CONCLUSION

British writers projected Sikhs as having a separate identity. Constitutional developments such as the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909, the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 and the Act of 1935, incorporating principles of separate electorates and communal reservations, intensified the communal problem.

The arrival of the Cripps Mission in March, 1942, added another dimension to communal politics. Until now the Akali Dal did not put forward, or even conceive, the idea of Sikhs having separate State. But in response to the Cripps Mission it advocated an "Azad Punjab". This demand was raised to counter the claims of the protagonists of Pakistan.


Though the Akali leaders emphasised language as the basis for a division of the state; at the popular plane they tended to mix religion with language. To counter the demand for a Punjabi Suba raised by the Akali Dal led by Master Tara Singh, an agitation for Hindi was launched by the Arya Samaj. They advocated a "Maha Punjab" irrespective of language. Communal overtones in this were explicitly
visible, though there was not much tension between the two communal groups at that time.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s both Hindu and Sikh communalists communalised the issue of the Punjabi language. The more orthodox and fundamentalists among the Hindus and the Sikhs perceived a threat to religion from modernising forces and utilised communal ideology and politics to neutralise the effect of such forces. During the sixties a section of the Akali Dal began to fight its opponents within the party by making an appeal to caste and increasingly looking for support from the Jat Sikhs, especially the big and middle farmers, who were the major beneficiaries of the Green Revolution. By the early 1970s, this section had become dominant.

The formation of the Punjabi Suba in 1967 did not satisfy the communal urges of the Akali Sikhs. In a desperate effort to get a share in political power and finding that it was impossible to do so on the basis of their own communal vote alone, the Hindu and Sikh Communalists decided to share power once in 1967 and then again in 1969 when Akali Jan Sangh coalitions were formed. Both communal groups found that their communal political base was discontented with the mutual communal adjustments. These communal coalitions strengthened the penetration and spread of communal ideology.
The secular parties, such as the Congress, have made their own contribution to the spread of communalism in Punjab. They have taken an opportunistic stand towards communalism and have even used elements of communal ideology often in a disguised manner - for the electoral and political purposes. They have appeased the communalists and tried to accommodate them.

Twice, once in 1948 and then again in 1956, the Akalis were persuaded to dissolve the Akali Dal and merge with the Congress, with the Akali stalwarts joining the Congress. But the strategy failed. While those Akalis who joined the Congress seldom came out of it, very soon others, more extreme communalists emerged and re-formed the Akali Dal.

From the point of view of Terrorism in Punjab, the situation in the Punjab actually began to heat up while the Akali government under Parkash Singh Badal was in power (June 1977-February 1980). It began with a confrontation between the Nirankaris and followers of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

In November 1973, the SGPC had passed a formal resolution declaring Nirankaris as renegades. On the Baisakhi of 1978, a procession of Sikhs including a large number of Bhindranwale's followers on their way to a
Nirankari assemblage was fired upon. Thirteen were killed, including one Fauja Singh whose widow, Amarjit Kaur, later became one of the leaders of the extremists. The Nirankaris charged with murder were subsequently acquitted on the ground that they had acted in self-defence. Thereafter, there was no let up in violence against them and their sympathisers. The head of the sect, Baba Gurbachan Singh, was killed in Delhi on 24th April, 1980.

In August 1982 the Akalis declared a holy war (Dharm Yudh) against the government and appointed Sant Harchand Singh Longowal as the dictator to fill Punjab's jails. By October, almost 30,000 Akalis were behind bars. Later, they stormed the Parliament. Four policemen were slain.

There was a succession of agitations: nahar roko, rail roko, rasta roko, kam roko and the slaying of innocent Nirankaris and Hindus.

