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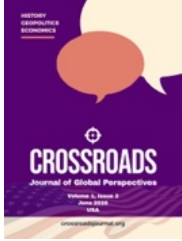
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Sino-Sikh Chushul Treaty 1842

Sukh Bajwa

Independent researcher, New York

Abstract

The Treaty of Chushul, signed on September 16–17, 1842, was a peace agreement that ended the Sino-Sikh War (also known as the Dogra–Tibetan War) of 1841–1842. It marked a rare diplomatic resolution between the expanding Sikh Empire (*Khalsa Raj*) in northern India and the Qing Dynasty of China, which held suzerainty over its vassal state Tibet. The treaty formalized boundaries between Ladakh (under Sikh/Dogra control) and Tibet, restored pre-war trade routes, and prevented further incursions, reflecting the limits of both empires reach amid internal challenges. It is still relevant today.

Keywords: Ladakh, Tibet, China, Sikh, Khalsa Raj, Dogras, Qing dynasty.



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Introduction

South Asia is the ground for the Great Game. Major Powers do their best to distort facts and publish alternate views on events. S. Bajpai sums it well when he says that scholars face genuine difficulty in understanding events and trying to analyze historical events and treaties written more than a hundred years ago and in other languages.

...when rival claims on territories are put forward with equal vehemence based on seemingly incontrovertible evidence and when national sentiments are worked up, a scholar working on a subject like this faces genuine difficulty in formulating an unbiased and dispassionate attitude and avoiding national affiliation (Bajpai, 1970).

Founded by Maharaja Ranjit Singh (r. 1801–1839), the Sikh Kingdom (*Khalsa Raj*) rapidly expanded from Punjab in South Asia, incorporating diverse ethnic groups through military prowess and alliances. Ranjit Singh's empire reached its zenith by the 1830s, controlling key Himalayan trade routes for salt, wool, *Pashmina* wool, and *Shahtoosh* wool (both discussed later). His death in June 1839 triggered a power vacuum, with succession wars among his heirs (e.g., Kharak Singh, Nau Nihal Singh) and reliance on Dogra Hindu generals like Gulab Singh of Jammu for stability.

By the 1800s, the Qing Empire was grappling with internal rebellions (e.g., White Lotus, Miao uprisings) and external pressures from European powers, including the looming First Opium War (1839–1842). Tibet, nominally under Qing protection as a vassal state, served as a buffer against Central Asian threats but had semi-autonomous governance under the Dalai Lama. Qing authority was more symbolic than direct, relying on periodic military garrisons (*ambans*) in Lhasa.

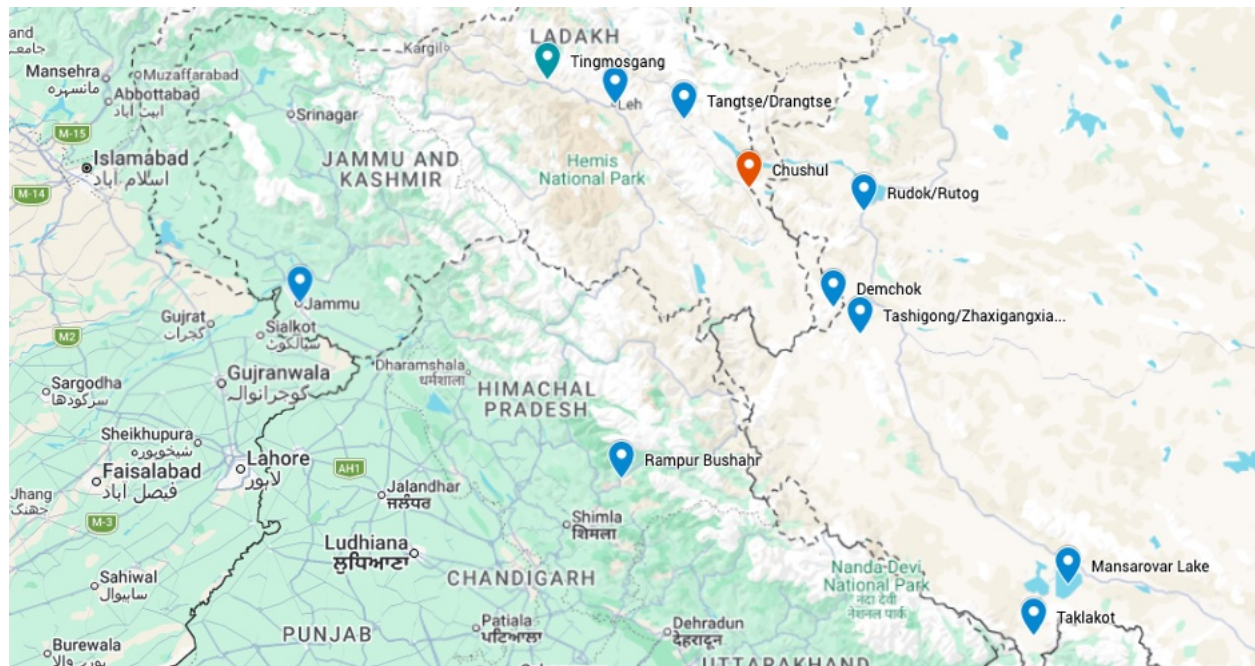
The British East India Company was also extending its influence in South Asia specially in the Himalayan border areas where Nepal and Tibet meet.

There was Qing Dynasty's declining Influence in Tibet and the rising Sikh Kingdom with expanding influence in Ladakh at the borders of western Tibet.

The Treaty of Chushul in 1842 was culmination of wars between the two powers. At stake were trade routes in the region.



Area enlarged below.



Location of places mentioned in the text.

Trade

In the 19th century, Ladakh was the hub of trade routes that branched out into Central Asia and Tibet. Its trade with Tibet was governed by the 1684 Treaty of Tingmosgang (Treaty of Tingmosgang, 2026). Some aspects of the treaty are:

- It was a Treaty between Ladakh and Tibet.
- Border between Ladakh and Tibet will be demarcated at the Lhari Stream (Charding *Nullah*) near Demchok (see map above) (Charding *Nullah*, Wikipedia, 2026). This is on the banks of the Indus River. There is a small Demchok settlement in both India and China. There is Demchok Monastery in India as well.
- Ladakh got the exclusive right to receive the *pashmina* wool produced in Western Tibet. Western Tibet was known as Ngari Korsum in old days. It is now called Ngari Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region. World famous Kashmiri *Pashmina* shawls were made with this *Pashmina* wool from Ladakh. The wool came from *Pashmina* goats that roam the cold high altitude Tibetan plateau. *Shahtoosh* is even finer wool from the Chiru antelope. *Shahtoosh* is illegal today as the endangered wild antelope has to be killed to get the wool.

Political Powers

In the early 1800s, the Kashmir Valley and the adjoining Jammu region were part of the Sikh Kingdom (*Khalsa Raj*) of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. But the *Dogras* of Jammu were virtually autonomous under the rule of Raja Gulab Singh, who was positioning himself to take control of Kashmir and the surrounding areas after the death of the Sikh monarch Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In 1834, Gulab Singh sent his ablest general and Kishtwar governor, Zorawar Singh, to take control of all the territory between Jammu and the Tibet border, leading to the conquest of Ladakh and Baltistan. Baltistan is the region between Gilgit in the West, and Ladakh in the East. Baltistan is northern part of Kashmir. It is in present day Pakistan. Gilgit and Skardu are important towns. By 1840, Ladakh and Baltistan were firmly under Dogra control, subject to the suzerainty of the Sikh Kingdom.

The British East India Company was the predominant power in the Indian subcontinent at the time. It treated the Sikh Empire as a valuable ally against the Afghans, but it also had designs for its own *Pashmina* trade with Tibet. Zorawar Singh's conquest of Ladakh broke the Kashmiri–Ladakhi monopoly on Tibet trade, and Tibetan *Pashmina* wool started finding its way into British territory. To regain the monopoly, Gulab Singh and Zorawar Singh turned their eyes towards Western Tibet.

From the early 18th century, Tibet had been under the protectorate of the Manchu-led Qing dynasty. A Qing *Amban* (imperial resident) was stationed in Lhasa to report on the affairs of Tibet. Nevertheless, Qing China was fighting the First Opium War (1839–1842) with the British Empire when the Dogra invasion of Tibet took place.

Prelude to Conflict: Sikh/Dogra Expansion into Ladakh (1834–1840)

The governance of Ladakh had deteriorated. This led to feudal clashes. The people appealed to the Governor for help but were treated with ‘contempt’. This affected the trade of lucrative *Pashmina* Wool, Tibetan Salt, and Tea from Tibet into Kashmir, Jammu, and Punjab.

The administration of Ladakh was far from satisfactory. Kaja (Gyalpo) Tshupal Namgyal, ('Tshe-dpal-mi-hgyur-don-grub-Knam-rgyal) who came to power in 1790, was not only peculiar in his personal habits but was also the reverse of the Ladakhi traditions in matters of administration. He had taken over the Privy Seal from Khalone (Prime Minister) and had dismissed all the old counsellors and governors. He appointed upstarts as his counsellors and governors. This resulted in the practical break-up of the administration... The people requested the King for help but the latter treated the request with contempt and punished them instead of offering any help. (Bajpai, 1970)

In 1834, General Zorawar Singh set out to conquer Ladakh from its Namgyal dynasty ruler, Tshewang Dorje Namgyal. By 1836, Ladakh fell, becoming a Sikh vassal and integrating into the empire's revenue system.

Gulab Singh, Zorawar's patron, and Raja of Jammu, was granted semi-autonomous control over Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh as a reward. General Zorawar Singh built a military fort in Leh (capital of Ladakh). It is still standing and is a military museum. (Ladakh Tourism, 2026)

The Sino-Sikh War (1841–1842): Spark and Escalation

It was both geopolitics and economics that triggered the war. The trade route from Western Tibet into Kashmir via Ladakh was a lucrative trade route. Perhaps if it were less important, its deteriorating governance and internal security situation would not have been considered important. The British also used the deteriorating governance to direct trade from Western Tibet to their controlled lands in Nepal-India border.

The hostilities and subsequent disorders attending his conquest of Ladakh had permitted the British to divert the shawl-wool trade to [Rampur-] Bashahr - a state of affairs that Gulab Singh could not long afford to tolerate (Fisher, 1963).

Shawl-wool was reaching British factories at Ludhiana and Delhi through passes in control of the British Government due to the unsettled state of affairs in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh (Bajpai, 1970).

Both the British and Chinese were also preoccupied with other wars. This created a window of opportunity for General Zorawar Singh.

Gulab Singh's chief objective in the conquest of Ladakh and Baltistan had been two-fold: to encircle the Kashmir valley - in anticipation of the day when the dissolution of the Sikh empire would permit him to claim Kashmir as well as Jammu - and to gain access to the lucrative wool trade that normally flowed from the plains of northwestern Tibet (Chang Tang) through Ladakh to the looms of Kashmir (Fisher, 1963).

General Zorawar Singh's Sikh and Dogra army entered Ngari region (Western Tibet) at Demchok and proceeded along the Ngari Valley to the area around Lake Mansarovar. The key battles were:

- **Frontier skirmishes at Demchok (1841):** Sikh and Dogra forces entered West Tibet from Ladakh.
- **Battle of Rudok (May 1841)**
- **Battle of Gartok (June 1841):** location uncertain as town has moved and been renamed.
- **Battle of Taklakot (September 1841)**
- **Battle of Toyo (December 10-12, 1841):** This was a decisive battle between the Sikhs/Dogras and Tibet/Chinese. It was fought 2-3 miles southeast of Taklakot. General Zorawar Singh was killed in this battle. A modest *samadhi* (memorial), known locally as chorten was built. It is likely just a heap of stones.
- **Battle of Drangtse/Tangtse (August 1842):** The decisive battle. This was near present day Leh, Ladakh. Tibetans launched counter-attack on Ladakh. Reinforcements under Dewan Hari Chand arrived and defeated the Tibetan army. The Dogras dammed the river to flood the Tibetan trenches, forcing them into an open-field battle where the Dogras had the advantage. The Tibetans fled. Dogras were in pursuit.
- **Battle of Chishul (September 1842):** A final battle was fought at Chishul.

The Treaty: Terms and Significance

The treaty was signed on September 16 and 17, 1842. The English translation of the treaty is shown below. The treaty is referred to as ‘Ladakhi Letter of Agreement’.

Shri Khalsaji Apsarani Shri Maharajah; Lhasa representative Kalon Surkhang; investigator Dapon Peshi, commander of forces; Balana, the representative of Gulam Kahandin; and the interpreter Amir Hah, have written this letter after sitting together. We have agreed that we have no ill-feelings because of the past war. The two kings will henceforth remain friends forever. The relationship between Maharajah Gulab Singh of Kashmir and the Lama Guru of Lhasa (Dalai Lama) is now established. The Maharajah Sahib, with God (Kunchok) as his witness, promises to recognise ancient boundaries , which should be looked after by each side without resorting to warfare. When the descendants

of the early kings, who fled from Ladakh to Tibet, now return they will not be stopped by Shri Maharajah. Trade between Ladakh and Tibet will continue as usual. Tibetan government traders coming into Ladakh will receive free transport and accommodations as before, and the Ladakhi envoy will, in turn, receive the same facilities in Lhasa. The Ladakhis take an oath before God (Kunchok) that they will not intrigue or create new troubles in Tibetan territory. We have agreed, with God as witness, that Shri Maharajah Sahib and the Lama Guru of Lhasa will live together as members of the same household. We have written the above on the second of Assura, Sambhat 1899 (17 September 1842).

[Sealed by the Wazir, Dewan, Balana, and Amir Shah]

Tibetan Letter of Agreement, 1842

This agreement is made in the interests of the friendship between the Lhasa authorities and Shri Maharajah Sahib and Maharajah Gulab Singh. On the thirteenth day of the eighth month of the Water-Tiger year (September 17, 1842), the Lhasa representative Kalon Surkang, investigator Dapon Peshi, Shri Raja Sahib, sat together amicably with Kunchok (God) as witness. This document has been drawn up to ensure the lasting friendship of the Tibetans and the Ladakhis. We have agreed not to harm each other in any way, and to look after the interests of our own territories. We agree to continue trading in tea and cloth on the same terms as in the past, and will not harm Ladakhi traders coming into Tibet. If any of our subjects stray into your country, they should not be protected. We will forget past differences between the Lhasa authority and Shri Maharajah. The agreement arrived at today will remain firmly established forever. Kunchok (God), Mount Kailash, Lake Manasarowar, and Khochag Jowo have been called as witnesses to this treaty.

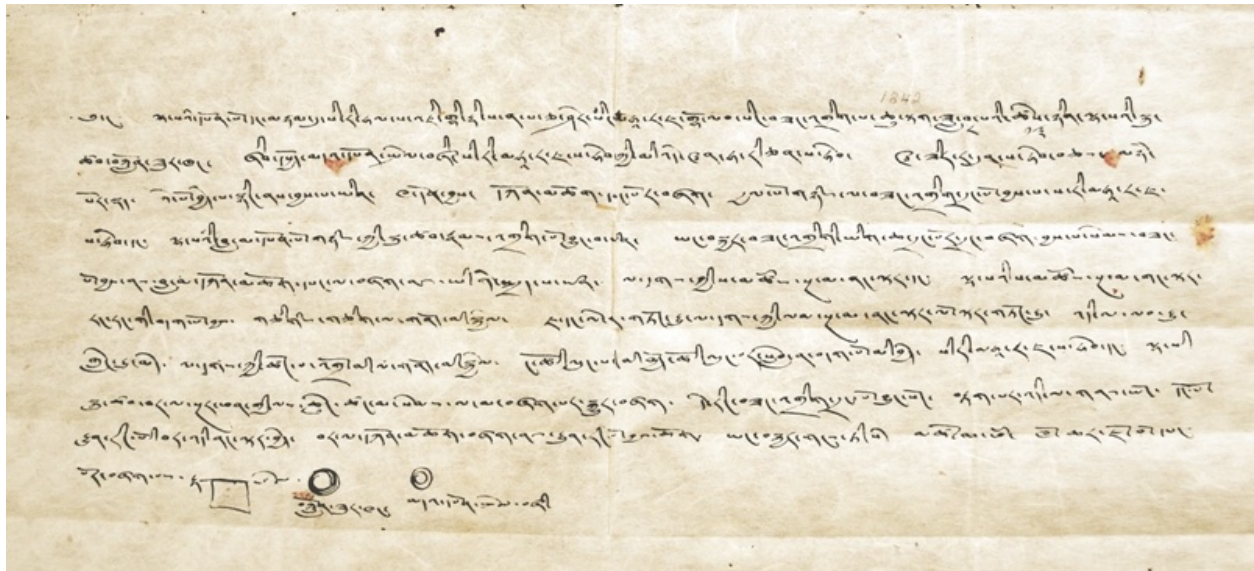
[Sealed by Kalon Surkhang and Dapon Peshi]

Signatories: On behalf of the Sikh Empire (Sher Singh and Gulab Singh) were Dogra envoys like Diwan Hari Chand; for Tibet/Qing, Lhasa officials (Kalon Soka and Bakshi Shajpuh) under imperial oversight.

Source: (Tibet Justice, 2026)

Core Provisions (from the treaty text):

- Format: Exchanged as ‘Letter of Agreement’ rather than a formal document, emphasizing personal vows over state seals.
- Mutual recognition of pre-1841 boundaries: Dogras withdrew from Tibetan territories like Rudok.
- Perpetual peace and non-interference: No future invasions or support for rebels.
- Trade resumption: Annual caravans of wool, tea, and salt via Ladakh routes, with no tariffs or blockades.
- *Pashmina* Trade: The lucrative *Pashmina* wool from Western Tibet will continue to go to Kashmir via Ladakh as it did before. It will not go to Rampur-Bushahr as the British wanted. “Continue trading in tea and cloth on the same terms as in the past, and will not harm Ladakhi traders coming into Tibet” (Tibet Justice, 2026). This is probably what the war was about.



(Wikimedia, 1842)

No full photographic reproduction of the Dogra/Sikh side of the exchange appears publicly digitized, but this Tibetan counterpart is the primary surviving original artifact.

This treaty provided that the Dogras were to be the rulers of Ladakh, but that their control was not to extend to Tibet, and that the boundaries of Ladakh and Lhasa would be constituted as formerly. "That in conformity with ancient usage Tea, Pashmina and Shatoosh wool shall be transmitted by the Ladakh road. That no person from Ladakh to Tibet and vice versa will be obstructed. That war will not be renewed between Ladakh and Tibet. That whatever customs were prevalent of old shall prevail" (Bajpai, 1970).

End of hostilities, agreement on borders and respect of sovereignty, non-aggression agreement, open to trade and tourism, and respect of old customs. This treaty delivered on all its objectives.

Is it Tibet-Dogra treaty or Sino-Sikh Treaty?

Dogra Kingdom was autonomous Kingdom but under suzerainty to Sikh Kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Tibet was autonomous Kingdom as well under suzerainty to China. The treaty was negotiated by Dogras and Tibetans. The treaty clearly states that "This agreement is made in the interests of the friendship between the Lhasa authorities and Shri Maharajah Sahib and Maharajah Gulab Singh" (Tibet Justice, 2026). It is also referred to as 'Ladakhi Letter of Agreement'. Should it not be Ladakhi-Tibet treaty as well?

It can be argued both ways on whether it was Tibet-Dogra or Ladakhi-Tibet or Sino-Sikh treaty. Perhaps it is a question of who you ask, and what people's motives are.

...genuine difficulty in formulating an unbiased and dispassionate attitude and avoiding national affiliation (Bajpai, 1970).

Long-Term Implications

- For India-China Relations: The treaty is cited in modern border disputes (e.g. Aksai Chin), as evidence of historical Ladakh suzerainty to Sikh Kingdom (*Khalsa Raj*), while China emphasizes suzerainty over Tibet.

- Historiographical Notes: Often overshadowed by the Opium Wars, the conflict underscores the Great Game rivalries in Asia.

The terms were also summarised in the Ladakh Chronicles as follows. Tibet recognised that Ladakh was annexed to the Sikh Empire. And the Sikh Empire relinquished the ancient Ladakhi claim to western Tibet. Both sides would remain within their own territories. Biennial Lopchak missions would go on as before. Ladakhi merchants would be allowed to travel to Rudok, Gartok and other places in Tibet and the Tibetan merchants from Chang Thang would be allowed to go to Ladakh (Wikipedia, 2026).

The texts of the notes also state that the "old, established frontiers between Ladakh and Tibet would be respected. The Ladakhi king and queen were to be allowed to live in Ladakh peacefully, and it is the Ladakhi king that would send the biennial Lopchak missions to Lhasa rather than the Dogra regime. All trade between the two regions was to be conducted according to "old, established custom".

This is significant as the treaty ensured restoration of diplomacy, ended border disputes, restored Ladakh's and Kashmir's 180-year monopoly over *Pashmina* wool from Ngari Korsum (Western Tibet), and enabled trade.

Sikhs today have excellent relations with China. Chinese Ambassadors visit *Darbar Sahib* (Literally court of God), the holiest shrine of the Sikhs. Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong visited in November 2019. Ambassador Luo Zhaohui visited in August 2018. Ambassador Le Yucheng visited in March 2015. China also add Punjabi language courses to its university (The Tribune, 2026).

Cao Yin, Associate Professor at Tsinghua University, Beijing, China, wrote about history of Sikhs in Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Singapore in 1885-1945. Sikhs were brought in by the British to police international settlements. He wrote positively about Sikhs in China. Sikhs "clean, modest, and well-disciplined characteristics made them very qualified policemen" (Yin, *From Policemen to Revolutionaries: A Sikh Diaspora in Global Shanghai, 1885-1945*, 2017). Sikhs were not mere mercenaries, but with civilizing influence who would challenge the British authorities in Shanghai if need be.

They were not merely responsible for checking riots and crimes, but also for carrying out the civilizing project in the International Settlement; on the other, they frequently challenged the authorities that they thought to be oppressive and discriminative (Yin, *From Policemen to Revolutionaries: A Sikh Diaspora in Global Shanghai, 1885-1945*, 2017).

It is worth repeating for its importance. The treaty is important as evidence of historical Ladakh suzerainty to the Sikh Kingdom (*Khalsa Raj*), while China emphasizes suzerainty over Tibet.

Conclusion

The Sino-Sikh Chushul Treaty of 1842 was the culmination of wars and between the two powers – Tibet, an autonomous region under China, and Ladakh controlled by the King of Jammu under the Sikh Kingdom (*Khalsa Raj*) of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. At stake were trade routes in the region. The treaty restored the old status-quo established by the 1684 Treaty of Tingmosgang.

The treaty was signed after several battles between General Zorawar Singh leading the Dogra army of Raja (King) Gulab Singh of Jammu, who was subservient to the Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Sikh Kingdom (*Khalsa Raj*), and the Tibetans.

The trigger for the conflict was geopolitics and economics. The governance of Ladakh had declined. Traders and caravans were reluctant to travel from Tibet to Kashmir via Ladakh due to deteriorating security and governance. The British took this opportunity to route trade in lucrative pashmina wool to their region. This would have destroyed lucrative trade to Kashmir (under Jammu and the Sikhs). General Zorawar Singh led his forces to conquer Ladakh and force the existing *status quo*.

The *pashmina* wool manufacturing in Kashmir today probably owes it to General Zorawar Singh and the Sikhs for its survival. However, the old trade routes between Tibet and Ladakh are no longer open.

This treaty can serve as a blueprint for cooperation for the future - end of border conflicts in Ladakh-Tibet, agreement on borders and respect of sovereignty, non-aggression agreement, open to trade and tourism, and respect of old customs.

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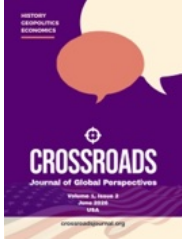
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Sikhs Before Sikhism: Exploring the Historical Roots of a People

Dr. Parmod Pahwa

Researcher and Analyst.

Abstract

The history of Sikhism is commonly narrated beginning with the life of Guru Nanak in 1469. While this approach is appropriate for understanding Sikhism as a religious tradition, it overlooks the deeper historical and cultural roots of the people who later became Sikhs. This article examines the pre-Sikh past of Punjab, exploring the ancient civilizations, ethnic communities, and spiritual currents that shaped the region long before the emergence of Sikhism. By situating Sikh identity within the broader civilizational history of Punjab, the article argues that Sikhism represents both a complete revolution and a cultural continuity. Understanding this deeper context enriches our appreciation of Sikh identity and its place within the long historical evolution of Punjabi civilization.

Keywords: Punjab; Sikh history; Indus Valley Civilization; Bhakti movement; Sufism; Punjabi identity; Guru Nanak; Khalsa; cultural continuity.



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1.) Introduction

The history of the Sikhs is often told beginning with the life of Guru Nanak (1469-1539), the founder of Sikh Religion. While this is appropriate when discussing Sikhism as a distinct religious tradition, it leaves unanswered an equally compelling historical question: *Who were the Sikhs before Sikhism?*

At first glance, the question appears paradoxical. Yet historians increasingly recognize the distinction between a religious identity and the cultural, ethnic, and geographical communities from which it emerges. No spiritual tradition arises in a vacuum. Sikhism, too, developed within a rich civilizational landscape shaped by centuries of cultural exchange, migration, and spiritual ferment.

