BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Newspapers


Microfilm
The Tribune (1918-1948), Haryana State Archives: Sinchai Bhawan, Panchkula.


Online Papers
Pro Quest Historical Newspapers from A. C. Joshi Library, Panjab University, Chandigarh:

The Times of India (1838-2004).

The Parliamentary Papers: House of Commons.

The Tribune Archives.

Collected Works
A. C. Joshi Library and the Gandhian Department, Panjab University, Chandigarh


Personal Interviews
Prof. V. C. Nanda: Lala Lajpat Rai Thinkers Forum, Chandigarh.
Sir Umendra Dutt: Kheti Virasat Mission, Jaitu, Faridkot.

Mr. Yogesh Kumar: Kasturba Seva Mandir Trust, Rajpura.

Journal
Online:

JSTOR, A. C. Joshi Library, Panjab University, Chandigarh.

Proceedings of the Panjab History Conference, Patiala.


Unpublished Thesis

SECONDARY SOURCES


Brass, Paul R., Language, Religion And Politics in North India, Vikas, Delhi, 1975


Datta, V. N., Gandhi and Bhagat Singh, Rupa, New Delhi, 2008.

353


Malhotra, S. L., *From Civil Disobedience to Quit India*, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1979.

Malhotra, S. L., *Gandhi an Experiment with Communal Politics*, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1975.


355


©
Department of Punjab Historical Studies
Punjabi University, Patiala.
(Established under Punjab Act No. 35 of 1961)

PUNJAB HISTORY CONFERENCE
43rd Session

Patron
DR JASPAL SINGH
Vice-Chancellor
Punjabi University, Patiala

Editor
DR BALWINDERJIT KAUR BHATTI

Editorial Board
PROFESSOR NAVEJ SINGH,
DR K.S. BAJWA, DR DALJIT SINGH,
DR KAVITA RANI AND DR KARAMJIT KAUR MALHOTRA

Proof-Reader
S. Charanjit Singh


2012
Copies : 500
Price : 450.00

The Publication of this Proceedings' Volume has been financially supported by the Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi. The responsibility for the facts or opinions expressed is entirely of the author and not the ICHR.

Laser Type Setting : Duggal Computers, Patiala (0175-2322807)

Published by Dr A.S. Chawla, Registrar, Punjabi University, Patiala and
Printed at Chanda Printers Patiala.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>District-wise agricultural Geography of the South-Eastern Part of the Punjab Province During Colonial Period</td>
<td>Mahender Singh</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Religion in Punjab: The Census Return of Arya Samaj</td>
<td>Bindu Bala</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>The Arya Samaj and Hindu Consciousness in the Colonial Punjab</td>
<td>Jagdish Kumar</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Religious Changes in Sirmour from Mid Nineteenth to Twentieth Centuries</td>
<td>Shilpa Mehta</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Urbanization in the Punjab: A Case Study of Ludhiana City</td>
<td>Pushpinder Kaur</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Co-operative Societies in Colonial Punjab</td>
<td>Charanjit Kaur</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Canadian Punjabis' Contribution to Rural Education: The Colonial Punjab</td>
<td>Mandeep Kaur</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Bhagat Singh's Language of Patriotism</td>
<td>Shyamala Bhatia</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Madan Lal Dingingra and the Press</td>
<td>Vishav Bandhu</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Mahatma Gandhi’s Presence in Punjab: An Assessment</td>
<td>Eka Sachdeva</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Political Power Struggle and Communal Violence in Punjab 1937-1947</td>
<td>Navdip Kaur</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Legislation on Children: An Initiation of a New Social Order</td>
<td>Vijay Lakshmi</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Managing Forests and Soil Resources: A Case Study of PEPSU</td>
<td>Roopam Jasmeet Kaur</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Quit India Movement in the Punjab and Response of Punjab Communist Party</td>
<td>Vikram Singh</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>A Unique Woman: Sarala Devi Chaudharani</td>
<td>Savinder Pal</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>A Genesis of Events Responsible for the Debacle of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah (1947-1953)</td>
<td>Sharda Sharma</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Progress of Literacy in Punjab after Independence (1951-2001)</td>
<td>Rajni Bala</td>
<td>419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Agricultural Changes in Punjab During 1966-2000</td>
<td>Bajinder Kaur</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mahatma Gandhi has had a very important moral and political influence on the country. His political strategies or at least what we understand of his political strategy seem to form an important part even of our current protest movements. Moreover, even today off and on wherever public morality, political activism and social actions are concerned, Gandhi’s voice still seems to be alive and influential in many parts of the country. Therefore, he has been the subject of massive research work. His philosophy, ideology, and strategy have been increasingly questioned and constantly put under scrutiny. But how did Gandhi influence the history and society of a region? On this issue there is little information available to us. Ravinder Kumar and others for example did bring out essays on the locality specific interpretations of Gandhi’s politics. He perceives that Gandhi’s political leadership had provided a spark to the already existing socio-economic disturbances. He emphasizes that Punjab’s social milieu was not simple but there were different depths and shades to its complexities which had made its case somewhat different.