At the time Sant Longowal launched the Dharm Yudh (Holy War), Bhindranwale was conducting his own morcha against the arrest of Bhai Amrik Singh, President of the All India Sikh Students' Federation and son of his predecessor. He, however, came to Amritsar and joined the Akali morcha staying at the Golden Temple Rest House (Sarai Guru Ram Das). Soon after, the Chief Minister, Darbara Singh, was
attacked with hand grenades, though he escaped unhurt, but 18 others, including the Education Minister, received injuries. The bomb blasts and explosions now increased in frequency, notably at Amritsar, Jullunder, Ludhiana and various other towns, where the Hindus were in a majority.

All the killer-gangs like Dal Khalsa, Bhindranwale Tigers, the Dashmesh Regiment, the A.I. Sikh Students' Federation, Khalistan Commando Force and the National Council of Khalistan - were wedded to the slogan of Khalistan. They owed allegiance to Bhindranwale, except for Babbar Khalsa and the Akali Youth Federation, which protected Sant Longowal. The National Council of Khalistan was based in Great Britain with Jagjit Singh Chauhan as its self-proclaimed President.

Bhindranwale occupied the Akal Takht on December 15, 1983. The Jathedar of the Akal Takht, Giani Kirpal Singh, protested but he was overruled by Tohra. Fights had started between the Babbar Khalsa and Bhindranwale's men at the Sarai, and this, added Tohra, had left no choice for Bhindranwale but to seek sanctuary at the Akal Takht. Such was the terror of Bhindranwale that no one even in the police or the Judiciary dared cross his path. Any act of injustice by these agencies, if reported to Bhindranwale, got redressed within 24 hours, after he telephoned or sent
word through a special messenger to do the job, as he dictated.

Green revolution reached its plateau by mid-seventies and was showing downward trends, thus adding to the frustration of even rich farmers, resulting from their rising expectations of mid sixties and early seventies. The green revolution has had its impact on rural socio-economic scene. It resulted in uneven development not only in different regions of the State but also for the population of Punjab as a whole. This unevenness resulted in the growing pauperization of marginal and poor peasants, thus adding to the army of the landless who have no employment avenues in urban areas because there is insufficient industrial development. The number of the landless doubled and those of the marginal peasants increased three times in ten years.

Extremism and fundamentalism grew and prospered under the shadow of Akali agitation. The agitation provided the terrorists a favourable atmosphere to carry out their activities and Akalis also needed the support of these elements to strengthen their agitation. That is why the fundamentalist Sant Bhindranwale was also involved in this agitation. Akalis made Bhindranwale an active partner in their morcha since August, 1982. Though the then Akali Dal Chief Sant Longowal condemned "senseless killings" in
Punjab, yet Akali Dal’s attitude towards extremist and terrorist acts was lukewarm. They did not unequivocally denounce the hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane in September 1981 (Bhindranwale praised this heroic act of Sikh fighters). They disassociated themselves with Khalistani activities but Balbir Singh Sandhu, the Secretary General of so-called Republic of Khalistan stayed at Nanak Niwas in Golden Temple.

For every action of Akalis, there was a communal Hindu reaction. In reaction to Longowal and Akali Dal’s recruitment of an army of one lakh self-sacrificing Sikhs, the Hindu communal bodies - Hindu Sangathan and Hindu Suraksha Samiti recruited their own volunteers.

Senseless killings of innocent people by the extremists also led to killings by the police. For example, some twenty Akali volunteers were killed in the "rasta-roko andolan" and more or less, a similar number of Bhindranwale’s supporters lost their lives at the time of his arrest at Mehta Chowk. There were deaths in fake police encounters or in police custody itself.

The traditional and religious network helped the militant leader, Sant Bhindranwale, in widening the mass base of his protest. He provided leadership to the various sections of the Sikhs - ranging from retired high ranking
government and army officers to poor rootless ruralites who were generally outside the power structure of the established Akali leadership. For the ideologically-oriented urban middle classes, Bhindranwale acted as a bridge between them and the tradition-oriented rural masses, thus providing a vision of Sikh solidarity.

