Preface

Amidst the currents of Indian history, whether they flow from the Ancient, Medieval or Modern segments, Punjab's role is pivotal. Whether as the earliest abode of the Aryans or as a sentinel for Indian frontiers, a buffer of the Colonial empire, its' vivisection as a corollary to Independence, the custodian of free India’s agricultural endowments or capsized by terroristic violence, it has always created major news in past and present records. Its’ present ethos has been clichéd with epithets-like prosperous and progressive. This elevation, occurs, because in comparison with the rest of India, it reflects a high per capita income, owing to its agricultural buoyancy. However, in the contemporary context, a replete assessment of progress is inclusive of economic growth, of which industrial development is a major determinant, in this respect, however, compared to states like Maharashtra, Punjab’s statistics remain abysmally poor.

So on a comparative analysis, the States’ agricultural statistics soar and on the other, industrial statistics are comparatively rockbottom. This phenomenon in the State, depicts an unusual antithesis, with all the parameters prevalent - a community marked by dynamism, enterprise, hardwork and resilience, agriculture which boomed in response to the Borlaug Seed and culminated in the spectacular Green Revolution, Agricultural surpluses should have spurned industrial strides, as elsewhere but Punjab’s achievement fell far short of expectations. This disparate development became more pronounced, when in the recent past, the State was gripped by terrorism causing turbulence in the entire socio-political structure of the State. This lacuna in Punjab’s body politic, i.e., a lopsided
agriculturally pronged development was pronounced as a major cause by eminent analysts for youth falling prey to the malaise of terrorism. The causative factors for terrorism, were discussed at length in various seminars, papers and theses, however, this vital core issue of industrial lag has been only perfunctorily discussed. As a student, subsequently as a teacher, also having lived in this region for a major part of my life, been a witness to recent history evolve as major events transpired, I became enthusiastic about pursuing research in this specific region with a contemporary focus.

The industrial growth of Punjab did necessitate an indepth study and moreover, a historical inquiry, this was the core issue for the onset of terrorism, which plagued the State for almost a decade. The prospect of culling the causes for a sluggish industrial growth from a historical perspective was challenging, fascinating yet contemporary. My endeavour was to examine the major social, political, economic and geographical strands of Punjab’s history, then present them in a coherent, analytical, contextual, historical framework focussing on its’ industrial growth.

Punjab’s historians have worked extensively in the contemporary sphere on the social, political, cultural and religious themes, however economic history is an emergent and relevant theme, closely allied with the possible cause and effect relationship of historical events. Whenever studies have been conducted in Punjab on violence, they have paid scant attention to certain structural roots of violence stemming from the distortions in its’ economic structure. Various studies conducted on the subject suffer from this theoretical inadequacy; a neglect of the process of economic growth simultaneous with its’ social and cultural evolutionary process. Modern
Punjab was the focus of my study, as this would be relevant in the present context to construe linkages with industry in the rest of the country, as well as historical past. Industrial lag as a problem has manifested itself in the present day and its’ repercussions have been contemporary.

For a systematic study and to extract the pith and marrow of each historical event, chapterization has been done keeping the specific historical episode at the core of the discussion and subsequent linkages with the industrial theme. I commenced my study by a reconnoitre with Punjab’s historical past, which is essential, since many subsequent occurrences are seeded in the past, it was also imperative, to analyse the psyche, ethos and cultural moorings of the people of the area under study. History no longer unfolds in a water tight compartment, sociological and geographical factors coexist. My thesis is an endeavour at making a temporal study of economic events and their imprint on historical evaluation from not merely a theoretical perspective.

During the course of my research, I charted out the major historical events which shaped the evolutionary process and thereby analysed its economic fall out. The colonial impact could not be overlooked, as it has played a major role in steering the State towards agricultural prosperity by laying its foundations in an extensive canal network, not without tampering with the social fabric. Partition was cataclysmic, as far as Punjab was concerned, it left scathing scars on the psyche, the economy and the topography of the State. The task of recuperation and reconstruction was stupendous, Punjab’s terrain, would scarcely have time to recoup and some
political or border aggression would erupt, this seems like a pattern inherent in its historical past.