The Akali Movement in Punjab with which Gandhi was closely associated, though influenced by him actually was not Gandhian in nature. The Akali Movement was an indigenous product which was organically linked to its local society and culture. Similarly, Gandhi’s equation with the leaders of Punjab was coloured by complexities. Though Gandhi with his political persona was able to win their respect but could not influence their approach. The Punjab Congress led by leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai was not particularly enamoured of Gandhi, though they did participate in the various All India movements which Gandhi launched. Even in the case of martyrdom of Bhagat Singh, Gandhi earned considerable ire of the people of the Punjab for whom Bhagat Singh was a very special young man. The strange equation between Gandhi and Punjab continued even in the election of 1937 where neither the Congress nor Gandhi seemed to have won the hearts of the elite of Punjab. It was the Unionist Party that formed a government even while the

* Research Scholar, Depts. of History, Panjab University, Chandigarh

hoi-poloi continued to stand with Gandhi and the Congress as was evident during the Quit India Movement. Though this influence of Gandhi began to fade by 1946 when Gandhi failed to prevent the Partition of the country. Partition of India, however, meant that the people of Punjab had to suffer in many more ways than the other parts of country. Perhaps the Gandhian legacy of politics, protest and social work came to be questioned in Punjab much more as the consequence of partition experience. Though, Gandhi died soon after Independence, it was his philosophy which guided the young nation during its formative years. Gandhi came into the public life through his ideas, especially by influencing the entire Community Development Programme that was sponsored by Government of India in all states including Punjab. Even apart from political hartal and boycott which was adopted in a big way in Indian public life after partition Gandhi continued to play important role in public morality even after partition. The special question which we want to investigate in this thesis is how was the Mahatma Gandhi’s complex influence visible in Punjab during his life and subsequent to it.

In order to answer this simple question we need to examine Gandhi’s political strategy and the influence of his ideas and thoughts either by being accepted in public life or being rejected in public life. In order to do this we will have to follow a two step method.

(A) Archival search around Gandhi’s own writings, his visits to Punjab and the direct contact with the various people of Punjab.

(B) Field research involving interviews with Gandhians, Gandhian Institutions and the various detractors of Gandhi.

This would involve understanding the political strategy of Gandhi as also its acceptance or rejection in the public life of Punjab. The focus of this work would be to understand the response of Punjabis to the persona of Gandhi, how they perceived him during his life time, how they remembered him after his lifetime and how have they preserved, or did not preserve his influence. To trace the research gap we had to survey the literature concerning Modern Punjab. While reviewing literature we identified that there are different opinions pertaining to Gandhi and Punjab which can be categorized under broad headings and which in itself provided us with a clear understanding of our areas of research. These different categories are as follows:


Work on ‘Gandhian Movements’ as of S. L. Malohtra.


Biographies and Autobiographies of Punjab Leaders.

Unpublished Theses concerning Gandhi and Punjab.


Detailed Works on Modern Punjab.
Works on Socio-Economic and Politics of Modern Punjab.
Analytical works as of Ravinder Kumar’s Essay on Lahore, Paul Brass’s Case Study, Partha. N. Mukherji’s Essay.
Works to understand ‘Gandhi’ as of B. R. Nanda, Judith Brown, Bhikhu Parekh, Erik Erikson and Sumit Sarkar’s article.

The available works which place Gandhi in the context of Punjab, present an ambiguous picture and indicates towards certain trends which can be classified under following arguments:-
A. Immense Impact of Gandhi.
B. Increase of Communalism and Violence.
C. Inadequate Attention.

Immense Impact of Gandhi in the context of Punjab has been traced by Prof. S. L. Malhotra in his four volume study written in the birth century year of Mahatma Gandhi8. He tries to place Gandhi in the perspective of Punjab, beginning from Rowlatt Satyagrah, Non-Cooperation, responses and interaction with masses, Gandhi’s take on complex communal problem, Civil Disobedience, Quit India Movement to the partition of Punjab. By studying these events he makes an effort to contextualize Gandhi in Punjab’s political environment. He emphasizes that his study refutes the common belief among scholars and politicians that the flow of Gandhian Movements started fading as soon as they touched the soil of Punjab. He claims that Gandhi’s technique of fighting injustice is not complete without understanding the state of society in which it operated. He also stresses on Gandhi’s immense efforts to solve Punjab’s complex political and communal conditions by propounding several solutions but the study leaves many loopholes as it does not provide any concrete analysis of the events narrated. After making a rigorous study of these four volumes one finds that the author has not substantiated his claims with required-and relevant facts. He makes no attempt either to make the readers understand the emergence of Gandhi in Punjab or the analysis of the socio-cultural milieu of Punjab’s society or make a mention of any other scholarly view-point on Gandhi’s impact. Manju Verma is another writer who centers her work on the women of Punjab by emphasizing upon their zealous participation in the freedom movement along with the influence of Mahatma Gandhi on the marginalized section of women. But she concentrates on the group of those elite women whose families were already woven in the freedom struggle. These are the only works which precisely focus their attention on both Gandhi and Punjab but lack in giving an integrated view of the concept. Both these works do not provide the grass root level information which can help in understanding Gandhi and his interaction with Punjab. This limitation in the analysis provokes following questions:

How did Gandhi suddenly emerge on the political scene of Punjab?

---

b) Who were the people who supported Gandhi and his Movements?

c) What socio-economic and cultural background they hail from?