The Jat Sikhs, the largest social group in the State, till the late 1960s was able to combine economic well-being with status and power in the rural society. This group was a major partner in political power in the ruling Congress at the State level till 1960s. In the 1980 Assembly elections the ruling Congress party lost the support of a large majority of Jat Sikhs. By the early 1980s, the major segments among the Jat Sikhs were almost alienated from the ruling Congress regime in the State. The prevailing political scenario provided a fertile ground for the launching of terrorism.

On 15 December 1983 Sh. Bhindranwale moved from the Guru Nanak Niwas to the Akal Takht with his armed entourage. From this sanctuary he and his associates intensified incitements of violence and communal hatred. An important target of extremists were those Sikhs who opposed their anti-national activities. They were liquidated in a planned manner. A similar fate befell those within the
Golden Temple Complex who were judged to have defied the authority of the extremists. Several were tortured and subjected to painful death, their bodies then being thrown into open drains.

A Punjab bandh was called on 8 February 1984, which was followed by a bandh on 14 February 1984 called by the Hindu Suraksha Samiti. Serious clashes and violence resulted in the death of 11 persons. Some Hindu fanatics committed the sacrilege of damaging the model of the Golden Temple and a picture of Guru Ram Das at the Amritsar Railway Station. There was violence in Haryana also.

Having moved into the Akal Takht, Bhindranwale continued to cast his spell all over the countryside. The Akali leaders and the High Priests had virtually lost whatever hold they had, and the shots were now being called by Bhindranwale. He moved around the Temple freely, with his bodyguards wielding rifles, guns and revolvers. Sikhs came from all parts of the country to seek his blessings and to listen to his inflammatory speeches, which he generally delivered during the afternoons from atop the roof of the Langar surrounded by his armed supporters.

On 26 January 1984, India’s Republic Day, a Khalistani flag was hoisted atop one of the buildings within the Temple complex. His preachings stirred up anti-Hindu
feelings to such an extent that by April-May of that year, there began a large exodus of Hindus, most of whom belonged to the business community, from Punjab.

Mrs Gandhi, finally decided to use the army to flush out the militants from inside the Golden Temple at Amritsar, and other shrines in the State. Lieutenant General R.S. Dyal, MVC, was deputed by the Army Commander to oversee operations being launched to flush out militants from nominated gurudwaras within the State. Lieutenant General K. Gowari Shankar, MVC, General Officer Commanding 11 Corps (located at Jullundur) was entrusted the task of sealing the Indo-Pak border throughout the State to prevent infiltration of militants and arms from across the border, as also to ensure that Pakistan did not militarily exploit the situation to our deteriment.

Whereas the Operation to flush out the militants was code-named 'Operation Blue Star', the sealing of the border came under the code name of 'Operation Wood Rose'.

Mrs Gandhi broadcast to the nation at 8.30 p.m. on June 2, 1984 over the television network. Mrs Gandhi ended her broadcast by pleading:

"Let us join hands and shed hatred, rather than shed blood."
At 9 p.m. on the 3rd, curfew was clamped down around the Golden Temple at Amritsar, and all over Punjab for a period of 36 hours. This was a clear indication that army action was imminent.

By 7 June, with Bhindranwale's death, the fight had virtually ended. With top leadership comprising Bhindranwale, Amrik Singh and Shabeg Singh having been eliminated, there was no one left in their command post at the Akal Takht to take over.

After the Operation Blue Star, Sikhs all over the world held protest-demonstrations. The BBC and the British and American newspapers gave wide publicity to the Sikh anger. Dr J.S. Chauhan, head of the "Khalistan Council", was allowed to broadcast over the British Radio (Channel 4) that "Mrs Gandhi's end was now near, and that whosoever killed her would be rewarded by the British Sikhs with a lakh and a half pounds sterling." A militant Sikh Organisation of the West was formed on 31 July, 1984, at New York, with Mr Didar Singh Bains of Yuba City, a multi-millionaire farmer, as President, and Maj. Gen. G.S. Bhullar, its General Secretary. Mr Ganga Singh Dhillon became its Executive member. They all talked of violence against the Indian state. Efforts were made to bring the Sikh question before the United Nations.
Two of the Sikh bodyguards of Mrs Gandhi assassinated her on the morning of October 31, 1984, at her official residence in New Delhi. For two days there was no law or order in India's capital city nor in major cities like Kanpur, Lucknow and Bokaro. On the second day, newspapers and the radio announced that Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code banning any gathering of five or more persons and night curfew had been imposed and that the police had been ordered to shoot law-breakers at sight. Nevertheless, the killings went on. Ultimately, the army had to be called in.

