

## Pressure Group Politics in Punjab: A Study of Bhartiya Kisan Union

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### Abstract

The present research paper is the outcome of research of Ph D pertains to the study of 'Pressure Group Politics in Punjab: A Study of Bhartya Kisan Union, which was conducted as case study and data empirically collected in the years of 2000-06. The study was based on certain fundamental research questions which were answered after collecting the empirical data through a scientific research design and conducting of a vast survey. The study deals with role of pressure groups in democratic political system like India. It deals extensively on the nature of pressure groups in India. Since the study deals with a peasant organization which is working as pressure group and has been influencing the Indian Political System since its inception. The present research paper is deals with the independent peasant organization known as Bhartiya Kisa Union. The paper has evaluated extensively the causes of its origion and continuation as successful independent peasant's pressure group which has been exerting pressure by way of agitations on political system of India as well as of Punjab. The research paper also dealt with the causes of its splits into six factions. It also dealt with the functioning and performances of each faction of BKU. The present paper also dealt with its ideology, pressure techniques, its limitations, determinants, its impacts on Punjab Politics etc.

**KEYWORDS:** Bhartya Kisan Union, Pressure Groups, Punjab Politics, Kanak-bandh, Gaon-bandh, Karja-bandh, BKU (Lakhowal), BKU Ekta (Sidhupur), BKU (Rajewal), BKU (Ugrahan)

### Introduction:

The present research paper is the outcome of research of Ph D pertains to the study of 'Pressure Group Politics in Punjab: A Study of Bhartya Kisan Union hereafter BKU, which was conducted as case study and data empirically collected in the years of 2000-06. The study deals with the causes of its inception, its continuation and bifurcations into various factions up to 2006. The research paper also dealt with the causes of its splits into six factions. It also dealt with the functioning and performances of each faction of BKU. The present paper also dealt with its ideology, pressure techniques, its limitations, determinants, its impacts on Punjab Politics etc.

### The study is based on the following fundamental questions:

1. Whether BKU's movement is ideologically based or class based or a populist movement?
2. What are the causes of BKU origin and which people and class organized the union?
3. Which class joins the union; actively participate in the union and which class gets obtained results?
4. Is it really a non-political independent peasant organization?
5. What kinds of pressure techniques and imitational means are being used by the union and what are their impacts on the union members particularly on small peasantry?
6. What are the limitations of the union in mobilizing the peasantry sustaining an agitation for a long time?

7. Does union really protect and promote the interest of agricultural labourer, sharecropper, tenants, marginal farmers, small farmers and even lower middle class farmers?
8. What kind of relation BKU has with the other peasant organization in Punjab?
9. What is the impact of BKU on Punjab political system and what are the determinants of effectiveness of the union?

The study of pressure group is only a twentieth century development. It was initiated by the group approach to politics introduced by Arthur F. Bentley<sup>1</sup> in "The Process of Government" first published in 1908. It was reinforced by David B Truman's<sup>2</sup> book "The Government Process". The term pressure group, however, was neither used by Bentley nor by Truman. It was used for the first time by Peter Odegrad<sup>3</sup> in his book "Pressure Politics" published in 1928. Moreover, V. O. Key's<sup>4</sup> book "Politics, Parties and Pressure Group" published in 1943 was such a work that it attracted the attention of all social scientist towards this important field of study. In the fifties the study of pressure group became the prime issue of discussion, disputation and even research which attracted American and social scientists like L. H. Harmon Zeiglar, G. W. Peak, J. A. Hill and R. L. Hardgrove Jr, Milbrat, E. E. Schattschander, Robert Paul Woeff, Mancur Olson, Robert H Salisbury<sup>5</sup> etc.

The focus of pressure group studies initially has been the liberal democratic politics of America and Western Europe. Social Scientist like S. E. Finer, J.D. Stewart, Allen Potter<sup>6</sup>, Graham Wooten etc. studied the pressure group phenomena British political system. Other pressure group studies with their focus on single country are La Palombara's "Interest Groups in Italian Politics" Henry W. Ehmann's "Organised Business in France", J.D. Miller's<sup>7</sup> "Australian Government and Politics".