There are works which explored the events with the belief that politics in general and politics of nationalism in particular can best be understood by looking at the social structure and social change and by examining the tensions latent in society as well as their articulation in ideology. Lahore essay on Rowlatt Satyagrah is one such work which gives the micro view of the first major agitation led by Mahatma Gandhi. He points out that the Rowlatt agitation was a crucial phase to understand, an important shift in Modern Indian politics as it facilitated the transformation of Indian National Movement from a movement of classes to one of the masses. This transformation according to him happened due to change in Gandhi's political strategy, as to use moral issues to cement grand alliances of different classes and communities of India in the great struggle against the British government. His account answer some very basic questions relating to the complexion of social groups which responded to Gandhi's appeals, the degrees of support from different regions, the dimension of Gandhi's success in a complex society, the strength and weakness of Gandhi's political strategy and like.

His essay involves critical appraisal of the significant social groups in Lahore, an examination of discontent which affected the social groups and the way in which these social groups were organized for political actions. In Lahore, local grievances were generated over the period of time which produced potentially revolutionary situation in the city, but they had nothing to do with the Rowlatt Act. All the main social groups in Lahore had distinct causes for unrest. He views that all that was required in April 1919 was an issue which would provide a channel of expression for the discontent which affected various classes and communities of Lahore. By initiating a Satyagraha against the Rowlatt Act, Gandhi provided such an issue. Ravinder Kumar provides us a lead towards the understanding that Indian social milieu is not simple but there are different depths and shades to its complexities, especially Punjab which has its own peculiar socio-cultural complications required clear understanding from different standpoints.

Paul Brass, therefore, gives another important insight into the deep-rooted complexities of Indian society. He in his pioneering work has viewed Indian society as a multi-ethnic society in which grand processes of both social differentiation and assimilation between people are taking place. So both these accounts in one way or the other help us in understanding the social fabric of Punjab and help in comprehending the query which has been posed earlier.

There is another work which deals with our other query regarding the sudden emergence of Gandhi in Punjab. Judith Brown in her work Gandhi's rise to power investigates exactly what Gandhi did, with whom he made contact and the nature of his strengths and weaknesses. She analyzed Gandhi's role in politics, to see what forces of change he was creating or exploiting in the mechanics of his rise to power. She traces Gandhi's emergence as a leader step by step. She argues that Gandhi's rise did not symbolize a radical restructuring of political life or the emergence of mass politics rather it signified the rise of Western educated and regional language-literate elites of Punjab.


Backward areas in place of Western-educated leaders of the presidency towns. It was the 'loyalty' of these local leaders or the so-called 'sub-contractors' that enable Gandhi to extend the constituency of the nationalist politics. Thus, this work not only answers the questions regarding the emergence of Gandhi in the context of Punjab but also reveals the intricacies of Indian social order. The work of Judith Brown, thus, tries to analyze the sub-contractors made by Gandhi in various regions of India. Paul Brass on the other hand tries to understand the dynamics between the national and local leadership in the multi-ethnic society like India. Brass points out that the marks of group identities, such as language and religion are not 'given' from which group identities naturally spring, but are themselves subject to variations: The national elites in the developing countries attach values to the modern state and seek to create a national identity co-extensive with it and to declare castes, tribes and religion as an illegitimate base for political activities. Indigenous political elites who attach values to such symbols such as castes, tribes and religion seek to induce multi-symbol congruence in their groups to achieve separateness and political rights. They may ultimately seek to make the state congruent as well as demanding sovereignty for their group. The essential argument put by Brass is the centrality of the politics and the political organization to the formation and channeling of group identity. Political organizations don't simply reflect or transmit communal demands. They shape group consciousness by manipulating symbols of group identity to achieve power for their group. He summarizes that the competitive political parties can not only exacerbate social divisions that lack cross-cutting pressures, can also promote inter-communal collaborations.

These works so far give an understanding of what actually happened comes only from the beginning at the grass roots. The works provide not only a structure to understand the arrival of Gandhi but also the social context in which he emerged. Communalism and Violence has played a vital role in shaping the politics and society of Punjab because of its complex complexion. Mahatma Gandhi right from the beginning had exhibited serious concern regarding the tense communal equation of Punjab. He suggested various solutions and remedies to part the deepening gulf between different communities. A lot has been said about the potential role of Gandhi in the politics of communalism in Punjab. But there are certain works which take notice of both these complex phenomena of communal tension, violence and also depict Gandhi from a different perspective.

S.L. Malhotra has devoted an entire volume to the politics of communalism and explained as how did Gandhi with his untiring efforts try to solve this communal triangle of Punjab. He held local leaders, political and communal organization responsible for the rising communal violence which ultimately resulted in the partition of the country. Prem Raman Uprety while narrating the religion and politics of Punjab in 1920 throws light as to how the intra-communal factors constitute an important aspect of communal tangle in comparison to the inter-communal factors. He emphasizes that no one tried

harder than Gandhi to bring Hindus and Muslims together but his religious approach to politics was at best an honest and fatal blunder. D. L. Chaudhry emphasized that the people of Punjab were catering many social and economic grievances against the oppressive regime but couldn't find a vent for their agitation. He suggests that the Gandhian Movements not only provided the masses with the platform to express themselves but even in spite of their adherence to non-violence somewhere marked the beginning of the revolutionary and violent activities in Punjab. Kamlesh Mohan perceives that instead of the growing influence of Gandhi in the Indian politics, the Rowlatt agitation in the Punjab unleashed forces which created an ethos for experiment with revolutionary ideology and methods. She refutes the common notion that India achieved political independence by the means of non-violence alone.

