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ROLE OF LYALLPUR IN GURDAWARA REFORMS MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the historical view of Gurdawara reforms movement as well as role of newly settled district Lyallpur in the struggle for having Sikh worship places in the hands of Shrimony Gurdawara Purbandhak Committee (SGPC). It also discusses the efforts of personalities belongs to Lyallpur (Faisalabad nowadays) for initiating the move and struggle for its success. It is concluded as that the movement was started in 1920 with the demands for removing the Mahants (government appointed administrators of Sikh worship places) from their responsibilities and transferring the powers of administrating Gurdawaras and adjoining lands to SGPC. The Sikhs started their struggle with peaceful demonstrations but later the violent activities from both sides due to harsh handling of Akalis agitation by Mahants. The personalities from Lyallpur like Sunder Singh Lyallpuri, Teja Singh Samnudri, Noranjan Singh, Daleep Singh and Harchand Singh and young Sikhs belongs to the Khalsa Bhojangi Saba played significant role to initiate the movement and struggled till the passing of Gurdawara Act in 1925. The study is done by using the historical method as well as qualitative content analysis of the data.

INTRODUCTION

The Gurdawara Reforms Movement has significant importance in the history of Sikhs as well as Punjab. The movement was launched on 16 November 1920 for having control of Sikh Gurdawaras around the province. The struggle continued for five years till the British government passed Gurdawara Reforms Act 1925 and handed over the control of Sikh religious worship places to the Shiromani Gurdawara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC). The movement was launched for a peaceful and non-violent struggle but it observed various violent as well as brutal incidents. Various Sikh leaders started the Gurdawara Movement from Lyallpur (now Faisalabad) and it had recognition in the areas

of Central Punjab. The Sikhs from Lyallpur played crucial role throughout the movement. This study looks into Gurdawara Reforms Movement as well as significant role of Lyallpur in the struggle.

Gurdawara Reforms Movement

The Gurdawara Reforms Movement was launched to gain the control of Sikh religious places from the Mahants, administrators appointed by the British rulers in the last year of second decade of 20th century and ended in the mid of third decade.¹ The Mahants were administrating the Gurdawaras from centuries but the Sikh community felt that they were violating the societal as well as religious rules and regulation of the Sikhism.² The Sikh Gurdawaras were not only places of worship but there were hectors of land adjoining to them and all that was under the control of Mahants.³ The land adjoined to Gurdawaras made Mahants landlords of the area. The complaints about ethical issues of Mahants were also revealed and Sikh community decided to control the Gurdawaras.

A countrywide movement was launched to have the control of Gurdawaras from *Mahants* (Mahants were the administrators of the Sikh Gurdawaras at that time). The target was to get Gurdawaras under the patronages of Shiromani Gurdawara Prabhandak Committee (SGPC) at any cost. The Sikh youth was key participants of the movement and they were eager to dissolve the *Mahant* system around the country. The Gurdawara movement was also called as Akali Movement and some violent activities were also occurred during that.⁴ A newspaper, *Daily Akali*, was especially published to highlight the issue of Gurdawara movement as well as to raise the voice for the legal reforms for the control of Gurdawaras.⁵ Huge number of young Sikhs from Nankana, Shekhupura, Lyallpur, and Amritsar participated in the movement and raised voice against the *Mahants* as well as their supporter police and administrative officers.

The Gurdawara movement hit various areas of the country but Punjab was focus. However, the movement also affected the perpetual, everlasting and interminable impacts on political outlooks of subcontinent. Its impacts on social fabric of the society also remained for decades in the area. It exposed culturally-camouflaged facades of Sikhs, Muslim and Hindus. They were living together on reciprocal co-existence but were exposed by movement and were segregated into radical factions on religious grounds. The issue was resolved at the end with the passage of the Gurdawara Act 1925 in the Punjab Assembly. However, the role of mainstream political leadership of the subcontinent remained questionable. It did not do anything to resolve the conflict of a big proportion of society in the Punjab. The issues raised at the time of Gurdawara Movement

¹ Ganda Singh, *Short History of Sikhs*, (Amritsar: SGPC, 1962), 1-2.

