

## Socio-political impacts of Dera Politics in Punjab

<sup>1</sup>Kuljit & <sup>2</sup>Dawinder Kaur

<sup>1</sup>Student, Department of political science, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara (India)

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of political science, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara (India)

### ARTICLE DETAILS

#### Article History

Published Online: 15 April 2019

#### Keywords

Dera's, untouchability, superstitious, inequality, poverty.

#### Corresponding Author

Email: dawinder.22040[at]lpu.co.in

### ABSTRACT

This research is based upon the concept of Dera politics as a world-wide phenomenon with special context to Punjab. Dera politics is most prevalent in the two states of Punjab and Haryana. The real root cause of Dera politics is the caste system which has not only divided one or two more states but the whole of India. Caste based communities have faced such problems before independence and yet facing it till today. The Dera is divided between the upper caste and the lower caste. It is highly affecting the lives of the people in Punjab. Instead of solving the problems, the community it has created more of communal clashes. They must have started the Dera with a different motive. Like the upliftment of the lower caste people and their basic rights of entering the religion places was denied to them. Dera was made to fight for the rights of the minorities but later on, was used for the corrupt motives of baba Ram Rahim. But Punjab government has taken some essential steps in quelling the Dera politics, which was being run by baba Ram Rahim. In order to stop another, Rahim to come forward and corrupt the mind of the people. Preventive measure should be taken by the Punjab government.

### 1. Introduction

The word Dera derives from the Persian word "Dera" or "Dirah", which means a Camp, Monastery or Convent. Dera's are not new in Punjab. It is much older than the Sikh faith and panth. There is many *Deras* in India. *Deras* in Punjab before Sikh faith, Dera's are belongs to Sufi Pier's, Yogi Nath's and Saint's. The Popularity of saint's through their followers can be seen through veneration. *Deras* are also known as Shrine's. Shrine's means *Khanqahs*. The function of *Khanqahs* was to provide relief to the people of all communities particularly the lower caste of different communities. Many of these Shrines are built in rural areas where lower caste people are lived. These Dera's are open for all the people in every society. There is also Sufi Dera's or Shrine's. Dera of Sakhi Savvar Sultan, Sheikh Farid, Khawaja Khizr and five Pir's (Panj Pir). These are the old Dera's in the History of Punjab.

Even during the lifetime of the Sikh Guru's several Dera had been established. The Sikh Dera's like for e.g. Bandai Khalsa, Nanakpanthis, Sutra Shahi, Gulabdasi, Nirmala's and the Nihang's. These Dera's are cropped up in the history of Sikh community. In 19<sup>th</sup> century, there are many Dera's come into being. The new Dera's are acted like the centre of Dalit mobilization. The majority of the followers of these Dera's were people of Dalit background. Who had embraced Sikhism to escape the cattiest 'Hindu Verna system. Because there is inequality between Hindu's and Sikh's. The increasing Politicization of Sikh institutions – The Akal Takath and SGPC (Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee) and their domination by Jat Sikh has been driven a large number of the Dera's as well. They played a big role in the politics of Punjab. Now these days there are many Dera's in Punjab like *Dera Saccha Sauda*, (Haryana). The head of this Dera is Gurmeet Singh, Dera Radha Swami Satsang Beas in Sirsa in village Beas, the first guru was Baba Jaimal Singh ji. Bhainiarwala Dera situated in district Ropar, the Head of this

Dera is Piara Singh. *Dera Sachkhand Ballan* situate in village Ballan district Jalandhar. The main Dera now these days famous in Punjab is Dera Sirsa. These Dera's give guidance to the people and these Dera's is highly politicized and the people of Punjab join to Dera's for support. *Dera Saccha Sauda* fully supported by the Dalit Sikhs. We saw the fact that the state has been shared schedule caste population in Punjab.