While on the other side, we have writers like Sohan Singh Josh who, though both a Communist and an Akali, appreciates the techniques of Gandhi in the form of non-violent satyagrah. The Akalis according to him adopted this technique during the Gurdwara Reform Movement and set an example before the country regarding its effectiveness. The peaceful struggle of Akalis according to Josh had also prepared them for a bigger struggle of their country's liberation. Partha Nath Mukherji has attempted to highlight an important dimension of the objective reality in the form of Punjab Crisis of 1984 and explained as how the traditions of non-violence and political actions were sown in the soil of Punjab. He also simplified as how this process of transition provided a laboratory for Gandhi to make important formulas on non-violence under the concrete conditions of an ongoing movement. Author is of the view that even today there is strong parallel tradition of non-violence co-existing with violent extremism in Punjab. These works put forward different perceptions regarding the impact and the role of Gandhi in the history of communalism and violence in Punjab. Yet instead of providing any clear understanding, they create an atmosphere of ambiguity for us.

Thus, the stickly of all these works leaves one in the state of profound confusion as they reflect different stand points with partial clarity. So in order to go beyond the ambiguity thus created, we have tried to balance our views by taking notes of different personal observations in the form of Memoirs, Biographies, and Reminiscences like Ved Mehta (critical views), Parkash Tandon (sparse comments), Indu Banga (silence), Mohan Lal (nothing concrete), H. S. Bajwa (no space), Sohan Singh Josh (appreciate the technique). While going through these works we have traced two different patterns as one does not acknowledge Gandhi's ideas while the other keeps silence regarding his presence.

After review of all these works, what comes to mind is the basic question why Gandhi and Gandhian Movements found only fleeting presence in Modern Punjab's...
literature? Most of the accounts either openly blame the Gandhi Movement for the rise of militant nationalism and communalism or are reluctant to say anything which is well said through their silence. Overview of all these secondary sources cast doubt on the only account that is of S. L. Malhotra which claims Gandhi’s immense impact on Punjab. The information provided by this only account is partial and leaves out all those details which would have given a different complexion to the issue. These studies leave wide gap in the area of research which needs to be covered for the advancement of the knowledge. Identification of research space leads us to introduce our research area i.e., Mahatma Gandhi’s presence in Punjab.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Customary Law, Gender and Question of Inheritance during British Rule</td>
<td>Gurmit Kaur</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>The Cultural Movement of 1930s Progressive Writers' Association and its Impact on Kashmir</td>
<td>Madhulika Singh</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Upheavals and Demands in J&amp;K State (1924-1931)</td>
<td>Anu Mankotia</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Gandhi and the Gurdwara Reform Movement</td>
<td>Ekta Sachdeva</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Development of Female Education: Their Role in Indian Freedom Struggle (with special reference to Punjab)</td>
<td>Rajwant Kaur Bhullar</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Changing Sex Ratio Trends in Sikh Castes (1868-1931)</td>
<td>Harneet Kaur</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Women as Political Prisoners</td>
<td>Savinder Pal</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>People's Response towards Educational Policy of Dogra Rulers (1846-1947)</td>
<td>Vinod Choudhary</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Accession of Jammu and Kashmir with the Indian Union: Dilemma of Maharaja Hari Singh</td>
<td>Chander Kanta</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Punjabi Women in Globalization: From Household to Entrepreneurship: A Case Study of Village Shankar</td>
<td>Charanjit Kaur Maan and Gurmej Singh Maan</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Women's Education in Ludhiana (1951-66)</td>
<td>Pushpinder Kaur</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Contemporary Social Structure in Haryana —The Gender Bias and the System of Inclusion and Exclusion</td>
<td>Pankaj Sharma</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Gender Relations in Polyandry (A Case Study of Trans—Giri Area of District Sirmaur of Himachal Pradesh)</td>
<td>Vikram Bhardwaj</td>
<td>475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Female Foeticide: Socio-Legal Dimensions</td>
<td>Pushpinder Kaur Dhillon and Sukhwinder Kaur</td>
<td>487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Gendered History of Partition: A Study of Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin's 'Borders and Boundaries'</td>
<td>Navdip Kaur</td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>जूध गृह गृहशल (पूर्णता पैदाव) अथवा गृह गृहशल पैदाव को द्वारा जूध गृह गृहशल को सृष्ट विद्युत</td>
<td>जूध गृह गृहशल विद्युत</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>जूध गृह गृहशल की आयुष्य विधान हृदयमय</td>
<td>जूध गृह गृहशल विद्युत</td>
<td>514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>जूध गृह गृहशल की आयुष्य विधान हृदयमय (जूध गृह गृहशल को सृष्टि विद्युत)</td>
<td>जूध गृह गृहशल विद्युत</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GANDHI AND THE GURDWARA REFORM
MOVEMENT

Ekta Sachdeva*

Although the working of the Non-co-operation Movement was abruptly called off by Gandhi yet the Gandhian wave of non-violence and non-co-operation was influencing many localities in general as well as communities in particular. One such community which showed its signs of sacrificing skill for its religious environs in accordance to the ongoing wave of non-violence was the Sikh community. Undoubtedly, the spirit of the community was sensed as well as channelized by Gandhi, therefore, our idea through the following passages is to ascertain individually the Gandhian factor in the Gurdwara reform movement which has been thus far left for inquiry.

