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## MAPPING THE CONTRIBUTION OF CH. NIHAL SINGH TAKSHAK TO THE PRAJAMANDAL MOVEMENT OF JIND PRINCELY STATE OF HARYANA

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### ABSTRACT:

Mainly in the political arena, we study a person's participation in government institutions, role in the administration, and effort for change in government institutions. During the national movement, several leaders participated in this struggle at the regional and national levels. Ch. Nihal Singh was one of them. During the national movement, what he did for the nation and society, to analyze his role, is the main objective of this research paper. He has broad political activity experience. He played a significant role in the establishment of the Jind state Prajamandal movement and as a Jind representative member, Jind merger movement, and P.E.P.S.U. cabinet minister. Because of his contribution Pandit Nehru called him "a great hero of the Jind state merger movement". As a constitutional assembly member, he continuously asked questions regarding the princely state's future. In this research paper descriptive methodology is mainly used.



**KEYWORDS:** Jind state, Prajamandal movement, a great hero of Jind merger movement, Jind representative house.

### INTRODUCTION:

Ch. Nihal Singh Takshak was born on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1911 to *jethbadi Pratham* in village Bagvi tehsil Charkhi Dadri district Jind.<sup>1</sup> He was born into a simple farmer's family. He had seven other brothers and sisters. He was the fourth child of his parents. His early education started informally. At that time there was no school system in the village. In 1934 he obtained an intermediate degree and in 1936 he got a Bachelor of Arts from Delhi University. When he returned to Jind after completing his graduation in 1936, the Jind ruler, considering his abilities, asked him to take over as tehsildar. But he refused this post. In October 1936 he met with G.D. Birla. Seeing the merit of Nihal Singh, he proposed the post of inspector of the Birla education fund. This proposal was immediately accepted by him because he felt the lack of educational institutions and education spread in his life. He continued to work on this post from Oct. 1936 to November 1946.<sup>2</sup> During this time, he mainly spread education in rural areas and created awareness among people about education. It was easy to understand the reason for the suffering of the people of the state when he entered the field of social service. Therefore he took part in political activities to solve these problems.

### Role of Ch. Nihal Singh Takshak in the establishment of Jind state's Prajamandal movement:-

During British rule, India was divided into two parts – 1. British India 2. Princely state. British India was directly under the British govt. rule and princely state were under the Indian ruler but

indirectly affected by the British government. Compare to British India, in the princely state's people condition was worst. But in 1920 Nagpur session of the Indian national congress refused to take any action in the princely state. During the non-cooperation movement, the princely state mass also took an active part. But congress still followed a passive attitude towards the princely state. Because of this passive attitude of congress, princely state people also felt an urgent need for a political platform for raising their demands and representing princely state people. Eventually, on 17 December 1927 Indian state people conference's first session was organized in Bombay. Its main activists were Balwant Rai Mehta and G. R. Abhyankar.<sup>3</sup> In this session they passed the resolution for citizen rights and responsible government in the princely state. But at that time, this organization did not get recognition as a political representative of the princely state mass. But due to changing Indian political conditions, the Indian national congress decided in 1939 Tripura congress to give full support to the Prajamandal movement. After this Prajamandal movements started their work effectively.

The Jind state was established by Gajpat Singh in 1763. According to geography Jind state was divided into three parts: -1 Sangrur 2. Jind 3. Dadri. The total area of this state was 1259 km<sup>2</sup> and the total population was 308183.<sup>4</sup> Education and health facility were very less in this state. Hence because of state conditions people started struggling against rulers.

Prajamandal organization in Jind state was started by him in 1939. Nihal Singh Takshak of Bhagvi village established Jind state Praja Mandal in 1939 and 1949 worked as its president.<sup>5</sup> Below given reason by him were the main causes to establish the Jind state people conference:-

1. Establishment of fully responsible government under Jind state ruler
2. Spend more amount on public welfare work rather than the royal family
3. Reducing the 25% increase in land tax to the level of 1920
4. Reduce the salary of the officer
5. To get freedom for writing, speech, and conferences
6. There should be a rule of law in the judiciary. Lawyers from outside the state of Jind should also have the freedom to practice. Removal of illiterate relatives of the king from high positions.
7. To end the repressive rule of Gangaram Kaula Dewan.<sup>6</sup>

These were the major aim of the Jind state people conference. In his leadership, Jind state people started agitation against state abolitionism.

