bani* warned the Sikh masses about the pseudo-*Bani*. However, *Sikhan Di Bhagatmala*⁹⁶ and *Kesar Singh Chhiber*⁹⁷ both discussed that spurious *Bani* was written by Meharban and Prithia. W.H. McLeod ignored all these sources even primary. All the selected historians do not mention about the construction of Baoli at Lahore and digging of well of six Persian wheels at place called Chherata by Guru Arjan Dev.⁹⁸

However, about the period of Guru Hargobind, the selected historian does not discuss his role in social-cultural awakening. Ganda Singh and W.H. McLeod had covered the period of Guru Har Rai and Guru Harkrishan very brief than Harbans Singh. All the selected historians discuss very brief about Guru Tegh Bahadur's role in social-cultural awakening.

All the selected historians discuss the reason behind the creation of the *Khalsa* in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh but took different approach in this regard. Ganda Singh thinks, Guru Gobind Singh wants to "build up united nation of purified ones" that would be "free from social evil". Harbans Singh also holds opinion, with Ganda Singh that "the amelioration of man in relation to society" was the object behind the creation of the *Khalsa*. Unlike them, W.H. McLeod considered that this was for "the public struggle for justice". Moreover, Guru Gobind Singh wants to transform his

⁹³ *Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 920* in Manmohan Singh (trans. in English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol 6, Shiromani Gurduwara Parbandak Committee, Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 1996, p. 3001

⁹⁴ *Mahalla 4, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 304* in Manmohan Singh (trans. in English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol 2, Shiromani Gurduwara Parbandak Committee, Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 1994, p.1018

⁹⁵ *Rag Bilawal Mahalla 5, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 820* Manmohan Singh (trans. in English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol 5, Shiromani Gurduwara Parbandak Committee, Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 1996, p. 2670.

⁹⁶ Shahid Bhai Mani Singh Ji, *Bhai Gurdas Ji Di Gyarvi Var Da Teeka Arthat Sikha Di Bhagatmala*, Bhai Vir Singh (ed.), Amritsar, Fourth Edition 1966, p. 130.

⁹⁷ Kesar Singh Chhibar, *Bansavlinama Dasan Patshahian Ka*, Piara Singh Padam (ed), Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1997, pp. 80-81.

⁹⁸ Gyani Gyan Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part-1, p. 412.

Sikhs into political force which would wage war in the cause of righteousness. In other words, W.H. McLeod does not consider the social factors as the reason for the creation of the *Khalsa* as Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh had assumed but he observed it from political perspectives. The contemporary Sainapati wrote that the purpose of creating the *Khalsa* was “for decimation of the demonic and annihilation of the wicked and also for the eradication of human sufferings”.⁹⁹ Similarly, Prof. Puran Singh stated the holistic opinion about the origin of *Khalsa* institution in this way, “the created of the *Khalsa* in India is the culmination of Guru Nanak’s genius, and the written character of his Word. The *Amritram* of the Tenth Master completely transmuted the men drawn from a low or high caste of India, drawn from the Hindus or the *Musalman*s. After the *Amritram*, the *Khalsa* resembles no parent type of his own. For making the universal nation of man-for the evolution of one united family of men on earth, Gobind Singh had shown the way in his *Khalsa*.”¹⁰⁰ Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both accepted in their writings that after baptism the five Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh instructed them to wear five symbols also called five *kakkars* namely, *kesh*, *kangha*, *kachchera*, *kara* and *kirpan*. But W.H. McLeod does not believe it. For him, the five K’s were not part of the *Khalsa* institution in 1699. It was the “result of gradual growth during the course of the eighteenth century”. For him, all these came in Sikhism due to “*Jat* cultural pattern and behavior”.¹⁰¹ However, he does not base himself on any source. His whole argument was particularly based on the bearing of arms and wearing of uncut hair came from *Jat* culture. With these twins he also pairs the comb and the *kara* also. He has no explanation to offer for the *kachchera*. He writes, “the breeches are rather harder to understand in this context”.¹⁰² On the

⁹⁹ Sainapati, *Sri Gur Sobha*, Kulwant Singh (English Translation), Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, 2014, pp. 60-61.

¹⁰⁰ Puran Singh, *The Book of the Ten Master*, Amritsar, 1995, p. 21. See also Madanjit Kaur, *Guru Gobind Singh- Historical and Ideological Perspective*, Chandigarh, 2007, p. 12.

¹⁰¹ Before, W.H. McLeod, Indubhushan Banerjee accounted the “changes” due to the entry of *Jats* in Sikhism. See Indubhushan Banerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*, Vol. II, A. Mukherjee & Co. Private Ltd, Calcutta, Second Edition, 1962, p.124. J.S. Grewal remarked that “but to assume that 5 Ks were introduced in the eighteenth century is wrong. It is necessary to mark a distinction between the formulation and its substantive proto type. The formulation came late but the substantive symbols were there from the time of instituting the *Khalsa*.” J.S. Grewal, *Contesting Interpretations of the Sikh Tradition*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 1998, p. 303.

¹⁰² W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, p. 52. Parminder Singh Kairo in his research work challenged the view that five Ks were first promulgated by Guru Gobind Singh. He argued that “Five Ks are actually developed over three centuries and were formally crystallized during the nineteenth century Singh Sabha Movement”, See Parminder Singh Kairo, *The Evolution of the “Five Ks” within the Sikh Texts*, Department of Theology and Religion, The University of Birmingham, January 2015, p. 4.

question, of uncut hair, scholars agreed that from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, all the Sikh Gurus were *Kesadhari*.¹⁰³ Even in *Guru Granth Sahib*, there are number of hymns about *Kesh* (hair) from which it reflected that all the Sikh Gurus from Guru Nanak were *kesadhari*. Even in their hymns God was presented with beautiful hair, for example Guru Nanak in his hymn praised the beauty of God by saying that “His eyes are so beautiful, teeth are delightful, nose is graceful and His hair is long”.¹⁰⁴ Guru Arjan called the God “Lord of beautiful hairs”.¹⁰⁵ Guru Amardas also said that after his death “call-in only the scholarly saints of the Lord of the beauteous hair to read the gospel of the God instead of *Puran*”.¹⁰⁶ Guru Ramdas stated that “each and every hair on his head and his body and mind did suffer the pains of separation, without seeing the God, he cannot sleep”.¹⁰⁷ Guru Arjan wrote that with “his head-hair, he wants to cleanse the feet of God’s slave”.¹⁰⁸ Then, how it is possible that the custom which present in the Sikh *Panth* from the first Sikh Guru had any impact of *Jat* culture? The source *Guru Kian Sakhian* says that in 1752 *Bikrami* i.e.1695 on *Baisakhi* day and in 1754 *Bikrami* i.e.1697 Guru Gobind Singh ordered *sangat* including men and women to wear *kara* of *Sarbloh* in their right hand.¹⁰⁹ Even the wearing of *kachchera* by women during Guru Gobind Singh period reflected in a *sakhi* entitled *Mai Bhago* in *Malwa Desh Ratan Di Sakhi Pothi*. In the same source, Guru Gobind Singh also gave much importance to *kangha* and ordered his Sikhs to use it daily. Furthermore, Guru Gobind Singh’s determination to equipping his Sikhs

¹⁰³ Trilochan Singh, “Turban and Sword of the Sikhs” in Mohinder Singh (ed.), *Sikh forms and Symbols*, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 2000, p. 54. See also Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Volume 1:1469-1839, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, Second Impression 1978, p. 86. See also Sahib Singh, *Jiwan-Birtant Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, Eighth Edition 1994, p. 116. See also Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, p. 275.

¹⁰⁴ *Vadhans Mahalla 1, Ang 567, Sri Guru Granth Sahib* in Manmohan Singh (Trans. English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 4, Shiromani Gurdara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 1996, p. 1864.

¹⁰⁵ *Bilawal Mahalla 5, Ang 829, Sri Guru Granth Sahib* in Manmohan Singh (Trans. English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol.5, Shiromani Gurdara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 1996, p. 2699.

¹⁰⁶ *Ramkali Sad, Ang 823, Sri Guru Granth Sahib* in Manmohan Singh (Trans. English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 6, Shiromani Gurdara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, Sixth Edition, 2003, p.3013.

¹⁰⁷ *Bilawal Mahalla 4, Ang 836 Sri Guru Granth Sahib* in Manmohan Singh (Trans. English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 5, Shiromani Gurdara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 1995, p. 2723.

¹⁰⁸ *Gujri Mahall 5, Ang 500, Sri Guru Granth Sahib* in Manmohan Singh (Trans. English & Punjabi), *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol. 3, Shiromani Gurdara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, Fourth Edition, 1995, p. 1647.

¹⁰⁹ Swarup Singh Kaushish, *Guru Kian Sakhian*, Piara Singh (ed.), p. 112 & 177.

with sword also reflected from the source.¹¹⁰ Bhai Gurdas II in his *var* mentioned *Kachchera* along with *kesh* and *kirpan*.¹¹¹ Rattan Singh Bhangoo wrote that Guru Gobind Singh during the *Khalsa* ceremony ordered “they must wear *kachchera*”.¹¹² James Skinner¹¹³ and the author of *Prem Sumarg*¹¹⁴ also mentioned “*kachchera* (breeches), as part of Sikh code”. It is said that the wearing of *kachchera* was started even from the period of sixth Sikh Guru Hargobind not for only in battle fields but even in daily life too.¹¹⁵ J.S. Grewal emphasized that *kachchera* can never be linked with *Jats* culture. Further, though the *Jats* had liking for arms, but the *kirpan* had no attraction for them. There is no evidence to support that *kirpan* used by the *Jats*.¹¹⁶

All the three historians accepted that *masands* became corrupt and oppressive during Guru Gobind Singh time. This was authenticated from *Thirty-Three Swayyas* of Guru Gobind Singh, *Parchian Sewa Das* and *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*.¹¹⁷ The selected historians also agreed that Guru Gobind Singh abolished this system. This was also authenticated from Sainapati’s *Gursobha* and Guru Gobind Singh’s own *hukamnama*’s.¹¹⁸ However, *Parchian Sewa Das* narrated the prophecy of Guru Tegh Bahadur about the abolition of *masands* as “when one complained about the corrupt and money minded nature of the *masands*. Then Guru Tegh Bahadur replied, “we cannot issue by warning to anybody. Our mind is occupied with some other concerns. Guru Gobind Singh will deal with them all”.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁰ Sir Sardar Attar Singh Bhadaur Rais, *Sahib Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Ji Ate Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji De Malwa Desh Rattan Di Sakhi Pothi*, Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, Second Edition 1968, p. 56 & p. 84. & pp. 92-93. There are also reference that the Sikhs not only keep the unshorn hair but also the bearded during Guru Tegh Bahadur period. See Swarup Singh Kaushish, *Guru Kian Sakhian*, Piara Singh (ed.), p. 70.

¹¹¹ *Varan Bhai Gurdas Ji Kian*, Vidya Parkashak Press, Lahore, n.d., p. 297.

¹¹² Rattan Singh Bhangoo, *Sri Gur Panth Prakash*, Kulwant Singh (English Translation), p. 87.

¹¹³ Shireen Moosvi (Trans. in English), “The Sikh Community, 1825 From James Skinner, Tashrihu’I Aqam” in J.S.Grewal and Irfan Habib (ed.), *Sikh History From Persian Sources Translation old Major Text*, Tulika, New Delhi, Second Reprint, 2007, p. 218.

¹¹⁴ Randhir Singh (ed.), *Granth Prem Sumarg Arthat Khalsai Jivan Janch*, New Book Company, Jalandhar, 1965, p.30 & p. 69.

¹¹⁵ Sahib Singh, *Jivan-Birtant Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, Eighth Edition, 1994, p. 121. See also Darshan Singh, *Sikhism Issues and Institutions (In the context of Dr. W.H. McLeod, Dr. Pashaura Singh, Dr. H.S. Oberoi and the Likes...)*, p. 25.

¹¹⁶ J.S. Grewal, *Recent Debates in Sikh Studies An Assessment*, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 2011, p. 97. J.S. Grewal also claimed that it was Guru Hargobind, who makes *kirpan* (sword) important before Guru Gobind Singh. See J.S. Grewal, “Role of Ideas in Sikh History”, *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 6(2), pp. 139-153

¹¹⁷ Guru Gobind Singh, *Thirty-Three Swayyas*, in Surinder Singh Kohli (tr.), *Sri Dasam Granth Sahib*, Vol. III, p. 1552

¹¹⁸ Sainapati, *Sri Gur Sobha*, Kulwant Singh (English Translation), p. 62. Ganda Singh (ed.), *Hukamname*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967, p. 161 & p.165

¹¹⁹ Hari Singh (ed.), *Parchian Sewa Das* (Punjabi), Language Department, Patiala, Second Edition, 1978, p. 85

We have noted that *rahit* is the fundamental issue in Sikh history. In this regard, W.H. McLeod offered a new and different hypothesis and perspective from Sikh historians and established Sikh traditions. About the *rahit* that was laid down by Guru Gobind Singh after *Amrit* ceremony in 1699, Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh does not wrote much. But W.H. McLeod raised some questions regarding *rahit*, particularly ban on tobacco, halal meat and intercourse with *Muslim* women. For him, ban on tobacco was anti-Muslim injunction in the *rahit*. A contemporary source *Gurshoba* by Sainapati only mentioned that Guru Gobind Singh prohibited the use of tobacco but not the reason behind it.¹²⁰ But Gyani Gyan Singh gives the two reasons for the abolition of this evil. He wrote that after the victory in battle of Bhagani, Guru Gobind Singh riding from Paunat, passed from Rampur, some of *Sehajdhari* Sikhs stopped to consume *hookah*, they were attacked and killed by the army of the other Rajas, and then Guru Gobind Singh thought that the reason behind their death was *hookah*. Guru Gobind Singh at Anadpur strictly ordered his Sikhs not to touch it. It appeared that the reason behind the prohibition might be related to warfare activities of the Sikhs but not, due to it was related to Muslims. The second reason was that Guru Gobind Singh wanted his Sikhs lead a clean life. Indeed, Guru Gobind Singh very well knew that its use make the intellect perverse and injuries to health.¹²¹ It should be noted that it was not only Guru Gobind Singh, who had prohibited it but even Guru Tegh Bahadur was also against the use of tobacco. It was reflected when Guru Tegh Bahadur awakened a farmer of Barna village about its bad effects and advised him to give up the habit of tobacco-smoking.¹²² In his works, while discussing *rahit*, Harbans Singh gives reference of Guru Gobind Singh injunction to the Sikhs not to think another woman except his own wife and not to eat the flesh killed in Muslim way.¹²³ W.H. McLeod' next focus was on Guru Gobind Singh injunction against sexual intercourse with Muslim women. Lastly, was on *halal* meat. His conjectures say that this was not the part of 1699 situation, but to 18th century. It should be noted that Guru Gobind Singh was not the first Guru, who had ordered his

¹²⁰ Sainapati, *Sri Gur Sobha*, Kulwant Singh (English Translation), pp.64-65.

¹²¹ Gyani Gyan Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part.1, pp. 955-1068. In fact it was the result of Guru Gobind Singh's injunction against smoking that in 1825 James Skinner wrote that "Sikhs had completely avoided the smoking". Shireen Moosvi (Trans. in English), "The Sikh Community, 1825 from James Skinner Tashrihu'I Aqwan" in J.S. Grewal and Irfan Habib (ed.), *Sikh History From Persian Sources Translation old Major Text*, p. 218.

¹²² Kavi Churaman Singh, *Sri Gur Partap Suraj Granth*, Bhai Vir Singh (ed.), Ras 11, Ansu 45, Vol. 10, Bhasha Vibhag, Punjab, 1993. However, Maculiffe argued that Guru Tegh Bahadur was the first Sikh Guru to preach against tobacco. Furthermore, "Guru Gobind Singh adopted his father's ideas on the subject and vehemently declaimed against the use of tobacco" See M. Maculiffe, "The Sikh Religion" in *The Sikh Religion A Symposium*, p. 17.

¹²³ Harbans Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh*, p. 49.

Sikhs not to think another man's wife, but Guru Amardas and Guru Arjan also gave the same injunction to his Sikhs.¹²⁴ Though, Ganda Singh remains silent in this regard but by quoting Santokh Singh's *Suraj Partap Granth*, he justifies that why Guru Gobind Singh prohibited sexual intercourse with Muslim women. However, Bhai Jodh Singh also gives a valuable statement in this regard. He says, "the Sikhs in those days fighting against the Mohammadan Emperor, whom they called Turk. The Mohammadans thought it lawful to take to themselves woman belonging to the enemy. The Guru was afraid that in revenge the Sikhs might imitate the Mohammadans. He, therefore, specially enjoined upon the Sikhs not to have intercourse with a Turkish woman".¹²⁵ Similarly, Sahib Singh and Khushwant Singh told that this was due to that "at that time when the Sikhs were fighting Muslims, the Guru outlawed retaliation against women."¹²⁶ It was the author of *Amarnama* who had stated on the issue of *halal* meat that Guru Gobind Singh ordered that do not kill the animal in *halal* (*Kutha*), way.¹²⁷ According to Bhai Jodh Singh, "before the advent of the Muhammadans, the Hindus who ate meat used *jhatka*. The use of *kutha* was due to the religious intolerance of the Mohammadans. Real religion can take rise into a fearless heart alone. There-fore the Gurus destroyed this daily coercion, which was being practiced on us through our food by this injunction. The result of it was moral".¹²⁸

Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both agreed that Guru Nanak well knows the political condition of his time. Both accepted Guru Nanak's protest against the political abuses of his days. But for his views, Ganda Singh dealt sources but primary sources which were Guru Nanak's *Bani* in *Guru Granth Sahib*. However, Harbans Singh had not quoted any primary source in this regard. W.H. McLeod remains silent in this regard. Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both accepted that Guru Nanak was eye-witness to the third invasion of Babur at Saidpur. Both agreed that Guru Nanak

¹²⁴ Narinder Kaur Bhatia (ed.), *Sri Satguru Ji De Muhey Diya Sakhian*, Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1978, pp.50-57.

¹²⁵ Sikhism English Translation of the Gurmat Nirnay by Bhai Jodh Singh, Typed Copy Bound in register, Ganda Singh Collection, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha Library, Punjabi University, Patiala, p.175. See also, Satbir Singh, *Rashya Rahit*, New Book Company, Jalandhar, 1974, p. 72.

¹²⁶ Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs Volume 1:1469-1839*, p. 84. See Sahib Singh, *Jiwan Birtant Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji*, p. 114. See also in this context, Pyara Singh Padam, *Rahitname*, Singh Bothers, Amritsar, Tenth Edition, 2015, p. 37.

¹²⁷ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Amarnama Farsi Mool, Punjabi Utara te Arth*, Sikh History Society, Patiala, 1953, p. 37.

¹²⁸ Sikhism English Translation of the Gurmat Nirnay by Bhai Jodh Singh, p. 177. According to Khushwant Singh one reason for the ban on Halal meat was "a protest against the cruelty to animals". See Khushwant Singh, *The Sikhs*, HarperCollins Publishers India, New Delhi, Reprinted 2003, p. 38. See Satbir Singh, *Rashya Rahit*, p. 70.

was also made prisoner during this invasion by Babur. But W.H. McLeod does not believe this. Ganda Singh does not refer to any source to support his opinion that Guru Nanak was prisoner of war at Saidpur. But Harbans Singh dealt *Puratan Janamsakhi* in this regard. On the other hand, unlike both Sikh historians, W.H. McLeod denied Guru Nanak's visit to Saidpur. For him the four hymns of *Babarvani* may be composed after 1526 in reply to the constant invasions of Babur, rather than to one incident. On the other hand Sahib Singh dates all the four *shabads* to 1521.¹²⁹ But contrary to W.H. McLeod's opinions, there are other sources, which mentioned about that Guru Nanak was present at the time of Babur's invasion such as *Bhai Bala Janamsakhi*¹³⁰, *Ibratnama*¹³¹ and *Chahar Gulshan*.¹³² Gyani Gyan Singh also remarked that when the army of Babur attacked Saidpur, Guru Nanak and Mardana were present there. Moreover, this source believed that there was a meeting between Guru Nanak and Babar at Awan village.¹³³ Harbans Singh points out that though, Babar does not mention that he met Guru Nanak in his autobiography *Tuzuk-i-Baburi*. He argued that "this will not be sufficient reason for rejecting altogether the possibility of such a meeting having taken place, though it does underline the fact that a persistent tradition about the Guru fails to elicit support from a likely contemporary source".¹³⁴

Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both accepted Guru Arjan was the first martyr of Sikh faith. An analysis of W.H. McLeod's writings discloses that he had not used the word martyrdom. In fact, he used the word "death". He does not accept the martyrdom of Guru Arjan as historical fact. His account of Guru Arjan's martyrdom is "brief" than the Sikh historians. He reduced Guru Arjan's martyrdom into "a single sentence". He writes, "Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru and father of Hargobind, had in

¹²⁹ Sahib Singh, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darpan*, Vol. 5, Raj Publishers, Jalandhar, N.D. p. 315.