My friend Mahomed Ali wrote an article, “Choice of the Turks”, which was confiscated. I tell you today that the time has now come to make up our minds about “Choice of the Believers of India”. I have come here to ask the Sikh students whether they wish to be loyal to the Empire or to Guru Nanak. Friends of your community are being sent to put down the great, freedom-loving Arab people, who have done us no harm. The Government steals an anvil from you and compensates you with the gift of needle. After the torture which was inflicted on Sardar Gohar Singh. How can a Sikh draw the sword for the Government? How can we maintain cordial relations with it after the perpetration by Bosworth Smith in Jallianwala? If you feel for the Punjab as much as I do, you can see that the Khalsa College gives up receiving grants, that it breaks off its connection with the Municipality and so you can make it truly Khalsa. If you do not succeed, you can leave it and be khalsa yourselves.¹

The above is the excerpt from ‘The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi’ which certainly gives a view of Gandhi’s preliminary conversation with the youth of the Khalsa College, Amritsar and a brief idea of the level of interaction between Gandhi and the Sikh community before the Nankana tragedy. In general, Gandhi’s appeal for supporting the Non-co-operation Movement to the communities of the Punjab was persistently based on religion and was reflecting a different attitude

*Research Scholar, Department of History, Panjab University, Chandigarh.

based to arouse the feelings for a peaceful crusade against Christianity in comparison to his appeal which was usually based either on the reason or his broad religious terminology. Yet, he was playing safe by placing the organic resolution, i.e., unity for the solidarity of the movement. Subsequently, the individuals or the groups of individuals from each community of the Punjab started placing their individual share in the name of their religion. In the similar wave large group of Sikhs sited a model of a community who were called to be born fighters and at the same time exhibiting their great passion of sacrifice non-violently for their religious environs in the form of the Gurdwara Reform Movement. On 25 February 1921, Gandhi learned to know about the sacrifice of the group of Akalis at Nankana Sahib. Amidst the campaigning wave of non-co-operation in the Punjab, he visited the site to get the first hand information and therefore, assessed the various aspects of the tragedy. Considering the level of sacrifices, he thoughtfully communicated with the leaders of the group and introduced them with the broader prospects of the movement. He observed:

In every case the event will live in history. I hope that you will not take the credit of bravery for Sikhs only, but that you will regard it as an act of national bravery. The martyrs have died not to save their own faith merely but to save all religions from impurity..... A friend has just now said that the Sikhs have passed their examination in suffering. I join issue with him and suggest to you that your examination has only just commenced. How are you going to use this newly acquired strength? The same friend drew my attention to the fact that your kirpans and your battle axes were part of your dress. So let them be. But I assure you that the time has not come for their use, if it is ever to come. All national associations have recognized the present necessity of non-violence. Your kirpans must therefore remain scrupulously sheathed and the hatches buried. If you and I will prove worthy of the martyrs, we will learn the lesson of humility and suffering from them; and you will dedicate all your matchless bravery to the service of the country and her redemption.²

Being receptive, he searched some new facts in concern to their religious beliefs, stance on the various issues and with that sensed their dynamism in the name of religion as according to him which if not channelized can obstruct the broader end in its entirety. Above all, he calculated the intensity of the sacrifice as a perfect example of non-violence, non-co-operation which according to him can be symbolized as a model of a religious movement based on his non-violence ideal. He commented upon thus:

Such has been the awakening among the Sikhs and so spirited is that community that either this awakening will deliver India from bondage within eight months or it will obstruct that deliverance. They have

strength of both body and mind. They are brave with the sword. It may be said that they are strong of will, too. The Sikhs are believed to number some thirty lakhs. Till today I had thought of them as a sect of Hinduism. But their leaders think that theirs is a distinct religion. Guru Nanak was its founder and Guru Govind Singh its defender. The Sikhs believe in ten gurus in all. Guru Nanak, of course, was a Hindu but according to Sikh leaders, he founded a new religion.

Correspondingly, the Sikh awakening showed their signs immediately by passing resolutions in concern to their demand for including Sikh black colour in the Swaraj flag but being aware of their constricted approach, he was prepared to channelize them patiently with reason. He suggested:

A friend has just drawn my attention to a resolution passed by the Sikh League inviting me to include the Sikh black colour in the national flag. These friends forget that all other colours are represented on the white strip. We must not be parochial, provincial or clannish. Hindu and Mussulman colours are specially represented, not so much for the numbers they represent, as for the fact they have remained apart for so long and that their mutual distrust has been an effectual bar against the realization of national aspirations. The Sikhs have never had any quarrel with Hindus. And if one has the Sikh colour separately represented, why not the Parsi, the Christian and the Jewish? I hope the Sikh Leaguers will see the unpractical nature of their suggestion.