This article explores the deeper historical roots of the Sikh people by examining the ancient and medieval history of Punjab — a region whose cultural patterns shaped the very soil from which Sikhism later blossomed.

2.) Punjab as a Civilizational Crossroads

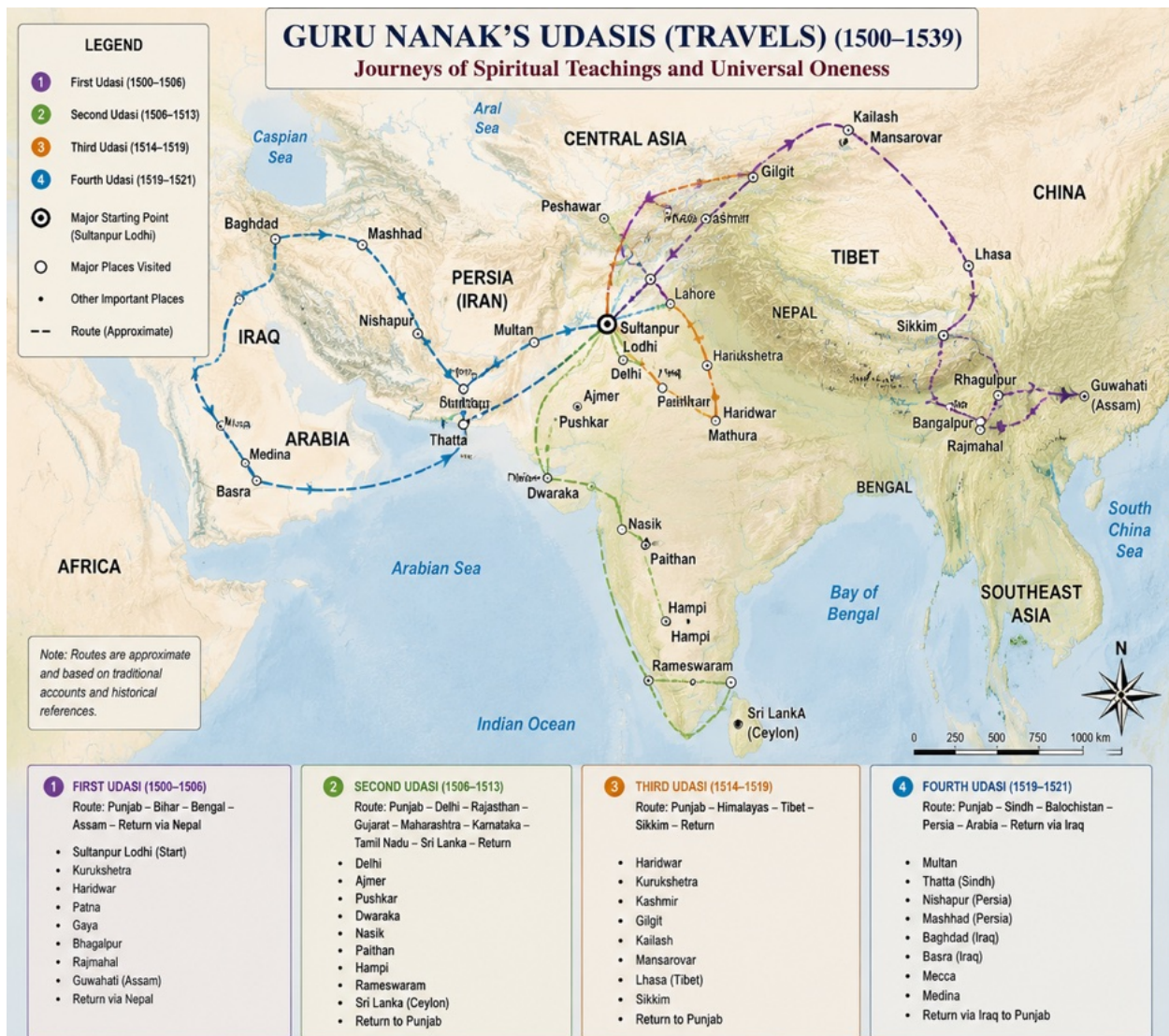
Punjab - the *Panj-āb*, or land of five rivers — has historically served as the gateway to the Indian subcontinent. Its geography made it a corridor for successive waves of migration, trade, and conquest. From the Indus Valley Civilization to the Vedic period, from Persian and Greek incursions to Turkic and Mughal rule, Punjab absorbed and transformed diverse cultural influences.

Asia was the birthplace of ‘Merchant Capitalism’ – a form of Capitalism in which merchants and traders exchanged goods throughout Asia. “The rudiments of capitalism did not begin in Europe during the ‘Middle Ages’ but rather developed centuries earlier in China, the Indian Ocean and only later in western Europe” (Peters, 2019). The merchants and traders were more interested in trade than history. They never formally documented the trade routes they opened. They probably also wanted to protect this commercially sensitive knowledge from others. Understandably, no merchant will talk about their sources and markets. “This form of trade-based globalization represents

a very early form of merchant capitalism, among the first along with Middle Eastern cities like Babylon and the Greek-city states, that predated western forms and has largely been ignored by western scholars because the sources are scarce and in ancient languages and text, and because history has been Eurocentric focusing on Marco Polo and his friends, that occurred much later” (Peters, 2019)

“The first merchants who reacted to these political embassies [nomadic tribes] by organizing expeditions up to China were in the first century bce from the Indo-Iranian borderlands, from Gandhara (nowadays northern Pakistan) and then Bactria (northern Afghanistan), soon to be united during the first century CE in the Kushan empire” (Peters, 2019).

It was not just goods and services that flowed along the trade routes. It was also knowledge and ideas. “Trade along the so-called Silk Road economic belt included fruits and vegetables, livestock, grain, leather and hides, tools, religious objects, artwork, precious stones and metals and—perhaps more importantly—language, culture, religious beliefs, philosophy and science” (History.com Editors, 2025). These trade routes facilitated Guru Nanak’s *Udasis* (travels) from Punjab to all corners of the known world.



Source: generated by the author from list of some of Guru Nanak's udasis (travels).

Note: historical accuracy not claimed

as Guru Nanak is known to have visited more places than the map depicts.

The same trade routes also facilitated European and Chinese explorers visiting South Asia. European travelers visited Punjab well before Guru Nanak. One such explorer Francisco Pelsaert (1590-1630) travelled in this region for Dutch East India Company. He wrote about his experiences in the book 'Jehangir's India' (Pelsaert, 1925).



Source: generated by the author from list of travelers and their routes.

Historical accuracy is not claimed. Intent is to illustrate rich exchange of ideas and goods.

The population of Punjab consisted of numerous tribes and communities, including *Jats*, *Khattris*, *Aroras*, *Rajputs*, *Gujjars*, *Kambojs*, and others. Over centuries, these groups developed a shared cultural identity centered around the Punjabi language, agrarian life, clan-based social structures, and regional customs.

Many of the families that later embraced Sikhism traced their ancestry to these pre-existing Punjabi communities.

Punjab was never a monolithic isolated inbred culture. It has always been a pluralistic and inclusive culture that has been connected with rest of the world for at least 500 years. Goods, services, and ideas have been freely exchanged.

3.) The Indus Valley Civilization and the Deep Roots of Punjabi Identity

The region now known as Punjab was home to one of the world’s earliest urban civilizations: the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC), also known as the Harappan Civilization (c. 3300–1300 BCE). Major sites such as *Harappa*, *Rakhigarhi*, and *Banawali* lie within the broader Punjab region (World History, 2026).



Indus Valley civilization (Wikimedia, 2026)

3.1 Urban Sophistication

The Harappans built:

- Planned cities
- Advanced drainage systems
- Standardized weights and measures
- Thriving craft industries
- Long-distance trade networks

“Some pre-Harappan settlements grew into cities containing thousands of individuals who were not primarily engaged in agriculture” (Ali, 2021). Cities allowed division of labor and an advanced economy based on town planning, pottery, and trade. Trade requires accurate weights and measures based on the easy-to-use decimal system.

“As seen in Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, and therefore the recently discovered Rakhigarhi, this urban arrange[ment] enclosed the world's initial urban sanitation systems. Among town, individual homes or teams of homes obtained water from wells. From a space that seems to own been put aside for bathing, waste material was directed to coated drains, that lined the foremost streets. Homes opened solely to inner courtyards and smaller lanes” (Ali, 2021).

3.2 Cultural Continuities

Archaeological evidence suggests continuities between the Indus Valley people and later Punjabi society:

- Agricultural patterns
- Craft traditions
- Settlement patterns
- Folk motifs and symbols

A traveler from modern day Punjab will feel right at home and familiar throughout most of the Indus Valley Civilization. Similar cuisine, language,

customs, preferences, and culture. In fact, people from modern day Punjab would like nothing more than to have freedom of travel through most of Indus Valley civilization as they see in it echoes of the past that they have lost. A traveler from modern day Punjab will feel right at home and get emotional in Balochistan a thousand km away. It feels like homecoming for them. “A unified culture emerged throughout the world, delivery into conformity settlements that were separated by as much as 1000 km. and muting regional variations” (Ali, 2021).

“This was a flourishing culture, with creative and technological development, and no sign of slavery or exploitation of individuals” (Ali, 2021). This suggests that Sikhism did not evolve in the dark or in vacuum or out of nowhere. It had its roots in the ‘flourishing culture’ and ‘creative and technological development’ of the Indus Valley civilization. This is expected as impactful ideas do not just emerge out of nowhere. They are the outcome of hundreds even thousands of years of cultural sophistication and development.

Sikh philosophy is considered a humane religion. Its central tenet is *sarbat-dabhala* (prosperity-for-all). Sikh philosophy does not believe in prosperity for the few or exploitation of the weak and poor. This was in practice to some extent in the Indus Valley Civilization – ‘no sign of slavery or exploitation of individuals’ (Ali, 2021).

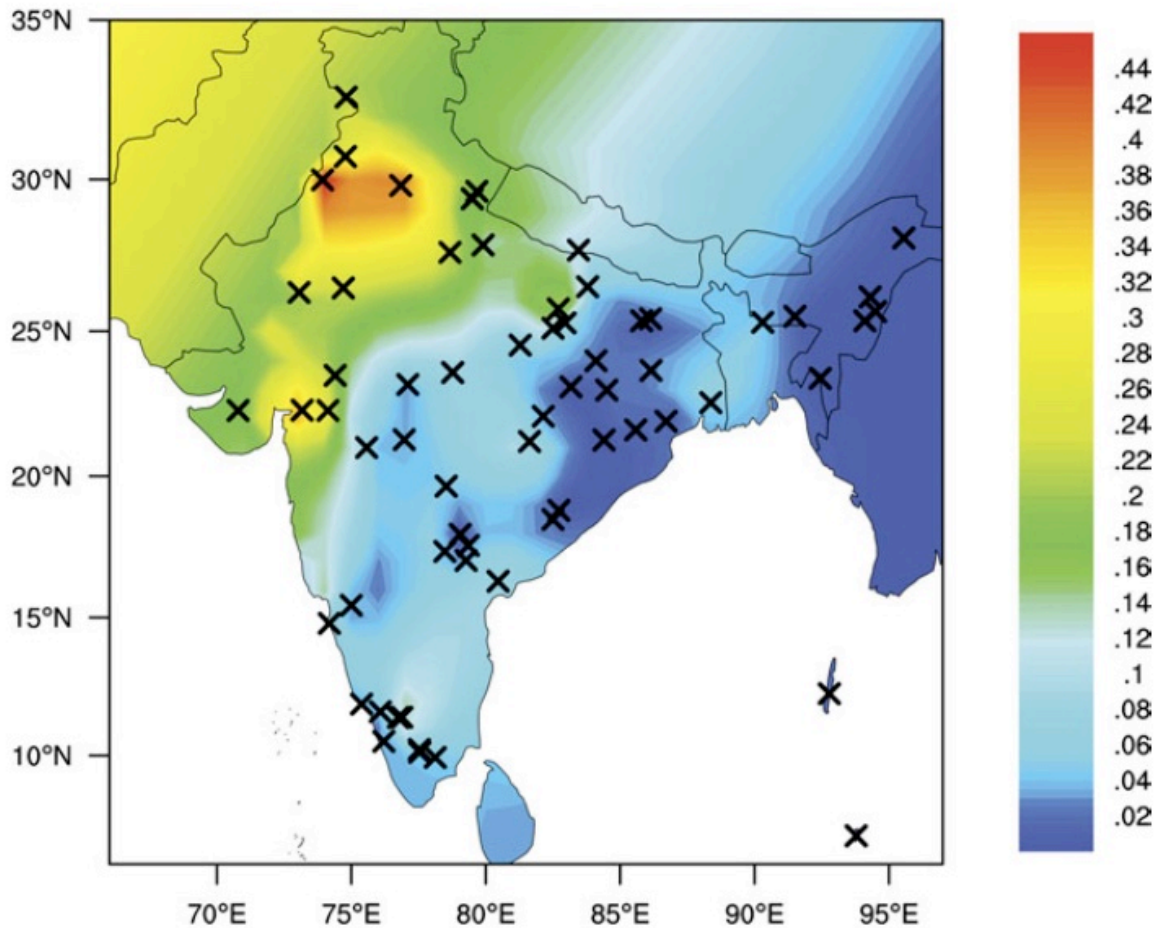
Another interesting aspect of Indus Valley Civilization was that “There’s no conclusive proof of palaces or temples — or, indeed, of kings, armies, or priests” (Ali, 2021). Sikh philosophy also carries this over. There is equality of all men *and* women. No one person is above others. There is no ‘King’ or priestly class or caste system in Sikh philosophy. There are no grand palaces for Kings or anyone. “Indus civilization cities were exceptional for his or her apparent egalitarianism. As an example, all homes had access to water and drain facilities. One gets the impression of a colossal, bourgeois society” (Ali, 2021). Sikh philosophy carries on this tradition of egalitarianism.

Sikh religion and philosophy were a cultural continuity of the informal values of the Indus Valley civilization. The religion formalized what people intrinsically believed in and practiced. This is expected. Religion, Great Leaders, and even Messengers of God recognize and work with people's prevailing beliefs. Formalized ideas and religion have to fit with people's existing beliefs. It cannot be superimposed on people with different views. Nor can an ideology which works in one region be transplanted as such to people with different civilizational values.

3.3 Ethnic Lineages

Genetic studies indicate that the people of the Indus Valley contributed significantly to the ancestry of North Indian populations, including Punjabis.

Ability to digest milk grants people ability to digest protein. It is associated with healthier growth of the person and the community. Research has shown that people of Indus Valley and specifically Punjab have higher ability to digest milk due to higher percentage of DNA that drives this.



*Mapping genes for lactose digestion.
Source: (Irene Gallego Romero, 2011)*

We don't have a DNA test for honesty or cultural values or martial spirit. But we have a DNA test for lactose tolerance (milk digestion). This suggests uniqueness of Sikhs in Punjab, and ethnic differences between Indus Valley Civilization and India/Hindustan.

It also suggests that institutions and values from one civilization cannot simply be superimposed on another civilization. "Institutions Cannot Be Transplanted" (Bhandari, 2026). There is no universal truth. Many civilizations do not believe in the so-called 'universal truth' e.g. universal human rights.

Can free markets, liberal democracy, female emancipation, human rights, or anti-caste frameworks be applied to societies in the Third World?... People in

the West often mistake their own inherited assumptions—about rights, fairness, individual dignity, and the rule of law—for universal truths that others will naturally accept once the proper legal structures are in place. It often does not occur to them that other societies may operate with radically different, even opposite, value systems... This is second-hand modernity: the adoption of institutional language and form without the habits of mind that make those institutions work. (Bhandari, 2026)

Yet, people continue to believe in transplanting models from one civilization to another. What works in China won't work in India. What works in Punjab cannot work elsewhere. People simply cannot be converted from one model of thinking to another.

4.) Spiritual Currents Before Guru Nanak

South Asia including present-day India and Pakistan was deeply fractured. “Subcontinent was deeply fragmented by rigid caste hierarchies, religious orthodoxy, and social inequalities” (Sahu, 2011).

By the medieval period, Punjab had become a vibrant spiritual landscape where multiple traditions coexisted.

4.1 Hindu Traditions

Punjab was home to diverse Hindu practices, including worship of Shiva, Vishnu, Devi, and local deities.

4.2 Islamic and Sufi Influence

Sufi mystics emphasized divine love, inner devotion, and human equality. “The Sufi movement, brought to India through Islamic mysticism, stressed universal love, tolerance, and service to humanity over rigid formalism”, and “Baba Farid opening khanqahs (hospices) and dargahs as inclusive spaces where people of all faiths and castes found solace and equality” (Sahu, 2011).

The verses of Baba Farid (1188-1265), later included in the Guru Granth Sahib, reflect this shared spiritual heritage.

4.3 The Bhakti Movement

The *Bhakti* movement used *bhakti* (prayer, dedication, devotion) with the divine (God) as a way towards spiritual fulfilment. It had its origins in South India, particularly in Hindu communities. *Bhakti* saints such as Kabir and Ravidas challenged ritualism and caste hierarchies, promoting a direct relationship with the Divine (God).

These currents formed the intellectual and devotional environment in which Guru Nanak's message emerged. The *Guru Granth Sahib*, the holy scripture of the Sikhs, contains work by 35 people who existed before Guru Nanak (founder of Sikh religion). It has works of both *Sufi* Saints as well as *Bhakti* thinkers. This suggests that Guru Nanak saw value in what existed before, and the religion did not emerge in isolation. It built upon what existed before.

4.4 Nath-Jogis/Yogis and Sidhhas

'Nath' means leader. *Jogi/Yogi* are those who practice Yoga. This was a movement to make sense of life and spiritual fulfilment using Yoga and related concepts. *Nath-Jogi* practiced meditation, body decorations and ornaments, physical discipline, withdrawing from society, and empty rituals. *Sidhhas* were another group of people related to *Nath-Yogis*. *Sidhhas* were those who were accomplished and proven. They focused on supernatural powers and 'inner energy'.

Guru Nanak had discourses with them and told them that the real yoga is development of mind and conscious behavior in service of the community while living with family.

5.) The Punjabi Ethos: Culture Before Religion

Punjab possessed a distinctive ethos shaped by its geography and history. Punjabi identity is regional, cultural, civilizational, and linguistic. It is also not confined to small province Punjab. This identity spans almost all of Indus Valley civilization.

5.1 Resilience and Martial Spirit

Repeated invasions cultivated courage, collective defense, and adaptability. Prof. Teja Singh and Prof. Ganda Singh title a chapter in their book that 'Suffering creates Power' (Prof. Teja Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs, 2006). It was relentless harassment of proud people by external invaders as well as disingenuous priestly class and ruling elite that compelled them to rise to Power.

Francisco Pelsaert writes about South Asia during his travels in Mughal Empire under Mughal Emperor Jehangir (1569-1627).

"The land would give a plentiful, or even an extraordinary yield, if the peasants were not so cruelly and pitilessly oppressed... The rulers palaces are adorned internally with lascivious sensuality, wanton and reckless festivity, superfluous pomp, inflated pride... As regards the laws, they are scarcely observed at all, for the administration is absolutely autocratic... The manner of life of the rich in their great superfluity and absolute power, 'and the utter subjection and poverty of the common people' and poverty so great and miserable that the life of the people can be depicted or accurately described only as the home of stark want and the dwelling-place of bitter woe" (Pelsaert, 1925).

The emergence of martial spirit started under the Sixth Sikh Guru Hargobind (1595-1644). "Historians usually see at this stage in Sikh history a sudden change in the character of Guruship. The Guru who had been a *fakir* now assumed the position of a *saccha padshah* (or true king)... The whole movement, in fact, is represented as having been transformed from something peaceful and spiritual into a mere military camp" (Prof. Teja Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs, 2006). Guru Hargobind wore two swords which

represented this new outlook. This idea *miri-piri* of two swords represent a Sikh as both a *mir* (political ruler) and a *pir* (spiritual leader).

History tells us of an incident when Sikhs saw a magnificent white *Baz* (Hawk). They captured the Hawk. The Hawk turned out to belong to the Mughal Ruler Shah Jahan. Mughal soldiers came looking for the Hawk. Sikhs refused to give the Hawk. Guru Hargobind told his Sikhs that they are not only going to take the Hawk (Symbol of Sovereignty) but also take Mughal Empire. This subsequently led to armed attack against the Sikhs. Sikhs were outnumbered 10 to 1. However, Sikhs defeated the Mughals and Guru Hargobind killed Mughal leader Mukhilis Khan in battle after allowing him to attack him 3 times.

This incident and victory over the Mughal empire ignited the martial spirit in the Sikhs. It was a small victory in absolute terms over the Mughal empire but it was a huge symbolic victory over the Mughal Empire which controlled 25% of the World's economy and had a standing army of hundreds of thousands. For comparison, China and USA today control 25% of the world economy (DiscoverSikhism, 2026).

“There was something far greater involved in this warfare than a mere dispute over a hawk or a horse. A new heroism was rising in the land, of which the object, then dimly seen, was to create the will to resist the mighty power of the foreign aggressors, called the '*Toorks*' (who were ordinarily -' called '*Mussalmans*' when they behaved in good neighbourly manner)” (Prof. Teja Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs, 2006).

The credit for consciously initiating Sikh's Martial Spirit goes to the sixth Sikh Guru Hargobind. He was the first to actively militarize the Sikhs by training them, procuring finest horses and weapons, giving the concept of *miri-piri* (spiritual and temporal), and building the *Akal Takht* as the supreme authority for Temporal (Worldly) affairs. This was a transition of Sikhs from spiritual mastery to Temporal (Worldly) mastery as well.

Subsequent Sikh Gurus developed it further. Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) formally initiated some of the Sikhs into the order of the *Khalsa - sampuran*

(complete) *Sant-Sipahi* (Saint-Soldiers). The legendary Sikh General and Administrator Banda Singh Bahadar uprooted the Mughal Empire from Punjab in the Battle of *Chappar Chiri* (May 1710), and established the First Sikh Kingdom (1710-15).

Banda Singh Bahadar minted coins. The coins did not have images of Gurus in line with Sikh Ethos. The verses in Persian on the pure Silver coins of the First Sikh Kingdom paid homage to the ideas of Guru Nanak and gave them due credit.



ਸਿੱਕਾ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਦੋ ਜਹਾਨ ਉੱਤੇ, ਬਖਸ਼ਾਂ ਬਖਸ਼ੀਆਂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੀ ਤੋਰ ਨੇ ਜੀ।
ਫਤਿਹ ਸ਼ਾਹਿ ਸ਼ਾਹਾਨ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ, ਮਿਹਰਾਂ ਕੀਤਿਆਂ ਸੱਚੇ ਰਬ ਏਕ ਨੇ ਜੀ।

Translation:

*Coin stuck for the 2 worlds (spiritual and temporal), by the grace of ideology of Guru Nanak
Victory of Guru Gobind Singh, by the grace of the one God.*

These verses on the coin show the philosophical ideas behind the Sikh Kingdom – mastery of spiritual and temporal world (religious and business/worldly), credit to the ideological roots of Guru Nanak, victory not of

Banda Singh Bahadar but of Guru Gobind Singh, and recognizing the One God of all Humanity (Monotheism).

5.2 Agricultural Self-Reliance

Punjab's fertile plains fostered hard work, independence, and communal cooperation. Punjab has always been fertile land with fertile soil, abundance of glacial freshwater, year around sunshine, and hardworking people. There is history of agriculture and rearing animals for at least 3000 years. This ensured abundance of food. The world-famous Himalayan Pink Salt mines are also in Punjab – present day Khewra, Pakistan. There is no history of famines or endemic malnutrition.

Even today, Punjab, “With only 1.53% of geographical area of the country, the state contributed 31.22% of rice and 46.24% of wheat in the central pool (upto Jan 2024)” (Invest Punjab Blog, 2026). Centuries of sufficient food and self-reliance no doubt contributed to physical, mental, and spiritual development of people.

5.3 Community Solidarity

Village life encouraged panchayat-style decision-making and mutual assistance. *Sanjah Chullah* (shared communal oven) is one example of this. Baba Farid (1188-1265) had the practice of *khidmat-e-khalq* – serving humanity and serving the poor with food, shelter, and protection. (Sahu, 2011)

The Sikh institutions such as *sangat*, *langar*, and *Gurdwara* were likely influenced by these historical and cultural traditions.

6.) Guru Nanak and the Emergence of a New Vision

Guru Nanak articulated a message rooted in Punjab yet universal in scope. He emphasized:

- The oneness of God

- Equality of all humans
- Rejection of caste and ritualism
- Honest labor
- Service to humanity

The Sikh Panth evolved through the teachings of the ten Gurus, culminating in the formation of the Khalsa in 1699.

Nanakpanthis (literally followers of Nanak) were the followers of teachings of Guru Nanak (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2026). This was the original name of the Sikhs. Not all *Nanakpanthis* were Sikhs. They may not formally identify as Sikhs, and follow religions as well. Some were of other religion as well – including Hindus and Muslims. The *Guru Granth Sahib*, the holy scripture of the Sikhs, is studied side by side with other religious texts of Hinduism and Islam. Even today, a sizeable community of *Nanakpanthis* lives in Sindh and Balochistan, Pakistan, as well as around Punjab.