¹³⁰ Surinder Singh Kohli (ed.), *Janamsakhi Bhai Bala*, Panjab University Publication Bureau, Chandigarh, Second Edition, 1990, p. 284. See also Shambhu Nath, *Janam Patri Babe Nanak Ji Ki*, Piar Singh (ed.), Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 1967, pp.54-57. This source refers to the meeting between Guru Nanak and Babar at Saidpur. Saroop Dass Bhalla, *Guru Nanak Mahima or Mahima Prakash*, Part 1, Uttam Singh Bhatia (ed.), Bhasha Vibag, Punjab, 1999, p. 380.

¹³¹ Mufti Ali-ud-din, "Ibratnama", Bhagat Singh (Translate in English), Ganda Singh (ed.), "Sources on the Life & Teachings of Guru Nanak", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. III, 1969, Punjabi University, Patiala, pp. 382-383.

¹³² Irfan Habib (tr.), "Guru Gobind Singh and his family after his death to 1759-1760 from Chaturman, Chahar Gulshan" in J.S. Grewal & Irfan Habib (ed.), *Sikh History from Persian Sources Translation from Major Texts*, p. 164.

¹³³ Gyani Gyan Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Part-1(Punjabi), K.S. Raju (ed.), pp. 289-290. See also, Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 19.

¹³⁴ Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and the Origins of the Sikh Faith*, p. 16.

some manner incurred the displeasure of the Mughal authorities and in 1606 had died while in custody”.¹³⁵ It is reflected that he accepted Guru Arjan’s was not killed, executed or martyrdom but he had “simply died” in Mughal custody. Accordingly, he called it was “later traditions” which considered Guru Arjan’s martyrdom at the hands of Muslims. For him, it was also “tradition” that Muslims i.e. Jahangir feared from Guru Arjan’s growing power of “religious leader”. If it is tradition where is the historical fact, W.H. McLeod remains silent. He without basing himself on any primary source asserted that the reason behind Jahangir’s fear was due to “the increasing influence of the *Jats* within the Sikh *Panth*”. He does not cite any reference to support his statement. In this regard, we are told that “if Jahangir felt concerned about Guru Arjan’s growing *Jat* following, then why does he say in his memoirs that he ordered the Guru’s execution because he blessed the rebel Prince Khusrau? Also, why was no action taken against the Minas and Hindalias, whose following also included *Jats*?¹³⁶ Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both held Jahangir’s religious fanaticism responsible for Guru Arjan’s martyrdom. Both had quoted Jahangir’s autobiography as primary source in this regard. Ganda Singh even remarked that *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* “is invaluable contemporary evidence regarding the causes which led to the arrest and imprisonment of Guru Arjan and the sentence of capital punishment with tortures passes against him by Emperor Jahangir”.¹³⁷ Both accepted the negative role played by Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi. However, Harbans Singh discusses Chandu Shah’s slander against Guru Arjan in the court of Jahangir. Saroop Das Bhalla also figures the enmity of Chandu Shah.¹³⁸ But Ganda Singh does not believe it.¹³⁹ Nevertheless the enmity of Chandu Shah with Guru Arjan also appeared in *Parchian Sewa Das*.¹⁴⁰ Writing about Guru Arjan, W.H. McLeod did not discuss about Chandu Shah, *Naqashbandis* and Khusrau.

Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both assumed that after Guru Arjan’s martyrdom, Guru Hargobind felt that “sterner methods were required to meet the growing oppression of the Mughal authority”. Both agreed that Guru Hargobind wore

¹³⁵ W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, p. 37.

¹³⁶ Jagjit Singh, “The Militarization of Sikh Movement” in Gurdev Singh (ed.), *Perspectives on the Sikh Tradition*, pp. 328-329.

¹³⁷ Ganda Singh, *Contemporary Sources of Sikh History (1469-1708)*, p.8.

¹³⁸ Ahmad Shah Batalwi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Gurbakhash Singh (Translated), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, p. 8.

¹³⁹ Ganda Singh, “The Martyrdom of Guru Arjan”, *The Sikh Review*, June 1981, Calcutta, p. 18.

¹⁴⁰ Hari Singh (ed.), *Parchian Sewa Das* (Punjabi), pp. 174-175.

two swords-*miri* and *piri*. Consequently, Guru Hargobind adopted the style of a soldier. Both hold opinion that the use of arms was for the service of weak and helpless. For their opinion, both had quoted Guru Hargobind's conversation with Samrath Ramdas at Srinagar in Garhwal from an old Punjabi manuscript titled *Panjah Sakhia* and a Marathi source, *Ramdasaswami's Bakkar* by Hanumantswami written in 1793.¹⁴¹ Contrary to Sikh historians, W.H. McLeod considered that Guru Hargobind wear two swords-*miri* and *piri* was a "later tradition". About Guru Hargobind's *miri-piri* policy, Bhai Gurdas in his *vars* stated that Guru Hargobind is "the king of both the spiritual and the temporal realms and a great warrior". *Mahima Prakash (Vartak)* says that it was Baba Budha Ji who had "blessed Mata Ganga Ji wife of Guru Arjan a son (Guru Hargobind) that would be *mir-pir*".¹⁴² The author of *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*,¹⁴³ Rattan Singh Bhangoo and Gyani Gyan Singh¹⁴⁴ mentioned about the wearing of two swords *miri* and *piri* by Guru Hargobind. Why W.H. McLeod ignored all these sources? Both Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh agreed that Sikh faith became militant under "Mughal persecution"¹⁴⁵ But W.H. McLeod called it as "tradition". For him, it was not the Guru Hargobind who had sanctioned the use of arms but it was due to the "influence of *Jat* cultural patterns and the economic problems". But in his analysis, he did not elaborate on the factor how "economic problems" influence on the militarization of the Sikh *Panth*.¹⁴⁶ His basic argument is that the *Jats* used to bear arms. Their very presence within the Sikh *Panth* made it "militant". He assumed that *Jats* were present in the Sikh *Panth* in considerable numbers during the time of Guru Arjan. But he does not provide any data related to the numbering of *Jats*. But J.S. Grewal pointed that "what exactly the proportion of *Jats* in Sikh *Panth* during in later 16th century or the early 17th century cannot be

¹⁴¹ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 49. Ganda Singh, "Guru Hargobind and Samarth Ramdas," *The Sikh Review*, Vol. XXXV, 1987, pp. 24-25.

¹⁴² Kulwinder Singh Bajwa (ed.), *Mahima Prakash (Vartak)*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2004, p.123. Bhagat Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*, Gurmukh Singh (ed.), Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997, p. 47

¹⁴³ Bhagat Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*, Gurmukh Singh (ed.), p. 246

¹⁴⁴ Gyani Gyan Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, p. 440.

¹⁴⁵ It is necessary to give the view of I. J. Singh as "if religious institutions do not respond to political issues that affect the lives of their people, those religions would become irrelevant to the lives of the people, and they should. They would no longer remain living religions but become empty shells of meaningless ritual and dogma" I.J. Singh, *Sikhs and Sikhism A View with a Bias*, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, Reprinted 1995, p. 110

¹⁴⁶ It should be noted that in his first work *The Sikhs of the Punjab* (1968), W.H. McLeod accepts "the pressure of subsequent history" but there is no mention of "Jat theory" of militarization of Sikh *Panth*. W.H. McLeod, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, Lyall Book Depot, Ludhiana, First Indian Edition in 1969, p. 14.

estimated from the evidence at present. It leaves much scope for hunches and conjecture”.¹⁴⁷

Many scholars had challenged the militarization theory of W.H. McLeod. Trilochan Singh¹⁴⁸ called his *Jat* cultural theory as “outright nonsensical and repulsive theory”, Jagjit Singh¹⁴⁹ termed it “untenable on more than one count” and Khushwant Singh¹⁵⁰ considered W.H. McLeod’s hypothesis on militarization as “on weak ground and some of his conclusions erroneous”. It should be noted that in Bhai Gurdas’s *varans*, the *khatri*s were 31.3% and *Jats* were only 3.5%.¹⁵¹ The assumption about *Jats* joined the Sikh *Panth* during the times of Guru Arjan is contradicted by the source *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* also. This source suggests that “some Sikhs of the Guru do agricultural work and some trade, and a multitude tasks up service”.¹⁵² The majority of *Jats* during Guru Arjan times as assumed W.H. McLeod refuted by Sangat Singh by saying that “the preponderance of *Jats* in Punjab comes only after 1750s”.¹⁵³ By this way, W.H. McLeod had reduced the significance of ideology in Sikh religion. Moreover, he had seen Guru Hargobind’s *miri piri* policy against the teachings of Guru Nanak. Bhai Gurdas in his 26 *Var* and *Pauri* 34 emphasizes that “from Guru Arjan was born Guru Hargobind who was also preached and spread the message of the Primal Lord”. Again Bhai Gurdas underscore that from “Guru Arjan emerged Guru Hargobind, Guru and God in one”.¹⁵⁴ But Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh agreed on the point that in no way, Guru Hargobind had alternated the policy of Sikh Gurus. Saroop Das Bhalla figures the daily routine of Guru Hargobind which

¹⁴⁷ J.S. Grewal, *Recent Debates in Sikh Studies An Assessment*, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 2011, p.81.

¹⁴⁸ Trilochan Singh, *Ernest Trumpp and W.H. McLeod As Scholars of Sikh History Religion and Culture*, p. 158.

¹⁴⁹ Jagjit Singh regrets that “some writers failed to grasp the socio-political significance of the Sikh religion and suggested that militarization of the movement was initiated by the influx of *Jats* in large numbers in Sikh *Panth*.” Jagjit Singh, “The Militarization of Sikh Movement” in Gurdev Singh (ed.), *Perspectives on the Sikh Tradition*, p. 325 & p. 378.

¹⁵⁰ Khushwant Singh, “Foreword” in Gurdev Singh (ed.), *Perspectives on the Sikh Tradition*.

¹⁵¹ Hardip Singh Syan, “The Merchant Gurus: Sikhism and the Development of the Medieval Khatri merchant Family”, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 51, 3 (2014): Sage Los Angeles/ New Delhi, p.312.

¹⁵² Ganda Singh, (Trans. in English), “Guru Nanak and Nanak-Panthis (Mid-Seventeen Century) From the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*”, Ganda Singh (ed.), *Sources of the Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak, The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. III, 1969, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 53.

¹⁵³ Sangat Singh, “McLeod & Fenech As Scholars of Sikhism and Martyrdom”, *Abstract of Sikh Studies*, Vol. III, Issue 2, April-June, Chandigarh, p. 71.

¹⁵⁴ Jodh Singh, *Varan Bhai Gurdas Text, Transliteration and Translation*, Volume 2, p. 141 & p. 406.

underlines that “Guru Hargobind had complete faith in ‘*nitname*’ and regularly enjoyed the ‘*Akhand Kirtan*’. Moreover, after the completion of ‘*nitname*’ then Guru Hargobind spent his time and energies in militaristic activities”.¹⁵⁵ However, Ganda Singh links Guru Hargobind’s *miri-piri* policy with Guru Nanak’s teachings. For him, the hymns in which Guru Nanak upbraided the rulers of his day were “heritage” for Guru Hargobind. Ganda Singh had seen the unity of Sikh thought, when he wrote, “the history of Sikhs reveals that the Sikh Gurus had in mind the duties of a nation as much as the duties of an individual. Studied from this point of view, there would seem to be no break or digression in the programme of Sikh life. Its principal remained the same though it underwent a constant transfiguration, assuming a great variety of forms, caused solely by local and occasional circumstances”.¹⁵⁶ Similarly, Harbans Singh also argued that “the Sikh Gurus of the same light and they revealed in continuum, the same truth. Their teaching was the same”.¹⁵⁷ The unity of Sikh thought and practice was also marked in *Bachittar Nattak* by Guru Gobind Singh.¹⁵⁸ In their writings Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod do not give much space to the battles of Guru Hargobind. Both the selected Sikh historian Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh accepted the far reaching influence of these battles yet they do not tie the battles, with Guru Hargobind’s “political ambitious”. But these were in self defence and against tyranny.¹⁵⁹ Hari Ram Gupta also accepted that Guru Hargobind’s battles were “of defensive character”.¹⁶⁰ But W.H. McLeod called these battles as “skirmish” and “conflicts”. Moreover, without basing himself on any historical fact he assumed the reason behind the battles was “the growing number of *jats* in Sikh *Panth*”. In other words, he considered all activities of Guru Hargobind happened due to the entry of *Jats* in Sikh *Panth* and totally ignored Guru Hargobind’s lead in taking Guru Nanak’s mission to its next stage.

¹⁵⁵ Saroop Das Bhalla, *Mahima Prakash*, Part-2, pp. 418-419. See also, Kulwinder Singh Bajwa (ed.), *Mahima Prakash (Vartak)*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2004, pp. 144-145. See also Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol.1, p. 158. See also Shardha Ram Philori, *Sikhan De Raj Di Vithia*, Pritam Singh (ed.), Hind Publishers, Jalandhar, 1956, p. 49.

¹⁵⁶ Ganda Singh, “The Sikhs”, p. 6.

¹⁵⁷ Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*, p. 28.

¹⁵⁸ *Sri Dasam Granth Sahib*, Surinder Singh Kohli (tr.), pp.127-128.

¹⁵⁹ According to John J.H. Gordon, Guru Hargobind used the sword “in defence of the faith”. John J.H. Gordon, *The Sikhs*, William Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1904, p. 36.

¹⁶⁰ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. 1, p.171.

Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both agreed that Guru Tegh Bahadur strengthen the Sikh community. However, W.H. McLeod does not give much space to the period of Guru Tegh Bahadur in his writings. He also doubts on the historical fact about the coming of the Kashmiri Pandits at Anadpur. Basing himself on *Chaupa Singh Rahitnama* and *Bachittar Nattak*, he assumed that coming of the Kashmiri Brahman to visit Guru Tegh Bahadur is a “Sikh tradition” or “accepted Sikh account”. Because this was not mentioned in these sources. However, Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both believed this as historical fact. For this, Ganda Singh had quoted *Bhatt Vahi Multani Sindhi*, Kavi Sewa Singh’s *Shahid Bilas* and Bhai Swarup Singh’s *Guru Kian Sakhian*.¹⁶¹ Harbans Singh had also quoted *Shahid Bilas* and *Bhatt Vahi Talunda*. Another source Kavi Kankan¹⁶² and Gyani Gyan Singh¹⁶³ also discuss about the coming of Kashmiri Brahmans at Anadpur Sahib. W.H. McLeod had ignored all these sources. Even, in 1975, Ganda Singh wrote an article on this issue titled as *Brahmins in Search of a Savior* published in (*The Sikh Review*, Vol. XXIII, Dec. 1975, pp. 65-69). Through, this article Ganda Singh discusses Guru Tegh Bahadur’s sacrifice for the cause of Kashmiri Brahmans. Both the selected Sikh historians noted the strict religious and persecution policy of Emperor Aurangzeb. But W.H. McLeod called this “Sikh tradition”.¹⁶⁴ However, the Sikh historians quoted Saki Mustaid Khan’s *Masir-i-Alamgiri*, Khafi Khan’s *Muntukhubat-ul-Lubab* and Mirza Inayat Ullah Ismi’s *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri* in this regard. The sources *Haqiqat-i-Bina wa uruj-i-Firqa-i-Sikhan* (1784) also remarked that “ it was the reign of His Majesty, the *Khuld Makani*. He had issued strict orders to the *subadars* and the *faujders* of the empire regarding the observance of the *shari’at* and the destruction of temples and idols of the contumacious”.¹⁶⁵ Harbans Singh and Ganda Singh both held Aurangzeb responsible for Guru Tegh Bahadur’s martyrdom. But W.H. McLeod called it only a “Sikh tradition”. Why W.H. McLeod had ignored the reliable sources used by Ganda Singh. What was the effect of Guru Tegh Bahadur’ martyrdom on Sikh *Panth* was discussed in detail by Harbans Singh. For him it brought “moral and political

¹⁶¹ Ganda Singh, “The Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Studied in Historical Setting”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XI, Part II, 1977, pp. 208-209.

¹⁶² Kavi Kakan, *Sakhep Das Gur Katha*, p. 55.

¹⁶³ Gyani Gyan Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, p. 720. See also Rattan Singh Bhangoo, *Sri Gur Panth Prakash*, Vol. 1, Kulwant Singh (English Translation), pp.64-64.

¹⁶⁴ Hew McLeod, *Sikhism*, p. 44.

¹⁶⁵ J.S. Grewal, *Guru Tegh Bahadur and the Persian Chronicles*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1976, p.65.

awakening”. Unlike Harbans Singh, Ganda Singh and W.H. McLeod discuss this briefly. For the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, it should be noted that W.H. McLeod only used the word “death”, instead of ‘martyrdom’.

The main argument of Ganda Singh regarding Guru Gobind Singh is that Guru Gobind Singh awakened the Sikhs towards “greater political consciousness”. Further, Guru Gobind Singh united them into “a compact national brotherhood”. The whole work of Guru Gobind Singh was “national reconstruction”. Though Ganda Singh had seen Guru Gobind Singh as the creator of a nation, yet he did not attribute any political aim directly to Guru Gobind Singh. It was Rattan Singh Bhangoo, who had stated that Guru Gobind Singh had created the *Khalsa Panth* to “destroy the Mughals”. By creating *Khalsa*, Guru Gobind Singh wanted “to wage a war against oppression”.¹⁶⁶ This was also believed by W.H. McLeod. Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh do not attribute any political aspiration to Guru Gobind Singh or the *Khalsa*. It should be noted that with the *Khalsa* institution, Guru Gobind Singh wanted to “organize his followers to fight against the Mughal tyranny” this was not the only aim but also to eradicate social evils.¹⁶⁷

Both Ganda Singh and Harban Singh discuss Guru Gobind Singh’s battles in detail than W.H. McLeod. The selected Sikh historians clearly confessed that Guru Gobind Singh fought battles not for territorial gains, but against the “religious intolerance and political iniquities of his time”. This is also corroborated from Guru Gobind Singh’s *Zafarnama*. Guru Gobind Singh writes, “he had no personal quarrels with the Mughal state or with the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. He was not fighting war for religious purpose but his struggle was essential against the oppressive order of the Mughal state”.¹⁶⁸ Both argued that these battles were defensive. Bhagat Lakshman Singh also proposed that battles of Guru Gobind Singh were “self-defense”.¹⁶⁹ On the other hand, W.H. McLeod called these battles as “defeat” of Guru Gobind Singh. He failed to explain why he assumed the battles as “defeat”. Again, he does not cite any source in this regard.

¹⁶⁶ Rattan Singh Bhangoo, *Sri Gur Panth Prakash*, Kulwant Singh (English Translation), p.73 & p. 77.

¹⁶⁷ Dalbir Singh Dhillon, *Sikhism Origin and Development*, p. 149.

¹⁶⁸ Guru Gobind Singh, “Zafarnama”, Rattan Singh Jaggi (Translate in Punjabi), New Delhi, 1999, pp. 676-679. See also Hari Singh (ed.), *Parchian Sewa Das*, p. 142.

¹⁶⁹ Bhagat Lakshman Singh, *A Short Sketch of the Life of Guru Gobind Singh*, Lahore, 1909, p.132.

On the other hand, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod had given very short space to the history of Banda Singh in their writings. In his writing, Ganda Singh accepted Banda Singh “the greatest hero”, “greatest martyr”, “one of the most remarkable men of India of 18th century”, “the man who had laid the foundation of the Sikh empire in 1710” and “the first Sikh political leader”. But W.H. McLeod termed Banda Singh’s struggle as “defeat”, “uprising”, “disturbance”. Unlike Ganda Singh, his struggle for independence had assumed by W.H. McLeod as “peasant revolt”.¹⁷⁰ It was Rattan Singh Bhagoo who had stated that the army of Banda Singh was constituted “of rustic *Jat* peasants”.¹⁷¹ However, Ganda Singh argued that peasantry was not the part of Banda Singh’s army. In fact, they joined Banda Singh army “to wreak vengeance upon local officials and for loot”. For instance, Ganda Singh stated that during Banda Singh’s invasion on Samana and Sadaura, the peasantry joined the army as “an opportunity” and as “favorable chance”. G.S.L. Devra tried to answer the question why did the peasantry join Banda Singh’s army. He argued that the peasants of neighboring regions of Malwa “either political situation was not accommodative or land though plenty was more arid”. Therefore, peasants had left with two options. The first was to move at distant places. The second was to fight for their survival at the local level. Consequently, they joined his army.¹⁷²

About the mission of Banda Singh the selected historians had different perspectives. Rattan Singh Bhangoo,¹⁷³ Ahmad Shah Batalwi¹⁷⁴, John Malcolm¹⁷⁵, and John Gordon¹⁷⁶ recorded that Guru Gobind Singh commissioned Banda Singh to Punjab with the object to avenge the blood of his grandfather, father and sons. Whereas, W.L. McGregor¹⁷⁷, M.A. Macauliffe¹⁷⁸ and C.H. Payne¹⁷⁹ have recorded

¹⁷⁰ E. Thornton remarked that the movement of Banda was an “agrarian revolt”. See E. Thornton, *Gazetteer of the Territories under the East India Company*, London, 1862, p. 176. Khushwant Singh also discussed the period of Banda Singh in his work *A History of the Sikhs* in its II part that is titled as “the agrarian uprising”. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs, Vol.1:1469-1839*, pp. 101-102.

