

## **A STUDY OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE MOVEMENTS IN PUNJAB**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The focus of this research is on the period following independence. On the cusp of a new millennium, India had the twin challenges of creating a nation and a democratic government. The formation of democracy in the newly created nation required the adoption of a Constitution. But economic growth and reducing poverty remained its greatest obstacles. India is a place where many various cultures, languages, and faiths coexist and thrive. Poverty, illiteracy, and pervasive socioeconomic inequality also acted as roadblocks on the way to full democracy. Therefore, it became an immediate challenge to construct a nation that could accommodate such differences and deal with such widespread social suffering. The instrument of accession was used to include India's many princely states into the newly established Union of India. The Government of India established a State Reorganization Commission in 1953 to address this issue after numerous states requested linguistic redrawings of their borders. In 1956, the State Reorganization Act was passed on the basis of its report in an effort to reduce state separatist feelings. The language-based reorganization of Punjab occurred in November 1966 in response to persistent political agitation by Sikhs for a Punjabi Suba, or Punjabi-speaking state. But social harmony in Punjab remained a distant dream. There have been both peaceful and violent movements by different ethnic groups seeking political autonomy or a separate state inside or outside India, despite New Delhi's efforts at conciliation. Young people's involvement in the Naxalite and Sikh Separatist Movements is the primary subject of this research, which aims to shed light on violent struggles in Punjab.

**KEYWORDS:** Young People's, Punjab Movements, democratic government, India, socioeconomic inequality, Naxalite and Sikh Separatist Movements.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Young people all throughout the world have been more politically active in recent decades. The dynamics of international politics and political movements have been profoundly altered as a result of this. This issue has also affected India, particularly the province of Punjab. Pre-Independence and post-Independence, peaceful and violent, the young of Punjab were open to any movement that promised a better

future for their country. Punjab's young people have always been heavily involved in the state's politics. The Peasant Movement (1907), the Ghadar Movement (1913-1948), the NonCooperation Movement (1920-1922), the Akali Dal Morchas (1920-1925), the Babbar Akali Lehar (1921), the Naujawan Bharat Sabha (1926), the Kirti Kisan Party (1926), and the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (1928) are all examples of important



political movements or organizations in Punjab prior to independence. Punjabis have a strong sense of duty to their community, and history confirms that a disproportionate number of freedom fighters from Punjab were imprisoned or executed during India's independence movement. A peaceful Punjabi Suba Movement, the violent Naxalite Movement, and the Sikh Separatist Movement, often known as the Khalistan Movement, all emerged in Punjab after Partition. The last two had an effect on the political, economic, and cultural climate of India as a whole, not just Punjab. The present research centers on the years 1966-1993, when Punjab was rocked by violent two-armed movements. The Punjab problem emerged during this time period as a result of a linguistic reorganization of the state of Punjab, which resulted in the formation of the new states of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. Punjab's social, economic, cultural, and political systems were radically altered when the Green Revolution began at this period.

Both the Naxalite Movement and the Sikh Separatist Movement in Punjab began in the late 1960s and the early 1980s, respectively. The former sought to seize power and create a society without social classes in accordance with the theories of Marx, Lenin, and Mao. The latter sought to build a theocratic nation. The former was founded on the idea of social class, whereas the latter was founded on the idea of personal identity. Young people's perspectives and political consciousness were affected by their involvement in these movements, which in turn was influenced by a number of social, political, and economic factors. Young people's engagement in political life is not a new

phenomenon. In the wake of the 1848 German revolution Students played a vital role in spreading the contemporary ideals of socialism, liberty, and equality in Austria, Czarist Russia (1917), and other countries in Eastern Europe. The political culture of a civilization, and not just the current politics, was heavily influenced by its youth. According to Hammack, Young people are a group with untapped potential in any culture. In order for any civilization to thrive and advance, young people must be introduced to the realities of the present while also being encouraged to explore their own creative potential. The International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences claims that. Movements led by young people are any concerted effort to bring about or counteract social change. Youth movements, a defining characteristic of contemporary cultures, are born of the conflicts and strained relationships between different generations. Student uprisings, cultural innovations (literary, artistic, and musical), scientific revolutions, religious reforms, ethnic revolts, nationalist and political generations, environmental, peace, and antiwar movements, and many more are all examples of youth movements.

