

# Kartarpur Sahib Corridor: Interfaith Harmony in Pakistan



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## ABSTRACT

The Kartarpur corridor between India and Pakistan has opened a plethora of divergent paradoxical perceptions: some consider that it would be a 'corridor of peace' whereas some believe that it would be a 'corridor of terror.' Some hold that this Corridor would empower the Qadiani community, whereas some maintain that it would enhance the influence of the Sikhs on both sides of the Corridor. Gurharpal Singh, Jagtar Singh, Bhabishan Singh Goraya, Gurmeet Kaur and politicians such as Navjot Singh Sidhu, Harsimrat Kaur Badal and others presented the Kartarpur Corridor as a gateway to peace in the region while a section of the media of Delhi declared it a 'corridor of terror.' Overall, a large number of the Sikhs and Muslims are delighted on the construction of the Corridor who consider it a dawn of new age. The prime minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, has been ardently applauded for goodwill for the Sikhs. In addition, many appreciate the significant contributions of Pakistan's army chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, and the Indian politician, Navjot Singh Sidhu. This year, the Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus, and Christians in Pakistan have celebrated the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Sahib happily at Kartarpur and Nankana Sahib, which means that the possibilities of new horizons of peace and interfaith harmony have been opened in the region in celebrating the event together as one community implies the emergence of the belief in shared humanity, peaceful coexistence, and interfaith harmony. This project created a kind of Punjabi nationalism by combining the Indian Punjabi Sikhs and the Pakistani Punjabi Muslims. Pakistan took the initiative for opening the Corridor just for the goodwill of the people of two countries.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The expression 'Kartarpur' is significant in the Sikh religious history. There are several places named with 'Kartarpur': first, there is a place Kartarpur in the Doaba, founded by Guru Arjan Dev. Second, a place named Kartarpur,

in district Hoshiarpur, where the Akalis held a conference in 1943. In the conference, the leaders denounced the idea of Pakistan and demanded the Azad Punjab<sup>[1]</sup>. Third, the Kartarpur Sahib is located in district Narowal, the Pakistani Punjab, wherein Guru Nanak Dev spent the last years of his life. Punjab is proud of the

intellectual and cultural heritage it offered to its inhabitants and to the rest of world. This creative land gave birth to several religious traditions and intellectual movements. Guru Nanak Dev is one of the iconic figures, the fertile land of Punjab ever produced. Allama Muhammad Iqbal in his book, *Bang-e-Dara*, paid a great tribute to Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, by declaring him a '*mard-i-kamil*'. Iqbal characterizes *mard-i-kamil* with piety, prowess, honesty, creativity, just and humane. Iqbal articulates:

*Phir uthi akhir sada Tauheed ki Punjab se  
Hind ko ek Mard-i-Kamil ne jagaya khwab se*

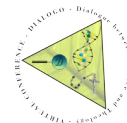
(Translation: There is again a voice of Oneness of God appeared in the Punjab, A perfect man had awakened India from its slumber.)

The Punjab region has been a liberal and moderate land and the historical evidence corroborates the narrative that the first Hindu converted to Islam was not persecuted at the hand of the Hindu majority community. No doubt, it is the land of peace as no heavy weapon was found in the archeological excavation of the sites of the Indus Valley Civilization but still the land of prowess and bravery presents blatant examples of anti-British drive as exhibited by Ram Muhammad Singh Azad (real name Udham Singh), Bhagat Singh Shaheed, Malangi, Jabru, Nizam, Rai Ahmed Shaheed Kharal, Murad Fatyana, Ghadrites, Babbar Akalis, etc. Besides fortitude, it mushroomed new religions and political movements. Sikhism a new religious tradition was founded by Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539) who after his four religious journeys, settled and spent the last 18<sup>[2]</sup> years (1521-1539) of his life at Kartarpur, the village named and inhabited by the Guru himself.