In communist regimes the existence of intermediate associations between society and state had largely been ignored. But some studies by scholars of some communist systems had shown that certain associational interest groups, like trade unions, exercised considerable influence over public process particularly in former Yugoslavia, Poland and erstwhile U.S.S.R. etc. This all shows that pressure groups are worldwide phenomenon

The emergence of powerful pressure group is an inevitable part of any democratic system. The nature of pressure group activities in under-developed and developing system is different from the one in developed democracy of liberal persuasion. In India in spite of illiteracy and consequent want of social communication pressure groups do exist. However, they are not large in number and have acquired different forms compared to those in Western Countries. Though not to the same extent as political parties they influence political system to protect and promote their sectional interest which is not always illegitimate. Indeed they have proved themselves to be indispensable to democratic politics of India.

In India, pressure group phenomenon has not been subject to proper empirical scrutiny. "The study of pressure group became popular by Western and American scholars in the wake behavioral revolution like Helen B. Lamb" Leadership and Political Institutions in India (Ed. Park and Tinker, 1959) " Politics of Scarcity by Myron Weiner in the full length survey of public pressure and political response in India. The number of such studies is very small. Some of the trade unions and business organizations, however, have been studied. However, we have a number of books on trade unions and business groups in India. The important books written with such a focus are S.D. Punekar's "Trade Unionism in India" and V. B. Karnik's 'India Trade Unions: A Survey'. These books describe the development of trade unions in India and analysis their problems and prospects. N. Pattabhi Raman in his book 'Political Involvement of India's Trade Unions' high lights that the trade unions have been and are dominated by or controlled by politicians and political parties.

The literature on business as a pressure group in India comes mainly from foreign, authors. A Kochanek<sup>8</sup>, in his book 'Business and Politics in India', has made a full length study of the Federation of India Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). Benard E. Brown's article emphasizes the fact of close relationship between the ruling party and Indian business interest. B.R. Nayyar's article on FICCI depicts and attitude of private enterprise towards planning in India. B.L. Fadia<sup>9</sup> 'Pressure Group Politics in India,' has researched a case study of FICCI as a pressure group. B. L. Fadia argues that politics in India is pre-eminently the politics of pressure groups rather than the politics of parties and pressure group in India are not to be condemned but to be controlled. B. K. Srivastva<sup>10</sup> suggests that the pressure groups are powerfully functioning in Indian Political System and remedy of the issue lies enlarging their scope rather than minimizing and increasing their numbers rather than limiting it what is required is a proper restraints a legal control and a social and official recognition.

Some books are also available about the role and activities of students groups, community and caste interests and ideological groups in Indian politics. Important books are Myron Wiener's 'Politics of Scarcity', Liyod L and Sussane Rudolph (Eds) 'Education and politics in India' and Rajni Kothari's<sup>11</sup> 'Caste and Indian Politics'.

The study of agrarian organization in India has not received the due attention of political scientist. The literature which we have mainly concerns peasant's movements and revolts mainly by sociologists. Some books are A.R. Desai's (ED) 'Peasant Struggle in India' attempts to provide a panoramic view of tribal and peasant struggle in India during the colonial period. D.N.Dhangare's, 'Peasant Movement in India' analyses the peasant agrarian movements and revolts in the period during 1920 to 1950, K.C. Alexander's 'Peasant Organisation have emerged and the conflicting interests which inhibits the growth of peasant movements.

Liyod L and Sussane Rudolph's 'In Pursuit of Lakshmi' concludes that class mobilization has not taken place in the countryside. The nature of the conflict according to them is countryside v/s city. M. V. Nandkarni's book 'Farmers Movements in India' believes that the farmer's movements under non-party organizations have only increased the power of rich farmers. Sharad Joshi's book 'Bharat Speaks Our' proves that a lot of discrimination is being done to the rural people of India.

### **Causes of BKU Emergence and Its Splits**

Punjab is an agricultural state. The green revolution which ushered in mid-sixties has brought about far reaching changes in the agriculture and rural areas of Punjab. The green revolution has enabled Punjab, once a deficit state in food grains to become a major surplus state. Punjab, a small state in terms of area having 1.5 percent of Indian Territory, producing sixty percent of food grains of India. The causes of the emergence of Punjab Khetibari Zimidara Union hereafter PKZU were the introduction of new technology in the green revolution proves partly the Arthur Bentley's proliferation hypothesis about the origin of groups that technical innovations cause the social differentiations.