² J.S. Dhillon, "Character & Impact of Singh Sabha," (PhD. Dissertation, Punjabi University Patiala, 2008).

³ Dalvir Singh Pannu, *The Sikh Heritage Beyond Borders*, (Lahore: Fiction House, 2019), 18.

⁴ Jaswinder Kaur, "The Gurudawara Sudhar Act 1925," (PhD. Dissertation, Birmingham University, Birmingham, 2008).

⁵ Suba Singh, *Panjabi Pattarkari da Itihas*, (Chandigarh: Punjab Publishers, 1978), 13.

expanded the gulf between two aforesaid communities which could never be bridged in upcoming times.

Gurdawara Reforms Movement was an effort for reorganization and renaissance of Sikh religious places as well as for bringing them underneath the patronages of SGPC. The concern upon control of Gurdawaras had been shown by the Singh Sabha,⁶ and countrywide protest move had also been launched. Although the movement was for the legal reformation as well as about religious and ethical concerns but contention between Mahants and Akalis caused bloodshed and slaughtering, in which the young supporters of Akalis were murdered in majority. To handle the violence, the British government decided for new legislation. A statement,⁷ was issued to show the intention of making law on issue according to the need of the time. Not only the issue to control the Gurdawaras had to be discussed in the legislature but keeping the *Kirpan* and other religious emblem even in prisons as well as during all walkovers has to be decided.

The agitation with the demand of legislative reforms as well as administrative change was at its peak. Some orthodox Akalis moved forward to get possession of Gurdawaras by force. In the contrary Mahants were ready to stop them with power. The evidences showed that the Mahants had organized trained forces for dealing with any kind of public insurgency. The Mahants had also recruited some criminals in their forces.⁸ Various incidents of power clash were occurred on several Gurdawara sites but two of them were considered big clashes with huge bloodshed. During the Gurdawara Reforms Movement, the first big incident of large scale killing was occurred in January 1921 at Gurdawara Taran Taran. The Akalis staged a protest in front of Gurdawara Taran-Taran with demand that Mhants should vacate the shrine and hand it over to SGPC. During the protest, the government officials tried to make both parties sit on negotiation tables. Both were agreed. However the negotiations were in process when a force of Mahants attacked on Morcha. Dozens of Sikhs reformers were injured while two, Hukam Singh and Hazara Singh, were murdered.

The second violent incident occurred in Nankana Sahib in February 1921 when dozens of Akali Sikhs went to Gurdawara and they were attacked by the forces of Mahants.⁹ There were different reports about the casualties in this incident. Some Sikh sources exaggerated the casualties till three hundred but moderate sources confirmed that one hundred and thirty people were slaughtered in the mass-killing incident of Gurdawara Nanakana Sahib. The Akalis stated that they came to perform their religious rituals but they were accused that they had gathered in Gurdawara in order to take possession which they could take due to hard response of *Mahants*. The civil and police officials of the area were aware

⁶ Ganda Singh, *Short History of Sikhs*, (Amritsar: SGPC, 1962), 11.

⁷ *Tribune* (New Delhi), February 10, 1921.

⁸ Dalvir Singh Pannu, *The Sikh Heritage Beyond Borders*, (Lahore: Fiction House, 2019), 187.