Kartarpur is situated near Shakargarh district Narowal, Punjab (Pakistan) but before August 1947 it was a part of District Gurdaspur which had produced famous personalities, such as Urdu poet Barkat Ram Zaman, Punjabi poet Shiv Kumar Batalvi, and politician Sir Fazl-i-Husain. Other than Sikh Gurus, Pakistani Punjab is honoured to produce famous personalities such as Bhagat Singh Shaheed, Bhai Sahb Singh, Dhani Ram Chatrik, Sardar Rattan Singh, Dr. Mohan Singh Diwana, Dr. Atar Singh, Harnam Singh Shan, Avtar Singh Malhotra, Parbjot Kaur,

Surinder Kaur, Tera Singh Chan, Amrita Pritam, Master Tara Singh, his brother Narinjan Singh, Kartar Singh Duggal, Gurdev Singh Mann, Col. Narinderpal Singh, Sohan Singh Seetal, Giani Kartar Singh, Sardar Kapur Singh, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and other Sikh notables who earned remarkable reputation because of their performance in divergent fields of life. Kartarpur is very close to the Indo-Pakistan border. India-Pakistan boundary line stretches over 2980 km (2240+740 LoC) touching the Indian held-Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat and Rajasthan etc. on the Indian side and AJ & Kashmir, Punjab and Sindh on the Pakistani side. Guru Nanak Dev was settled and lived till 22 September 1539 at Kartarpur after about two decade Divine journey.<sup>[3]</sup> He remained engaged in the agricultural activities on his land. Kartarpur was the first village that was founded and inhabited by Guru Nanak Dev. It was the first place wherein the first Gurdwara was established and the first *Langarkhana* was set up and run by Guru Nanak Dev. First Sikh *sangat* was shaped on the same land under the aegis of Baba Nanak. Kartarpur is the place where the Guru completed his Bani. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Guru, Angad lived in Kartarpur Sahib and Guru Nanak instead of his sons Sri Chand and Lakhmi Chand appointed Angad Dev as the next Guru<sup>[4]</sup> with advice to move from Kartarpur. Many claim that Guru Nanak Dev never preached new religion and he always replied to the question, who are you, Hindu or Muslim?, 'na mein Hindu, na mein Musalman,' the Guru replied, but he appointed Lehna the next Guru as Guru Angad which verifies that Guru Nanak was acquainted with this fact and laid the foundation of a new religion which meticulously needed its custodians in the coming times. So the first Sikh *panth* (community) appeared at Kartarpur Sahib which highlights the importance of this village to the Sikhs and others. Punjab being a liberal land respects all religions, cultures and ideals. This capaciousness is so paramount that sometimes it touches the extreme point of passiveness and apathy.

Guru Nanak Dev is said to be away from preaching his ideals but the history tells that he publicly expressed his beliefs at Multan *mela* although the text of this exhortation could not be preserved but on the daring expression he was arrested by Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi because it was translated by the reporters as an anti-



government and anti-Islam drive. This may be considered as the first public speech relating to his religious tenets by the Guru because in the previous discussion he only pointed out injustice, superstition and wrongdoings in the debates and sometimes in a meaningful styled dialogue with the religious propagandists of different religions. This impressive and logical style proved success to make the people aware about the maxim of piety and difference between good and bad. The arrest by Lodhi may be taken as the first persecution of the Sikh religious personality by a Muslim political authority. Bhai Addan Shah, follower of Sewa Ram, also lived at Kartarpur Sahib.<sup>[5]</sup>

The story of Kartarpur is full of interesting facts. The River Ravi flows close to Kartarpur therefore the floods ruined Pakhoki village and the buildings or houses of Kartarpur built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Maharaja Ranjit Singh after assuming the power worked on this village but the real services were rendered by Bhopindar Singh, Maharaja of Patiala (grandfather of Capt. Amrindar Singh, CM Punjab) who donated 135,600 rupees for the construction of the new building and renovation of the place. During the period of 1920-1929, the construction and repair of the present building completed<sup>[6]</sup> but the partition of India changed the scenario of the region and the Radcliffe Award handed over these areas to Pakistan which forced the Sikhs to migrate from this area to east Punjab. Kartarpur Sahib perhaps being isolated and far away from the political centres remained out of focus during the last decade of the British rule and the Indian struggle for freedom because no document verifies any political gathering organized by the Sikh political parties at this place. However, Sardar Teja Singh<sup>[7]</sup> contended in 1947 that the Sikh sacred places Nankana Sahib and Kartarpur in Shakargarh, district Gurdaspur 'are the Mecca and Medina' for the Sikhs.<sup>[8]</sup>