The material gains of green revolution remained for a short period. Since 1972, there was a decline in profitability of agriculture. The material gains (of) during green revolution provided enough consciousness among the peasants that they could not tolerate declines in profitability and organised themselves into PKZU. Here David Truman's homeostatic mechanism hypothesis proves true that the disadvantaged sections of society seek to restore the viable balance. He argues that the disadvantaged people with differentiated interest and values organize themselves to work towards a favourable balance in society. The finding of Hardip Singh proves true that the period of early seventies was also marked by the process of disintegration of the path of armed straggle by the Nazalite movement and consequently a shift towards a political line oriented towards forming of mass based organizations. As a result of this shift from annihilation line to the mass activity line, the major chunk of Naxalite cadre

got engaged in building mass organization within the peasantry. This development generated fears among a section of the politically conscious rich peasant in Punjab.

It also proves K.C. Alexander's thesis that the emergence of the most of the independent farmer's pressure groups in a South India can be explained as a reaction to the political organizations of some section of the peasants and agricultural labourers. The green revolution has increased the integration of agriculture into market nexus. The green revolution, which contributed materially to all categories of peasant, including small farmers, in proportion to their land and other assets owned by them but the material gains of green revolution, particularly for small farmers, did not remain favourable for a long period. The uneven gains of green revolution have widened the disparities among all segments of the peasants.

In the modernization of agriculture in Punjab has intended to undermine the traditional norms of agrarian relationship in which based on exchange of mutual benefits and services. It has created an economically powerful and socially influential section of farmers who are keen to nurse their own vested interests and to perpetuate the arrangements which helped them to become rich. It has accentuated the class contradiction between the farmers and the landless labourers, and farmers are keen to keep the latter under control. The initial phase of green revolution became a paying proposition with high rate of return over cost. The terms of trade were favourable till 1972-73. After wards there was decline in terms of trade. Peasants met another setback when Government of India announced the application of the Land Ceiling Act of 1972.

Green revolution brought prosperity and higher rate of literacy for a segment of peasantry which contributed to the rise of the level of consciousness among the peasants and they organize themselves into PKZU in 1972.

BKU came into being due to the deteriorating conditions of the peasants. It proves one of the theses of K.C. Alexander about the causes of peasant movement. He argues that peasant movement is caused by the deteriorating economic condition of the peasantry. The commercialisation of agriculture leads to a breakdown of agrarian relations.

Since its inception BKU successfully fought various agitations and succeeded to mobilize the peasantry on massive scale. It has fought two historic agitations like Governors Gherao in March 1984, and Kanak-bandh, Gaon-bandh, Karja-bandh in the same year.

Since the late 1970s, there occurred agitations by farmers mainly on price and related issues and against the neglect of rural interest it has been a prominent feature of the political scene in several states like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab etc. The peasants have launched massive agitations in various states demanding remunerative prices of agricultural products, reduction in the rates of agricultural inputs (Electricity, Seeds, Oil, Fertilizers, Insecticides, Pesticides and Weedicides etc.

Farmer's Movement spread in various parts of the country. They may be said to have started in Tamil Nadu under the leadership of Narayana Swami Naidu. In Maharashtra, farmers launched an agitation on massive scale under the leadership of the non-political Shet Kari Sangathna headed by Sharad Joshi. The peasants were mobilised on massive scale by Rudrappa in Karnataka by Petal in Gujarat, by Mohinder Singh Takait in U.P., Vijay Jawadia in Maharashtra by Shanker Reddy in Rayala Seema, Andhra Pradesh.

The leadership of independent peasant's organizations learnt out of experience the limitation of state level peasant organization and realized the need for an organization at national level. Since, it was the central government which determined the prices of major agricultural inputs and outputs. Only a

strong national peasant organization could prove effective. Narayana Swami Naidu took the initiative and convened a meeting of the non-political organization and formed Indian Farmers Union (Bhartya Kisan Union). Punjab Khetibari Zimidara Union merged itself in to BKU and became its Punjab Unit in 1980.

It was decided that BKU will remain non-political in character. But the late Narayana Swami Naidu himself could not resist temptation of jumping into the political fray of Tamilnadu. He formed a political party under the name of 'Peasant Toilers Party. This brought a split in the national level organization. The Northern Units of BKU removed Mr. Naidu from the President ship. In 1982 once again peasant leaders came together and formed an inter-state co-ordination committee. In 1988 a further split came into being Mohinder Singh Takait from U.P. formed a different faction and BKU was divide into two factions at national level one led by Sharad Joshi and other by Mohinder Singh Takait.