The next historical occurrence, which had repercussions in a vivisection of the State, was the Punjabi Suba movement, here in lay the germs of subsequent communalism in the State. All these socio political occurrences brought forth major repercussions, so they had to be probed. The Green Revolution was undoubtedly, like a magic wand ushering the State into a proverbial gilded era but it brought forth major distortions in the social and political fabric of the State, in determining its’ future policies. The wave of prosperity, which the Green Revolution brought created a large employable workforce, but did not create conditions and opportunities of employment. The employment, growing disparities of wealth and income, leading to unequal conditions for availing of opportunities and poverty gave rise to individual and social anger. A resultant sense of insecurity made it easy for retrogressive religious ideologies to seed and flourish, so terrorism rocked the State. This was a significant milestone in history to be scanned. For the progress of industry in the State, a study of industrial policies and acts, whether Central or State was essential this was done in a separate chapter. Finally, the winds of liberalisation blew over Punjab, they were juxtaposed fortunately, with peace and tranquility with the elected government of Beant Singh, the impact of democracy and peace on industrialization were discussed. In the Conclusion, the ultimate findings of my work are synthesized and presented.

I started my research work by locating the secondary sources, to historically ressurect the area I wanted to study, so I began with a
reconnoitre of various secondary sources. In the process, I began by reading up a large number of periodicals, particularly "Punjab Past and Present," published by Punjabi University, Patiala, I also read books which covered a wide spectrum of Punjab's Modern and Contemporary Periods, these books have been enumerated ahead. The Department of Punjab School of Economics of the Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar has done commendable work in the field of Punjab's Industry. This was invaluable for an initial framework to build upon.

After making a sound foundational survey of the historical backdrop, it was imperative to pursue my study on historical methods by tapping the Primary Sources, to provide a deeper insight into the subject. I visited the Directorate of Industries, Punjab, where records and documents are maintained pertaining to the specific field, so as to provide all the vital clues to make a start. These records, reports, industrial policies were accessible and the officers were rather helpful with their oral versions on various queries.

The Statistical Abstracts from the Statistics, Department of Punjab, State Industries Corporation, other Corporations and Boards have been useful for the collection of specific data and figures, significant for the eventual historical analyses and conclusion. The Punjab Chapter of the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry has prepared various papers on industry in Punjab, these were useful. In addition, to these primary sources, the field work, reports and data available at the Centre for Rural Research and Industrial Development are extensive, as well as intensive, on the subject. Though most studies on Punjab are largely obsessed with terrorism and its'
repercussions, I had to sift material pertaining to my topic. The Punjab State Archives, which has shifted from Patiala to Chandigarh, houses Primary Sources for reconstructing important milestones in Punjab’s chequered history - the colonial period, partition, resettlement and bifurcation. I spent sometime looking at the Primary Sources there i.e. Punjab Administrative Reports, files on Commerce and Industry, various acts of the Punjab Government and monographs on Industrial products.

No thesis on Punjab is complete without reference to the old copies of the Tribune. I scanned the copies on microfische. The private papers of individuals - Lord Mountbatten and Jawaharlal Nehru were also scanned, so as to resurrect the early period of my thesis, at the Nehru Memorial Museum Library, New Delhi. On requesting the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee at Amritsar, a few records of Master Tara Singh and Sant Fateh Singh (in Punjab) were browsed through, though, unfortunately, a lot of Archival material was destroyed during Operation Blue Star. The Home Department, Political files, as well as the Commerce Department files 1920-46, housed at National Archives at Delhi, gave some inkling to the British attitudes towards initial industrial development in Punjab. In order, to make the study empirical and get a first hand account of the subject, some businessmen from major industrial towns of Punjab were interviewed.

In Delhi, the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries’ Reports and Confederation of Indian Industry Reports were from where I studied certain general trends of Indian industry, notifications and policies of the Government of India, which had subsequent repercussions in Punjab. The National Council of Applied Economic Research at New Delhi,
has been bringing out surveys like the Techno Economic Survey on Punjab, these again have been most useful. Data were also collected from the Annual Survey of Industries issued by the Central Statistical Organisation.

For the ultimate culmination of my thesis, the dramatis personae was varied. Before my thesis took a final shape, I faced innumerable obstacles, the greatest blow was the death of my guide Dr. R.C. Jauhri, who passed away, when my thesis was in its' final stages. May God bless his soul and my utmost gratitude to him for all the inspiration and guidance he provided me always, I would like to thank Mrs. Jauhri for her endless cups of tea which would refuel me for my work. At this juncture of despair and despondency, Dr. J.S. Dhanki bailed me out. I must thank him most profoundly for agreeing to supervise my remaining research work with tremendous patience and care. My colleague, Dr. Sukhdev Sharma deserves special gratitude for his help at every stage during the journey of my research work.

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