Guru's and God man is living at the centres of the Dera's. These Guru's and Dera's comes up with their own spiritual. The Dalit Dera's running parallel to Sikhism. From the Dalit community in Punjab there are lots of follower were packed in Panchkula and Sirsa. All the people were supported them a lot. In the list of the followers of these Dera's there are many leaders, actors, officers, assembly members were coming. They all support the Dera head's a lot. They also went for Dera's for solving their problems. The chief helped them through his known leaders and some another VIP person. These Dera's are running through the people of Hinduism and Sikhism. Mostly the people in Punjab believed in these Baba's."<sup>1</sup>

According to Shekhar Gupta "A holy book has much wisdom but in times of distress, you sometimes need a human being to refer to, particularly if he has a Godly reputation".

Many peoples in Punjab think that they need a guru in their life who guides them. There are many issues why peoples are joined Dera's for example; A property dispute between two brothers, learning about sport, for fighting in the elections, a good match for marriage. Those peoples who puzzled in these types of situations they need Baba's for solve the difficulties in their lives. In these Dera's Guru provide them guidance. The followers of the Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh spread all over the

<sup>1</sup>Paul Hershman (1981): Punjabi Kinship and marriage, Hindustan Publishing Corporation, Delhi: Pg. 21

world. At the time of Modii government, they started a surgical strike against terrorist. The Singh started shoot for this strike. This is an open secret that Dera is set to support the incumbent coalition.

There were many Dera's who affect the politics for example *Dera Beas*. The fact that congress vice president Rahul Gandhi, Chief Minister Captain Amrinder Singh, Badal, Arvind Kejriwal have met the head of the Dera Beas several times in the run up to assembly elections. For the political benefit Badal have long relationship with the head of the Dera Beas. Sukhbir Singh Brother-in-Law married with the niece of the Dera head. Around the elections many political leaders gave the seat in the political party for the native of the Dera chief. The Dera Beas is situated in Doaba (Punjab). Dera Saccha Sauda situated in Malwa.

Dera Ballan, the head quarter of Dera Ballan is in the village Ballan in rural Jalandhar. This Dera related to Ravidas community. The Dera chief welcomed them (leaders) for the political spectrum. When Arvind Kejriwal visited to Dera Sachkhand. BSP wanted to protest against him but this protest stopped by the Dera. Many of Dera's officially said that they stay away behind this nobody knows about this which political party would come into power. They said that they have not any political committees. The political parties have intricate discussion with the Dera Head.

The circumstance of Dera Sacha Sauda consequently offers a useful entry point into the review the existence of caste in relation to the Sikh religion.<sup>2</sup>

Dera's are two types one is sikh Dera's and others are non-sikh Dera's. The basic thing in all these Dera's are guru bhakti. These Dera's are also known as Dera panth. The branches of these Dera's in all over the world. In the current time there is 10,000 Dera's in Punjab. The Dera phenomenon is very older than sikh panth. These baba's plays an important role in the life of the common people. Baba's are the soul of these Dera's. In modern time Dera plays dangerous role as the centre of form mobilization. Class structure means that is resolute by birth. It means that in some cultures if your parents are deprived, you are going to be deprived too. And Sikhism is the fifth largest religion in the world. The guess is that the residents of Sikhs in all over the world 20 to 30 million. It was originated in 1469 by Guru Nanak Dev ji in Punjab province. Sikhism is a monotheistic religion founded in Punjab in the 15<sup>th</sup> era by Guru Nanak.

## 2. Research Objectives

The proposed study will be an attempt to understand the impact of Dera politics on the people of Punjab and its role in articulating the faith and belief of the people into the political process in Punjab. the study will also analyse the political manifestation of religious belief of Dera on the contemporary politics of Punjab.

- To analyze the causes and factors responsible for the spread of Dera's in Punjab.
- To analyze the impact of Dera's on the politics of Punjab.

- To understand the misuse of religious faiths, beliefs and manipulation by the Dera Guru's and Baba'.

## 3. Hypotheses

- The followers of Dera's construct a social-religious community which manifested and manipulated in the form of Dera politics by Dera heads in Punjab.
- The Dera's in Punjab have been using the belief and faiths of Dera followers to mobilize them politically.

