

**The Leadership Crisis In A Movement : A
Sociological Study of Punjab Problem
1980 — 84.**

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KAWALJIT KAUR

**CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI—110067
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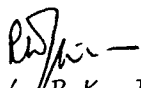
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DECLARATION

This dissertation entitled 'THE LEADERSHIP CRISIS IN A MOVEMENT : A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF PUNJAB PROBLEM 1980-1984', submitted by Kawaljit Kaur for the MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY degree has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University. We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


[Prof. R.K. Jain]
CHAIRMAN


[Dr. Nirmal Singh]
SUPERVISOR

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KAWALJIT KAUR

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PREFACE

The present study is an attempt at a sociological understanding of the ongoing crisis in Punjab. A number of studies have been published on the current Punjab situation, by journalists, political activists and social scientists drawn from different disciplines. All these studies shed light on diverse aspects of the crisis. Our argument, in the study presented here is that all these aspects enmesh to give rise to the multifaceted crisis situation.

The ongoing crisis situation does not show any hopeful signs of being overcome as the various analyses and suggested solutions as a consequence, do not attempt to tackle the situation as a complex whole, whose different facets do not admit of being tackled in isolation from other interrelated manifestations. Moreover, it is always difficult to analyse a current crisis because the inter-relationships of different facets of a problem become somewhat transparent, only when the problem becomes a past event.

Some authors have tried to locate the problem in the inherent antagonistic structure of the Punjab society [Victor D'Souza EPW 1982]. For others the roots of the problem lies in superstructural aspects of society like language, religion and politics in their interplay [Paul Brass 1975; Rajiv Kapoor

1986; Tully and Jacob 1985]. Still others hold the power holders at Delhi wholly or mainly responsible for the present crisis in Punjab [Amrik Singh 1985].

Punjab has the highest per capita income among the Indian states. Even on the basis of other indicators the state can be counted among the more prosperous states. The prevalence of violence and extremism in such a state has attracted attention of many analysts. Some have brought out another aspect of the crisis by understanding the imperialist game. According to them neocolonialism, nurses and encourages 'fundamentalist' elements clamouring for separatism and successionism, in order to divide and weaken India [Chopra, Mishra and Nirmal Singh 1984].

These studies have highlighted important aspects of the ongoing crisis in Punjab. They are helpful but do not tackle the situation in an integrated wholistic perspective.

The present study keeps all these studies in view and has concentrated on an important phase of the crisis i.e. 1980-84. In this period Akali movement had mobilized hundreds of thousands of people paralysing the normal socio-economic and political life in the state. It also saw the emergence of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale as a charismatic leader, simultaneously symbolising hope and terror to the people of

Punjab. Shromani Akali Dal the main political party, representing the so called sikh - aspirations and formally being the instrument of launching the movement around those sikh demands, proved incapable of either containing Bhindranwale phenomenon within Akali leadership's fold or accepting a junior role within his camp followers.

All this has raised a number of questions. Why is it that the most prosperous and progressive state has given rise to a massive movement of discontent? What is the genesis of the movement precipitating the present crisis? What was the structure of leadership of the movement? Is there a relationship in the crisis of leadership of the movement and the continuity of the crisis situation?

We have tried to provide tentative answers to these and related questions in the ensuing pages. The main evidence in support of our arguments have been collected from secondary sources i.e. books, journals and the commentaries accessible to the researcher, which have been duly acknowledged as the text of the study proceeds.

In the first chapter, we deal with some conceptual and theoretical issues relating to the study of social movements. The importance of ideology and leadership of the movement is discussed to bring out meaning, nature and type of leadership and its crisis.

The second chapter deals with the socio-economic conditions of the society in which the Akali movement has grown and the historical genesis of Akali Party as an outgrowth of the movement. Political consciousness among the sikh masses and historical background of the discontent among them have been discussed to bring out the relationship between interests, ideology and organisation that enmesh to make and unmake a movement and its leadership.

The third chapter finally deals with the development of the specific phase in the movement from 1980 to 1984 with focus on the role of the leadership. The crisis of leadership and the unresolved tensions culminate in "Operation Bluestar" trauma in June 1984. We have tried to analyse these developments as aspects and consequences of leadership phenomena.



Chapter - 1

THEORATICAL FRAMEWORK

The main objective of this study is to attempt a better understanding of the genesis and make up of the ongoing crisis in Punjab. It is well known that this crisis is both the basis and the consequences of Akali movement launched in 1980 and Culminating in the total breakdown of socio-political life in Punjab by the middle of 1984. Therefore in this chapter we have tried to grapple with conceptual and theoretical questions of developing a proper perspective on social movements in general, so as to arrive at somewhat better understanding of the movement that is so much intertwined with the ongoing crisis in Punjab. Apart from conceptual identification of social movements, their classification and causation theories, we have focussed on the role of ideology and leadership in solving or aggravating a conflict situation. It is our central argument that the failure of leadership to resolve the conflict was both the explanation of the untraceable situation as well as of the crisis of leadership itself.

The term 'social movement' first came into use in the 19th century. But at that time it had a specific connotation and referred only to the Industrial working class movement. Today the term is used in a broad sense and denotes collective attempts either to bring about change in a social institution or to create an entirely new social order. Though the term is sometimes used in contra-distinction from the religious or political movements but all these movements may be termed as social movements, because they occur in a society with the aims of changing it. Secondly all social movements have political implications even if the members do not strive for it.¹

According to Rao, "A social movement essentially involves sustained collective mobilization through either formal or informal organisation and it aims at bringing about change in the existing social relationships, values and norms..."²

For Gusfield, social movements are a 'Group phenomena' which involve the sharing of common beliefs and actions. Social movements are oriented to change

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1. Heberle, R., 'Social Movements', in *International Encyclopaedia of Social - Sciences*, D.L. Sills (ed); The Macmillan Co. & the free Press, 1968, Vol.14, p.439
 2. Rao, M.S.A., 'Conceptual Problems in the study of Social Movements', in *Social Movements in India*, Rao M.S.A. (ed); Manohar Publications, New Delhi 1979, Vol.2, p.1-2.

and criticise the prevalent form of social order, expressing their discontent through means of demonstrations, meetings and campaigns and propose a new set of programme and policies.³

From the above definitions of social movement it is clear that social conflict and change form the underlying current of the social movements. At a certain point of time the discontent in a society emerges in the form of strain between already established relationships and the new emerging or aspired for relationships. Secondly, discontent is expressed in collectivity in the form of protests and demonstrations and new proposals are made to bring about social and cultural changes. Thus social movements share an important relationship with the social order.

Social movements are different from other forms of protest i.e. crowd behaviour, mobs, riots and social trends etc. The main difference being that social movements are more stable and to some extent organised than the other forms of protest. The participants in a social movement share common sentiments and beliefs and have a sense of 'we-feeling' among themselves. The

3. GUSFIELD, J.R. (ed.) *Protest, Reform and Revolt : A Reader in Social Movements*, John Willey & Sons, New York, 1970.

participants in a social movements may be motivated in different ways to join a movement.

There can be three types of motivations :

- 1] *The value-rational* - The belief of the members in the practical aims of a movement.
- 2] *The emotional - affectual* - The members may be attached by the charismatic personality of their leader.
- 3] *The Purpose - rational* - The members may associate with the movement for the pursuit of their individual interests.⁴

The members may follow any one or all the three types of motives to join a movement.

Thus we see that in any society, in the consciousness of some elements of that society, the existing values, ways of behaviour, pattern of relationship or control of societal resources and differential appropriations may not be adjudged as just and equitable or may be seen as counter to their interests. As a consequence these elements may strive through collective actors to transform the existing order of things. Others

4. Heberle R., op.cit., 1968, P.440.

may have counter - views of the same situations. All this results in a stressful situation in society, which may find expression in large masses of people joining together in common effort to change societal arrangements in desired directions which may meet with resistance from other elements who may have conflicting cognition of the situation and opposing interests and aims. These collective efforts at change to achieve shared goals and interests with more or less sustained continuity contribute to the make up of social movements. The intensity of effort and the degree of consciousness of the aims of the movement and the interests advanced by the movement are not equally shared by all participants. Thus diverse elements may for different motivations and with differing intensity would always form part of the same movement.

CLASSIFICATION OF MOVEMENTS

Social movements have been classified on one or the other criterion. Blumer distinguishes between specific and General movements.⁵ He gives examples of voting right for women being the specific movement and the Feminist movement as a General movement.

5. Gusfield, op.cit., 1970, p.5.

Giddens while talking about the movements from the pre-modern times the development of modern states distinguishes between movements of rebellion and revolution. The movements of rebellion are those which seek to thoroughly change the existing institutions though they may not want to overthrow the monarch e.g. the peasant uprising. The movements of revolution aim at radical changes in the existing socio-economic and political structure.⁶

Rao classifies movements on the basis of different criterion.⁷

a] On the basis of criterion of consequence of a movement:

Under this he differentiates between reformatory, revolutionary and transformative movements, which bring about structural changes.

Reform movements lead to partial changes. They bring about changes associated with norms, values, rituals etc. e.g. the religious and reform movements which bring about structural changes in the religious sphere and social relationships.

6. Giddens, Anthony, *Sociology : A brief but Critical Introduction*, MacMillan Education Ltd., 1986, p.88.

7..Rao, op. cit., 1979, p.3.

Revolutionary movements are identified with violence and radical changes in the society. Here conflict is based on the Marxist ideology of class struggle e.g. The Russian and Chinese revolutions. Transformative changes are middle level power privileges and the resource structure by attacking the upper class monopoly. Here the degree and intensity of the conflict is less than the revolutionary movements and more than the reformatory.

b] On the basis of locus of a movement

The linguistic religious sectarian and caste movements which T.K. Oommen calls 'pre-mordial collectivities' or the peasant's, student's and ethnic movements which he calls 'Civil collectivities'.⁸

c] On the basis of Scale and Spatial Spread

Some movements may be all India movements and some may be local or regional e.g. Bihar, Telangana, Naxalbari movements etc.

d] On the basis of dominant issues of interest

This type of movements include for example the women liberation, Tebhaga movement and anti-Hindi

8. Oommen T.K. - *Social Movements in Survey of Research in Sociology and Social Anthropology*, 1969-79, ICSSR, Vol. II, Satvahan Publications, New Delhi, 1985.

movements etc.

All these classifications have one or the other limitation and do not fully explain about the origin, growth and consequences of a movement. Rao does not strictly follow the basic principles of classification i.e. exhaustiveness and exclusiveness. He ignores exclusiveness in distinguishing between the reform, revolutionary and transformative movements. He distinguishes between reform and revolution in terms of amount of change and reform and transformation in terms of area of change. He does not specify the movements which bring about partial middle level changes and total middle level changes. Secondly, classifying movements on the basis of primordial collectivities the participation of other social categories are ignored. Thirdly, movements sometimes spread beyond the boundaries of a territory in which they originate thus classifying on the basis of the name of the territory may cause problems. Fourthly, as far as goal of a movement is concerned it may undergo transformation with the passage of time. On the whole these classifications do not tell anything about the background of the participants and the means employed to pursue their cherished goals.

THEORIES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

M.S.A. Rao advances three broad theories to study social movements. These theories explain the structural conditions and the motivational forces giving rise to a movement.

1. *Theory of Relative Deprivation*

This theory has developed on two different levels - the level of social mobility and social conflict. Merton was the propounder of the theory.⁹ He applied the theory to analyse social mobility. Thus Merton stresses more on the word 'relative' than on 'deprivation'. Later Runciman following Merton used the concept in relation to the 'reference group' and 'inequality'. The feeling of deprivation is more in relation to the reference group than in relation to how little one has.

According to Marx who developed the theory of relative deprivation on the basis of conflict in the society,¹⁰ a feeling of discontent prevails due to the relative expectations and the actual conditions of

9. Merton R.K., *Social Structure and Social Theory*, Amerind Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd., New York (1968) Indian Edition, New Delhi (1981).

the workers. The increasing gap between what the workers feel they should get and what they actually get further increases their level of expected need satisfaction when seen in relation to the reference group. This dissatisfaction results in conflict and revolt. Thus Marx analyses relative deprivation in terms of material possession, status, behaviour and worth.