Sharad Joshi unsuccessfully contested the Maharashtra Assembly elections. Mohinder Singh Takait converted its peasants union into Bharatiya Kisan Kamgar Party in Uttar Pradesh. BKKP contested the 1996 assembly election in U.P. and bagged eight seats. Earlier Bhupinder Singh Mann successfully made his entry to Rajya Sabha.

The organization of pressure groups in India largely the function of politically motivated persons, such groups are organised by Politicians with a view to creating a permanent support base ensuring their continued ascend only in their respective political party or by the out of tune politicians to seek re-entry into the polities. The group may also be organized by some persons in their effort to seek recognition in the political circles. This hypothesis about pressure groups and its organization proves true in the findings of Kehar Singh about the study of PKZU. He observes that most of the agricultural groups in Punjab were organized by those who had the back ground of either the erstwhile Unionist Party of the Akali Dal, and were at the movement endearing to seek entry into a political party of their preference.

### **Causes of Splits**

First split in BKU came into being in September, 1989. The tussle for to the post in the organization brings forth the first split, whereas both the leaders alleged each other for the split. Lakhawal alleged the split was caused due to some ideological differences. He accused B.S. Mann and B.S. Rajewal as collaborated with the government for agro processing units and allotment of agencies for agricultural inputs. On the other hand Mann and Rajewal accused Lakhawal for the split that he was too ambitious to become the president of the organization though of a faction and his lust of power caused split in the organization. One thing proved that the lack of democracy in the political parties and institution and respect of democratic tendencies in the working of democratic institutions are prevailing.

The reason of second split in Lakhawal faction in September 1994 was caused due to the Lakhawal's active role in Sikh politics which deprived the organization's character of an independent non party organizations and more emphasis on religious demands of Sikhs than the economic demands of peasants. When objected by the secular activists who resulted into the expulsion of certain leaders which proved Robert Michel's thesis of iron law of oligarchy.

The third split of June 2002, in BKU Ekta (Sidhupur) over the agitation means in Jethuke agitation. The state leadership wanted to adopt a soft line on merger bus rare issue whereas district leadership and some hard liner wished to adopt repressive imitational means. The tussle resulted into the expulsion of hard liner which further proved the Robert Michels hypothesis. The expelled leaders alleged that president Sidhupur, who criticized the Lakhawal being play an active role in Sikh politics, also participating in Akali politics accordingly to the wishes of SGPC president Tohra.

The fourth split of October 2004 in BKU Ekta Sidhupur was caused by the tussle over leadership and lack of faith in democratic norms. The aspirants of top post Surjit Singh Phool violated the democratic norms and presented a parallel report in an annual delegation session at Fatehgarh Sahib. Whereas the report was passed in Executive committee unanimously to which Phool was also a member.

Sucha Singh Gill comments on these developments. "These developments have fragmented BKU's movements in the state. The splits and divisions have weakened the movement with a larger number of farmers becoming disinterested in BKU due to the opposing positions taken by the different factions leading to confusion among the many supporters of the movement."<sup>12</sup>

BKU which came into being an independent, autonomous and non party organisation has left its character in 1980 when not only it supported the Lok Dal in legislative elections but also some of its leaders contested the elections on Lok Dal tickets. Though it supported the SAD in legislative assembly elections of 1985 yet with the formation of S.S. Barnala as Chief Minister and his stand on the realignment of SYL it remained more close to P.S. Badal. During the phase of militancy in Punjab, BKU could not save itself from prevailing fundamentalist Sikh movement. It supported United Akali Dal and discarded the moderate SAD in parliamentary election 1989.

After the first split of September 1989 both the factions supported poll boycott move of SAD in the legislative elections of 1992. With the passage of time Chief Minister Late S. Beant Singh succeeded to win over to Lakhawal.

In the Parliamentary election of 1996 both the factions lefts its independent character, BKU (L) converted itself into Lok Hit Party and BKU (Rajewal) with the collaboration of SAD (Mann) and Janta Party of Subramaniam Swami unsuccessfully contested the elections. Till then union was further bifurcated into three factions.

