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

ABSTRACT
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Supervisor
Dr. Jaspal Kaur Dhanju
Professor

Co-Supervisor
Dr. D.S. Dhillon
Former Professor and Head

Submitted by
Jaspal Singh

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

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

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

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

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