2. *The Strain Theory*

According to this theory the structural strain occurs in the prevalent norms, values and situational facilities of a society. Those who are under this strain develop a set of generalised beliefs in order to assess and explain the situation. Such a condition in a society requires a precipitating factor to start off a movement. Thus social movements are a deliberate organised and conscious attempt on the part of the members to construct a more satisfying society for themselves.

3. *The Theory of Revitalization*

Social movements play a 'double edged' role. While on one hand they criticise and express dissent against the existing system, on the other they propose

a new set of policies to improve the situation. Thus social movements employ adaptive processes to establish equilibrium in society.

Amongst all these theories the theory of relative deprivation seems more appropriate because it is not only centered around conflict and cognitive change, motivating and mobilizing people, but it also gives the best explanation for the change orientation of the movements.

Ideology

Formulation of an ideology is an important component of any social movement. The leaders of a movement make a set of beliefs and ideas by selecting different elements of relative deprivation and combining them in different ways to formulate an ideology. Symbols are also made use of which become an important source of identification for the members. The ideology also provides the source of legitimization of the new values, norms and social relationships. Modern social movements follow the ideas of liberty and equality, sometimes in combination with ideas of national unity and independence. The defenders of the existing order create a counter set of ideas which

become the constitutive ideas of a counter movement. Thus they try to defend the status quo.

The belief in a set of ideas bind the members of a social movement together which is important for the success of a movement. The belief structure of any movement varies from deomocratic to revolutionary. The members through their commitment to the movement and its ideology attack the existing ruling party and demand an equal share in the social, economic, educational, political, religious goods and services. This should not be mistaken as a case of social mobility but a case of confrontation and conflict.

The relationship of social movements to political parties is important and can take various shapes. A political party may be the spearhead of a movement, or a movement may exert influence through several political parties, or a party may contain several movements or parts of them, or a movement may reject its connection with any political party.

The power structure of any movement may vary from diffusion of power to concentration in one person, who is at the top level and is known as a leader.

" It is never the case that mankind move in any direction with an even front, but there are always those who go before and show the way".¹¹

This statement made by Cooley shows the importance of a leader in the human society. Leadership in a society is indispensable and no field of human activity is without its impact. A leader can lift his people to the humanitarian level or misguide and deceive them.

"Leadership implies a following whose behaviour is the result of a conscious consideration of the leader's personality, of its own interests and of the anticipated social consciousness".¹²

According to R.N. Vyas - "Leadership behaviour consists of those acts that are functionally related either to goal achievement or to the maintenance and strengthening of the group."¹³

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11. Cooley, C.H., *Human Nature and the Social Order*. Transaction Books, London, 1983, p. 357.
 12. *Encyclopaedia of social sciences*, Edwin R.A. Seligman. Macmillan Company Ltd., New York, 1933, Vol. IX, p.282.
 13. Vyas, R.N., *Creative Leadership*, Ambika Publications Ltd. New Delhi, 1973, p.7.

La Piere describes leadership as the "behaviour that affects the behaviour of other people more than their behaviour affects that of the leader".¹⁴ (emphasis added).

The above definitions of leadership implies that leadership is functional to a group and helps in the target achievement. It also denotes dominance and submission as the behaviour of the leader affects others and the importance of followers who consciously support a leader either due to his personal traits or because of their own interests.

Studies on leadership also assume elite approach.¹⁵ Elite theory was developed by Pareto. He divided the society into non-elite and elite. The elite was further divided into two strata - the governing elite and the non-governing elite. Mosca divides the society into two classes - a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The main argument put forward by the elite theorists was that the elites occupy superior position in a society owing to their personal attributes.

14. Vyas, op. cit, 1973.

15. Bottomore, T.B., *Elites and Society*,
Penguin Books Ltd., England, 1964.

But later on the elite theorists placed less emphasis on the personal traits like intelligence, organisational ability etc. and more on the institutional framework of the society. According to them the heirarchical organisation of social institutions allows a minority to monopolise over the majority.¹⁶ Apart from this these theorists also emphasise that the infrastructure of any society remain the same but the elites circulate and that the elite rule is inevitable.

According to Robert Michels, 'The Iron law of oligarchy' also emphasize the fact --

"It is the organisation which gives birth to the domination of the elected over the electors, of mandatories over the mendators, of the deligates over the deligates who says organisation says oligarchy.

Modern man according to him is faced with an unresolvable dilemma. He can not have large institutions such as nation states, trade unions, political parties, without turning over effective power to few who are at the summit of these institutions.¹⁷

16. Mills, C. Wright, *The Power Elite*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1956, p. 4.

17. Michels, Robert : *Political Parties*, Page 15, Introduction, Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1949.

But the elite approach has been criticised on the basis that it concentrates power in one single elite group which is not possible in a pluralist society. Secondly in modern democracies the governing elites are compelled to share their power with the pressure groups and power is decentralized in a democratic setup. Due to these reasons it is not advisable to use elite theory as an approach to the study of leadership. Secondly leadership is devoid of implications of concentration of power.

The concept of leadership has been derived from the charismatic paradigm of *Weber*. Broadly speaking a leader is the one who initiates innovative and change oriented behaviour in a group of people. The leader has an influence over this group through his personal qualities and his control over the distribution of resources. Thus leadership styles can be seen in a way in which the leader uses his influence and power in a specific context.

Before we move further it is important to clarify the concept of charisma in leadership studies. The concept of charisma was used by *Weber* in a purely value-neutral sense. According to *Weber* a charismatic

leader is a possessor of unusual qualities of knowledge. He is a natural leader who during times of political, psychic, physical, economic or religious distress have not been an office holder or incumbent of any occupation which could give him an authority. The holder of charisma knows no bureaucratic organisation. He commands respect from his followers by virtue of his personal charm, his mission and his miracles. ¹⁸

Weber introduced the concept of charismatic leader in the context of his classification of authority into three ideal types --

- a] *Legal rational authority* is based on formal rules and the right of a person to exercise authority is given by virtue of these rules.
- b] *Traditional authority* is derived from the belief in the sanctity of traditions and customs.

In both the above types the right to exercise authority is legitimate. But

- c] the *Charismatic authority* is distinctly personal. It rests on the devotion to the specific sanctity and heroism. There are

18. Girth, H.H. and Mills, C.W., *From Max Weber : Essays in Sociology*, RKP, London, 1948.

important differences between the charismatic leadership and the general leadership which we shall discuss now.

Charismatic leadership is a special subtype of General leadership with unusual qualities not found in leadership in general. The differences between charismatic and general leadership can be seen by examining four dimensions showing the followers recognition of response to the leader.¹⁹

1] *The leader-image dimension --*

This refers to the belief that followers hold about their leader. The leaders are believed to have skills and qualities admirable in their particular culture, i.e., wisdom, foresight, character, strength etc. which are essential for the accomplishment of the goals.

In case of a charismatic leader the followers believe that he has some super human qualities commonly associated in their culture with the realm of the divine on the supernatural.

19. Willner, Ann Ruth, *The Spellbinders'. Charismatic Political Leadership*, New Haven Yale Univ. Press, 1984, p. 5-7.

2] *The idea acceptance dimension:* - It relates to followers receptivity of leader's ideas. The followers may accept their leader's ideas because it sounds reasonable to them, or it conforms with their already obtained knowledge or experiences or because of the leader's prestige and status.

In charismatic relationship these basis of belief either do not exist or do not count. The followers accept his ideas unquestionably because it is 'he' who has advanced these ideas.

3] *The compliance dimensions :* - This refers to the leader's directives. The followers may comply with leaders commands due to the following reasons - because they seem reasonable or lawful, advantageous, out of fear of penalties etc.

On charismatic leadership such motives are minor or irrelevant. They comply because 'he' has given command. Belief and obedience is automatic.

4] *The emotional dimensions :*

This relates to the type and intensity of the emotional commitment of followers to a leaders. Followers are emotionally attached to leader, specially if he is highly popular.

In charismatic relationship the intensity of emotions is not only more in degree but also somewhat different. Followers respond to the leader with devotion, awe, reverence and blind faith. These emotions are close to religious worship.

From the above discussion it becomes clear that a charismatic leader is perceived by the followers as somewhat superhuman. The followers have a blind faith on the leader and unconditionally comply with his ideas and are devotionally attached to him.

Coming back to leadership we will now discuss how can leadership be obtained, Leadership can be obtained chiefly through three means -- persuasion, coercion and mixed.

If the followers are educated they can be persuaded but in a battlefield coercion is necessary. Usually in a democratic setup the leader is obliged to use

persuasive means whereas in autocratic and dictatorial setup coercive ways are employed. On the whole a leader has to decide which means to use under which circumstances and accordingly any one or a mixture of both the methods can be used.

The two elements of human relationship - personality and situation also helps in the emergence of leadership to some extent. Considering personality one thing is clear that there is no absolute standard of leadership that can be considered worthwhile in every case and in every situation. A leader in one group may not be accepted as a leader in another. Though leadership demands some sort of skill but no single kind of skill will be useful in all situations.

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The situational factor does not seek the success of a leader in certain traits but in certain situations. It puts forward the view that the leaders should act under certain conditions in certain ways in order to achieve their goals. The situational factor actually refers to opportunity. But situation alone does not make a good leader. Thus traits like courage, boldness, initiative, adaptability etc. are important which help an Individual to understand his situation and act with foresight and insight.



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Nature of Leadership

John Adair proposes three approaches to understand the nature of leadership.²⁰

1. *Qualitative approach*

It is based on the generally accepted ideas that the leaders are born and not made. The approach stresses certain in-born qualities such as initiative, intelligence and humour etc. as the essential components which make a leader. Though these qualities are inborn in a person, these can be developed with the help of strong will power.

The approach has two main drawbacks. First is that we cannot come to an agreement regarding the qualities of a leader which will give him dominance over his followers in any situation. Secondly no particular trait can be said to be good or bad for leadership e.g. a soldier for whom courage and bravery are essential traits may possess them but may not be a good leader.

20. Adair, John, *Training for Leadership*, Macdonald and Co. Pub. Ltd., 1968, p. 11 to 22.

However the approach brings out an important point that natural leadership varies from person to person.

2. *Situational Approach*

The approach stresses that although intelligence, scholarliness, dependability, social participation and socio-economic status are related to leadership, yet the social situation and a particular organisational and environmental setting under which the leaders act is important. Thus a person who is a leader in one situation may not be a leader in another. But the only common factor is the superior competence or knowledge that a person has and by means of which he proves to be a leader in a particular situation.

The approach suffers from two main drawbacks. First of all the role flexibility to this degree may create more confusion than it solves. Secondly certain men seem to possess a general leadership competence enabling them to influence their followers in different situations. The approach neglects this and does not give any explanation for this.

3. *Functional Approach*

It is a comprehensive and integrated understanding of leadership which has been propounded on the basis of a number of studies on social psychology of small groups. It emphasises on the group needs and combines the situational and qualitative approach in it.

There are three areas of group needs.

First is the need to fulfill a common task of the group. Before achieving its goal the group may pass through many adverse circumstances ranging from frustration and anxiety to reorganisations within the group.

Second area of need is team work. In order to achieve its common task and to face the internal and external disruptive forces the group must maintain its cohesiveness and the members must always stand united. The third area of group need is the needs of individual members of the group. The members have certain physical, social and vocational needs which may or may not be met by participating in the group. But the basic needs of food shelter and protection are received in money. These needs arise out of the whole range of social activity.

Each of these areas of need overlap each other. In order to fulfill group task through team maintenance certain functions of planning and executing the plans has to be performed. Performance of these tasks rest on the leader depending on the nature of task and the situation. The functional approach regards leadership as an essential interaction between the leader, group members and the situation. The leader should be aware of the latent powers of his followers and should be able to evoke and harass them.

The concept of situation implies group task and working environments. In a time of crisis a leader may be required to act promptly without consulting his members. The time limit factor may not allow him to share his decision making function with his subordinates.

Keeping in view the above discussion we can conclude that all the three approaches are important for a comprehensive study of leadership. Though any satisfactory theoretical formulation is not yet available but the personality of the leader, group and its needs and the situations determined by the physical setting must be all together taken in consideration.

The distribution of leadership roles depends upon the type of distribution of authority and power.

