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# Impact of Terrorism on Khem Karan Town (Majha Region) of Punjab (1980-1993)

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Ashwani Kumar<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Meenu Sharma<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup>Research Scholar, Department of History, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, India

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of History, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara  
India

Corresponding Email: <sup>1\*</sup>A9855680007@gmail.com

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**Abstract:** *This paper attempts to examine terrorism in the Punjabi town of Khem Karan. During the 1980s and 1990s, the state's predicament was explored in this paper. It looks at how terrorism has stigmatized large sections of the population. The paper's primary goal is to examine society's struggle during the time of terrorism (1980- 1993). Punjab is a well-developed state in India's northwest. Punjab is the country's personal bodyguard. To keep their nation safe, the people of Punjab have had to go to war with foreign powers. Punjab has developed into a major food producer for the entire country. During the green revolution of 1966-67, Punjab's wealth rose steadily. However, the dark days of Punjabi history followed that period. Some in Punjab are seeking to turn the Punjabi Suba morcha into Khalistan by launching terrorist attacks. As a result, districts like Tarn Taran, Amritsar, and Gurdaspur have felt the effects (Majha region). Despite this, border regions have suffered greatly, with many citizens unable to receive a quality education, and the economy, social welfare, and financial well-being of the region have all been harmed. They didn't stop when the dark days were gone, however.*

**Keywords:** *Majha Region, Terrorism, Struggle of Society, Migration, Economic Backwardness.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Khem Karan is a 'Nagar Panchayat' of Tarn Taran district. Located in the district's southernmost reaches, the town is located at 31.1 degrees North latitude and 74.5 degrees East longitude. The town is well-served by rails and roads. It is a bustling metropolis with a burgeoning economy. Every five years, elections are held for the 13 wards that make up the city of Khem Karan. According to the Census India 2011 data, Khem Karan Nagar Panchayat has a population of 13,446 people, with 7,390 men and 6,056 women. Khem Karan is a town in Punjab's Tarn Taran district. The town's environs include the Indo-Pak border on one side



and the remaining northern sides of Bhikhiwind and Amritsar. Eastern city: Patti; southern district: Ferozpur, a 72.58 km stretch from the west to the south. The river Sutlej flow southwest from the Pakistani border. The town used to be part of the Lahore district before the partition. A Kasur to Amritsar railway service existed. The second station was Khem Karan. From Khem Karan to Kasur, the city had a sizable population, and it was carefully developed. Khem Karan has a railway station, a police station, a Nagar Panchayat, a Government Senior Secondary School for girls, a Government Senior Secondary School for boys, a bus stop, government elementary schools, and a government civil hospital, Shri Bala ji Sen Sec School, United Sen Sec School, Gurukul Public School, and many government buildings. These were world-famous and well-worth the time and effort to see. These Baolis have been demolished. Khem Karan is home to a number of ancient Gurudwaras, including Guru Sar, Gurudwara Bhai Chain Sahib, Gurudwara Tham Sahib, and more. In addition, there are ancient temples like Mandir Shri Devi Dwara, Mandir Baba Seeta Ram ji, Mandir Bhai Wasti Ram ji and Mandir Mata Gauran Ji. India was partitioned in 1947. Khem Karan was assimilated into Indian culture. The settlement of Khem Karan had a slow but steady influx of residents after Partition. Heavy losses were incurred by Khem Karan during the two Indo-Pak wars (1965 and 1971). Khem Karan had just returned from one of these conflicts when the era of terrorism began. During this dark time, Khem Karan had to bear a great deal of loss.

### **Terrorism in Khem Karan Town**

After the Indo-Pak war in 1965, the desire for a Punjabi state faded, and that morphed into a call for Khalistan. First, the demand was made in an orderly and constitutionally peaceful manner. The area most affected was Khem Karan Town in Punjab's Majha region. The Sikh community was particularly hard hit. This tight-knit group of people who treated each other like brothers was terrible. It ravaged Punjab's economic, social, and educational infrastructure. The Hindus increasingly emigrated from Punjab to the bordering states, where they established businesses and grew their communities. "Problem People"(committee for information and initiative and Punjab 1989) the police force detained thousands of people as suspected terrorists and informers and held them in prison for several months. They had more soul as a result of it. The vast majority of them simply vanished without a trace. The government ordered the cremation of thousands of people.