⁹ J.S. Dhillon, "Character & Impact of Singh Sabha," (PhD. Dissertation, Punjabi University Patiala, 2008).

about the tension between Akalis and Mahants but the necessary measures to control the situation were not taken.¹⁰

The Nankana Massacre became the reason to gain the attention not only of the national media but also of the national political leadership. The movers towards Gurdawara for having possession were called as Bubar Akalis and it was shown as that they moved by their own will and decision and the agitator Akalis were not involved in all that.¹¹ The group attacked on Gurdawara Nankana Sahib was led by the Dalip Singh, one of the close friend of Editor of *Daily Akali*, Sunder Singh Lyallpuri, and there were dozens of members of Khalsa Bhojangi Saba in the attacking *Jatha*.¹² Later the group called as *Babur Akalis* was accused for attacking the British officers and their allies. and considered in Sikh history as patriot to hilt as well as true and firm believers of Sikh religion.¹³

The administrator of the Gurdawara Nankana sahib was considered chief of all the Mahants around Punjab. All other Mahants were considered his subordinates. The chief administrator of Nanakana Sahib was Mahant Narain Das at that time and he had close relations with Commissioner Lahore, Governor of Punjab and Police officials of the areas.¹⁴ Mahant Narain had general reputation of being a corrupt person. There were various complaints against him for corruption in the management of funds as well as for participating in dance parties and having relations with prostitutes. The ethical complaints had annoyed the common Sikhs and majority demanded his dismissal whether through administrative reforms or by means of physical force.¹⁵

Observing the situation of the adjoining areas, Mahant Narain Das requested for security to administration as well as engaged hundreds of guards for protection of his interest.¹⁶ Nanakana Massacre was a story of Narain Das of killing dozens of non-violent Sikhs brutally and their bodies were burnt in the courtyard of the Gurdawara. A *Jatha* of local Sikhs and local police reached to Gurdawara but till then all 130 bodies of Akali Sikhs had been scorched poignantly.

The Akalis gathered around the Gurdawara to protest and they blocked the ways. The agitators staged the protest and accused commissioner Lahore for mass-killing. The protest *Morcha* was continued for a week and it gained

¹⁰ IP. Singh, "Revisiting Nankana Sahib Massacre after 100 years," *Times of India*, February 21, 2021. From

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chandigarh/revisiting-nankana-sahib-massacre-after-100-years/articleshow/81130566.cms>, accessed on January 12, 2022.

¹¹ Ganda Singh, *Short History of Sikhs*, (Amritsar: SGPC, 1962), 21.

¹² Malik Ashfaq, *Pakki Mari, Sandal Bar: History of Lyallpur*, (Faisalabad: Peace Books, 2017), 104.

¹³ Jaswinder Kaur, "The Gurudawara Sudhar Act 1925," (PhD. Dissertation, Birmingham University, Birmingham, 2008).

¹⁴ Gurbakhsh Rai Sethi, *Sikh Struggle for Gurdawara Rreform*, (New Delhi: Union Press, 1927).

¹⁵ Jogiwan Mohan Wahla, "Role of Sikhs in National Movement," *The Journal of the Punjab*, Vol. 24, No.1 (1990): 146.

¹⁶ J.S. Dhillon, "Character & Impact of Singh Sabha," (PhD. Dissertation, Punjabi University Patiala, 2008).

attention of the media due to mass-killing issue and masses supported the Akalis.¹⁷ Due to increasing mass-level support for demand to penalize the responsible of massacre, the Commissioner Lahore reached Nankana and arranged dialogue with Akalis. After a mutual agreement in administration and Akalis, the Mahant Narain Das and his companions were arrested and Gurdawara handed over SGPC. Akalis were credited for their patience after massacre and just staged peaceful Morcha (protest) and firmed with their broader cause to having control of Gurdawaras.

Mahatma Gandhi, Allama Iqbal, Jinnah, Sir Fazal e Hussain, Sir Agha Khan and other mainstream political leadership showed serious concerns on Nankana Massacre and demanded for impartial inquiry as well as strict action against culprits.¹⁸ The bloody episode made Gandhi shocked and he paid tribute to martyrs and described the incident as, “second edition of Dyerism at Jallianwala Bagh”¹⁹. Police arrested some persons for accusing the huge massacre of Akalis at a worship place but only five were penalized. Mahant Narain Das and one of his companions were confined for life imprisonment and his three acquaintances were sentenced for death.