N. Hans forwards as types of leaderships.²¹

1. *Institutional leader*

This refers to formal leaders occupying a position owing to which they carry leadership roles. The leadership roles in such a type continue even though the persons occupying the position may change.

2. *Situational leadership*

It is the informal leadership providing guidance to a group or community to achieve its goal. The leader commands respect and prestige in specific situations.

3. *Dictatorian or authoritarian leadership*

Here all the powers and functions are centralized in one person and the participation of the followers in the decision making matters is not considered important. A dictator generally fails to generate spontaneous assent and group solidarity,

21. Nagpal, Hans, Leadership a Frame of Reference in *Leadership in India*, L.P. Vidyarthi (ed.), Asia Pub.House, New Delhi, 1967, p. 61-62.

4. *Democratic Leadership*

In this type role-structure is diffused among the members. It promotes responsible participation by other group members and reinforces co-operative inter-personal relations within the group. It encourages cohesiveness in the group.

None of the above said patterns exist in its pure forms. Whereas Institutional leadership has informal aspects, situational has formal aspects. There is also democratic - authoritarian continuum. Democratic leadership have undemocratic character because of the system of indirect election system. A leader who is elected by the people has the right to elect the members who again will be elites. But democratic leadership by principle cannot concentrate power in itself and has to give chance to others in the participation of decision-making. So even though pure democracy is difficult to exist ideally speaking it is a better form of leadership than other forms.

Leadership Crisis

In any large organisation or in any movement certain demands are made to the leader. He is expected

to function intelligently in external as well as internal environments keeping in view the prevalent social order of that society. Hence we are dealing with leadership as a social status. Being at the head of the hierarchy of authority and decision making in a movement, the leader in order to affect change has to operate in an environment of enemies, adherents, clients, etc.

A movement originates in a society and seek to change certain norms values in the social order thus the opinion of the public regarding the ideology of the movement becomes important. The success of any movement depends much on the influence it exerts in a society. Because a movement is bound to face opposition, it must find ways and means of manipulating and influencing the external environment. The movement has to be articulated to the major segments of the parent society.

Owing to these two important needs of a movement, the leader has to perform two set of role-demands - as an articulator and as a mobilizer.²²

22. Gusfield, Joseph R., *Functional areas of Leadership in Leadership in India*, L.P. Vidyarthi (ed) op.cit., 1967, Page 25.

The acts of a leader become symbolic of the entire movement. In leadership the public identifies and judges a movement. He is the champion of a movement and through propaganda, by means of communication he personifies the movement.

As a mobilizer he is expected to maintain and uphold the ideologies and convictions of the movement. He has to be zealously committed to a movement which differentiate it from any other movement in the society. As a mobilizer he is the soul and conscience of the movement. He must try to mobilize maximum support for the movement.

As an articulator he is expected to meet half way the public and other organisations of the society. He must have the ability to find access to the major institutions even though they be hostile to change and be able to inspire some acceptance outside of the movement. He must be able to communicate well not only within the group but even outside.

Thus leadership in a movement merges as a set of functions and corresponding roles. Crisis develop in a movement when a leader fails to perform these roles successfully. A leader may not come up to

The leadership of nationalist movement, in order to gain all possible support to their movement and to mobilize newer sections of Indian people in the central cause of working for freedom from British imperialism sought accomodation with diverse religious and social interests. The social and religious reform movements which joined the nationalists retained their identity even when they were fighting for independence of India. Thus we see that incipient communalism formed part of the nationalist movement apart from the balatant communalism encouraged by the British to divide Indian people.

The seeds of communalism sown during the British period continued to sprout even after independence. The uneven reorganisation of India on the linguistic bases while easing the situation for some, further aggravated the problem of minorities and nationalities for others like the Punjab. The social base for recruitment of the elite has widened and articulation of newer interests is creating leadership difficulties. The demand on leadership has undergone a qualitative change. Political bosses controlling party machines, organising factional politics, raise

the expectations of the conflicting demands made on to him. Secondly the leader might keep his own interest of retaining power above the interests of the movement. But the fault doesn't always lie with the leader himself, the members of a movement have to be equally committed to the movement. The socio-economic conditions of the society also play an important part. The more a society is unevenly developed, the more expectations it has of a leader, which might lead to crisis.

Leadership Crisis in India

The traditional Indian Social structure characterized by hierarchy, holism, continuity and transcendence underwent many changes owing to the processes of sanskritization and modernization.²³ Two types of changes took place - culture and structural. But the changes were inconsistent in both the cases.

In cultural case the democratic ideals of secularism, untouchability, non-parochialism and equality came in direct confrontation with the traditional value system which continues to resist. The process of urbanization, industrialization and spread of education etc. led to the formation of new identities of caste and

 23. Singh, Yogendra, *Modernization of India Tradition*,
 Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1986.

regional groups. Tradition is being reinforced by means of communication and transport.

In structural sphere the caste, family and village community have retained their traditional character. Caste has become flexible and adapted itself to the interests of political parties and organisations. Joint family loyalties still prevail.

These contradictions are also apparent at the macro structural level where the political elite do not leave an opportunity to exploit the prevailing confusion to their advantage.

The leaders of the nationalist movement formed the ruling elite group in Independent India. The growth of Indian nationalism was the outcome of struggle against the restrictions on economic, social, political and cultural development. The nationalist leaders being educated and more exposed to the world tried to free India from foreign rule. The elite at that time was more homogeneous and came almost from the similar background.

They had uniformity of ideology and aspirations. But at that time they were more concerned with the solidarity of the nationalist movement and independence.

funds and engineer elections. The gap between the political elite and the non-political elite has also widened. Revolt against the power monopoly of one party has swelled the ranks of opposition parties. But they also lack political cohesion. It is widely believed that attainment of power is the only principal end of all parties. Parochial issues are pursued with passion, factionalism and casteism rules the ideals of leadership all over India today. That it should break out into an apparent crisis, as it has happened in Punjab, is due to a convergence of various failures of the leadership to resolve the conflicting demands.

From the above discussion we conclude that social movements are an important means of expressing as well as spreading discontent in any society. Leadership plays an important part in the success or failure of a movement. In the next chapter our discussion will be on the socio-economic conditions of Punjab and the historical background of the leadership crisis we have just discussed the leadership crisis in India which was necessary because the crisis in Punjab are not only to be seen in its socio-economic backdrop but also in the context of leadership crisis at the all India level.

CHAPTER - 2
SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AKALI
MOVEMENT AND PUNJAB CRISIS

Punjab is roughly triangular in shape. It covers an area, of 50,357 km² and extends between 29°33'N to 32°31'N latitude and 73°53'E to 76°56'E longitude. The reconstructed state comprises of three divisions made up of twelve districts which are further divided into 45 subdivisions.²⁴

There are three principal snow fed rivers in the state - the Sutlej, the Ravi and the Beas. About 95 per cent of the total area of Punjab is flat plain. Punjab experiences a continental type of climate i.e. extreme summer heat followed by severe winter. The greatest rainfall occurs in the period from June to September under the N.W. Monsoons. The average rainfall of Punjab is about 70cm.²⁵

POPULATION

As per the 1981 census the population of Punjab is 16,669,755 as compared to 13,551,060 in 1971. It is 2.44% of the country's total population. The density of

24. Census of India 1981. Provincial Population Totals Series 17, Punjab.

25. Census of India 1971 (Punjab) series 17, p.1-A, General Report.

Punjab is 331 persons per sq. kms. As against 269 in 1971. The state registered the highest growth rate of 23.01% since 1901. The sikhs form the bulk of the population i.e. 60.75 per cent followed by Hindus 36.93 per cent. The rest 2.32 per cent is divided among other religious communities in the state.²⁶

ECONOMY

In order to understand the present problem at hand it is necessary to study the inter-relationship between the development of social and economic structures of the state concerned. Punjab being a state of India we would locate the problem in the larger context i.e. as a consequence of the retarded growth of Indian capitalism, its political and regional manifestations.

At the time of Independence, India inherited a specific capitalist path of development and bourgeois political economy from the British imperialists. But the capitalist path of development, instead of effecting a radical solution to the basic social and economic problems has resulted in the uneven development and aggravated intra-regional and inter-regional imbalances.

26. The Census of India 1981, op.cit.

The land reforms have been tardy and even when implemented were not implemented properly. The specific path of development chosen has resulted in the increase of mass poverty, unemployment, agricultural landless labourers and rural indebtedness. Even according to the Government statistics 40 per cent of the total population of the country is below poverty line.²⁷

An important result of the economic development has been the strengthening of some economic groups constituting the upper strata such as the rich peasantry, Industrialists, big and medium businessman. These groups in order to protect and further their interests exploit the state apparatus at various levels and thrive on the prevailing confusion to their advantage. Under such circumstances agitations and demonstrations arising out of discontent among the deprived sections are not uncommon. Moreover individuals and segments of the upper strata, where the advantages are not always distributed to the satisfaction of all also manipulate the popular discontent as an instrument, in their struggle against their rivals who are seen as impediments to their ambitions.

27. Singh Gopal - 'Locating The Problem' in Singh Gopal (ed) *Punjab Today*, Intellectual Publishing House, New Delhi, 1987, p.3.

In India capitalism has compromised with the feudal structure and landlordism. This compromise has had a negative effect on the emergence of national market and a consistent integrating ideology expected of capitalism. Secondly the strategy of the Indian ruling classes determined by the capitalist class acquiring a monopoly character at a very early stage, was not geared to the expansion of the market by removal of poverty and unemployment. Outmoded technology is being imparted into India and we are becoming more and more dependent on foreign aid. The multi-national corporations, International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have also put pressure on the economy of India, to safeguard their interest maintaining the existing international divisions of labour to the disadvantage of independent capitalist development in India and other Third World countries. Such a stage of affairs gives chance to the imperialists to carry out divisive activities in newly freed countries to keep them in neo-colonial tutelage.

Under these circumstances there are two important implications of the bourgeois dominated capitalist economy. One is that the asymmetrical relationship between the international and Indian capital continues

to be that of domination and exploitation. The former dominated by the national bourgeois. In such a relationship common masses are the worst effected. Secondly the dissatisfied section of the regional bouregeois starts demanding greater share in the centrally controlled and managed resources. What happens under such circumstances is that the revivalist and secessionist elements which are conceptually and historically associated with feudalism get a new lease of life as they are exploited by the regional bourgeois as well as the imperialists for their vested interests. In the power game of mobilising mass support for electoral purpose, the national bourgeois also tries to fan these sentiments or at least does not constantly struggle against these tendencies under the fond hope of taming them with the help of state power if need be.

Hence when such is the scene at all India level we cannot see the Punjab crisis in isolation because the deepening economic crisis at the all India level has its impact on Punjab.

There are two sectors of economy - agriculture and industry in Punjab. But Punjab being predominantly agricultural state the more important source of economy is aggriculture.

AGRICULTURE

With the introduction of Green Revolution in Punjab, the state made rapid development and became the most prosperous state in India. The Green Revolution consisted of government sponsored spread of certain high yielding varieties - mainly of wheat.

These varieties require greater input of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and water. Thus Punjab farmers use 132 kg. of chemical fertilizer/ hectare as compared to 32 kg. for India as a whole. 80% of Punjab's net area shown is irrigated as against just 28% for India as a whole. Almost 100% of its villages are electrified, while only 56% of all India villages are electrified. The annual per capita consumption of electricity in agriculture is five times the India figure.²⁸

In 1960 the consumption of power for agriculture was only 15% and in 1980 it increased to 40%. Mechanisation of agriculture has also increased. In 1961 there were only 4997 tractors in the state, in 1981-82 their number increased to 146,332.²⁹

28. *Punjab : The People Fight Back*, All India Federation For Democratic Rights, 1987, p.8.

29. Chopra, Mishra and Nirmal Singh *Agony of Punjab*, Patriot Publishers, New Delhi, 1984, p.155-156.

The Green Revolution has already reached its plateau. The groundwater resources are well exploited. The exploitation of limited remaining surface water will pose technical and organisational problems. Almost all the area under cultivation is saturated with high yielding varieties and chemical fertilizers. The cost of production continues to rise year after year and the margin of profitability is getting eroded, though not the net profit.