Kartarpur Gurdwara remained closed after 1947 because no Sikh was there to serve it. Being situated in the border area, it also proved a sensitive place for both Pakistani and Indian armies. Although a train ran through this village area and it had a station and platform as well but all was defuncted after 1947 due to the apathetic attitude of the governments. The Punjabis in general and Sikhs in particular were

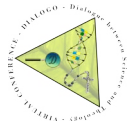
the most affected population of the partition 1947. Even the India-Pakistan rivalry caused heavy loss of the Punjabis.<sup>[9]</sup> Despite all odds, this place remained alive and intact because of the Muslims who have profound respect for Baba Nanak Sahib. Jatts especially the Randhawa clan of the areas maintained the modesty and sacredness of the place and arranged cleanliness of the building and the surrounding. Randhawa family, the local administration of Shakargarh and Auqaf department of the government looked after the building and surroundings of Kartarpur Sahib. This elaborates devotion of the Muslims towards Baba Nanak. This sacred place remained a symbol of respect and blessings and credit goes to the local Muslims who maintained its sanctity and importance. Despite less facilitated, the religious glamour, glory and radiance of this sacred place was retained by the Muslims when the Sikhs had no access to it. The distance of Kartarpur is 27 km from Shakargarh, 3 km away in Pakistan from Pak-India border while Dera Baba Nanak Sahib (Gurdwara Shri Darbar Sahib where Baba Nanak's ashes buried) is only 1 km from the Pak-India border on Indian side. Both the places are related to Guru Nanak Dev and his family.

In the 1950s, the Sikhs started Ardas (prayer) in which they daily prayed to God to provide them an open opportunity to see the sacred Sikh places left in Pakistan:

*Vichhrhey gurdhama de khuly darshan  
didarey bakhsho*

(Translation: O God! We submit You to grant an open opportunity to visit the departed holy places)

The restless souls approached the point from where they tried to view the Kartarpur Gurdwara. The Sikhs fixed a point (darshanasthan) near Dera Baba Nanak Sahib on the Indian side to see a slight view or Darshan of the Kartarpur Gurdwara. In the 1965 War between India and Pakistan, the bridge on the River Ravi was destroyed as a defence strategy. Pippa Wirdee opines, during the Sikh struggle for Khalistan in the 1980s, few Sikhs had access to this Gurdwara.<sup>[10]</sup> Jagtar Singh also maintains that 'Pakistan has been harbouring Sikh militants for years'<sup>[11]</sup> but Bhabishan Singh Goraya says that a news published in the Indian newspapers that



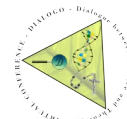
Pakistan was constructing a terrorist camp near the border but as a matter of fact Pakistan was renovating the Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara which was damaged severely in the Indo-Pak war.<sup>[12]</sup> Gian Singh Sandhu writes that the rumour spread by Jagjit Singh Chauhan that Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale<sup>[13]</sup> was escaped to Pakistan during the Indian military attack on the Harmandir Sahib, Amritsar in June 1984.<sup>[14]</sup> In the ups and downs, the Kartarpur Sahib from time to time kept on attracting attention of the Muslims and Sikhs throughout the history.