In the state legislative elections of 2002 both the groups BKU (L) and BKU (Rajewal) took diverse stands and former supported the SAD where as latter for the first time supported the congress party. Due to the support of BKU (Rajewal) congress came victorious. In the parliamentary elections of 2004 both the groups took their earlier stands and BKU (Lakhawal) supported SAD where as BKU (Rajewal) supported congress. Then BKU (Lakhawal) has been supporting SAD in SGPC Elections and in lieu of that getting SGPC tickets and nominations from SAD. The third factions BKU (S) are also being alleged to indulge into factional fights of SAD and supporting Late Gurcharn Singh Tohra. The only faction BKU (Ugrahan) could preserve its independent character. Though it did not support any political party yet the leaders and members of this group are alienating from electoral process of Punjab.

The allegation that BKU represents rich peasants only found incorrect. It constitutes highest 33.64 percentage membership of lower middle class peasants (5-10 acres) followed by 27.16 percentage of membership of small peasant (3-5 acres). If we combine the two classes' lower middle class and small peasants (3-10acres) they constitute 61 percentage of the membership. BKU also have considerable 9.87 percentage of marginal peasants (up to 2.5 acres) share in the membership. The three classes of peasants constitute 71 percentage of the membership.

The upper middle class (10-15 acres) has 13.88 percentage of membership and rich peasants (15-20 acres) have 8.02 percentage share of membership and very rich peasants (20-50 acres) have 5.86 percentage of membership. It was combine the three classes (10-15 acres) they constitute 28 percentage of the membership. Peasants having land more than fifty acres have 1.23 percentage of membership whereas landless labourers have negligible .30 percentage of membership.

Small peasants have the highest 39.72 percentage of participation in union activities and agitations followed by 38.46 percentage of participation of upper middle class and 37.50 percentage of participation of marginal farmers. Faction wise BKU (Lakhowal) constitutes 33.33 percentage of membership of lower middle class peasants followed by upper middle class peasants having 24 percentage shares in the membership. The middle classes, lower and upper constitute 57 percentage of membership. The very rich peasants also have considerable 16 percentage of membership followed by 13.33 percentage share of rich peasants. Both rich classes constitute 30 percentage of membership. The small peasants also have considerable share of 12 percentage of membership. This faction does not possess the membership of marginal and land less labourers. Very rich peasants have the 66.66 percentage of participation followed by rich peasant's share of 30 percentages in participation and 22.22 percentage shares in participation of small peasants.

**BKU (Rajewal)** constitutes 40.47 percentage of membership of lower middle class, followed by small peasants having 25 percentages and 13.09 percentage of membership of upper middle class. If we combine the three classes (small, lower and upper middle) they constitute 78 percentage of the membership. Rich peasants have also considerable share 11.90 percentage of membership. The peasants who have land more than fifty acres have the share of 3.57 percentage of share and rich peasants have 1.19 percentage of membership. The four classes (upper middle, rich, very rich and peasants having land more than fifty acre) they constitute 30 percentage of the membership. It has 4.76 percentage membership of marginal peasants but no membership of landless labourers.

Participation wise upper middle class leads with 45.45 percentage followed by 40 percentage of participation of very rich peasants and small peasants have 38.09 percentage of participation.

**BKU (Sidhupur)** constitutes highest 34.66 percentage of membership of small peasants followed by 33.3 percentage of membership of lower middle class. The marginal peasants have also considerable membership of 9.33 percentages. If we combine the three classes it constitutes 78 percentage of membership. This faction has 8 percentages each membership of rich and upper middle class peasants. Very rich peasants also constitutes considerable share of 66.66 percentage membership. If we combine these three classes it constitutes 22 percentage memberships. This faction do not has any membership of landless labourer and peasants having land more than fifty acres. The small peasants have the participation of 38.42 percentage, marginal peasants gave 42.85 percentage participation and 24.00 percentage share of participation of lower middle class.

**BKU (Ugrahan)** constitutes highest 35-55 percentage membership if small peasants followed by 27.77 percentages of lower middle class and marginal peasants have 23.33 percentage of share in membership. If we combine three classes they constitute 86 percentage of membership. Upper middle class peasants gave also considerable share of 11.11 percentage of membership. This faction has the membership of 1.11 percentages of landless labourers. This faction has only 12% membership of four classes of upper middle, rich, very rich peasants, and peasants having land more than fifty acres. Whereas other factions have share of membership of four classes more such as: 22 percentage BKU (Sidhupur) 30 percentage of BKU (Rajewal) and 30 percentage of BKU (Lakhowal).