A report entitled 'Who are the Guilty?' jointly published by the Peoples' Union for Democratic Rights and the Peoples' Union for Civil Liberties pointed that the guilty included H.K.L. Bhagat, senior member of Rajiv Gandhi's cabinet, four members of Parliament belonging to his party and innumerable members of the ruling Congress Party. Another commission of inquiry headed by a retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, S.M. Sikri and consisting of a panel of eminent retired civil servants including Badruddin Tyabji, Rajeshwar Dayal and Govind Narain likewise gave an indictment against Congress politicians, the police and Delhi Administration.

The 1984 parliamentary election was a land-slide for Rajiv Gandhi. After victory, Rajiv Gandhi took leaders
of the Opposition parties in confidence. Every negotiation with the Akalis was discussed with them and it was only after he had sensed their approval for the way he was handling the problem that he called Sant Longowal to negotiate a detained settlement.

On Wednesday, the 24th July, 1985, an accord was signed between Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Harchand Singh Longowal. Shri G.S. Tohra, SGPC President, and Shri Parkash Singh Badal, former Chief Minister of Punjab, however, disapproved the accord and opposed every clause of the agreement signed by Shri Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Longowal. On July 24, 1985, elections to the Punjab Assembly were announced. On August 20, Sant Longowal was shot dead.

In 1985 elections, the Akali Dal won a clear majority in the Assembly winning 73 seats. Surjit Singh Barnala was elected leader of the Akali Dal legislature party and became the Chief Minister. After the installation of a popular ministry in Punjab, the army was removed from Punjab, anti-terrorists operations called off and number of detenus, including several known terrorists were released from the jails.

The accord provided for the transfer of Chandigarh to the Punjab and compensation in terms of land and money to Haryana. Haryana was hoping of getting the rich cotton-
growing and predominantly Hindu and Hindi-speaking tehsils of Fazilka and Abohar as well as cash to build a new capital. The Mathew Commission appointed to settle the details denied it these tehsils because of one village, Kandukhera.

Justice Mathew refused to identify Hindi-speaking areas and suggested another Commission. The transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab scheduled for the Republic Day was postponed. The Second Commission under Justice Venkataramiah was able to identify 45,000 acres of Hindi-speaking villages and recommended yet another Commission to locate another 25,000 acres making a total of 70,000 acres as fair compensation to Haryana. The transfer of Chandigarh was postponed to 15th July. A third Commission under Justice Desai was a non-starter as the Barnala government refused to accept its terms of reference. A fourth Commission was promised. The Times of India in its editorial of 12th July, 1986 said:

"________the Centre is at last moving away from the amateurish practice of setting artificial deadlines - “Chandigarh to be transferred by January 26”, “Chandigarh to be transferred by June 21”, “Chandigarh to be transferred by July 15” - only to become a prisoner of these dates."

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The more important part of the accord and one which affected the future of farmers in the region was the laying of the link canal to bring waters of Punjab rivers to Haryana and Rajasthan. The Punjab government was in no hurry to dig its part of the 35 miles. Haryana had already laid its portion of the link canal.

The Central Government had been pursuing a policy of drift and had not implemented the Accord as promised. Such tactics helped the extremists and separatist forces. The failure of Akali government in tackling the extremists, separatists and terrorists resulted in deterioration of law and order day by day. The situation became critical, when the declaration to the effect of beginning the Sikhs' battle for the creation of 'Khalistan' was made by 'Panthic Committee' from inside the the Golden Temple Complex on April 29, 1986.