Narowal separating from Sialkot was created as an independent district in 1991. During the peacemaking move between Pakistan and India in 1998-99, Mian Nawaz Sharif and Indian PM Atal Bihari Vajpae concluded friendly session but the prevailing bitterness blocked any wave of cordiality. During the years of 1990 and 2000s, the government of Pakistan started the repairing work on the Gurdwara Sahib. During 2004-5, Gen. Parvez Musharraf and India agreed to open Kartarpur,<sup>[15]</sup> Lahore, Amritsar roads and Railway line of Khokhrapar and Monabao but this understanding could not be materialised. Pakistan People's Party also maintained the same policy. Many object the PPP government especially Aitzaz Ahsan (ex-interior minister) that he handed over the list of the Sikh freedom fighters struggling for Khalistan to the Indian government but he rejected this allegation. Najam Sethi in his interview told that Benazeer Bhutto and Nawaz Shareef were ready to open the Kartarpur corridor but the establishment opposed it.<sup>[16]</sup>

The May 2018 elections gave popular mandate to Pakistan Tahreek-i-Insaf and Imran Khan took oath as Prime Minister of Pakistan. Being cricketer Imran Khan invited Kapil Dev, Navjot Singh Sidhu and Sunil Gawaskar to join him in the oath taking ceremony on 18 August 2018 but due to the pressure by the extremist Hindu party Bhartiya Janata Party and media only Navjot Singh Sidhu dared to join the glorious and historic ceremony of oath taking event of Imran Khan as Prime Minister of Pakistan. Navjot Singh Sidhu's marvelous entry with a 'magic Japhi'<sup>[17]</sup> added a new chapter in the political and religious histories of Pakistan, India, Punjab and Sikhism. The Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa, being a Jatt embraced Sidhu who reciprocated

the same zeal on the basis of the ethos and racial affiliation which infuriated the Indian politicians and media.<sup>[18]</sup> Navjot Sidhu retaliated with more forceful enthusiasm and responded to all the questions raised by the opponents daringly with sound arguments based on cultural, moral and religious grounds. Jaiteg Singh Anant acknowledged that Sidhu being a man of prowess and joviality saluted his friendship with Imran Khan and went to Pakistan. He did not talk against anyone therefore real credit of Kartarpur corridor goes to Sidhu who proved to be an ambassador between India and Pakistan.<sup>[19]</sup> Ch. Parvez Ilahi bluntly claimed in response to the statement by Mohinder Pall Singh in the Punjab Assembly that the Kartarpur Corridor was concluded only because of Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa and his *Japhi*<sup>[20]</sup> which the Najam Sethi had already claimed.<sup>[21]</sup> Sidhu alleged that the entire fuss was created out of jealousy as the Indian Prime Minister was ignored by the Pakistani government and not invited in the Pakistani Prime Minister's oath taking ceremony.<sup>[22]</sup> Many ups and downs came in the way of the Kartarpur Corridor project but ultimately it was signed by Pakistan and India. Despite chaos and hue and cry, India had to approve this project and on 26 November 2018 Vice President Venkaiah Naidu and Capt. Amrinder Singh laid the foundation stone of Dera Baba Nanak-Kartarpur Sahib corridor as a counterblast to the Pakistan's credit.<sup>[23]</sup>

On 28 November 2018, Imran Khan inaugurated the Kartarpur Corridor's project in a prestigious ceremony attended by Navjot Singh Sidhu (Congress)<sup>[24]</sup> and Harsimrat Kaur Badal (Akali) who made religiously emotional speeches and thanked the Pakistani and Indian governments on the friendly understanding regarding the Corridor. This step was perceived as a sincere effort of Imran Khan, Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa and Navjot Singh Sidhu. Sikhs and Muslims believe that these three leaders have honoured Guru Nanak Dev in a true sense and his followers by creating a facilitative environment which helped permit the Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims to have a visa-free visit to Kartarpur Sahib. Jaiteg Singh Anant while translating the Sikh emotions of happiness thanked Imran Khan and Navjot Singh Sidhu on this endeavour. Jathedar Kuldeep Singh Wadala (d. 6 June 2018) had been