The Morchas (protests) for Gurdawara reforms continued after Nankana Massacre and situation became bad to worse but British government as well as various Sikh members of Punjab Assembly resisted against Gurdawara Bill introduced by a Sikh legislator in November 1921.²⁰ Instead of British and majority Sikh legislators Sir Fazl e Husain, a Muslim member of Punjab legislature, supported the bill.²¹ He was also nominated as member for proposed controlling board for Gurdawara affairs. The movers tried best but failed to have support from Sikh members for bill and Sikh legislators boycotted the session and it had to be dropped in Nov 1921.²² Due to squabbling in treasury benches and Sikh legislators, Sir Fazl e Husain suggested for bringing fresh bill with the consultation of concerned stakeholders, especially in government and Sikh demonstrators.²³ It was stated that the British officials were not able to understand the enormity and nefariousness of issue of religious affairs of Sikhs,²⁴ but government has serious concerns for the participation of Sikhs in British army which they had not be ignored.²⁵

The British officials had consideration that Sikhs had violated the law and according to needs of justice they had to be punished for that. On the other hand, Akali Sikhs were considering that officials were supporting the Mahants in their

¹⁷ Teja Singh, *The Gurdawara Reforms Movement and Sikh Awakening*, (New York, Nabu Press, 2010).

¹⁸ IP. Singh, “Revisiting Nankana Sahib Massacre.”

¹⁹ Wahla, “Role of Sikhs,” 147.

²⁰ *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore), July 11, 1925.

²¹ Ganda Singh, *Short History of Sikhs*, (Amritsar: SGPC, 1962).

²² Tai Young Tan, “Akali Movement 1921-25,” *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol.28, No.4 (1994): 675.

²³ *Desh* (Lahore), November 05, 1921.

²⁴ IP. Singh, “Revisiting Nankana Sahib Massacre.”

²⁵ J.S. Dhillon, “Character & Impact of Singh Sabha,” (PhD. Dissertation, Punjabi University Patiala, 2008).

deeds and actions against the demonstrators.²⁶ In the situation of misunderstanding between British officials and Sikhs, the Gurdawara Bill was introduced and became a benchmark in the relationship of colonial rulers and important community of the Punjab. The bill was very important to legalize the Akalis' control over Gurdawaras while it could not be passed without consent of British rulers, especially that of Governor Punjab. There was need to cast away doubts between Sikhs and British as well as it might become cause for friendly relations in upcoming days.²⁷ The suggestion to refresh the bill was an effort to decrease the tension between demonstrator community as well as rulers, also to maintain the law and order situation in the province.

After the Nankana Massacre the movement for Gurdawara reforms was shifted to Amritsar where the issue for controlling the Golden Temple became bone of contention between rulers and Akalis. Kharak Singh was leading the movement there while Teja Singh of Samundri, senior member of the *Khalsa Bhojangi Saba*,²⁸ also stayed in Amritsar during Golden Temple issue. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Amritsar locked the Golden Temple declaring it a disputed shrine and refused to hand over the key to SGPC on November 07, 1921. As the Akalis raised voice against action of DC and staged demonstrations against him, the civil administration too took action against Akalis' members. The police arrested more than 12 hundred Sikhs and they were prisoned for unlimited period. The movement was not stopped even after the imprisonment and protests were continued all over the Punjab. The DC Amritsar took action against protestors in his jurisdiction but could not agree the provincial administration for taking action in other districts. The imprisoned Akalis were released after three months with interference of central administration and the continued demonstration became more powerful. The release of protestors was welcomed by the mainstream political parties as well as masses at large.²⁹

The Mahant Sunder Das, the administrator of Gurdawara Guru Ka Bagh in Amritsar claimed that the Gurdawara as well as adjoining cultivated land was his personal property. He filed the suit in local revenue court and Deputy Commissioner decided the case in his favor. The key of the Gurdawara was handed over to Sunder Das and concerns of the Akalis were rejected by the revenue court. The Akalis once again launched a huge demonstration on issue in August 1922. A Jatha of Akalis, around 100 young Sikhs, moved towards Gura ka Bagh for having possession by force but police resisted and stopped them by force. Akalis staged demonstration against the court decision and civil administration's action. They moved towards Guru ka Bagh Gurdawara but were baton-charged by police at large. The demonstrations were staged one after one on different days and all were treated with strict hands.