¹⁷¹ Rattan Singh Bhangoo, *Sri Gur Panth Parkash*, Kulwant Singh (English Translation), p. 267

¹⁷² G.S.L. Devra, “Environmental Disturbances Popular Resistance and Banda Bahadur”, in Amarjit Singh (ed.), *Banda Singh Bahadur Tri-Centenary of Martyrdom*, Nirmal Publishing House, Kurukshetra, 2017, p.27

¹⁷³ Rattan Singh Bhangoo, *Sri Gur Panth Prakash*, Kulwant Singh (English Translation), Vol.1, pp. 197-199.

¹⁷⁴ Ahmad Shah Batalwi, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Gurbakhash Singh (Translated), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, pp. 31-32.

¹⁷⁵ John Malcolm, *A Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 76.

¹⁷⁶ J.H. Gordon, *The Sikhs*, William Blackwood And Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1904, p. 55.

¹⁷⁷ W.L. McGregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, London, 1846, pp. 106-109.

¹⁷⁸ M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. 5, Oxford, 1909, pp. 238.

that the aim of Banda Singh was to carry on a struggle against the oppressive and unjust order of the Mughal state. For Ganda Singh, his mission was “for the liberation and independence of his peoples”. But Harbans Singh assumed his mission was against “cruelties and injustice of the provincial governors”. But W.H. McLeod assumed he wants to wreak vengeance on Wazir Khan. We are also told that his mission was “defending the depressed against the oppressor”.¹⁸⁰

W.H. McLeod did not write about the battles of Banda Singh. On the other hand, Harbans Singh had only discussed about the battle of Sirhind and Gurdas Nagal in brief. But Ganda Singh mentioned in detail. Ganda Singh stated that early battles of Banda Singh augmented the confidence of the Sikhs for further activities. For him, victory of Sarhind served as a “signals for a general Sikh rising” and revised in them “a new spirit of independence among the Sikhs”. With the victory of Sarhind, “the dramatic turn in events reached a climax” argued Harbans Singh. But W.H. McLeod assumed that there are “several accounts” which described the battle and capture of Sarhind. Moreover, according to him all these accounts stressed the “terrible destruction” done by Banda Singh’s army. Ganda Singh also accepted that when the Sikhs entered Sarhind, the “heartless population was subject to an indiscriminate plunder”. But the reason behind it according to Ganda Singh was that “the sentiments of the crusaders had been much excited by the cold-blooded murderer of the young sons of Guru Gobind Singh in this place”. Consequently, this “inflamed the fire of their fury”.¹⁸¹ It is necessary to give a statement of Major James Browne, “as will always happen where the common rights of humanity are violated, a hero arose, whose courage and ability directed the efforts of his injured followers, to a just, though severe revenge.” According to Ganda Singh “the hero” referred to here is Banda Singh.¹⁸²

Ganda Singh also discussed about the establishment of capital by Banda Singh and also what type of his government was. But Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod

¹⁷⁹ C.H. Payne, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, London, Reprint 2002, Patiala, p.40.

¹⁸⁰ Sohan Singh, *Life & Exploitation of Banda Singh Bahadur*, Prithipal Singh Kapur and Dharam Singh (ed.), Punjabi University, Patiala, 2000, p.65.

¹⁸¹ Ganda Singh, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur Based on Contemporary and Original Records*, p. 46.

¹⁸² Major James Browne, “History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs”, Ganda Singh (edited & annotated), *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, Indian Studies Past & Present, Calcutta, Reprint 1962, p.14.

remain silent in this regard. Ganda Singh mentioned that Banda Singh made the fort of Mukhlispur as his capital and renamed it Lohgarh. But, he does not discuss, why Banda Singh gave it that name. However, Irwine stated that the name Lohgarh was given due to “the prominence of iron in Guru Gobind Singh’s new ritual or with reference to the fort’s supposed impregnability.”¹⁸³ After the establishment of Banda Singh’s power, he assumed “the regal state” as stated by Ganda Singh. While, Harbans Singh thinks that after his victory of Sarhind, Banda Singh laid the foundation of “Sikh sovereignty in the Punjab”. He assumed the “style of royalty”. On the other hand, William Irvine remarked that at Lohgarh Banda Singh assumed “something of regal state”.¹⁸⁴ No Sikh source even works of Kesar Singh Chhiber and Rattan Singh Bhangoo refers to any coins struck by Banda Singh. But Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both discussed about the coins of Banda Singh. Both does not mention the year, when Banda Singh struck his coins for the first time. But we are told that Banda Singh struck his coins between 1710 to 1713 with “the concept of Sikh sovereignty”.¹⁸⁵ It is said that Banda Singh started first Sikh coin when he conquered Sarhind and established his capital at Lohgarh.¹⁸⁶ Both the Sikh historian wrote what was inscribed on it. But they do not refer to the source. However, near contemporary historians and sources also mentioned the striking of coins by Banda Singh. The first reference appeared about coins from the report of *Akhbar-i-Darbar-Mualla* of 9 January, 1711. The report says that “the Sikhs had struck their own coins”.¹⁸⁷ This report also tells about the seal and new *sammāt* started by Banda Singh. The second source was *Hadikut-La-Akalim* (1780) by Usmani Bilgrami. The author says that “Guru Nanak is the king of the world and the true lord” inscribed on the coins.¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, Ganda Singh also discusses about seals and *sammāt* started by Banda Singh. But Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod remain silent in this regard. Ganda Singh argued that all this was done by Banda Singh and it was due “to infuse

¹⁸³ William Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Vol. 1 & 2, Oriental Books, New Delhi, Reprint 1971, p. 109.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 110.

¹⁸⁵ Kirpal Singh and Kharak Singh, (ed.), *History of the Sikhs and their Religion*, Volume II, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, 2013, p. 215.

¹⁸⁶ Rai Jasbir Singh, “Early English and Persian Writings and the Sikh Coinage”, *Punjab History Conference Proceeding*, Thirteenth Session, March 18-20, Part I, 1994, p. 131.

¹⁸⁷ Bhagat Singh, (Trans. & ed.), “Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla”, (Mughal Court-News Letters relating to the Panjab, A.D. 1707-1718)”, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XVIII-II, October 1984, Punjabi University, Patiala. pp. 51.

¹⁸⁸ Murtaza Husain Allah Yar Usmani Bilgrami, “Hadikut-La-Akalim” in Balwant Singh Dhillon (ed.), *Banda Singh Bahadur Farsi Sarot*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2011, p.240.

in the minds of the Sikhs a spirit of equality with the ruling people” and also to inspire his Sikhs that they were in “no way inferior than the Mughals”.

About the introduction of *Fateh Darshan* the historians had different opinions. However, Harbans Singh remains silent in this regard. Though Rattan Singh Bhangoo¹⁸⁹ and even one of the *hukamnama*¹⁹⁰ of Banda Singh reflected that *Fateh Darshan* as a new salutation was started by Banda Singh. W.H. McLeod assumed that by doing so Banda Singh wanted to establish his own *Panth*. For Ganda Singh it was only a “war-cry” and started by Banda Singh after his victory over Sarhind. However, Ganda Singh clearly confessed that its use was stopped, when it was condemned by the *Khalsa*. Khafi Khan, whom Majida Bano believed that he is apparently the only Persian writer who had in his work *Muntakhabu’I Lubab* completed by him in 1711 mentioned that the army of the Sikhs raised cry of *Fateh Darshan* and *Sacha Padshah* during the battle of Sarhind.¹⁹¹ Basing himself on authority of *Risalah-i- Sahib Numa Chahar Gulshan-i-Punjab*, Ganda Singh rejected the views of Khafi Khan and stated that the Sikhs ascribed the victory to *Waheguru*, the Almighty. The opinion of Ganda Singh was also justified from the remarks of Kamraj Bin Nain Singh, in his work *Ibratnama*, completed by him in 1719, also gives testimony that the salutation *Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa* was in vogue in *Khalsa Dal* during Banda Singh’s period. He writes, “due to their (Sikhs) foolishness, they said *Waheguru* instead of saying *Rabbi-Ul-Izat*”. He also accepted that the practices of Sikhs are different from that of the religion of Hindus and Muslims.¹⁹²

Ganda Singh had discussed in detail about the abolition of *zamindari* system. Though Harbans Singh gives no comprehensive accounts in this regard, yet he accepted that it was abolished by Banda Singh. But W.H. McLeod puts doubt on Banda Singh’s this work. He writes, “what about the claim that Banda was responsible for the collapse and abolition of the *zamindari* system in Punjab?” He does not try to answer this question. Unfortunately, Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both

¹⁸⁹ Rattan Singh Bhangoo, *Sri Gur Panth Prakash*, Kulwant Singh, (English Trans.), Vol. 1, p. 339 & p. 347.

¹⁹⁰ Ganda Singh (ed.), *Hukamname*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1967, p. 193.

¹⁹¹ Majida Bano (tr.), “Banda Bhadur and his Followers – Fron Khafi Khan, Muntakhabu’I Lubab” in J.S. Grewal and Irfan Habib (ed.), *Sikh History from Persian Sources Translations of Major Texts*, Tulika, New Delhi, 2001, p. 156.

¹⁹² Kamraj Bin Nain Singh, “Ibratnama”, Balwant Singh Dhillon (ed.), *Banda Singh Bahadur Farsi Sarot*, p. 83.

did not cite any evidence in this regard. On the other hand, Harbans Kaur Sagoo and G S Deol also believed that Banda Singh abolished the *zamindari* system.¹⁹³

Again, W.H. McLeod raised a question: “What about the extensive use of killing and other violence let loose by the campaigns of Banda”? He does not throw light in this regard. Ganda Singh thinks that the “irregulars i.e. professional robbers and dacoits and also persecuted peasants were responsible for indiscriminate murder and plunder”. In this regard, it is necessary to give the remarks of Muhammad Shafi ‘Warid’s Persian work *Mir’at-i-Waridat*. He wrote that “after the slaying of Wazir Khan, he laid down that of Hindus and Muslims, whoever, became enrolled among his Sikhs, should be of one body and take their meal together so that the distinction in honour between the lowly and the well-born was entirely removed and all achieved mutual unison, acting together. A sweeper of spittle sat with a raja of great status and they felt no hostility to each other.”¹⁹⁴ Rattan Singh Bhangoo also stressed on the point that Banda Singh told the officials announcers to make announcements such as: “do not do what I prohibit. An ornament on the person of a woman should not be touched. A man’s clothes and the turban on his head must also not to be touched.”¹⁹⁵

Ganda Singh refused to say that Banda Singh’s struggle was a “communal strife”. Furthermore, for him, it was “political struggle”. He stressed the point that Banda Singh had no ill-will against the Muslims or Mughal religion. However, for his this statement Ganda Singh based himself on news of *Akhbar-i- Darbar-i-Mualla*. The news said that after the occupation of Sarhind, “they had emphatically told people not to kill even a bird.”¹⁹⁶ Both the Sikh historians argued that though Bahadur Shah passed the prohibitory laws against the Sikhs, but Banda Singh was not antagonistic to their religion. Both based their views on Bahadur Shah’s order of 10 December 1710, “to kill the worshippers of Nanak, i.e. Sikhs, wherever found’. In this regard, they also quoted the proclamation made by Banda Singh in 1711 that was appeared in *Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla*. Banda Singh says, “I do not oppose the Muslims. Accordingly, for

¹⁹³ Harbans Kaur Sagoo, *Banda Singh Bahadur and Sikh Sovereignty*, Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 157-158. See also Gurdev Singh Deol, *Banda Bahadur*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1969, p. 46.

¹⁹⁴ Irfan Habib (tr.), “Banda Bahadur and his Followers from Muhammad Shafi ‘Warid”, *Mir’at-i-Waridat*”, p. 161. See also Qazi Faqir Muhammad, “Jam-u-Tawarikh” in Ganda Singh, *Kuj Ku Puratan Sikh-Ithas ik Patre*, Amritsar, 1937, p. 48.

¹⁹⁵ Rattan Singh Bhangoo, *Sri Gur Panth Prakash*, p. 224.

¹⁹⁶ Ganda Singh, “Presidential Address”, in Indian History Congress, 35th Session, Jadavpur University, Calcutta, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XXII-II, October, 1988, p. 184.

any Muslims who approached him, he fixes a daily allowance and wages and looks after him. He has permitted them to read *Khutba* and *Namaz* with the result that five thousand Muslims have gathered round him. Having entered into his friendship, they are free to shout their call and say their prayer in the army of the wretched [Sikhs].¹⁹⁷ A *Vakil's* report on 9 May 1711 to Maharaja Jai Singh had also been self-explanatory in this regard. The report says, “the news of the Guru [Banda Singh] is that he has put up his camp in Kalanaur. The Hindus as well as the Muslims are thronging to him and he is taking them into his services.”¹⁹⁸

From the above study, we can say that the Sikh historians Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh and a non-Sikh historian W.H. McLeod had different views that were due to their different approach, source and methodology towards Sikh history. We find that though Ganda Singh had major interest in the collection of source material of Sikh history, but he approached them in his writings through critical eyes. He stressed on objectivity. Harbans Singh though impressed by modern historiography yet he is gentle with traditions. He used mostly later *Gurmukhi* sources. W.H. McLeod used a very few sources. He approached Sikh history with western historical methodology. He called himself a sceptive historian. That's why he doubted and questioned every established fact of Sikh history as tradition and ignored the primary sources. It can be right to say that he ignored the compositions of Sikh Gurus that are the most important evidence on the Sikh *Panth's* in terms of its ideals and institutions.

¹⁹⁷ Ganda Singh, “Development of the Sikh Thought upto the 18th Century”, p. 23.

¹⁹⁸ *Vakil Report No. 260* in Balwant Singh Dhillon, *Rajasthani Documents on Banda Singh Bahadur*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, First Edition, 2016, p. 110.

CONCLUSION

The main motivation of the Singh Sabha movement was the search for Sikh identity and to revive the teachings of the Sikh Gurus. All the intellectual activities of the Singh Sabha reformers were related to social-cultural and religious awakening of the Sikhs. To generate awakening among the Sikhs, they used a number of means like *Amrit parchar*, newspapers, tract societies, *updeshaks*, *gurpurbs*, religious *diwans* and *Jathas*. By all these methods or means, they motivated the Sikhs to shed their un-Sikh practices that had crept in Sikh society. The Sikh masses were advised to understand and follow the moral teachings of *Guru Granth Sahib*. The awakening activities of the Singh Sabha reformers had also influenced the educated Sikhs to write about and popularize the glorious past and heroic thought. This was also the historical background relevant for the emergence of numerous Sikh intellectual historians including Karam Singh 'Historian', Ganda Singh, Teja Singh and Harbans Singh. Inspired by modern or western education they stood for Sikh identity independent of the Hindus.

The social-cultural and religious environment of any society has impacted its historians. In other words, every historian is a by-product of the milieu of his society. Similarly, Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod were influenced by the environment of their societies and religions. There are different factors which awakened the selected historians to write Sikh history. It should be noted that Ganda Singh had some interest in poetry while he was young. This was reflected from his poem entitled *Sanu Khich Hai Ik Mahboob Wali, Asi Gali Prem Di Chalian Ni*. Even, he had a pen-name *Kewal*. But soon he felt his passion for Sikh history and left this surname. Ganda Singh awakened towards Sikh history due to these reasons: his father Sardar Jawala Singh was well known about the subject of history and maternal grandfather were part of military life during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time. The tales of the 18th centuries Sikh heroes and their sacrifices did inspire him. Two personalities from the Government High School, Hoshiarpur, aroused his interest in the subject of history. The first was Headmaster of the school Jemaj Marr and the second was Master Bhagwan Das. Sir Arnold T. Wilson aroused his interest in History writing and bibliographical literature.

However, he was much inspired by Karam Singh 'Historian' also. He learnt from him the significance of empirical evidence. He was motivated by Karam Singh 'Historian's open minded research also. In addition to the work of Karam Singh, Ganda Singh was inspired by the novels of Bhai Vir Singh such as *Sundari* and *Bijai Singh*. Consequently, he motivated to write on 18th century Punjab history particularly Sikh history. Late 19th century awakening activities of the Singh Sabha movement, rise of communalism in North India and writings of Bhagat Lakshman Singh also developed his curiosity towards Sikh history. His motive was to write Sikh history with a scientific approach. In truth research and re-write the history of the Sikh masses was his purpose. The motives of Ganda Singh were also to collect primary sources related to Punjab history particularly Sikh history, to dispose the historical controversies related to Sikh history on the authority of primary sources and to propagate Sikh history and Sikh religion. Ganda Singh's interest in Sikh History and love for Sikh religion can be understood through his these writings also: (i) *Sikhi Parchar Di Zarurat* (1925), (ii) *Inkishaf-i-Haqiqat* (1926), (iii) *Dharmik Parchar Di Lorh* (1928) and (iv) *Sikhi Parchar* (1928).

Harbans Singh had also deep faith in Sikh religion. Though in his young age, he was attracted towards Punjabi literary renaissance, but in his later life he devoted himself to the cause of Sikh history and religion. There are five factors that awakened his mind towards Sikh history. First, it was the influences of his father Ram Lal and of his mother Roop Kaur. His father Ram Lal had interest in literary works and his mother Roop Kaur had deep devotion to Sikh Gurus. In fact, she was religious lady. Second, scholars such as Kartar Singh and Darshan Singh in addition to G.S. Talib, Fauja Singh and Ganda Singh remained in touch with his research. Third, significantly, like Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh was also the product of the Khalsa College, Amritsar. Fourth, he was influenced by Bhai Vir Singh the charismatic personality of Singh Sabha movement. Fifth, moreover, Harbans Singh was highly influenced by the ideology of *Tat Khalsa*, so he wrote Sikh history from new point of view represented by the slogan *Ham Hindu Nahin*. His motive was to encourage Punjabi studies, Sikh history and also the Sikh Studies. Furthermore, he wanted to write the biographies of Sikh Gurus from traditional sources, for those who were influenced by the modern historiography.

The factors that influenced on W.H. McLeod to write on Sikh history were different than the selected Sikh historians. He was not fascinated to Sikh history from his young age in New Zealand. But it was possible, when he came to Punjab as Christian missionary of Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. During his early employment in Punjab as an English teacher at the Christian Boys Higher Secondary School at Kharar, he felt the need to change the direction of his life. In fact, he wanted to serve in Baring Union Christian College at Batala. This was possible if he develops as a historian. Thus he finally decided to work on Sikh history as a whole. According to him, his motive was to make understanding of the educated western peoples with the Sikh religion and Sikh masses through his writings. Radical Sikh scholars considered him to destroy the Sikh tradition. Gurdev Singh and Trilochan Singh criticized him due to his missionary interests. But W.H. McLeod denied it in 1966 that he and his wife were not Christian's believers. Despite his disclaims about his belief in Christian religion, yet he continued his associations with some Christian institutions throughout his life such as from 1968-1969, he was the director of the *Christian Institute of Sikh Studies* in Batala. He was became the Convener of Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (PCANZ) Historical Records Committee 1998 to 2000. He was also member of PCANZ Historical Records Reference Group in 2000. In Presbyterian Church records his title is mentioned as Reverend.

About the social-cultural awakening of the Sikhs from the period of Guru Nanak up to Guru Gobind Singh, the Sikh historians Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh had similar views on the major themes. But W.H. McLeod had quite different opinion from them. Culture and religion are closely linked to each other. Culture is based on certain principles that were taken from the religious beliefs of the community. Guru Nanak founded Sikh religion. In truth, Sikh culture was also started with the foundation of Sikh religion. For the newly founded Sikh religion, Guru Nanak gave new social order, social institutions and social principles. This suggested Guru Nanak's cultural awareness and efforts to build an alternate culture. Sikh social-cultural awakening was traced to Guru Nanak by Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh. Both praised the role of *sangat*, *pangat* and *langar* institutions in social-cultural awakening. Ganda Singh accepted Guru Nanak as a social reformer. Harbans Singh proposed that Guru Nanak had restructured the social customs of the society.

However, W.H. McLeod does not state anything in this regard. Contrary to Sikh historians, he does not accept Guru Nanak as the founder of Sikh religion. He considered that Guru Nanak was not a prophet but a *sant* of North Indian *nirgun* tradition. For him, Guru Nanak only stated the influence of *nath* doctrine and practices. But it should be noted that the word *sant* or *nirgun* tradition was not mentioned in early Sikh historical records. Guru Nanak had even basic difference with Bhakti saints. Such as, Bhakti saints stressed on the renunciation of the world, but Guru Nanak had stressed on family life. Guru Nanak appointed Bhai Lahina as Guru Angad his successor, to keep the continuity of his newly founded Sikh religion. But no other Bhakti saint has done like this. However, Bhai Gurdas in his *Vars* and Bhai Nand Lal in his *Jot Bigas* have firmly portrayed the position of Guru Nanak as the prophet par excellence. Guru Nanak was against the caste discrimination accepted by Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh and quoted Guru Nanak's hymns to support their views. Though, W.H. McLeod had quoted Guru Nanak's hymns in this regard. Nevertheless, he assumed that Guru Nanak was against it, because it was hindrance to spiritual salvation of the masses. However, Bhai Gurdas remarked in his *Var 1, Pauri 23* that Guru Nanak converted the four castes into one caste. Furthermore, Sikhs of the Guru Nanak's period do not believe in caste classification. Guru Nanak's hymns in *Guru Granth Sahib* and the *vars* of Bhai Gurdas are valuable and an authentic source in this regard. The language used by Bhai Gurdas makes it clear that he was not repeating instructions pronounced by Guru Nanak in his hymns, but a precept practised by his followers. However, the Sikh historians justified their views by stating that to eradicate this social evil in practical forms, Guru Nanak started *sangat*, *pangat* and *langar* institutions. Both the Sikh historians accepted Guru Nanak was conscious towards the inferior position of the women in the society at that time. On the basis of *Asa Di Var* both proposed that Guru Nanak raised the social status of women and gave them equality with men in religious and social sphere. But W.H. McLeod proposed that equality was given to women in sphere of spiritual liberation not in social matters. However *B40 Janamsakhi* that was completed in 1733 makes it clear that the path started by Guru Nanak was open to women also.