Nanakpanthi thought spread wherever Guru Nanak traveled. “Most of the places where Guru Nanak visited during these travels were important trade centers from where traders were bringing and taking goods and side by side by mingling with each other were spreading his message to all mankind” (Kaur, 2021). “Punjab through ages was a state with an extensive range of trade routes connecting it with other parts of the continent. This connectionism between the urbanization and the dissemination of the Sikh faith proved to be very conducive” (Kaur, 2021).

It is also worth noting that the *Nanakpanthi* ideology was open to all. “Nanakpanthi thought of 15th century which with the faith of followers from different regions of the continent without any distinction of caste, creed become hardcore Sikh Movement of 17th century” (Kaur, 2021). As *Nanakpanthi* ideology spread, the ideology itself also transformed into *Sant-Sipahi* (Saint Soldier) and later into the *Khalsa*.

7.) From Community to Nation: The Rise of the Khalsa

By Guru Gobind Singh's time, Sikh identity had transformed into a self-conscious community with its own scripture, institutions, and ethical code. The *Khalsa* represented a disciplined collective committed to justice and spiritual sovereignty.

The Khalsa established their own Kingdom twice. From 1710-16 under Banda Singh Bahadar, and then again from 1799-1849 under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Both Sikh Kingdom carried on the foundational values of its civilization: 'flourishing culture, with creative and technological development, and no sign of slavery or exploitation of individuals'; spiritual heritage of inclusiveness and devotion to One God (Monotheism); egalitarianism, etc.

8.) Sikh religion and history as a socio-political revolution

Sikh religion was more than an evolution of the values and beliefs of people of the 3000 year old Indus Valley Civilization (IVC). It was a revolutionary new thought.

Sikhism, a revelatory religion, originated in the 16th century as *a new revolutionary force*, aimed at the spiritual rejuvenation, moral upliftment and the social emancipation of peoples. On the one hand, it confronted the dogmatism and religious formalism of the priest-dominated and caste-ridden society and on the other it challenged the political oppression of the contemporary rulers (Dhillon, 1992).

Sikh religion transformed and revolutionized the life and destiny of its followers. It did this by spiritual rejuvenation, moral upliftment, and social emancipation. It gave moral compass to people. It gave them both knowledge and confidence to act. They could act with conviction on the basis of knowledge and sound moral values. Sikh Gurus rejected all know religions of the time.

ਨਾ ਹਮ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਨ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ॥

(I am not a Hindu, nor a Muslim) (Guru Granth Sahib, 2026).

Sikh Gurus also spoke against empty knowledge that fills people with ego and false pride while benefiting no one.

ਪੜਿਆ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਸੁ ਲਬੁ ਲੋਭੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰਾ ॥

Even a “learned one” is called foolish if he is filled with greed and ego (Guru Granth Sahib, 2026).

Indus Valley Civilization and North India before the spread of Sikh Religion was a place of ‘bitter woe’. European explorers in 16-17th century wrote about the pitiable condition of the people. This shows that the values of Indus Valley Civilization were *not* strong to uplift people or bring about their social, cultural, *and* political emancipation.

The utter subjection and poverty of the common people' and poverty so great and miserable that the life of the people can be depicted or accurately described only as the home of stark want and the dwelling-place of bitter woe (Pelsaert, Jahangir's India, 1925).

European explorers who traveled the same land 200 years later when Sikh religion was firmly established gave a completely different picture.

One is struck most with the gentlemanliness of it all... One is not dunned, or jostled, or insulted, or fawned upon... Instead there is a rich simplicity in this as in all Sikh shrines (Candler, 1910).

Another unique aspect of Sikh religion was oneness of religion and politics. From the time of First Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak, there has been inseparability of religion and politics.

The Gurus regarded it as their moral duty to fight not only social injustice but also political oppression... They placed the Sikhs in the vanguard of a *socio-political revolution*-a revolution which captured the imagination of the people all over the country (Dhillon, 1992).

The high point of Sikh religion's transformative power was when the natives of Indus Valley Civilization established their First Sikh Kingdom (1710-15) under Banda Singh Bahadar. It was the first time that natives of this land established their Kingdom after more than 700 years of foreign rule under the Mughals from

Central Asia. Sikhs defeated the Mughal Empire who controlled 25% of the world's economy. For comparison, USA and China together constitute 25% of the world's economy today. A political achievement like this never happened before and has never happened since in the history of South Asia.

Religious underpinnings of Sikh Ethos

It is very important to *not* ignore the religion underpinnings of Sikh ethos. It separates them from others in South Asia. Sikh's identity is Sikh (ethno-religious), and Punjabi (regional, cultural, civilizational, and linguistic). Sikhs are descendants of the ancient 3000 year old Indus Valley Civilization, one of the original four ancient civilizations (Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Chinese, and Indus Valley). Sikh religion is the only home-grown native philosophy of the people of Indus Valley Civilization. This identity cannot and should not be diluted.

It is worth emphasizing that the revolutionary ideals of Sikh religion developed by the 10 Sikh Gurus contributed in a big way to the spiritual, economic, and political rise of the Sikhs.

It was reserved for [Guru] Nanak to perceive the true principles of reform, and to lay those foundations which enabled his successor [Tenth Guru] Gobind to fire the minds with a new nationality, and to give practical effect to the doctrine that the lowest is equal with the highest, in, race as in creed, in political rights as in religious hopes (Prof. Teja Singh, A Short History of the Sikhs, 2006)

There is a trend in the world towards secularism and deemphasize religion. People say they are spiritual but not religious. Where do their ideas of spirituality and morality come from? Does everyone create their own version of spirituality and morality as it suits their intelligence, background, and convenience? This trend towards secularism, self-made spirituality, and anti-religious or even un-religious is wrong at best and a deep conspiracy at worst.

Secularisation has posed even a bigger threat to the religious identity and future of small communities like the Sikhs. It has been looked upon as a subtle weapon to destroy all dissent (Dhillon, 1992).

Rise of Sikhs in just 300 years from moral failings, to spiritual rejuvenation, to political power is a lesson for the world.

Man, in his search for utopia, has not yet invented a form of political machinery which the ingenuity of the devil would not find a way of exploiting for evil ends. But in a world, ridden by materialism and plagued by poverty, social injustice and racial discrimination and oppression, religion, and morals can still play an important role in bringing humanity into a greater experience of love, freedom, peace and justice (Dhillon, 1992).

Conclusion

The ancestors of the Sikhs were the people of Punjab - farmers, artisans, traders, warriors, and mystics - who inhabited the region long before the birth of Sikhism. Guru Nanak transformed this environment by offering a new vision that ultimately gave rise to one of the world's youngest and most dynamic faith traditions.

Sikh religion and philosophy were a cultural continuity of the informal values of the Indus Valley civilization. The religion formalized what people intrinsically believed in and practiced. This is expected. Religion, Great Leaders, and even Messengers of God recognize and work with people's prevailing beliefs. Formalized ideas and religion have to fit with people's existing beliefs. It cannot be superimposed on people with different views. Nor can an ideology that works in one region be transplanted as such to people with different civilizational values.

The values of Indus Valley Civilization were *not* strong to uplift people or bring about their social, cultural, *and* political emancipation. It is very important to *not* ignore the religion underpinnings of Sikh ethos. It separates them from others in South Asia.

While many people of the Indus Valley civilization do not formally practice Sikh religion, they have similar civilizational values and way of living. This is why Sikhs and Punjabis traveling a thousand km through the Indus Valley even as far

as Balochistan or Sind feel they have come home. This is a unifying factor that can be the basis of people working together for peace and prosperity.

Understanding this deeper history enriches Sikh identity and situates Sikhism within Punjab's long civilizational journey.

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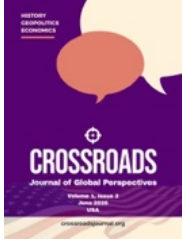
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Economic (and Political) Model of the Sikhs

Avtar Singh

Freelance economics and geopolitical analyst based in USA.

apunjabsingh@proton.me

Abstract

The Economic (and Political) Model of the Sikhs as enshrined in the Sikh scripture *Guru Granth Sahib* is Libertarian Capitalism. It is also in line with Sikh Ethos and History. 'Liberty' is in its name. Sikh economic model is anti-Socialism and anti-Marxism. Sikhs don't want government involvement in the means of production, economy, or social security. Sikhs have their own community managed, *private, non-Governmental*, Social Security centered around the Gurdwara. Yet, Sikh's economic (and political model) is being equated with Socialism and Marxism. Marxist mindset has extremely negative effect on Sikhs and Punjab. Punjab's problems do not get solved. They get worse. Academia, bureaucrats, media, and the public ask for more government interference that made things bad in the first place. The result is a downward spiral.



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Libertarian Capitalism is a well-defined economic and political model that gives a macro-economic model for how to run the economy, education, healthcare, infrastructure etc. Sikh Gurus, Sikhs, and Punjab have a long history of persecution by the government of the time. Only Libertarian Capitalism with its respect for property rights, less government interference, and no coercion or repression is compatible with Sikh ethos of *Halimi Raj* as enshrined in Sikh scripture Guru Granth Sahib.

Keywords: Macroeconomics, Punjab, Sikh, Guru Granth Sahib, Economy, Libertarian Capitalism, Austrian Economics, Marxism, Socialism, Collectivism.

Introduction

People have not suddenly stopped following religion or traditional values or become evil. Nor is there any shortage of humanity today. It is adoption of a bad economic (and political) model that have destroyed people's lives and twisted their psyche. People are zombified by our economic (and political system). This is root cause of almost all of our problems. *Youthanasia* is used to describe future of our youth. Study of the economic (and political) model we exist in is very important for our prosperity, freedom, and sanity.

25-50 million Sikhs worldwide constitute the Fifth largest religion in the world. It is a common fallacy that the Economic Model of the Sikhs cannot be mapped onto conventional economic models like Capitalism or Socialism. It is said that it has elements of Capitalism and Socialism. Sikh economists go into a spiritual dimension without addressing the practical aspects. They have a simplistic naïve view that people should 'just do honest work' (*kirat karo*).

An Economic (and Political) model defines people's relationship with the government including level of interference of the government in the economy and people's lives. The Economic (and Political) Model of the Sikhs is Libertarian Capitalism.

Economics as a Universal Science

Polylogism is a belief that logic in the context of social sciences varies by ethnicity, religion, culture etc.

“polylogism holds that logic varies according to race, sex, culture, or class. It treats economic reasoning as dependent on a thinker’s personal identity, from which it follows that economic principles are a matter of choice or preference that vary from one identity group to the next” (Njoya, 2024).

Polylogism is particularly prevalent among the Sikhs and in Punjab. They believe that the usual rules and models don’t apply to them (ਵਿਲੱਖਣ ਪੰਜਾਬ).

Polylogism is fashionable in academia as well which encourages all people to think for themselves with so called ‘open decolonized mind’. While good in principle, ‘open decolonized mind’ generally leads to worse ideas and worse outcomes. A better approach is to adapt successful ideas from all over the world. Singapore is a good example that adopted this (discussed later in Section ‘The invisible hand, and the visible hand’.

Ludwig von Mises showed using first principles (Praxeology) that Economics is a Universal Science with Universal rules and applicability. (Rothbard, Praxeology: The Methodology of Austrian Economics, 2019) All people are subject to the same economic and political forces.

“In Human Action, Ludwig von Mises argues that economics should be understood as “a part, although the hitherto best elaborated part, of a more universal science, praxeology.” Mises asserts that all human beings are guided by the same human motives, namely “to struggle successfully for survival and to use reason as the foremost weapon in these endeavors” (Njoya, 2024).

Economics is a ‘Universal Science’ (Njoya, 2024). Economics does not discriminate by race, class region etc. What is good for one entity is good for another. What applies to one applies to another. What was true in 19th century England is true in 21st century China, Africa, and Punjab. Economics as a Universal Science applies to Sikhs and Punjab as well.

Economic (and Political) models of the World

Indian Prime Minister and Economist Dr. Manmohan Singh said, “Economic policy and decision making do not function in a political vacuum” (Singh M. , 2005).

An Economic (and Political) model or theory defines relationship of government with people and the economy. It defines what the government can do. Crucially it defines level of interference by the government in the economy.

Economic (and Political) model is the realm of macroeconomics. It defines at high level what the relationship is. This relationship is formally and legally defined in a country’s Constitution. E.g. American Constitution *forbids* arbitrary stop and search by the Police. Indian Constitution *allows* arbitrary stop search as well as arbitrary detention by the Police.

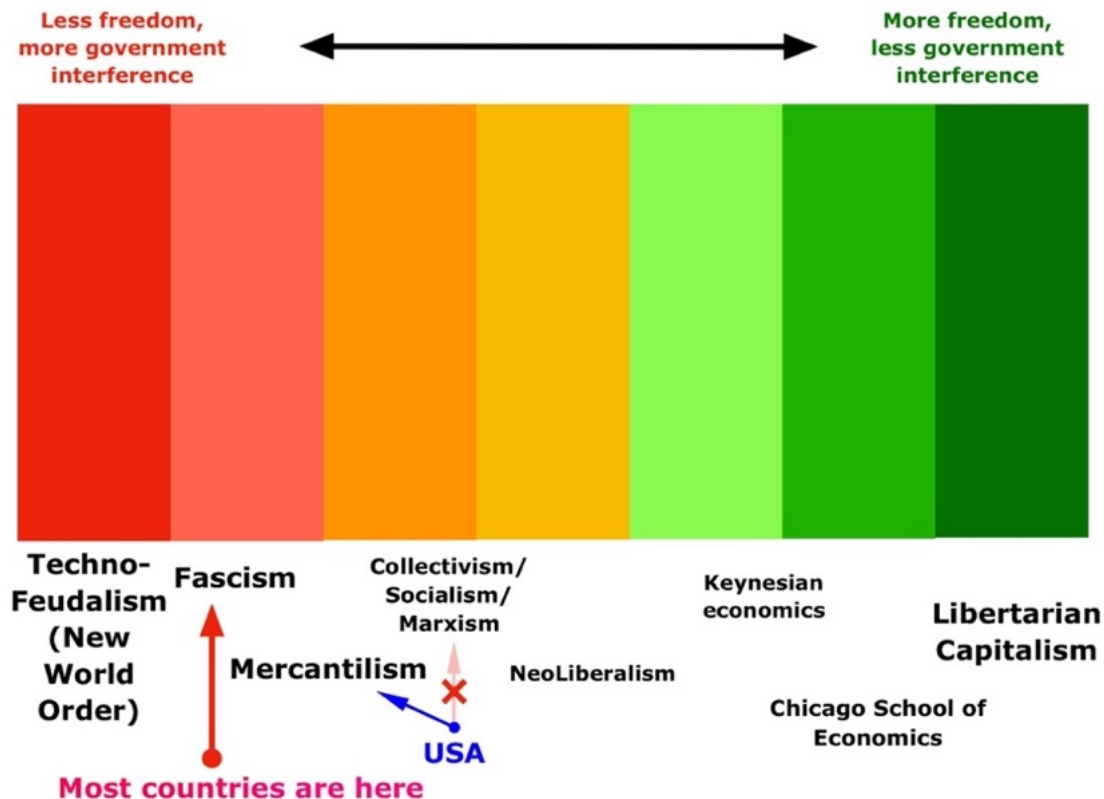


Figure by the Author

Libertarian Capitalism: non-coercion (no force), voluntary taxation on consumption, no income or property tax, respect for property rights, less government interference.

Chicago School of Economics: calculated interference in the economy by the government based on models and data.

Keynesian Economics: money printing at time of economic crisis.

NeoLiberalism: deregulation of the economy.

Collectivism/Socialism/Marxism: Government owns means of production and property, government price control, government interferes in people's life and economy.

Mercantilism: government uses military force to help its businesses. Example is European colonial powers, and USA today.

Fascism: merger of Government/State and corporations/business. This is Punjab today.

Techno-Feudalism (The Future): Technology like Digital Currency is programmed to control us. E.g. how many flights we can take, where we can spend money on, negative interest rates.

What is Libertarian Capitalism?

- Focus is on Liberty and personal freedom. Liberty is in its name.
- Core principles are respect for property rights and non-coercion. Property includes capital, land etc. Non-coercion means not using force for governance.
- Economic model which has least government intervention in the economy.
- Does not mean no governance or anarchy.
- No income tax or property tax as it is not voluntary. Voluntary taxes on consumption only. A small government can be funded by tariffs and taxes on

consumption only as America was before 1913 when there was no income tax.

- Government role should be limited to what cannot be done by the private sector – border control, army, drafting laws (legislature), courts, and law enforcement.

It is no exaggeration to say that the most important distinction in all of libertarian theory is that between coercion and non-coercion... Obliterate this divergence and there is nothing left to libertarianism at all.... This is so important, it bears repeating: libertarianism consists of nothing more than the implications of this one single solitary distinction [coercion, use of force] (Block, 2014).

Murray Rothbard says, “State is that organization in society... that obtains its revenue not by voluntary contribution or payment for services rendered but by coercion [force]” (Rothbard, Anatomy of the State, 1974).

He also adds that the State is an “inefficient, organization for achieving social ends.” Therefore, when the inefficient State does more, it needs to exponentially extract more from the public. Therefore, responsibilities and power of the State must be kept as small as possible.

Ministers down to the most junior employees in local offices, have their own private interests, which by no means coincide with those of the community. Of these, love of power and dislike of work are the chief (Russell, 1949).

Bigger the government, more the extraction from the public by force (Coercion). Bigger the government, more the inefficiency. It is baked into the nature of politics and economics and separates one model from another. Do you want the government to steal from others to help you? Answer to this question decides the economic model you choose.

At a fundamental level, economic and political models are about levels of freedom, which decides who has access to natural resources and assets – land, gold, trees, water etc. In Libertarian Capitalism, natural resources and assets belong to the people, and the State protects it all from external threats. In Socialism, Marxism, and Feudalism, the natural resources and assets belong to the State.

Comparing Libertarianism with Socialism and its forms

Socialism is an abstract idea. Marxism is the theory by Karl Marx with focus on class struggle. Communism is its implementation. They all are bunched together and referred to as Collectivism. They are used interchangeably.

The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx makes their stand on property clear. Socialists/Communists are even against property bought by someone with their labor.

In this sense, the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property...

In one word, you reproach us with intending to do away with your property. Precisely so; that is just what we intend” (Marx, 1848).

The Communist Manifesto also states, “Abolition [Aufhebung] of the family!... The bourgeois clap-trap about the family and education, about the hallowed co-relation of parents and child, becomes all the more disgusting...” (Marx, 1848).

Here is a summary of Karl Marx’s Communism: abolition of property that you worked for, and the end (‘abolition’) of the ‘disgusting family’.

The Communist Manifesto lists its objectives:

1. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.
2. A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.
3. Abolition of all rights of inheritance.
4. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.
5. Centralisation of credit in the hands of the state, by means of a national bank with State capital and an exclusive monopoly.
6. Centralisation of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the State.
7. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State;
8. Equal liability of all to work. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.

9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of all the distinction between town and country by a more equitable distribution of the populace over the country.
10. Free education for all children in public schools.
(Marx, 1848)

In contrast, Sikhs believe in non-coercion (not using force), family life, and property (land) ownership.

Mikhail Bakunin, “a champion of human freedom”, “warned with prophetic accuracy that Marxist states would create new ruling classes rather than liberate the masses”. He met Karl Marx and said Marx “remains from head to foot, an authoritarian” (The Unz Review, 2026).

	Libertarian Capitalism	Socialism/Communism
Using force for governance e.g. income tax	No	Yes, heavy taxes
Class Struggle	No, Polylogism	Yes, Bourgeoisie and Proletariat
Abolition of private property	No	Yes
Who is more important	People first	Oligarchs first, government second, people last
Inheritance tax	No	Yes
Means of production	With people	With State
Centralization of credit, banks, communication, transport	No	Yes
Inequality	Natural	Unnatural. It must be eliminated.

Family	Culture conservative, family is central to community	'Abolition' of the 'disgusting' Family
Government to decide where people live, forced migration of people	No. Homestead and farms as natural place to live.	Yes

The Wealth Pump of Socialism and Communism

Governments all over the world today loot the productive to pay oligarchs and bankers. The masses only get a few scraps. Small local businesses get the blame for the 'ills of Capitalism'. Prof. Peter Turchin calls it the 'Wealth Pump' (Turchin, 2024).

Socialism, Marxism, and Communism are government run 'Wealth Pump' from the productive middle class to the Oligarchs and bankers. The rise of Socialism and the shrinking Middle Class is no coincidence. This is the intended but un-stated purpose of Socialism. Nowhere was it more obvious than after the Communist Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

The book 'History's Greatest Heist: The Looting of Russia by the Bolsheviks' by Sean McMeekin talks of how "the Bolsheviks financed their aggression through astonishingly extensive thievery. Their looting included everything from the cash savings of private citizens to gold silver diamonds jewelry icons antiques and artwork" (McMeekin, 2008).

The book also talks about the Wealth Pump Socialists run. "McMeekin also names names introducing for the first time the compliant bankers lawyers and middlemen who for a price helped the Bolsheviks launder [to the West] their loot impoverish Russia and impose their brutal will on millions" (McMeekin, 2008).

"In less than two years [1917-19], the Bolsheviks exported over 500 metric tons of gold [to the West], raising \$353 million in foreign currency. McMeekin puts the total value in today's terms at \$35 billion" (Nagorski, 2009).

The Moscow Times also writes about this, “How the Bolsheviks Looted Russia” (Moscow Times, 2009). The book ‘Wall Street and the Bolshevik Revolution’ by Antony C. Sutton shows how Wall St. oligarchs and bankers financed the Bolshevik Revolution (Sutton, 2012).

Even today, people remain poor in Russia and Canada, two Communist countries with vast natural wealth. Their vast natural wealth serves the same oligarchic and banking overlords, not their people. Their governments run the Socialist Wealth Pump (Youtube, 2026).

Moscow Times asks, “why Russia never managed to become a prosperous and calm member of the club of advanced nations despite its vast wealth of natural resources and bright, skilled citizens” (Moscow Times, 2026).

The story by *Moscow Times* is worth reading for how criminals and monopolists connected to the government confiscated Moscow Domodedovo that was developed by emerging Capitalists. Criminals, monopolists, thugs, and the government benefited.

Today’s predatory businessmen share an unpleasant trait with the Kremlin’s frenzy of expropriations: they don’t just want the asset — they want to humiliate its owner, preferably by paying a grotesquely low price or nothing at all” (Moscow Times, 2026).

Predatory capitalism, Mafia Capitalism, expropriations, confiscation, forced selling, thugs, criminals in business; the only way they survive is with government patronage. Socialist Governments survive as long as they run the Wealth Pump. This describes not just Russia, but Communist Punjab as well.

Socialism and Communism is a government run ‘Wealth Pump’ from the productive middle class to the Oligarchs and bankers. It was by design. It always has been. Today, it is more sophisticated and relies on financial repression, indoctrination, and secrecy. But it is more effective and more prevalent.

Marx famously said, capitalists will sell you the rope to hang them. Reality is different. “Western capitalists sold the Bolsheviks the rope not with which to

hang them, but to hang millions of Russians” (Moscow Times, 2009). This rope is Socialism (and Marxism).

About the Sikhs

The word Sikh literally means ‘student’. Sikhs are students (and followers) of the philosophy of Guru Nanak (1469-1539) and subsequent nine Gurus as enshrined in the Sikh scripture - the *Guru Granth Sahib*. It is a well-defined and written philosophy. The Sikh scripture the *Guru Granth Sahib* was written and compiled by the Sikh Gurus themselves. It does not rely on oral traditions and there are no ambiguous interpretations. Sikh religion is the fifth largest religion in the World with 20-50 million followers.

Sikhs are descendants of the ancient 3000-year-old Indus Valley Civilization, one of the original four ancient civilizations (Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Chinese, and Indus Valley). Sikh religion is the only home-grown native philosophy of the people of Indus Valley Civilization. The Golden Age of the people of Indus Valley Civilization coincided with the rule of the Second Sikh Kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Sikhs are not Indians. Just as Jews are not Arabs, Koreans are not Chinese, Sikhs are not Indians. Sikh’s identity is Sikh (ethno-religious), and Punjabi (regional, cultural, civilizational, and linguistic). It is worth repeating for its importance, Sikhs are not Indians.

Libertarian Capitalism and Sikh Philosophy

The Sikh religious scripture *Guru Granth Sahib* is clear about its position on using force for governance.

ਦੂਖੁ ਅੰਦੋਹੁ ਨਹੀ ਤਿਹਿ ਠਾਉ ॥ ਨਾਂ ਤਸਵੀਸ ਖਿਰਾਜੁ ਨ ਮਾਲੁ ॥ ਖਉਫੁ ਨ ਖਤਾ ਨ ਤਰਸੁ ਜਵਾਲੁ ॥੧॥

There is no place here for grief or anxiety. There is no financial repression.

There is no fear or crime or scarcity.

ਰਾਜੇ ਸੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ ॥ ਜਾਇ ਜਗਾਇਨਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਸੁਤੇ ॥
ਚਾਕਰ ਨਹਦਾ ਪਾਇਨਿ ਘਾਉ ॥ ਰਤੁ ਪਿਤੁ ਕੁਤਿਹੋ ਚਟਿ ਜਾਹੁ

[Graphic description of Government officials looting from the people.]