### 1939- Dadri Stayagraha –

After the establishment of the Jind Praja Mandal organization, leaders open a front against the Jind state ruler. During 1937-1938 Dadri- Kanina region (Jind state part) faced famine but meanwhile state govt. increased 25 % land tax and begar. People started migrating outstate for employment. People's conditions become worst. The leader first requested govt. to do something in favor of people. But the ruler did not take attention to their demand. Eventually, the Praja Mandal organization started Satyagraha. This Stayagraha started through Ch. Nihal Singh effective speech.<sup>7</sup> He was arrested by the Jind state govt. because of this popularity increased. Jind state govt. an effort to suppress this movement. Govt. arrested Nihal Singh's brothers; imposed on them false cases and penalties. But this suppression was not able to stop this movement. Lastly Jind govt. accept their demands. Govt. reduce land tax and provides food in the famine-affected area. Thus in the leadership of Ch. Nihal Singh Takshak Dadri's Stayagraha became successful. After this movement, leaders felt people conference organization is not so strong in this region. 19-20 Oct. 1939 second time the people conference organized an assembly and in this session, he started efforts for organized this conference in an effective manner.<sup>8</sup> Because of the Second World War Jind state govt. imposed Indian security ordinance. Hence during 1940 – 46 people conference movement was weak.

But passively Ch. Nihal Singh works for the people conference organization. He advised that Jind state masses should be part of this organization. For this silently Praja Mandal committee was opened in every village of Jind state and people were involved in committees made aware through night school. Thus, Birla education trust school played a significant role in this movement. He sent a letter about the Jind state condition to the Indian national congress. Moreover, he gave economic help to Praja Mandal

activities and provide also a holiday for the Praja Mandal organization. At the end of 1946, the condition became worst. Because of people's conference efforts on 1 Jan 1947 Jind state ruler announce a responsible cabinet. In this cabinet, he got the post of education minister. But during the oath ceremony, they took an oath for remains loyal to Jind ruler. Thus the establishment of responsible govt. did not complete. So, in 1947 with Indian independence Jind state people also started to demand to merge the Jind state with the Indian union.

### **Role of Ch. Nihal Singh in Jind state merger movement:-**

During getting freedom movement and after getting independence, the princely state became a major issue, it was a problem that how to deal with these states. Every princely state wanted to remain free. Eventually, three policies prepared for the merger of a princely state in the Indian union:-

1. A treaty was prepared in which communications, foreign affairs, and defense would remain with the Indian union government and those rulers would remain independent in all matters.
2. By creating pressure of mass movement.
3. War

Although the third method was used for the merger of very few princely states. For Jind state merger Ch. Nihal Singh used the mass movement method. Gradually, Jind state people also started to strike for good salaries and a better lifestyle. But the Jind state government gave clear instructions that the Jind state congress will not start any movement in this situation. Jind state people conference changed into the Jind state congress after the establishment of responsible government. 17<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1948 state congress organized a meeting, in this meeting Jind merger resolution passed with a majority. On 18<sup>th</sup> Feb 1948 Ch. Nihal Singh announced a Satyagraha for the Jind state merger with his effective speech which was given in his home plot, Bhagvi village. As soon as he completed his speech government arrested him and detained him at Bajidpur jail in patiyala.<sup>9</sup> Because of this government step, a huge reaction came from the people's side. The next day 35 thousand males and 9 thousand females come from a nearby village in Dadri district and cordon off the district. At that time Pattabhisitaramiya was in Patiala, he praised this nonviolent movement and gave his moral support. 7<sup>th</sup> march 1948 Nihal Singh was released by the Jind state government because of political pressure. After that Pattabhisitaramiya came to Dadri on behalf of the Indian government to address people. And he gave assurance to the people that they will as soon merge with this state. After this announcement Jind state merged with Patiala East Punjab State Union. In October 1951 when the all-India state people committee was merged with the Indian national congress at that time Jawahar Lal Nehru and Kashmir C.M. Sheikh Abdullah gave a title to Ch. Nihal Singh Takshak " a great hero of the merger movement".<sup>10</sup> This title is the result of his deeds and sacrifices.