The combination of three groups (marginal, small and lower middle class) is highest in BKU (Ugrahan) which has 86 percentage of share of membership compared to 77 percentage of BKU (Sidhupur) 70 percentage of BKU (Rajewal) and 45 percentage of BKU (Lakhowal).

Participation wise BKU (Ugrahan) constitutes the participation of 46.87 percentages of small peasants followed by marginal peasant with 42.85 percentage of participation and 40 percentage share of participation of lower middle class.

On the basis of land holdings the composition of four factions prove that two factions BKU (Lakhowal) and BKU (Rajewal) have the membership of rich and upper middle classes more than the other classes. Whereas BKU (Sidhupur) has the more membership and participation up to lower middle class and BKU (Ugrahan) has highest percentage of membership and participation up to lower middle class peasants.

### **Ideological Base of the Union**

Literature on demands establishes that the union is interested in building a just society which should have all the urban facilities into the rural society. It wants to remove corruption, exploitation and discrimination of all sorts against the people living in the villages. It also wants to give relief to the peasant's reeling under debt and wanted that all the loans dues should be waived. It mobilises all rural people irrespective to class, caste, religion and gender. Some other demands include linking farm prices to the index of prices with base year of 1967-68, remunerative prices of outputs and lowering the prizes of inputs. It demands establishment of a fund for compensation to farmers in the eventuality of natural calamities, removal of octroi and old age pension at the age of 55. It seeks reservation of seats in medical and engineering colleges and other educational institutions and in government services to rural people in proportion to the rural population and free education the children of whose land holdings are less than ten acres. Therefore the ideology of the movement is to transcend stratification in the rural society and increase mass appeal of the BKU to all the people of India.

Pre-splits phase up to 1989 analysed by the Zoya Hassan and she characterize the BKU's movement as movement of rich and middle class peasants D.N. Dhanagre<sup>13</sup> designated this movement as an a political populism." The analyses of the BKU's movement in the purview of Ernesto Loclau's populism proves some of its characteristics like it is determined to change the present society and appeals to the rural masses not to specific classes and mistrusts the traditional politicians but it is not against intellectualism. Though the BKU considers peasantry a homogeneous class and does not believe in class differentiation among the peasantry, It also claims to protect the interests of the all the categories of the peasants. But the composition of union on the basis of land ownership proves that faction wise BKU (Ugrahan) represents small and marginal peasants, BKU (Sidhupur) represents the peasantry up to lower middle class peasants. BKU (Rajewal) and BKU (Lakhowal) represent upper middle and rich peasantry. Though these two factions have some members of small peasants and lower middle class also yet its thrust on the demands proves that it represent the middle and rich peasants only. If we take a single demand to prove this thesis, BKU, demands to waive of all loans of the peasants. Whereas two factions BKU (Lakhowal) and (Rajewal) argue that those farmers can repay the loans should pay and those who cannot repay should not pay the loans. The other two factions (BKU (Sidhupur) & BKU (Ugrahan) feel that the loans of the all peasants should not be waived and there should be a limit to which extent of land holdings the loan should be waived. They feel that rich peasants should not be given this facility.

MV. Nandkarni believes that the farmer's movements under non-party organisations have only increased the power of rich farmers. The union's claim that it had been protecting the interests of all the segments of the peasantry, including landless labourers, share-croppers, and marginal peasants was found to be incorrect in its pre split phase. No agitation was launched for the interests of the agricultural labourers. Even the union dealt high an iron hand with the unity of agricultural labourers for the demand of higher wares.

After the splits the two factions BKU (Sidhupur and Ugrahan) attracted the marginal and small peasants. They have waged an agitation known as 'Save Land' and 'Karja Mukti' initiated by these factions since 1998. They announced that no peasant would be allowed to successfully install the district administration to execute the court order the important among them the case of Chathewal. The



inclination of two factions towards the leftist peasant's organisations, representing small, marginal landless labourers, proves this thesis.

### **Pressure Techniques of the Union**

The preferred pressure techniques of the unions are memorandum, demonstration, dharna, civil disobedience rail roko or chakka jamm, imposition of curfew etc. It was found that the union had faith in imitational means like gherao, dharna, demonstration and rail-roko of chakka jamm. The union had adopted repressive means like rail roko, civil disobedience, and imposition of curfews. They adopt repressive imitational means in compulsion only when the other peaceful proved in effective. To examine these extreme means whether legitimate or not one must examine their demands whether they are just or not. As we have examined the condition of Punjab peasantry its 85 percentage peasants are under debt and the debt of Punjab peasants has reached to 12500 crores. The condition of small, marginal and landless labourers is very critical and deteriorating. Nirmal Singh Azad rightly observes that capitalist mode of production in Punjab agriculture is transforming the small peasants into a marginal community.