Undoubtedly, Gandhi analyzed the Nankana tragedy as a perfect example of non-violence, non-co-operation but exhibited it as a model community only after convincing the Sikh leaders to sacrifice their credit broadly for the sake of the Swaraj. Perhaps, it was crucial for his ongoing movement to channelize the sacrifice of a particular community which was in the name of a particular religion for a common goal. We too observed that the resolutions were solely taken by the Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee during the emerging conditions of the Keys affair of the Golden Temple at Amritsar and later too as there were hardly any queries between the leaders of the movement and Gandhi before the Jaiton issue. It reflects the unwavering trait of the community for the sake of their religion. However, Gandhi was curiously examining, appreciating as well as sharing the progressive moves of the movement based on the communiqué of the Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee through his columns.

Above and beyond a series of incidents led Gandhi to sense the threat of the aggressive forces against the religious support of the Non-co-operation Movement and finally it was the Chauri Chaura incident which made him to call off the movement abruptly by convincing the working committee of the movement with

3. Ibid., p. 421; Sikh Awakening, 13-3-1921.
his ethical expression. Consequently charged with promoting disaffection against Government through his writings in Young India, Gandhi was arrested on March 10, 1922 but was released in February, 1924. Even though, nothing has been shared in his writings about the progress of the Gurdwara reform movement in the years of his internment except a letter from the Punjab Nationalists to him before his arrest in which he had been cautioned about the forceful activities of the Sikhs in the Central parts of the Punjab. However, his inquisitiveness to explore the Sikh community has been seen through his readings concerning the Sikh History during his internment. He noticed:

The last set of books I should like to mention are the histories of the Sikhs by Cunningham, Macauliff and Gokulchand Narang. All those books are good in their own way. It is impossible to appreciate the present Sikh struggle without understanding their previous history and the life of Gurus. Cunningham’s is a sympathetic record of events leading to the Sikh wars. Macauliff’s is a life-story of the Gurus giving copious extracts from their compositions. It is sumptuously printed publication. It loses its value because of its fulsome praise of the English rule and the author’s emphasis on Sikhism as a separatist religion having nothing in common with Hinduism. Gokulchand Narang’s is a monograph supplying information not available in the two works mentioned. I read in Yeravada Prison all the writings that I could lay my hands upon regarding the Sikhs. I read portions of Granth Saheb. Its deeply spiritual and moral tone I found to be uplifting. In the collection of hymns we have at the Asram, we have some of Guru Nanak’s also.

Interestingly, the Gurdwara Reform Movement was in progress in spite of the pause in the working of Non-co-operation Movement. However, Gandhi was linked back to the Gurdwara Reform Movement after his release in February, 1924 by the members of Punjab Provincial Congress Committee for inquiring the level of support during the Jaiton firing issue. After understanding the ongoing state of the movement through correspondence, newspapers, and telegrams from the Punjab, Gandhi thought of asserting by way of open letter to Akalis and proposed them to pause for reorganizing their approach as well as clarifying their stance in the emerging conditions. The particular open letter was questioned for being based on wrong facts and which further led to be the basis for the Akali deputation headed by Sardar Mangal Singh (Editor, Akali-Te-Pardesi, Amritsar). Gandhi counseled them to place a comprehensible accountability of their moves which includes initially a modification in their strategy as in accordance to the ‘Gandhian

strategy i.e. Struggle- Truce- Struggle11 and a written document to explain their stance in accordance to the Gurdwara (religious) as well as the Nabha issue (political). He argued:

It follows, therefore, that a large body of men cannot be deputed to assert the right of S.G.P.C.'s possession, but one or at the most two men of undoubted integrity, spiritual force and humility may be deputed to assert the right. The result of this is likely to be the martyrdom of these pioneers. My conviction is that from that moment the possession of the Committee is assured, but it may so happen that martyrdom is postponed and intermediate stages such as pinpricks, serious assault or imprisonment might have to be suffered. In that case and in every case till actual control is secured, there must be a ceaseless stream of devotees in single or double file visiting the gurdwara in assertion of the right of the Committee. It is hardly necessary for me to point out that, if the possessor for the time being may consent to submit to arbitration, the Committee should be ever ready to accept the offer when the asserting of the right by means of satyagraha ceases. In such a case, it goes without saying that if there are any of the devotees who have been imprisoned in prosecution of the object of the Committee, they should be discharged simultaneously with the acceptance of the arbitration.12

But if my advice is accepted, for the time being no Jatha will be dispatched, but negotiations should be by a third party with the State authorities with a view to clearing away misunderstanding and removing the deadlock.13

Some misunderstandings were also clarified during the discussions with the deputation which Gandhi shared in an interview to the Associated Press. Gandhi even sent his representative Mr. Panikkar to have a close watch on the reports of the movement which were earlier publicized either directly or through the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee. Later it was Mr. Panikkar who edited the *Hindustan Times* in the guidance of Sardar Mangal Singh. In spite of that Gandhi was keeping a constant vigil on the reports.14

My friends informed me to my surprise that there was a general misapprehension in the Punjab that, after the Nankana tragedy I had expressed an opinion that the Gurdwara movement should have been postponed till after the attainment of swarajya and that my recent letter was intended to renew that opinion. I never once expressed the opinion attributed to me, as can be amply verified