Both the Sikh historian assumed social awakening from the *langar* institution. Both agreed that it was started by Guru Nanak and helped in the eradication of caste system. W.H. McLeod was confused about the *langar* system and its functioning. For

him, it was functioning during Guru Amardas period. But the sources *Puratan Janamsakhi*, *Kanhaiya Lal* in his *Tarikh-i-Punjab* and *Saroop Das Bhalla* in his *Mahima Prakash* agreed that *langar* institution was started by Guru Nanak. Moreover, Guru Nanak himself underscores the importance of *langar* institution in his own hymns. Both the Sikh historians discuss about *sangat* institution. And they accept its role in the eradication of distinctions based on religion, race, caste and creed. W.H. McLeod has given very short space in his writing to the *sangat* institution. He does not like Sikh historians discuss its role in social-cultural awakening.

The Sikh historians accepted that Guru Angad consolidate the Sikh *Panth*. W.H. McLeod does not accept this. In other words, he does not accept any development during Guru Angad period. Both Gyani Gyan Singh and Saroop Das Bhalla has maintained that *Gurmukhi* was invented by Guru Angad. Unlike them, the author of *Chahar-Bagh-i-Panjab*, Ganesh Das Bedehra and Kavi Kankan had traced *Gurmukhi* to Guru Nanak. This view was also accepted by the selected historians. However, Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both discuss the impact of this language on the Sikh society. But W.H. McLeod remains silent in this regard. Harbans Singh assumed its impact on literary culture. According to Ganda Singh, it helped in making independent the Sikhs from the *Brahmin* priests. The statements of Ganda Singh are justified with references from Muhsin Fani's *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*. This source stated that the Sikhs had no favor for the language of Hindus i.e. Sanskrit.

W.H. McLeod's main stress was upon Guru Amardas period after discussing Guru Nanak in his writings. All the selected historians accepted that Guru Amardas opposed the evil practice of *sati*. Both the Sikh historians agreed that Guru Amardas was also against the *pardah* practice. W.H. McLeod remains silent in this regard. However, Ganda Singh does not refer to any source. Harbans Singh had quoted Saroop Das Bhalla's *Mahima Prakash* in this regard. Both the Sikh historians discuss the social awakening brought by *langar* institution in Guru Amardas times. But unlike them, W.H. McLeod assumed that Guru Amardas borrowed the *langar* institution from the *sufis*. Factually speaking this practice was started by Guru Nanak in the Sikh religion. This is reflected from Guru Nanak's own hymns and *Puratan Janamsakhi*. For the Sikh historians Guru Amardas instructed his followers to use hymns on social ceremonies like marriage and death. This is identical with Sundar Das's account *Ramkali Sad* and Guru Amardas's own masterpiece *Anad*

Sahib in *Guru Granth Sahib*. Both Sikh historians have accepted that this makes the Sikhs more self-contained in social matters and turned Sikh faith into well marked social group. This is also noted by Bhai Gurdas in his *vars* and Mohsin Fani the author of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*. However, for W.H. McLeod Guru Amardas efforts to appoint the opening days of the month of *Baisakh*, *Magh* and *Diwali* and digging *Baoli* are innovations, recourse to traditional Indian institutions and reintroduce Hindu festivals. Harbans Singh remarked that all these were for the Sikhs to forgather at Goindwal. Ganda Singh remains silent in this regard. However, the sources agreed that this was done by Guru Amardas so that Sikh could become acquainted and fraternize with each other. It should be noted that during Guru Amardas period Sikhism had become completely a religion of householder. In order to save its followers from absorption in other sects, it was become essential to augment the work of religious organization by social reform actions.

Both the Sikh historians discussed Guru Ramdas' role in the formation of Amritsar and its role in the social-cultural awakening. All the selected historians discuss about the appointments of *masands* by Guru Ramdas and their role in preaching Sikh religion. But Guru Ramdas's great contribution of introducing *ghorian* and *lavan* remained unnoticed by all the three selected historians. In fact, Guru Ramdas' great contribution in the awakening of the Sikh masses towards distinct social-cultural awakening should have been noticed.

Again, all the selected historians discuss during the Guru Arjan period, the role of *Darbar Sahib* and *Guru Granth Sahib* in the social-cultural awakening of the Sikhs. However, the Sikh historians stressed on the point that these institutions helped the Sikhs to free themselves from the Hindus. W.H. McLeod also accepted the necessity of *Guru Granth Sahib* in the customs of the Sikhs and its contribution in the unity of Sikh *Panth*. However, these scholars did not pay attention to the role of Guru Hargobind in the evolution of awakening. Ganda Singh and W.H. McLeod did refer very briefly to the period of Guru Har Rai and Guru Harkrishan than Harbans Singh. Again both remain silent about Guru Tegh Bahadur' role in social-cultural awakening. However, Harbans Singh stressed that Guru Tegh Bahadur ordered his Sikhs to abandon the practice of *Sakhi Sarvar*. Attar Singh the author of *Malwa Desh Rattan Di Sakhi Pothi* had also mentioned this development.

All the selected historians had widely taken up the creation of the *Khalsa* by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. But they had taken different approaches. Ganda Singh wrote that Guru Gobind Singh wants to build up united nation of purified ones that would be free from social evil. Harbans Singh also accepted this. But in W.H. McLeod's observation, it was an attempt by Guru Gobind Singh to carry on the public struggle for justice. Obviously, he is more political in his concern than the Sikh historians. Later Indian writers such as Sainapati and Prof. Puran Singh had stressed more upon the social transformation caused by the *Khalsa* and its operations during the 18th century. Both the Sikh historians accepted that Guru Gobind Singh instructed five beloved to wear five symbols also called five *kakkars* namely *kesh*, *kangha*, *kachchera*, *kara* and *kirpan*. But W.H. McLeod does not accept this. For him, these were the outcome of the course of the eighteenth century Sikh history. Moreover, according to him, all these came due to the impact of *Jat* cultural patterns. Sikh scholars agreed that from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, all the Sikh Gurus were *Kesadhari*. Even in *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sikh Gurus Guru Nanak and Guru Arjan praised the beauty of God by saying that His hair is long and also beautiful. Then, how it is possible that the custom which was present in the Sikh *Panth* from the first Sikh Guru had any impact of *Jat* culture? The source *Guru Kian Sakhian* says that in 1752 *Bikrami* i.e. 1695 on *Baisakhi* day and in 1754 *Bikrami* i.e.1697, Guru Gobind Singh ordered *sangat* including men and women to wear *Kara* of *Sarbloh* in their right hand. Three sources had stressed upon the relationship of *kachchera* with the *Khalsa* tradition. They are: (i) Rattan Singh Bhangoo in his work *Sri Gur Panth Prakash* (ii) the author of *Prem Sumarg* (iii) James Skinner in his work *Tarishul'I Aqwam*. It is appeared from the source *Malwa Desh Rattan Di Sakhi Pothi* that Guru Gobind Singh also gave much importance and ordered his Sikhs to use *kangha* daily. Furthermore, Guru Gobind Singh's purpose of providing the swords to his Sikhs also reflected from this source.

About the *rahit*, Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh do not write much. They only mentioned, what Guru Gobind Singh prescribed in the *rahit*. But W.H. McLeod questioned particularly three items of *rahit*. The first was Guru Gobind Singh bans on using of tobacco, the second was Guru Gobind Singh forbidden on the intercourse with Muslim women. The third was Guru Gobind Singh banned to eat *halal* meat. He proposed that all this was not part of 1699 *Khalsa* institution but

of the 18th century. These were appeared in Sikh *rahit* due to Sikhs enmity with Muslims in 18th century. According to Sikh scholars, the use of tobacco was banned to save good health and physical vigour to keep *Khalsa* active for and in battle field. It should be noted that it was not only Guru Gobind Singh who had in 1699 during *Khalsa* ceremony banned the use of tobacco, but Guru Tegh Bahadur was also against its use. This is appeared in the source *Gur Partap Suraj Granth*. Guru Gobind Singh banned sexual intercourse with Muslim women due to Guru Gobind Singh desire to outlaw revenge against them. It is the result of Guru Gobind Singh's injunction that Qazi Nur Mohammad and Ghulam Muhi-ud-Din praised the moral values of the Sikhs. From the source *Amarnama* it is appeared that Guru Gobind Singh ordered that do not kill the animal in *halal (kutha)* way. We have figured out that prior to the arrival of the Muhammadans in India, the Hindus also who ate meat, used *jhatka*. But the use of *kutha* was started due to the religious fanaticism of the Mohammadans. Guru Gobind Singh very well knew that real religion originated into fearless heart alone. Consequently, he prohibited this daily compulsion, which was being practiced on masses through their food by this injunction.

The relationship between religion and politics in Sikhism is a matter of debate among the historians. Many Sikh historians have justified in their writings the inseparable mixture of religion and politics in Sikh religion. J.S. Ahluwalia, Dharam Singh, G.S. Dhillon and Sher Singh had come in this category. But it is true that Sikh Gurus had not advocated systematic theory of polity. However, attentive study of Guru Nanak's compositions in *Guru Granth Sahib* reflected that awakening towards political oppression was started by Guru Nanak. The Sikh Gurus were against the religious-political oppression, because they undoubtedly understand that no religion could take growth under any kind of religious, social or political oppression. Both the Sikh historians had traced the political awakening to the days of Guru Nanak. In this context, Ganda Singh used the term political consciousness. In his evidence, he used Guru Nanak's *Bani*. But Harbans Singh did not do so. Both underscored that Guru Nanak clearly knew the political conditions of his time. And also Guru Nanak protested against the political abuses at that time. But W.H. McLeod considered that Guru Nanak's hymns that criticized the contemporary political conditions were motivated by spiritual objectives. Both the Sikh historians accepted that there was a meeting between Guru Nanak and Babar in 1521. W.H. McLeod does not accept this.

Contrary to him, there are other sources from which the opinions of selected Sikh historians are justified. These are: *Puratan Janamsakhi*, *Bhai Bala Janamsakhi*, the author of *Ibratnama* Mufti Ali-ud-Din and *Chahar Gulshan (1759-1760)* by Chaturman.

Both the Sikh historians accepted Guru Arjan as the first martyr of Sikh faith. But W.H. McLeod used the word death instead of martyrdom. For him this is Sikh tradition or the Sikh sources that mentioned it as martyrdom. Both the Sikh historians quoted Jahangir's autobiography to point out that Jahangir's religious fanaticism was responsible for Guru Arjan's martyrdom. They also noted the role played by Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi in this regard. W.H. McLeod's perspective in this regard was totally different from the Sikh historians. Furthermore, he suggested that the entry of the *Jats* in Sikh *Panth* was responsible for Guru Arjan's death in Mughal custody. For this statement he does not quote a primary source even as the secondary. But from Jahangir's autobiography, it is cleared that political motives of Jahangir were behind Guru Arjan's martyrdom. It should be noted that if the entry of *Jats* in Sikh *Panth* had roused the fears of the Mughal authorities. Then why this was not did with the sects of Prithi Chand and Handalias too who had also their *Jat* followers.

W.H. McLeod had mentioned Guru Hargobind's *Miri-Piri* policy in detail but with different perspective than the selected Sikh historians. Both the Sikh historians hold opinion that the use of arms in *Miri-Piri* policy was for the help of weak and helpless. According to W.H. McLeod, it was not Guru Hargobind who had sanctioned the use of arms but it was due to the impact of *Jat* cultural patterns and also due to the economic problems that were present at that time. He did not elaborate on the factor how economic problems were responsible for this. W.H. McLeod assumed that during Guru Arjan period, the *Jats* were in large numbers in Sikh religion. But he does not provide any data related to the numbering of *Jats* in Sikh *Panth* at that time. However, it should be noted that in Bhai Gurdas' *varan* that the *Khatri*s were 31.3% and *Jats* were only 3.5%. There is no data to support his theory that the *Jats* were the leading component among the Sikhs when Guru Hargobind's became the sixth Sikh Guru. W.H. McLeod had seen Guru Hargobind's *Miri-Piri* policy against the teachings of Guru Nanak. However, it could be traced from the *Bani* of Guru Nanak. Nevertheless the sources such as *varan* of Bhai Gurdas, *Ramakli ki Var* and Guru Gobind Singh's *Bachittar Nattak* had confirmed the unity of Sikh

thought, conduct and practice. Both the Sikh historians do not tie political motivation to Guru Hargobind's *Miri-Piri* policy or his battles. But it was owing to in self-defense and against tyranny. But W.H. McLeod called the battles of Guru Hargobind as skirmish and conflicts. In other words, he considered all activities of Guru Hargobind' happened due to the entry of *Jats* in Sikh *Panth*.

Both the selected Sikh scholars described the contribution of Guru Tegh Bahadur in the spread of Sikh community. But W.H. McLeod had not given much space to the period of Guru Tegh Bahadur in his writings. Again, he used the word death, instead of martyrdom. He doubts the arrival of Kashmiri Brahmins for protection to Guru Tegh Bahadur. Harbans Singh had rejected this posture by his works: (i) *The Heritage of the Sikhs* (ii) *Guru Tegh Bahadur* and Ganda Singh through his research paper titled as *The Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Studies in Historical Setting (The Panjab Past and Present, 1977)*.

According to Ganda Singh, Guru Gobind Singh awakened the Sikhs towards greater political consciousness. Further, he unified the Sikh masses into national brotherhood also. He argued that Guru Gobind Singh had no political ambitious behind the creation of the *Khalsa*. Sikh historians clearly confessed that the battles of Guru Gobind Singh were not for any territorial expansions and gains. In fact, these were against the religious intolerance and also political iniquities of that period. This is also corroborated from Guru Gobind Singh's *Zafarnama*. Both the selected Sikh historians argued that these battles were defensive. On the other hand, W.H. McLeod called these battles as defeat of Guru Gobind Singh. However, the opinions of Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh are supported by Bhagat Lakshman Singh also.

Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod had given very short space to the history of Banda Singh Bahadur in their writings. They are silent about the early political career of Banda Singh. In fact, W.H. McLeod believed that what was written on Banda Singh is based on traditions. Doing so, he ignored that Ganda Singh produced a biography of Banda Singh based on contemporary and near contemporary Persian source. Ganda Singh accepted Banda Singh the greatest hero, greatest martyr, one of the most remarkable men of India of 18th century, the man who had laid the foundation of the Sikh empire in 1710 and the first Sikh political leader. But W.H. McLeod termed Banda Singh's struggle as defeat, uprising and disturbance. Unlike

Ganda Singh, Banda Singh's struggle for independence had assumed by W.H. McLeod as peasant revolt. However, Ganda Singh had argued that peasantry was not the part of Banda Singh's army. In fact, they joined Banda Singh army for loot and to take revenge on the local officials of that time. For instance, Ganda Singh stated that during Banda Singh's invasion on Samana and Sadaura, the peasantry joined his army as an opportunity and as favorable chance.

W.H. McLeod did not write about the battles of Banda Singh. On the other hand, Harbans Singh had only discussed about the battle of Sirhind and Gurdas Nagal in brief. But Ganda Singh discussed these in detail. Ganda Singh considered the conquest of Sarhind as a signal of Sikh rising. This filled in the Sikhs the spirit of independence. Harbans Singh thinks that after his victory of Sarhind, Banda Singh laid the establishment of Sikh sovereignty in the land of the Punjab. Ganda Singh praised Banda Singh for setting up his capital at the fort Mukhlispur and renamed it Lohgarh. A work in Persian and completed in 1722 under the title *Fatuhatnama-i-Samdi*, refers to the construction of Lohgarh. Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod remain silent in this regard. Both the Sikh historians discuss about the coins of Banda Singh. Both does not mention the year, when Banda Singh struck his coins for the first time. But we are told that Banda Singh struck his coins between the years 1710 to 1713 with the idea of Sikh sovereignty in the Punjab. Ganda Singh refused to call Banda Singh's struggle communal strife. Furthermore, for him, it was political struggle. He stressed the point that Banda Singh had no ill-will against the Muslims or Mughal religion. A report of *Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla* in 1711 had referred to Banda Singh's tolerance of Muslims- he allowed them to read *Khutba* and *Namaz*. It is reported that five thousand Muslims had joined his army and its march.

The differences regarding approach between the Sikh historians and non-Sikh historian W.H. McLeod are many but also deep. Ganda Singh, though by religion was a Sikh, yet his approach towards Sikh history was not biased. It is well known fact that his major interest was in the collection of primary sources related to Punjab history particularly Sikh history, but he used them in his writings with critical approach. The major focus in his writings was objectivity that was based on rigorous inquiry. However, Ganda Singh approached the Sikh history with the two viewpoints (1) *Babania Kahania Put Sut Karein* (stories of the wise turn progenies into able inheritors): This has been oral way of looking at reality or truth in Punjab. Ganda

Singh used it as his method of History writing. (2) Professor Puran Singh's ideal was: *Punjab Jinda Gura De Naam Te*. It found favor with Ganda Singh while exploring Sikh history and religion.

But unlike Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh was more narrative in his historical approach than acting as-analytic. Unlike Ganda Singh, he has been largely based on traditions in his writings. But this does not mean that he had followed traditional approach in his writings. Actually, he approached them with historian's objective eyes. As a matter of fact, he followed a mediating position. On the one side, he values modern historiography. On the other hand, he does not dismiss the traditions in his writings.

Some scholars believed that W.H. McLeod had a biased approach. His studies had been considered by Trilochan Singh as prejudiced. For this scholar, his writings are either hearsay stories or scandal mongering gossip. He called W.H. McLeod's methods and theories in his writings are based on particularly skepticism and conjecture too. Another Sikh scholar Gurdev Singh considered his approach wholly negative. However, W.H. McLeod has been a western historian who had approached the Sikh religion like a man who had no spiritual sense. In truth, he belongs to the skeptical camp. He takes pride in being a skeptical historian. The result of this was that he doubted and questioned the established facts of history. In his whole writings, his approach regarding the development of Sikh religion was not in favor of the purposeful aim of the Sikh Gurus, but in terms of influence of various factors such as social, cultural, economic and historical environment. He termed the views of those scholars who believed that the subsequent development in Sikh religion after the first Sikh Guru Guru Nanak was in total unity with his teachings (This view was also accepted by Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh) as orthodox Sikh interpretation. However, Harbans Singh stated that each Sikh Guru contribute a new national trait that was rehearsed with the influence of the changing times and environment. Ganda Singh accepts that Sikh *Panth* passed through various but regular stages of evolution during the time of Guru Nanak's nine successor Sikh Gurus. But he argued that it was the teachings of Guru Nanak that were worked as corner stone for the religious, social and political structure of the Sikh Nation.

The major difference between these three historians is rooted in methodology. Ganda Singh treated History as an objective narrative and it was never History unless it was truth. For him, objective history can be achieved only through the objective approach that must be free from all biases, individual, group or ideological. Though Harbans Singh values modern historiography but his method does not allow him to reject the myths and also legend in history. He is the least worried about the chronological order. W.H. McLeod called his own methodology as emphatically historical. Furthermore, he had grounded his research experience in New Zealand where he was student and in the *School of Oriental and African Studies* in London where he worked as a Research Fellow. As a result his approach toward Sikh history was based on western historical methodology.

In the end, we agree that every scholar discussed in this research work has his own motive, method and interpretations of the past. On the major aspects of social-cultural and religious-political awakening of the Sikhs, the difference between selected Sikh historians Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh and non-Sikh western historian W.H. McLeod are many but also deep. These differences were influenced by various factors. The result of this was the difference between their sources and methodology. Consequently, they had different approach towards Sikh history and religion. Many established facts of Sikh history and religion had been described as Sikh tradition by W.H. McLeod. The reason behind this was due to the fact that every religion also deals with a reality that could not be evidently discernible to the outsider or uninitiated. The inner meaning of any religion can be understood only through its participation and also by following its prescribed path and discipline. Again, religions need to be observed through the two-fold lenses of faith and history. The single lens of history is insufficient, while that of faith alone repeatedly clouds the findings.