ਹੁਣਿ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੋਆ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਣ ਦਾ ॥

ਪੈ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਕਿਸੈ ਰਵਾਣਦਾ ॥

ਸਭ ਸੁਖਾਲੀ ਵੁਠੀਆ ਇਹੁ ਹੋਆ ਹਲੇਮੀ ਰਾਜੁ ਜੀਉ ॥

Do not make anyone cry... (non-coercion, don't use force for governance).

A milestone in Sikhs History was in 1710 when they established their First Sikh Kingdom of Banda Singh Bahadar, who made Sikh farmers owners of their land. This put Sikhs on path to inter-generational wealth. Sikhs would not want their property and lands taken away. Libertarianism offers what Sikhs want above all: not using force for governance, and respect for property rights.

Taxes and State expenses

Prof. Block writes in his book 'Towards a Libertarian Society', "It is no exaggeration to say that the most important distinction in all of libertarian theory is that between coercion and non-coercion." (Block, 2014) This should be our guiding light in deciding how to tax.

Taxation is theft, purely and simply, even though it is theft on a grand and colossal scale which no acknowledged criminals could hope to match. It is a compulsory seizure of the property of the State's inhabitants, or subjects (Rockwell, 2025).

But the State needs money to function. Our objectives must be to minimize the role and size of the State so it needs less; and to ensure State 'steals' taxes while doing us least harm, just like a 'good robber' is the one that steals the least, and does not kill us.

There should be no income tax or property tax as they are not voluntary. Income tax and property tax rely on coercion (force) by the government. If people don't pay, their property is taken away or they are put into prison. Taxes on consumption via Sales Tax and Tariffs are examples of voluntary tax. If people don't want to pay taxes or consider them high, they don't have to buy it.

This tax structure also encourages savings and investment. "A country with a consumption tax instead of an income tax will have higher growth and higher living standards" (Roberts, 2026). A small government can be funded by tariffs and taxes on consumption only as America was before 1913 when there was no income tax. Dr. Roberts was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Economic Policy. He writes, "the income tax enacted in 1913 converted free Americans into serfs or slaves" (Roberts, 2026).

It is important to not have income tax or property tax. Governments make the excuse that they need to know everything about the people to tax them. These taxes taken by force lay the ground for financial repression. However, taxes on consumption and tariffs do not lead to financial repression. Even if the amount of tax collected is the same, taxes on consumption and tariffs are less intrusive and repressive than taxes on income and property. Sikh Scripture Guru Granth Sahib explicitly writes against financial repression.

ਦੁਖੁ ਅੰਦੋਹੁ ਨਹੀ ਤਿਹਿ ਠਾਉ ॥ ਨਾਂ ਤਸਵੀਸ ਖਿਰਾਜੁ ਨ ਮਾਲੁ ॥ ਖਉਫੁ ਨ ਖਤਾ ਨ ਤਰਸੁ ਜਵਾਲੁ ॥੧॥

There is no place here for grief or anxiety. There is no financial repression.

There is no fear or crime or scarcity.

What is government allowed to spend money on in Libertarian Capitalism?
(Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom, 1962)

1. Border control and Army
2. Drafting laws (Legislature)
3. Courts and law enforcement (Police)

Everything else is left to the private sector: education, roads, healthcare, pensions, social security, airports, dams, flood defenses, irrigation canals. If there is economic value to certain group of people, they can pool together and find ways to get it done for their benefit. Or entrepreneurs will see the opportunity and provide that service efficiently without burdening others.

All economic activity is based on verbal and informal or written and formal contracts based on laws to protect the consumer and capital. There is no need for inspectors who are usually bribe takers. If there is violation, people report its violation and the efficient law enforcement do their job.

This does not mean no government or anarchy. Government laws protect consumers, capital, environment etc. E.g. even when there is private healthcare, there are laws to protect patients (consumers). Even when private sector builds roads, there are laws to ensure roads are safe. Unlike in modern democracies, laws should be strictly enforced, not re-interpreted by the executive and selectively applied by the law enforcement. The real anarchy is in democracies today.

Pure Libertarian Capitalism does not exist today. Capitalist countries like USA have socialist programs like Medicaid and Medicare. Pure expression of any ideology is hard to find. Even at the height of Socialism and Marxism, some were more unequal than others. The masses ask, 'what does the government do for us'? Demands of the Statecraft will pressurize government. This is even more so in democratic government where elections are 'advance auction on stolen goods' (Mencken, 2025). This will lead to government starting programs to help the masses. Singapore's Housing and healthcare are good examples of invisible hand of market and invisible hand of governance at work together (discussed later).

Roads, schools, and hospitals

Who will build roads, bridges, and infrastructure? Who will run schools and hospitals? The free market does it.

Free Market does a better job of capital allocation and efficiently providing products and services than the best government bureaucrats.

Government funding of roads, bridges, and infrastructure leads to distortions such as airports in the middle of nowhere. China's Mayor Economy and 'GDP Worship' is a good example of over building. China's model works for China as it is the factory of the world that earns trillions from rest of the world for manufacturing. Most other countries of the world cannot afford the luxuries that China can.

When a colleague of mine joined an official trip visiting a county in northeast China, the local mayor led the visitors to an imposing bridge and pointed out that it had been built under his direction, going on and on about the grand scale and cost of this project. Finally, one of the guests could not help observing aloud that the bridge spanned a stretch of dry, flat land.

'What is the bridge for, exactly?' the guest asked. The mayor chuckled and said, 'Do not worry. The central government has agreed to dig a river underneath it (Jin, 2023).

When Government gets involved, they build bridges where there are no rivers, and then dig rivers for bridges. They build airports where there is no commercial justification, then build roads for airports, then subsidize flights to the airports. It is not driven by public need. Government infrastructure projects are built because politicians and bureaucrats need to reward those who keep them in power. There is no economic justification for it.

We must heed Henry Hazlitt's 'Economics in One Lesson'. Think of "consequences of that policy not merely for one group but for all groups". Don't tax the doctors and nurses to please the farmers. Let the farmers organize as Free Market and fund their own irrigation canal. Let the free market offer services and run schools and hospitals.

America's broken schools, healthcare, and infrastructure is the result of over financialization and government involvement. America needs less government, not more government involvement.

Why is American Healthcare so expensive? Mises Institute has several studies about this.

Nobel Prize-winning economist Milton Friedman wrote that medical price inflation since 1965 has been caused by the rising demand for health-care coupled with restricted supply.

The majority of policymakers support either monopolization (e.g. typically Republicans) or nationalization (e.g., typically Democrats).

These government-private partnerships called “managed competition” resemble centrally-planned fascism (Richman 2013). Government sets prices, which has predictably led to reduced quality, rationing and other perverse gaming. Moreover, the bureaucracy has brought standardized care, higher administrative costs and high executive salaries” (Mises Institute, 2017).

What makes education and healthcare expensive in USA? It is government interference in economy. Specifically:

- Restricting supply of doctors and nurses by making it difficult to open medical colleges, and raising cost of training.
- Restricting construction of hospitals by requiring them to have Certificate-of-Need (CON) from the government. “CON laws are anti-competitive, as they make it relatively easier to expand existing hospitals than to build new, competitive ones.” (EconLib, 2018)
- Political parties support either formation of either monopolies or nationalize aspects of care reducing supply and choice.

“The way to improve the health care system—both the supply and demand sides—is to make health care more like other goods and services that we purchase directly...” (EconLib, 2018). In others words, freemarket for healthcare.

Sectors of healthcare where there is no government involvement such as laser eye surgery and cosmetic surgery, tend to see falling prices and higher quality from competition (Mises Institute, 2017).

What Americans need is not another complicated insurance scheme, but a return to health care that patients pay for themselves.

Putting patients in charge of their own healthcare encourages them to be price-conscious. When this happens, service providers have an incentive to compete on price, and competition produces downward price pressure.

If we want to incentivize cost-saving surgeries, we should roll back the laws that give insurance an outsize influence in healthcare.

The United States health care system is one of the most regulated sectors of the economy, and was so even before Obamacare. This has, predictably, driven up costs. Instead of another complicated insurance scheme, let's give freedom a try" (Mises Institute, 2017).

Cato Institute published recommendations on how to reduce healthcare costs in USA – highest amongst developed countries. The recommendations center around reducing government interference, *not* more government control (Cato Institute, 2026).

Anyone that has spent time in Punjab sees private schools and hospitals provide good service for low price, relative to price/quality ratio of Government school. Schools and Hospitals in Punjab would do better and charge less if there was less government interference and less bribes. Private businesses want to provide good service and make money. They are not out to loot from the public. It is the government that has no other way to make money but extract from the public.

Airline tickets and smartphones are good examples of services and products which have not increased in price over a decade. The key has been less government involvement.

The government increases compliance costs with new regulations. The businesses charge more. The businesses get the blame for rising costs and more procedures.

Government involvement should be limited to carefully drafted laws that are strictly enforced to protect the consumers as well as property rights and capital of investors.

To summarize, who will build roads, bridges, and infrastructure? Who will run schools and hospitals? The free market does it where it is needed. Private entrepreneurs build it and charge people to use it. Keeping government out lowers price by lowering unnecessary procedures, barrier to entry, taxes, and bribes. Competition increases quality and lowers price. Good laws protect both consumers as well as investors property and capital. Punjab's private schools and hospitals are good example of it in practice.

Free Market does a better job of capital allocation and efficiently providing products and services than the best government bureaucrats and their vanity projects funded by taxes extorted by the State to benefit its corporate overlords.

Schooling and propaganda

It is critical to have minimal government interference in schooling. Government should not get involved in how schools are run, nor in the syllabus/curriculum taught to children. This is because governments distort history and religion. They also push indoctrination. They also destroy creativity and joy of learning in children.

Conventional education and schooling are indoctrination and propaganda that prepares impressionable young children to live and die as slave for the Nation-State. It does this by manipulating them. "behave like a machine"

- destroy "impulse to play"
- impede "joy of life"
- destroy "power of thought by obedience"
- "bred receptiveness to fanaticism"

(Russell, *Power: A New Social Analysis*, 1938)

Outcome of conventional government education (and propaganda) is "human material as passive as stone" (Russell, *Power: A New Social Analysis*, 1938). It is heavy price to pay for 'free' education.

Popularity of Socialism

With clearly stated toxic ideas such as abolition of property that you earned, and the ‘abolition’ of the ‘disgusting family’, why is Socialism/Marxism so popular?

Socialism and all its forms are popular because they were designed to appeal to the masses. The masses like simple direct messaging of someone else to blame for their condition.

It is human to hate. For self-definition and motivation people need enemies: competitors in business, rivals in achievement, opponents in politics. They naturally distrust and see as threats those who are different and have the capability to harm them (Samuel Huntington, ‘Clash of Civilizations’) (Huntington, 1996).

The surest way to work up a crusade in favor of some good cause is to promise people they will have a chance of maltreating someone (Quote by Aldous Huxley).

Masses don’t think for themselves. The academia and bureaucrats who may be able to think for themselves are indoctrinated. They also have a vested interest in seeking state patronage.

Gustave Le Bon writes in ‘*The Crowd: A Study Of The Popular Mind*’ that crowds like simple messaging, repetition, and contagion (Bon, 1895).

- **Simple messaging of hate** that the masses with primeval thinking can understand and connect with. Simple message of someone else to blame.
- **Leader:** Leaders of socialist movements are “recruited from the ranks of those morbidly nervous, excitable, half-deranged persons who are bordering on madness”. The Leaders are “men of action than thinkers”.
- **Contagion:** The Globalist Oligarchs control of media and academia help spread the message.

Masses like free stuff and price control as they have been emptied by the Wealth Pump of Communism. The emptier they become, they louder their demand for more.

This applies to healthcare, education, and infrastructure in most of the world. Mises Institute showed government interference as the cause of high price and low quality in healthcare (Mises Institute, 2017). Yet, people suffering from high costs and low quality ask for Socialist healthcare.

“Libertarians will rely upon emotion less – and reason more – than will either liberals or conservatives” (al., 2012). This makes Libertarianism and Libertarians less connected with the crowds who are driven by “impulsiveness, irritability, incapacity to reason, the absence of judgment and of the critical spirit, the exaggeration of the sentiments” (Bon, 1895).

Morally degraded masses ask for government interference in every aspect of life. Governments are happy to oblige. Higher taxes and more government intervention follow. Governments use demands of morally degraded people to create a framework for oppression and persecution. As things get worse, morally degraded masses ask for ever more government help. The cycle continues.

Morally degraded masses want a country with ‘cradle-to-grave’ government care. They want government to educate their children, take care of their healthcare, and they want a leader to pamper them and make them happy.

Morally degraded and dysfunctional masses with their demand for government help are the root cause of almost all of our problem. Morally degraded masses cannot be fixed. All we can do is to build a system where the morally degraded masses do not make it worse for all by asking the government to steal from the productive to give to the dysfunctional using threat (coercion) and monopoly of violence of the interfering State.

Sikh scripture *Guru Granth Sahib* was written by and for people with higher level of conscientiousness. It has abstract ideas, and direct instructions. There is no “impulsiveness, irritability, incapacity to reason, the absence of judgment and of the critical spirit, the exaggeration of the sentiments”. Sadly, when the religious scripture written by high IQ Sikh Gurus is read and interpreted by indoctrinated Sikh Marxist academics, they see Socialism in it.

To summarize, why are toxic ideologies like Marxism popular? Why would anyone believe in an ideology that calls family life ‘disgusting’, and wants to confiscate people’s assets by force? It is because the ideology appeals to the simpleton masses already hollowed out by the State. The academic and bureaucrats are indoctrinated via the universities and education system. They seek State patronage. Oligarchs fund and promote it for the Wealth Pump. Everyone has his snouts in the trough of the State, and their two front trotters as well. “Morbidly nervous, excitable, half-deranged persons” become Marxism’s biggest supporters and drown out everyone else.

The invisible hand, and the visible hand

Libertarianism does not mean no government or anarchy. There is need for both the free market, as well as good governance and less/small governance. Even too much of good governance is not good as it is inefficient, even if it is benevolent. Big government is inherently inefficient and even the most benevolent government becomes extractive fascist government.

A healthy and progressive society requires both central control and individual and group initiative: without control there is anarchy, and without initiative there is stagnation (Russell, 1949).

What should the visible hand of government allowed to do? What should be the role of government? All economic transactions in a Libertarian system involve voluntary agreement or contracts between two parties.

The state provides minimal services like army (border control), police (law enforcement), courts, and making laws (judiciary). Almost everything else is provided by private sector: education, roads, healthcare, pensions, social security, airports, dams, flood defenses, irrigation canals. If there is economic value to certain group of people, they can pool together and find ways to get it done for their benefit. Or entrepreneurs will see the opportunity and provide that service efficiently without burdening others.

When government-- in pursuit of good intentions tries to rearrange the economy, legislate morality, or help special interests, the cost come in inefficiency, lack of motivation, and loss of freedom. Government should be a referee, not an active player (Friedman, 2026)

Where does the visible hand of good governance come from? Where do we get benevolent bureaucrats? How can we tame power of government?

The problem of the taming of power is, as the above quotation shows, a very ancient one. The Taoists thought it insoluble, and advocated anarchism; the Confucians trusted to a certain ethical and governmental training which should turn the holders of power into sages endowed with moderation and benevolence...

Plato, like Confucius, sought the solution in a government of men trained to wisdom (Russell, Power: A New Social Analysis, 1938).

The solution to taming power is in combination of having sound economic and political model in libertarian capitalism/anarchism with small government; and in people with:

- "certain ethical and governmental training", "sages endowed with moderation and benevolence" - Taoism
- "men trained to wisdom", Epistocracy - Plato
- "vocation of leadership" - Bertrand Russell
- The *Khalsa*: philosopher-kings of the Sikhs

It is not an easy solution. Benevolent bureaucrats are as valuable as Gold and just as rare. Singapore is an example of a country that has solved this problem better than most. The paper also summarizes 10 lessons from Singapore's housing policy.

The housing policy in Singapore has evolved over time in response to different housing challenges.

The more recent (since 2000) housing policy challenges include the need to curb the speculative and investment housing demand, the increase in income inequalities, as well as an aging population.

These have brought about the introduction of ***carefully crafted macroprudential policies***, targeted housing grants to assist low- and middle-income households, and schemes to help elderly households monetize their housing equity” (Phang, 2016).

As the world moves towards 15-minute cities, Singapore housing model is a good example of how to carefully balance evolving needs of people for a highly constrained resource - land. Singapore’s visible hand of good governance carefully balanced need to help people buy houses for sense of ownership and start family, need for reducing inequality, need for racial harmony, need for people to grow to bigger houses, need for elderly to monetize housing assets, and need of private developers and financiers etc.

Not all is perfect. The criticism of Singapore housing model is also well documented (Phang, 2016). One criticism is that highly controlled environment saps people of innovation and makes people ‘house rich, cash poor’.

However, it has helped Singapore achieve 90% home ownership rate funded by compulsory savings via Central Provident Fund (CPF). The CPF is a mandatory, comprehensive social security savings scheme in Singapore for citizens and permanent residents, primarily designed to fund retirement, healthcare, and housing. It may or may not work for other countries where government interference is usually associated with misallocation of funds to populist schemes and corruption. It is the visible hand of good governance (‘carefully crafted macroprudential policies’) of Singapore that makes it work.

Sikh Academics and State Intellectuals are Marxist

Sikh academics from 1970s to 2000’s studied in Indian Universities funded by Soviet Union. All senior and retired faculty today who studied and did PhD’s in that period were indoctrinated in Marxist ideas.

Instead of economists trained in Praxeology or first principles (Rothbard, Praxeology: The Methodology of Austrian Economics, 2019) or even Libertarian Capitalism and Austrian Economics, Sikhs academics were indoctrinated in

Marxism. Sikhs academics never explored and expanded on economic message in *Guru Granth Sahib*. They only have superficial understanding of it that is limited to memes and slogans.

Sikh academia can only think in terms of Marxist solutions – big government, more government interference, big government programs, new government legislation etc. Their solution to every government failure is more government intervention. (ਸਰਕਾਰ ਕੁਝ ਕਰੇ)

An article from 1985 summarizes status of Marxism in Punjab: (Singh, 1985)

- Sikhs in Punjab in the grip of Marxism.
- Land owning 'Jat Sikhs' who will lose the most from Marxism are its strongest supporters.
- Intellectuals, bureaucrats, technocrats, academia in Punjab Marxist as well.
- Writers, novelists, playwrights, media Marxist as well.
- "official literature produced either by Moscow or Peking is considered as the only desirable reading material"
- Culture of anti-intellectualism amongst the Sikhs.
- "Theory is [still] merely considered as some lessons drawn on the basis of practical experience." Sikhs with no exposure beyond his village proudly proclaims, 'as per my experience...'

Sikhs and Punjab have not changed much since 1985. Marxist academics also suited Indian State which wanted people to ask for more government interference in people's lives, and big government. It gave Indian State, government, bureaucrats, and politicians more power. They could justify more interference, more control, and more taxes. Governments love doing this. People ask for their own enslavement.

All ideologies talk of *Sarbat-da-bhala* (prosperity-for-all). Even Hitler, Mao, Stalin *probably* had vision of doing good for their people. Just saying you want 'prosperity-for-all' is irrelevant. Everyone says that, including tyrants that murder millions.

Sikh philosophy of *Sarbat-da-bhala* (prosperity-for-all) does not mean Socialism. There is nothing in common. Yet, Marxists and Nationalist Sikhs falsely equated the two in order to get it accepted by the Sikhs masses.

Final Goal of Communist/Marxist is confiscation of property of people including land. They start by proposing co-operatives, land pooling, communal farming and living, government support, Minimum Support Price, and other failed Soviet programs. Then the co-operative fails. Then the same Marxists propose privatization of property to corporates. Sikh Marxist academia provided the intellectual arguments for more State interference and confiscation of farmers lands and people's property.

Life under Marxism is **ਬੇ ਜੁਬਾਨ, ਬੇ ਵਪਾਰ, ਬੇ ਜਮੀਨ** (no voice, no business, no property). Example is Russia.

The global economic model is not Capitalism but Socialism and Fascism. The Socialist/Marxist bureaucrats and media deflect blame to Capitalism. Sikhs once again internalized this message of evil Capitalism. Even in the West, Sikhs became Marxists.

'Government should do something', (**ਸਰਕਾਰ ਕੁਝ ਕਰੇ**), is the single most dangerous and self-destructive thought in the minds of Sikh academia, elites, State Intellectuals, and Sikh bureaucrats whether in Punjab or abroad.

To summarize, Marxist ideas infested minds of Sikh intellectuals due to Soviet funding and indoctrination of Sikh academia. It achieved popular acceptance by *Com Nust*, literally destroyers of community, getting Marx to ride on the shoulders of Guru Nanak.

More Marxist than China or Russia

China is *not* Marxist. China has its civilizational values to rely upon. It does not need Marx.

The CCP actually functions as the “Chinese Civilization Party”. Its soul is not rooted in the foreign ideology of Marxism-Leninism but in the rich cultural reservoirs of Chinese civilisation.

The greatest explosion of personal freedoms that the Chinese people have experienced in the past 4,000 years has taken place in the last 40 years” (Mahbuabni, 2020).

Sikhs, Punjab, and India are more Marxist than China. Sikhs, Punjab, and India put 800 million people dependent on the government on *atta-daal* (rice and pulses) scheme. China put 800 millions of its people to work, and given them more freedom and pride in 40 years than they had in 4000 years. The results show.

Today, 134 million Chinese (or one-third of America’s population) leave China freely. Then they return home freely. Instead of suffering repression, the Chinese have experienced a great liberation in their personal lives” (Mahbuabni, 2020).

In contrast, if an Indian or Sikh is given the opportunity to leave India, they never return.

Indians have come to make up the third-largest group of undocumented immigrants in the United States, according to the Pew Research Center’s 2021 estimates, which put the number of such Indians at 725,000.

India is the only country in the top five outside Latin America, and since 2011, the number of undocumented Indians in the United States has grown by 70 percent, the fastest growth of all nationalities. Figures from U.S. Customs and Border Protection show that the number of undocumented Indian immigrants increased the fastest between 2020 and 2023 (Washington Post, 2024).

Prosperous middle-class families with access to \$40-100k leave India rather than invest or work there. Could it be government repression and threat of property confiscation that drives them out?

The immigrants are often from middle-class families.

These migrants are “not the desperately poor” and often come from the most prosperous states in India.

They frequently sell their land to pay for the journey — which families say can run \$40,000 to \$100,000 per person (Washington Post, 2024).

Punjab (and India) is world's epicenter of Socialism, Marxism, Fascism, tyranny, and failed economy. Not China, not Russia. And Sikh Marxist elite and Sikh State intellectuals ask for more of it (ਸਰਕਾਰ ਕੁਝ ਕਰੇ).

Less developed regions like Punjab go downhill very fast when they adopt Socialist values. Only solution for developing nations is Libertarianism.

Thanks to their enjoyment of relative economic freedom for many years, the capitalist west can now afford a modicum of pernicious socialism.

In contrast, free enterprise being virtually unknown in the third world, socialist egalitarianism is the death knell of their economy (Block, 2014)

Social Security model of the Sikhs

Social Security provides support for those who cannot sustain themselves for various reasons. It is a safety net. It supports disabled, those who fall on hard times, chronic sick etc.

Sikhs do *not* believe in *Welfare State* where the State provides cradle to grave welfare. Sikhs have their own *private, non-government*, community funded Social Security model based around the Gurdwara. It is not Welfare State. It is not charity. Key is no government involvement. It is not a State model. It is private social security, funded and managed by the community using their own money. It is self-service – not a government program.

This is a working model in tens of thousands of Sikh Gurdwaras all over the World. It is more efficient and inclusive than anything any government does.

But do governments not give money to the poor in the form of welfare? Doesn't that help the poor?

First, only the crumbs go to the poor. The rich, after all, run the government. It would take quite a bit more benevolence than they have for them to orchestrate things against their own interests.

The government is also a direct source of poverty. Its minimum wage and union legislation makes it difficult if not impossible for poor youth to get jobs. Its rent control makes cheap housing scarce. Its tariffs make all basic necessities more expensive, and its subsidies to [inefficient] business have the same effect.

welfare bureaucracy, where continued disasters call forth greater and greater budgets (Block, 2014).

In the West, Welfare State destroys families by making it financially lucrative to have broken families and get more aid. “And what is the effect of welfare on the family? To ask this is to answer it. As Charles Murray has shown in his insightful book *Losing Ground*, the social worker makes a financial offer to the pregnant girl that the father of her baby cannot even come close to matching. But they do so on the condition that this young man be out of the picture. A recipe for family disaster if ever there was one” (Block, 2014).

Government *Programs* lead to Government *Pogroms*

Friedrich Hayek (1899–1992) was an economist of Austrian School of economics. He shared Nobel Prize in Economics in 1974. His book 'Road to Serfdom' was published in 1944 at the height of Fascism and Nazism. The core message of the book is that socialist policies such as central planning and big government lead to Fascism and Nazism.