---

from my writings and speeches of the time. My recent letter was merely an advice to suspend and not necessarily to stop altogether the sending of the impending Shahidi Jatha till after deliberation with a Committee of non-Sikh friends, and full introspection and searching of the heart.¹⁵

An epoch of Gandhi’s non-violence non-co-operation too influenced a community of untouchables for reforming their state by securing rights from orthodox Hindus. They relied on satyagraha technique which was commonly termed as Vaikom Satyagraha. Being concerned for their struggle the Sikhs helped the community by way of free kitchen. Being in touch with the Vaikom Satyagrahis, Gandhi calculated the gesture to be irrational as according to him the community should be left to its own and there should be no interference by any non-Hindu community in a matter which was specifically concerned with the Hindu reform. His categorization of the Sikh community among non-Hindu communities was later questioned and which was then clarified by Gandhi on the rational basis as well as personal experience. He referred to it:

I cannot but regard it as charity that a large number of people, who are well able to feed themselves, should feed themselves at the kitchen and unwillingly be partakers of charity of which they do not stand in need, and this I say irrespective of the fact whether Sikhs be regarded as a part of the Hindu society or not. I would expect the Kerala friends to have self-respect and courage enough courteously to decline such assistance even if Sanatni Hindus offered to establish a kitchen. I can conceive the possibility and necessity of such a kitchen in a famine-stricken area where people are starving.¹⁶

I am very glad to find that Sikh friends resent my classing them with non-Hindus. I assure them that I had no such intention whatsoever. During my first tour in the Punjab I happened to say in the speaking of the Sikhs that, in my opinion, they were a part of the Hindu community. I did so because I knew that millions of Hindus believed in Guru Nanak and that the Granth Saheb was filled with the Hindu spirit and Hindu legends. But a Sikh friend who was present at the meeting took me aside and said with gravest concern that my inclusion of the Sikhs in the Hindu community had given offence, and the friend advised me in future never to speak of the Sikhs in the same breath as Hindus. During my tour in Punjab, I found that the caution given by the friend was well-given. For I noticed that many Sikhs regarded themselves as belonging to a religion distinct from Hinduism. I promised the friend never again to refer to the Sikhs as Hindus. Nothing would, therefore, please me better than to find that the

separatist tendency is confined only to a very few Sikhs and that the general body regard themselves as Hindus.\textsuperscript{17}

Similar proposition was put to the Sikhs regarding their forceful behaviour at certain places against the Hindu temples. He remarked:

\begin{quote}
I learnt through Punditji Motilal after you had gone that the S.G.P.C. was actually defending the accused in the matter of the persecution of Akalis. I learnt, too, that a Hindu temple within the precincts of the Golden Temple had been destroyed by the Akalis and that the latter took their stand upon religion.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

Being an ideological head it was he who not only introduced the communities but the Congress members too with the confines of a local struggle based on non-violence non-co-operation. He explained:

\begin{quote}
The representatives from Kerala asked me if they should not have a resolution of the Congress supporting the movement. I told them that I did not like the idea. What they wanted was moral support. It would have been given by the Committee for the asking, if they had sent a resolution to the President. My responsibility in dissuading them was, therefore serious. But I am convinced that all local movements must be self-reliant and that the A.I.C.C should give its moral support only in exceptional cases. The talk with the members was followed by the resolution regarding the Sikhs. The members when they found me settling the draft of the resolution asked me again whether, in view of the Sikh resolution, I should not relent. I told them that the Congress had already taken up the Sikh cause and that, therefore, it could not very well now refrain without giving rise to the suspicion it had given up the Sikh cause. The members did not perhaps appreciate my reasoning. But they cheerfully submitted to it.\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

Once the misapprehensions were cleared between him and the Akali leaders directly during the discussions, he directed the movement with his strategy and due to which a required space was offered for the arbitration. In accordance, leaders of the movement were notifying him about their moves and the conditions emerging out of it which lastly resulted in a Gurdwara Legislation on July 11, 1925. He declared:

\begin{quote}
Both the Punjab Government and the Sikhs are to be congratulated upon the happy ending of the Akali movement. It has required the self-immolation of hundreds of the bravest in the land. It has required the imprisonment of thousands of brave Akalis. The public is familiar with the tale of their sufferings in the jails. Such marvelous sacrifice could not go in vain. Let us hope that the gurdwara reform will now
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[17] Ibid., p.105, Notes, 22-5-1924.
\end{footnotes}
proceed steadily and without a hitch. The Government deserves the congratulations, too, on their release of Akali prisoners and relaxation in the stringency of conditions regarding the Akhand Path.\textsuperscript{20} In spite of the Akalis giving a clear demonstration of their strict adherence to the principle of passive sufferings at Nankana, Gurdwara-Bagh, Jaito and other places and a number of independent observers including the Congress leaders testifying to this; and of the S.G.P.C. formally condemning violent activities, confirming their belief in non-violence and categorically stating that ‘their movement was neither anti-Hindu nor anti- any other creed’ with no desire of establishing Sikh Raj, the Mahatma showed himself unable to form a correct assessment of the Akalis and their movement and suddenly withdrew his support to their cause at a very critical juncture. Whether this shift in the Mahatma’s stand was due to his fears about the Akalis becoming violent and Jaito repeating the history of Chauri Chaura or in keeping with his policy of suspending the movements when they grew too strong and went beyond the control of his trusted lieutenants is a question which needs further investigation.\textsuperscript{21}