## 4. Research Methodology

The study will explore and analyse various dimension of Dera politics and their use in political processes. Therefore, study will use theoretical perspectives of social constructivism to understand the various tenets of Dera politics in context of the Punjab. The research will use both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include various government reports and documents, interviews and press statements. The data will be collected from the different political parties, websites, Dera's and their followers. The study will also use the secondary resources including books, journals, articles, newspapers.

**Understanding the Dera community in Punjab:** The Dera is not a simple thing to understand, Dera's have developed as a community in different forms having the distinct social and cultural attributes. The Dera followers construct the special social and religious identities which ally them together as a socio-religious community. Different Dera followers have contextualize the understanding of society, religion and cultural practices to create the unique features of a community. Dera as a community have been a point of attraction to the people by several ways. Sometimes, it is the religion and sometimes it is having been their humanitarian actions to liberate the masses those are not equally treated in the other religions. The Dera phenomenon has been in the news latterly in a very negative way. A lot of people think these Dera's is new senses. There is resources of violence and wrong action immoral and all that, so that the risk of stereography of these Dera's which are very popular in Punjab and Haryana.

"The rise of a de facto convocational mode of governance under the supports of the Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal)-Bhartiya Janata Party led government in 1997 could deter the proclamation of violent joint individuality politics in Punjab. Yet it remains to be seen if this mode of governance can play the same restrictive role in the case of caste-based individuality politics in the state. The mandatory SAD (B)-BJP government's conduct of the outcomes of the Dera Sacha Sauda argument and its lodging of the quickly proclaiming Dalit identity will be critical in the protection of peace in Punjab."<sup>3</sup>

So, through the 1870s, 1890, 1900 there was a Takht-Khalsa movement and one of the basic premises of that movement was that the Britishers and the Hindus and the Sikhs are two different communities. There is nothing common what is the British did is that they gave passive support the conservative Sikh eventually the resected in it has been remove from the Golden temple. Thereafter the SGPC Act of

<sup>2</sup>Denzil Ibbetson (1916 rpt. 1987): Punjab Castes, Low Price Publications, Delhi: Pg. 14-15

<sup>3</sup>Baixas, Lionel. (2007). The Dera Sacha Sauda Controversy and Beyond. Economic and Political Weekly. 42. 4059-4065.

Shromani Gurudwara Parbandhak committee act passes in 1925. The Act definition of the Sikh lends towards the exclusive Khalsa view and one who is believed in the tenth guru and the Granth sahib, and was not a "Patit". Who is "Patit" Trimming of long hair, Idol worship smoking, following the rituals of other Faiths, or not follow wing Sikh religious injunctions makes one a patit. So, it was this definition was clearly targeted at Hindus who has to keep them out of the definition who is Sikh. The new that anyone who is follow another form of worship, ideal worship and trimming of hairs automatically the first people would be targeted of the Hindu and it was a very clear short of I called a conscious decision to set of that way and that was the starting point of by of which religion and Politics got intertwining in Punjab.

#### **What, how and why Dera's come to be so popular?'**

The Dera's are deprived partner existing province. In north there is Dera Saccha Sauda, Dera Beas etc. Their supporters are from lower caste people. Dera Saccha Sauda enjoys the company of their supporters who are in the amount of Dalit Sikhs. The main circumstance behind the admiration of these Dera's the state has substantial shared of scheduled caste inhabitants. In Punjab there is high population of poor caste like Dalits. The Dera's are stimulated from the treatise of Islam, Sufism, Sikhism, Kabir, and Christianity".<sup>4</sup> Which they are combined with provincial and native signs and mythologies. These Dera's consecutively similar to the Sikhism. The Dera Saccha Sauda accomplish the supporters of Ram Rahim. People goes to Dera's because Dera leaders provide them health services, food and pleasing an opinion against social evil, alcoholism. The work of social welfare is started from Ram Rahim. He organised blood donation camp. He constructs a hospital for the peoples. He helped the people in Jammu and Kashmir in the time of flood through food, medicines, clothes etc. Ram Rahim always supported may political leaders. Many of the supporters came from Malwa region. The political leaders want to help the Dera head Gurmeet ram Rahim to gain power in a number of constituencies. 69 constituencies for the assembly comes from the Malwa region.