IMPACT OF GREEN REVOLUTION

The benefits that accrued from the Green revolution are obvious. But the Green Revolution in Punjab has had many adverse effects on the socio-economic and political aspects of the state.

1. The Green Revolution in Punjab resulted in uneven development not only in different regions of the state but for different sections of people for Punjab as a whole. This unevenness resulted in growing 'proletarianization', 'immiserization', and 'partial pauperization' of the marginal and poor peasants.³⁰ The number of landless labourers

30. Singh Gopal (ed) 1987, op.'cit., p.10.

has increased to double and that of marginal farmers to three times in ten years. In Punjab 24% small peasants and 31% marginal peasants live below poverty line.³¹

2. The capitalist mode of production has resulted in imbalance in the overall development. The big landlords constituting only 20% own more than 60% of the total land. The rich farmers have political connections and can easily avail of the credits and other assets at the cheap rate of 6% to 10% interest. The poor peasant is either driven to part with his land after becoming a defaulter with the credit agencies, or become indebted to the local money lenders. Some times these indebted farmers sell their lands to the big farmers or lease it out for about Rs.1200 per acre per year. In 1971 there were 13.5 lakh such holdings and decade later 10 lakh. Thus more than 3.50 lakh families not working on their own lands. Thus rich farmers go on becoming more rich and poor farmers become more poor. The 11 lakh agricultural labour households get low wages - Rs. 8

31. Bhalla, G.S. and Alagh, Y.K. "Green Revolution and Small Peasants : A study of income distribution Punjab Agriculture", EPW, Part II, May 22, 1982, p. 876.

in the lean season and Rs.25 for a few days in the busy season.³²

This has resulted in tendency towards social polarization and shapening of class contradictions. In order to meet the challenge of growing politicisation of the landless the big farmers use reactionary elements and divisive forces as their main weapon to destroy the unity of people.

3. In Punjab the prices of all inputs have shot up but there has been shortage in supply. The shortage in the supply of electricity results in shortage in supply of water also. There were few buyers for the bumper crop in case of potatoes in 1979 and sugarcane lateron. Such problems result in frustration even among the rich growers.
4. Another impact of Green Revolution is that it attracted migratory labour force. A heavy proportion of its work force depends upon low production employment. This cheap labour comes from eastern U.P., Bihar, Rajasthan etc. The

32. All India Federation for Democratic Rights, 1987, op cit., page.11.

labour comes during harvest and sowing seasons and most of them settle in Punjab towns after harvest, taking petty jobs. The local labour force is more organised and demands better wages. Thus the capitalist farmer prefer to employ the outside labour which is cheap and docile. The unity and consolidation of the rural proletariat is hindred because of the lack of interaction between the local and outside labour. The inflow of migratory labour had added to the existing social tensions in rural Punjab. The extremists and the fundamentalists play upon the psyche of sikh community by indicating the imminent danger of domination by Hindu majority in the state.

5. A large number of Punjabis have immigrated to hard currency countries such as England, U.S.A., Australia and Canada. These people have a strong attachment to their rural homes. They hoard money and try to buy more and more land which is considered a status symbol. Such a trend has resulted in the expansion of large land holdings on one hand and enormous increase in the number of landless labourers on the other.

6. The consumption of fertilizers means large profits to the foreign firms from whom the fertilizers or the fertilizer plant technology is purchased. A share of profit also went to the traders. But for small and marginal farmers it mounted debt and investment.

Thus Green Revolution has resulted into an economic stratification of peasantry into different layers but their social base is similar. Most of the peasants belong to Jat caste and believe in sikhism. The labourers belong to backward and scheduled castes. Therefore whenever these labourers demand more labour the rich jats incite caste prejudices in the non-untouchable rural poor and marginal farmers against the landless.

It is this new rural rich who have mixed up religion with caste factor to widen their social base and to capture political power. Hence agriculture based prosperity of Punjab has further reinforced the religious, caste and communal feelings among the people.

INDUSTRY

"No where in the world vigorous growth of agricultural sector can be maintained for long without dynamic growth of the secondary and tertiary sectors of economy".³³

The industrial scene in the state has so far been dominated by the small scale manufacturing units. These small scale and medium industries are confined to a few cities like Amritsar, Batala, Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Mandi Gobindgarh, Rajpura and Mohali. There are mainly eight type of industries in the state - woollen textiles and hosiery, steel re-rolling, cotton textile and spinning, cycle and cycle parts, cotton ginning and processing, agricultural implements and machine tools, sewing machines and parts, and sports goods. The development of these industries is uneven in different areas of the state.

In 1973-74 there were 30,691 small scale industrial units with the value of production at current prices amounting to Rs.408.25 crores. These industrial units employed over 2.33 lakh workers. In 1979-80 their number increased to 47,437 and value of production to

33. Randhawa M.S. *Green Revolution : A Case study of Punjab*
Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1974, p.121

Rs.888.19 crores. The number of workers employed too increased to 3.33 lakh. The large and medium scale industrial units increased from 122 to 203 during the same period. Their production increased from Rs.282.83 crore to RS.945.99 crores.³⁴

Though Punjab has the highest percapita income in the country it lags behind in Industrial development and whatever industrial development is there, it is loopsided.

Firstly the small scale industry in Punjab depends upon the raw material from outside the state. The lack of large and medium scale industries and ancillary units limit the prospects of the small scale industries which are unable to compete with the product of the industrial units in other parts of India because they are linked with large and medium industries. Secondly the Punjab economy lacks diversification. The share of the manufacturing in the total state income has slightly increased from 10.12% to 11.00% in 1961-71, but the proportion of male work force had declined from 15.60% to 10.30% in the same period. The contribution of registered and unregistered industries

34. Chopra, Mishra and Nirmal Singh, 1984, op., 'cit. p. 158.

to the gross domestic production in Punjab was only 11.7% as against 24.9% in Maharashtra, 23.0% in Tamil Nadu, and 18.0% in West Bengal.

The industrial backwardness of the state is also clear from the total and per capita net value added in the factory system. In 1956-66 Punjab ranked 8th in the share of value added, went down to 10th position in 1977-78. In the same period in terms of per capita value added in factory sector Punjab was pushed down from 4th to 6th position. Infact in early 80s Punjab figured nowhere among the nine major Indian states in terms of factory sector output and employment.³⁵

Thirdly the industrial sector is not producing vital requirements of its developed agricultural sector. It has failed to meet the demands for tractors and chemical fertilizers from the farm sector. There is only one tractor factory in the state- the Punjab Tractor Ltd. producing Swaraj Tractors. But most of the tractors come from outside. Similarly for fertilizers Punjab depends on outside supply.

This results in highly distorted economic development as there is weak organic link between the different sectors. Development in one sector does not

35. Azad Nirmal S., *Distorted Economic Development in Gopal Singh (ed), op.cit., 1967, page 52-53.*

generate development in the other. Some industries do not have direct structural link with the Punjab economy. These industries either produce for the outside demand or are dependent on imported raw-material or both. The agricultural raw material is produced in abundance but there are not many industries to exploit it. Only processing industries in the small scale sector are that of sugar, cotton ginning and rice shelling.

Keeping in view the above discussion we can say that the industrial backwardness of Punjab economy has political manifestations. The Indian state has developed Public sector to promote industrialisation of the economy, but Punjab had been ignored as far as Public sector was concerned. Private sector dominates the Industrial structure of Punjab economy. Out of the registered units the Public sector accounted for 25% with 10.9% workers employed. In contrast to it in Indian economy the Public sector accounted for 24.4% of the workers employed.

As far as financial assistance of Punjab is concerned, its share in the central investment in 1979 with commissioning of fertilizer plant at Bhatinda, was only 2.2%.

Such a development of the Industrial sector is unable to bring about any radical transformation in the economy. Infact it reinforces the urban bourgeois interests on the one hand and the capitalist landlord and rich peasantry on the other. This has created acute social conflict. The traditional communalists, clans, caste, semi-feudal elements are reasserting themselves in the new situation in a new way.

Another adverse effect of this unequal economic growth is that it is reinforcing the unjust social structure and creating communal tensions in Punjab.³⁶ Broadly speaking the two major sectors of economy are dominated by the two major communities in the state. The sikhs predominate the agricultural sector and the Hindus the trade sector. The link between agriculture and trade is very strong as most of the inputs and outputs of agriculturists in rural areas have to pass through the traders in the urban areas. The economic interests of both the communities clash. Secondly the urban bourgeois is also divided into Hindus and Sikhs. So again both the communities come in confrontation with each other. Under such circumstances either one or both the communities are likely to invoke religious

36. D'Souza Victor, *Economy, Caste, religion and Population distribution : analysis of communal tension in Punjab*, in E.P.W. Vol. 17, April-June 1982.

sectarianism against the other. Such a situation can also lead to extremism, violence and counter - violence among both the communities. The political vested interests play one community against the other and take full advantage of the situation.

The capital intensive economy, the distorted economic development and the absence of public sector and the accumulation of wealth by the rich farmers has resulted in unemployment. The surplus of the rich farmers is either accumulated in the banks, or spent on consumer good or buying more land. Besides they prefer becoming truck owners, cinema owners, cold storage owners, labour contractors, private bus owners and even smugglers. Thus much of the wealth which is invested does not help to create many employment opportunities.

Thus for the youth of Punjab there are few ways out of their desperate circumstances. Army recruitment of sikhs has been lowered since 1947. It is difficult to go to the foreign countries due to their restrictive immigration practices. Thus large number of degree holder youths are Jobless. Many of them join rackets to indulge in smuggling at the border.

As we discussed above the economic development of Punjab has not gone long way in solving the socio-economic and political problems of the state. The unequal development of agricultural and industrial sectors has created imbalance in the economy. The capitalist development has adjusted itself to the landlordism and class and caste conflicts are present. Communal feelings are incited in one community against the other and the politicians take advantage of the situation.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The word 'Sikh' is derived from the sanskrit word 'Shishya' meaning a disciple or learner. In Pali 'Shishya' becomes 'Sisa' - means a pupil or one under training in a religious doctrine. The term 'Sikh' in Punjab came to be used for the disciples of Guru Nanak and his nine spiritual successors.

Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak at a time of social and political turmoil in Punjab. The Muslim invasion strongly reinforced the traditional Hindu social structure, instead of bringing a change in it. The more muslim rulers became rigid and forced Islam on the Hindus, the more the Hindus reverted to idol

worship, wearing of sacred thread, caste system etc. Bhakti cult and sufism did not have strong impact on the masses.

Sikhism adopted and reconciled some aspects of hinduism and Islam. Guru Nanak took monotheism of Islam and accepted the sovereignty of God, purest vendanta from Hinduism and rejected idol worship, rituals and every kind of human discrimination and preached the universal brotherhood of man. Guru Nanak had his followers drawn both from among the muslims and Hindus. Nanak's teachings were attuned to the secular aspirations of the common people as distinct from the priesthood. He preached in the simply language of the masses, emphasised on labour sharing of food, denunciation of empty rituals and exposed the hollowness of priesthood, ascetism and celibecy. Nanak considered values of labour as vital to the social progress.

He once observed -

"I cannot worship Thee with an empty stomach, Lord, take this rosary and I am through with meditation if I am to starve and pray".

(Adi Granth: P.656. Emphasise mine)³⁷

Nanak summed up his message in three commandments —

37. Dhillon Dalbir Singh, *Sikhism origin and Development*, Atlantic Publishers and distributors, New Delhi, 1988, p.156.

kirt karo - work
vand chhako - share your meals with others
nam japo - worship

Nanak took practical steps to do away with caste system and introduced the system of Langar or common kitchen.

Sikhism developed in two phases. During the first half of the 16th century it was a reform movement. Under the first five Gurus sikh faith underwent significant changes. It crystallised its own institutions and organised structures.

The evolution of any community needs suitable ethnical doctrines and its distinctive social and religious beliefs. The evolution of sikh community was not sudden. Nanak built a strong foundation with a clearly recognised ethical belief and social thought. The first four successors built upon this foundation. The institutions of Langar, Sangat, Pangat, Guruship, Manji and Masand system provided effective functional organisation for the propagation of this faith and for binding its adherents into a religious community.

Guru Angad devised a new script Gurumukhi and gave a distinct written language to his follower.