We cannot ignore the fact that the research work on the Akali Movement has provided certain space to work on ‘Gandhi and the Gurdwara Movement’ as the information provided from the sources is meager as well as fleeting. Gandhian component through the Gurdwara movement cannot be confined within a constricted approach and therefore should be considered beyond. From the very beginning it was the Gandhian wave of non-violence non-co-operation which inspired the Central Sikh League to reform their Gurdwaras; then it was Gandhi who sensed the sacrificing skill of the community and therefore channelized it for the struggle of the Swaraj; supported it by endorsing it as a model of a religious movement based on his ideal of non-violence; guided it with his strategy in the emerging conditions and introduced the limits of religious in comparison to the political movement as well as local in comparison to the mass movement based on passive resistance.

With the direct and indirect support of the Central Sikh League and the Indian National Congress, the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and the Shiromani Akali Dal started what a contemporary called ‘the third Sikh war’, a non-violent struggle against the government for the control of gurdwaras.\textsuperscript{22} Here the Mahatma seems to have neglected the fact that it was he and his lieutenants in the Sikh League who brought the Akalis from

\textsuperscript{20} CWMG, 1968, Vol. xxvii, p.361, Gurdwara Legislation, 16-7-1925.
\textsuperscript{21} Quoted, Mohinder Singh, \textit{The Akali Struggle - A Retrospect}, Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi,1988, p. 81.
religion to politics and persuaded them to formally join the movement of non-cooperation by launching a frontal attack against the bureaucracy which was backing the vested interests in the Sikh Shrines.23

Firstly, the origin of the Gurdwara Reform Movement emerged with the initiatives of the Central Sikh League which was a political party and then it was linked with the non-violence resolution and later with the Non-co-operation Movement. Ongoing wave gathered the support of almost all the political parties, so it was not something unusual with the Central Sikh League to support the political movement later. On the contrary, Gandhian wave of non-violence non-co-operation and his appeal on the basis of religion awakened the group of Akalis to maintain the religious sanctity of their religious environs which was particularly sensed and channelized by Gandhi to establish the force of passive resistance distinctively on the sacred front.

The keys were delivered to the Shiromini Committee as a politic measure in view of the large proportion of the Sikhs in the army, a large number of disbanded soldiers, an unprecedented Hindu-Muslim solidarity on the Khilafat issue and the threat of an intense civil disobedience at the beginning of 1922.24

The force which was built by Gandhi with the resonance of the passive resistance on the political front against the British Government had started working and which even facilitated the moves in concern to the Gurdwara Reform Movement and due to which the movement took its pace in its initial struggles.

Undeniably, abrupt call of the Non-co-operation Movement was also followed with a wave of an all round distrust among the religious communities. In the emerging state of affairs, the position of the leaders who were still working for the solidarity was critical and the statements made to calm the environs were further taken with suspiciousness. Reports in the papers were too influenced with the distrust of each community for one another. Therefore the way Gandhi was depending on the open letter, statement to Associated Press and asking for straight confessions from the Akali leaders was but a rational approach to deal with in the existing affairs.

At that stage when the Akalis were engaged in a life and death struggle at Jaito, the Mahatma's advice to immediately suspend the movement and to drop the Nabha issue altogether was bound to further weaken the Akali Movement.25

I hope my telegram of congratulations was duly received. I have hitherto refrained from saying anything publicly because I do not know what our friends there would wish me to do in the matter, and on receipt of your letter, I was inclined to make use of it in order to enable me to make appropriate reference to the splendid behaviour of the Jatha. But doubting whether you would approve of such a step, I have framed an independent message of which I enclose a copy herewith. Please keep me informed of further developments.26

The misapprehensions regarding the weakening of the movement at a critical stage due to his assertion of not supporting the Nabha issue has also been apprehended as firstly he did not withdrew his direction to the movement during the Nabha issue rather abstained from supporting openly. Moreover, analytical research works on Gandhi now guide us to trace the calculated strategies of Gandhi which were sure to be unanswered before. Therefore, we can now access that his strategy certainly guided the movement at a significant state and assisted in becoming one of the distinguished religious movement based on the passive resistance.

I am not unaware of the fact that non-violence is not your final creed. It is therefore doubly incumbent upon you to guard against any violence in thought or word creeping in the movement.27

All the Akalis did not appreciate passive resistance or non-violence as the political weapon to fight against the colonial rulers. A few of the Akali leaders and some old Ghadarites reacted sharply to the cold-blooded murder of a large number of Singh reformers at Nankana Sahib in February, 1921...They were tried in courts and in the verdict given in February, 1925, it was imputed that their aim was to gain independence in India and Sikh rule in the Punjab. 28

Lastly, in spite of the ongoing wave of the non-violent Gurdwara Reform Movement there emerged a movement by another group of Akalis who were forceful in their activities and were working simultaneously. So to classify the creed of the Akalis by Gandhi too will be inadequate as both kind of believers were working to achieve their ends but in due course it was the passive resistance for a sacred cause which certainly established its bond with the Sikh community.

27. Ibid., 211, Open Letter to Akalis, 25-2-1924.