### **NAXALITE MOVEMENT IN PUNJAB FROM 1967 TO 1975**

Beginning in England in the 18th century, the Industrial Revolution quickly swept across Europe, transforming rural agrarian cultures into urban industrial ones. The result was the destruction of the tiny peasantry and an entire segment of the population that relied on various forms of agriculture for survival. Because of this, many people left the countryside for the cities, where they found work in factories.



As a result, a previously unseen stratum of society emerged: the working class. The working class's daily struggles and labors sparked the birth of the Communist Movement.

When communism was already a well-established political force in Europe and elsewhere, it failed to register with Indians, who instead continued to ignore the working class's revolutionary political struggle. Indian immigrants in Western countries were the first to meet communist revolutionaries from other parts of the world. Then, despite overcoming many obstacles and fierce opposition from authorities, these ardent Indian revolutionaries brought the germs of the Communist Movement back to their home country.

Indian communism's forefathers took their organizational model from the Comintern (officially the Third Communist International). The Comintern relocated its headquarters from Berlin to Moscow following the triumph of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917. The rapid global development of the Communist Movement may be traced back to the Russian Revolution of the 20th century, which served as a beacon of hope for the world's working class. In a related note, the Comintern gave its full backing to the Indian Communist Movement.

The early leaders of the Indian liberation fight who, faced with the British government's harsh and rigid approach, were forced to settle overseas, and it was from there that Indian communism emerged. Some of them had personal interactions with members of the Third Communist International while living abroad. These communist ideologues schooled them in the value of politically

organized mass action through committees and organizations, such as workers' and peasants' parties, trade unions, and communist cells within the preexisting trade and other unions.

M.N. Roy was one of the pioneers who, with the aid of the Third Communist International, tried to establish a communist party in India around the turn of the twentieth century. The Comintern Congress was held in Tashkent during the First World War (1914-19) and a bureau was established to combat imperialism in Asia. The bureau was instrumental in the founding of the Communist Party of India (CPI) on October 17, 1920 in Tashkent. M.N. Roy, Evelyn Roy-Trent, Abani Mukherjee, Rosa Fitingov, Mohammad Ali, Mohamad Shafiq, and Acharya Shafiq, seven of the party's original members, were chosen to serve as secretaries.

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 inspired many people, including activists like Muzaffar Ahmad, S.A. Dange, and Singaravelu Chettiar, to embrace Marxism and Leninism. Small communist organisations were organized by these individuals in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Lahore, and Kanpur during 1921 and 1922. A communist party in India could not be successfully organized from overseas.<sup>33</sup>

The Communist Party of India (CPI) is one of the earliest communist parties in Asia, having been reorganized on 26 December 1925 following the union of small-scale communist groups in Kanpur.

During World War II (1939-45), its policies acquired traction in India's political climate. World War II was labeled an imperialist conflict by the CPI leadership. He called on the working class to use the moment to advance the



revolutionary cause. The CPI's stance shifted, however, when the Soviet Union entered the war in 1942 to aid Britain in its fight against fascist Germany. It claimed that uniting against Britain politically at that time would have weakened the anti-fascist front as a whole, and it pledged Britain its unqualified support. The Congress Party simultaneously initiated the Quit India Movement that same year (1942) in an effort to gain independence for India. The Congress party's campaign garnered widespread attention, and the CPI's ties to India's rising political elite were severed as a result

Since its founding, the CPI has looked to the Communist International's top officials and theorists for political direction. The Third Communist International's leaders were confident that national liberation movements in the colonies could be successfully transformed into socialist movements if only they were exposed to communism. Because of this, communist parties in formerly colonized nations were tasked with guiding national liberation movements in this direction.