There are few signs yet that we have the intellectual courage to admit to ourselves that we may have been wrong. Few are ready to recognise that the rise of Fascism and Nazism was not a reaction against the socialist trends of the preceding period, but a necessary outcome of those tendencies (Hayek, 1944).

In other words, Hayek recognized Fascism as an outcome of Socialism. Yet, the world increasingly demands Socialism. *Pogroms* are planned violent attacks by the government against an ethnic group. Government *programs* lead to government *pogroms*. Socialism leads to Fascism.

People live in the false hope that the large inefficient violent State will extract from someone else, not them. "When the State does everything for you, it will soon take everything from you." (Margaret Thatcher) As the World becomes more socialist, the government becomes more extractive, tyrannical, and fascist.

In any case, communism is the most destructive doctrine created by humans in many centuries, and it still rules over a large part of humanity in the 21st century (Birch, 2025).

Libertarian Capitalism protects the minorities, Socialism does not

Minorities are prime targets for exploitation when a government needs to extract money from the public. Collectivism and its various forms like Socialism and Marxism spell death for minorities. They become subject of government pogroms.

Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another (Marx, 1848).

Pogroms in Russia against the Russian Jews, Yellow-Star houses to mark the Jews, and Sustained Sikh *Ghallughara* (Genocide) from 1984-1998 are examples of Government pogroms to suppress and extract from the minorities. A small government that needs less and has severe restrictions on its role is less likely to use its monopoly of violence against the minorities.

The Communist Manifesto lists one of its objectives, "Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels" (Marx, 1848). Who will be rebels? Sikhs are minorities and first to 'rebel' against injustice. Socialism/Communism will never protect minorities.

Inequality as a natural consequence of unequal ability

Even in an agrarian economy, there are 10-fold or more differences between abilities of individuals. Consequently, inequality is a natural consequence in a

healthy society. Even forest dwelling communities today have a 'chief', and some people with bigger houses and more food than others. An enterprising person that trades can amplify this difference 100x or 1000x. Inventors that solve people's problems at scale will be even more wealthy than consumers. Inequality of even a million times or billion times is natural in advanced economies.

Wealth is not a taboo among the Sikhs. It is not considered evil. Sikhs don't envy those with wealth. This thinking is also in line with Libertarian Capitalism.

In contrast, all forms of Collectivism such as Socialism and Marxism steal from those who work and are productive, to give to the inefficient State. Socialists try to suppress this natural inequality among people. Everyone is a comrade in Marxism. The suppression of inequality does not work. The best leave or hide their wealth. It also gives rise to the famous anecdote about Socialism, "All are equal in Socialism, but some are more unequal than others." This was popularized by Orwell in his landmark book 'Animal Farm'.

All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others" (Orwell, 1945).

Marxist indoctrination among the Sikhs has led to Sikhs adding 'but' and 'if' to wealth. Marxist Sikhs say you can acquire wealth *if* it is via honest and ethical means. They never specify the criteria. Who decides what part of wealth is honest and ethical? Who decides what to do with 'immoral' and 'unethical' wealth? A committee of government bureaucrats?

What about government acquiring wealth through taxation by force, inflation (printing money), and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources? Is that honest and ethical? Is 40% income tax, 15% consumption tax, 80% fuel tax, rising property tax, 50% estate tax, and \$39 Trillion dollar of government debt honest and ethical?

No Marxist intellectual or academic ever brought this up to a committee of government bureaucrats.

Libertarian States

No large Libertarian State exists today. This is because masses demand free stuff and price control. The global capitalists also push for Socialism as a Wealth Pump. Mainstream Media owned by large corporations pushes the narrative of 'Socialism is good, capitalism is evil'. Academia and bureaucrats are already deeply indoctrinated Marxist.

USA from 1776 to around 1913 was a Libertarian State. There was no income tax. USA Still has highest protection of the individual from the State. There are still property rights and freedom from arbitrary arrest and confiscation.

The two Sikh Kingdoms 1710-15 and 1799-1849 were also Libertarian. Barron Charles Hugel was a European traveler who visited South Asia during the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He wrote "Never perhaps was so large an empire founded by one man with so little criminality; ; and when we consider the country and the uncivilized people with whom he has had to deal, his mild and prudent government must be regarded with feelings of astonishment." (Hugel, 1845) Lack of criminality of the State and a prudent (less intrusive) Government is the hallmark of a Libertarian State.

An "enabling environment for the craftsmen, traders, manufacturers and merchants was provided so that they could flourish and grow." (Gurdeep Kaur, 2019) Sikh Kingdom did not own means of production, but created an enabling environment.

Argentina also adopted Libertarian ideas after its financial crisis. (International Finance, Has Argentina's risk of libertarianism paid off?, 2025) (Cato Institute, 2025)

Dry Water

Economic models are implemented as a whole. You cannot have Socialist government programs, with property rights and no financial repression. Socialism and Communism *require* repression and confiscation of people's property to fund the inefficient government programs.

You cannot pick and choose to build your own *chimera* of an economic model. Yet, people try and build their own home-grown models.

None of the objectives of Socialism and Communism are acceptable to Sikhs or any sane person. So, Socialists and Communists try and wrap it in something else. Among Sikhs and Punjab, *Comm Nust* (destroyers of community) communists wrapped Communism in Guru Nanak's religious teachings. In USA, they wrapped it in free stuff and price control for those emptied by the Wealth Pump of Communism.

Communists lie to get acceptance. But once they are in power, they go full power on confiscation and family destruction. A question to ask Communists, which of these stated objectives do they stand by and which ones they want to incorporate into their home grown economic model:

1. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.
 2. A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.
 3. Abolition of all rights of inheritance.
 4. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.
 5. Centralisation of credit in the hands of the state, by means of a national bank with State capital and an exclusive monopoly.
 6. Centralisation of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the State.
 7. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State;
 8. Equal liability of all to work. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.
 9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of all the distinction between town and country by a more equable distribution of the populace over the country.
 10. Free education for all children in public schools.
- (Marx, 1848)

Sikhs call this ਬੇ ਜੁਬਾਨ, ਬੇ ਵਪਾਰ, ਬੇ ਜਮੀਨ – people with no rights, business at mercy of the government, and no property rights.

A question to ask Communists is if they support this: “The bourgeois clap-trap about the family and education, about the hallowed co-relation of parents and child, becomes all the more disgusting...” (Marx, 1848).

It took more than 250 years for the West to develop, test, and fine tune an economic model like Libertarianism. Its origins go as far back as John Locke (1632-1704), Adam Smith (1723–1790) and ‘The Wealth of Nations’. From there, it was further developed in Austria by Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich Hayek (hence it’s alternate name Austrian Economics). It then developed in USA in 20th century. The Mises Institute can be considered its current flag bearer.

Sikh Marxist academics and Communist Sikh State Intellectuals don’t understand Libertarianism but reject it. They genuinely believe they can develop an Economic Model before the next election. Sikh Marxist academics and State Intellectuals idea of an economic model is ‘just do honest work’. They don’t even talk about ‘Incentives’ (the invisible hand) or its importance. Why would any sane person do honest work with threat of confiscation and constant repression. To be fair, ‘just do honest work’ mindset, culture, ethics are important. But the system of incentives is more important. Russia and Canada are good examples of Communist countries where people do honest work and have natural resources, but have no prosperity or individual freedom.

Sikh Marxist academics and Communist Sikh State Intellectuals genuinely believe they can have Socialist programs with property rights and without financial repression. When confronted, they weasel to ‘little bit of everything’ economic model. It is lack of intellectual rigor, and disingenuity. All they want is to be a State Intellectual. It is sycophancy of the State instead of honesty, intellect, and courage.

The intellectuals are, therefore, the 'opinion-molders' in society. And since it is precisely a molding of opinion that the State most desperately needs, the basis for age-old alliance between the State and the intellectuals becomes clear (Rothbard, 1974).

Their search for Economic Dry Water before the next election will surely will be worthy of a Nobel Prize in Economics.

Conclusion

Sikh's economic model is Libertarian Capitalism, also called Austrian School/Thought of Economics. Sikh's economic model is enshrined in Sikh scripture *Guru Granth Sahib*. This is the model that gives most freedom and least government interference. Prosperity follows.

The two core elements of “libertarianism: the non-aggression principle and private property rights” (Block, 2014). Ask any Sikh suffering in Punjab what he wants more than anything, it is non-aggression from the government, and security from confiscation of his property, land, and water by the government. No other economic model except Libertarianism can give Punjabis that.

The capitalism and entrepreneurship of Sikhs in Punjab was recognized by Milton Friedman who witnessed “self confident, strident, raw capitalism bursting at the seams” in Punjab (Friedman, 2000). Marxist academia, State Intellectuals, and Government bureaucrats in Punjab have over the last 40 years suppressed their entrepreneurship via the *Comm Nust* (destroyer of communities) Communist Wealth Pump to enrich their oligarch overlords. Inequality rises, poor get poorer, rich get richer, middle class disappears. These are the textbook signs of a (Communist) Wealth Pump.

Marxist academia, State Intellectuals, and Government bureaucrats in Punjab try to give their own economic model. They propose Socialism without repression, respect for property rights, and ‘space for capitalists’. It is like trying to find dry water. It is a Nobel Prize for Economics worthy endeavor. As Punjab goes into downward spiral economically and socially, all the Marxists get louder and more aggressive in asking for more of the same.

The American Constitution and Bill of Rights protect the citizen from the Government. Property Rights, due process of law, and freedom from arbitrary detention are in it. Both Sikh Kingdoms and USA emerged at similar times in World History. Sikhs economic (and political) model is very different from Nation-State model of Europe, UK, or Communist Canada.

Compare USA with Russia and Canada in terms of property rights and individual freedom for their citizens if you want to learn more about Capitalism and Communism.

A milestone in Sikh History was Sikh farmers becoming masters of their land when the First Sikh Kingdom was established in 1710 by Banda Singh Bahadar. Libertarian Capitalism respects property rights. Socialism does not.

Libertarianism does not mean anarchy or no government. Prosperity comes from both the invisible hand of the market, as well as the visible hand of small and benevolent good governance. We still need carefully drafted laws that are strictly enforced to protect the consumers as well as property rights and capital of investors.

At a practical level, who will run hospitals, schools, build roads and bridges? Free Market does a better job of capital allocation than the best government bureaucrats. Government funding of these leads to distortions such as airports in the middle of nowhere. China's Mayor Economy is a good example of over building.

At a practical level, low quality and high price of healthcare, education, infrastructure in USA is due to government restriction on supply of doctors and nurses to please special interest groups, government managed monopolization, nationalization, and lack of free market.

Mises Institute has several studies that show sectors of healthcare where there is no government intervention improve quality and lower cost (Mises Institute, 2017).

We must heed Henry Hazlitt's 'Economics in One Lesson'. Think of "consequences of that policy not merely for one group but for all groups". Government should not tax the doctors and nurses to please the farmers. Let the farmers organize as Free Market and fund their own irrigation canal. Don't restrict supply of doctors and nurses to boost pay of special interest groups of doctors and nurses. Entrepreneurs will see the opportunity and provide the required service efficiently without burdening others.

The new insights presented by this paper are summarized here. Punjab (and India) is world's epicenter of Socialism/Communism/Marxism, Fascism, tyranny, and failed economy. Not China, not Russia. How ironic since Libertarianism is enshrined in Sikh scripture *Guru Granth Sahib*. Sikh's vision of *Halimi Raj* (benevolent governance) is aligned with principles of Libertarianism. Socialism/Communism can never achieve that. Socialism/Communism is anathema to Sikh religion and death knell for minorities.

Centuries of persecution and repression of Sikhs by governments of the time has indoctrinated their intellectuals, twisted their psyche, and 'damaged their DNA' (common anecdote amongst the Sikhs). Sikhs today subconsciously want freedom from repression, and security of their property, land, and water. But they ask for it from the government (ਸਰਕਾਰ ਕੁਝ ਕਰੇ).

Asking the government for prosperity and freedom is like asking the Mafia for law and order.

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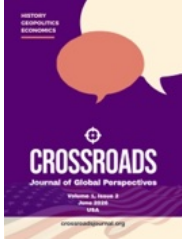
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Sikh Political Failure 1984-2026

Avtar Singh

Freelance economics and geopolitical analyst based in USA.

apunjab Singh@proton.me

Abstract

Sikhs have a history of Statehood. Sikhs established their Kingdoms twice: 1710-1715 and 1799-1849. They could not achieve Political Sovereignty at Crossroads of History in 1947 and were condemned to exist as fourth class (lowest class) citizens in a 'caste' driven third world country. They launched a movement for equal rights in 1984. Sikhs suffered Sikh *Ghallughara* (the Sustained Sikh genocide 1984-98) in which 1 million Sikhs were killed by Indian government (American Sikh Council, 2015). Indian "police under the direction of the Director General of Police K.P.S. Gill, were *eliminating all young, aware Sikhs*" (Pettigrew, 1995). Indian military attacked Sikh's holiest shrine the *Darbar Sahib* in 1984. Sikhs today have a movement for Sikh Sovereignty for their own Sovereign State Khalistan. Will the Sikh movement for Political Sovereignty succeed? The future is hard to predict. Sikh Leadership gets the blame for Sikh Political Failures. This paper takes a deeper look at root causes of Sikh Political Failures.



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We argue it is not leadership that is the root cause. Lack of wise and politically savvy leadership is one of the *symptoms*. This paper claims that most of Sikh's problems are due to their own fault, but they blame others for it. This paper is important as Sikh's movements for greater political relevance and participation keep failing. There are real consequences of this in terms of lives lost and money wasted. But there has been no serious in-depth analysis of Sikh Political Failures. This is a Historical and Analytical Study of Institutional absence, Strategic Missteps, and the Crisis of Modern Sikh Politics. The author has tried to be objective and politically neutral in a potentially emotionally charged discourse on political failures.

Keywords: Khalastan, Khalistan, Sikh, 1947, 1984, *ghallughara*, genocide, Punjab, referendum, separatists, Khalsa Raj, Maharaja Ranjeet Singh.

Introduction: From Glory to Political Eclipse

The political trajectory of the Sikh community from the early nineteenth century to the present is one of remarkable contrast. Within a span of a few generations, once sovereign people - who under Maharaja Ranjit Singh ruled an area the size of modern-day France - found themselves reduced to a politically marginalized minority within a postcolonial Indian nation-state where they are about 1.7% of the population (World Population Review, 2026). They were *de facto* fourth class (lowest class) citizens in a 'caste' driven third world country. This paper seeks to analyze the reasons behind that political failure with focus on our present times 1984-2026.

The intersection of religion, politics and economics is a minefield where the careers and lives of great men of history have ended with a misstep, and sometimes without. All political powers want to have a stranglehold on the narrative in this domain and brutally suppress any alternatives. "It is dangerous to be right in matters on which the established authorities are wrong" (Voltaire Quotes, 2026). Nevertheless, this paper is an honest, courageous, and

analytical attempt at going beyond the obvious and listing the symptoms. It is an insider's deep analysis.

It is worth emphasizing that the focus of this paper is 'Political Failure' of Sikhs. It is not a judgement on a community, which the author is in no position to make. Generalizations are inevitable and attempt has been made to avoid it. An anecdote is that one can only aspire to be at most 80% right in matters of Social Sciences. There are exceptions to the generalizations. The intention here is constructive criticism.

The paper is structured as follows:

1. Root causes for repeated Sikh Political Failures
 - 1.1) Narcissism (ਰੋਮੇ)
 - 1.2) Very low knowledge, skills, and capability (ਗਵਾਰ ਪੁਨਾ)
 - 1.3) Easy Money (ਅੰਨ੍ਹਾ ਪੈਸਾ)
2. Symptom: Leadership Failure (ਆਗੂ ਮਾੜੇ)
3. Symptom: Lack of deep literacy (ਜਮਾਂਦਰੂ ਅੰਤਰਜਾਮੀ)
4. Symptom: The missing \$100 billion (ਕਾਮਰੇਡ ਠਗ ਬਾਬੇ)
5. Symptom: Soft Positive Language (ਮਿੱਠੀਆਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ, ਕੰਨ ਰਸ)
6. Symptom: Meaningless feel good stunts (ਕੁੱਤੇ ਕੰਮ)
7. Symptom: Empty handed at a gun fight (ਝੋਲੀ ਚੱਕ)
8. Symptom: Victim mindset (ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਤਕਰਾ, ਬਾਪੂ ਸਾਡਾ ਕੁਟਿਆ ਗਿਆ)
9. Looking to the Future
10. Spiritual emptiness
11. Conclusion

1.) Root causes for repeated Sikh Political Failures

In this section, we present a hypothesis for root causes of repeated Sikh Political Failures. The root causes can then be used to explain the symptoms which are visible to outsiders and historians.

While all communities and people have character flaws, the three root causes have been closely observed in Sikhs by the author to come in the way of their progress. It is based on tribal knowledge and unrecorded events that are not made public. One has to be an insider to observe them. Correlation is not causation. The three character flaws of the Sikhs are not just incidental but root causes of their political failure.

1.1) Me Me Me, self-centered, inflated ego, and Narcissism (ੴ)

Ego is sense of self-worth. It is healthy and normal. Most people have it. Narcissism is having an inflated ego where one only cares about oneself. It manifests as over-estimation of one's worth and abilities. Narcissists have a constant need to be validated, stimulated, and praised. Narcissism (inflated ego) is an issue only when it dominates one's behavior and leads to undesirable outcomes.

The three dominant traits making up this triad [of dark psychology] are narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism (Mace, 2022).

While Sikhs are quick to point out the dark psychology of *Chanakya-niti* (extreme Machiavellianism) in India's 'upper caste' Brahmins, they are equally quick to dismiss their own equally harmful Narcissism (inflated ego).

Psychology Today explains Narcissism: "...a hunger for appreciation or admiration, a desire to be the center of attention, and an expectation of special treatment reflecting perceived higher status" (Psychology Today, 2024).

Psychology Today also adds "Narcissism is properly viewed on a spectrum". People have varying degrees of it and it is not a disorder. It is a common human trait.

Narcissism has been and is endemic in the world. It is not just a Sikh problem. It is one of the three common dark psychology traits along with psychopath and Machiavellianism. Narcissism affects Sikh leaders, activists, and common Sikhs as well. Narcissism is having a God-Complex.

These personalities, he discerned, came across as inaccessible, aloof, overconfident, auto-erotic, self-important, and exhibitionistic.

They also displayed fantasies where they'd be omnipotent and omnipresent figures. Jones's studies revealed his understanding that narcissists needed to be 'unique' for nothing was as offensive to these personalities as the notion that they resembled someone else.

Everyone can be guilty of putting their needs ahead of others sometimes, but narcissists will do this like it is their bread and butter.

You could say that a narcissist is someone who loves themselves to the point of refusing to believe that anything existing outside the realm of their own interests can have any possible validity or importance.

They have a proclivity for placing the onus of failure on others (Mace, 2022).

Ego and narcissism (ਹੋਮੇ/*haume*) of Sikhs is well known. It is a 'me, me, me' culture that will make Social Media influencers blush. There is a well-known saying among the Sikhs: 5 Sikhs will have 12 Leaders. This is because no Sikh can tolerate another Sikh as his Leader taking the limelight or higher position. Five Sikhs cannot choose a leader. Sikhs can only nominate themselves, *and* their closest family members as a Leader. Every Sikh also nominates his son.

This narcissism (ਹੋਮੇ/*haume*) of Sikhs is a *major* problem that prevents their rise. Communities need a feeling of caring for one another, a high trust society, collaboration, division of labor. This is what builds Empires. Muslims call it *Aṣabiyyah* — group solidarity / social cohesion. It is discussed by ancient Islamic writer Ibn Khaldun in the 14th century in his book *Muqaddimah*. Chinese stress Social Harmony as well. Sikh's self centeredness, narcissism (ਹੋਮੇ/*haume*), is exact opposite of this. It does not lead to greatness, and destroys communities. Conversely, lack of this *Aṣabiyyah* leads to decline of Empires. There is modern aphorism, "an empire survives as long as there is someone willing to die for it".

The author would go as far as to say this narcissism (ਹੋਮੇ/*haume*), self centeredness, inflated ego of Sikhs is the biggest cause of their political failure. Combine it with other factors like very low knowledge, skills, and capability,

discussed later, and you have a toxic combination that poisons any attempt at greatness. A community of people with very low capability, that thinks too much of themselves and cannot collaborate, will be a low achievement community. They might have a chance if they did not have one of these, but the two factors together ensure their low political status.

The origin of this is because Sikhs have fought for land over History. High population and shrinking land from political blunders meant that land is a precious commodity. Fight over land is common. This makes your neighbor an enemy. Fellow Sikhs cannot be trusted. Every other Sikh is considered a fool at best, and out to get your land at worst. The only one who has your interests at heart is only you yourself.

Majority of Sikhs live in India which is not known for good governance. BBC India Chief Mark Tully quotes former Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee, “People often perceive the bureaucracy as an agent of exploitation rather than a provider of service” (Tully, 2003).

In 1959, University of Chicago economist and sociologist Bert Hoselitz described Indian cities as “parasitic” rather than “generative” (Mody, 2023).

Every government Sikhs have lived under have a history of confiscating their land. This makes them wary of governments and authority. British Empire was no better.

The British authorities in the Punjab taxed Sikhs not in kind as the Sikh Kingdom used to, but in cash, so that a sharp fall in crop prices led to the bankruptcy of many peasants who failed to sell their products in the markets at a good price.

Like other Indian and Chinese migrants, Sikhs went overseas to look for better salaries. Economic concern was the primary cause for most migrations at that time (Yin, 2017).

Sikhs suffered through Sikh *Ghallughara* (the Sustained Sikh genocide 1984-98) in which 1 million Sikhs were killed by Indian government (American Sikh Council, 2015). Indian “police under the direction of the Director General of

Police K.P.S. Gill, were eliminating all young, aware Sikhs” (Pettigrew, 1995). Indian military attacked Sikh’s holiest shrine the *Darbar Sahib* in 1984.

Sikhs also have an unusually high number of traitors. Sikhs don’t trust fellow Sikhs. The book “Sikh Caucus: Siege in Delhi, Surrender in Washington” by Pieter Friedrich explores this in detail (Friedrich, 2021).

All these factors make it difficult for Sikhs to work in a hierarchy in close collaboration with each other or trust Sikh institutions. Sikhs subconscious belief is that *I am my own sole salvation*. Instead of a healthy culture of relying on one another and division of labor which enabled humans to survive in African savannah and fight lions, Sikhs have a deeply anti-collaboration low trust culture.

This is in contrast to the West and South East Asia. There is a culture of relatively good governance, rule of law, and respect for property rights in the West. Institutions of the West uphold West’s values of Liberal Democracy with its respect for Human rights and Rule of Law. China emphasis social harmony over individualism. These enable a high-trust and pro-collaboration culture.

In contrast, Sikhs lost 80% of their land in the last 80 years. Sikhs have not seen any benefit from trusting others whereas people in Western Civilizations have seen benefits of trusting their governments and institutions. This is what Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson refer to as *benevolent societal institutions* for which they won the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2024 (Nobel Prize, 2024).

The System has *not* worked for the Sikhs through most of their history. They have been exploited by their own and others. Jews support each other. An anecdote amongst Sikhs is that ‘1 Jew + 1 Jew = 11’, but ‘1 Sikh + 1 Sikh = 0’. Whereas two Jews will naturally collaborate and work together. Two Sikhs together will do everything together to undermine and minimize each other.

Jews have been expelled from lands. They were traders. There is no need for natural animosity. There is need for collaboration and to look out for each other. Jews were not persecuted by Jews during *holocaust*. Yet thousands of Sikhs were actively involved or traitors in persecuting their own kind during the Sikh

Ghallughara (Sustained Sikh Genocide 1984-1998) in which more than a million Sikhs were killed (American Sikh Council, 2015).

Indians did not have similar problems. 'Upper caste' Hindu Indian *Brahmins* have (mis)led the masses for generations. But *Brahmins* do not see each other as a threat. *Brahmins* collaborate and look out for each other. This is exact opposite of Sikhs where every Sikh is out to get their land or get them trapped.

Psychology Today magazine elaborates on inflated ego and where it comes from.

The amount of suffering we experience is proportional to our sense of self-importance.

Those of us who struggle with disappointment, frustration, or anger tend to take things very personally. Led by the ego, we may forget that we are not at the center of the universe. If we are attached to the idea that we are central to everything, it becomes all about "me, me, me," and we most likely will experience conflicts, anger, and other uncomfortable emotions (Psychology Today, 2024).

Property confiscation, bad governance, 'predatory cities', and attempts at extermination, unusually high number of traitors amongst Sikhs are all examples of what psychologists call the 'sufferings'. This leads to feelings of distrust in others which manifests as self-centered. It creates a low-trust anti-collaboration society.

What can Sikhs do about all this?

The way to deal with the ego healthily is not to take things personally (Psychology Today, 2024).

Easier said than done when every one of your fellow Sikhs and all governments over last 500 years have tried to steal your land and exterminate you.



*Sikhs have been cruelly persecuted throughout their history by governments of their time.
Price was put on Sikh's heads by most governments of the time.
(Museum of Sikh History at Gurdwara Mehdiana Sahib)*



*World's largest and longest protest (2020-21) led by farmers of Punjab over Property Rights.
Property confiscation, bad governance, 'predatory cities', and attempts at extermination are
all examples of what psychologists call 'sufferings'.*

*They lead to feelings of distrust in others which manifests as self-importance,
where the only one who has your interests at heart is only you yourself.*

1.2) Very basic knowledge, very basic skills, and very low capability (ਗਵਾਰ ਪੁਨਾ)

Anyone who has worked with Sikh organizations will note their very basic knowledge, very basic skills, and consequently very low capability.