### **Ch. Nihal Singh in Jind Representative House:-**

During British rule, the Indian princely state was under the completely absolute rule and these states were politically, economically, and socially backward. With the British government's august declamation and the Indian national movement's self-rule and responsible govt. ideas also started spreading in the princely states. Some princely states such as Baroda in 1910, Travancore in 1921, and Pudukotai in 1924 established legislative assemblies. But their meeting was irregular and their rights were also limited. In this chain, the Jind state also started the decentralization of power. A representative assembly was established. In this assembly of 45 non-government members, 36 were directly elected. This resolution was made only for suggestions and to give a platform to people for their demands. In reality, it's controlled by the ruler. Without the ruler's permission, they could not ask questions regarding administration and without his authority, no new tax was imposed or removed. Thus Jind state representative assembly candidate had the freedom of namesake.<sup>11</sup>

### **The first election of Ch. Nihal Singh for representative assembly:-**

In Oct. 1937 election to the House of Representatives was announced by Jind state. At that time four representatives' names from Dadri were sent to the house representative. But at that time voting

rights were very limited. Only those who paid one hundred rupees or more could vote. This meant that the right to vote was limited to upper-class people. In that election, 17 candidates from the Dadri region participated in the election. But in the last year, due to the work done by Ch. Nihal Singh Takshak in the field of education he gained a lot of fame. Therefore, he got 82 percent votes in this election. He won the election with a majority. He was made a member of the central advisory committee.<sup>12</sup> He was recognized from his very first day in the House of Representatives for his candor and tough decision. Therefore, he asked public interest questions repeatedly in the House of Representatives:-

1. Did the government undertake the work of issuing govt. education in any area of the princely state?
2. If yes, then it was a successful experience, then should the arrangement of education by the government be considered for all the states as well?
3. The tax was increased during 1914- 1918, for how many days it was increased?
4. Franchise limit should be reduced.

He sent several letters to the advisory committee. So that eligible people in the Dadri district could get the franchise right. Because of his effort, 82 people got franchises right.<sup>13</sup> His effort became successful. But due to his fearlessness and frankness, there was a lot of resentment in the royal power. Therefore, every effort was made to push them back from the House of Representatives.

### Elections of 1939 and 1942 for the house representative:-

The election of the House of Representative assembly was held in Oct. 1939. He was defeated in this election. But it is known from the letter written by him that his defeat was due to government pressure. In 1942, re-election was held for the seat in the house of representative. He was elected unopposed as M.L.A. Meanwhile, political reforms were implemented in the Jind state. The number of members was increased and all religious constituencies were abolished. The house of representative had the right to interpret a resolution. This type of political reform increased the power of the legislators. With this, he established himself as a domineering public leader in the house. He asked the following question related to public welfare-

1. What work has been done to improve the rural areas and what encouragement has been given by the govt. to the education provided by the private school?
2. How much kerosene and sugar is given every year in district Dadri?
3. What arrangements have been made by the government for the prevention of cholera in Dadri and how much has been spent on it?
4. How much has been spent on the road built from Dadri and how much compensation has been given by the government to the land owner for the land taken?<sup>14</sup>

These questions were sent in writing by him in the House of Representatives which presents his character as a true public servant.