**Historical background:** According to some scholarly studies in which there is very brief introduction around 1521 when Babar was empire in India. There is a lot of people being killed. Guru Nanak Dev ji was there and he was very hurt by what is happening in all around. The Bhakti movement and the Muslim operation which gave rise to the birth of Sikh Dharma. He was against the caste system and against Ideal worship. But he was the not first one who against these two things and not the last when Guru Nanak Dev ji was there. His followers were called "*lakh pantis*". Subsequently, the word "Sikh" came into the origin. The word Sikh actually comes into the Sanskrit word "Shishya". By "shishya" it means student. Student of the Guru. The tenth Guru Gobind Singh ji was responsible for starting the Khalsa so at the huge congress ion at Anandpur Sahib at 13 March 1699. He found Khalsa and the Basic intext then was to with the Mughals. Interesting thing is that the "Panj Piara" the five people who set up Agricole data on the life of Khalsa belongs to different parts of the India. It was quite

representatives. So, this is the very brief history of the Guru's. All the Gurus were "Khatri's" or "Kshatriya".

In the very initial era Aryans comes in India from the middle East. They fighting with the peoples of the India and defeated them and won the province near the Ganga river. And they lived at that place. The technique of the Arya peoples was very modern. They used homemade arms. The majority of Dalits is defeated by the minority of the Aryans because Aryans follow the method "Divide and Rule".

**Now let's come to the British rule:** During the Anglo Sikh was and even subsequently entry the British developed the very healthy respect for the bravery of the Sikh soldiers and for the Sikh community. Even during the war of independent which is the 1857 Sikh princes helped the British fight against the others. the British firstly knew if they wanted to defend India against Afghanistan. It is not only the Sikh who could do so because during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time. He had led in the army had defeated the afghans as you know even today defeating Afghan's not easy job so the British realise the bravery of the Sikh soldiers. Having said that they are very care in their vines. They wanted to divide Punjab into Hindu and Sikh. After the 1857 war of Independence. The Britishers remove the Bagnoli soldiers of the army and replaced them with loyal Sikh and loyal Muslim soldiers. Now when they appointed the Sikh soldiers. They put a condition the only those Sikhs who have the five kesh, Kanga, Kasha, Kirpan, Keshdhari, Sikh who joined the army. At that point of time it was proximately jat sikh who support the five Kesh. So, it is they who got job in the army.

The Britishers also made they had colonisation officers who actually went to villages in district Amritsar and Pathankot. Searching for the best farmers. They give these farmers land and the biggest beneficiary the Malwa Jat-Sikhs. They also give reservations in the army and in civilian services to the Jat-Sikh. So far may be for military reasons otherwise get turn into the Jat Sikh constituency. In Punjab there is also a very prosperous and brave community called "Khatri's" and "Kshatriya".

**Modern perspective:** social media plays an important role in the politics. They talking about the social-economic structure of the Dera and the Dera Saccha Sauda. The inspiration helped their trust about their gurus. "The theoretical understanding of the Dera. This article also efforts the ancient point of view of the Dera's. Here we studying about the social issue from a hypothetical point of view. The Dera phenomenon in the larger treatise of the sociology of belief. Here sociology of religion is the study about the communal, and national singularity. It plays an important role when opinions are correctively whispered".<sup>5</sup> The phenomenon of the Dera is such as cooperative appearance of some spiritual opinions and exercise that rotates around the mystical leaders. In the sociology of belief.