The justice and legitimacy if the repressive agitational means is drawn by the fact that it is resorted in such situations, where the establishment against whom this action is undertaken has violated the norms of justice. The lack of justice in the action of establishment therefore justifies this action. There is no doubt that peasant had not been getting justice since a long particularly during WTO regime. The concessions in form of subsidies meant for agriculture have been withdrawn. On the recommendation of Sen Committee government is thinking to scrap the CACP. The remunerative prices of wheat, paddy, and sugarcane cotton are virtually jammed. Government has a very little control on the increasing prices of agricultural inputs. Due to these policies of the government peasants are reeling under heavy debt and knelt to commit suicides. It is found that the union had no influence on the decisions being taken by the government either central or state. It always came into action when the decision had already been taken. It has only the techniques to alter the decision by mass agitations.

Regarding the relation with other peasant organizations BKU have, proves that different factions have different choices. Number of peasant organizations has been struggling for the cause of peasants in Punjab such as: Kirti Kisan union, Kheti Bari Kisan Vikas front, Sarab Bharti Kirti Kisan Sabha, Jamhoori Kisan Sabha, Punjab Kisan Sabha (Taggar) (CPM), Punjab Kisan Sabha (Sambar) (CPI) Kisan Sangharsh committee, Kisan Wing (Congress) Kisan Wing (SAD) Kisan Wing (SADA) and five factions of the BKU.

The relations of BKU's factions with each other faction proved that they have not cordial relation with each other. Only on very few issues they formed a common platform. Though the members of two factions viz BKU (Lakhawal) and BKU (Rajewal) marked their preference with each other yet both the factions have no close relation with each other. Even on political and economic front, both are taking diverse stands, where as BKU (Rajewal) supported the WTO but BKU (Lakhawal) rejected it. Presently both are supporting staunch opponent ruling parties of Punjab viz Congress and SAD. Both factions even do not like the remaining factions of the BKU such as BKU (Sidhupur), BKU (Ugrahan) and BKU Krantikaree. The reasons of disliking are that the remaining factions are more inclined themselves to the leftist tendencies and peasant organizations.

BKU (Ugrahan) and BKU (Sidhupur) also do not have good relation with each other as well as with the BKU (Rajewal) and BKU (Lakhawal). Since both the factions have some sore memories of the split they do not come closer with other despite their same class base and inclination towards leftist peasant organizations. The same is the situation with BKU (Sidhupur) and BKU (Krantikaree) both has got good relations. Later on Bhupinder Singh Mann formed its own faction known as BKU (Mann).

Regarding the relation with other peasant organizations BKU seldom form a common platform on peasant issue like sharing of water disputes. BKU (Sidhupur) and BKU (Ugrahan) formed common platform with leftist's organizations like KKV, PKS (S) PKS (Taggar), AIKKU, JKS, KKV, and Kisan Sangarsh Committee. BKU (Ugrahan) has closest relationship with KSC and they formed a joint action committee known as Kisan Sangarsh committee and fought jointly number of agitations like, Mannawala, Meenia, Bhai Bakhtawar and Chathewal. Among the left peasant organisations of CPI & CPI (M) the BKU (Ugrahan) has close relation with Kisan Sabha (Taggar) than PKS (Sambar).

Number of times BKU (Sidhupur) initiated the formation of common platform of 18 peasant organization or 11 peasant's organizations but BKU (Rajewal) and BKU (Lakhowal) gave a discouraging response to the move. Due to the initiative of BKU (Sidhupur) the common platform of eight organizations or six organizations waged common fights.

BKU (Sidhupur) and BKU (Ugrahan) have a good experience of waging war like situation and creating an atmosphere of mass movements in the agitations like Jethuke, Maiserkhana, Bhai Bakhtawar, Meenia, Mannawal and Chathewal. Because BKU (Sidhupur) has been divided into three factions it has lost its traditional strength and skill. Whereas, BKU (Ugrahan) emerged as stronger peasant organization which have mass base of small peasantry and have an ability to organize a mass movement. This faction operates lesser as a pressure group than a peasant organization struggling for a mass movement. This faction has also more repressive agitation means. Number of times BKU (Ugrahan) directly challenges the civil administration and confined the PSEB and Bank employees.