Harimandir built by the fifth Guru at Amritsar held a special importance for the sikhs and by and by Amritsar became a holy city for them. Guru Arjun Dev compiled the Adi Granth which contained the teachings of the first five Gurus and many Hindu and Sufi saints also. The teachings of the ninth Guru were incorporated later.

Sikhism took a sharp turn during the later half of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century. Guru Arjun became the first martyr at the hands of the then Mughal rulers and his son Guru Hargobind transformed the peaceful sikh movement into a militant movement, not only for its own survival but to become part of the general struggle for the protection of downrodden and oppressed. Hargobind wore two swords of 'Miri' and 'Piri' signifying 'Shakti' and 'Bhakti' respectively. He showed the early seeds of political consciousness among the sikhs.

Guru Teg Bahadur became the second martyr and his son Guru Govind Completed the work initiated by his ancestors. He created the institution of initiating the sikhs into a well knit disciplined bond of people called the 'Khalsa', who took a new birth through this

sacrificial ceremony. He gave five emblems as the symbols of sikh religion. Sikhism emerged as a full fledged religion during the time of Guru Gobind Singh. The sikhs became a distinct religious community. Guru Govind Singh also abolished the institutions of personalised Guru and bequeathed Granth Sahib as the Guru of the sikhs.

After Guru Gobind Singh's death the sikh leadership was taken-over by Banda Bahadur. After his death the sikhs were without a leader and scattered in jungles in order to save themselves from the Mughal ruler's persecution. Later on they organised themselves into eleven misls, out of which Ranjit Singh of Sukerchakia misl came out to be most powerful and established his rule in Punjab. But Ranjit Singh established a secular rule and had many non-sikhs as his ministers and administrators.

Punjab was annexed by the Britishers after Ranjit Singh's death. The British rulers following a 'divide and rule' policy and adjusted the three Punjabi communities in different, occupations. The Hindus being more educated than the other two were preferred for clerical jobs, the muslims in police and the sikhs in the army. The sikhs joining the army were asked to strictly adhere to the sikh code prescribed for the khalsa.

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS REFORMS

One source of inspiration for political aspirations, ideology and action for sikhs came from the teachings of sikh Gurus. The sikh political leaders were the product of a movement that had grown and developed among them as a resistance against socio-religious corruption, economic exploitation and political persecution during the mediæval days.

The Gurdwaras and Granth Sahib hold a special importance for the sikhs. Being historically associated with the important incidents in the lives of the sikh Gurus. These Gurdwaras form the institutional mechanism combining the best record of the sikh tradition and instilling a sense of belongingness for the sikh masses weaving them into a collectivity.

With the passage of time institutionalisation of sikh religion led to a growth of special set of people who confined themselves to the management of Gurdwaras. There also developed a distinct sect called udasis but there was no great antagonism between them and the common sikhs. The Gurdwaras had passed into the hands of the udasis at the time of muslim persecution of the sikhs. The sikh misaldars and later

on Ranjit Singh granted rich and tax free land to these Gurudwaras. The udasis became the Mahants managing properties attached to Gurudwaras as private fiefs. These mahants started living a luxurious life and practiced Hindu rites inside the temple.

After the annexation of Punjab by the British, the Gurudwaras passed into the hands of government supported managers who were mostly drawn from the Mahants. Some reform movements started in Punjab at this time. The Nirankari, Namdhari, Radha Soami and Singh Sabha among the sikhs and the Arya Samaj, Brahma Samaj etc. among the Hindus.

THE NIRANKARIS

During the reign of Ranjit Singh the Hindus living in western Punjab came under the influence of sikh religion. Some of them accepted the baptism joined the khalsa while others continued to describe themselves as Hindus but generally gave up the worship of Hindu Gods and started reading the Granth. Among these Hindus grew up a custom of bringing up atleast one son as a keshdhari sikh. In the 18th century this semi-Hindu Sikh community under the leadership of Baba Dayal founded Nirankari sect. He condemned idol worship,

and other Brahmnic rituals. Belief in Guru Nanak and Guru Granth was basic to the Nirankaris. Baba Dayal's son Darbara Singh succeeded him. He started Anand marriage institution, wherein the marriage was solemnised in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib in a simple and inexpensive way. The Nirankari's believed in the formless God. The present Nirankari sect is a breakaway branch of the earlier Nirankari sect. It was started by one Buta Singh who on account of some charges was asked to leave the sect.

Buta Singh was succeeded by Avtar Singh and Avtar Singh by his son late Baba Gurbachan Singh. It is this sect with which the sikh fundamentalists have their conflict. The Nirankari's have no affiliation with any of the known sikh religious traditions. Their Gurus wear a turban and keep bearded but they do not regard Guru Granth as their Guru. They preach their faith through the vocabulary and symbolism of sikhism.³⁸ For example in imitation of Guru Gobind Singh's 'Panj Piaras' (the Five Beloved of the Sikh history) they have 'Sat Sitaras' (the Seven Stars). Their religious book compiled by Avtar Singh is called after 'Gurbani' as 'Avtar Bani'. In their monthly journal

 38. Singh Harbans, *The Sikh Faith and the Nirankaris : A Historical Perspective* in *The Sikh Review*, August 1978, Vol. xxvi, No.296, p. 7.

'Sant Nirankari' they present articles in which their interpretation of Guru Granth and Gurbani seems much distorted. Due to such reasons the Akalis do not regard them as sikhs and have conflict with them.

THE RADHASOAMIS

They believed in the living Guru who initiates the disciples. This sect was founded by Shiv Dayal. He was greatly influenced by Adi Granth and Propounded a doctrines which contained elements of both Hinduism and Sikhism. He described God as the union between Radha (Symbolising the Soul) and Soami (the Master), hence himself a Radhasoami. The Radhasoami temples do not have Guru Granth but a raised platform from where the Guru delivers his discourse. Even though they may be kashdhari sikhs. The Radhasoamis do not believe in baptism and militant khalsa. They believe in the teachings of first five sikh Guru and reject the others.³⁹

By and by the Radha Soamis and the Nirankaris became independent religious sects and developed their belief systems and institutions without any connection with the original sikhs and sikhism.

39. Singh, Khushwant. *A History of the Sikhs* :vol.1 : 1469-1839. Princeton University Press, London:1963, p.125.

THE NAMDHARI OR KUKA SECT

This sect was founded by Balak Singh who preached virtues of poverty and denounced riches as godless. The Namdharis chanted humns and danced in a state of frenzy. They wore only handspun cloth, tied turban in a different way and wore necklaces of wollen rosaries sround their neck. They have different Gurdwaras and do not inter-marry with other sikhs. They also believe in living God.⁴⁰ AS their mythology has it Guru Govind Singh came back to life after he was supposed to, have been dead, and ordained the continuation of personified Gurus as used to be the case for sikhs. Thus they have a sequence of Gurus after the Tenth Gur.

The sikh masses continued to pay homage to hindus or muslim saints and did not develop any strong institutional separateness exclusive of their faiths or sects. Some low caste sikhs were even accepting christainity. The Arya Samaj founded by Dayanand Sarswati with its revivalist trend posed another challenge to the sikhs. Though here too initially some sikhs associated themselves with Dayanand.

40. Singh Khushwant, *op. cit.*, 1963, p:127.

The Arya Samajists contended that the sikhs were Hindus and the sikhs showed their sharp reaction in the form of a booklet, 'Hum Hindu Nahin Hain' (we are not Hindus)⁴¹. This probably marked the beginning of sikh communal consciousness. They regarded themselves as a distinct community and were frightened to be assimilated in the Hindu fold. Partly atleast the struggle for separate identity for sikhs was a reaction to Hindu revivalist efforts to deny them a recognition.

THE SINGH SABHA

This was formed to meet the challenges of the time. It aimed at propagating sikh faith, Punjabi language and education among the sikhs. There followed a period of intellectual activity. Many Khalsa schools and a Khalsa college was established. It is worth nothing that the growth of sikh separate identity movement was accompanied by conscious effort by educated sections to reform Sikh social practices and to spread modern education among them alongwith the propagation of sikh faith. The British adopted a deliberate policy of encouraging these separatist and loyalist but modernist elements.

41. Dr. Singh S. *Political Development of Sikhs : Search for Identity (1949-1919)* in *The Punjab Past and Present*. October 1982, Vol. xvi-11, No.32, p. 274.

A central organisation, chief Khalsa Diwan led by rich and feudal elements was founded in 1902. The sikhs adopted a loyalist political strategy of seeking patronage from the Britishers. But from 1907 to 1920 the anglo-sikh relations, as far as the peasant masses were concerned, underwent considerable change.

The trouble in the canal colonies erupted in the form of agrarian unrest in 1907. It was the first instance in Punjab in which the Jat peasantry raised their voice against the British power. This unrest was further aggravated in the following years with the occurrence of some important events like the Minto-Morley reform 1909, Kamagatamoru tragedy 1914, Montague Chelmsford reforms 1918, Rowlat act 1919 and finally the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy 1919.

On one hand Punjab was writhing under the British repression and on the other opportunistic elements among the sikhs honoured General Dyer in the Harmandir. The Sikhs felt an urgent need of reforms and launched a Gurudwara reform movement called Akali movement. The movement was essentially religious in its initial stages but in the course of time it became anti-imperialist.⁴²

42. Chopra, Mishra, Nirmal Singh, 1984, op., 'cit. p.63.

The movement (1920-25) got co-operation and support from the national press and the Indian National Congress. The Akalis launched a two pronged struggle, directly against the Mahants on one hand and the Britishers who supported the Mahants on the other. This movement widened the gap between anglosikh relations and brought the sikhs in the national mainstream.

The sikh Gurudwara Act of 1925 marked a turning point in the movement towards the reformulation of sikh identity and development of a distinct sikh community. The SGPC became the institutional framework for the sikhs and exercised jurisdiction over 300 sikh shrines and got access to substantial resources.⁴³

The movement had certain important effects -

- a] It provided the sikhs with a new kind of middle class intellectual leadership.
- b] The movement had two facets - communal and nationalist. It was communal as it aimed at establishing a separate sikh identity and eradication of Mahants who were not keshdhari 'sikhs'. It was nationalist because it was anti-imporialist.

43. Singh, Mohinder, *Akali Movement*, The Macmillan Company of India, New Delhi, 1978, p. 138.

c] The movement brought the Akalis into the national mainstream. A strong reciprocal relationship developed between the Akalis and the nationalists.

During 1930s the opportunistic group within the Akalis broke away from the congress and joined the pro-imperialist Sunder Singh Majitha. Master Tara Singh even asked ten lakh sikhs to join army during world war II. In the North Western Frontier Provinces the Akalis joined the Muslim League and in 1942 they even demanded an 'Azad Punjab', a separate sikh state from the Cripp's Mission. The Akali leadership tried to negotiate with Muslim League also for a separate silk state in 1946. However the sikh masses were not without strong nationalist and anti-British traditions and could not easily be swayed in favour of partition. League leadership also did not offer sufficiently attractive terms to Akali leadership. Above all the civil war situation created by Muslim League tactics and connived at the British did not leave much room for manaeuvre for Akali leadership. When partition became certain, for the mere physical existence, sikhs had to migrate to India i.e. Bharat, from riot-torn Muslim dominated Pakistan.

PUNJABI SUBA MOVEMENT

The Akali-congress rift came just before the first General elections when they broke away under Giani Kartar Singh. Out of 57 seats the Akalis got only 12 seats. The defeat was a set back to their prestige. But the Akali morale was boosted when they won 110 out of 132 seats in the SGPC elections. Thus they launched an agitation demanding Punjabi Suba. The movement for Punjabi Suba lasted for almost a decade - 1955 to 1965. Language and religion dominated the political ideology of the Akalis. Akali supremo Master Tara Singh demanded a sikh state and Sant Fateh Singh who replaced Master Tara Singh demanded a state based on language alone and won support from many non sikhs also. An important turn took place when the leadership of Punjabi Suba movement passed into the hands of Sant Fateh Singh. He was a jat sikh and thereafter the Jats dominated the political scene of Akalis in Punjab as against the earlier domination by urban dominant leadership.

