

Organisation of MISL in Punjab

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Abstract – The Punjab has been a political and culturally very important region of India in all the periods of Indian history. During 18th century whole Punjab was divided in Misls. These Misls claimed complete equality with everyone in all matters. There were twelve Misls in Punjab. Sardar could exercise strict control over the Misldars only in times of war and the foreign matters was decided by Gurmata.

The people of Punjab paid the revenue willingness, without a grumbling and the Punch driven the village governance under misldar. Law and order system of Misl was very strict, the villagers boycott the culprit. Mainly the cases were handed by Panchayat. Sometime individual leaders and the local lineage group, might attach themselves to a rising Misl. Army also main part of organization of Misls. Justice system of Misls depend of old customs. Misl play a very important role in growth of Punjab.

Keyword :- Dal Khalsa, Gurmata, Misl, Army Justic, Revenue, Zamindar and Organization

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ORGANISATION OF MISL IN PUNJAB

The Punjab has been a culturally and politically very important region of India in all of the periods of Indian history. Due to this reason many invaders invaded on the Punjab region. In 18th century the Punjab had become a cockpit of struggle among from powers like the Marathas, the Afghans, the Sikhs and the Mughals. When Marathas and Mughals eliminate, struggle continued between Sikh and Afghans. Finally Sikh got success in struggle due to two reasons one was a tenacity of purpose and resourcefulness of mind. The other that, fighting is an art consisting of quick observation skill and a combination of unselfishness.[1] But no any powers subdued the Sikhs. The Sikhs power established in the Punjab during mid-18th century.

Firstly the Sikhs organize themselves in small army bands and after that into Dal Khalsa. Dal Khalsa was a powerful military band in Punjab during 18th cent. There were sixty five in the beginning of this organization. Every band come under a Sikh sardar. The Sardar continued to struggle in pursuance of Gurmata. Many villages were coming under Sikhs for their protection so the territory of Dal Khalsa increased rapidly. After this leaders of Dal Khalsa felt to divide itself into units or divisions called 'Misls'. These Misls take decision through the Gurmata and increased national army and Dal Khalsa. Now they could very successfully and effectively resist the exotic invader.[2]

Between 1767 till 1799, whole of the Punjab was held by Misls. The word 'Misl' is an Arabic word

which means 'equal' or 'alike' and the dominant feature of these eleven or twelve Sikh Jathas. Misl claimed complete equality with everyone in all social and religious matters.[3] every Misl was a component part of Sarbat Khalsa and derived their names from the name of their village. Each Misl headed by a separate Misldar who was subordinate to the Sardar', and the Misl now could be recruited from outside the individual gotra or even Jati.[4] The Misldar came together in common purpose and it was recognized that the sardar could exercise strict control over the Misldars only in times of war. The foreign policies of the Sikh decided by Gurmata. At that time the Sikhs looked like a national institutions.

In the seventies of the 18th century, considerably there were twelve Misls namely kanhayas, nakhais, fazulpurias or Singhpurias, Nishanwalias, Shahid, Bhangis, ramgrahias, Ahluwalias, Sukarchkias, Karorsinghias, Phulhins and Dalewalies. The Nabha, Jind and Kaithal formed the most important of the cis-satluj chiefs.[5] In Misls some Misls were big and some were minor ones, minor Misles called by the name 'Dehras'.

Nawab kapur singh was the founder of the Misl Faizalpuria. He was a great soldier and main leader of Dal Khalsa. Dal Khalsa was organized by him in 1748 and Jassa singh Ahluwalia controlled it. The governor of Lahore gave him the title of Nawab. His father was a jat peasant namely Dalip Singh. After the death of Banda Nawab Kapur was

the first great leader of the Sikhs. He organized the National Militia of the Sikhs.

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia was the founder of Ahluwalia Misl. He was liberal and tolerant person. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia led the Sikh bands in 1738 against the muslims. He pillage Jullundhur Doab and Kasur in 1753. At this time Kapur Singh gave him a title 'sultan-ul-kaum'.

Jassa Singh defeated the governor of Lahore (Khwaja Obed) and occupied Lahore. He struck the Sikh coin and took the title of 'Padshah'.

Jassa Singh was succeeded by Fateh Singh, Bhag Singh and Nihal Singh. Fateh Singh remained friendly with Ranjit Singh.

The strongest Misl Bhangi was founded by Sardar Hari Singh. Hari Singh was took Bhang in access. He extended the boundaries of his Misl Lahore to Pakistan. After his death Jhanda Singh became his successor and the power of Misls carried on its peak. He subdued Kasur, Jammu and Ramnagar and got the gun 'Zamzama'. [6]

The Misl Ramgarhia was founded by Jassa Singh Ichogolia. Its name was derived by the Name of fort of 'Ram Rauni'. Jassa Singh joined to Adina Beg increased his power and extended his boundary, the combination of other Misl fought against him and he was driven out to Haryana and Vanquished some territory near Sirsa and Hisar. He returned in 1783 to his original place.