The re-election of the house Jind representative was to be held in May 1946, in the mean while some laws were changed by the Jind ruling class. The area of voting rights was narrowed and the number of members of the assembly was reduced. The power was again handed over to the Nazim officer of the district. So, a vigorous struggle was fought against these policies of the Jind state by him. When the House of Representatives did not pay attention to his demands, then he made other parts of the country familiar with the condition of the Jind states through his writings. This article was written with the title "*Jind rajya piche ki aur*". Copies of this article were sent to the village committees of the Praja Mandals and important political leaders of the country such as Gandhi, J. L. Nehru, Sardar Patel, etc. The following are the main points of this article-

The meaning of "*Jind rajya piche ki aur*" is that Jind state constitutional progress is going backward as compared to other regions of India. To increase the proportion of franchises in all most all regions of India, the rules of the franchise are being relaxed. Whereas in Jind state, these rules in which land tax was increased from Rs. 20 to Rs. 40 and rent from Rs. 40 to Rs.80. Similarly the franchise granted based on education was also curtailed.<sup>15</sup>

In this article, seven main issues have been discussed by Chaudhary Nihal Singh Takshak, which are related to the internal proceedings of the assembly. The first point is how the annual session was

repeatedly postponed by the Jind Vidhansabha on the pretext that their efforts were that at least the representatives could reach the session of the Vidhansabha. In the second part, it was told that the representative was insulted a lot in the assembly. The act that representatives should know one language out of Urdu or English was passed and a public representative was expelled from the House of Representatives on this issue.

In the third and fourth parts, the questions that were asked by the representatives and the proposals that were made, how they were rejected, and those methods have been explained. Very little time was kept for the first questions and proposals, then after that, these were declared illegal on one pretext or the other. Thus the speaker of the assembly did not give any answer to these questions. These questions were mostly related to works of public interest. In similar activities, the representatives were not given any right to debate the budget or reduce any expenditure, are included. Similarly, whoever had a bill, it would have been prepared immediately and permission would have been given to it. The effect of these two articles was that the movement for the establishment of a responsible government in Jind state started gaining momentum at a very fast pace. Due to reforms of 1942, which had come to a standstill in the movement for the establishment of responsible government. Due to these circumstances, it started gaining more momentum. It is said that there is immense power inside the pen, this has been proved by the writings of Chaudhary Nihal Singh Takshak ji. Thus by the end of 1945, the background of the Praja Mandal movement was ready. The struggle went on for a whole year in Jind state, in which Choudhary Nihal Singh ji carefully organized and provided leadership to the movement. Therefore, due to the efforts of Choudhary Nihal Singh Takshak, a responsible government was established in Jind state in the early days of 1947.

The plan of 3 June announced the joining of the princely states to a single dominion. The country was divided based on the plan of 3 June. Therefore, the number of Constituent Assembly was redistributed. Now the total number of members of the Constituent Assembly of India was reduced to 324, in which the number of princely states was fixed at 89. With the declaration of independence, the princely states gradually started joining the constituent assembly. In the Constituent Assembly, three seats were earmarked for the Patiala and East Punjab States Union. Therefore, HH Raj Chand, Bilaspur Maharajkumar Balendushah, and Chaudhary Nihal Singh Takshak participated in the constituent Assembly from these princely states.

The Praja Mandal movement had become very strong in Jind state. Therefore the ruler here had to bow down to the mass movement and on January 1947 responsible government was established here. Therefore, when all the princely states needed to join the constituent assembly based on their representation, the name of Choudhary Nihal Singh Takshak, the most popular leader of the Praja Mandal movement was suggested by the Jind state. Finally, the name of Choudhary was sent to elect the most popular leader of the Praja Mandal movement, which was suggested by the Jind state. Finally, the name Choudhary was sent to elect representatives in the Praja Mandals of Nabha Faridkot, Maler Kotla, and Kapurthala. Here also no questions were accepted without the name of Choudhary ji. Therefore, on 14 July 1947, Choudhary Nihal Singh Takshak joined the assembly as the youngest member of the constituent assembly at the age of 36 years.<sup>16</sup>

After becoming a member of the constituent assembly he used to hold talks with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel mainly on the merger of Jind state and Hindi as the national language. The questions asked by him in the constituent assembly regarding the future of the princely state of Jind are as follows – Choudhary Nihal Singh Takshak will be Honorable minister of the state be pleased to state whether the government is aware of the fact that the Congress of Jind State has decided to join the Union of India. Demanded a merger of the state with the union. If so, what steps have been taken by the Government of Jawaharlal Nehru? This question is being examined as a part of the general plan regarding the future laid down for the State of East Punjab.