²⁶ Jaswinder Kaur, "The Gurudawara Sudhar Act 1925," (PhD. Dissertation, Birmingham University, Birmingham, 2008).

²⁷ *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore), July 11, 1925.

²⁸ Jaswinder Kaur, "The Gurudawara Sudhar Act 1925," (PhD. Dissertation, Birmingham University, Birmingham, 2008).

²⁹ Ganda Singh, *Short History of Sikhs*, (Amritsar: SGPC, 1962).

As the issue was highlighted in the media, the mainstream political leadership like Hakim Ajmal Khan, Pandit Madan Mohan, Rajinder Parsad and others showed serious concerns over violent behavior of police to the peaceful demonstrators.³⁰ The provincial administration also look into the matter and police was strictly ordered for stopping baton-charge against the Akalis but till that arrest toll had reached to 5605 and around one thousand had hospitalized with mall-treatment of police.³¹ A three-members committee was comprised to solve the issue of Gurdawara Guru ka Bagh. Sir Ganga Ram and Sir Fazal e Hussain was member of the committee with a British official. At the end it was decided that the land of the Gurdawara would be purchased from Mohan Das. Sir Ganga Ram paid for the land donated to SGPC.³²

At that time of presentation of bill in Legislative Council of Punjab, the Muslim-Sikh relations were at lowest ebb while Sikh-Hindu relations seemed going well but on the issue of Gurdawara Bill Hindu members did not support the move. The reason was concerns of local Congress leaders, Lala Lajpat Rai and Malaviya about the Sikhs' political consideration against Gandhi's ideology. Mahatama Gandhi also showed concerns of Gurdawara Bill.³³ Hindu members resisted the bill and supported the government against Sikh movers.³⁴

On the issue for supporting the Maharaja of Nabha, the government banned the SGPC and Akali Dal in September 1923. The issue was as that Maharaja of Nabha, Ripduman Singh, was sympathetic to SGPC as well as Akali Dal. Maharaja was also supporting the Gurdawara movement in various spheres. Maharaja was considered as eyesore for Punjab Government and he had been warned by the British officials for his deeds. Meanwhile, Maharaja of Patiala, Raja Bhupindar Singh, filed a complaint against Nabha state for boundary a dispute. It had been considered that the complaint was lodged with the support of provincial government. The verdict from court remained against the Maharaja of Nabha and Political-Agent constrained Raja Ripduman for abdicating to his post.³⁵ The Akali Sikhs were hurt with court decision and administrative action. The SGPC demanded restoration of Raja Ripduman and announced for observing Nabha Day on September 09, 1923.³⁶

The SGPC and Akali Dal were declared banned organizations by the provincial government on the issue. Police attacked their meeting, called for plan the Nabha Day demonstration, in Gangsar Gurdawara in Jaito city. Dozens of Sikh were arrested including Teja Singh of Samundri, Narinjan Singh, Bawa Harikishan, Sewa Singh of Thikriwala, Mehtab Singh. They were charged for treason as well as war against Crown. The arrested Sikh leaders were prisoned

³⁰ Jaswinder Kaur, "The Gurudawara Sudhar Act 1925," (PhD. Dissertation, Birmingham University, Birmingham, 2008).

³¹ Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Sikh History*, (Belgium: Belgium University Press, 2008).