<sup>5</sup>[https://www.jstor.org/stable/40276650?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/40276650?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)/cited by Ronki Ram/Social Exclusion, Resistance and Dera's: Exploring the Myth of Casteless Sikh Society in Punjab/ 6 October 2007

<sup>4</sup> Cited by Ajoy Ashirwad Mahaprashasta / India; Mix of religion, welfare and religion at Dera Saccha Sauda/ 30 august 2017

**Understanding of Dera politics in Punjab:** The Dera politics in Punjab is the product of interaction of Dera's with large number of their followers and articulation of their voting power in the democratic elections. The Dera who follow the command of Dera's are mostly influenced by the socio-religious practices developed in the different religious cults. Therefore, to understand the Dera politics, first it's necessary to understand the religion and cultural aspects of the society interpreted by different scholars. We talking about the theory of Max Weber on religion, according to him "religion is based on cultural needs that is how developing the human economic and sociological situation".<sup>6</sup> Max Weber says the religion and society is the part of politics. Religion is highly affected in the politics. He says that modern capitalism started in India through caste system. Weber said that the protestant idea was the singular reason of rise of capitalism. He talks about the rising of sociological delinquent of substantial reputation. "The theory 'sociology of religion' is the best theory even he made in all his life. His study about the idea how a specific cult of religion can affect the economic behavior of its supporters. In his context he talking about the western society".<sup>7</sup>

**Socio-political implications of Dera politics in Punjab:** the social structure of the Punjabi society which highly feudal in character and follow the Brahmanical caste system also substantially increases the importance of Dera's in Punjab. Majority of the victims of this social stratification has been the lower caste people who were not treated equally in the upper caste Gurudwara's. As a consequence of this lower caste masses mostly attracted toward Dera's in search of dignity, spirituality and equality propagated through the philosophy of Dera's. The large numbers of Dera followers construct different social and political communities. They have developed their own social, cultural and religious norms and traditions which bind them together as a social and religious community. This large number of Dera followers are centre of attraction of political leaders; almost all the political parties in different elections seek the support of Dera Guru's to win the elections.

**Caste structures of Punjabi society:** "Initially in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century Manu smriti is talked about the caste system in India. This book is based on caste system. In this book Manu smriti divided caste into several stages upper to lower caste. Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Sudra, Untouchable these are the six stages according to Manu smriti. He said that in his book there is lot of discrimination on the basis of castes".<sup>8</sup> Here merits are doesn't valued then caste. Caste is more important than every aspect of the life.

**Dalit liberation movements:** this movement is started by E.V Ramaswamy in Tami Nadu in 1925. It was an anti-North India and anti-caste movement. In this movement people are aggressive against the caste-system. They want self-respect

for the superstitious and lower caste peoples. E.V Ramaswamy welly knew about this thing. This movement is an evident for the North Indian peoples. E.V Ramaswamy welly knew this movement is an evident for the North Indian peoples. "Darshan Ratan Raavan is the founder of Ad-Dharmi Samaj. The youth of our country started this components Raavan Senna in the capitals and metropolises. It was recognized in 2008. The author Charanjit Hans told that for starting this unit the main motive behind this to aware the peoples of the country".<sup>9</sup> He said that Raavan is not an anti-hero. Where the word "Dalits" is taken from? Dalit people are those people who comes from the lower caste. "That is mentioned in the stages of Varnasrama theory. This thing is also written in the constitution that the Dalit people are coming from the lower caste. The identity of the Dalits is very poor. Dalits are not only discriminated through caste, they also discriminated through economically, politically, and socially. The Brahmin caste is famous since from many decades. The peoples who are related with scheduled caste they don't trust upon God because of the caste system".<sup>10</sup>