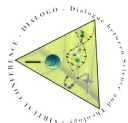
visiting the border (Dera Baba Nanak Sahib) since January 2001 and kept on praying until his death. He came to the border area for more than 400 times with *langar* just to sensitise the desire and demand of the Sikhs to open this border point so that they could visit Kartarpur Sahib.<sup>[25]</sup> Bhabishan Singh Goraya claims that he visited Pakistan on 14 April 1994 and told the Aukaf officials present in the Panja Sahib about the Kartarpur Sahib. He realized that Pakistan had soft corner for the Sikh and in opening the Kartarpur langha. On return to India, he pledged to raise his voice for the Kartarpur langha in India. In January 2001, he convinced Jaswinder Singh Advocate to join him in this campaign. They advertised the date of Ardas near border for the Kartarpur Langha through wall chalk and newspapers. On the publication of the news in the *Tribune*, the Indian secret agency called Jaswinder and inquired about the news who after this call refused to continue and disassociated from the campaign.<sup>[26]</sup> Bhabishan Singh Goraya went to Wadala village near Jalandhar on 20 February 2001 to meet Kuldeep Singh Wadala who had been expelled from the Shiromani Akali Dal by Parkash Singh Badal and was trying to survive in the politics with a new party Akali Dal (Democratic). First Kuldeep flatly refused to undertake this campaign but Goraya's solid arguments especially the point that this campaign would be a non-political campaign, convinced him to work on it. He asked Goraya to join him in the party meeting likely to be held at Dhariwal district Gurdaspur and talk about the Kartarpur langha. On 28 February 2001, in the meeting Goraya presented his stance on the Kartarpur corridor and favourable attitude of Pakistan. The participants zealously agreed to launch a campaign as a religious move. The party of Wadala published the posters and on Vaisakhi they converged at Anaj Mandi, Dera Baba Nanak. Goraya told that they came to know about Jaswinder Singh Advocate's presence along with about 200 Sikhs there in the Gurdwara. They had already reached the place and recited Ardas, therefore, he was blessed with the opportunity to be the first who had Ardas on the border for Kartarpur langha.<sup>[27]</sup> As the Wadala group consisting of around 2000 people headed towards the borders, the BSF (Border Security Force) interrupted their movement. Goraya asked Kuldeep Singh Wadala

to recite prayer (Ardas) at the point who along with other Sikhs performed Ardas. After this, a meeting at Jalandhar structured a body named Kartarpur (Ravi) Darshan Abhilakhi Sanstha with the following officeholders:

- [1] Kuldeep Singh Wadala (Head)
- [2] Jasbir Singh
- [3] Gojinder Singh Bajwa
- [4] Udham Singh Aulakh
- [5] BS Goraya

Goraya got separated from this Sanstha after three years but he continued his separate Ardas every month on *Sangrad* as they had been doing under Wadala. His Ardas contained the prayer of the solution to the Kashmir problem and peace between India and Pakistan. He organized Sangat Langha Kartarpur in 2003 under his own patronage. On the opening of the Kartarpur corridor in 2019, they displayed big banners showing the pictures of Imran Khan and Navjot Singh Sidhu.<sup>[28]</sup> Various leaders desired and worked to have access to Kartarpur Sahib but the honour was bestowed to Sidhu was proved as an 'ambassador of Muslim-Sikh unity.'<sup>[29]</sup> In June 2008, US official *John Warlick McDonald* visited Darbar Sahib area, which highlighted Kartarpur langha issue in India. Actually, when he tried to talk to the media persons, the BSF officials stopped him from speaking. He obeyed with resentment and comment that 'this is the situation of freedom of the press in India.' The same was published widely in the newspapers, which highlighted the Kartarpur langha issue in India.<sup>[30]</sup>

The Pakistani government assigned the FWO<sup>[31]</sup> the duty to work on the Corridor and November 2019 (550<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev) was fixed as the completion time. In January 2019, the Pakistani government appointed Dr. Muhammad Faisal as focal person on the Kartarpur Corridor project and sent the draft proposals to the Indian government to expedite the dialogue regarding the final agreement. The government also proposed to appoint some focal person in India so that both the countries might approach some viable route to achieve consensus on the feasibility report. On 22 January 2019, the Indian government threw the proposal back to Pakistan and sought the Pakistani delegation to come to