After this on March 16, 1948, Chaudhary Nihal Singh asked a question in the constituent assembly taking stock of the situation after Satyagraha. He asked whether the fact that a parallel government has been set up in Jind State is correct. It is also a fact that the administration of the village

is being run by parallel administration and the state government has failed to maintain peace and order in the state of Jind. If so, what steps have been taken by the government?

Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru answering his question said that there was a movement in the Dadri district of Jind State against the state administration. On the advice of the state's minister, the Jind state agitation was suspended and the state authorities released all the Congress leaders who had been arrested in connection with the agitation.<sup>17</sup>

In this way, Choudhary ji being a member of the Constituent Assembly resolved the problems arising in Jind state and what arrangements should be made there so that democratic values could be established. The leaders of the Indian Union were assisted in finding answers to questions such as he supported the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly from 14 July 1947 to 10 May 1948. The members of the Constituent Assembly keep changing from time to time. Therefore, on May 10, 1948, Choudhary Nihal Singh completed his term and fulfilled his responsibility. In this way, he cooperated in the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly for about 10 months. The questions raised by him in that Assembly were resolved. The Jind state was included in PAPSU shortly after.

After this, preparation was started for the organization of the Council of Ministers to run the administration. A debate started regarding the allotment of seats in various organizations. In August 1948, such a floating government was established under the leadership of Gyan Singh Rodwala, which fell in December 1948. Therefore, in January 1949, a Council of ministers consisting of seven members was formed by Gyan Singh Rodwala and Choudhary Nihal Singh ji. To represent Jind state, on behalf of Jind state, it was asked to choose a representative from among Major Amit Singh and Choudhary Nihal Singh. He was unanimously sent to the PAPSU cabinet. In this cabinet, Choudhary ji was given the post of Education Minister.<sup>18</sup>

He took important decisions for the development of education while holding the post of Education Minister in the PAPSU cabinet. While holding the post of Education minister, on behalf of the Birla Education Trust, the schools were opened under Jind, Patiala, and Nabha. They were made government and their teachers were also taken into government service along with the previous service. This decision had many positive effects on the field of education. The best effect of this was that the management of these schools is now being done well. And due to the good arrangements for the management of scholarships by the government, the number of students in these schools started increasing like in other areas. Looking at the literacy rate and the number of schools in PAPSU state, the need for more schools was felt by Takshak ji.

In 1939, the total number of primary schools in Patiala was about 238 while the total number of middle schools was 21. These were also mostly located in urban areas. Therefore, given the unavailability of schools and illiteracy, and the lack of communication, Takshak ji announced the establishment of more new schools so that the literacy rate could be increased. He issued an order to open 168 new primary schools for boys and 16 new primary schools for girls. These new primary schools were opened in Patiala-26, Fatehgarh Sahib-29, Barnala-27, Kandaghat- 7, Kapurthala-16, Sangur-22, Mahendragarh-20 and Bhatinda respectively.<sup>19</sup> These schools were mostly opened in rural areas.

Due to this, the common people reached closer to education. At that time there was a lack of means of communication. Therefore when schools were located in remote places, very few students could get admission. Therefore, on one hand, the number of schools increased, while on the other hand, the distance between the schools and the homes of the students decreased. Due to this the encouragement towards education among the common people increased a lot. Educated people got employment in the form of appointment of teachers. Therefore, this decision reduced the illiteracy rate by some percent and unemployment also decreased by some percent.

Thus Ch. Nihal Singh played a significant role in the Prajamandal movement, Jind representative house, Constitutional Assembly, and PEPSU cabinet. Because of his efforts, the Praja Mandal movement spread in every village of Jind State. In the representative assembly, he also attracted the attention of the government toward public welfare works. In the constitution assembly, he asked questions regarding the merger of the princely state and how to remove their backwardness. In the PEPSU cabinet, he

worked as Education Minister, during his tenure, his governmentization of schools that were open through private efforts and trust. Thus Nihal Singh being a politician did social welfare work.

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