### **Operation Blue Star**

Punjab's level of violence peaked around the year 1980 AD. Only three groups were involved in armed conflict before 1984. With official links to Dam Dami Taksal and Dal Khals, these groups included the All-India Sikh Students' Federation (AISSF), the Babbar Khala and the Akhand Kirtani Jath (AKJ). According to government estimates, there are 150 to 300 militants on the ground. In addition to Nirankaris and alleged informers, these armed organizations targeted government employees and paramilitary members. They also targeted Communists, Nirankaris, and Communist Party leaders. Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale's reign of terror came to an end in June 1984 when the Indian Army conducted an operation code-named 'Operation Blue Star,' with the goal of clearing terrorists from the Golden Temple complex. The bloody conflict that erupted inside the Akal Takht resulted in considerable casualties as well as extensive damage. Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and several of his close



associates were assassinated by security personnel, who employed army tanks in the attack. The attack on the Sikh faith's holiest site has far-reaching ramifications. Along with the Sikh people's rage and grief, the Indian Army's Sikh Regiment rose up in mutiny. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, India's then Prime Minister, was killed by her own Sikh bodyguards just months after the attack. As a result, Sikhs in Delhi and other areas of the nation were the first people in post-independent India to be killed and their property destroyed by armed mobs. These changes caused a rift between the Indian government and the Sikh community, but only for the time being (Puri et al, 1999). Following the death of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1984, anti-Sikh rioting in Delhi sparked Operation Blue Star, which in turn exacerbated unrest in Punjab. The President's Rule had already been in place since September 1983. Most of the legislation that gave police and security services new authority to deal with armed organizations was passed during this time. Nevertheless, a part of the security personnel abused these actions to pursue and harass ordinary citizens, often for their own ends (The Indian Express, 1992). Due to the threat of arrests, torture, and death while in police custody, many young men between the ages of 18 and 22 fled their homes and joined militant organizations. Many of these young guys travelled to Pakistan, where they trained as terrorists before returning to India. The government attack on the Golden Temple in Amritsar, which sparked protests across the Punjab, was the most hazardous act. A few months later, her body guard shot and killed Prime Minister Smt Indira Gandhi in Delhi. - Northern Patrika, Alahabad, 31st October 1984. As a result, anti-Sikh riots broke out in Delhi and other regions. A huge number of Sikhs perished in the process. In the end, Punjab was the one who suffered. Punjab's state of affairs began to worsen. In the years 1987 to 1992, militant activity grew rapidly. Among the crimes committed were murder, homicide by bombing, robbery of banks, extortion, abduction of a minor, and smuggling. The murders in the state were masked by the various hardships that the people had to endure. (Dillon 1998 pp-120-22). Punjab has been the most impacted in terms of its economy and educational system in this situation. Many Hindu traders in the Majha area of India went out of business due to political unrest. Many of the houses, stores, and businesses in the area had been abandoned. Traders stopped trading and relocated to different states. As a result of this, Punjab's wealth following the green revolution was once again converted into suffering. Punjab's factories and businesses have been shut down. (Sekhon and Singh; violence in Punjab (p.13)

### **Impact of Terrorism on Khem Karan Town (Majha Region)**

The police and security services failed to protect the general public. A huge number of villagers made the migration to the metropolis. There appears to be an end in sight for the educational system in Majha area schools. Only a small percentage of school teachers choose to relocate to cities. Due to this, the temple of education was left in ruins. There are no more instructors available to work at educational institutions. Students began to skip school as well. As a result, the majorities of children born in the Majha area in the 1980s are either illiterate or have had their educational opportunities severely limited. Terrorists target Hindus and murder them. Many Sikhs were killed as a result of government persecution. They're on the run from the government, but they're also suffering from the scars it has inflicted on them. The bodies of the men were burned by the police. The remains were referred to be "unidentified" by the police. This conflict was begun by Shaheed Sardar Jaswant Singh