During these years the government implemented three formulas to solve the language conflict in Punjab. The Sachar, the PEPSU and the Regional Formula but

failed miserably.⁴⁴ In the meantime Jan Sangh launched 'Save Hindi' agitation which left bitter traits behind. Language and communal issues got mixed up with the state politics and it became difficult to separate the one from the other. At last Punjab was trifurcated into Haryana, Himachal and Punjab. The New Punjab had sikh majority population but suffered many losses. It lost mineral wealth, forest wealth, hill stations, the hydro-electric projects and even the industrial areas.

The newly carved out Punjab mainly on language basis brought a change in the Akali Politics. Moreover the period was marked by a general breakdown of one party dominance i.e. congress rule. All sorts of coalition politics was experimented within different states by non-congress parties to chart out a new path of development and to work out a solution to the problem of pluralism in the specific Indian context. The Akalis followed a secular orientation from 1967 to 1971 and were able to form three coalition governments with the help of Jan Sangh. But this change in the Akali policy or for that matter Hindu communal party Jan Sangh was more opportunistic than principled. They knew very well that though Punjab is a sikh majority

44. Brass, P.R. - *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, Cambridge Univ. Press, New York, 1974, p 337-343.

state, all the sikhs do not support the Akalis. Secondly Akali - Jan Sangh conflict was too deep to be reconciled.

From the above discussion we conclude that the Akalis always tried to protect their upper class elite interests. Even during the Gurudwara Reform Movement their main interest was only to get a control over the Gurudwaras. During the Punjabi Suba Movement the Akalis' demand had latent political interests. It was the desire to have dominant share in the political power which drove the Akalis to launch the movement.

The failure of Akali leadership to realise that apart from guarding the religious and communal interests of sikhs, there was a lot common between the interests of sikhs and Hindus of Punjab and between the Punjabis and the rest of the Indian people, resulted in their sectarian and separatist politics. They could not as a consequence realise the importance of wielding power in cooperation with other secular and democratic parties. The internal factions among the Akalis always rendered them weak. The control over S.G.P.C. and Akali Dal always became a source of conflict among different groups and individuals within the Akalis. However uptill 1979 they somehow managed to

face the internal conflict with makeshift adjustments and use of power. But once the militant group led by Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala came on the scene, the Akali politics proved incapable of dealing with the militants partially due to external pressures and this was aggravated by being out of power.

When they saw that the government was not conceding to their demands they raised communal slogans and by mixing up communal demands with the other set of demands (some of which were genuine too) they made the whole agitation a movement only against the hindu community. The moderates in the Akalis were not strong enough to turn the course of the movement. The militants got hold over it and with an imperialist backing they made the movement totally communal. It is with this aspect in view we will be dealing with the leadership risis in the next chapter.



CHAPTER - 3

CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP 1980-84

".....politics in Punjab both before and since 1947 have frequently been dominated by communal considerations and antagonisms. Communal differences have twice in the past quarter century been made the basis for successful political demands for partition (in 1947) or re-organisation (in 1966) of the state to conform to patterns of communal and linguistic concentrations of populations".⁴⁵

The achievement of Punjabi Suba was a landmark of those who claimed to articulate such religious and political aspirations in Punjab. Akali Dal has been the spearhead of all the religious and political demands made on behalf of the sikhs since its inception. In 1920s, it moved from position of religious reform organisation to a political party using both agitational and electoral tactics and emerged as a leading political party of the sikhs in Punjab. In its efforts to develop sikhs from a religious sect to a political nation the Akalis have made use of three types of symbols -- historical, religious and linguistic symbols.

45. Brass, Paul R, op.'cit. 1974, p. 337.

The historical symbol provided emotional appeal projecting sikhs as an incredibly courageous fighting force. The religious symbols i.e. the five emblems of the Khalsa and Gurdwaras specially Golden Temple and the linguistic symbol i.e. the punjabi language with emphases on Gurmukhi script made demarcations between sikhs as a community different from other communities in Punjab. These symbols became the sources of identification of the community. Thus whenever the Akali Dal or Sikh political elite started agitations or movements for more share in the political system, they manipulated these symbols and got mass support.

Although the Akalis succeeded in getting the Punjabi Suba they hardly get a chance to wield power and the political scene of Punjab was dominated by Congress(I). Giani Zail Singh became the Chief Minister of Punjab in 1972 and he availed all the opportunities of boosting sikh religious sentiments. The Akalis found themselves in a weaker position and in 1973 the Akali Dal working committee and some other well known sikhs, held a meeting at Anandpur Sahib. They prepared a list of grievances and reports and this report came to be known as the famous 'Anandpur Sahib Resolution'. In 1978 the Resolution was revised and 45 more demands were

tagged on to it. But these demands were later on reduced to 15 when finally presented before the Centre.

THE DEMANDS

Anandpur Sahib Resolution became most controversial in the early phase of the Akali agitation. The Akalis themselves did not have a stable stand on the Resolution. Three different versions of this document were put forward by different Akali factions.

One version of the resolution was projected by DR. Bhagat Singh M.L.A. of the Akali Dal (T), another by Bhai Kapur Singh and the third by late Giani Ajmer Singh, Secretary of the Shiromani Akali Dal. Bhai Kapur Singh emphasised the pre-eminence of Khalsa and demanded the inclusion of some punjabi speaking areas in Punjab which according to him were snatched away from Punjab. Dr. Bhagat Singh's version differed from Bhai Kapur Singh's only in respect of certain areas i.e. he wanted only Paonta Sahib, Dehra Dun valley and the Terai area of U.P. to be included in Punjab. Giani Ajmer Singh's version was equally communal.

Secondly various differences of opinions existed on the interpretation and exact aims and objectives of

these three versions, while the Akalis speak of the Resolution as a concept for an autonomous homeland within the framework of the Constitution of India, some feel it is a separatist document.

Whatever be the controversy over the different versions of the Resolution, the crux of this document was that the Akalis put forward certain political, economic, religious, cultural and educational demands. It is not feasible to mention all the Akali demands in detail, so we will take up the major Akali demands which actually became controversial and created a stir in Punjab.

THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEMANDS

Considering itself as the "very embodiment of the hopes and aspirations of the sikh nation" the Akali Dal put forward the following demands making clear that "the political goal of the Panth, without doubt, is enshrined in the commandments of the Tenth Lord, in the pages of sikh history and in the very heart of the Khalsa Panth, the ultimate objective of which is the pre-eminence of the Khalsa."⁴⁶

46. Chopra, Mishra and Nirmal Singh op. cit. 1984, p.217.

- 1] Akalis demanded greater state autonomy and authority in matters of civil aviation, finance and others, leaving defence, external affairs, currency and railway affairs to the Centre.
- 2] Transfer of Chandigarh as the capital of Punjab along with all those punjabi speaking areas which have not been included in Punjab.
- 3] Amendment of Constitution in order to recast centre-state relations on the federal principles with equal representation at the centre for all states.
- 4] Introduction of land reforms for increasing agricultural production with a view to remove the gap between the rich and poor. Nationalisation of basic consumer industry.
- 5] Akalis claim that Punjab's share in the Sutlej-Beas water is less than adequate and had been further reduced with the construction of Kapoori Canal which diverts water to Haryana. They demanded the matter to be taken up in the Supreme Court.

6] Akalis believe that their share in the power supply as per the present scheme is inadequate. According to the scheme the power from Bhakra Nangal Dam is supplied to Haryana, Delhi, UP and occasionally Rajasthan. The Akalis demand that the authority for distributing the power supply should be with the state and not the centre.

Economic and political demands such as these are backed by religious and social demands.

- i] Declaration of Amritsar as the holy city and ban on liquor and cigarettes in the city.
- ii] Enactment of All India Gurdwara Act under which all the Gurdwaras in the country will have an all embracing rule for S.G.P.C. elections, which otherwise differs from state to state and important Gurdwaras throughout India would be controlled by the S.G.P.C.
- iii] The Akalis want the order of the Government passed in 1980, regarding the recruitment to army, on the basis of population rather than

on 'merit' to be withdrawn. According to them under the new rule sikh recruitment in the army will reduce from 15% to 1.5%.⁴⁷

Though the mainstream Akalis did not go all the way for "Raj Karega Khalsa" as was demanded by Bhai Kapur Singh, their separatist tendencies do reflect when they claim that the political goals of the Panth are inscribed in the commandments of the Tenth Guru.⁴⁸

The Akalis demand a radical transformation of the Indian federal policy, giving more powers to the state and restricting Centre's powers. By doing so the Dal claims to protect the sikh interests which according to them are negated by the centre. These demands clearly show that the Akalis want monopoly of power. But although they claim to be the representatives of all the sikh interests they have not been once fully supported by all the sikhs even in the state. If that would have been the case the Dal could have ruled the sikh majority state of Punjab without coalitions. Secondly Punjab is not a sikh state. It is a state where people belonging to other communities also live. Thus the Akali

47. *India Today*, November 15, 1982, p.74-76.

48. Singh Sukhdev, "Many faces of a Resolution", in *The Tribune*, Chandigarh, September 13, 1982.

demand of pre-eminence of Khalsa make the Resolution theoretically communal. Pre-eminence of a particular group is incompatible with the postulates of a secular and liberal democratic state, the very foundation of Indian Constitution. Thirdly there is no guarantee that the interests of all the sections of sikhs in a state demanded by the Akalis would be protected. Thus the radical restructuring of centre-state relations in the direction of Akali demands would be unrealistic as it will result in state being more powerful than the centre which can cause more problems of regionalism and communalism. Approximately only six out of every ten Punjabis living in Punjab are sikhs, even though the number would be much smaller if Akalis' narrow definition were to apply.

As far as the Bhakra Dam demand is concerned the Centre is unlikely to concede because if Punjab is given this power then all the other states would also make the same demand which would further cut short centre's power over the assets that serve many states and were created with national effort. Secondly 43% of its power is diverted to supply to the farmers and heavy subsidies are spent on power supply to farmers. In fact in very few other states power is subsidised for agriculture at all.⁴⁹

49. India Today, op. cit. (1982)

As regards water resources an economist⁵⁰ who has studied the issue concluded that the type of agricultural programme which the Government had adopted for both Punjab and Haryana, demands large supply of water. So even if all of Punjab's water were to go to Haryana it would be insufficient for Haryana and even if none of it went it would be insufficient for Punjab. Almost all the ground-water resources are exhausted in Punjab and half of Punjab's blocks are now "black areas" (where no tubewells can be allowed) and one fifth more are "grey areas", fast turning black.

There can be two possible solutions - One is that the pattern of crops grown should be changed, according to the availability of water and the need of the farmers. But this would require major changes, large scale institutional assistance and would run counter to the interests of the Green Revolution.

Second is harnessing of Ganga water for Haryana. In fact for Haryana it is nearer than the Sutlej. Besides it is not being exploited in U.P. which gets heavy rains every year.

Akalis are generally believed to be justified in their demand for Chandigarh as the capital of Punjab.

50. Punjab : People Fight Back (1987) op. cit. p. 12.

Chandigarh was originally built as the capital of composite Punjab when Pt. Nehru rejected Akali's suggestion of Amritsar as being the capital of the then Punjab. In the reorganised Punjab, Chandigarh was made the Union Territory and common capital of Haryana and Punjab. At last when the later Mrs. Gandhi awarded Chandigarh to Punjab to appease Akali demand supported by many other political parties, she tagged a condition of transfer of Abohar and Fazilka to Haryana as these areas were claimed to be populated by Hindi speaking people and adjacent to Haryana. The then Akali Government did accept this award as told but soon rescinded from it. Moreover, the linguistic make up of Abohar and Fazilka could never be established unambiguously and so also its contiguity with Haryana. Secondly they are very important from an economic point of view. Mrs. Gandhi did not want to go against Haryana interests so for the sake of political balance of power the award became a bone of communal contention. The award was based on alteration of state boundaries on the basis of religion and not language, according to Akalis.

The state Government banned the sale of liquor and cigarettes within an area of 200 metres around the Golden Temple, the Akalis wanted to see the whole city

covered under the ban. This demand is again purely communal because Amritsar is not only inhabited by the sikhs but Hindus also for whom cigarette smoking is not considered to be unholy and many of them are habitual smokers. Secondly smoking or drinking is an individual liking and the state cannot change people's long acquired habits by banning the sale of goods habitually consumed by large sections of people, more so when the consumption and ban demands run on communal lines.