BKU (Rajewal) and BKU (Lakhowal) are protecting the interest's rich peasants and have national affiliations. Both have their interstate coordination committees and they organized number of agitations at New Delhi. Both factions operate like successful pressure groups. But BKU (Rajewal) may convert itself into a "Swantra Party" and may left its character of pressure group. Whereas other factions of the BKU have no affiliations at national level and they are confine to Punjab only.

The decision making process and working of the all factions found more or less democratic. All the factions have their state level meeting, regularly and the participation of members as well their office bearers found to be encouraging. Full free discussions were held on the issues on the agendas. Every member could express his views freely and frankly. The elections of the unions were also held democratically.

Among these determinants of effectiveness BKU have the determinants like its vast membership, its vast voting power, its massive organization still, strong agitations spirit, innovative in new agitational techniques, waging mass movement which could bring forth peasant revolt, revolving around the ruling party, supporting a party in election fray, protection through courts and expert knowledge etc.

### **Limitations of the Union**

BKU has demonstrated and campaigned in organised manners. Whenever peasants hold demonstration the union member bring their tractor trolley full of eatables and firewood for cooking. At the site of demonstration and rallies community Kitchens are opened and peasants of the nearby villages maintain regular supply. The union did not disturb the normal life of common residents. The faction ridden BKU has created limitations for itself. Presently it cannot organise the agitation like Governors gherao of 1984 in which fifty to sixty thousand thousands peasants could participate. Though on the whole the mass base of the BKU have widen then its inception yet it has been divided into different even some time diverse parts. Though the demand charter of the all factions has very little differences yet their agitational techniques, partly and political preferences have been changed.

It is the natural limitation of a peasant organisation that it cannot organise its agitations for longer time due to the preoccupation of peasants in their agricultural fields. It has also the limitation in the time of sowing and reaping. More or less all the factions have created limitations for themselves due to their different stands on a particular peasant's issue.

But some time the thesis of Robert Michel proves partly true when the leaders were expelled from the union due to the criticism of top leadership which caused split of the union and violated democratic norms. The division of BKU into five factions proves that there were undemocratic tendencies in the working of the union.

### **Determinants of Effectiveness**

BKU has the determinants of effectiveness like its vast membership, its massive organizational skill, strong agitational spirit, innovative in new agitational technique, waging mass movement which could bring forth peasant revolt, revolving around the ruling party, supporting a party in election fray, mature leadership, capacity to form unity among parties on state issues and among peasant organizations on some common issues, protection through court, expert knowledge, form common national platform etc.

### **Impact of BKU**

BKU has great impact on the social, political and economic scene of the Punjab. It has been playing an important role in the dynamics of Punjab Politics. It represents the expectations and aspirations of the all the segments of the peasantry. Different factions represent different sections of the peasantry. Both the ruling political parties of the Punjab viz Congress and Akali Dal have realized their importance and both are eager to get their support during the elections. Though the BKU since its inception was inclined towards SAD and considered Congress as its number one enemy yet with the passage of time BKU (Rajewal) has supported the congress in assembly elections in the year 2002 and parliamentary election of 2004. The other two factions BKU (S) and BKU (Ugrahan) have different preferences and affiliations. BKU (Sidhupur) remained close to Late Gurcharn Singh Tohra and supported him in the factional fights of the SAD. BKU (Ugrahan) did not support and affiliated to any political party but it has its inclination towards left parties. The movement initiated by the BKU has fragmented now and it has lost its factions and the leadership is not exhibiting any show any curiosity to converge all the faction into one union when they were asked for the possibility of the unity in the union.

BKU (Lakhowal) has fully intermingle itself in SAD politics with shared mass base of peasantry. BKU (Rajewal) is heading towards to formation of political party at national level. Though BKU (Sidhupur) has lost its traditional strength due to two splits yet it has been struggling to form a mass movement and forging unity among all the peasant organizations of the Punjab. BKU (Ugrahan) is going through a critical phase, after waging revolt like situations, announcing the Karja Mukti Andolan (agitation) and direct clashes with police and administration during agitations. Successes of Chathewal agitation establish its creditability that it can organize a big peasant's movement in the Punjab. The fifth faction BKU Krantikari, has not proved its mobilization skill and mass base independently yet.

### **Footnotes:**

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