Most Religious leaders and evangelists are masters of emotions rather than masters of cognition. Perhaps this is why Maharaja Ranjit Singh (r. 1799-1839) made his Sikh Kingdom secular and welcomed people from all religions in his government.

Perhaps it is willful ignorance, perhaps it is stubbornness to learn and adapt to changing reality. Most Sikhs in 2026 are stuck in events of 1984 and 1947; and working like it is 1980's. I almost expect to see fax machine at their office. They frequently say they prefer physical paper in our hand, and face to face meetings. Most Sikh activists and organizations are two generations behind rest of the world in use of technology, finance, and in organization and business practices.

It also requires certain level of intelligence and knowledge to know your level of skill, or lack of it (Dunning-Kruger Effect).

The Dunning-Kruger effect is a cognitive bias in which people wrongly overestimate their knowledge or ability in a specific area. This tends to occur because a lack of self-awareness prevents them from accurately assessing their own skills (Psychology Today, 2026).

Poor performers and unskilled simply don't know they are poor performers and unskilled because they lack the knowledge to recognize they are poor performers and unskilled. It is only when you work with others, and observe others that one's own strengths and weakness are visible. Sikhs refuse to do that. Most religious activists will be evolved out outside the closed fossilized religious organizations they operate in. Like the government, there are no market forces at work here. Archaic work practices, incompetence, and dysfunctionality are endemic.

Another phenomenon at play amongst Sikh organizations and activists is the Bonhoeffer's Theory of Stupidity. "We have more to fear from stupid people than evil ones" (Thomson, 2023).

"Nature of power requires that people surrender certain faculties necessary for intelligent thought — faculties like independence, critical thinking, and reflection" (Thomson, 2023). People in groups and in pursuit of comfort in numbers show this behavior. They are driven by Group-Think and in the spell of Witch Doctors.

"More harm is done by one powerful idiot than a gang of Machiavellian schemers." "The lesson from Bonhoeffer is to laugh at those daft, silly moments when in close company. But we should get angry and scared when stupidity takes reign" (Thomson, 2023).

"Debating an idiot is like trying to play chess with a pigeon — it knocks the pieces over, craps on the board, and flies back to its flock to claim victory" (Thomson, 2023).

Sadly, 'powerful idiots' Sikhs are in power in Sikh organizations. Sikhs do more harm to themselves than India's 'upper caste' extreme Machiavellian *Chanakya Niti* Brahmins ever did. They contributed to political failures at crossroads of History. The apt titled article 'Wavells Stupid Sikhs' (Punjab Monitor, 2013) is an excellent record of consequences of stupid Sikhs in positions of Power at the crossroads of History in 1947.

One of the most significant admission of this comes from Tara Chand Malhotra, also known as Master Tara Singh. He was President of Sikh Political Party *Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD)* in 1947.

The reason for our not pressing the demand for a Sikh state was our ignorance of history and world Politics (Singh, 2010).

Others have similar views.

The Sikhs who are in a position to negotiate on the spot are disunited and poorly led. Master Tara Singh [Sikh Leader in 1947] is stupid and emotional (Moon, 1973).

How was such an incompetent non-Sikh who admits his “ignorance of history and world Politics” chosen as President of Sikh Political Party? Perhaps Sikhs liked him because he was relatable (“stupid and emotional”). Perhaps he entertained the Sikhs masses with loud emotions and empty assurances. It continues to works to this day. Then people and historians say that Sikh Leaders failed them (Sandhu, 2017).

Tara Singh, called ‘Master’ by his followers because he was a third-grade school teacher, had lost many members of his own family in the violence he had provoked and one passion motivated him now, revenge... ‘We shall sate her thirst with our blood and the blood of our enemies!’ (Collins, 1975).

It is not just one person, but other people associated with Sikh Political Party *Shiromani Akali Dal* (SAD) in 1947 were people of very low knowledge and very low capability. Punjab Monitor has excellent summary of incompetence and lack of political insight of not just the President of the Sikhs but supporting Leaders, and Maharajas.

Due to their undiplomatic and tactless moves the Sikh leaders made enemies every where (Punjab Monitor, 2013).

Very basic knowledge, very basic skills, and very low capability extend across Sikhs at all levels and all fields. Sikh Leaders, state-intellectuals, elite, academics, businessmen, are not any different. Sikhs just do not make the extra effort. Sloppy work, lackluster performance, uninspired outcome. There should be no excuses for the inexcusable poor work ethic. People have to lift themselves up. No one does it to you.

Journalist Bharpur Singh Balbir said “The world will support you if your legs have the strength to stand” (Balbir, 1984).

The actress Simi Chahal in the Punjabi movie ‘Hoshiar Singh’ beautifully and elegantly sends the message.

ਜੇ ਤੂੰ ਵੀ ਟਾਇਮ ਸਿਰ ਚਾਰ ਅਖਰ ਪਡ ਲੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਪਤਾ ਹੋਨਾ ਸੀ ਟੀਚਰ ਨਾਲ ਗਲ ਕਿਦਾਂ ਕਰੀ ਦੀ ਹੈ।... ਇਹ ਆਪਨਾ ਗਵਾਰ ਪੁਨਾ ਕਿਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਦਿਖਾ।

(If you had learned something in life, then you would have known how to talk to your teacher... show off your crudeness somewhere else) (Chahal, 2025).

It is worth repeating for its importance. Stupid Sikhs do more harm to themselves than India's 'upper caste' extreme Machiavellian *Chanakya Niti* Brahmins ever did.



Water Bus:

a government funded 'innovation' from Punjab: The Land of Five Rivers.

A laughing stock and a failure.

The only consolation is that it was withdrawn before it sank.

In true Punjab tradition, local politics was blamed for its failure.

1.3) Easy money (ਅੰਨ੍ਹਾ ਪੈਸਾ)

Sikhs migrated *en-masse* to the West after the *sustained* Sikh genocide (*ghallughara*) 1984-1998. This coincided with the best time in History in the West. Francis Fukuyama wrote about this period in his landmark book 'The End

of History and the Last Man'. Fukuyama builds on Hegels 'End of History' phrase.

It meant, rather, that there would be no further progress in the development of underlying principles and institutions, because all of the really big questions had been settled (Fukuyama, 2006).

The implied message in this book was that people should focus on making money rather than politics, philosophy, and economics as the big questions have been answered. Why study or worry about politics, philosophy, and economics when there was only one model that had won. All competing ideologies had lost. Cold War was over. There was also the *peace dividend* of the post-Soviet era. Governments could focus on investments in the economy rather than war. There was also availability of cheap money post Bretton-Woods 2 when US Dollar was no longer backed by Gold.

Sikhs were thrust into this world in the West. They subconsciously adopted the prevalent mood of the time. We see it in Sikhs who migrated post 1984. Their focus has been to make money only. Their self-worth is measured in money. Their friends, behavior, values all come from money. Politics, philosophy, and economics became mere entertainment. It was an easy time for Sikhs to make money. All Sikhs have anecdotes of other Sikhs migrating to USA with the proverbial \$20 in their pocket, working at a gas station or motel for 1 year, then buying it for \$100,000, and then selling it to a giant corporation of \$2 million a year later. They talk of 'hard work', and 'investments', but it really was the flood of easy money that lifted all. It was the time of *Cantillionaires* (millionaires who benefited from money printing by government). Money was easy in quick deals and owner financed deals.

The author has personal experience of this during Sikh weddings. The advice given (as a joke) to the new bride for happiness in married life by her elder sisters was to 'charge it' (to husbands credit card).

It was not the most enlightened Sikhs who made money. It was the *least* enlightened Sikhs who made money. Sikhs with no business acumen were 'in the right place at the right time'.

To quote from the Punjabi movie 'Chal Mera Putt': 'those you would not lend a bicycle to in Punjab got UK visa' (Chal Mera Put, Youtube, 2025). Those who barely had a bicycle in Punjab started driving around in Bentleys. Similar trend occurred in Punjab as well. Land prices skyrocketed. People became nominally rich. The feeling was captured by BBC journalist Mark Tully in his book.

The farmer has to do nothing. He has just to sit there and watch his land escalate in value (Tully, 2003).

This easy money was not a product of higher productivity but a result of money printing (quantitative easing) by all governments which made easy money available at low interest rate under their ZIRP (Zero Interest Rate Policy).

By holding rates near zero for almost seven years, the Fed has driven up the price of risky assets, increased leverage and created a pseudo wealth effect... (Cato Institute, 2015).

Sikhs in the West and Punjab made easy money during the best time in History from 1990-2008, and then again 2010-2029. It is *pseudo wealth* as it is wealth driven by inflation. Sikhs got wealthy in nominal terms. But most Sikhs are getting poorer when measured in terms of Gold.



*Rising price of Gold reflects falling value of Dollar.
Most Sikhs got nominally rich but
most Sikhs are getting poorer when measured in terms of Gold
which is the real measure of money. Only Gold is money, rest is credit.*

Prof. Kishore Mahbubani writes in NY Times and says, "Francis Fukuyama's famous essay 'The End of History' may have done some serious brain damage to Western minds in the 1990s and beyond". (Mahbubani K. , End of Whose History?, 2009) This easy money did 'serious brain damage' to Sikhs as well. Sikhs call this state ਅੰਨ੍ਹਾ ਪੈਸਾ – money that makes people blind. The unearned easy money further fueled Sikh's already inflated ego/ਹੋਮੇ. There was no incentive to grow, develop, learn. Pseudo-wealth created illusion of prosperity, as well as illusion of moral and intellectual superiority. Sikh's *haume*/ਹੋਮੇ (ego, false pride, narcissism) went through the roof. Sikh's knowledge or character went through the *floor* from lack of any incentive to build it.

Politics, philosophy, and economics became mere entertainment in an era of easy money, nominal riches, and pseudo-wealth.

Root causes of Sikh Political failures are summarized below.

Centuries of repression, shrinking lands, rising population, poor governance, attempts at property confiscation, unusually high proportion of traitors, low trust culture, and attempts at extermination (sustained Sikh Genocide 1984-1998) are 'sufferings' that leads to feelings of distrust in others which manifests as *self-centered narcissism*. One can only trust oneself.

While Sikhs are undoubtedly a hardworking progressive community, their wealth today is from being at the right place at the right time. It is luck. This did a lot of "brain damage" (ਅੰਨ੍ਹਾ ਪੈਸਾ – money that makes you blind).

Easy Money (ਅੰਨ੍ਹਾ ਪੈਸਾ) with the least enlightened Sikhs created illusion of riches ("pseudo-wealth") and false sense of moral and intellectual superiority (ਮੇਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਸਿਆਣਾ ਕੌਣ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ / 'no one can be wiser than me'). It is common anecdote that Sikhs are individually comfortable middle class, but collectively very poor as a community. Individually, every Sikh considers himself a born one-man Oracle (ਜਮਾਂਦਰੂ ਅੰਤਰਜਾਮੀ). Collectively, a community of self-styled God-Kings (ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ) are irrelevant.

‘Deal’ culture and Easy Money meant they never needed to build their character or learn new skills or build networks or systems (organizations and institutions). The world surged ahead. Sikhs were left with very basic knowledge, very basic skills, and very low capability.

Sikhs just do not make the extra effort in their work. The world today exposes their sloppy work, lackluster performance, uninspired outcome (TikTok, 2025)

Correlation is not causation. These three character flaws of the Sikhs are not just incidental but *core* to their political failure.

While all communities and people have character flaws, the three root causes have been closely observed in Sikhs by the author to come in the way of their progress. It requires deep engagement with Sikh masses and Sikh activists to observe them at play during crucial discussions. The three root causes of Sikh political failure are hard for outsiders to see.

2.) Symptom: Leadership Failure (ਆਗੂ ਮਾੜੇ)

Historians blame incompetent Sikh Leaders like Tara Chand Malhotra (also known as Master Tara Singh) and Baldev Singh. Dr. Akhtar Sandhu has done excellent work on ‘Sikh Failure on the Partition of Punjab in 1947’ (Sandhu, 2017). A more crucial question is why did Sikh Organizations have such deeply incompetent leaders who later confessed their ‘ignorance of history and world Politics’ and were perceived as ‘stupid and emotional’?

Offloading the blame to someone is convenient. It enables Sikhs to wash their hands of deeper ideological, structural, and strategic failures. Sikhs love being victims – in this case they love being victims of their own leaders.

"Social Action Needs Organization" (Turchin, 2023). Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson won the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2024 for their work on:

Importance of societal institutions for a country’s prosperity.

Reducing the vast differences in income between countries is one of our time's greatest challenges. The laureates have demonstrated the importance of societal institutions for achieving this (Nobel Prize, 2024).

There is *not a single* Sikh organization dedicated to preparing world class leaders with knowledge, skills, and experience in history, economics, politics, and leadership.

There is no action towards organizations and institutions training Sikhs on 'history, economics, politics, and management skills' and giving them opportunities to get real world experience.

Just as there will be no doctors without medical colleges, no engineers without engineering colleges, no nurses without nursing schools, there can be no leaders without leadership institutes, organizations, and support for the Leaders.

Do Sikhs expect great leaders to drop from the sky without them as a community having invested in their education and experience, without the leadership structure they need, and without us ourselves having the standards to follow the Leaders. It is Magical Thinking.

The root cause of this is inflated ego and narcissism/ਹੱਮੇ. No Sikh will fund an institution to prepare another Sikh for Leadership because he is a born leader himself. He neither trusts anyone, nor does he believe anyone else can be better than him.

Sikhs do not and cannot build networks and systems, except at personal and business levels. They will have rolodex of supplier of truck parts, but not have a rolodex of movers and shakers in the deep state. The root cause is that Sikhs cannot work with equals or with more powerful because of their *haume* (inflated ego, false pride, and narcissism).

If a Leader is required, the Witch Doctor who ego massages the rich, expresses loud emotions, and promises spiritual entertainment is selected as the Leader. Bonhoeffer's Theory of Stupidity ensures people will suspend intelligent thought and follow the Witch Doctor. "Master Tara Singh [Sikh Leader in 1947]

is stupid and emotional” (Moon, 1973). This was true in 1947, 1984, and is true today in 2026.

Our fake leader today is "either a man who is judged to be good by common self-deception or someone put forward by men who are more likely to desire special favors than the common good" (Kissinger, 2022).

In other words, our minds are so warped and standards so low, we self-deceive ourselves into choosing Witch Doctors and toxic leaders; or a manufactured ‘Leader’ with entertainer personality is thrust upon us by big businesses looking to subvert the government machinery for special favors.

Money amongst Sikhs is with the least enlightened Sikhs with ‘Brain Damage’ (ਅੰਨ੍ਹਾ ਪੈਸਾ). They fund ego massage by Witch Doctors, spectacles, and anti-India catharsis in the form of protests for optics (ਦਿਖਾਵਾ).

Sikhs so called ‘Leadership Failure’ is a symptom and convenient scapegoat for deeper ideological, structural, and strategic failures. Sikhs love being victims – in this case they love being victims of their own leaders.

3.) Symptom: Lack of deep literacy or deep work (ਜਮਾਂਦਰੂ ਅੰਤਰਜਾਮੀ)

Sikhs compare themselves to Jews. There are similar number of Jews and Sikhs. They have similar historical trajectory. But can one compare intellectual and scientific contributions of Sikhs and Jews?

Sikhs blame this on lack of sovereignty. Sikhs have been in USA, Canada, UK for more than 100 years. How many world class books, papers, ideas, discoveries can be attributed to Sikhs in the West?

Sikhs are active on social media, but don’t support or respect deep literacy. Sikhs think in memes and simple slogans. Not just the Sikhs masses, but also Sikh intellectuals and funders lack appreciation of deep literacy or deep work.

Sikhs are anti-intellectual. Anyone who says anything sensible is hated, ridiculed, ostracized, and attacked.

Race, ethnicity, religion, culture, IQ, region, weather, geography, may have an effect but not to the same extent as establishing organizations and institutions at critical cross roads in history that can nurture people with deep intellect and expertise.

Singapore and China actively encouraged deep literacy, deep expertise, and deep work. The results show.

Lee Kuan Yew said to Chinese Premier Deng Xiaoping, “Whatever we can do, you can do better. We are the descendants of the landless peasants of south China. You have the mandarins, the writers, the thinkers and all the bright people. You can do better” (TIME Magazine, 2005).

The lesson here is that “descendants of the landless peasants of south China” did better in Singapore than “mandarins, the writers, the thinkers and all the bright people” in China (TIME Magazine, 2005).

Another example, it is about 150 years since the *Meiji* restoration (reform) of 1868 from *Shogunate* pre-medieval Japan to modern Japan. Mark J. Ravina writes in his book ‘To Stand with the Nations of the World: Japan's Meiji Restoration in World History’ that “Japan’s daimyo [feudal lords] were “high-born dummies” whose intellect was nearly always far below par” (Ravina, 2017).

Japanese leaders in 1868 referred to their people as with “weak disposition”, lacking “diligence and perseverance”, and with “high-born dummies” as administrators. 150 years may or may not be not enough to improve IQ or racial characteristics and culture. Japanese people and any community never deserve such unfair generalized tags. It was lack of benevolent institutions that made them so. “The O'kubo administration aspired to transform Japan, but that transformation would be driven by bureaucratic deliberations, not by popular zeal” (Ravina, 2017). It is ‘bureaucratic deliberations’ in institutions that was responsible for modern Japan’s ‘restoration’ that made it a modern power.

Extractive institutions create ‘Vicious Cycle’ that demoralizes people. Race, ethnicity, religion, culture, weather, geography, and Leaders get the blame.

Sikhs match any other community or Nation in memes, social media posts, movies, and songs. Sikhs also match others in intellect, morality, and character. But this goldmine of talent is not supported, goes feral, or misdirected.

Sikhs successfully countered media campaigns against them with their own home grown Tractor2Twitter social media campaigns but could never rise beyond that. Even today, there is not a single book by a Sikh that gives a concise true well-researched account of Farmers Protest 2020 which made history as the largest protest.

Sikhs trail far behind in deep literacy, deep work, books written, ideas presented, and inventions etc. A related trait is intellectual laziness. Sikhs are quick to criticize, but cannot create and invent.

Singapore, China, and Japan showed it is not due to race, ethnicity, culture etc. It is because Sikhs never developed the institutional framework with 'bureaucratic deliberations' required to lift themselves out of the sea of mediocrity, consumerism, entertainment, and catharsis (ਭੜਾਸ).

The root cause of this is inflated ego and Narcissism/ਰੋਮੋ. No Sikh will fund an institution for another Sikh. The richest Sikhs have no philanthropic contributions except funding religious *langar* (communal kitchen). Every Sikh believes he knows all about every topic because he read simple slogans and social media memes. Every Sikh is a born one-man know-all (ਜਮਾਂਦਰੂ ਅੰਤਰਜਾਮੀ).

Sikhs fund social media channels, fake activism, and catharsis (ਭੜਾਸ) that feed their ego and narcissism. Consequently, Sikh social media channels abound, fake activists talk of religious freedom, and Sikhs are out on the streets raising slogans and protests. Sikhs will fund low value intellectually lazy work that is visible (optics) and gives quick shallow wins. But Sikhs will not fund a journal of deep literacy.

4.) Symptom: the missing \$100 billion (ਕਾਮਰੇਡ ਠਗ ਬਾਬੇ)

Most Religious leaders and evangelists are masters of emotions rather than masters of cognition. They emotionally manipulate people with their empty reassurances. They serve ‘opium of the masses’ (Karl Marx) to keep them sedated, pacified, and dependent on them.

Sikh (pseudo) intellectuals are what Ayn Rand referred to as ‘Witch Doctors’ (ਨੀਮ ਹਕੀਮ, ਠਗ ਬਾਬੇ).

The Witch Doctor’s brain is a miasma of floating abstractions unrelated to concretes. Both are guided and motivated—ultimately—not by thoughts, but by feelings and whims. Both cling to their whims as to their only certainty. Both feel secretly inadequate to the task of dealing with existence (Rand, 1963).

It is universal, driven by flaws in human character to be attracted to empty reassurances, magic pills, magic spells, and easy wins. This is how Witch Doctors and Socialism endured through time.

Almost all Sikh (pseudo) intellectuals are comrades trained in Soviet funded universities of 1980’s. In dialogue with them, their comrade/Marxist/communist grounding becomes clear. It is well known among the Sikhs that Sikh comrade/Marxist/communists have been trying to proverbially get Marx to ride on Guru Nanak’s shoulders as a way to get into Punjab. Socialism is complete opposite of Sikh Religion. These comrades try to wear the cloak of Guru Nanak to get acceptance amongst the Sikhs. Perhaps all institutions have been hijacked and corrupted to some extent. Are institutions of modern Nation-States not facing the same challenges? Witch Doctors amongst Sikhs cost them at least \$100 *billion*.

Every year, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints collected an estimated \$7bn from its 17 million members through a practice known as tithing, in which members give about 10% of their income to the religious organization.

About \$1bn of the collected money was placed into a reserve fund at Ensign Peak – which is registered as a non-profit – and invested, with profits growing tax-free.

Created in 1997, the reserve fund has ballooned to more than \$100bn... (TheGuardian, 2023).

The Mormons collected \$7bn/year, saved and invested \$1bn/year out of that for 30 years. The \$1bn/year wisely invested over 30 years grew to \$100 bn. Sikhs also donate generously tenth of their income as '*dasvandh*'. Unlike Mormons, Sikhs do not have a \$100 billion fund. It is worth repeating for its seriousness. Cost to Sikhs from pseudo-intellectual comrade Witch Doctors in their midst is \$100 *billion*.

Socialism, emotionalism, feelings and whims, empty slogans, rhetoric, loud emotions, and catharsis (**ਭੜਾਸ**) are order of the day. Socialism has nothing to do with Sikh's philosophy of '*Sarbat-da-bhala*' (prosperity for all). But they are falsely equated. Getting Marx to ride on Guru Nanak's shoulders is Witch Doctors strategy.

“When the Missionaries arrived, the Africans had the land and the Missionaries had the Bible. They taught how to pray with our eyes closed. When we opened them, they had the land and we had the Bible” (Jomo Kenyatta, founding President of Kenya). Just as the Colonials used Bible to trick and loot the Africans, the looters of Sikhs today use foreign philosophy of Socialism disguised as Sikh philosophy to trick and loot Sikhs of their money and land. Marx is disguised as Guru Nanak. '*Sarbat-da-bhala*' (prosperity for all) is wrongly equated with Socialism. It is a serious \$100 *billion* problem.

A Communist is known among Sikhs as '*Comm nast*'/**ਕੌਮ ਨਸ਼ਟ** (destroyer of community). Yet, they are everywhere. Socialism in simple terms is 'Promise Prosperity and then Loot'. (**ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਜਪਨਾ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਮਾਲ ਅਪਨਾ**).

“ਘੱਟ ਅਕਲ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਬੇੜਾ ਗਰਕ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ” (“These low intelligence people have destroyed Sikhs” (Dhillon P. G., ਘੱਟ ਅਕਲ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਬੇੜਾ ਗਰਕ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ: Dr Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon's speech, 2019).

There is no money for real work.

5.) Symptom: Soft Positive Language (ਸਿੱਠੀਆਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ, ਕੰਨ ਰਸ)

The pen is mightier than the sword only if the words are sharper than the sword. American comedian George Carlin joked about 'Soft Language' (Carlin, 2008). Guru Nanak's language was sharp and hard hitting. He referred to some as 'dogs that attack you and lick your blood'. He called others as blind and deaf.

ਰਾਜੇ ਸੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ ॥ ਜਾਇ ਜਗਾਇਨਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਸੁਤੇ ॥

ਚਾਕਰ ਨਹਦਾ ਪਾਇਨਿ ਘਾਉ ॥ ਰਤੁ ਪਿਤੁ ਕੁਤਿਹੋ ਚਟਿ ਜਾਹੁ ॥

(Rulers are lions, but their officials' lowly dogs who harass common people.

Officials hurt the common people, and lick their blood like dogs)

(Sikh Samridhi, 2025).

But today Sikhs only want praise, motivation, and 'positivity' wrapped in soft language. The root cause of this is their extreme *haume* (ਹੋਮੇ), narcissism, self-centeredness, inflated ego, and 'me me me' mindset. Sikhs cannot accept constructive criticism. Sikhs are un-coachable. Sikhs shutdown when you talk of anything but positive things wrapped in 'soft language'. Rationally discussing anything uncomfortable with Sikhs is like walking on eggshells. Sikhs want an illusion of happiness where everything is ok as long as their business is doing well. They are disingenuous when it comes to community issues. Sikhs don't fund real work. Sikhs fund spectacles for spiritual entertainment and catharsis (ਭੜਾਸ). That explains the position they are in.

Chris Hedges calls this positivity 'cult programming'. Dark insidious psychological techniques used by government and corporations create an Illusion of Happiness. This is exemplified by Positive Psychology where problems, anxieties and fears are buried. Politicians, officials, and corporate managers "...are awash in such insincere and coercive techniques. The goal,

replicated in the corporate workshops where managers are taught how to speak to employees, is not to communicate but to control" (Hedges, 2010).