³² J.S. Dhillon, "Character & Impact of Singh Sabha," (PhD. Dissertation, Punjabi University Patiala, 2008).

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Punjab Legislative Council Debates Vol.III, 11 January 1922. 117-118

³⁵ IP. Singh, "Revisiting Nankana Sahib Massacre."

³⁶ J.S. Dhillon, "Character & Impact of Singh Sabha," (PhD. Dissertation, Punjabi University Patiala, 2008).

in Lahore Fort. The Akali Sikhs and other organizations announced protest march towards Jaito from around the province. The Sikhs welcomed the protest call, gathered and started march in shape of Jathas (groups) towards Jaito. Police tried to stop the march on various points but remained failed. The police even baton-charged the people and arrested at large. On 21st March 1923, police opened gun fire on demonstrators and dozens of Sikhs were died and injured. Even then, the Akalis continued to adopt non-violent behavior in the movement. The Sikh groups kept on march to Jiato city and huge number of demonstrators reached there.³⁷

According to the 1919 Act of India, Governor was authority for administrative and legislative affairs in the province. Governor Punjab was Douglas Maclogan from 1921 to 1924, and he was reluctant for fulfilling demands of Akalis, especially for giving them control of important Gurdawaras. During that the Gurdawara Bill was presented in the Assembly twice but could be passed. All the bloodied incidents of Gurdawara Movement were occurred during the rule of Douglas Maclogan, last big incident was Jaito Morcha and he was called back to London on 31 May 1924,³⁸ when the Jaito Morcha move was its peak.³⁹

The political scenario of Punjab was changed abruptly in 1924 and Malcolm Hailey was nominated as Governor of the province.⁴⁰ He took charge on 31st May 1924 and showed sympathetic attitude towards Gurdawara Movement and treatment with Sikhs in the province from the day first. He set up a committee consist of five Sikh legislatures for having decision on issue. New draft of Gurdawara Bill was also made and Akali leadership was consulted within and outside the Jail.⁴¹ The Akalis had concerns over interference of government in Gurdawara affairs mentioned in proposed Bill but they accepted it, on the other hand Hailey government had also not clear direction regarding control of Gurdawaras, but the bill was moved in the Punjab Legislature and passed.⁴²

Role of Lyallpur in Gurdawara Movement

Although the Gurdawara Reforms Movement was seemed to be just of four or five years but the situation for launching the movement to control Gurdawaras by SGPC was not occurred in days but it was developed in years. The breed for the Gurdawara Movement, especially young guys struggling for the community cause, was prepared with a long process of ideological training. The Sikh youth had close association with strong Sikh ideology and was ready to struggle for their rights. The central point of the Gurdawara Movement was Nankana Sahib and the Sikhs from nearby areas, especially Lyallpur, contributed a lot in this regard.

³⁷ Jaswinder Kaur, "The Gurudawara Sudhar Act 1925," (PhD. Dissertation, Birmingham University, Birmingham, 2008).

³⁸ Harjinder Singh Dilgir, *Struggle for Freedom of Religious Worship at Jaito*, (Amritsar: SGPC, 1988).

³⁹ Bukhshish Singh Nijjar, *History of the United Punjab*, (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 1996), 82

⁴⁰ Ibid, 145.

⁴¹ Jaswinder Kaur, "The Gurudawara Sudhar Act 1925," (PhD. Dissertation, Birmingham University, Birmingham, 2008).

⁴² *Tribune* (New Delhi), April 09, 1921.

A significant role was played by the young members of the Khalsa Bhojangi Sabha in the Gurdawara Reforms Movement. The Khalsa Bhojangi Sabha was an organization of Sikh young guys established in Lyallpur, a newly settled district nearby Nankana Sahib. The young Sikh guys associated with the Sabha significantly participated in Gurdawara reforms movement.⁴³ The Khalsa Sabha served to train the Sikh youth with ideological pupation and educating them with modern system. It established the schools as well as trained the Sikh youth with ideological considerations of the Sikh theology and developed sentiments against colonial rulers and their local facilitators. The Mahants, the administrators of the Sikh Gurdawaras and their adjoining properties, were also considered in general public as close local allies of the colonial rulers.