GLOSSARY

- *Adi Granth*: The *Guru Granth Sahib*; the sacred scripture of the Sikhs that was compiled by Guru Arjan in 1604.
- *Akal Takhat*: The supreme authority seat of the Sikhs, situated at Amritsar in front of *Harimandir Sahib*.
- *Amrit*: literally ‘nectar’, water used for baptism in the initiation ceremony of the *Khalsa* institution that was introduced by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699.
- *Bairagi*: A Hindu religious mendicant; A Vaishnavite *sadhu*.
- *Baoli*: A large masonry or brick well with steps leading down to the water.
- *Baisakhi*: The first day of the month of *Baisakh*, an important festival of rural Punjab, celebrating the advent of harvesting season, generally falling into the second week of April.
- *Bandai Khalsa*: Followers of Banda Singh Bahadur.
- *Bhai*: Brother a title applied to Sikhs of acknowledged learning and piety.
- *Brahmin*: The highest priestly caste among the Hindus.
- *Chuhra*: A caste of scavenger; sweeper.
- *Chamar*: One who skins animals, dyes the skin and makes object from it; a class of leather workers.
- *Dasam Granth*: Holy book containing the writings of Guru Gobind Singh the tenth Sikh Guru of the Sikhs.
- *Dasvand*: Tithe; one –tenth of total income which a Sikh usually offers to the *Guru Guru Granth Sahib*.
- *Dharamsal*: Earlier form of *Gurdwara*; the door of the Guru; the place of religious congregation.
- *Dhirmalia*: A follower of Dhir Mal, elder brother of Guru Har Rai and grandson of Guru Hargobind.
- *Diwan*: Congregation; Religious gatherings.

- *Diwali*: Festival of lights that is observed all over India on *amavasya*, the last day of the dark half of the lunar month of *Kartika* (October-November).
- *Doab*: A tract of land between two rivers.
- *Devi*: A Hindu goddess.
- *Granthi*: Sikh priest who reads *Guru Granth Sahib*; A functionary in charge of a *Gurdwara*.
- *Gurmaryada*: The Prescriptions of life-cycle rituals according to Sikh Guru's teachings.
- *Gyani*: A Sikh theologian.
- *Gurmukhi*: Literally from the mouth of the Guru; Name for the script writing Punjabi.
- *Gurbani*: Hymns of *Guru Granth Sahib*.
- *Gurpuarb*: Anniversaries pertains to the Guru; festivals or occasions related with the Guru.
- *Gurdwara*: Sikh Temple; Sikh Shrine.
- *Guru*: Spiritual Guide; Teacher.
- *Gurmat*: The Guru's precept.
- *Harimandir Sahib*: The temple of God; the Golden Temple.
- *Halal*: Flesh of an animal killed in accordance with Muslim rituals.
- *Hukamnama*: Letter of Command; A Decree issued either by Guru or from the holy seats of Sikh authority.
- *Jatha*: Band of devotees.
- *Janamsakhis*: Hagiographic narrative of life of the Sikh Gurus, particularly Guru Nanak.
- *Jathedar*: Group leader.
- *Jagirdar*: Lord of a feudal estate.
- *Jagirdari*: Feudalism; Feudal system.

- *Jat*: Name of an agricultural class of Northwestern India; members of this class; Farmer; principal landowning and cultivating group in Punjab.
- *Jhatka*: Slaughtering of an animal with a single stroke of the blade.
- *Kesadhari*: A Sikh who retains the *kesh* (uncut hair).
- *Karah Parsad*: Sacramental food.
- *Khalsa*: The Sikh order of brotherhood established by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699.
- *Khanda*: Double-edge sword.
- *Khande De Pahul*: The *Khalsa* rite of initiation in which water sweetened with soluble sweets is stirred with a two-edged sword.
- *Kirtan*: The Singing of hymns, particularly from *Guru Granth Sahib*.
- *Kirpan*: Sword worn as one of the Five *Ks*.
- *Kachchera*: A pair of breeches, which must not extend below the knees, worn as one of the Five *Ks*.
- *Kangha*: Wooden comb, worn as one of the Five *Ks*.
- *Kara*: Steel wrist-ring worn on the right wrist as one of the Five *Ks*.
- *Landa*: A script used by the accountants in Punjab.
- *Langar*: Free community kitchen started by Guru Nanak.
- *Lavan*: Hymns composed by Guru Ramdas for the solemnizing of marriage.
- *Masand*: High seat; devoted followers of Guru.
- *Manji*: Literally a cot; A Sikh preaching-centre established by Guru Amardas.
- *Marhi*: A monument erected in memory of an important Hindu; normally at a burning *ghat*.
- *Miri- Piri*: Doctrine that Guru Hargobind Sahib instituted. *Miri* means temporal power and *piri* means the spiritual authority.
- *Nam*: The essence and support of the whole word.
- *Nath*: *Jogis* known for his rigorous discipline.

- *Nanak-Panthi*: The followers of Guru Nanak, the early Sikh community.
- *Nirgun*: Formless; non-incarnated.
- *Panth*: The Sikh community.
- *Pangat*: A row in a Sikh *Langar* without any consideration of a caste or creed.
- *Panj Piare*: Five beloved ones created by Guru Gobind Singh.
- *Pauri*: Stanza of a *vaar*.
- *Puratan*: One of the extant collections of *Janamsakhis* anecdotes.
- *Pardah*: Veiling and seclusion of women.
- *Rahit*: The code of belief and conduct of the *Khalsa*.
- *Rehatnama*: A recorded version of the *Rahit*.
- *Sabha*: Society; Association.
- *Sehajdhari*: A Sikh who neither accepts baptism into the *Khalsa* nor observes its code of discipline.
- *Sangat*: Assembly of holy persons; holy congregation around the *Guru Granth Sahib*.
- *Shradh*: Offerings of food and clothes with reverence or in remembrance of one's ancestors.
- *Sitala*: Goddess who controls or inflicts small-pox.
- *Sufi*: A member of one of the Muslim mystical orders.
- *Sati*: A custom in which a widow was burnt at the cremation pyre of her dead husband.
- *Tat Khalsa*: The true *Khalsa* or *Pure Khalsa*.
- *Updeshak*: Preacher.
- *Zimidari*: An estate; Landlordism.

SIKH AWAKENING IN THE HISTORICAL WRITINGS OF GANDASINGH, HARBANS SINGH AND W.H.MCLEOD

Introduction

In *Japji Sahib* the term Sikh at one place meant as the “instruction” of the Guru. But also, at another place used as the “disciples” of the Guru. Factually, the followers of Guru Nanak had come to be called Sikhs in his lifespan. The awakening word is defined by *Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* as: “1. a rousing from sleep 2. (a) a rousing from inactivity, sloth, or indifference (b) a revival of religion and 3. a coming into consciousness or awareness”. Thus the term Sikh awakening has been used in this research work with two purposes. The first in the context of Sikh Gurus contribution in social-cultural and religious-political awakening of the Sikhs as reflected in the historical writings of Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod. In India, a new awakening was started by Guru Nanak by founding Sikh religion. All the Sikh Gurus contribution in the field of social-cultural and religious-political awakening was distinct and extraordinary. The Sikh Gurus very well knew the fact that value and ideas cannot become practical without they are institutionalized. As a matter of fact, a religion develops through its institutions. Consequently, the Sikh Gurus started various institutions such as *sangat, pangat, langar, dharmsala, maji, masand, miri-piri* and above all *Khalsa* to generate social-cultural and religious-political awakening among the Sikhs. The second was in the context of the awakening activities of the Singh Sabha movement that motivated the Sikh scholars to write about their glorious past with new ideology.

The Singh Sabha movement was started in 1873 with the main objectives to restore Sikhism to its pristine purity. In other words, their task was to rediscover the pure doctrine. The wide-awake intellectual leaders of this movement initiated to awake the Sikh masses from their deep slumber. They generated an awakening for religious and social reforms in the society. The first necessity of the time was to educate and enlighten the Sikhs in order to maintain their identity. Thus, they devoted their time and money in the publications of various books, magazines, tracts, handbills and newspapers. Moreover, history writing became the essential tool for the intellectual members of Singh Sabha movement. Thus, a large amount of literature that was produced by the Sikh historians was impacted by the Singh Sabha ideology. They also made

efforts to collect contemporary source material, analyses it critically and re – write Sikh history from Sikh point of view. This is a common fact that Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh were influenced by the modern progress and awakening activities of the Singh Sabha movement especially its educational and literary activities. Obviously, both of them were inspired to write Sikh history as a legacy of this movement. But the another historian in this research study is William Hew McLeod, though he was not a Sikh but he had been western historian of Sikh history, religion and society. Like Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh, he also belonged to the twentieth century. These historians were also contemporary to each other and in truth also good friends. But they had differed perspective on Sikh religion and history. Both Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh had started their work under the inspiration principally from the Singh Sabha movement that had leavened the Sikh community, and also generated among its members a new interest in the research and study of Sikh history. But W.H. McLeod was indebted for his interest in historical research to his western historical methodology.

This research work is divided into six chapters. The first chapter titled as “Introduction”. In this chapter, first of all, a brief introduction of the term Sikh awakening and how this was related to the research topic is given. A brief outline of Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh’s and W.H.McLeod’s life is also discussed. Instead of it, primary sources and research methodology is also discussed. Review of literature is also given, in order to understand what was done before this research proposal and how this is different from them. The second chapter is “Means and Intellectual Activities of the Singh Sabha Movement”. In this chapter, the historical background before the birth of Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh is discussed. This background was related to the period of Singh Sabha movement, whose main motive was the search for Sikh identity and greatness. To achieve this goal intellectual member of the Singh Sabha movement used a number of means like *Amrit parchar*, newspapers, tract societies, *updeshaks*, *jathas*, *diwans* and *gurpurbs*. These awakening activities of Singh Sabha movement awakened the Sikh scholars to write about their glorious past with a new approach. It was under the impact of this awakening that a *Singh Sabha School of Thought* was generated. Ganda Singh and Harbans came in this category. Third chapter titled as “Life, Motives and the Works of Selected Historians”. This chapter discussed the early life of Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod. This included

the information of their birth, family, education, marriage and career. This was given due to it is well known fact that every historian belongs not to the past but to its present age. Instead of their life, those factors were found that influenced the selected historians to write about Sikh history. This chapter studied that the selected historians had different motives to write Sikh history. The fourth chapter is "Social and Cultural Awakening of the Sikhs". This chapter, find out the social-cultural awakening of the Sikhs from Guru Nanak up to Guru Gobind Singh period as seen by Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H.McLeod. First of all, this chapter has discussed the meaning and definition of the word "social and cultural". The social-cultural condition of the society before the birth of Sikh religion is also discussed but in brief. This chapter underlined that *sangat, pangat, langar, miri-piri* and the *Khalsa* institution played a considerable role in shaping the socio-cultural life of the Sikh community. The fifth chapter is "Religious and Political Awakening of the Sikhs". This chapter discussed the religious and political awakening of the Sikhs from the period of Guru Nanak to Banda Singh Bahadur as seen by the selected historians. This chapter discussed the meaning and definition of the word religion and political in brief and how religion and politics are related in the Sikh religion. The Sixth chapter is on "Historiographical and Comparative study of Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod". This chapter discussed the similarities and dissimilarities on the issues of socio-cultural and religious-political awakening of the Sikhs in the writings of Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H.McLeod. For this, their findings were compared with primary or near contemporary sources. Furthermore, the selected historians used different approach, methodology and source material from each other. The last chapter of the thesis is entitled conclusion. This is based on the findings of this research study.

The main motivation of the Singh Sabha movement was to establish the Sikh identity and to awaken Sikh masses about the moral teachings of the Sikh Gurus. It was an effort to generate social-cultural and religious awakening among the Sikh community. For this, they used a number of means such as *Amrit parchar*, use of newspapers, handbills, tract societies, *updeshaks, jathas, gurburbs* and religious *diwans*. By all these methods or means, they motivated the Sikhs to shed their un-Sikh practices that had crept in Sikh society. The Sikh masses were advised to understand and follow the moral teachings of *Guru Granth Sahib*. The awakening activities of

the Singh Sabha reformers had also influenced the educated Sikhs to write about and popularize the glorious past and heroic thought. This was also the historical background relevant for the emergence of numerous Sikh intellectuals including Karam Singh, Ganda Singh, Teja Singh and Harbans Singh. Inspired by modern or western education they stood for Sikh identity independent of the Hindus.

There are a number of factors that motivated Ganda Singh towards Sikh history. First, he had some interest in poetry while he was young. This was reflected from his poem entitled *Sanu Khich Hai Ik Mahboob Wali, Asi Gali Prem Di Chalian Ni*. Even, he had a pen-name *Kewal*. But soon he felt his passion for Sikh history and left this surname. Secondly, his father Sardar Jawala Singh was well known about the subject of history and maternal grandfather were part of military life during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time. Thirdly, the tale of the 18th centuries Sikh heroes and their sacrifices did inspire him. Fourthly, two personalities from the Government High School, Hoshiarpur, aroused his interest in the subject of history. The first was Headmaster of the school Jemaj Marr and the second was Master Bhagwan Das. Fifthly, Sir Arnold T. Wilson aroused his interest in History writing and bibliographical literature.

However, he was much inspired by Karam Singh 'Historian' also. He learnt from him the significance of empirical evidence. He was motivated by Karam Singh 'Historian's open minded research also. In addition to the work of Karam Singh, Ganda Singh was inspired by the novels of Bhai Vir Singh such as *Sundari* and *Bijai Singh*. Consequently, he motivated to write on 18th century Punjab history. Late 19th century awakening activities of the Singh Sabha movement and rise of communalism in North India and writings of Bhagat Lakshman Singh also develop his curiosity towards Sikh history. His motive was to write Sikh history with a "scientific approach". In other words, his chief motive was research the history of Sikhs and primary sources related to it. He wants to dispose the historical controversies related to Sikh Gurus and Sikh history and to give objective account on the basis of the primary sources.

Harbans Singh's attention towards Sikh history was originated due to these reasons. First, it was the influences of his father Ram Lal, and of his mother Roop Kaur. His father Ram Lal had interest in literary works and his mother Roop Kaur had deep devotion to Sikh Gurus. In fact, she was religious lady. Harbans Singh had his B.A. and M.A. degrees in English literature. No wonder, if he devoted himself to Sikh studies. Second, scholars such as Kartar Singh and Darshan Singh in addition to G.S. Talib, Fauja Singh and Ganda Singh remained in touch with

his research. Third, significantly, like Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh was also the product of the Khalsa College, Amritsar. Fourth, he was influenced by Bhai Vir Singh the charismatic personality of Singh Sabha movement. Fifth, moreover, Harbans Singh was highly influenced by the ideology of *Tat Khalsa*, so he wrote Sikh history from new point of view represented by the slogan *Ham Hindu Nahin*. His motive was to encourage Punjabi studies, Sikh history and also the Sikh studies. Furthermore, he wanted to write the biographies of Sikh Gurus from traditional sources, for those who were influenced by the modern historiography.

The factors that influenced on W.H. McLeod to write on Sikh history were different than the selected Sikh historians. He was not fascinated to Sikh history from his young age in New Zealand. But it was possible, when he came to Punjab as Christian missionary of Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. During his early employment in Punjab as an English teacher at the Christian Boys Higher Secondary School at Kharar, he felt the need to change the direction of his life. He wants to serve in Baring Union Christian College at Batala. This was possible if he develops as a historian. Thus he finally chooses to work on Sikh history as a whole. According to him, his motive was to make understanding of the educated western peoples with the Sikh religion and Sikh masses through his writings. Radical Sikh scholars considered him to destroy the Sikh tradition. Gurdev Singh and Trilochan Singh condemned him due to his missionary interests. But W.H. McLeod denied it in 1966 that he and his wife were not Christians. Despite his disclaims about his belief in Christian religion, we are told that in 1998, he had joined the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand.

Sikh social-cultural awakening was traced to Guru Nanak by Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh. Both praised the role of *sangat*, *pangat* and *langar* institutions in social-cultural awakening. Both accepted that Guru Nanak gave women equality with men in religious and social matters. For this, they based themselves on Guru Nanak's hymn *Asa Di Var*. W.H. McLeod had also quoted this source, yet he argued that Guru Nanak gave them equality only in "spiritual liberation". Nonetheless *B40 Janamsakhi* makes it clear that the path started by Guru Nanak was open to women also. On the matter of Guru Nanak's protest against caste system, W.H. McLeod's understanding is radically different from the selected Sikh historians. Both the Sikh historians accepted Guru Nanak wants to abolish the caste system and quoted Guru Nanak's hymns to support their views. Though, W.H. McLeod had also quoted Guru Nanak's hymns in this regard. Nevertheless, he assumed that Guru Nanak was against it, because it was stoppage to

spiritual salvation of the masses. However, Bhai Gurdas remarked in his *Var 1, Pauri 23* that Guru Nanak converted the four castes into one caste. Furthermore, Sikhs of the Guru Nanak's period do not believe in caste classification.

Both the Sikh historian assumed social awakening from the *langar* institution. Both agreed that it was started by Guru Nanak and helped in the eradication of caste system. W.H. McLeod was confused about the *langar* system and its functioning. For him, it was functioning during Guru Amardas period. But the source *Puratan Janamsakhi*, *Kanhaiya Lal* in his *Tarikh-i-Punjab* and *Saroop Das Bhalla* in his *Mahima Prakash* agreed that *langar* institution was started by Guru Nanak. Moreover, Guru Nanak himself underscores the importance of *langar* institution in his own hymns

Both Gyani Gyan Singh and Saroop Das Bhalla maintained that *Gurmukhi* was invented by Guru Angad. Unlike them, the author of *Chahar-Bagh-i-Panjab*, Ganesh Das Bedehra and Kavi Kankan had traced *Gurmukhi* to Guru Nanak. This view was also accepted by the selected historians. However, Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both discuss the impact of this language on the Sikh society. But W.H. McLeod remains silent in this regard. Harbans Singh assumed its impact on literary culture. According to Ganda Singh, it helped in making independent the Sikhs from the *Brahmin* priests. The statements of Ganda Singh are justified with references from Muhsin Fani's *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*. This source stated that the Sikhs had no favor for the language of Hindus i.e. Sanskrit.

W.H. McLeod's main stress was upon Guru Amardas period after discussing Guru Nanak in his writings. All the selected historians accepted that Guru Amardas opposed the evil practice of *satti*. Both the Sikh historians agreed that Guru Amardas was also against the *pardah* practice. W.H. McLeod remains silent in this regard. However, Ganda Singh does not refer to any source. Harbans Singh had quoted Saroop Das Bhalla's *Mahima Prakash* in this regard. Both the Sikh historians discuss the social awakening brought by *langar* institution in Guru Amardas times. But unlike them, W.H. McLeod assumed that Guru Amardas borrowed the *langar* institution from the *sufis*. Factually speaking this practice was started by Guru Nanak in the Sikh religion. Both the Sikh historian discusses the introduction of using Guru's hymns by Guru Amardas on social ceremonies like marriage and death. Their opinions were also authenticated from Sundar Das's account *Ramkali Sad* in which instructions of Guru Amardas before his demise are given

and Guru Amardas' own masterpiece *Anand Sahib*. Both are incorporated in *Guru Granth Sahib*.

Both the Sikh historians discussed Guru Ramdas' role in the formation of Amritsar and its significance to Sikhism. All the three historians discuss about the appointments of *masands* by Guru Ramdas and their role in preaching Sikh religion. Guru Ramdas's great contribution of introducing "*ghorian*" and "*lavan*" remained unnoticed by all the three selected historians. This was in truth Guru Ramdas's great contribution to the Sikh masses towards distinct social-cultural awakening.

Again, all the selected historians discuss during the Guru Arjan period, the role of *Darbar Sahib* and *Guru Granth Sahib* in the social-cultural awakening of the Sikhs. However the Sikh historians stressed on the point that these institutions helped the Sikhs to free themselves from the Hindus. W.H. McLeod also accepted the necessity of *Guru Granth Sahib* in the customs of the Sikhs and its contribution in the unity of Sikh *Panth*. However, these scholars did not pay attention to the role of Guru Hargobind in the evolution of awakening.

Ganda Singh and W.H. McLeod did refer very briefly to the period of Guru Har Rai and Guru Harkrishan than Harbans Singh. Again both remain silent about Guru Tegh Bahadur's role in social-cultural awakening. However, Harbans Singh stressed that Guru Tegh Bahadur ordered his Sikhs to abandon the practice of *Sakhi Sarvar*. Attar Singh the author of *Malwa Desh Rattan Di Sakhi Pothi* also mentioned this development.

All the selected historians had widely taken up the inauguration of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. But they had taken different approaches. Ganda Singh wrote that Guru Gobind Singh wants to "build up united nation of purified ones" that would be "free from social evil". Harbans Singh also accepted this. But in W.H. McLeod's observation, it was an attempt by Guru Gobind Singh to carry on "the public struggle for justice". Obviously, he is more political in his concern than the Sikh historians. Both the Sikh historians accepted that Guru Gobind Singh instructed five beloved to wear five symbols also called five *Kakkars* namely, "*kesh, kangha, kachha, kara and kirpan*". But W.H. McLeod does not accept this. For him, these were the outcome of the course of the eighteenth century Sikh history. Moreover, according to him, all these came due to the impact of Jat cultural patterns. Sikh scholars agreed that from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, all the Sikh Gurus were *Kesadhari*. Even in *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sikh Gurus Guru Nanak and Guru Arjan praised the beauty of God by saying that His hair is long and

also beautiful. Then, how it is possible that the custom which was present in the Sikh *Panth* from the first Sikh Guru had any impact of *Jat* culture? The source *Guru Kian Sakhian* says that in 1752 *Bikrami* i.e. 1695 on *Baisakhi* day and in 1754 *Bikrami* i.e.1697 Guru Gobind Singh ordered *sangat* including men and women to wear *Kara* of *Sarbloh* in their right hand. Three sources had stressed upon the relationship of *kachchera* with the Khalsa tradition. They are: (i) Rattan Singh Bhangoo in his work *Sri Gur Panth Prakash* (ii) the author of *Prem Sumarg* (iii) James Skinner in his work *Tarishul'I Aqwam*. It is appeared from the source *Malwa Desh Rattan Di Sakhi Pothi* that Guru Gobind Singh also gave much importance and ordered his Sikhs to use *kangha* daily. Furthermore, Guru Gobind Singh's purpose of providing the swords to his Sikhs also reflected from this source.