The Communist International held that individual communist parties were best suited to determine the appropriate revolutionary strategy and tactics for their nations. But the CPI's biggest problem has been that it follows Communist International's lead too closely. As a result, it was unable to keep up with the shifting political winds in India. As a result of these flaws, the CPI was completely unable to seize political power in India when the country won its independence.

The Communist Party of India (CPI) recognized the urgent necessity to reformulate its political program with the arrival of political freedom in 1947 if it

was to thrive in a liberal parliamentary democracy. At the same time, the CPI in West-Bengal advocated the use of force to hasten the communist revolution. It was quickly implicated in a wide range of illegal operations, leading to its prohibition by the Government of West-Bengal in March 1948.

Protection for the Citizens Act. A progressive shift in the CPI was visible when the ban was lifted in 1951, with one faction of the party breaking away from the party's stated doctrine of upholding revolutionary violence.

At a special meeting held in 1951 in Calcutta, the CPI voted to adopt a new political program. The party was supposedly dragged away from its left-sectarian course. The CPI's unprecedented triumph in the West Bengal and Kerala Assembly Elections, in compared to other non-Congress parties, may be directly attributed to the party's choice to support Constitutionalism for the building of democracy and socialism. Therefore, the CPI's decision to follow the Constitutional route made sense.

The majority of the party's members felt their faith in a peaceful transition to communism was validated when a communist government was established in Kerala in 1957. While moderate party members considered the process of peaceful and democratic reform as too slow and time-consuming, the more radical parts of the party continued to favor the policy of reflationary transformation through violence. As a result, the communist applecart was quickly upended by internal and foreign factors.

There was a severe breakdown of law and order in Kerala when the communist leadership there experimented with an



unusual mix of administration and agitation. So the central government stepped in and removed the elected administration. The party's radicals saw this as the majority's abandonment of their Constitutional line. In 1961, against this backdrop, the CPI held its Sixth Congress in Vijayawada, and the mood was electric. Both national democracy (under the leadership of the working class and the national bourgeoisie) and people's democracy (based on collaboration with the national bourgeoisie but led by the working class) were presented as competing theses and programmes at this Congress.

The leaders of the various political parties realized, however, that the upcoming third general election made it imperative that they put their differences aside. During his speech at the 1961 Vijayawada congress, Ajay Ghosh emphasized the importance of forming a national democratic front in order to strengthen democratic procedures and structures in the country. However, the delicate balance inside the CPI was thrown off by China's military attack on India in October 1962. The national council of the party did not issue a strong condemnation of Chinese aggression until November 1, 1962. Even though the resolution was supported by a large majority, there was a vocal minority (led by Jyoti Basu, P. Sundarayya, and H.K.S. Surjeet) that refused to budge from the central office. By January 10, 1963, the Indian government had arrested 957 CPI top and middle cadres in practically all states, beginning with a crackdown in November 1962. Importantly, on November 22, 1962, E. M. S. Namboodiripad (Former Chief Minister of Kerala) was arrested and held for a week

before being released. By the middle of December 1962, there were three signs that the CPI front organization had largely waned or vanished. While in Moscow for a "explaining," Khrushchev harshly criticized Dange for being a "easy victim to the chauvinism of the reactionary forces." Dange was away from the country from December 9, 1962, to January 6, 1963.

A major shift occurred inside the party at this time, in the early months of 1963. The widespread arrest of west-Bengal unit members in the wake of the Chinese invasion had a devastating effect on the organization. The national sectarian leadership took action, forming a regional organizing committee to replace the state party. On March 9, 1963, the Chinese Communist Party launched its most ferocious assault against the CPI to that moment. Four editorials headlined "A Mirror for Revisionists" were published in the People's Daily. A virtual split occurred in the CPI after the National Council passed a resolution opposing Chinese aggression.