**Impact of Dera's on the Society of Punjab:** In Punjab there is a largest population of lower caste peoples. Those people who have no land they work as a farmer in the fields of the upper caste peoples. They also treated them unequally in gurudwaras. "There are those Dera's who are supported these kinds of communities. The emergence of the Dera's in Punjab continuously raised day by day. Non-Sikh Dera's like Dera Saccha Sauda, Sachkhand Ballan they offered their followers self-respect, impartiality and belongingness. Dera Saccha Sauda came into power in the late 60s and early 70s".<sup>11</sup> That time Sikh organizations futile to address the problems that they confronted by peoples, especially those peoples who are belongs to sikh caste. Dr. Darshan told if once the power of these Dera's spreading in the Punjab region then the power spreading in all over the country. This thing is happened when no one is hearing their voice like if Dera head did not communicate them directly or properly. If the followers are not satisfied. They left their Dera permanently. Because of these Dera's the social and economic condition of the followers goes increase day by day. In Punjab there is more than 9000 Dera's in 12000 villages of the Punjab only. If in the difficult time of the peoples Dera's don't support them they changed their path."

**The Cases of Corruption and Exploitation:** The fact is that in the time of donation Dera Saccha Sauda head ram Rahim faced charge of rape and murder. Some political parties are also having close relationship with ram Rahim. "At the time 2014 assembly election Haryana. Modii allegedly fallen praise the rape accused ram Rahim in addressing in the rally in Sirsa. This is happening for the first time the political leader had clearly raised the Dera during the election. The accused person who are rapist and murdered. The politicians support him for winning the election, because of power. After all this all

<sup>6</sup><http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/sociology/sociology-of-religion-max-weber/43751>

Sociology of Religion: Max Weber, Article shared by: Rashmi Priya

<sup>7</sup><https://www.cairn.info/revue-internationale-de-philosophie-2016-2-page-137.htm>

Introduction to Max Weber on Religions and Civilizations

Bryan S. Turner

<sup>8</sup> Scheduled Caste in sikh community; A historical perspective/  
<http://PunjabPanorama.blog.com/2005/09/scheduled-castes-in-sikh-community.html/?m=1>

<sup>9</sup><https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/dera-sacha-sauda-heres-what-gives-deras-so-much-political-power/articleshow/60233977.cms> Dera Sacha Sauda: Here's what gave Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh so much political power / 26 August 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Cited by: Mamta Aggarwal /class movement in India/ 2017

<sup>11</sup> Cited by Ajaypal Singh Brar/ impacts of social media on socio-political structure of Sikhs/ 7 sep/ 2018

leader visited to the Dera for wanted his sanctification for the assembly elections in Haryana and Maharashtra. Also, "BJP said that ram Rahim is a valuable person. Who have one crore followers all over the country. Mainly in Haryana and Punjab there are mostly large number of Dera followers who are related to lower caste like Dalits. Till now these days BJP leaders are in touch of the Dera leader ram Rahim because they thought that in 2019 elections ram Rahim play a major role in carrying vote for the party".<sup>12</sup>

The BJP party thought that for winning the 2019 elections we need for a great patience for collecting the votes from the followers. The BJP party thought that for winning the 2019 elections we need for a great patience for collecting the votes from the followers.

Corrupt leaders can come into the politics "here we discussing about the case of Aasaram, He is accused of raping 16 years old girls his ashram in Jodhpur in 2013. There is a lot of followers of Aasaram Bapu in the Rajasthan, Gujrat, Maharashtra. When the judgement was declared against him."<sup>13</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

Dera's since long have been the part and partial of not only Punjab but in many other states of the India, like Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, etc. Dera's attract large number of masses through various means in the form of their followers. Dera's not only create the impact in the social and religious life but also play a very key role in the economic as well as political life. The Dera culture and its traditions construct a different ethics and morality to be followed by the common people in whom they find a sense of social, spiritual as well as the economic liberation. Through the welfare and missionary activities lot of people who are poor or living their life at very lower strata get attracted towards the reformist culture of Dera's. That is how the Dera's maintained their sustainability among the common masses and use this force in the politics as well. Almost in all the elections every mainstream political party try to seek the support of Dera Guru's and in return of it they provide them several type of social and economic concessions which turned into the establishment of very wide social and political force in the politics. However, in Punjab lot of cases have been filed against the wrong practices like economic and sexual exploitation mostly by the Gurus in the Dera's. Dera business have been closing. They are refunded by the government. It highly effected upon the economy of India. Un-educated and superstitious people are blindly trust upon these Dera's.