Kanheyia Misl was founded by Jai Singh. When Ramgarhia Sardar gave a crushing beat on Jai Singh Kanheyia, he married off his grand-daughter to Ranjit Singh. Ranjit Singh was belonged to Sukarchakya Misl. The founder of this Misl was Charat Singh.

He raided Rohtas and sacked Wazirabad by a great deal with Abdali army and harassed them. His son Mahan Singh made his successor and kept continued his policy. In the battle of Batala he defeated Jai Singh Kanheyia. But when Ranjeet got married with Jai Singh's granddaughter these Misls came together.

Chaudhri Phul Singh was the founder of Phulkin Misl. Guru Hari Rai blessed to Chaudhri Phul. Amar Singh became his successor and at this time Patiala became a strong state. For his great success and conquests Ahmad Shah Abdali gave him the title of 'Raj-Rajgan'. He also struck his own coins. But Sahib Singh his successor was a weak ruler. Phulkin Misl came under the protection of British in 1809.

Tara Singh Gheba was the founder of the Dallewalia Misl. Original founder of this Misl was Gulab Singh and his resident was in Dallewalia which derived the name of this Misl. Tara Singh took part in the fight of

Kasur and Sirhind. He was a great soldier. Ranjit Singh grab his proprietorship after his death.

Sangat Singh and Mohan Singh was the founder of Nishanwalia Misl and they were lead character of Dal Khalsa. Ambala and Shahabad were main regions of this Misl. Ranjit Singh fought against them and captured most of the area of this Misl. When in 1809 territory held the British lapsed to the Ambala and Shahabad become a dependency of the British. [7]

Karor Singhia and Shahid Misl also very important Misl and play a very important role in Punjab politics.

Here, It can be said the formation of Misl was an assortment of theocracy, democracy and absolutism. [8] The organization of Misl was based on feudal in character because they were not work completely independent. They draw a common plan and Guru Granth and meet in Amritsar twice in a year. Mainly in the organization of Misls dominant feature was equality. Because the Sikh Misls were associations of soldiers for a common purpose that was religion.

Sometimes, individual leaders Zamindars and the entire local lineage group, might attach themselves to a rising Misl. Misls extended their territories on the Southeast of Delhi to keep the labor safe and unmolested. So the Zamindars of the place themselves under the protection of Sikhs. [9]

Due to this, the villages of Punjab being recognized and run their self-government and paid the accustomed revenue willingly, without grumbling. That system was called Rakhi System. Rakhi became the source of income for Misls. In this system, Sikh gave internal or external protection of the person who gave Rakhi.

Misl leader took Rakhi twice time within one year, after each harvest, that is Rabi and Kharif. Rakhi was biggest source of income for Sikh leaders. After this every Sikh leader was expected to step his Dera at a strategic point, to build new Garhisand to repair the old Mughal forts for his use. [10] The system of Rakhi was like Chauth system which took by Maratha. But the administration system during Misls time did not have well developed.

Gurumatta was the central power during Misls time. But in internal structure head of the Misls was Misaldar. He was absolutely supreme and a petty sovereign in the Misls internal matters.

In village panchayats play a very important role in Misls administration. The self-governance of villages was controlled by Panches. In 18th century, Sikhs issued their own coins but the Sikh sardar minted the coins almost every year. The sardar struck their coins by the names of Raj that of Guru.

Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Kaithal were most important mints.[11]

The panchayat handle the ordinary cases of village. The villagers boycott the culprit, they throw the culprit outcast as a punishment. The culprit was compulsory to pay consolidating amount of money as a Jurmana. But the serious cases were dealt by Sikh chiefs (Misdar). Even Jagirdars also entrusted the civil, criminal and property cases under the sikh chiefs. The judgment was divided according to the rule of the Misls. The Sikh chief also decreases the amount of taxes on trading.

After the death of Ahmed Shah, the sikh ruled most of the region of the country and stabilized them as a big and undefeated. But the Judicial system was not highly developed under Misls time. Because there justice mainly depend on old customs. Many sardar think source of income to justice and every step they got money and specialty in case of theft. They got expensive gift like 'Nazrana' in every case.

Army was the main part of Misls. Some Misls, like kanahya and Bhangi maintained a big army bands. These Misls maintained 20000 soldiers, but small Misls maintained small troops of army. Some Europeans told about the military of Sikhs, according to forster, "The army of sikh Misls was near two lakhs". But the military of Sikhs Misls increased day by day in 19th century. Horse were played a very important role in Sikhs army. In weapons they used mostly spears, swords, two edged daggers, sabres and matchlocks. They were expert in handling the sabres and matchlocks. But there was no permanent army during Misls time.

Punjab was divided into number of territories, these terries were not fixed and the boundaries of Punjab were shifting from time to time, according to their ruler. Lahore, Amritsar, Gujarat and Sialkot were big cities which were under taken by the Bhangis. Bhag Singh Ahluwalia, Ramgariyas and Kanalys shared Amritsar city its neighboring districts. Jassa Singh Ramgarihia, the Sardar of Ramgarhia Misls was a brave man, who played an important role in the history of Misls and Punjab also.

Thus Misls gave a strong position to Punjab and organize a political system in Punjab.

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