Psychologists, in and out of the government, have learned how to manipulate social behavior. The promotion of collective harmony, under the guise of achieving happiness, is simply another carefully designed mechanism for conformity. Positive psychology is about banishing criticism and molding a group into a weak and malleable unit that will take orders... That most oppressive systems of power, including classical Western colonialism and proponents of globalization, all use the idea of social harmony as a control mechanism (Hedges, 2010).

Our addiction for comfort, safety, power, money, and superficial entertainment has created a world which is devoid of all enchantment, beauty, and passion. People are spiritually empty from bad upbringing. They constantly seek something they can't define and can't see even when they find it.

J. G. Ballard reminded us that 'the suburbs dream of violence. Asleep in their drowsy villas, sheltered by benevolent shopping malls, they wait patiently for the nightmares that will wake them into a more passionate world (Monbiot, 2013).

Perhaps this spiritual emptiness from soft language, positivity, and lack of meaningful change explains why Sikhs periodically take to the streets in huge public displays of catharsis (ਭੜਾਸ) when issues and anxieties can no longer be buried. Perhaps it is human longing to 'wake them into a more passionate world' that they can't create.

6.) Symptom: Meaningless feel-good stunts (ਕੁੱਤੇ ਕੰਮ)

It is not enlightened Sikhs who have money. It is the least enlightened Sikhs who have money.

The richest Sikhs are 'Potato King', Peach King', '7/11 King', 'Trucking King', 'Gas Station King', 'Real Estate King' etc. This is in contrast to other minorities like Jews where Jews who run world class businesses and banking have money. It

is also in contrast to Indians where ‘upper caste’ Brahmins in India have the most money and power. They run IT services, banking, bureaucracy.

The least enlightened Sikhs who are ignorant of global events and macroeconomics fund activities that pander to their ego and narcissism (ਗੋਮੇ). They are misled by Sikh Witch Doctors and comrade Sikh pseudo intellectuals trained in Soviet funded universities of 1980’s. Pick up top 10 activities of Sikh community. Ask who is funding it. Ask them why they are doing it. We leave it to you as an exercise.

Ask Sikh activists and organizations what they do and why they do it. What you will hear is abstract alphabet soup of ‘floating abstractions’ and vague vision. It will not be their words but the words of a Witch Doctor manipulating their minds behind the scenes.

The Witch Doctor’s brain is a miasma of floating abstractions unrelated to concretes. Both are guided and motivated—ultimately—not by thoughts, but by feelings and whims. Both cling to their whims as to their only certainty. Both feel secretly inadequate to the task of dealing with existence... If we ask our intellectual leaders what are the ideals we should fight for, their answer is such a sticky puddle of stale syrup—of benevolent bromides and apologetic generalities about brother love, global progress and universal prosperity at America’s expense—that a fly would not die for it or in it (Rand, 1963).

The book *'The Hijacking of Sikhi'* by Dr. Karminder Singh Dhillon explores it:

Combined effect of the prolonged efforts of the three deviant groups would be that Sikhi would take on a severely ritualistic mode". "the spiritual plane of Sikhi would be systematically but surely hijacked and taken back to the same destination it intended to break away from... Sikhs who have become aware of the hijacking and desire to return to authentic SGGS based Sikhi are looked upon as “deviants” while the adherents of the hijacked version are considered as “true” and “genuine” Sikhs (Dhillon D. K., 2018).

Conspiracies theories are hatched to justify lack of any rational explanation. They hint CIA and ‘intelligence community’ involvement, funding from Rothschild, and propaganda led by Chatham House to obfuscate it all. Stories of Cloak and Dagger, and Spy vs Spy games pander to ego and narcissism of all.

Sikh activities are ‘deviant’ and ‘ritualistic’ (Dhillon D. K., 2018). In vernacular Punjabi, it is called ਕੁੱਤੇ ਕੰਮ (dog’s antics).

7.) Symptom: Empty handed at a gun fight (ਝੋਲੀ ਚੱਕ)

Sikhs have not developed organizational and societal institutions. They have not encouraged a culture of deep literacy. They have not prepared world class intellectuals.

There are anecdotes of Sikhs going to meetings empty handed (ਝੋਲੀ ਚੱਕ) with just their victim mindset. No documents, no dossiers, no experts, no professional help, no preparation, no proposal. Sikhs talk of repression, human rights abuses, religious freedom. The outcome is ‘no result’.

Sikh activists sponsor ‘White House dinner’ that end up being a trivial irrelevant photo-op in Eisenhower building where pictures are taken with a Congressman or Senator who gives empty reassurances to Sikhs. It is not Congressman or Senator’s fault. Sikhs don’t even know what to ask. Sikh Leaders are ‘Witch Doctors’ (ਨੀਮ ਹਕੀਮ, ਠਗ ਬਾਬੇ). “The Witch Doctor’s brain is a miasma of floating abstractions unrelated to concretes... Both feel secretly inadequate to the task of dealing with existence” (Rand, 1963). Sikh activists go to United Nations and give passionate speeches and submit documents for optics (ਦਿਖਾਵਾ) for their funders. The outcome is ‘no result’. Sikh activists have closed doors secret meetings with ‘Intelligence Community’. The outcome is ‘no result’.

In intellectual competition with Hindus and Muslims, he (the Sikh) was a cart horse pitted against thoroughbreds (Griffin, 1892).

How can a cart horse compete against a thorough bred? Perhaps by getting help from other thoroughbreds and exploring alternatives instead of trying to compete head on with the thoroughbred yourself. Other communities have well trained, well-prepared, and well-funded lobbyists. Sikhs are empty handed without even a knife at the proverbial gun fight. This is why Sikhs fail at so called ‘table talks’ at Cross Roads of History. How do you fight legal cases against

entities bigger than you? By nurturing lawyers or at least hiring equally good lawyers.

The root cause of this is big ego and Narcissism/ਹੋਮੋ. No Sikh will ever ask anyone to accompany him as no one knows more about the world than him. Every Sikh considers himself a born expert in geopolitics, economics, and history (ਜਮਾਂਦਰੂ ਅੰਤਰਜਾਮੀ). He doesn't *need* expert advice or professional help. One vocal social media analyst of Sikhs loudly says 'Work for Sikh political rights is missionary work', while spending thousands of dollars every month on ego massage from Witch Doctors. He did not like it when I recommended, he go to a psychologist as it will be cheaper and more effective than spending thousands to have his ego massaged. He still has delusions of 'missionary work' in a world of professional lobbyists.

No documents, no dossiers, no experts, no professional help, no preparation, no proposal. Sikhs go ਝੋਲੀ ਚੱਕ (empty handed) on 'missionary work' singing hymns of human rights, religious freedom, bullying, genocide, and transnational repression. The outcome is 'no result' at any negotiation or political discussion.

8.) Symptom: Victim Mindset (ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਤਕਰਾ, ਬਾਪੂ ਸਾਡਾ ਕੁਟਿਆ ਗਿਆ)

Sikhs can do no wrong, so believe most Sikhs. Life would be perfect if it wasn't for external influences working against them. It is big time victim mindset.

Sikhs believe it is not that they never developed institutions, they were *not allowed* to develop institutions. Someone undermined their efforts. Sikhs believe they were *not allowed* sovereignty in 1947. Sikhs believe they were *not allowed* education, and books were snatched from them. They quote study by Leitner (Leitner, 1971). It is *always someone else* who did something to them. Someone undermined them.

There is a lot of truth in that. This belief is summarized in the common expression “ਪੱਤਾ ਪੱਤਾ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਦਾ ਵੈਰੀ” (Enemies at every step).

Authentic Sikhs – because there was a price on their heads and limbs – would take refuge in the jungles of Punjab, the desert regions of Rajasthan and the hills of Jammu and Kashmir... The void and vacuum would allow Sikh gurdwaras, institutions and virtually everything connected to the Sikh psyche to fall into the hands of THREE groups who were either anti-Sikhi, deviant or even non-Sikhs for a long and continuous period of time... In the 207 years of the hijacking [of Sikhi], virtually everything about the uniqueness of Sikhi that was constructed by our Gurus in 239 years would be turned on its head. And everything that was rejected would be systematically brought back as accepted religious practices (Dhillon D. K., 2018).

The author has personal experience of his grandfather telling him that British did not allow a school in the village. The British Officer told my young grandfather to join the army. “What do you need school for? Join the army.”

The British Empire suppressed political movements in South Asia. The worst repression was reserved for the Sikhs as the British conquered the Sikh Kingdom and naturally worried about resurgence of the Sikhs. The British annexation marked a profound transformation. The colonial authorities understood the potential of the Sikh martial tradition and sought to redirect it in ways that served imperial stability. Rather than suppressing Sikhism, the British co-opted it. They redefined the community as a “martial race,” encouraging Sikh enlistment in the British Indian Army. This strategy accomplished two goals: it rewarded Sikh loyalty and neutralized political nationalism.

As a result of this repression, Sikhs could not mobilize to form their own Nation-State. They were bunched together with Hind/Hindustan to form ‘India’. Almost all of Sikh’s current predicament comes from this grave strategic blunder to not carve out of a Nation-State for themselves at the critical crossroad of History in 1947. There is no doubt that Sikhs have suffered in the last 80 years from the various Soviet inspired pogroms by Indian government. Prof. Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon has written about “Evolution of the Demand for a Sikh Homeland”. He chronicles broken political promises and insincerity of India with the Sikhs (Dhillon G. S., 1974). He also documented Sikh grievances and repression in his book “India Commits Suicide”.

There is no doubt that Sikh religion as it is practiced today is a deeply corrupted and hijacked version. There is no doubt that Sikhs were denied education. There is no doubt that every political entity the Sikh minority have lived under has systematically planned their destruction. Mughal Empire, British Empire, and India are equally at fault.

What have Sikhs done about all this? What are the achievements of the Sikhs in the last 100 years? The Gurdwara Reform Movement (1919–25) marked the first major organized assertion of Sikh agency against colonial control. British authorities had long allowed corrupt *mahants* (custodians) to control major gurdwaras, many of whom were aligned with the state. The Akali agitation, combining religious reform with political mobilization, successfully transferred control of the shrines to the community through the Sikh Gurdwaras Act of 1925. This movement gave birth to two lasting institutions:

1. The *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee* (SGPC) - the central religious management body;
2. The *Shiromani Akali Dal* (SAD) - the political arm of Sikh interests.

These were monumental achievements in self-organization. Yet, they also locked Sikh politics into a narrow institutional frame where religious administration and political mobilization became entangled. Instead of evolving into a modern political party with a constitutional vision for Punjab, the *Akali Dal* remained largely reactive and sectarian.

There has been no serious movement by concerned Sikhs to get rid of corrupted and hijacked *Sikhi* with its emphasis on *maryada* (rituals and protocols) rather than truthful living.

There have been no attempts by concerned Sikhs to build institutions of learning. There are institutions for grand weddings, entertainment, consumerism. But no institution of learning.

Instead of decoupling from the political, economic, and social System of India, Sikhs have embraced and internalized the System. It is a *Stockholm Syndrome* where the victim is in love with his aggressor.

Sikh diaspora in Canada, the UK, and North America is disconnected from Punjab's ground realities. Their activism, though valuable in highlighting human rights abuses, sometimes romanticized historical wounds without offering realistic pathways for Punjab's governance or autonomy.

It is worth repeating, “ਖੱਤਾ ਖੱਤਾ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਦਾ ਵੈਰੀ” (Sikhs have enemies at every step). It is the real world. Punjab, the land of the Sikhs has concentrated natural resources, geopolitical strategic location, and hard-working progressive people. Of course, others are going to try and enslave them and steal their resources and land.

What is buried in Punjab that powerful countries and agencies of the world want to control it? (ਅਜਿਹਾ ਕੀ ਦੱਬਿਆ ਪੰਜਾਬ 'ਚ ਜੋ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਤਾਕਤਵਰ ਦੇਸ਼ ਤੇ ਏਜੰਸੀਆਂ ਟੁੱਟ ਪਈਆਂ) (C5 Channel, 2022).

This trickery and loot are not unique to Sikhs. “When the Missionaries arrived, the Africans had the land and the Missionaries had the Bible. They taught how to pray with our eyes closed. When we opened them, they had the land and we had the Bible” (Jomo Kenyatta, first Prime Minister of Kenya).

If the Colonials used Bible to trick and loot the Africans, then looters of Sikhs today use Socialism disguised as Sikh philosophy to trick and loot Sikhs of their money and land. Karl Marx is disguised as Guru Nanak amongst the Sikhs.

Were you tricked and robbed? Good morning. Welcome to the real world.

As Prof. Kishore Mahbubani, President of UN Security Council said “At the end of the day, geopolitics is a cruel business. It always requires cunning, not political naivete, to succeed in geopolitics” (Mahbubani P. K., Can Asians Think of Peace?, 2025).

Sikh Journalist Bharpur Singh Balbir said this 40 years ago, “...when we do not recognize difference between friend and enemy, we enable our enemies to strike at the heart of our Guru” (Balbir, 1984).

The root cause of victim mindset is the same inflated ego, narcissism, and very poor awareness of the world around him. It is compounded by lack of any organizations or institutions preparing politically savvy professionals.

Sikhs believe it is other people's fault for doing wrong to them. If you sleep with your house unlocked, don't blame the thief for theft. If you have an empty mind, don't blame the Witch Doctor for misleading you.

The naivety and audacity of Sikhs in believing that they will not be tricked, misled, and robbed is hard to understand. Even after more than 500 years of repression, being looted, lied to, promises broken etc. Sikhs appear shocked that they were tricked and promises to them were broken.

With very basic knowledge, and very basic skills, and very low capability, Sikhs only realize afterwards that they have been tricked and robbed.

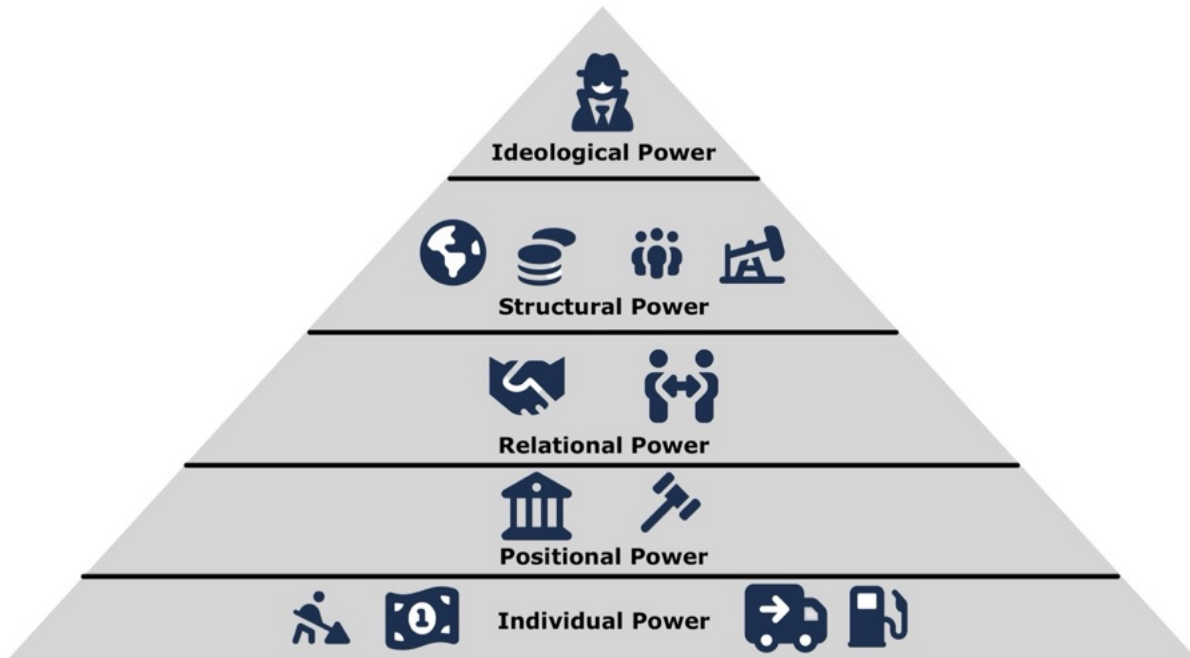
Once this realization hits, Sikhs start their customary *morcha* (protest) bellowing loud emotions, victim mindset, and taking to the streets.

9.) Looking to the Future

What does future hold for a community driven by narcissism/ego/pride; easy money; and very low capability, knowledge, and skills? What role do Sikhs have in the future?

There are different perspectives on Power. One view of power is:

- **Ideological Power:** set the direction, give vision, build systems, fund them
- **Structural Power:** ownership of assets and commodities like oil, land, Gold, rare earths, manufacturing, people.
- **Relational Power:** contacts, lobbying. E.g. AIPAC.
- **Positional Power:** having individuals in positions of Power e.g. President of World Bank, Judge.
- **Individual Power:** Sikhs exist here as disunited unorganized individuals.



The sad reality is that South Asians and particularly the Sikhs are seen in Labor and Service roles only in the World Order. They have individual power. A few individuals on their own may get into positions of Power such as President of the World Bank. But as a community, what else can you hope for when all you have is ‘Individual Power’, and have no alliances (relational power), no hard assets (no gold, no land, no oil), and no investment in intellectual capabilities.

If Sikhs are serious, here is what they can do:

1. Get Ideological Power: invest in world class intellectuals and ideological power. It is the lowest investment way to power.
2. Build alliances and acquire relational power: lobbying.
3. Build assets for structural power: Buy Gold, build assets and wealth funds.

But they will not because of their *haume/ego/pride*. One cannot tell or even suggest to a Sikh what to do. No Sikh will act based on advice from someone else as it will mean someone else knows more than him. Sikhs will continue to have very low capability, very low knowledge, and very poor character of ‘bread

and circus'. It will remain a pleasure centric community (ਸਵਾਦ ਆ ਗਿਆ) making money from 'labor and service' (individual power). The song by Sikh singer sums up their fate well:

ਰੋਟੀ ਹੱਕ ਦੀ ਖਾਈਏ ਜੀ, ਭਾਵੇਂ ਬੂਟ ਪਾਲਿਸ਼ਾਂ ਕਰੀਏ।

(Translation: Let's eat the bread of honest labor, even if it means we have to polish shoes) (Mann, 2013)

Such a cringeworthy song should have been relegated to dustbin of History, yet it made this singer a famous star filling stadiums supported no doubt by Deep State keen to set this narrative for the Sikhs.

What a fall for a community that 150 years ago ruled a region the size of France, changed 700 years of History by establishing their Sikh Kingdom, and whose King Maharaja Ranjit Singh rise was described in colonial Britain by the metaphor, 'a Lion has risen in the East'.

10.) Spiritual emptiness

I had several discussions with more than 100 prominent Sikhs in various fields. I saw lack of Humanity and Spiritual Strength. Big ego, lack of awareness and knowledge, and easy money was 'in your face' in any discussion with Sikhs. Other communities might be similar, but they can afford to be so. A small marginalized, minority community with no political power cannot afford this. Sikhs lack this meta-intelligence (intelligence about intelligence, and awareness about how you think). Perhaps, that is why they are condemned to a precarious existence of labor and service all over the World.

Humanity and Spiritual Strength are hard to define but easy to see. All accomplished people in their field - philosophers, scientists, writers, academics, doctors, leaders - connect with their spiritual core and humanity.

"The first gulp from the glass of natural sciences will turn you into an atheist, but at the bottom of the glass God is waiting for you" (Heisenberg, 2026).

Thousands of Westerners, Russians, Chinese, Japanese, Singaporeans demonstrate it. Sikhs do *not*. Sikhs are Empty Inside. That is why they can only

talk, do *morchas* (protest), fight, criticize. Sikhs claim they are humane. Is this a conscious effort or from their powerlessness?

To rise above everyday existence in a despiritualizing consumer culture and urban environment requires spiritual strength. It also requires spiritual strength to fight forces of evil within and without. Public intellectuals talk about this in social media. “This Is A Spiritual War | Charlie Kirk” (Charlie Kirk, Dr. Jordan Peterson, 2025). “We are in a Spiritual Battle” (Tucker Carlson, 2025).

Deeper study of most natural and social sciences shows a spiritual, underlying order. Perhaps that is God. You only connect with it when you go deep with honesty and immerse yourself in your field of study. I went deep into psychology of Sikhs. I saw emptiness.

11.) Conclusion: From Moral Greatness to Political Wisdom

The Sikh Political failure is an organizational and institutional failure. Sikhs never built systems for success. Political relevance requires organization, resources in people and money, foresight, and adaptability. History repeatedly shows that moral nations perish without institutional intelligence.

Sikh political institutions remain parochial, reactive, and factionalized. Unlike other small nations that leveraged identity into political modernity - Israel, Ireland, or Singapore - the Sikhs have yet to develop a comparable political-intellectual infrastructure.

Successful people build systems and architecture for success. Clueless people make grandiose plans and ‘motivate others’ on social media. The book ‘Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones’ by James Clear is a good introduction to this.

Leaders (or lack of it) get the blame even when there is no community or infrastructure or organizational support for leaders and change makers. Leading Sikhs requires fighting masses with entrenched narcissism; easy money; low capability, low inability to understand or change. Sikhs are under

the grip of Bonhoeffer's 'theory of stupidity'. The political culture remains charismatic, martial, and casual/informal. It is *not* of bureaucratic deliberations and not institutional.

From Maharaja Ranjit Singh's lost empire to the fragmented politics of today, the Sikh story illustrates how a community can lose political direction. To move forward, Sikhs must learn not only from their martyrs but from their administrators; not only from their warriors but from their strategists.

Easy money, emotionalism, selective learning, ego massage, feelings and whims, empty slogans, rhetoric, loud emotions, social media addiction, shallow meme level understanding, dependency on protests, catharsis (ਭੜਾਸ), anti-intellectualism, consumerism, *wokism*, socialism, and an apolitical overly spiritual hijacked interpretation of religion have established themselves deep in Sikhs psyche. Is it any surprise that at crunch time when decisive action is needed, Sikhs find themselves empty handed (ਝੋਲੀ ਚੱਕ).

Most of Sikh's problems are due to their own fault, but they blame others for it. Correlation is not causation. The three character flaws of the Sikhs are not just incidental but root causes of their political failure.

- Me me me, self-centered, inflated ego, and Narcissism (ਰੋਮੋ)
- Very basic knowledge, very basic skills, very low capability (ਗਵਾਰ ਪੁਨਾ)
- Easy Money (ਅੰਨ੍ਹਾ ਪੈਸਾ)

While all communities and people have some character flaws, the 3 root causes have been closely observed in Sikhs by the authors to come in the way of their progress. It requires deep engagement with Sikh masses and Sikh activists to observe them at play during crucial discussions. The 3 root causes of Sikh political failure are hard for outsiders to see.

They have not been systematically documented before as the authors here have tried to do. We believe this is our unique and new insight.

This paper is important as Sikh's movements for greater political relevance and participation keep failing.

'Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.' Sikhs failed politically in 1947, 1984, and 2025. They keep doing the same thing over and over again without *any* serious and deep self-reflection. There is catharsis (ਭੜਾਸ), but no serious and deep reflection.

Lives are lost and money is wasted. Governments retaliate. There has been *ghallughara* (sustained Sikh genocide 1984-98) and attack on Sikh's holiest shrine *Darbar Sahib* multiple times. A culture of distrust develops on both sides. Masses are demoralized. The next generation tries again. The cycle repeats. It becomes a low trust culture. Peace, Progress, and Prosperity remain elusive.

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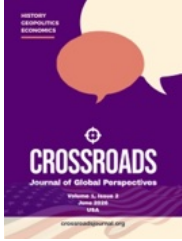
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Shiromani Akali Dal and the Fragility of Governance in British Punjab 1920–1925

Dr. Asif Nazir

University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom.

Amandeep Kaur

Research Scholar, Department of Punjabi
Sri Guru Granth Sahib World University, Fatehgarh Sahib, Punjab.

Kiranpreet Singh

Research Scholar, Department of Punjabi
Sri Guru Granth Sahib World University, Fatehgarh Sahib, Punjab.

Harbeer Kaur

Assistant Professor
Post Graduate Department of English
Mata Gujri College, Fatehgarh Sahib, Punjab.



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Abstract

This paper argues that the emergence of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) in 1920 exposed the fundamental flaws in British colonial rule in Punjab and constituted a serious structural challenge to the British government. This study offers a novel theoretical framework based on three new concepts: collaborative captivity, the judicial-proprietary paradox, and legislative fragmentation. Current historiography, however, concentrates on either the efficacy of Sikh mobilization or the strategic skill of British officials. In addition to opposing colonial authority, the study demonstrates how the SAD systematically undermined the state's alliances by taking advantage of the traditional Sikh identity that the British had created for military recruitment. The study demonstrates how the SAD changed military sociology from a pillar of colonial power into a channel of imperial weakness, building on Oberoi's important analysis of colonial Sikh identity formation and Fox's cultural materialist perspective on Akali mobilization. The Sikh Gurdwara Act of 1925 is reinterpreted as a tactical tool of legislative division, allowing a fundamentally weak colonial state to survive by channeling religious independence into manageable institutional structures, rather than as a generous reform or a definitive nationalist victory. The paper advances the theoretical conversation on movement institutionalization, colonial knowledge creation, and the relationship between legal frameworks and political legitimacy by offering new perspectives on how anti-colonial movements might take advantage of the internal conflicts of garrison states.