The difference between the Sikhs and non-Sikh scholars about the Khalsa *Rahit* was also deep particularly about the use of tobacco. According to Sikh scholars, it was banned to save good health and physical vigour to keep Khalsa active for and in the battle field. But W.H. McLeod had raised objections to the ban on the use of tobacco and ban on contact with Muslim women. Harbans Singh gives reference of Guru Gobind Singh injunction to the Sikhs not to "think another woman" apart from for his own wife. Ganda Singh remains silent in this regard. Khushwant Singh stated that it was did by Guru Gobind Singh due to that Guru Gobind Singh wants to banned revenge against Muslim women.

Both the Sikh historians had traced the political awakening to the days of Guru Nanak. In this context, Ganda Singh used the term "political consciousness". In his evidence, he used Guru Nanak's *Bani*. But Harbans Singh did not do so. Both underscored that Guru Nanak clearly knows the political conditions of his time. And also Guru Nanak protested against the political abuses at that time. But W.H. McLeod considered that Guru Nanak's hymn that criticized the contemporary political conditions are motivated by spiritual objectives. Both the Sikh historians accepted that there was a meeting between Guru Nanak and Babur in 1521. W.H. McLeod does not accept this. Contrary to him, there are other sources from which the opinions of selected Sikh historians are justified. These are: *Bhai Bala Janamsakhi*, the author of *Ibratnama* Mufti Ali-ud-Din, *Chahar Gulshan (1759-1760)* by Chaturman.

Unlike the selected Sikh historians, W.H. McLeod did not discuss in detail the martyrdom of Guru Arjan. But he had mentioned Guru Hargobind's *Miri-Piri* policy. Both the Sikh historians hold opinion that the use of arms in *Miri-Piri* policy was for the help of weak and

helpless. According to W.H. McLeod, it was not Guru Hargobind who had sanctioned the use of arms but it was due to the impact of “Jat cultural patterns” and also due to the “economic problems” that were present at that time. He did not elaborate on the factor how “economic problems” were responsible for this. W.H. McLeod assumed that during Guru Arjan period, the Jats were in large numbers in Sikh religion. But he does not provide any data related to the numbering of Jats in Sikh Panth at that time. W.H. McLeod had seen Guru Hargobind’s *Miri Piri* policy against the teachings of Guru Nanak. However, it could be traced from the *Bani* of Guru Nanak and *Varan* of Bhai Gurdas. Both the Sikh historian’s do not tie a political motivation to Guru Hargobind’s *Miri-Piri* policy or his battles. But it was owing to in self defence and against tyranny. But W.H. McLeod called the battles of Guru Hargobind as “skirmish” and “conflicts”. In other words, he considered all activities of Guru Hargobind happened due to the entry of *Jats* in Sikh *Panth*. Both the selected Sikh scholars described the contribution of Guru Tegh Bahadur in the spread of Sikh community. But W.H. McLeod had not given much space to the period of Guru Tegh Bahadur in his writings. He used the word “death”, instead of martyrdom. He doubts the arrival of Kashmiri Brahmins for protection to Guru Tegh Bahadur. Harbans Singh had rejected this posture by his works: (i) *The Heritage of the Sikhs* (ii) *Guru Tegh Bahadur* and Ganda Singh through his research paper titled as *The Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Studies in Historical Setting (The Panjab Past and Present, 1977)*.

According to Ganda Singh, Guru Gobind Singh awakened the Sikhs towards “greater political consciousness”. Further, Guru Gobind Singh unified the Sikh masses into national brotherhood also. He argued that Guru Gobind Singh had no political ambitious behind the creation of the Khalsa. Sikh historians clearly confessed that the battles of Guru Gobind Singh were not for any territorial expansions and gains. In fact, these were against the religious intolerance and also political iniquities of that period. This is also corroborated from Guru Gobind Singh’s *Zafarnama*. Both the selected Sikh historians argued that these battles were “defensive”. On the other hand, W.H. McLeod called these battles as “defeat” of Guru Gobind Singh. However, the opinions of Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh are supported by Bhagat Lakshman Singh also.

Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod had given very short space to the history of Banda Singh in their writings. They are silent about the early political career of Banda Singh. In fact, W.H. McLeod believed that what was written on Banda Singh is based on traditions. Doing so, he

ignored that Ganda Singh produced a biography of Banda Singh based on “contemporary and near contemporary Persian source”. Ganda Singh accepted Banda Singh “the greatest hero”, “greatest martyr”, “one of the most remarkable men of India of 18th century”, “the man who had laid the foundation of the Sikh empire in 1710” and “the first Sikh political leader”. But W.H. McLeod termed Banda Singh’s struggle as “defeat”, “uprising”, “disturbance”. Unlike Ganda Singh, Banda Singh’s struggle for independence had assumed by W.H. McLeod as “peasant revolt”. However, Ganda Singh argued that peasantry was not the part of Banda Singh’s army. In fact, they joined Banda Singh army for loot and to take revenge on the local officials of that time. For instance, Ganda Singh stated that during Banda Singh’s invasion on “Samana and Sadaura”, the peasantry joined his army as “an opportunity” and as “favorable chance”.

W.H. McLeod did not write about the battles of Banda Singh. On the other hand, Harbans Singh had only discussed about the battle of Sirhind and Gurdas Nagal in brief. But Ganda Singh discuss in detail. Ganda Singh considered the conquest of Sarhind as a signal of Sikh rising. This filled in the Sikhs the spirit of independence. Harbans Singh thinks that after his victory of Sarhind, Banda Singh laid the establishment of Sikh sovereignty in the land of the Punjab. Ganda Singh praised Banda Singh for setting up his capital at the fort Mukhlispur and renamed it Lohgarh. A work in Persian and completed in 1722 under the title *Fatuhatnama-i-Samdi*, refers to the construction of Lohgarh. Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod remain silent in this regard. Both the Sikh historians discuss about the coins of Banda Singh. Both does not mention the year, when Banda Singh struck his coins for the first time. But we are told that Banda Singh struck his coins between the years 1710 to 1713 with the idea of Sikh sovereignty in the Punjab.

Ganda Singh refused to call Banda Singh’s struggle “communal strife”. Furthermore, for him, it was “political struggle”. He stressed the point that Banda Singh had no ill-will against the Muslims or Mughal religion. A report of *Akhbar-i- Darbar-i-Mualla in 1711* had referred to Banda Singh’s “tolerance of Muslims- he allowed them to read *Khutba* and *Namaz*. It is reported that five thousand Muslims had joined his army and its march.”

The differences between the Sikh historians and non-Sikh historian W.H. McLeod are many but also deep. However, Ganda Singh approached the Sikh history with the two following viewpoints:

- 1) *Babania Kahania Put Sut Karein* (stories of the wise turn progenies into able inheritors): This has been oral way of looking at reality or truth in Punjab. Ganda Singh used it as his method of History writing.
- 2) Professor Puran Singh's ideal was: *Punjab Jinda Gura De NaamTe*. It found favour with Ganda Singh while exploring Sikh History and Religion.

But unlike Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh was more narrative in his historical approach than acting as-analytic. Unlike Ganda Singh, he has been largely based on traditions in his writings. But this does not mean that he had followed traditional approach in his writings. Actually, he approached them with historian's objective eyes. Significantly, D.G. Daw found him more concerned with Sikh tradition than history. As a matter of fact, he followed a mediating position. On the one side, he values modern historiography. On the other hand, he does not dismiss the traditions in his writings.

Some scholars believed that W.H. McLeod had "biased approach". His studies had been considered by Trilochan Singh as "prejudiced". For this scholar, his writings are either "hearsay stories" or "scandal mongering gossip". He called W.H. McLeod's methods and theories in his writings are based on particularly skepticism and conjecture too. Another Sikh scholar Gurdev Singh considered his approach wholly negative. However, W.H. McLeod, a western historian who had approached the Sikh religion likes a man who had no spiritual sense. In truth, he belongs to the "skeptical camp". He takes pride in being a "skeptical historian". The result of this was that he doubted and questioned the established facts of history. In his whole writings, his approach regarding the development of Sikh religion was not in favor of the purposeful aim of the Sikh Gurus, but in terms of influence of various factors such as social, cultural, economic and historical environment. He termed the views of those scholars who believed that the subsequent development in Sikh religion after the first Sikh Guru Guru Nanak was in total unity with his teachings (This view was also accepted by Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh) as "orthodox Sikh interpretation". However, Harbans Singh stated that each Sikh Guru contribute "a new national trait" that was rehearsed with the influence of the "changing times and environment". Ganda Singh accepts that Sikh *Panth* passed through "various but regular stages of evolution" during the time of Guru Nanak's nine successor Sikh Gurus. But he argued that it was the teachings of Guru Nanak that were worked as corner stone for the "religious, social and political structure of the Sikh Nation".

The major difference between these three historians is rooted in methodology. Ganda Singh treated History as an objective narrative and it was never History unless it was truth. For him, true history can be achieved only through the “objective approach” that must be “free from all biases, individual, group or ideological”. Though Harbans Singh values modern historiography but his method does not allow him to reject the myths and also legend in history. He is the least worried about the chronological order. W.H. McLeod called his own methodology as “emphatically historical”. Furthermore, he had grounded his research experience in New Zealand where he was student and in the *School of Oriental and African Studies* in London where he worked as a Research Fellow. As a result his approach toward Sikh history was based on western historical methodology.

In the end, we agree that every scholar discussed here, has his own motive, method and interpretations of the past. On the major aspects of social-cultural and religious-political awakening of the Sikhs, the difference between selected Sikh historians Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh and non Sikh western historian W.H. McLeod are many but also deep. These differences were influenced by various factors. The result of this was the difference between their sources and methodology. Consequently, they had different approach towards Sikh history and religion. Many established facts of Sikh history and religion had been described as Sikh tradition by W.H. McLeod. The reason behind this was due to the fact that every religion also deals with a reality that could not be evidently discernible to the outsider or uninitiated. Again, religions need to be observed through the twofold lenses of faith and history. The single lens of history is insufficient, while that of faith alone repeatedly clouds the findings.

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ਖਾਲਸਾ ਕਾਲਜ ਗੁਰੂਸਰ ਸਾਧਾਰ ਵਿਖੇ ਹਿਟਰੀ ਸੈਸਾਇਟੀ ਵਲੋਂ 12 ਫਰਵਰੀ 1957 ਵਿੱਚ ਆਯੋਜਿਤ ਕਾਨਫਰੰਸ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਤਸਵੀਰ (ਖੱਬਿਓ-ਸੱਜੇ) ਕਾਲਜ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਸ. ਇਕਬਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਡਾ.ਹਰੀ ਰਾਮ ਗੁਪਤਾ, ਡਾ. ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਡਾ. ਰੀਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ, ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਰੰਗ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਪ੍ਰਿਥੀਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਪੂਰ (ਧੰਨਵਾਦ ਡਾ. ਮਹਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ)



ਡਾ. ਰੀਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਬੀ.ਯੂ.ਸੀ. ਕਾਲਜ, ਬਟਾਲਾ ਵਿੱਖੇ ਲੈਕਚਰ ਦੀਇਕ ਤਸਵੀਰ (ਖੱਬਿਓ-ਸੱਜੇ) ਪ੍ਰੋ.ਜ਼ੋਹਨ ਵੈਬਸਟਰ, ਸ. ਨਾਨਕਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਪ੍ਰੋ.ਮਹਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ, ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਐਲ.ਏ. ਮਕੱਲਾ, ਮੁੱਖ ਮਹਿਮਾਨ ਡਾ. ਰੀਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ, ਡਾ.ਸੀ.ਐੱਚ ਲੋਹਾਲਿਨ, ਬਨਾਰਸੀ ਦਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਮੈਕਲੇਡ (ਧੰਨਵਾਦ ਡਾ. ਮਹਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ)



ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰਪਤੀ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜ਼ੈਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਡਾ. ਗੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਪਦਮ ਭੂਸ਼ਨ ਨਾਲ ਸਨਮਾਨਿਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ (ਪੰਨਵਾਦ ਡਾ. ਮਹਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ)

ਸਾਨੂੰ ਖਿੱਚ ਹੈ ਇੱਕ ਮਹਿਬੂਬ ਵਾਲੀ, ਅਸੀਂ ਗਲੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਦੀ ਚੱਲੀਆਂ ਨੀ
 (ਵੱਲੋਂ—ਸ੍ਰੀ ਮਾਨ ਸਦਾਰ ਗੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ “ਕੇਵਲ”)

ਹੱਥੀਂ ਕਠਨੀਆਂ ਸਿਰ ਹਨ ਤਲੀ ਉਤੇ, ਭੰਵਰੇ ਜੁਲਮ ਦੇ ਜਾਨਾਂ ਠੱਲੀਆਂ ਨੀ।
 ਸਾਨੂੰ ਖਿੱਚ ਹੈ ਇੱਕ ਮਹਿਬੂਬ ਵਾਲੀ, ਅਸੀਂ ਗਲੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਦੀ ਚੱਲੀਆਂ ਨੀ।
 ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸ਼ਰਬਤ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀ ਦਾ ਪੀ ਲਿੱਤਾ, ਅਸੀਂ ਸੜਦੀਆਂ ਏਥੇ ਅਕੱਲੀਆਂ ਨੀ।
 ਆਪ ਮਾਰ ਉਡਾਰ ਆਜ਼ਾਦ ਹੋਈਆਂ, ਅਸੀਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੁਆਹ ਦੇ ਰੱਲੀਆਂ ਨੀ।
 ਅੜੀਓ ਆਇਕੇ ਅਸਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਸ ਜਾਵੇ, ਕੇਹੜੀ ਰਾਹ ਮਹਿਬੂਬ ਨੇ ਮੱਲੀਆਂ ਨੀ।
 ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਖੇਡਣੀ ਖੇਡ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਵਾਲੀ, ਟੋਲਣ ਸਾਥ ਨ ਚੱਲਣ ਅਕੱਲੀਆਂ ਨੀ।
 ਡਰਨ ਬੰਬ ਨ ਜੋਲੀ ਬੰਦੂਕ ਕੋਲੋਂ, ਵਿਚ ਦੁਖ ਦੇ ਸੁਖ ਪਿਮੱਲੀਆਂ ਨੀ।
 ਸੀਨੇ ਵਿਚ ਭੀ ਗੋਲੜੀ ਆਣ ਵੱਜੇ, ਪਾਵੇ ਵਿਚ ਕਲੇਜੜੇ ਸੱਲੀਆਂ ਨੀ।
 ਰਾਹ ਯਾਰ ਦੇ ਜਾਨ ਕੁਰਬਾਨ ਹੋਵੇ, ਛੱਡਣ ਕਦੀ ਨਾ ਯਾਰ ਦੀ ਗੱਲੀਆਂ ਨੀ।
 ਪਿਛੇ ਹੱਟੀਏ ਯਾਰ ਦੇ ਕੂਚਓ ਨਾ, ਭਾਵੇਂ ਉਡ ਜਾਵਨ ਸਾਡੀ ਤੱਲੀਆਂ ਨੀ।
 ਆਪਾ ਵਾਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਿੰਦ ਘੱਲ ਦਿੱਤੀ, ਸਿਰ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਅਸਾਂ ਹੇ ਤੱਲੀਆਂ ਨੀ।
 ਬਿਨਾਂ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਯਾਰ ਦੇ ਮੁੜਾਂਗੇ ਨਾ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲੱਖ ਮੁਸੀਬਤਾਂ ਬੱਲੀਆਂ ਨੀ।
 ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਤੂੰ ਕੀ ਤੱਤੀਏ ਨੀ, ਅਸਾਂ ਏ ਕਹੁ ਨਾ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਅਵੱਲੀਆਂ ਨੀ।
 ਭਾਵੇਂ ਮੌਤ ਨਗਾਰੜਾ ਬੰਬ ਜਾਵੇ, ਅਸਾਂ ਖੇਡਣੀ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਅਠਕਲੀਆਂ ਨੀ।
 ਅਸਾਂ ਖੇਡਣਾ “ਕੇਵਲ” ‘ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਹੋਲਾ’, ਹੋਰ ਛੱਡਕੇ ਸਭ ਪਲੱਲੀਆਂ ਨੀ।

ਡਾ. ਗੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਇੱਕ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਮਾਸਕ ਪੱਤਰ 'ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ', ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਮਾਰਚ, 1925 ਵਿੱਚ



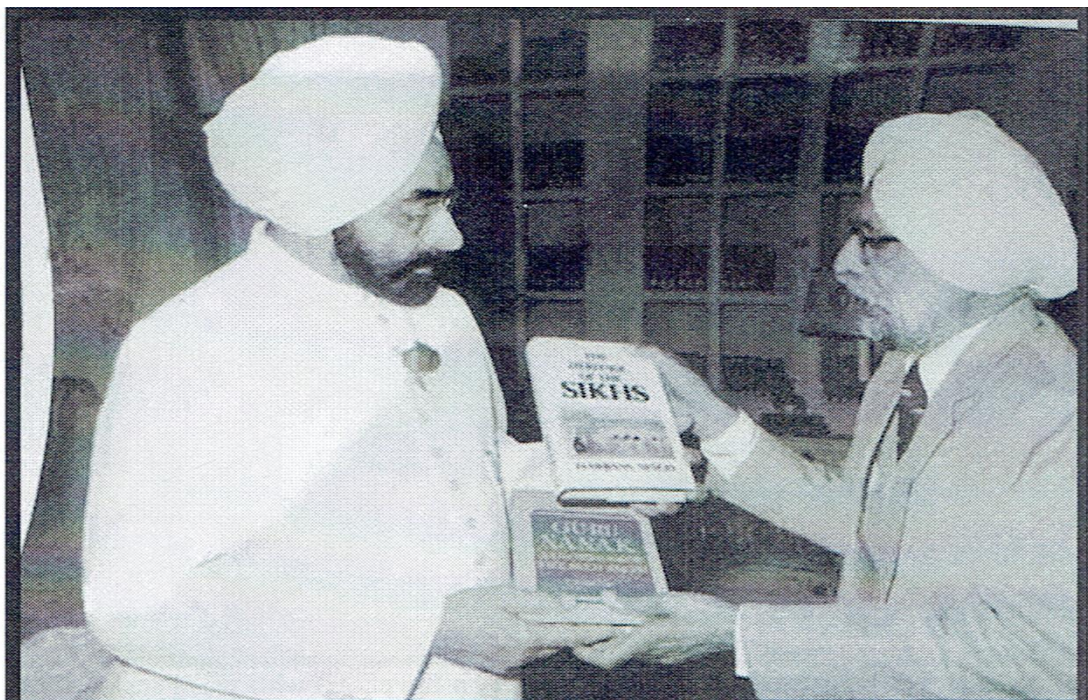
At Abadan, in Persia, with his friend Dr. Gurdit Singh



Dr. Ganda Singh took his Matriculation from Govt. high School Hoshiarpur in 1919 this was a school photograph taken on June 10, 1917, Dr. Ganda Singh is seen standing in the last row at extreme left



WILLIAM HEW MCLOED AT THE GOLDEN TEMPLE, 1963



**Professor Harbans Singh Presenting his books to Giani Zail Singh, the then
President of India**

ਡਾ. ਰੀਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਹਰਬੰਸ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਲੋਂ ਲਿਖੇ ਪੱਤਰ

Harbans Singh, M.A., P.E.S.(I)

BARADARI PALACE
PATIALA
20, Curzon Road,
Dehra Dun
June 20, 1967

My dear Ganda ji,

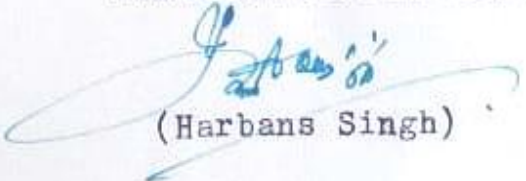
We arrived here on the 17th — all four of us. My one regret is I could not see you before leaving Patiala. This I had wished to do — for more than one reason, but those two or three days were greatly rushed. I am indeed very sorry and owe you many an apology.

I am getting down to business. The weather is much better than it was at Patiala, though the rains have not yet started. And once that happens, it would be just superb. I do not know — maybe, it is a change from the Bhatinda sandines — I find the rainy season so extremely enjoyable.

I had had rather depressing reports about Stji's health, but, while out for a walk last evening, I could from the roadside see him pottering around his bed room. I hope to call upon him one of these days.

Hoping that you are keeping very fit and with respectful regards,

Yours affectionately,


(Harbans Singh)

Dr Ganda Singh, M.A., D.Litt.
The Lower Mall,
Patiala.