From July 7-11, 1964, dissidents had their first meeting at Tenali. Jyoti Basu spoke out for the opposition at this meeting, saying, "We are the Communist Party of India." Dange's outfit is not the Communist Party of India, and we will not treat them as such. We made it through it. The party's next meeting, scheduled for October 31, 1964, will take place in Calcutta, as previously planned. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI (M)) was the final manifestation of this break. There was a rift because party leaders had different ideas about how to approach the Congress party strategically and tactically, with varying degrees of



accommodation and hostility. The CPI (M) party's presidium of three members, including Jyoti Basu, A.K. Gopalan, and T. Reddy, was chosen during the party's congress of delegates in Calcutta on 31 October, 1964. , and announced that this was in fact the Seventh Congress of the true CPI. The CPI (M) afterwards established itself as a formal political party. It is worth noting that despite the CPI (M)'s status as a distinct communist party, it was unable to unify those who were unhappy with the CPI's policies. Since the CPI had amassed enough popular and political support by the middle of the 1960s to be recognized as a significant opposition party, the break inside the CPI was one of the most regrettable moves made by radical communist leaders.

### **Naxalite Movement in Punjab**

Punjab is a state with a long history of uprisings and conflict. In the fight against the British, it played a pivotal role. The Gadar Movement, the Kirti Kisan Party, the Riasty Praja Mandal Movement, the PEPSU Muzara Movement, and the Red Party all got their starts and flourished in this country. Punjab was another region that enthusiastically embraced the Communist Movement while it was still under British administration; this enthusiasm persisted even after the country gained its independence. In Punjab, the insurgency's social and political backbone was the Jat peasantry, namely the middle peasantry, who owned land.

The Communist Party of India (CPI) split apart in 1964 due to ideological differences, and the CPI (M) was founded in the state of Punjab as a result. The party in Punjab became more radical and aggressive about this time. However, the

party did take its time getting its ideology out there. While many red communists from the former PEPSU remained with the CPI, numerous militant cadres in Punjab defected to the CPI (M). In contrast to the CPI, the CPI (M) never had a solid political foothold in Punjab, and as a result, it never built bridges to the broad constituency of urban workers, rural wage earners, and rural landless cultivators. Red communists like Bujha Singh and Harkishan Singh Surjeet, who were both very active in Punjab, helped the CPI (M) establish a solid political foundation there over time. The electoral figures demonstrate the presence of the CPI (M) as a political party in Punjab; in the 1967 elections for the Punjab Legislative Assembly, the party contested 13 seats and won 3. One alternative reading is that the CPI (M) is taking use of an election-based route to power that is guaranteed by the constitution. The Punjab CPI (M) has three main concerns: (1) acknowledging and implementing Mao's principles; (2) taking part in government formation through parliamentary politics; and (3) advancing the welfare of the people through the organization of militant mass struggles. Workers inside the CPI (M) who were influenced by Mao's ideas felt that the party was not making progress toward its overarching objective of establishing the power of the proletariat. By limiting its political activities to peasant organizations and trade unions, aiming for a few economic aims, it had degraded its revolutionary position to that of a reformist party, inheriting the CPI's structural and bureaucratic approach.



## **Punjab Student Union (PSU) and Naxalite Movement**

It's worth noting that the CPI was responsible for starting the student organization that ended up playing such a key role in the Movement's success. At the Desh Bhagat Hall on March 15, 1963, CPI member Avtar Singh Malhotra met with Darshan Baghi and other young people.

student group at Jalandhar's Bhagat Yadgari Hall. Students at the Panjab University in Chandigarh responded to Darshan Baghi's appeal for a gathering to explore the necessity for and nature of such an organization. They organized into what was once called the Chandigarh Students Union (CSU) but is now known as the Punjab Students Union (PSU). Marxist members of the PSU joined the CPI (M) after the CPI split in 1964. Punjab Student Union (PSU) tried to align the students of Punjab with the Marxist philosophy through organisation, provocation, and alignment.