The policy of appointing one commission after another rather than implementing the Accord in its true spirit by the Rajiv Gandhi Government, resulted in weakening the moderate Akali leadership. Since the split in their ranks, the Akalis had already been facing problems, and had become weak against the extremist, separatist and terrorist forces.

On 11 May 1987, the Barnala Government was
dismissed and President's rule in Punjab was imposed. The Central issue on which the dismissal was justified was on the ground of complete break-down of law and order in the State.

The dismissal of Barnala government and imposition of President's rule buried the Punjab Accord for which Sant Longowal had sacrificed his life; which was endorsed by the people at the polls; for which Surjit Singh Barnala had suffered excommunication. Moreover, it also buried any hope for a political solution in the near future.

In the beginning, it was generally acknowledged that there was some improvement in the situation under the President's rule. A large number of hardcore separatists and terrorists had either been arrested or got killed. The efforts of Julio Francis Ribeiro, the then Punjab Police Chief, resulted in improving performance of police and paramilitary forces in the State. In spite all these facts, extremism, separatism and terrorism continued.

To flush out the extremists, separatists and terrorists from the Golden Temple Complex, the government conducted 'Operation Black Thunder'. The Operation was very successful in the sense that it made progress in its objective without hurting the feelings of the Sikhs as was the case earlier during the Operation Blue Star. The
operation brought about a metamorphic change in the situation. The extremists, separatists and terrorists not only lost their control over the Golden Temple and other shrines, but also the sympathy of a big section of the Sikhs. Recovery of more than twenty human dead bodies including those of women, from the debris of the 'Akal Takht' inside the Golden Temple Complex, exposed the atrocities of the terrorist forces.

Mr V.P. Singh visited Amritsar in an open jeep on December 7, 1989, for a prayer for peace. He assured the Punjabis that his government would move fast to resolve the Punjab problem and restore peace and prosperity. It was a step for pacifying the Sikh psyche and it also showed the sincerity of the new government to solve the Punjab problem.

Parliamentary elections were held in Punjab, under National Front Government, for 13 seats. Out of these 13 seats, 9 were secured by Akali Dal(Mann) and its allies.

Parliament on December 29, 1989, unanimously passed 63rd amendment bill which replaced the 59th Constitutional amendment. The most dangerous aspect of this amendment was that Article 21 which confers the basic right to protection of life and liberty was made suspendable. The undoing of this amendment went a long way in restoring the confidence of the Sikhs in the democratic process.
Nearly 4,500 militants including 121 hardcore ones were killed in 1,235 encounters during 1991 as compared to 2,400 in 746 encounters in 1990. Over 3000 civilians, including 487 securitymen were killed during the year as compared to 2350 in 1990.

The Operation Rakshak-I was launched before the June 21 elections to instil confidence among the people and for creating a congenial atmosphere for holding free and fair elections. The army and para-military forces carried house to house searches in the border districts to flush out militants and rounded up many suspects.

Mr Chandra Shekhar took over as the eighth Prime Minister on 10 November, 1990.

The people of Punjab had great expectation from Chandra Shekhar. They wanted Mr Chandra Shekhar to hold mid-term polls in Punjab. Mr Simranjit Singh Mann on November 19, 1990 demanded dissolution of the Lok Sabha and the holding of elections.

On December 4, 1990 the five members panthic committee and its allied militant outfits served an ultimatum on the Punjab Government and autonomous organisations to switch over to Punjabi medium in all official work by December 10 or "face the consequences".
In 1991 Parliamentary elections, the Congress won because of the sympathy wave caused by the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. Mr P.V. Nararsimha Rao took over as Prime Minister. Prime Minister Mr Rao announced Parliamentary and Assembly elections to be held in Punjab in mid of February 1992. Finally in January, Election Commission decided the date of elections, i.e., February 19, 1992, for 13 Lok Sabha and 117 Assembly seats.