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੀ ਕੀ ਕੜੀ

ਕੋਰਾ ੨੧
੨੧ ੩੩੬੦

(ਪਿਆਰੇ ਜਗਦੀਸ਼ ਜੀ,

ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਪੱਤਰ ਮਿਲਿਆ । ਫੈਸਦਾਰ।

ਉਹ ਜੋ ਮੈਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ - ਪਰ ਇਹ ਜੋ ਜਵਾਬ
ਹੈ। ਜੋ ਕੋਈ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ~~ਕਿਤੇ~~ ਕੋਈ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ ਉਸਦੀ
ਗੰਭੀਰਤਾ ਦਾ ਵੇਰਵਾ ਹੈ - ਜੇਹਾ ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ। ਪਰ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ
ਗੰਭੀਰਤਾ ਦੀ ਸਹੀ ਸੁਰਤ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਪੜ੍ਹੀ। ਇਸੇ ਸਬੰਧ ਵਿੱਚ
ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਚਿੱਠੀ ਹੈ।

ਅੰਤਿਮ ਸਮੇਂ ਦਾ ਇਹੋ ਦਿਨ ਇਹ ਸਿਰਫ
ਦੀ ਵੱਡੀ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਜੇ ਕਿਤੇ ਸਿਰਫ ਤਾਂ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ
ਕੁਝ ਜਗਦੀਸ਼ ਜਵਾਬ ਹੈ।

ਕੋਈ ਵੱਡਾ ਕਾਰਜ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਧੀ ਸਿਖਾ - ਉਹ
ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਕੁਝ ਕੋਈ ਹੈ। ਜੋ ਕੁਝ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਕੋਈ ਵੱਡੇ
ਗੱਲ ਉੱਤੇ ਸਾਫ਼ ਕੰਮ ਦਾ ਕੁਝ ਸਹੀ ਸਿਰਫ ਕੁਝ ਸਿੱਧੀ ਹੈ।
ਉਹ ਕੁਝ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਉਹੋ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹੋ ਉੱਪਰ ਕੋਈ
ਸਾਹਿਤ ਹੈ। ਜੋ ਉਹੋ ਹੈ ਫੈਸਦਾਰ ਦੀ ਸਿੱਧੀ ਸਿਖਾ ਹੈ।
ਪਰ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਮਨੋ ਮਨੋ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਸਹੀ ਹੈ।
ਉਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਉਹੋ ਹੈ ਸਿਰਫ ਕੋਈ ਹੈ। ਜੋ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਸਿੱਧੀ ਸਿਖਾ ਹੈ।

ਕੋਈ ਵੱਡਾ ਕਾਰਜ ਕੁਝ ਕੁਝ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਕੋਈ
ਉਹੋ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਸਿੱਧੀ ਸਿਖਾ ਹੈ। ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸਤਾ ਕੁਝ ਹੈ।

ਜੋ ਕੋਈ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਹੈ। ਤਾਂ, ਕੋਈ ਕੁਝ
ਉਹੋ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਸਬੰਧ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਹੈ। ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ
ਕੋਈ ਹੈ? ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਤੇ ਚਾਹੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਤੇ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ
ਨੀ। ਕੋਈ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਕੋਈ ਉਹੋ ਸਿੱਧੀ ਸਿਖਾ ਹੈ।
ਸਿੱਧੀ ਸਿਖਾ ਹੈ।

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO
DUNEDIN NEW ZEALAND

Dept of History
25 March 1971

Dear Dr Ganda Singh,

Thank you very much for your letter. I was very sorry indeed that I could not manage a visit to Patiala during my brief stop-over in India. Actually I only managed a single hour in Batala, though it was certainly worth it.

Dr Ménage will be enormously pleased to meet you when you are in England. He can be found at:

Dr. V. L. Ménage
School of Oriental & African Studies
University of London
London WCL

His home address is in Chelsea - somewhere in Tite St, but unfortunately I do not yet have my address file. I think the number is 3, and you would doubtless find it in a telephone directory - but the address I have given above will always find him. I shall write to him immediately telling him of your intended visit and passing on the information you have given me in your letter.

I hope I thanked you earlier for your very kind editorial in the October 1970 PPP. That particular issue has already reached me (also the offprints) and I look forward very much to seeing the issue with Gurcharan Singh's contribution. I have a great affection for him, and a great respect for his opinions.

Professor Barrier, in a recent letter, suggested that there might perhaps be a file of the Loyal Gazette in the Sikh Kanya Mahavidyala, but obviously that was no more than a hopeful guess. It is a great pity when all copies of a journal or magazine get destroyed.

We have bought ourselves a house here in Dunedin and look forward to moving into it the day after tomorrow. It will keep me poor for the rest of my life, paying off the debt, but it is a nice house and should serve us well. It has a view of the Dunedin harbour on one side and of the open sea on the other - rather different from our Batala view. The fact that I expect to spend several decades paying off the house should not imply that we intend to live in it all that time. It is still my ambition to return to the Punjab for that is where my asli ghar now is.

With very best wishes from us both.

Yours sincerely, Hew McE.

ਵਿਲੀਅਮ ਹਿਊ ਮੈਕਲੇਡ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਡਾ. ਗੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਪੱਤਰ

**SIKH AWAKENING IN THE HISTORICAL WRITINGS
OF GANDA SINGH, HARBANS SINGH AND W.H.
MCLEOD**

**A
THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA
IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
HISTORY**

SUPERVISOR
Nazer Singh
DR. NAZER SINGH
(Retired) Professor of History
Department of Distance Education
Punjabi University, Patiala

SUBMITTED BY
Amandeep Kaur
AMANDEEP KAUR



**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA**

2020

CONCLUSION

The main motivation of the Singh Sabha movement was the search for Sikh identity and to revive the teachings of the Sikh Gurus. All the intellectual activities of the Singh Sabha reformers were related to social-cultural and religious awakening of the Sikhs. To generate awakening among the Sikhs, they used a number of means like *Amrit parchar*, newspapers, tract societies, *updeshaks*, *gurpurbs*, religious *diwans* and *Jathas*. By all these methods or means, they motivated the Sikhs to shed their un-Sikh practices that had crept in Sikh society. The Sikh masses were advised to understand and follow the moral teachings of *Guru Granth Sahib*. The awakening activities of the Singh Sabha reformers had also influenced the educated Sikhs to write about and popularize the glorious past and heroic thought. This was also the historical background relevant for the emergence of numerous Sikh intellectual historians including Karam Singh 'Historian', Ganda Singh, Teja Singh and Harbans Singh. Inspired by modern or western education they stood for Sikh identity independent of the Hindus.

The social-cultural and religious environment of any society has impacted its historians. In other words, every historian is a by-product of the milieu of his society. Similarly, Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod were influenced by the environment of their societies and religions. There are different factors which awakened the selected historians to write Sikh history. It should be noted that Ganda Singh had some interest in poetry while he was young. This was reflected from his poem entitled *Sanu Khich Hai Ik Mahboob Wali, Asi Gali Prem Di Chalian Ni*. Even, he had a pen-name *Kewal*. But soon he felt his passion for Sikh history and left this surname. Ganda Singh awakened towards Sikh history due to these reasons: his father Sardar Jawala Singh was well known about the subject of history and maternal grandfather were part of military life during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time. The tales of the 18th centuries Sikh heroes and their sacrifices did inspire him. Two personalities from the Government High School, Hoshiarpur, aroused his interest in the subject of history. The first was Headmaster of the school Jemaj Marr and the second was Master Bhagwan Das. Sir Arnold T. Wilson aroused his interest in History writing and bibliographical literature.

However, he was much inspired by Karam Singh 'Historian' also. He learnt from him the significance of empirical evidence. He was motivated by Karam Singh 'Historian's open minded research also. In addition to the work of Karam Singh, Ganda Singh was inspired by the novels of Bhai Vir Singh such as *Sundari* and *Bijai Singh*. Consequently, he motivated to write on 18th century Punjab history particularly Sikh history. Late 19th century awakening activities of the Singh Sabha movement, rise of communalism in North India and writings of Bhagat Lakshman Singh also developed his curiosity towards Sikh history. His motive was to write Sikh history with a scientific approach. In truth research and re-write the history of the Sikh masses was his purpose. The motives of Ganda Singh were also to collect primary sources related to Punjab history particularly Sikh history, to dispose the historical controversies related to Sikh history on the authority of primary sources and to propagate Sikh history and Sikh religion. Ganda Singh's interest in Sikh History and love for Sikh religion can be understood through his these writings also: (i) *Sikhi Parchar Di Zarurat* (1925), (ii) *Inkishaf-i-Haqiqat* (1926), (iii) *Dharmik Parchar Di Lorh* (1928) and (iv) *Sikhi Parchar* (1928).

Harbans Singh had also deep faith in Sikh religion. Though in his young age, he was attracted towards Punjabi literary renaissance, but in his later life he devoted himself to the cause of Sikh history and religion. There are five factors that awakened his mind towards Sikh history. First, it was the influences of his father Ram Lal and of his mother Roop Kaur. His father Ram Lal had interest in literary works and his mother Roop Kaur had deep devotion to Sikh Gurus. In fact, she was religious lady. Second, scholars such as Kartar Singh and Darshan Singh in addition to G.S. Talib, Fauja Singh and Ganda Singh remained in touch with his research. Third, significantly, like Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh was also the product of the Khalsa College, Amritsar. Fourth, he was influenced by Bhai Vir Singh the charismatic personality of Singh Sabha movement. Fifth, moreover, Harbans Singh was highly influenced by the ideology of *Tat Khalsa*, so he wrote Sikh history from new point of view represented by the slogan *Ham Hindu Nahin*. His motive was to encourage Punjabi studies, Sikh history and also the Sikh Studies. Furthermore, he wanted to write the biographies of Sikh Gurus from traditional sources, for those who were influenced by the modern historiography.

The factors that influenced on W.H. McLeod to write on Sikh history were different than the selected Sikh historians. He was not fascinated to Sikh history from his young age in New Zealand. But it was possible, when he came to Punjab as Christian missionary of Presbyterian Church of New Zealand. During his early employment in Punjab as an English teacher at the Christian Boys Higher Secondary School at Kharar, he felt the need to change the direction of his life. In fact, he wanted to serve in Baring Union Christian College at Batala. This was possible if he develops as a historian. Thus he finally decided to work on Sikh history as a whole. According to him, his motive was to make understanding of the educated western peoples with the Sikh religion and Sikh masses through his writings. Radical Sikh scholars considered him to destroy the Sikh tradition. Gurdev Singh and Trilochan Singh criticized him due to his missionary interests. But W.H. McLeod denied it in 1966 that he and his wife were not Christian's believers. Despite his disclaims about his belief in Christian religion, yet he continued his associations with some Christian institutions throughout his life such as from 1968-1969, he was the director of the *Christian Institute of Sikh Studies* in Batala. He was became the Convener of Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (PCANZ) Historical Records Committee 1998 to 2000. He was also member of PCANZ Historical Records Reference Group in 2000. In Presbyterian Church records his title is mentioned as Reverend.

About the social-cultural awakening of the Sikhs from the period of Guru Nanak up to Guru Gobind Singh, the Sikh historians Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh had similar views on the major themes. But W.H. McLeod had quite different opinion from them. Culture and religion are closely linked to each other. Culture is based on certain principles that were taken from the religious beliefs of the community. Guru Nanak founded Sikh religion. In truth, Sikh culture was also started with the foundation of Sikh religion. For the newly founded Sikh religion, Guru Nanak gave new social order, social institutions and social principles. This suggested Guru Nanak's cultural awareness and efforts to build an alternate culture. Sikh social-cultural awakening was traced to Guru Nanak by Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh. Both praised the role of *sangat*, *pangat* and *langar* institutions in social-cultural awakening. Ganda Singh accepted Guru Nanak as a social reformer. Harbans Singh proposed that Guru Nanak had restructured the social customs of the society.

However, W.H. McLeod does not state anything in this regard. Contrary to Sikh historians, he does not accept Guru Nanak as the founder of Sikh religion. He considered that Guru Nanak was not a prophet but a *sant* of North Indian *nirgun* tradition. For him, Guru Nanak only stated the influence of *nath* doctrine and practices. But it should be noted that the word *sant* or *nirgun* tradition was not mentioned in early Sikh historical records. Guru Nanak had even basic difference with Bhakti saints. Such as, Bhakti saints stressed on the renunciation of the world, but Guru Nanak had stressed on family life. Guru Nanak appointed Bhai Lahina as Guru Angad his successor, to keep the continuity of his newly founded Sikh religion. But no other Bhakti saint has done like this. However, Bhai Gurdas in his *Vars* and Bhai Nand Lal in his *Jot Bigas* have firmly portrayed the position of Guru Nanak as the prophet par excellence. Guru Nanak was against the caste discrimination accepted by Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh and quoted Guru Nanak's hymns to support their views. Though, W.H. McLeod had quoted Guru Nanak's hymns in this regard. Nevertheless, he assumed that Guru Nanak was against it, because it was hindrance to spiritual salvation of the masses. However, Bhai Gurdas remarked in his *Var 1, Pauri 23* that Guru Nanak converted the four castes into one caste. Furthermore, Sikhs of the Guru Nanak's period do not believe in caste classification. Guru Nanak's hymns in *Guru Granth Sahib* and the *vars* of Bhai Gurdas are valuable and an authentic source in this regard. The language used by Bhai Gurdas makes it clear that he was not repeating instructions pronounced by Guru Nanak in his hymns, but a precept practised by his followers. However, the Sikh historians justified their views by stating that to eradicate this social evil in practical forms, Guru Nanak started *sangat*, *pangat* and *langar* institutions. Both the Sikh historians accepted Guru Nanak was conscious towards the inferior position of the women in the society at that time. On the basis of *Asa Di Var* both proposed that Guru Nanak raised the social status of women and gave them equality with men in religious and social sphere. But W.H. McLeod proposed that equality was given to women in sphere of spiritual liberation not in social matters. However *B40 Janamsakhi* that was completed in 1733 makes it clear that the path started by Guru Nanak was open to women also.

Both the Sikh historian assumed social awakening from the *langar* institution. Both agreed that it was started by Guru Nanak and helped in the eradication of caste system. W.H. McLeod was confused about the *langar* system and its functioning. For

him, it was functioning during Guru Amardas period. But the sources *Puratan Janamsakhi*, *Kanhaiya Lal* in his *Tarikh-i-Punjab* and *Saroop Das Bhalla* in his *Mahima Prakash* agreed that *langar* institution was started by Guru Nanak. Moreover, Guru Nanak himself underscores the importance of *langar* institution in his own hymns. Both the Sikh historians discuss about *sangat* institution. And they accept its role in the eradication of distinctions based on religion, race, caste and creed. W.H. McLeod has given very short space in his writing to the *sangat* institution. He does not like Sikh historians discuss its role in social-cultural awakening.

The Sikh historians accepted that Guru Angad consolidate the Sikh *Panth*. W.H. McLeod does not accept this. In other words, he does not accept any development during Guru Angad period. Both Gyani Gyan Singh and Saroop Das Bhalla has maintained that *Gurmukhi* was invented by Guru Angad. Unlike them, the author of *Chahar-Bagh-i-Panjab*, Ganesh Das Bedehra and Kavi Kankan had traced *Gurmukhi* to Guru Nanak. This view was also accepted by the selected historians. However, Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh both discuss the impact of this language on the Sikh society. But W.H. McLeod remains silent in this regard. Harbans Singh assumed its impact on literary culture. According to Ganda Singh, it helped in making independent the Sikhs from the *Brahmin* priests. The statements of Ganda Singh are justified with references from Muhsin Fani's *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*. This source stated that the Sikhs had no favor for the language of Hindus i.e. Sanskrit.

W.H. McLeod's main stress was upon Guru Amardas period after discussing Guru Nanak in his writings. All the selected historians accepted that Guru Amardas opposed the evil practice of *sati*. Both the Sikh historians agreed that Guru Amardas was also against the *pardah* practice. W.H. McLeod remains silent in this regard. However, Ganda Singh does not refer to any source. Harbans Singh had quoted Saroop Das Bhalla's *Mahima Prakash* in this regard. Both the Sikh historians discuss the social awakening brought by *langar* institution in Guru Amardas times. But unlike them, W.H. McLeod assumed that Guru Amardas borrowed the *langar* institution from the *sufis*. Factually speaking this practice was started by Guru Nanak in the Sikh religion. This is reflected from Guru Nanak's own hymns and *Puratan Janamsakhi*. For the Sikh historians Guru Amardas instructed his followers to use hymns on social ceremonies like marriage and death. This is identical with Sundar Das's account *Ramkali Sad* and Guru Amardas's own masterpiece *Anad*

Sahib in *Guru Granth Sahib*. Both Sikh historians have accepted that this makes the Sikhs more self-contained in social matters and turned Sikh faith into well marked social group. This is also noted by Bhai Gurdas in his *vars* and Mohsin Fani the author of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*. However, for W.H. McLeod Guru Amardas efforts to appoint the opening days of the month of *Baisakh*, *Magh* and *Diwali* and digging *Baoli* are innovations, recourse to traditional Indian institutions and reintroduce Hindu festivals. Harbans Singh remarked that all these were for the Sikhs to forgather at Goindwal. Ganda Singh remains silent in this regard. However, the sources agreed that this was done by Guru Amardas so that Sikh could become acquainted and fraternize with each other. It should be noted that during Guru Amardas period Sikhism had become completely a religion of householder. In order to save its followers from absorption in other sects, it was become essential to augment the work of religious organization by social reform actions.

Both the Sikh historians discussed Guru Ramdas' role in the formation of Amritsar and its role in the social-cultural awakening. All the selected historians discuss about the appointments of *masands* by Guru Ramdas and their role in preaching Sikh religion. But Guru Ramdas's great contribution of introducing *ghorian* and *lavan* remained unnoticed by all the three selected historians. In fact, Guru Ramdas' great contribution in the awakening of the Sikh masses towards distinct social-cultural awakening should have been noticed.

Again, all the selected historians discuss during the Guru Arjan period, the role of *Darbar Sahib* and *Guru Granth Sahib* in the social-cultural awakening of the Sikhs. However, the Sikh historians stressed on the point that these institutions helped the Sikhs to free themselves from the Hindus. W.H. McLeod also accepted the necessity of *Guru Granth Sahib* in the customs of the Sikhs and its contribution in the unity of Sikh *Panth*. However, these scholars did not pay attention to the role of Guru Hargobind in the evolution of awakening. Ganda Singh and W.H. McLeod did refer very briefly to the period of Guru Har Rai and Guru Harkrishan than Harbans Singh. Again both remain silent about Guru Tegh Bahadur' role in social-cultural awakening. However, Harbans Singh stressed that Guru Tegh Bahadur ordered his Sikhs to abandon the practice of *Sakhi Sarvar*. Attar Singh the author of *Malwa Desh Rattan Di Sakhi Pothi* had also mentioned this development.

All the selected historians had widely taken up the creation of the *Khalsa* by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. But they had taken different approaches. Ganda Singh wrote that Guru Gobind Singh wants to build up united nation of purified ones that would be free from social evil. Harbans Singh also accepted this. But in W.H. McLeod's observation, it was an attempt by Guru Gobind Singh to carry on the public struggle for justice. Obviously, he is more political in his concern than the Sikh historians. Later Indian writers such as Sainapati and Prof. Puran Singh had stressed more upon the social transformation caused by the *Khalsa* and its operations during the 18th century. Both the Sikh historians accepted that Guru Gobind Singh instructed five beloved to wear five symbols also called five *kakkars* namely *kesh*, *kangha*, *kachchera*, *kara* and *kirpan*. But W.H. McLeod does not accept this. For him, these were the outcome of the course of the eighteenth century Sikh history. Moreover, according to him, all these came due to the impact of *Jat* cultural patterns. Sikh scholars agreed that from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, all the Sikh Gurus were *Kesadhari*. Even in *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sikh Gurus Guru Nanak and Guru Arjan praised the beauty of God by saying that His hair is long and also beautiful. Then, how it is possible that the custom which was present in the Sikh *Panth* from the first Sikh Guru had any impact of *Jat* culture? The source *Guru Kian Sakhian* says that in 1752 *Bikrami* i.e. 1695 on *Baisakhi* day and in 1754 *Bikrami* i.e.1697, Guru Gobind Singh ordered *sangat* including men and women to wear *Kara* of *Sarbloh* in their right hand. Three sources had stressed upon the relationship of *kachchera* with the *Khalsa* tradition. They are: (i) Rattan Singh Bhangoo in his work *Sri Gur Panth Prakash* (ii) the author of *Prem Sumarg* (iii) James Skinner in his work *Tarishul'I Aqwam*. It is appeared from the source *Malwa Desh Rattan Di Sakhi Pothi* that Guru Gobind Singh also gave much importance and ordered his Sikhs to use *kangha* daily. Furthermore, Guru Gobind Singh's purpose of providing the swords to his Sikhs also reflected from this source.