Keywords: Shiromani Akali Dal; collaborative captivity; garrison state; Sikh Gurdwaras Act; colonial governance; Punjab; legislative fragmentation; non-violent resistance.

INTRODUCTION: THEORISING COLLABORATIVE CAPTIVITY

The colonial governance of Punjab in the early twentieth century poses an intriguing analytical challenge for scholars: how did a state apparatus, specifically designed for military security, become so susceptible to a religious reform movement that explicitly rejected armed insurrection? Current scholarship presents conflicting interpretations. Yong (2005) describes the administration as a formidable "Garrison State," founded on institutionalized military collaboration, paternalistic land policies, and the deliberate promotion of martial identities (p. 4). Akhtar Sandhu holds that the term 'martial races' was used by the British, although the cultural traits attest to the martial status of certain castes (Sandhu, 2026). In contrast, Condos (2017) provides a starkly different perspective, depicting the Punjab administration as an "Insecurity State" characterized by a constant, pervasive fear among its populace and governed by what he calls a "logic of pre-emptive violence" (p. 13). Blissett (2023) further complicates the discussion by illustrating that the Board of Administration period (1849–1853) established enduring patterns of civil-military integration that continued well into the twentieth century (p. 5).

This article goes beyond mere descriptive characterizations to create a new analytical synthesis. The Punjab administration exhibited both strength and fragility simultaneously — and this seeming contradiction is crucial for understanding the effectiveness of the Akali movement. The colonial government had established an exceptionally sophisticated system for military recruitment and political control, yet this very sophistication led to structural weaknesses that a strategically skilled adversary could take advantage of. The idea of collaborative captivity encapsulates this dynamic: the state's reliance on Sikh military personnel resulted in a situation where the population that ensured imperial security was also the same population whose discontent could lead to imperial downfall. The strategic innovation of the SAD was not to challenge this system from the outside but to engage with its internal contradictions, turning the mechanisms of collaboration into tools of in action. This analytical framework produces three significant contributions. First, the

article reveals that the British 'weaponisation' of Sikh identity for military ends — a phenomenon critically assessed by Oberoi (1994) in his study of colonial identity construction and by Fox (1985) in his cultural materialist analysis of Akali mobilisation — fostered a unified communal infrastructure that the SAD could seize and redirect. Second, it pinpoints the judicial-proprietary paradox as a particular legal contradiction that the SAD capitalised on to delegitimise colonial authority, illustrating how British property law became a hindrance rather than a benefit when applied to religious institutions. Third, it reconceptualizes the 1925 Sikh Gurdwaras Act as a mechanism of legislative fragmentation — a strategic concession that upheld colonial authority by steering Sikh political energy into state-supervised electoral processes. This final finding challenges both the nationalist historiography that interprets the Act as an unequivocal victory and the colonial narratives that frame it as a form of benevolent reform. Several prominent historians particularly Grewal (1990), Oberoi (1994), and Fox (1985) have investigated the connection between the construction of colonial identity and the political mobilization of Sikhs. The assertion here is not that these interactions have been completely ignored, but rather that they have not been consolidated into a cohesive structural explanation that accounts for both the effectiveness of the SAD and the particular nature of the British concessions. The three concepts elaborated upon below offer precisely that integrative framework.

The Construction of the Martial Garrison: Imperial Strategy and Its Contradictions

The principles of collaborative captivity were established in the years following the annexation of 1849, as the British created a governance structure that Blissett (2023) describes as prioritising "security over development, military exigency over civil administration" (p. 4). The Indian Rebellion of 1857 was instrumental in solidifying this framework, demonstrating that Punjabi manpower was crucial in suppressing the revolt (Raj, 2024, p. 7; Chatterjee, 2019, p. 1076). In the aftermath of the rebellion, British officials systematically

developed the "Martial Races" theory — a pseudo-scientific ideology that attributed enhanced military capabilities to specific ethnic and religious groups, with Punjabi Sikhs at the top of this constructed hierarchy (Liebau, 2017, p. 468). Yong (2005) notes that the five Ks became mandatory for enlistment (p. 55), yet the analytical implications extend well beyond mere administrative convenience.

What has been inadequately acknowledged in existing scholarship — with the notable exception of Oberoi (1994, pp. 302–315), whose analysis of the Singh Sabha movement anticipates this argument — is the extent to which this racialized recruitment strategy necessitated active state involvement in the formation of religious identities. The military did not merely enlist Sikhs; it actively shaped a specific type of Sikh identity that aligned with imperial objectives. By establishing orthodox Sikh identity as a requirement for military service, and by positioning military service as the primary means of economic progress for rural Sikh families, the British fostered a community that was both more unified and more aware of its unique interests than any Sikh community prior to colonial rule. Fox (1985) illustrates that this phenomenon was intricately linked to the wider political economy of colonial Punjab, where land policies, canal colonization, and military recruitment converged to cultivate a distinct Jat Sikh peasant consciousness (pp. 79–98). The military regiments effectively served as training grounds for fostering communal solidarity, wherein Sikhs from various regions and castes cultivated a shared identity through common discipline, collective symbols, and the joint experience of serving the empire. Consequently, the concept of the 'Garrison State' transcended mere description, evolving into a dynamic system that created the very conditions for its potential downfall. This analysis revises Yong's (2005) narrative by illustrating that the garrison's strength was, in fact, the source of its fragility. As the connection between Sikh identity and military service intensified, the state's susceptibility to movements that could shift Sikh solidarity towards anti-colonial objectives increased.

Mechanism 1: Collaborative Captivity — The Paradox of Dependent Control

Collaborative captivity refers to a distinct structural condition that has not been sufficiently explored in the current literature regarding colonial governance. In contrast to mere dependency, which suggests a susceptibility to external influences, collaborative captivity illustrates a scenario where the state's coercive mechanisms become constrained by the sociological makeup of its own forces. The statistical implications of this phenomenon were striking: by the early twentieth century, Sikhs made up about 20% of the combat strength of the Indian Army, despite accounting for less than 2% of the population of British India. Furthermore, approximately one in every fourteen adult Sikh males was enlisted in the military during the Akali period (Yong, 2005, p. 226; Panesar, 2016, p. 35). These statistics indicate that any substantial repression of Sikh political engagement would inevitably affect the families, communities, and social networks that supplied the army with its most esteemed soldiers. The strategic acumen of the SAD was evident in its ability to identify and leverage this structural condition. The movement intentionally utilized ex-soldiers and military pensioners—individuals whose service histories symbolized imperial allegiance—as the primary participants in non-violent jathas (Singh, 1978, p. 12). This approach transcended a mere recruitment tactic; it represented a nuanced form of political jiu-jitsu that effectively turned the state's own resources against it. The incident in 1922, where police forces assaulted these decorated veterans at Guru-ka-Bagh, resulted in what this article describes as a recursive crisis of authority: the state found itself unable to dismiss the challenge to its power or to adequately penalize the challengers without jeopardizing the morale and loyalty of Sikh regiments.

The notion of collaborative captivity provides a novel perspective on the reasons conventional indicators of state strength were inadequate in forecasting colonial vulnerability. The administration in Punjab had access to substantial material resources — including a trained police force, military units, and a legal framework — yet these resources became ineffective precisely at the moments they were most crucial. This observation calls into

question realist theories of state power that equate material capabilities with effective governance, instead illustrating that the social structure of coercive institutions can influence whether material capabilities can be converted into actionable force. Condos (2017) examines this insight through the lens of the psychological concept of "insecurity" (p. 13), whereas collaborative captivity provides a more accurate structural explanation: the state was not merely fearful of its populace but was objectively limited by the recruitment sociology it had established. This differentiation is significant for the comparative study of garrison states — a topic to which the conclusion will return.

Administrative Failure and Epistemic Blindness: The Production of Colonial Ignorance

The structural limitations of collaborative captivity were exacerbated by the systematic shortcomings in the production of colonial knowledge. According to Raj (2024), British governance in Punjab depended on what he refers to as "natural leaders" — these included landed aristocrats, hereditary priests, and traditional elites who acted as intermediaries between the colonial administration and the rural populace (p. 7). However, by 1920, these intermediaries had lost their legitimacy among the Sikh masses, who increasingly perceived them as corrupt collaborators, with their authority reliant solely on British protection rather than the consent of the community (Singh, 1978, p. 138). The administration consistently failed to recognize this transformation. Its intelligence networks were constructed around these intermediaries, resulting in a closed information loop where declining elites reported their own sustained relevance, while the emerging "Neo-Sikh" middle-class leadership remained undetected by official surveillance (Blissett, 2023, p. 865).

This state of epistemic blindness necessitates a theoretical examination. The ignorance exhibited by the colonial state was not merely a lack of information gathering; rather, it involved the active creation of a specific type of knowledge that systematically marginalized social realities that contradicted the

assumptions of imperial governance. Singh (1978) illustrates how officials persistently framed Akali mobilization as a matter of "conspiracy" and "external agitation," failing to acknowledge the authentic sentiment for religious reform due to their conceptual frameworks lacking the capacity to accommodate the political consciousness of the autonomous lower-middle class (p. 41). Consequently, Condos (2017) identifies a distinct pattern termed "pre-emptive force": officials, perceiving a threat yet unable to accurately identify its origins, resorted to violence as a means of compensating for their cognitive shortcomings (p. 49).

The 1921 massacre at Nankana Sahib exemplifies the lethal repercussions of colonial governance. A mahant, supported by British authorities and assured of their protection, orchestrated the murder of around 130 peaceful reformers who aimed to access the gurdwara (Singh, 1978, p. 32; Sarna, 2025, p. 426). This incident was not an isolated event; rather, it represented a coherent manifestation of a knowledge system that categorized mahants as 'loyal' and reformers as 'dangerous,' disregarding the actual substance of their religious beliefs. The theoretical implications extend further: epistemic blindness is an inherent characteristic of colonial rule, not merely a random administrative oversight. Colonial administrations rely on local intermediaries for insights into their subject populations, yet this reliance fosters systematic incentives for these intermediaries to distort social realities in ways that align with their personal interests. This insight challenges narratives that view colonial knowledge primarily as a mechanism of power (Cohn, 1996), revealing instead that the production of colonial knowledge could lead to significant vulnerabilities when the social landscape it claimed to depict experienced changes that intermediaries had reasons to obscure.

Mechanism 2: The Judicial-Proprietary Paradox — When Law Undermines Authority

The second major mechanism through which the SAD exposed the weaknesses of colonial governance was the manipulation of the judicial-proprietary

paradox. In Punjab, British property law recognized mahants as private proprietors of Gurdwara lands — a legal status that officials had deliberately encouraged to ensure political loyalty from those managing religious institutions (Kaur & Gurna, 2025, p. 1070; Singh, 1978, p. 18). This arrangement served multiple colonial aims: it created a class of property-owning collaborators with vested economic interests in British rule, and it provided legal structures for controlling access to religious sites through property law, rather than delving into the more politically sensitive domain of religious regulation.

The paradox arose when the SAD presented an alternative view of Gurdwara ownership based on the Sikh principle of Panthic trust — the belief that Gurdwaras are the collective property of the Sikh community rather than belonging to individual owners (Sarna, 2025, p. 425; Singh, 1978, p. 19). This assertion extended beyond mere legal discourse; it represented an ontological perspective regarding the essence of sacred space that British property classifications were ill-equipped to address. The colonial legal framework acknowledged only individual or corporate ownership, rendering the notion of community trusteeship, which surpasses legal personhood, completely incomprehensible within British law. The state's use of police to safeguard the property rights of mahants against community assertions highlighted the inherent conflict between colonial legal principles and Sikh religious beliefs.

The judicial-proprietary paradox served as more than merely a legal technicality; it acted as a mechanism for delegitimization that undermined the normative claims of colonial authority. The British portrayed their governance as embodying the 'rule of law' and impartial justice; however, the conflicts surrounding Gurdwaras revealed that colonial law was fundamentally incapable of acknowledging the religious character of the institutions it was meant to adjudicate. This situation highlights a broader theoretical insight: when legal systems consistently generate outcomes that contravene the normative values of the populations they govern; the concept of legality transforms into a source of delegitimization rather than one of legitimation. The Akali case illustrates that the more the colonial state emphasized the formal

accuracy of its legal processes, the more it revealed the substantive injustices that those processes engendered.

The paradox also highlights a significant aspect of the interplay between property law and political authority. By converting religious institutions into private property, the British aimed to establish a reliable class of collaborators with a stake in colonial legality. However, this approach resulted in a legal framework where the defence of property rights held by corrupt custodians necessitated the suppression of the religious claims of the very community whose military contributions upheld the empire. Thus, property law, intended as a tool of control, evolved into a snare. The SAD recognized this dynamic and deliberately orchestrated confrontations that compelled the state to confront this untenable choice in a public forum, thereby ensuring that each legal triumph for the mahants translated into a political success for the Akalis.

Resistance Strategies and the Sovereign Combatant Dilemma: Reengineering Imperial Discipline

The tactical innovations of the SAD may represent one of the most overlooked aspects of the movement's effectiveness. While existing literature acknowledges the Akali's use of non-violent marches and the involvement of military veterans, it has not sufficiently explored the connection between British military discipline and Akali protest methods. This article posits that the SAD successfully reverse-engineered imperial discipline, converting the behaviours that the British had instilled in their Sikh soldiers into tools of anti-colonial resistance. The evidence supporting this claim is considerable. Akali jathas marched in battalion formations, donned distinctive black turbans that served as uniforms, upheld strict discipline in the face of adversity, and utilized military terminology to articulate their operations (Singh, 1978, p. 27). These actions were not mere superficial imitations but rather systematic reapplications of military organizational strategies. The SAD understood that British military training imparted not only technical abilities but also psychological traits — such as obedience, bravery under pressure, and group

cohesion — that could be harnessed for political purposes the British had never envisioned. Fox (1985) highlights a significant aspect of this in his discussion of how Jat Sikh peasants transformed agrarian grievances into organized political movements (pp. 148–171), yet he does not analyse the specific mechanism through which military discipline was transferred.

The strategic outcome of this reverse-engineering process resulted in what this article refers to as the Sovereign Combatant Dilemma. The Akali protester, who was both a disciplined soldier in formation and a non-violent religious martyr, posed an insurmountable tactical and ethical challenge for British officers. How could an officer command troops to fire upon individuals who exhibited the same behaviors as those troops had been trained to display, who shared their religious beliefs, and who chose not to respond to violence with further violence? This discovery enhances our understanding of non-violent resistance by illustrating that its success is contingent not merely on moral persuasion but also on the particular strategic context in which it is situated. In the case of the Akali movement, Gandhian non-violence was effective not because it swayed the hearts of the British, but because it undermined British military strengths by taking advantage of the unique vulnerabilities of a garrison state reliant on minority recruitment — a context-specific strategic innovation rather than a universally applicable moral approach.

Media Mobilisation and Transnational Networks: The Globalisation of Local Resistance

The Akali movement's interaction with media and transnational networks introduces an additional aspect where current scholarship has offered descriptions but lacks sufficient analytical integration. Singh (1978) chronicles the establishment of newspapers by the SAD, such as Akali, and its collaboration with The Hindustan Times, while also highlighting the involvement of Sikh diaspora communities from Canada, Hong Kong, and Shanghai (pp. ix, 12). Raj (2024) recognizes the media's role in revealing colonial atrocities (p. 17). Nevertheless, what remains unexplored is the

precise mechanism by which media mobilization altered the strategic considerations of colonial officials.

The SAD's media strategy served as a coercive multiplier, converting local confrontations into international crises with ramifications that extended well beyond the immediate protest arena. The Jaito Morcha (1923–1925) exemplifies this dynamic with particular clarity. When British forces opened fire on a Shaheedi Jatha consisting of 500 volunteers, the SAD's media apparatus ensured that the incident received international attention that colonial censorship could not contain (Singh, 1978, p. 72). Sikh organizations in the diaspora leveraged this coverage to exert pressure on the British government through channels unavailable to domestic actors — including parliamentary questions in London, press campaigns in sympathetic foreign newspapers, and diplomatic representations through imperial networks.

The coercive multiplier functioned through two separate pathways. Firstly, it heightened the political repercussions of repression by converting local law enforcement actions into global reputational harm. The British government, acutely aware of American and international sentiments in the aftermath of World War I, discovered that each act of suppression in Punjab resulted in diplomatic challenges that were disproportionate to the military importance of the actions taken. Secondly, the transnational aspect weakened colonial assertions of providing 'civilised' governance. The dissemination of atrocity narratives via global Sikh networks fostered a counter-narrative portraying British rule as barbaric and illegitimate — a characterization that the British themselves had employed to rationalize their governance. This analysis challenges perspectives that view media solely as a tool for information dissemination, instead illustrating that media mobilization can significantly transform the strategic landscape by expanding the audiences before whom confrontations are enacted.

The Colonial Response: Legislative Fragmentation as Strategic Retreat

The shift from coercion to legislative measures during Governor Sir Malcolm Hailey's administration has been interpreted in the scholarly discourse as either a reaction to Akali pressure or a deliberate adjustment within colonial policy. Raj (2024) characterizes the 1925 Sikh Gurdwaras Act as a "historic victory" for non-violent mobilization (p. 17). In contrast, Singh (1978) offers a more complex perspective, emphasizing Hailey's strategy of fostering anti-Akali "Sudhar Committees" to provoke internal conflict (p. 134). Although these interpretations capture elements of the colonial response, they do not sufficiently theorize the distinct outcomes that legislation could facilitate, which coercion could not achieve. This article reconceptualises the 1925 Act as a tool of legislative fragmentation — a strategic manoeuvre intended to dismantle the movement that the state was unable to suppress. Legislative fragmentation denotes a particular governance strategy: when confronted with an organized populace that resists coercion, the state establishes institutional frameworks that incentivize moderation and penalize radicalism, thereby dividing the movement along tactical disagreements. Hailey's notable innovation was to link the release of prisoners to their written acceptance of the Act's implementation, ensuring that those who embraced the settlement (moderates) and those who sought unconditional amnesty (extremists) would cultivate enduring organizational hostilities (Singh, 1978, p. 112).

This reconceptualization yields three innovative findings. First, legislative fragmentation functioned as a more nuanced form of control than coercion, as it resulted in outcomes that seemed to be victories for the movement: the SGPC acquired authentic institutional power; Sikhs attained real control over their religious sites. However, these advancements occurred within a framework that fundamentally transformed the nature of Sikh political organization, redirecting energies that had previously been aimed at opposing the colonial state towards electoral competition for state-regulated institutions. Second, the Act established what Riat (2013) describes as a contemporary "religion-secular binary," necessitating that Sikhs adopt state-

approved legal definitions of identity to engage in electoral processes (p. 26). This requirement marginalized heterodox groups and reinforced the authority of a particular Khalsa elite, whose power increasingly relied on colonial legal structures. Third, the long-term implications of the Act — the "institutionalized communal separatism" that Chatterjee (2019) associates with Partition — were not merely unintended consequences but rather essential components of a governance strategy that prioritized short-term stability at the expense of long-term communal polarization (p. 1104).

Engaging Counter-Evidence: The Problem of Victory

The theoretical framework established herein must thoroughly address the counter-argument that the 1925 Act signified a true victory for the Akalis. Kaur and Gurna (2025) describe the passage of the Act as the successful conclusion of the gurdwara reform movement (p. 1070). Abbas and Ali (2022) highlight the achievement of the SAD in attaining "passive resilience" in the face of overwhelming state power (p. 383). Grewal (1990) also regards the Act as a pivotal moment in Sikh political evolution. These interpretations are not merely incorrect; they reflect a genuine aspect of the transition of institutional authority from colonial collaborators to representatives of the community. Nevertheless, a counterfactual analysis lends credence to the interpretation of legislative fragmentation. Had the British continued with a strategy of persistent coercion instead of transitioning to legislative co-optation, it is likely that the Sikh regiments of the Indian Army would have revolted — a scenario that military officials considered seriously throughout the Akali era (Yong, 2005, p. 226). Thus, the transition to legislation can be viewed as a survival strategy for a fundamentally vulnerable state, rather than a concession won by a victorious movement. Condos (2017) identifies a broader trend: when insecure states encounter threats, they are unable to suppress, they alter the institutional framework to maintain the essential structures of authority while relinquishing peripheral elements of control (p. 113).

Resolving this tension necessitates a clear distinction between outcomes and frameworks. The 1925 Act yielded results that were genuinely beneficial to Sikh communal interests: the SGPC acquired authority over gurdwaras, corrupt mahants were ousted, and the principle of community governance of religious institutions was legally recognized. However, these results were attained within frameworks that limited future political progress — frameworks that legally defined Sikh identity, linked political representation to control of religious institutions, and directed political efforts into electoral competition overseen by the colonial state. The Akalis secured control of the gurdwaras but forfeited the ability to mobilize the movement that had achieved this victory.

Institutional Legacy: The State Within a State and Its Contradictions

The institutional legacy of the 1925 Act significantly altered the political landscape of Punjab for subsequent generations. The SGPC wielded financial resources, administrative capabilities, and electoral legitimacy that were unmatched by any other political entity in colonial India. Singh (1978) observes that this institutional foundation equipped the SAD with the necessary resources to evolve from a volunteer reform group into a resilient political party adept at advocating for Sikh interests through both electoral and administrative avenues (p. 150). Nevertheless, this institutional achievement harboured an inherent contradiction — a phenomenon this article refers to as the institutional capture of mobilisation. The very resources that empowered the SAD as a political entity simultaneously limited its ability to engage in the type of extra-institutional mobilisation that had previously made the Akali movement effective against colonial authority. The SGPC transitioned into an institution that required defence and management, rather than serving as a platform for contesting the frameworks of colonial governance. This shift altered the relationship between means and ends: rather than employing institutions as tools for mobilisation, the SAD increasingly used mobilisation to sustain institutional integrity. This observation enriches social movement

theory by pinpointing a distinct mechanism by which the institutionalisation of movements fosters conservatism — not merely through the co-optation of elites, as suggested by the resource mobilisation literature (McCarthy & Zald, 1977), but through the structural transformation of organisational interests that accompanies institutional control.

The long-term effects transcended the SAD, influencing the overall course of Punjabi politics. The Act's creation of a legally recognized Sikh electorate not only reinforced but also legitimized communal political identities, undermining efforts for cross-community collaboration. Raj (2024) points to this "communalisation of Punjabi politics" as a contributing factor to the eventual disaster of Partition, emphasizing the 1925 Act's importance beyond the immediate context of gurdwara reform (p. 17). The institutional structure that ensured Sikh religious autonomy also played a role in the political dynamics that ultimately led to the division of Punjab — a tragic irony that the legislative fragmentation framework elucidates, setting this analysis apart from the more optimistic narratives presented by nationalist historiography.

Conclusion

The most notable new discovery concerns what this article calls the reverse-engineering of imperial discipline. Current interpretations of Akali 'non-violence' either view it as a manifestation of Gandhian methods or as a reflection of Sikh martial heritage expressed in a non-violent manner. This article illustrates that it signifies something more precise: a strategic innovation specifically designed to exploit the weaknesses of a garrison state reliant on minority recruitment. This discovery carries significant implications for the wider discourse on non-violent resistance (Sharp, 1973; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011), indicating that the success of non-violent approaches is heavily influenced by the structural characteristics of the states they confront. The most important new insight relates to what this article has labelled the reverse-engineering of imperial discipline. Existing narratives surrounding Akali 'non-violence' either interpret it as an application of Gandhian principles or as

a manifestation of Sikh martial tradition in a non-violent context. This article reveals that it signifies something more nuanced: a context-specific strategic innovation designed to exploit the vulnerabilities of a garrison state that relies on minority recruitment. This insight has broader implications for the literature on non-violent resistance (Sharp, 1973; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011), suggesting that the efficacy of non-violent strategies is critically contingent upon the structural makeup of the states against which they are employed.

Nonetheless, a notable generative gap persists. The current academic literature fails to adequately elucidate the specific pedagogical mechanisms through which British military training was adapted into Akali protest techniques. This article has established that former soldiers constituted the disciplined core of the morchas, and that jathas utilized military formations and terminology. However, the exact nature of the translation process remains unexplored. Did Akali leaders intentionally study British training manuals and devise systematic methods for redirecting military discipline towards non-violent objectives? Alternatively, did this transformation occur more organically, as soldiers applied familiar organizational structures to new political contexts based on their shared experiences? Addressing this gap necessitates the examination of vernacular Punjabi sources that have not yet been analysed in English-language scholarship: SAD organizational diaries from 1920 to 1925, training pamphlets distributed to jatha leaders, and memoirs of military veterans involved in the movement. Such investigations could clarify whether Akali 'non-violence' was a deliberate psychological reverse-engineering — a conscious effort to undermine the effectiveness of British officers' military training against subjects who had mastered its forms while rejecting its aims — or a more spontaneous convergence of organizational cultures. The findings would not only enhance the understanding of the Akali movement but also contribute to a broader theoretical framework regarding how military institutions can inadvertently serve as training grounds for the anti-colonial movements that ultimately supplant them.

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