Finally, reached at a conclusion is that following a Babas is very easy, as per my personal perception there is no need to study or understand the scriptures or the "vani" of gurus, we have all our worries that we hand over these types of *baba's*. We just thought that they take care of all our worries. People not realised that this is not Sikhism. They do not think that there is no place in our religion like these kinds of dogmas. Religion should be flexible and it change with the time. According to Guru Nanak Dev ji No one is born pure or impure.

<sup>12</sup> Cited by Kabir/ many of decoding the Dera Culture: An Alternative to mainstream Sikhism / 29 august 2017

<sup>13</sup> Cited by Vipin Pub by/ what is in it that people and politicians flock to Dera/ 26 August 2017

Caste is made by man not made by God. Moreover, birth determines status of this could not be changed. A man becomes high or low according to his actions.

## Acknowledgement

*I am the most thankful to Almighty for showering his blessing for the successful accomplishment of this research paper. I would like to acknowledge the following people for helping the entire process of this study.*

*Sincerely thanks my supervisor, Ms. Dawinder Kaur. Assistant Professor in Lovely Professional university, Phagwara who has been source of my inspiration encouragement. It is due to her untiring and unconditional support co-operation and step wise guidance which made this study a success. Moreover sincere thanks to my parents regarding their moral and financial support and last but not the least the staff of library who helped me in various ways.*

## References

- (1998): 'India's Akali-BJP Alliance: The 1997 Legislative Assembly Elections' in AS.
- (1999): 'Akali-BJP Debacle in Punjab: Wages of Non-Performance and Fragmentation' in EPW, December 11.
- (2000): 'Punjab: Decline of Identity Politics' in EPW, March 11-17.
- (2002): 'Punjab Assembly Elections: Sharply Polarized Electorate' in EPW, June 15.
- (2002b): 'Punjab Assembly Elections: Decline of Identity Politics' in EPW, April 13.
- (2004): 'Sikhism and the Caste Question: Dalits and Their Politics in Contemporary Punjab' in Contributions to Indian Sociology.
- (2005): 'Return of the Region: Identities and Electoral Politics in Punjab', EPW, January 15.
- (2007): 'Punjab Elections: Exploring the Verdict' in EPW.
- 1994: *The Sikhs of Punjab (The New Cambridge History of India)* Indian Edition, Delhi: Foundation Books.
- 25 November 2009: *PM urges calm over Sikh protests* 2007, BBC News, 18 May [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/mobile/south\\_asia/6668299.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/mobile/south_asia/6668299.stm) ,
- (1986): *Punjabis in New Zealand: A History of Punjab Migration 1890-1940*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.
- (1996): *The Evolution of Sikh Community*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.
- (2000): *Exploring Sikhism: Aspects of Sikh Identity, Culture, and Thought*, Oxford, New Delhi.
- (2004): 'Socio-Economic Transformation and Scheduled Castes in Punjab' in Harish K Puri (ed), Dalits in Regional Context, Rawat, New Delhi.
- (2006): 'Dalit Assertion in Punjab: Examining New Trends and Emerging Dilemmas', paper presented in a seminar 'Conditions of Marginal Groups in India' organized by the Centre for Social Studies, Surat, July 5-6.
- , Anne Vaugier (2000): 'Strains on Punjab Governance: An As, Anne Vaugier (2000)
- 1 August 2007: July <http://www.economist.com/world/asia/displaystory>.
15. Singh, Gur Harpal (1992): 'The Punjab Elections 1992: Breakthrough or Breakdown?' in Asian Survey (AS).
- Abbi, B. L. and Singh, Kesar (1997): *Post-Green Revolution Rural Punjab: A Profile of Economic and Socio-Cultural Change (1965-95)*, Chandigarh: CRRID.