The enactment and implementation of All India Gurdwara Act would increase the power and resources of S.G.P.C. which is the main resource pool for the Akali Dal. The collection at the country's Gurdwaras are unofficially assessed to be Rs.150 crore a year.⁵¹

Regarding the Army Recruitment problem both the defence and Home Ministry officials say that other states are justified in their protest against heavy recruitment from one state or community. Secondly the rule regarding the army recruitment has never been vigorously implemented and sikhs still formed 10% of the Indian army when the Resolution was asked to be implemented.⁵²

51. India Today, 1982, op.'cit. p 74

52. Tully, M. and Jacob, S. *Amritsar : Mrs. Gandhi's Last Battle.*, Janathan Cape Ltd., London 1985, p. 48.

The demand for nationalisation of consumer industries and setting up key public sector in Punjab has again been seen to be justified to the extent that a balanced growth of economy is possible only when both, the agricultural and the industrial sectors are equally developed. The mechanisation of agriculture had resulted in unemployment and more employment opportunities would be created with the installation of public sectors in Punjab. Secondly nationalisation of industries will further prevent the control and concentration of wealth in few hands and exploitation of the workers by fixation of wages.

However it is argued against the Akalis that the main purpose of the demands is political. When the Akalis were in power during the Janata-Akali coalition they never raised such issues inspite of their being in power in Punjab and sharing in the central Government. Neither Badal who was the Union Agriculture Minister, nor Surjit Singh Barnala who succeeded Badal in 1977 did anything tangible about the division of water or power supply. When they ruled Punjab for 30 months they did not raise the Chandigarh issue or the issue of Gurdwara Act.

This problem has another aspect that lies in the social structure of Punjab. Though most of the Jat farmers associate themselves with the Akalis, a small section of them, most of Scheduled Castes and other rural poor owe allegiance to the congress (I) and the communists. The rural poor and the low caste cannot have any interest in increasing the power of the land owning class or in the terrorism and separatist tendencies. Thus the rural rich are using fundamentalism as the safe weapon to stimulate religious sentiments of the masses.

A very noticeable aspect is that the leadership of Akali movement and the fundamentalist framework has been provided by 'Malwa' region, less by 'Majha' and the least by 'Doaba'. Bhindranwale and all his close associates and Akali stalwarts Gurcharan Singh Tohra, Jagdev Singh Talwandi, Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and Prakash Singh Badal, belong to this region. Two Congress (I) MPs Amrinder Singh and Devinder Singh Garcha who resigned from the Congress to join the Akalis also belong to this region.

Malwa region has its own peculiarities as compared to other regions in Punjab. First is that the

militant tradition of the sikhs developed in this region - during Guru Gobind Singh's days, Banda Bahadur's wars and finally the origin of Dal Khalsa.

Secondly, during British period with an exception of Ludhiana, this region was under Indian princes who were sikhs by religion and Jats by caste. Thus nationalist consciousness came late and in a weak form in this region. Thirdly, being princely region it had all the characteristics of feudal economy and which are still found there. With an exception of Ludhiana, there is no industrial development.

Thus -

"The region presents a queer mixture of backward economy, feudal traditions and consciousness and religio-communal makeup."⁵³

THE CRISIS IN LEADERSHIP

"One Akali a sant, two Akalis a dal, three Akalis a chaos" (Frank Maraes, the late Editor of Indian Express)⁵⁴ (emphasis mine).

This is how the Akali politics was summed up by Frank Maraes in 1971. The truth is that the Akalis

53. Chopra, Mishra and Nirmal Singh, op. cit. (1984), p.150.

54. Naryanan, V.N. 'Who's Afraid of Akali' UNity, in The Tribune, December 20, 1987, (Magazine Section).

have lived up to their two predictable traits - one is that when in power they fight among themselves and split and secondly out of power they become united and excellent agitators for the causes which they cherish. Thus it is a type of self-destructive streak in them that overpowers their courage and commonality of purpose. Even the Panthic Unity concept by which they swear cannot keep them united.

During the Punjabi Suba Movement the Akalis had fought unitedly and somehow overcoming their internal contradictions succeeded in getting the Suba. But in their movement for the implementation of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution the Akalis became sharply divided between moderates and extremists and their morcha failed miserably in achieving its objectives. While the extremists gained upper hand in the morcha, the centre did not nip the problem in the bud and let it flower till it went totally out of control and culminated into 'Operation Bluestar' - a traumatic experience for all sikh believers.

We would now review some of the important events in these four years owing to which Bhindranwale emerged as the leading man in the Morcha with a mass

support behind him. Secondly how these events prove the inadequacy of the Akali leaders for whom individual interests came before the interests of Punjab or even the sikhs for whom they claimed to be fighting with the centre.

Bhindranwale phenomenon and the Akali agitation started separately. It all started with Akali Nirankari clash in 1978 and later on in 1981 with the murders of the Nirankari chief and the editor of a Hindi newspaper in Punjab.

In 1978 the clash would have been averted if the Akalis who were in power had acted with some courage and statesmanship. They did not oppose the Nirankari procession because most of the Nirankaries represent Hindu trading class and the Akalis had formed a coalition government with the Janta Party. On the other hand they did not oppose the Nihangs who went to stop the procession because Nihangs being religious fundamentalists and being led by an equally fundamentalist leader Bhindranwale could have charged the Akalis of being unfaithful to their own religion. The cost was high as far as electoral and political interests of the Akalis were concerned. Moreover Talwandi the Shrimani

Akali Dal chief wanted to use aggravated Nirankari-sikh tension for his factional battle against Badal-Tohra combine in Akali leadership, who had divided among themselves the control of Government and S.G.P.C. and were suspected of planning to oust Talwandi from Akali Dal Presidentship.

In September 1981, the dramatic arrest of Sant Bhindranwale was followed by violence and Plane hijack by some sikh youths who demanded Bhindrawale's release, who was arrested in connection with Lala Jagat Narain's murder case. On the other hand the Akali leaders while putting forward their demands, asked for unconditional release of Bhindranwale, which was done. This was the first time when the Akalis showed concern with him. But by giving such a support to Bhindranwale they only increased his importance and gave impetus to fundamentalism.

Two more rounds of talk followed in which the water issue dominated. But the talks broke down and in April 1982 the Akalis launched their first morcha to protest against the construction of Syl Canal at Kapoori which was meant to divert Ravi-Beas waters to Haryana. Akali Dal was backed by the communist

Party of India (Marxist) and nearly 1000 volunteers courted arrest.

On the other hand Bhai Amrik Singh a protege of Bhindranwale and the President of All India Sikh Students Federation was arrested charged in several cases. Bhindranwale moved from Mehta Chowk to Room No. 48 of Guru Nanak Niwas in Amritsar, to seek the sanctuary in Golden Temple complex and be near the religious shrine, having emotional-religious appeal for sikh masses. Here he made his position more secure and launched a morcha for the release of his associates.

The Akali Dal realised that Bhindranwale had entered their seat of authority which they feared would be lost. So they immediately called off their agitation at Kapoori, held a meeting and joining their movement with that of Bhindranwale's they launched a "Dharam Yudy Morcha". Jagdev Singh Talwandi who was carrying on his agitation at Delhi after breaking away from the main stream Akali Dal after Congress came to power in Punjab in 1980 elections, called it off and joined Bhindranwale. Sukhjinder Singh who had quarrelled with Badal earlier favouring pro-khalistan stance also joined him. Longowal the President of SAD was accepted as

the morcha dictator by all the groups and the slogan raised was for removal of discrimination against the sikhs.

This event was the turning point in the Akali Dal agitation. The agitation no longer remained a non-violent moderate means of expressing discontent, it rather became violent and extremist day by day. Aroused communal feelings dominated the movement. Bhindranwale left no stone unturned to voice communal feeling in most abusive terms and fill hatred among the Hindus and sikhs.

The volunteers continued courting arrest and by October 1982 already 25000 had courted arrest. A group of militants tried to storm the Parliamentary house and had a clash with the police.

Realising the gravity of the situation Mrs. Gandhi sent Swaran Singh to open talks with the Akalis. The negotiations were dragged on without any end result. While the political vacuum in the Akalis aggravated the problems, the Central Government dealt with it in a belated fashion. Bhindranwale emerged as the most controversial leader with bodyguards carrying firearms and no one to question him.

While for the next two years from 1983-84 violence ruled Punjab - the various bus killings of Hindus, murders of innocent and important functionaries, DIG Atwal, Chief of Delhi Gurdwara Management Committee Manchanda, a Punjabi Poet Dr. V.N. Tiwari, former Jan Sangh legislator H.L. Khanna and numerous others made no impact on the Centre or the Akalis to effect a compromise.

While the situation demanded firm handling and decisive political solutions, Mrs. Gandhi accepted most of the religious demands of the Akalis. But this could not satisfy the Akalis who actually wanted political power and were using religious demands more as cover to mobilize mass support.

The rift between various Akali factions was coming to the surface. Bhindranwale moved into Akal Thakht and made his position more secure with the Sikh masses. He was strongly backed by AISSF. Longowal's supporters had an open confrontation with pro-Bhindranwale elements in January 1984. Both the parties blamed and accused each other of treason from time to time. Balbir Singh Sandhu the self-styled General Secretary of the banned "National Council of Khalistan" called for an armed struggle and denounced Indian

constitution. He even announced the boundaries of Khalistan from within Golden Temple. Bhindranwale remained silent over the question of Khalistan.⁵⁵

While all this was happening the Government did not make a move to take some measures either to arrive at an agreement with the Akalis or even to stop terrorism.

The police force had been demoralised. The CRPF and the Punjab Police could not see eye to eye. Bhindranwale's men moved freely in and out of the Golden Temple and trucks carrying weapons drove into the Temple without being searched by the police.

There were quite a few opportunities missed when both the parties could have arrived at a solution or at least the government could have done something.

- 1] In 1982 the talks broke when the Akalis backed out.
- 2] When DIG Atwal was killed at the doorsteps of the Temple it was the best opportunity for the Government to flush out the extremists from the Temple.

55. India Today, February 15, 1984, p. 19.

- 3] After Dhilwan bus killing when the conscience of the people was shaken and Akalis wanted to talk but the Centre hesitated.
- 4] Once Home Minister P.C. Sethi invited the Akalis for talk but later backed out.
- 5] Finally in 1984 when again the government failed to arrive at any solution.

Thus we see a long story of Congress in power and the Akali leadership trying to maximise political advantages for themselves and not concluding or compromising both parties lost to emerging fundamentalism, terrorism and secessionism.

FACTIONS WITHIN THE AKALIS

Broadly speaking there were two factions within the Akalis :

1] *The Moderates*

Sant Harchand Singh Longowal was the leader of the moderates. He was backed by leaders like Prakash Singh Badal and Balwant Singh. The moderates initially launched the movement with objective of cooperating with

Bhindranwale and Talwandi extremism and using the movement to browbeat the Centre into conceding political power to Akalis in Punjab. They failed in both.

2] *The Extremists*

Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale was the leader of the extremist group G.S. Tohra, J.S. Talwandi and Sukhjinder Singh were his leading supporters within the traditional Akali Dal politics. The extremists had a number of groups which were led by different leaders but all supported Bhindranwale.

a] THE DAL KHALSA

It was formed in 1978 at Chandigarh under the inspiration of a retired I.C.S. Officer S. Kapur Singh. The Dal Khalsa aimed at the attainment of Khalistan. In 1981 it held an education conference at Chandigarh which was Presided over by Ganga Singh Dhillon, an American based Indian businessman and a propagator of Khalistan. Initially it also had underhand support of Giani Zail Singh and Sanjay Gandhi.

b] DASHMESH REGIMENT

Dashmesh Regiment was headed by Sardool Singh and was based at Anandpur Sahib. It aimed at lifting ban on AISSF, withdrawal of CRPF and BSF from the Golden Temple Complex.

c] ALL INDIA SIKH STUDENTS' FEDERATION

Late Bhai Amrik Singh was its President. It became the major support base among Sikh youth for Bhindranwale.