The various factions of the Akali Dal, the various Panthic Committees and various Students Organisations were not able to come together to fight the elections. Some of them particularly, the more militants one, were against the elections any way. The others knew that their victory in the elections was not certain. They believed that if they refused to participate in the elections, the Congress Government in the Centre would not hold the elections. They were also prepared to disrupt the elections, if the Centre decided to hold elections in Punjab. In November 1991 Operation Rakshak-II was launched. After this operation the law and order situation in Punjab improved.

There was big movement of troops in Punjab before the election. The Army had worked out logistics to render what commanders call "useful support to the civil authority to first create proper atmosphere for a free and fair poll and later help installation of an elected Government."
There was deployment of nearly 2 lakh men in the State including different types such as 50,000 men from the Army, 55,000 policemen, 20,000 Home Guards, 1500 Special Protection Officers and 390 companies of para-military organisations.

The elections were held under conditions of fear and terror because the Akalis had decided to boycott the elections and terrorists had asked the voters not to come out of their homes. Even then 25% voting did take place. There was very little voting in the villages. But there was sufficient voting in the urban areas. As many as 300 villages did not vote at all.

The Congress victory in Punjab assured a working majority for the Congress in the Parliament. The Beant Singh government was installed on February 25, 1992.

Punjab election was a pleasant surprise for two reasons - firstly the event had passed off without serious mishap, secondly that nearly 25% of the electorate had come out to vote for the Assembly by risking their lives - if not on the day of election, then may be later.

After joining as Chief Minister of Punjab Mr Beant Singh gave the call "forgive and forget". He said that it was true that the Sikhs were hurt in 1984 riots, but he said
that we should not forget that Hindus were also badly injured because there was a series of murders of innocent people; violence must be condemned whether of Sikhs or Hindus. Mr Beant Singh decided that he would fight violence and militancy. Actually he decided he is an old man and he has to die anyway. He believed it is better to die for a cause than to die in sleep. He led a single-minded campaign against the militant outfits. Many terrorists were killed.

After six months of its government, Beant Singh Government carried out municipal elections in Punjab. Mr Beant Singh also promised that after the municipal elections panchayat elections would also be held in Punjab. Mr Beant Singh wanted municipal elections in Punjab in order to have legitimacy for his government in Punjab. It was said that he had secured only 10% of the valid votes polled in the February Assembly elections. The municipal elections in Punjab held in September 1992 were politically much more active than the Assembly elections, held in February. The amount of fear was much less. Even some of the Akalis took interest in these elections.

Panchayat elections were held successfully which further marginalised the faction-ridden Akalis. The panchayat elections have been successful in more ways than one. Firstly, the large turn-out to a large extent
legitimised the Congress Government in the State. This party came to power with merely 10 per cent votes as the rural populace had boycotted the Assembly elections. Secondly, the violence-free elections and the large voter turn-out amply demonstrated that normalcy was fast returning in the State. And thirdly, the negligible influence of militants both in the form of their sponsored candidates and their impossibility in influencing the electorate indicated the changing mood as well as the extent to which the terrorists had been decimated in Punjab.

In 1993, there was a different kind of Punjab. It was a Punjab having less obsession with terrorism and fear. The problem of Punjab had not yet been solved. However, people in Punjab were no longer paralysed.

In 1993, it was being felt that Beant Singh had succeeded in eliminating terrorism from Punjab in a period of one year's rule. Punjab had been burning for the last six or seven years. People did not come out of their homes after sunset. One year's rule of Beant Singh was a great success. People were moving about freely even late in the evening, not only in the cities but also in the villages.

The past was, now, being looked upon in its proper perspective. The Blue Star operation was the most tragic event in the history of Punjab. It was described, now, as a
day of penance. It was described as a day of national shame. On May 1, 1994 six Akali factions floated a unified Shiromani Akali Dal. The name of this Dal was the establishment of an autonomous state within the federal structure in the Indian Union. In case of non-fulfilment of this demand through peaceful and democratic means, the unified Akali Dal would be free to launch a struggle for the achievement of a sovereign Sikh state.