Khalra. There are at least 20,000 unidentified Sikh bodies in Punjab, he claims in the documentary "Missing Punjab," where he appears to be speaking for the first time. As a result, the entire province of Punjab has been adversely affected by this depressing time. Back then, residents of Khem Karan were frightened to venture beyond their neighborhoods. The streets were deserted after the clock struck five o'clock. Hindus were kidnapped and murdered after being forced to board buses with other passengers. One of them is mentioned in this piece of writing. A Punjab Roadways bus with the number PUE 8725, which had left Amritsar bound for Khem Karan at 6:25 p.m. on March 25, 1988, according to FIR No. 26 at Police Station Khem Karan, was hijacked by terrorists, according to the report. He went by the name of Niranjana Singh, the bus driver. The bus was kidnapped at the Asal Uttar drain, and militants held it hostage until it arrived at Manawa village. The militants forcibly removed the Hindus from the bus. He sprayed Hindus with bullets. An additional Hindu man, Pawan Kumar Bedi, was shot and fell unconscious. The terrorists assumed Pawan Kumar Bedi had been killed and fled the scene. When Pawan Kumar Bedi regained consciousness, he sprinted to Khem Karan's side. The police were given all of his information as a result of him cooperating with them. Ashwani Julka, Naresh Mehta, Chaman Lal, Jalal Masih, and Kewal, all of Khem Karan, were killed. Because of the event, Naresh Kumar Mehta's father left Khem Karan and relocated to Ambala. They returned to Khem Karan when the insurgency was put down. I'm going to revisit an earlier Khem Karan event. Terrorists assassinated a former soldier (Des Raj S/O Sh Boor Chand) at Khem Karan. The night of November 6th, 1989 has come. Terrorists broke into Des Raj's home late that night. They began to pelt him with bullets. He died on the spot. A bullet struck his wife in the arm. According to Dharminder Singh S/o S. Tarlok Singh ward number 1 Khem Karan Jaswinder Singh Sunny was kidnapped by Punjab Police. Jaswinder Singh Sunny did his primary education from Khem Karan. He completed his Senior Secondary from Government Boys School Valtaha. He went to Phagwara to do his Civil Engineering. He was good artist of Bhangra. He used to play Gatka very well. On March 19, 1989 he went to Phagwara engineering College to pursue his degree, but didn't return. His father and his family searched for him but Jaswinder Singh Sunny was nowhere to be found. For four years, his father kept wandering to find him. They found out that Jaswinder Singh Sunny had been abducted by Punjab Police. At the time, a woman told the family that Sunny was alive with the police. She demanded seven lakh Rs from his family. The woman was killed by terrorist on the day she was due to pay. The last hope of finding Sunny was gone. Although his father met the Chief Minister and the President but everything was in vain. While waiting for Sunny, his father died. His mother is still waiting for him today. I am mentioning another story of brave Police CT. (Bishember Nath 2868/TT) who sacrifices their live for the nation. For Honest and gallant police officers, the safety and welfare of the country comes at first place. Ct. Bishember Nath Boparai was one of those police officers. He was full of vim and vigor. On 12 June, 1961, he joined the police service to wipe out the filth of terrorism from the region completely. He intended to uproot the terrorism. That is why he spied out the activities of the terrorists. Consequently, Bishmber Nath became gall and worm wood for the militants. On 25 August 1988, when he was positioned at the railway station, some unknown people abducted him but on the way, he started struggling to escape. The militants being more in number overpowered him and ambushed him brutally with the bullets and Bishember Nath got martyred on the spot. We feel a collective sense of pride at his strength and vigor.



Mentioning another story of Rajesh Kumar S/o Shri Roshan Lal ward No 1 Khem Karan. According to Roshan Lal, on 15/04/1988 we all had slept at night in our home. At four o'clock in the morning, someone knocked our door. When we opened the door eight or nine people who had a lot of weapons. They said nothing but forcefully kidnapped our son Rajesh. On the next day, we received a letter from terrorists stating that they had abducted their son Rajesh and said come with 50,000 cash and save your son if you can. We tried for three or four days to free Rajesh Kumar from the clutches of terrorists. We told him we are too poor. The terrorists finally released my son on 19/04/1988. We were very scared by this incident. Thus this Dark Age took the father away from the son. Some women became widow.

## **2. CONCLUSION**

Before India gained independence, Punjab was a rich state. Punjab's "heart" is said to be in Majha. Punjab has been a great contributor to India's economic growth. Punjab prospered much further during the Green Revolution. The town of Khem Karan in the Majha area was prospering as well, day by day. Pakistan attacked India out of nowhere in 1965. It was a terrible time for the inhabitants of Majha, particularly those in Khem Karan. As a result, a large number of residents are left without housing. They were forced to find new homes elsewhere. The conflict of 1971 was also a death knell for the inhabitants of Khem Karan. They had barely begun to lead a normal life when they found themselves once again homeless. The dark years of 1980 to 1994 significantly weakened the Majha area. For a period of 12-13 years, the residents of Khem Karan had to bear this suffering. Mortality and the prospect of making a livelihood were major concerns for the populace at this time. Hindus were kidnapped off buses and executed. During the riots, there were Sikhs who lost their lives. The police were unable to offer enough protection for either party. An end came to the Hindu-Sikh faith and community. The industry was completely destroyed. Many individuals emigrated to Haryana and Himachal Pradesh after disposing of their property. This incident significantly affected student education. A safer location, such as Amritsar, has been selected for the teacher's relocation. Curfew forced Punjabi schools to close for several days in 1984. (Data from the Tarn Taran student attendance registry, Bhura Kohna) The student began to plagiarise on examinations. This left the educational system with little substance. Agriculture's growth rate fell from 6% in 1987 to 2% in 1992. Understanding how violence affects investment decisions by firms and farmers is essential to understanding how terrorism affected Punjab's economy. The Kargil conflict wreaked havoc on the Majha area. Unbalanced conditions led to economic and educational shifts in the region. People had to flee their homes once more as a result of the Kargil conflict. The Khem Karan had been abandoned for the second time in as many days. Houses were closed and streets were busy back then. There was no industry in the border areas because of the lack of investment by industrialists and the government. 70 percent of the population of Khem Karan is reliant on agriculture. There isn't enough land to go around supporting everyone. It's no surprise that because this is a border town, the businesses make pitiful profits. Unemployment rose in border regions where there was little industrial activity. Young people who are unemployed are more likely to become involved in drug use. They are struggling with issues including poverty, unemployment, and substance abuse.



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