The Khalsa Bhojangi Sabha was formed by the Master Sunder Singh, known name of Lyallpur (nowadays Faisalabad) in the early decades of 20th century. Sunder Singh Lyallpuri was one of the founding fathers of the Sikh awaking movement in early decades of the 20th century as well as printer, publisher and editor of Daily Akali⁴⁴ (served as spokesperson of the various Sikh movements in Punjab, including Gurdawara Movement). He had been working for educating the Sikh youth in Punjab since 1903 and had established a high school with the help of local community in Lyallpur. Later it became college and known in the area as Khalsa College. Sundar Singh was candidate of tehsildar (an important post in revenue department) in 1900 but he could not be selected due to his remarks against the colonialism in front of interview panel consisting of British Officers. After refusal from the post of tehsildar, Sundar started working for the betterment of Punjabi people especially Sikhs.⁴⁵

He established an organization of Sikh Youth namely Khalsa Bhojangi Sabha in the first decade of 20th century. The members of young Sikh's association played significant role in the movements of Sikh community in Punjab after 1910, especially in Gurdawara Refomrs Movement. The role of these young Sikh guys remained significant in Nankana Massacre, Jaito Morcha, Sucha Sodha as well. He was also called as *Master* due to his educational and religious services. Master Nandlal Lyallpuri, Sardar Sunder Singh Majethiya, Harchand Singh, Teja Singh of Samundri, Narajan Singh, Boota Singh (Jathydar), Sewa Singh of Thikriwala, Tikka Khan, and Qazi Abdur Rehman were also important figures of the Community Awakening Move in Lyallpur started by Sunder Singh and they played a significant role for awaking the Sikh youth against colonial rulers as well as their local allies.⁴⁶

The school established for the Sikh boys in Lyallpur, also trained the young guys regarding Sikh ideologies as well as for the Cudgel fighting too. The school was started according to the modern education system introduced by the British rulers but the young guys were also trained according to the needs of the community as well as for fighting against the colonialism. With the efforts of

⁴³ Malik Ashfaq, *Pakki Mari, Sandal Bar: History of Lyallpur*, (Faisalabad: Peace Books, 2017), 103-104.

⁴⁴ Suba Singh, *Panjabi Pattarkari da Itihas*, (Chandigarh: Punjab Publishers, 1978), 13.

⁴⁵ Ashfaq, *Pakki Mari, Sandal Bar: History of Lyallpur*, 102-103.

⁴⁶ Ashutosh Kumar, "Electoral Politics in Punjab: Study of Akali Dal," *Economic and Political Weekly*, November 18, 2004.

the two decades a breed for the movements was prepared and this breed participated significantly at first in the protest against the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre in various cities especially in Lyallpur and later in Gurdawara reforms movement. Sunder Singh jailed after two casualties during the protest against Jallianwala Bagh massacre and sentenced for death. On first appeal the death sentence converted into life imprisonment and on second appeal it remained one year jail but he was sent for Kala Pani for that.⁴⁷

The first ever Punjabi newspaper under British rule was also started from Lyallpur with community awaking ideology, especially for Sikhs. “*Weekly Sucha Dhandhora*”⁴⁸ meaning as Pure Announcement and Sunder Singh Lyallpuri was its publisher, printer as well as editor. The *Sucha Dhandhora* had been considered the real representative newspaper of the Punjabis in general and Sikhs in particular in the area. It was known for the Sikh ideology writings as well as of political articles on Punjab’s ruling position. It became the reason to provide a good breath for struggle for Sikh rights in the province. The paper was published from 1906 to 1919, till the Sunder Singh was arrested for accusing terrorism and working against state due to series of protests against Jallianwala Bagh Massacre.