The above mentioned groups were staunch supporters of Bhindranwale. Besides these there were two other factions which were extremist in form but were against Bhindranwale.

i] BABBAR AKALIS

It was headed by Sukhdev Singh who owned the responsibility of killing 45 Nirankaris in Punjab and elsewhere. The Babbars aimed at eliminating Nirankaris though they claimed to be against the killings of innocent people.

ii] AKHAND KIRTANI JATHA

Akhand Kirtani Jatha was headed by Bibi Amarjit Kaur. She was the widow of late Fauja Singh who

was killed during the Akali - Nirankari clash of 1978. She was a post-graduate school teacher in Punjabi. She was against Bhindranwale and held him responsible for the death of her husband.

THE MAIN AIMS OF THESE GROUPS WERE:

- 1] To dislocate the moderates from the leadership of SGPC and Akali Dal. They used the twin weapons of fundamentalism and extremism to expand their hold over sikh masses. That is one reason why the moderates lost some ground to fundamentalists as the moderates tried to contain them by incorporating their ideological and political stance on their political platform.
- 2] To get the Anandpur Sahib Resolution implemented by the government and thus secure political power exclusively for themselves.
- 3] To eliminate the Nirankaris, Hindu communalists, journalists and writers and political leaders of all parties who were against the Panth in the perception of these groups.

- 4] To demoralise police and the para-military forces stationed in Punjab. They killed around 50 Punjab police men including one DIG and an ex-DSP before June 1984. 90% of those killed were sikhs. Thus Punjab police was really demoralised.⁵⁶
- 5] To consolidate and perpetuate the rift between the Hindus and Sikhs purely on communal lines.

In due time the support of Bhindranwale came from all sections of the society including Jats, non-jats, educated, uneducated, employed, unemployed, rich, poor and antisocial elements. Bhai Amrik Singh and Harminder Singh Sandhu were educated. Gurtej Singh was an IAS officer who left his job to join Bhindranwale, who was to him a messiah and could do no wrong.⁵⁷

Besides there were atleast three former military generals - Shahbeg Singh, Jaswant Singh Bhullar and Narinder Singh. These all were jats. To name a few non-jats - Ranjit Singh, the alleged killer of the Nirankari Chief, Gajjan Singh, Karam Singh, Satnam Singh who were charged with plane hijack.

56. Singh, Gopal, *Communal Organisation In Punjab (1978-84) : An Overview*, in Singh, Gopal (ed) op. cit. 1987, p.219.

57. Singh, Tavleen, *Terrorists in the Temple* in Kaur, Amarjit and others op. cit., 1984, p.41.

" A case study of the recently arrested sikh youth, terrorists has revealed that only 10 per cent of them are committed to the "Khalistan" attainment, 50 per cent take to the gun in a spirit of 'adventure' and the remaining 40 per cent are driven by sheer 'poverty' to become outlaws".⁵⁸

Besides the crisis in Akali leadership, there was another dimension to the crisis. It was the conflict within the Congress. The Darbara-Zail feud was the main clash. Buta Singh who had a solid following among scheduled caste sikhs also had his own factional axe to grind and wanted his power base in Punjab independent of and in opposition to Zail Singh and Durbara Singh factions. It was at the political as well as caste level. Darbara Singh was a Jat and Zail Singh was a Ramgarhia sikh. Zail Singh during his Chief Ministership of Punjab had ruled successfully by manipulating religious sentiments of the sikhs but Darbara Singh was more secular in his approach and that was the main reason that he was reduced to a mere spectator to the emerging Punjab crisis when communal division took hold of the situation. But mechnisations by rival Congress leaders played no meagre role.

58. Dang, Satyapal, *Genesis of Terrorism : An Analytical Study of Punjab Terrorists*, Patriot Publishers, New Delhi, 1988, p.127.

Thus to conclude this chapter we can say that the ideological differences of the moderates and extremists kept them poles apart, their formal joining together notwithstanding. The Akalis presented their Resolution in the form of sikh grievances and it came to be identified with the sikhs. Thus Anandpur Sahib Resolution had all the communal and fundamental hues which could spread misunderstanding among the common people. Akalis claimed to be the protagonists of the sikh interests in Punjab. In their quest for power they seem to have forgotten that Punjab belonged to all those who lived in Punjab and not only the sikhs. The centre on its part dragged on the problem not realising the gravity of the situation. For both the parties political interests were more important than anything else. If moderates demanded a greater share in political system, the extremists went a step ahead and asked for Khalistan. The internal conflicts of the Akalis and the hesitant moves of the Centre to solve the problem resulted in Operation Bluestar. On one hand was the traditional leadership of the Akalis and the charismatic leadership of Bhindranwale. But the Akalis did neither adhere to their traditional goals nor fully supported Bhindranwale. On the other

hand was the Congress. The charisma of Mrs Gandhi brought Zail Singh to power in Punjab but he ruled Punjab by fanning the religious sentiments of the sikhs and so did Buta Singh and to some extent Darbara Singh also. Thus the sikh Congress leaders too played a double game by neither following the secular tradition of the Congress nor that of the sikhs. Such conflicting interests of the state and centre leaders could not have but resulted in leadership crisis only.

Conclusion

In the present study we have tried to look for a sociological explanation for the ongoing crisis in Punjab, with focus on 1980-84 period. We have worked with the general theorem that socio-economic and political discontent results in substained articulation of the same along efforts to transform the social situation in opposition to the prevailing power structure. This discontent and substained collective efforts on the behalf of the discontented structural elements may later take the form of a movement. In Punjab we have argued, in the three preceeding chapters, that the movement in the first of Nineteen Eighties did arise out of the prior existing socio-economic and political discontent, nurtured along religious community based lines by interested political groupings, that the movement did not succeed in achieving any of its proclaimed objectives or even in partial obsorption of its ideological aims in the main socio-economic and political setup has been explained on the crisis of leadership of the movement. The central theme of the present study of Punjab crisis of 1980-84 in "Leadership crisis in a Movement" is an explanatory formula for the unresolved crisis.

In the first chapter we dealt with the theoretical aspect of social movements and the role of leadership. We have seen that movements are one of the many ways of showing discontent in a society. Compared to crowd behaviour, riots and mobs they are the more organised and sustained means of protest. Certain sections of the society feel deprived of certain privileges which they feel they ought to get. The sense of deprivation may be in connection with economic deprivation, social and cultural denials or quest for more political power. The movement finds a justification in an ideology which gets formulated in due course of time and it provides for its own legitimacy. Successful collective mobilization is not only related to ideological appeal but also to the nature and quality of leadership and the organisation that the leadership is able to forge to sustain the movement and capitalise on the gains of the movement when charisma is on the wane and routinisation sets in.

Collective mobilization tends to be spontaneous in the case of charismatic leadership. In other cases the followers may join and support a movement because they find some advantage in it, either in the form of rational appeal of interests being advanced or of continuation and assertion of traditional affinities. The

leaders advance an ideology to get a wider acceptance of their messages. They may recruit some volunteers imbued with specialised capabilities for fulfilling specific tasks. Thus leadership, ideology, organisation and collective mobilization work in unison towards the successful achievement of their goal in a movement. An incongruence between these factors may change the direction of the movement, the planned outcome of the movement may get distorted or may result in a total disarray of the movement. Thus portrayed picture of a movement describes a degenerated movement. As the leaders lead a movement, they play an important part in it. The level of commitment on the part of the leader and its perception by the following at various levels helps a movement to grow. The more committed the leaders are to the ideology they have adopted more support they are able to mobilize because after all the belief system is important to convince the masses. Secondly, if the leaders are more committed to their own self interests in contradiction from the collective interest of the movement, crisis may develop. Each individual leader will have his own conflicting interests which he would like to fulfill. It has been argued in the case of Independent India that it has progressively developed on these lines where after the death of Gandhi and Nehru a political

vaccum has been created as far as the identification of leadership with the general aims of the movement that it led was concerned. There has been basic suspiciousness among the political elites even on the highest level. The centre has proved inefficient in its ability to forge a leadership that worked in unison and harmony with collective interests and Punjab could not be seen in isolation from the general socio-economic and political developments of India.

The second chapter highlighted those structural strains in the state which spread discontent among the general masses. Seeing Punjab in the larger Indian context we found that capitalist path of development in Punjab has not replaced fundamentalism fully. Secondly it led to an inequitable development of economy. This is reflected in the concentration of capital resources in a few hands. A feeling of deprivation developed in those whose interests have been overlooked by the Green Revolution and subsequent industrialisation in Punjab. When this section of the society raised its voice for equal rights, the big landlords and elites who also happened to be the political elites raised fundamentalist slogans. In case of Punjab these were mainly but not always the sikh fundamentalist slogans. The prosperity of the

state as a result of Green Revolution has increased economic inequalities and intensified social antagonisms, thus providing a fertile ground for communalists, extremists, fundamentalists and secessionists.

The demographic distribution of the people and the occupations associated with them easily brought out the communal divide. The Sikhs were predominantly agriculturists constituting the rural population, and the Hindus were traders mostly residing in and dominating the urban communities. The conflicting interests of agriculture and industry on the one hand and the rural urban divide on the other matched the communal demographic distribution. The fundamentalists took advantage of this fact and communalised the conflict.

The growth of sikh community both as a religious fraternity and as a social group having political socialisation has a history behind it. It has evolved from a Hindu reformist sect to a full fledged separate religious collectivity. The sikh elites after enjoying separate electorates under the colonial rulers and fighting against them for Gurdwara reforms became more politically conscious along communal lines, thus they demanded 'Azad Punjab' before Independence and 'Punjabi Suba' after Independence.

We have traced this chequered history to lay bare the historical genesis of both the communal character of the leadership of Akali movement as well as its tendencies to raise communal political demands on behalf of Sikhs and the battle for a little larger share of power for itself and using that as a platform to launch another movement. That the leadership has been prone to exogenous prompting was also not without historical roots.

Thus we see that these economic, social, communal and political strains were like an undercurrent which came to the surface during the 1980s and became more severe by 1984.

In the third and final chapter we have explored the leadership crisis which made the situation so explosive that it resulted in storming of the Golden Temple by the armed might of the Indian state, after it was converted into a haven for sort of political adventurers including armed terrorists, without resistance from Akali leadership. The Jat capitalist farmers who also happened to be the political elite among Sikhs formed the leadership of the movement. Agitations, morchas and dharam yudh were the main parts of their strategy to consolidate and expand their mass base. The Akali leaders put forward their demands

in the forms of 'Anandpur Sahib Resolution'. Though they were not so vocal in raising the fundamentalist slogan of literal translation of the slogan "Raj Karega Khalsa" or becoming violent in the beginning. But later on when they joined hands with Bhindranwala under the compulsions of competing for the communalised following they got sharply split into moderates and extremists. In the course of the development of the movement the moderates were almost reduced to mere spectators and the extremists took over the reigns of the movement in their hands. In harmony with the extreme communal ideology they raised fundamentalist slogans, killed indiscriminately and almost gave the movement an anti-Hindu colour. On the other hand the Congress leaders and the Opposition Leaders had their own electoral and political interests which they held so dearly, that they thought that the only acceptable settlement of Punjab tangle should be at the expense of the adversary. They did not try to hammer out a rational solution to the situation and settle the problems. By taking such a stand they rejected their own secular and democratic ideology which they preached so loudly. The moderates among the Akalis had their own political interests, extremism and fundamentalism grew and prospered under the shadow of their agitation as they thought that Bhindranwala could be used as their

'Danda' against the centre. Thus their attempts at making the movement non-violent or flushing the terrorists out of the Golden Temple were half hearted and consequently ineffective. The infighting among the Akali contributed a lot to the present crisis, that half a dozen of them were aspiring to be the Chief Minister of Punjab by negotiating with the centre and using Bhindranwale as a bargaining counter, only resulted in the solution evading the leadership by some other section ganging up with extremists and foiling the compromise. The central leadership also tried to use the same tactics of alternately proping up Bhindranwale or conceding communal/religious demands and setting up alternative sections of Akali, dangling Chief Ministership as a Prize. The centre also tried to play up Haryana and other interests to defer final settlement.

Therefore our study attempts to highlight some of the acute problems in Punjab. Amongst other multifarious problems we could only discuss some of these in this work. These were the economic, social and political problems which dominated this study of leadership crisis. All these problems are inter-related and needed to be solved soon for the better functioning of the society.

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