Harbhajan Sohi, Hakim Singh Samoan, and Daya Singh, as representatives of the new Coordination Committee, recently met with the PSU's leadership. Harbhajan Sohi spent roughly two months at the Panjab University, Chandigarh campus in 1967, before attending the Delhi school, learning about and spreading Maoist doctrine. The PSU activists Darshan Baghi, Bhupinder Singh, Meh Singh, and Rajinder Singh Dhindsa were all captivated by his ideas, as were their friends Daya Singh, Tarlochan Grewal, and Thana Singh. The PSU's top brass had heard of him before, and they cited his past writings as an influence. The Naxalite Movement's goals and the CPI (M)'s opportunistic, revisionist line were addressed at length at their sessions.

As a result, the PSU's leadership collectively decided to break ties with the CPI (M) and instead align with the extreme communists. At the same time, Charu Mazumdar had the notion of a national armed battle to destroy the class enemy, which she saw as the sole revolutionary course of action. He believed that people's revolutionary zeal had been dampened as a result of the proliferation of mass organizations. That's why, in his opinion, it's important to disband any and all groups that cater to the masses. Later, on March 15, 1968, during a meeting in Punjab, Baba Bujha Singh recommended dissolving the PSU and recruiting its leaders into the party to wage violent resistance against the State. The PSU executive board was reluctant to dissolve the organization, thus the meeting got heated.

The PSU went on strike in 1968 in an effort to oust the administrations at Government College (located in Ludhiana) and Government Rajindra College (located in Bathinda). Several student-police skirmishes broke out during these protests. On 12 December 1968, in response to police brutality on students in Amritsar, a strike was declared in every university and college in Punjab. On the day of the strike, police shot and killed Jagtar Singh, a student at Sudhar College in Ludhiana; he was the first PSU victim. On December 19th, a walkout was organized for all of Punjab in protest at the death of Jagtar Singh. Darshan Baghi was arrested during the strike and sentenced to a year in prison under the harsh MISA Act.

## **CONCLUSION**

Post-Independence On the cusp of a new millennium, India had the twin challenges of creating a nation and a democratic



government. In order to establish a democratic government, the newly constituted nation had to adopt a Constitution. The largest obstacles, however, were economic growth and reducing poverty. India is a country rich in cultural and linguistic diversity, home to people of many faiths and many languages. Poverty, illiteracy, and pervasive socioeconomic inequality also acted as roadblocks on the way to full democracy. Building a nation that could accommodate such differences and overcome such widespread social misery became an urgent task. The instrument of accession was used to include India's many princely states into the newly established Union of India. The Government of India established a State Reorganization Commission in 1953 to address this issue after numerous states requested linguistic redrawings of their borders. In 1956, the State Reorganization Act was passed on the basis of its report in an effort to reduce state separatist feelings. The language-based reorganization of Punjab occurred in November 1966 in response to persistent political agitation by Sikhs for a Punjabi Suba, or Punjabi-speaking state. But social harmony in Punjab remained a distant dream.

There have been both peaceful and violent movements by different ethnic groups seeking political autonomy or a separate state inside or outside India, despite New Delhi's efforts at conciliation. This research, which aims to understand the armed conflicts in Punjab, zeroes in on the involvement of young people in the Naxalite and Sikh Separatist Movements. Despite their ideological differences, these Movements all used violence as a form of protest. Although the Sikh Separatist

Movement was localized in Punjab, its militants earned notoriety internationally after committing a number of high-profile acts of violence, most notably the hijacking of several airplanes. From the village of Naxalbari in West Bengal, the Naxalite Movement spread after extreme members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) called for violent action against landowners. Fighting broke out between tenants and landlords after peasants began grabbing land illegally on March 3, 1967. By May of 1967, the insurgents had taken over the Naxalbari region.

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