About the *rahit*, Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh do not write much. They only mentioned, what Guru Gobind Singh prescribed in the *rahit*. But W.H. McLeod questioned particularly three items of *rahit*. The first was Guru Gobind Singh bans on using of tobacco, the second was Guru Gobind Singh forbidden on the intercourse with Muslim women. The third was Guru Gobind Singh banned to eat *halal* meat. He proposed that all this was not part of 1699 *Khalsa* institution but

of the 18th century. These were appeared in Sikh *rahit* due to Sikhs enmity with Muslims in 18th century. According to Sikh scholars, the use of tobacco was banned to save good health and physical vigour to keep *Khalsa* active for and in battle field. It should be noted that it was not only Guru Gobind Singh who had in 1699 during *Khalsa* ceremony banned the use of tobacco, but Guru Tegh Bahadur was also against its use. This is appeared in the source *Gur Partap Suraj Granth*. Guru Gobind Singh banned sexual intercourse with Muslim women due to Guru Gobind Singh desire to outlaw revenge against them. It is the result of Guru Gobind Singh's injunction that Qazi Nur Mohammad and Ghulam Muhi-ud-Din praised the moral values of the Sikhs. From the source *Amarnama* it is appeared that Guru Gobind Singh ordered that do not kill the animal in *halal (kutha)* way. We have figured out that prior to the arrival of the Muhammadans in India, the Hindus also who ate meat, used *jhatka*. But the use of *kutha* was started due to the religious fanaticism of the Mohammadans. Guru Gobind Singh very well knew that real religion originated into fearless heart alone. Consequently, he prohibited this daily compulsion, which was being practiced on masses through their food by this injunction.

The relationship between religion and politics in Sikhism is a matter of debate among the historians. Many Sikh historians have justified in their writings the inseparable mixture of religion and politics in Sikh religion. J.S. Ahluwalia, Dharam Singh, G.S. Dhillon and Sher Singh had come in this category. But it is true that Sikh Gurus had not advocated systematic theory of polity. However, attentive study of Guru Nanak's compositions in *Guru Granth Sahib* reflected that awakening towards political oppression was started by Guru Nanak. The Sikh Gurus were against the religious-political oppression, because they undoubtedly understand that no religion could take growth under any kind of religious, social or political oppression. Both the Sikh historians had traced the political awakening to the days of Guru Nanak. In this context, Ganda Singh used the term political consciousness. In his evidence, he used Guru Nanak's *Bani*. But Harbans Singh did not do so. Both underscored that Guru Nanak clearly knew the political conditions of his time. And also Guru Nanak protested against the political abuses at that time. But W.H. McLeod considered that Guru Nanak's hymns that criticized the contemporary political conditions were motivated by spiritual objectives. Both the Sikh historians accepted that there was a meeting between Guru Nanak and Babar in 1521. W.H. McLeod does not accept this.

Contrary to him, there are other sources from which the opinions of selected Sikh historians are justified. These are: *Puratan Janamsakhi*, *Bhai Bala Janamsakhi*, the author of *Ibratnama* Mufti Ali-ud-Din and *Chahar Gulshan (1759-1760)* by Chaturman.

Both the Sikh historians accepted Guru Arjan as the first martyr of Sikh faith. But W.H. McLeod used the word death instead of martyrdom. For him this is Sikh tradition or the Sikh sources that mentioned it as martyrdom. Both the Sikh historians quoted Jahangir's autobiography to point out that Jahangir's religious fanaticism was responsible for Guru Arjan's martyrdom. They also noted the role played by Shaikh Ahmad Sarhindi in this regard. W.H. McLeod's perspective in this regard was totally different from the Sikh historians. Furthermore, he suggested that the entry of the *Jats* in Sikh *Panth* was responsible for Guru Arjan's death in Mughal custody. For this statement he does not quote a primary source even as the secondary. But from Jahangir's autobiography, it is cleared that political motives of Jahangir were behind Guru Arjan's martyrdom. It should be noted that if the entry of *Jats* in Sikh *Panth* had roused the fears of the Mughal authorities. Then why this was not done with the sects of Prithi Chand and Handalias too who had also their *Jat* followers.

W.H. McLeod had mentioned Guru Hargobind's *Miri-Piri* policy in detail but with different perspective than the selected Sikh historians. Both the Sikh historians hold opinion that the use of arms in *Miri-Piri* policy was for the help of weak and helpless. According to W.H. McLeod, it was not Guru Hargobind who had sanctioned the use of arms but it was due to the impact of *Jat* cultural patterns and also due to the economic problems that were present at that time. He did not elaborate on the factor how economic problems were responsible for this. W.H. McLeod assumed that during Guru Arjan period, the *Jats* were in large numbers in Sikh religion. But he does not provide any data related to the numbering of *Jats* in Sikh *Panth* at that time. However, it should be noted that in Bhai Gurdas' *varan* that the *Khatri*s were 31.3% and *Jats* were only 3.5%. There is no data to support his theory that the *Jats* were the leading component among the Sikhs when Guru Hargobind's became the sixth Sikh Guru. W.H. McLeod had seen Guru Hargobind's *Miri-Piri* policy against the teachings of Guru Nanak. However, it could be traced from the *Bani* of Guru Nanak. Nevertheless the sources such as *varan* of Bhai Gurdas, *Ramakli ki Var* and Guru Gobind Singh's *Bachittar Nattak* had confirmed the unity of Sikh

thought, conduct and practice. Both the Sikh historians do not tie political motivation to Guru Hargobind's *Miri-Piri* policy or his battles. But it was owing to in self-defense and against tyranny. But W.H. McLeod called the battles of Guru Hargobind as skirmish and conflicts. In other words, he considered all activities of Guru Hargobind' happened due to the entry of *Jats* in Sikh *Panth*.

Both the selected Sikh scholars described the contribution of Guru Tegh Bahadur in the spread of Sikh community. But W.H. McLeod had not given much space to the period of Guru Tegh Bahadur in his writings. Again, he used the word death, instead of martyrdom. He doubts the arrival of Kashmiri Brahmins for protection to Guru Tegh Bahadur. Harbans Singh had rejected this posture by his works: (i) *The Heritage of the Sikhs* (ii) *Guru Tegh Bahadur* and Ganda Singh through his research paper titled as *The Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Studies in Historical Setting (The Panjab Past and Present, 1977)*.

According to Ganda Singh, Guru Gobind Singh awakened the Sikhs towards greater political consciousness. Further, he unified the Sikh masses into national brotherhood also. He argued that Guru Gobind Singh had no political ambitious behind the creation of the *Khalsa*. Sikh historians clearly confessed that the battles of Guru Gobind Singh were not for any territorial expansions and gains. In fact, these were against the religious intolerance and also political iniquities of that period. This is also corroborated from Guru Gobind Singh's *Zafarnama*. Both the selected Sikh historians argued that these battles were defensive. On the other hand, W.H. McLeod called these battles as defeat of Guru Gobind Singh. However, the opinions of Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh are supported by Bhagat Lakshman Singh also.

Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod had given very short space to the history of Banda Singh Bahadur in their writings. They are silent about the early political career of Banda Singh. In fact, W.H. McLeod believed that what was written on Banda Singh is based on traditions. Doing so, he ignored that Ganda Singh produced a biography of Banda Singh based on contemporary and near contemporary Persian source. Ganda Singh accepted Banda Singh the greatest hero, greatest martyr, one of the most remarkable men of India of 18th century, the man who had laid the foundation of the Sikh empire in 1710 and the first Sikh political leader. But W.H. McLeod termed Banda Singh's struggle as defeat, uprising and disturbance. Unlike

Ganda Singh, Banda Singh's struggle for independence had assumed by W.H. McLeod as peasant revolt. However, Ganda Singh had argued that peasantry was not the part of Banda Singh's army. In fact, they joined Banda Singh army for loot and to take revenge on the local officials of that time. For instance, Ganda Singh stated that during Banda Singh's invasion on Samana and Sadaura, the peasantry joined his army as an opportunity and as favorable chance.

W.H. McLeod did not write about the battles of Banda Singh. On the other hand, Harbans Singh had only discussed about the battle of Sirhind and Gurdas Nagal in brief. But Ganda Singh discussed these in detail. Ganda Singh considered the conquest of Sarhind as a signal of Sikh rising. This filled in the Sikhs the spirit of independence. Harbans Singh thinks that after his victory of Sarhind, Banda Singh laid the establishment of Sikh sovereignty in the land of the Punjab. Ganda Singh praised Banda Singh for setting up his capital at the fort Mukhlispur and renamed it Lohgarh. A work in Persian and completed in 1722 under the title *Fatuhatnama-i-Samdi*, refers to the construction of Lohgarh. Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod remain silent in this regard. Both the Sikh historians discuss about the coins of Banda Singh. Both does not mention the year, when Banda Singh struck his coins for the first time. But we are told that Banda Singh struck his coins between the years 1710 to 1713 with the idea of Sikh sovereignty in the Punjab. Ganda Singh refused to call Banda Singh's struggle communal strife. Furthermore, for him, it was political struggle. He stressed the point that Banda Singh had no ill-will against the Muslims or Mughal religion. A report of *Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla* in 1711 had referred to Banda Singh's tolerance of Muslims- he allowed them to read *Khutba* and *Namaz*. It is reported that five thousand Muslims had joined his army and its march.

The differences regarding approach between the Sikh historians and non-Sikh historian W.H. McLeod are many but also deep. Ganda Singh, though by religion was a Sikh, yet his approach towards Sikh history was not biased. It is well known fact that his major interest was in the collection of primary sources related to Punjab history particularly Sikh history, but he used them in his writings with critical approach. The major focus in his writings was objectivity that was based on rigorous inquiry. However, Ganda Singh approached the Sikh history with the two viewpoints (1) *Babania Kahania Put Sut Karein* (stories of the wise turn progenies into able inheritors): This has been oral way of looking at reality or truth in Punjab. Ganda

Singh used it as his method of History writing. (2) Professor Puran Singh's ideal was: *Punjab Jinda Gura De Naam Te*. It found favor with Ganda Singh while exploring Sikh history and religion.

But unlike Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh was more narrative in his historical approach than acting as-analytic. Unlike Ganda Singh, he has been largely based on traditions in his writings. But this does not mean that he had followed traditional approach in his writings. Actually, he approached them with historian's objective eyes. As a matter of fact, he followed a mediating position. On the one side, he values modern historiography. On the other hand, he does not dismiss the traditions in his writings.

Some scholars believed that W.H. McLeod had a biased approach. His studies had been considered by Trilochan Singh as prejudiced. For this scholar, his writings are either hearsay stories or scandal mongering gossip. He called W.H. McLeod's methods and theories in his writings are based on particularly skepticism and conjecture too. Another Sikh scholar Gurdev Singh considered his approach wholly negative. However, W.H. McLeod has been a western historian who had approached the Sikh religion like a man who had no spiritual sense. In truth, he belongs to the skeptical camp. He takes pride in being a skeptical historian. The result of this was that he doubted and questioned the established facts of history. In his whole writings, his approach regarding the development of Sikh religion was not in favor of the purposeful aim of the Sikh Gurus, but in terms of influence of various factors such as social, cultural, economic and historical environment. He termed the views of those scholars who believed that the subsequent development in Sikh religion after the first Sikh Guru Guru Nanak was in total unity with his teachings (This view was also accepted by Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh) as orthodox Sikh interpretation. However, Harbans Singh stated that each Sikh Guru contribute a new national trait that was rehearsed with the influence of the changing times and environment. Ganda Singh accepts that Sikh *Panth* passed through various but regular stages of evolution during the time of Guru Nanak's nine successor Sikh Gurus. But he argued that it was the teachings of Guru Nanak that were worked as corner stone for the religious, social and political structure of the Sikh Nation.

The major difference between these three historians is rooted in methodology. Ganda Singh treated History as an objective narrative and it was never History unless it was truth. For him, objective history can be achieved only through the objective approach that must be free from all biases, individual, group or ideological. Though Harbans Singh values modern historiography but his method does not allow him to reject the myths and also legend in history. He is the least worried about the chronological order. W.H. McLeod called his own methodology as emphatically historical. Furthermore, he had grounded his research experience in New Zealand where he was student and in the *School of Oriental and African Studies* in London where he worked as a Research Fellow. As a result his approach toward Sikh history was based on western historical methodology.

In the end, we agree that every scholar discussed in this research work has his own motive, method and interpretations of the past. On the major aspects of social-cultural and religious-political awakening of the Sikhs, the difference between selected Sikh historians Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh and non-Sikh western historian W.H. McLeod are many but also deep. These differences were influenced by various factors. The result of this was the difference between their sources and methodology. Consequently, they had different approach towards Sikh history and religion. Many established facts of Sikh history and religion had been described as Sikh tradition by W.H. McLeod. The reason behind this was due to the fact that every religion also deals with a reality that could not be evidently discernible to the outsider or uninitiated. The inner meaning of any religion can be understood only through its participation and also by following its prescribed path and discipline. Again, religions need to be observed through the two-fold lenses of faith and history. The single lens of history is insufficient, while that of faith alone repeatedly clouds the findings.

SIKH AWAKENING IN THE HISTORICAL WRITINGS OF GANDA SINGH, HARBANS SINGH AND W.H. MCLEOD

ABSTRACT

After the establishment of Singh Sabha movement, its intellectual reformers had earnestly started to investigate the historical origin and source of Sikh religious tradition and faith. Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh is the legendary product of this milieu. W.H. McLeod a western and non-Sikh historian was also their contemporary. The present research work **“Sikh Awakening in the Historical Writings of Ganda Singh, Harbans Singh and W.H. McLeod”** highlights the social-cultural and religious-political awakening of the Sikhs in their historical writings. The first chapter which given information about the meaning of term Sikh Awakening, research methodology, a brief information of each chapter and primary sources. The second chapter discusses the various means or methods of Singh Sabha movement used by the intellectual reformers for the religious and social-cultural awakening in detail. In the third chapter an attempt has been made to know who and what inspired the above stated selected historians to write Sikh history. All those motives which influenced them to write Sikh history are highlighted. Their early life, career and their works are also given. The fourth chapter deals with social-cultural awakening of the Sikhs as reflected in the historical writings of selected historians. The chapter discusses the social-cultural awakening from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh in detail. The fifth chapter takes up the study of religious-political awakening of the Sikhs from Guru Nanak to Banda Singh Bahadur as reflected in the historical writings of the selected historians. The sixth chapter highlights the sources and approach of selected historians in detail. The seventh chapter is “conclusion” which summarizes the findings and interpretations of the research work.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

It is to certify that Amandeep Kaur has got two research papers published in the following reputed journals:

- Paper entitled **Gyani Ditt Singh: A Relentless Crusader** published in Abstracts of Sikh Studies, Vol. XIX, Issue 3, July-Sept 2017. ISSN: 2230-7729
- Paper entitled **Professor Harbans Singh: His Contribution to Sikh Studies** published in The Sikh Review, Vol.65:08, No. 764, August 2017. ISSN:0037-5128

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DECLARATION

I **Amandeep Kaur** hereby affirm that the work in this thesis is exclusively my own and there are no collaborations. It does not contain any work for which a Degree / Diploma has been awarded by any University / institution.

Date. 2.11.2020

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This is to certify that the above statement made by the candidate is correct to the best of my knowledge.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am very grateful to the Almighty that provided me enough encourage and strength overcoming all my difficulties in the completion of this research mission.

*During the preparation of this work, I have always felt omnipresent God by my side and I bow before his grace. I am thankful to God for providing me this golden opportunity, grant His blessings on me and to provide me with the ability to proceed effectively. Moreover, I am deeply indebted to my research supervisor **Dr. Nazer Singh**, (Retired) Professor of History, Department of Distance Education, Punjabi University, Patiala for his guidance, support and valuable suggestions that were beneficial much in the finalization of this challenging task. It was a privilege to work with him and benefit from his thoughts and experiences through countless meetings.*

*I am grateful to **Dr. Mohammad Idris**, Head of Department of History, Punjabi University, Patiala. I am also thankful to Dr. Kulbir Singh Dhillon, Dr. Jaspal Kaur Dhanju, Dr. Sukhninder Kaur Dhillon, Dr. Parneet Kaur Dhillon, Dr. Balraj Singh, Dr. Sandeep Kaur, Dr. Jashandeep Singh Sandhu and Dr. Daljeet Singh for their precious suggestions, guidance and cooperative attitude.*

During the mission of this research, I have visited many libraries and express my indebted thanks to the different library staff particularly the staff of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha Library, Punjabi University, Patiala, the library of Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, Central Library, Patiala, library of Language Department, Punjab, Punjab State Archives, Chandigarh, Dwarka Dass Library, Chandigarh, A.C. Joshi Library, Panjab University, Chandigarh, library of Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, Bhai Gurdas Library, Guru Nanak Dev University, Sikh Reference Library, Darbar Sahib, Amritsar and Sikh History and Reference Library of Khalsa College, Amritsar.

Especially, I thank our respected Mrs. Kiran, Office in Charge, Department of History, Punjabi University, Patiala for her helping hand in completing all the formalities related with this this research work till the last day of the submission.

It will be impossible for me to pay the price of sacrifice made by my parents Sardar Jagdev Singh and Sardarni Simarjeet Kaur, who have always been my pillars of strength. They always stood by me with their blessings. I am thankfully indebted to

my loving sister Jaswinder Kaur, who has always remained a great support and motivation for me. The completion of this research work has also been a happy moment for my nephew Gurmeet Singh and niece Armaandeep Kaur, who always asked me when will be your Ph.D complete massi ji.

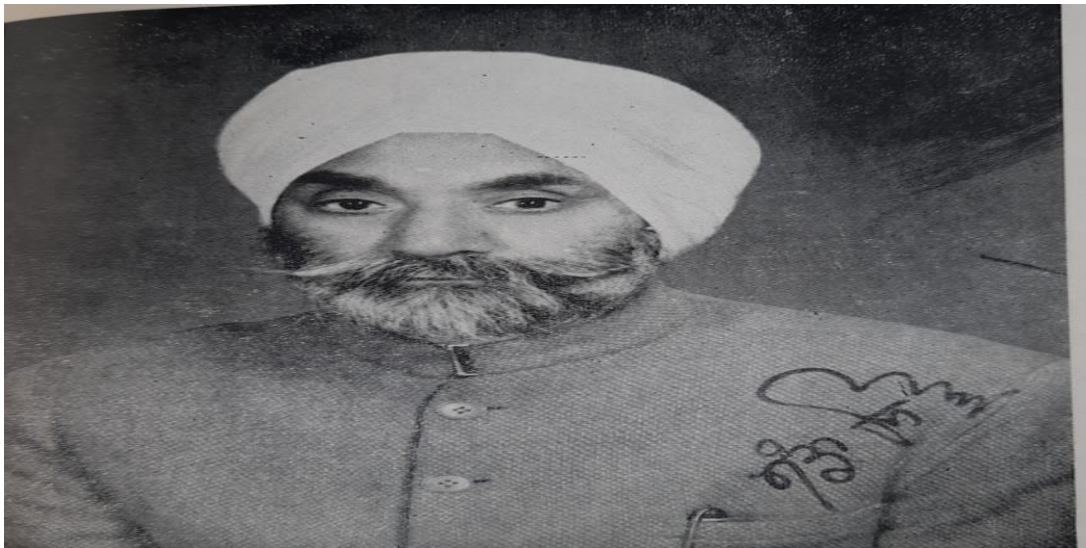
I am also filled with gratitude to my best friends Veerpal Kaur, Ramandeep Kaur, Gurpreet Kaur, Jaspreet Kaur, Kirandeep Kaur and Bhupinder Singh for their love & good wishes for the completion of this research work.

I would also like to thank Mr. Gurinder Singh (Anmol Computer, Shop No. 17, Shalimar Plaza, Opp. Punjabi University, Patiala) who certainly undertook the computerization of this dissertation with efficiency and meticulousness

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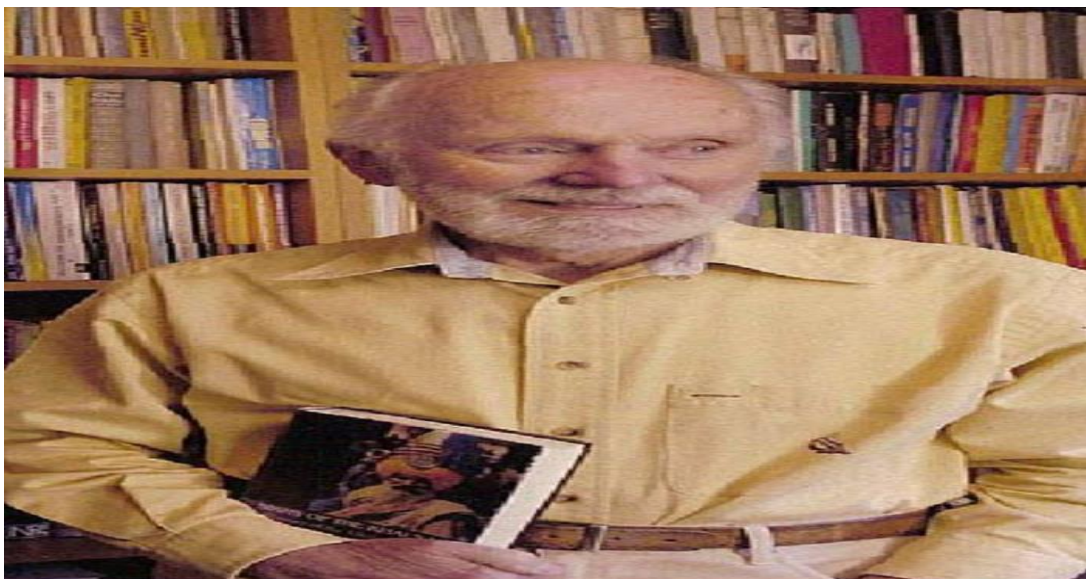
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