On May 13, 1994 Prem Bhatia reacted to the "Amritsar declaration" and said that it was a serious threat of setback in Punjab. In his words: "OH, no! Not again! This mixture of an unpleasant shock and disbelief broadly summed up the public reactions within Punjab and outside to the threatened revival of political agitation by the "unified" Akali Dal of six factions implied in the "Amritsar declaration" earlier this month. The shock and disbelief arose from what appeared to be a reversal of the process of normalisation which was popularly believed to have already gone far enough to be viewed as almost accomplished."

Fortunately for Punjab, Parkash Singh Badal preferred the democratic and constitutional path instead of joining and following the Amritsar declaration of May 1, 1994.

The Chief Minister, Mr Beant Singh, while analysing the factors which led to the defeat of his party in Ajnala, indicated that he was not unduly worried over the poll
verdict. "The Congress may have lost the election but it is a victory for democracy", he said, pointing out that the parties which had boycotted the elections earlier and challenged the Constitution of India, had not only participated in the byelection but also won it besides swearing by the Constitution. "It is a good sign."

The results of the panchayat samiti and zila parishad elections were conclusive. The Congress established its supremacy in 10 districts. It shared power with the Akali Dal owing allegiance to Mr Parkash Singh Badal in the district of Faridkot. The Akil Dal (Badal) again had a clear edge in the two districts of Amritsar and Mansa. In Fatehgarh Sahib, the winner was the Akali Dal (Amirtsar).

The victory of Mr Gurcharan Singh Tohra as the SGPC president for the 21st time was never in doubt. He was expected to win even in the face of an open challenge to his leadership from the Akali Dal (Badal) nominee, Mr Prem Singh Lalpura. What is, however, significant is the big margin of his victory.

Peace in Punjab had a price. A free hand was given to the Police and some amount of state terrorism did come into existence.

In March 1995, K.P.S. Gill asserted that militancy would not return.
Mr Gill was confident that militancy would not return to Punjab. "Political uncertainty helps militants to spread their net. Now that Political stability has been restored, militants cannot get the support they enjoyed once".

There was a setback when Beant Singh fell to the terrorist attack and was killed by a human bomb on August 31, 1995 but the apprehensions about the revival of militancy and terrorism in Punjab proved to be wrong.

In conclusion, it is noteworthy to observe that since the time of the clashes between the followers of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and the followers of the Nirankari sect in 1978, the activities of the terrorists went on increasing. In the beginning the terrorists seemed to be working for an aim - the aim of achieving Khalistan. For this, they attacked specific targets. But later on everybody began to feel insecure when their targets no longer remained specific. There was no let up in violence. Besides, there was a phenomenal rise in anti-social activities, such as killing of innocent persons, particularly women and children, rapes, extortions, hijacking of planes, indiscriminate kidnapping and demanding ransom. This led to the decline of popularity of the terrorists among the Sikh masses.

In the initial years, a section of police force
turned a blind eye to the activities of the terrorists besides sharing the booty. But when after some time the terrorists began to target the families of police personnel, the police force got a jolt and it was then that it started taking firm action against them. Further more, the rivalries among the different terrorist groups led to their losing devilish energies and fire-power.

Terrorism started declining in 1993. In 1994 and 1995, the decline was very much visible. Credit for this must go to Beant Singh, to K.P.S. Gill and also to the Army that effectively sealed the Pakistan border and prevented support and infiltration of terrorists. However, no single factor can be ascribed to explain the decline of terrorism in Punjab. However, there is one factor which is the most significant. This was the revolt and opposition of the Sikh masses to the terrorists. Partly because of the legacy of the historical relationships between the Sikhs and the Hindus, partly because the healing touch did operate and mainly because the terrorists lost their sense of discrimination and started torture of innocent Sikhs; the Sikh masses revolted against the terrorists and started helping the Police and the Army.

Terrorism can come back. It is mainly because the problems of Punjab still stagnate. They can revive terrorism but revival would be impossible unless it receives cooperation or at least acquiescence of the Sikh masses.

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