At the start of the Gurdawara Reforms Movement in 1920, the Singh Sabha was identified the need of ideological representative newspaper of the struggle. According to the needs, it was decided that a newspaper must be started and Sunder Singh Lyallpuri was nominated to publish the paper. Sunder Singh and his companions decided the name of newspaper as “Daily Akali”. After the necessary arrangement, the first edition was published on 21 May 1920 from Lyallpur. The Akali was published in Gormukhi Punjabi and was considered largest published newspaper in Punjab during early three decades of the 20th century. Sunder was not only its publisher and printer but also served as editor during Gurdawara Movement. Later, the renowned journalists of the area Hera Singh Dard and Mangal Singh were also served as its editors. Akali had played a vital role for spreading the message of Gurdawara Movement and ideas of Sikh awaking. It also played vital role in independence movement in later years. Akali had been published from Lyallpur till 1947 in Punjabi but it was also published from Amritsar in Urdu from the August 1923. Sunder Lyallpuri also published the Daily Hindustan Times in English from New Delhi. It started its publication from 15th September 1924 but Sunder sold out it after passing the Gurdawara Act in November 1925. Guru Khalsa, Kundan, Khalsa, Melo, Inqlab and Nawan Yug were also published from Lyallpuri under the editorship of Sunder Singh Lyallpuri. All the newspapers, dailies and weeklies, remained spokesperson of the Gurdawara Reforms Movement as well as Sikh religious and political ideology till the partition. Bhai Daleep Singh, Teja Singh Samundari, Harchand Singh, Naranjan Singh, and Sardul Singh were earliest editorial team of the Akali with Sunder and all were remained significant part of the Gurdawara Reforms Movement from its first day to the end.

⁴⁷ Ashfaq, *Pakki Mari, Sandal Bar: History of Lyallpur*, 106.

⁴⁸ Majid Sheikh, “The Rage of the Sikhs sole Spokesman,” *Dawn* (Lahore), October 30, 2012.

Although the Gurdawara Reforms Movement had started in 1920 but gained the national as well as international consideration due to the Nankana Massacre where 130 Akali Sikhs were slaughtered and dozens were brutally injured. An important name of the Khalsa Bhojangi Sabha, Bhai Daleep Singh was commanding the Sikh Jatha martyred in Nankana Massacre. Daleep Singh was also one the martyrs in Massacre. Another important name of Nankana Massacre was Boota Singh Jathydar and various young members of the Khalsa Bhojangi Sabha were gathered in Nankana Massacre.

CONCLUSION

Not only Sunder Singh Lyallpuri but various other Sikh leaders from Lyallpur participated in the different activities, demonstrations, Morchas, Jathas, and agitations. The names of Teja Singh Samundri, Harchand Singh, Naranjan Singh, Sewa Singh of Thikriwala, Mehtab Singh and various other personalities from Lyallpur was continuously heard in the movement. Not only in agitations and demonstrations but Lyallpurian personalities like Sunder Singh Majethiya, Mehdi Shah, Dilbagh Sindh, Harchand Singh, and Rai Shahadat Khan played significant role for moving and passing the Gurdawara Bill from Legislative Council. Not only Gurdawara Bill but other issues related to movement were also moved, discussed and gain consideration by these legislators from Lyallpur. The role of Akali and other newspapers published from Lyallpur was significant and crucial for the movement. The activities to train the Sikh youth before the starting the Gurdawara movement was also a key factor which cannot be denied and that became backbone of the movement. Akali movement got impetus due the impact of financial limitations and tyranny. Radical leaders who came to the forefront were of different shades of political opinion and religious enthusiasm, Baba Kharak Singh, Mehtab Singh and Teja Singh Samunderi were inspired by religious considerations. Master Tara Singh and three brothers- Amar Singh, Mukh Singh and Jaswant Singh of Jhabal were religious fanatics.