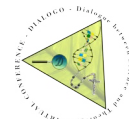


Delhi to further talk on the project which Dr. Faisal declared as a delaying and childish tactic.<sup>[32]</sup> The mischievous Indian intentions desired to cripple the sincere effort of the Pakistani government and such maneuvering could be detrimental to the peacekeeping effort in the South Asian region, but things were settled and India consented to the points relating to the exchange of visitors as proposed by Pakistan. They agreed that the process would continue to create an environment of understanding even after the completion of the project. The document presented by Pakistan was to permit the Sikhs only a 4-hour stay in the Kartarpur Sahib, which would remain open from 8 am to 5 pm daily; the visitors would have to apply a month before the proposed date of the visit and on approval, the visitors would get permits. The visitors having valid passports would get security clearance from the Indian government and come to Kartarpur in a group of 15 persons. The Indian government would provide the visitors' list to Pakistan three days before the visit date. The visitors would eat nothing except *Parshad*<sup>[33]</sup> during the stay at Kartarpur. Apparently, it seemed awkward to force the pilgrims to move out the place after few hours and they were not allowed to buy or eat anything even then it was the biggest blessing for the Sikhs to be allowed to visit this sacred place after several decades. If proved successful, both the countries could facilitate the pilgrims more in future as Pakistan issued a new visa policy on 25 January 2019 which permits the Sikhs having US and Canadian nationalities to apply for visa even on the arrival at the Pakistani airports.<sup>[34]</sup> In October it was decided that under 'the agreement, the corridor will remain open seven days a week from dawn to dusk.'<sup>[35]</sup>

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan proposed to send a Pakistani delegation on 13 March 2019 to seek final decision on the points mentioned in the draft agreement while the Indian delegation planned to visit Pakistan on 28 March.<sup>[36]</sup> The Indian authorities in a high level meeting at New Delhi chaired by Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba discussed the issues involved in the Kartarpur Corridor project such as land acquisition. The Punjab government assured the availability of the land by the mid-March when the National Highway Authority of

India (NHAI) and Land Ports Authority of India (NHAI) would start the preliminary work.<sup>[37]</sup> The process continued on both sides amid the warlike conditions of Pak-India relations and anti-minority attitude of the Indian Prime Minister. Narendra Modi was alleged to be responsible for the Palwama incident in which 40 police men lost their lives. Although the responsibility was put on Pakistan but many in India alleged that the BJP government played a tactic to win the elections likely to be held in April 2019 but the BJP government associated this incident to Pakistani sponsored Jihadis and threatened a direct attack on Pakistan as revenge. The Pakistani government rejected the India's allegation and warned against any border aggression. But the Indian air jets entered Pakistan from the Kashmir areas and flew back without any damage but it was projected as surgical strike in which 300 terrorists were killed. Pakistan not only rejected the Indian claim but also asked India to wait for the counter-attack.<sup>[38]</sup> On the very next day the world saw the arrest of the Indian pilot Abhinandan Varthaman by the Pakistan's army.<sup>[39]</sup> Airspace and land routes were closed and war terror prevailed across the borders.<sup>[40]</sup> In the war uproar, nobody could talk of the Kartarpur Corridor. To Gurharpal Singh, the confrontation between the two countries' might derail the project. The Promise of Kartarpur co-exists with the ever-present realities of the Indo-Pakistan relationship.<sup>[41]</sup> The BJP government apparently seemed successful in sabotaging the project but the damage and arrest of the Indian air jet and pilot by the Pakistan's forces made the BJP leadership defensive and apologetic which helped further the working on the Kartarpur Corridor. The Indian victory could make Modi assertive and hero of the extremist Indians which might endanger the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor.

India allocated land and on 14 March 2019 the Pakistani delegation under Dr. Faisal participated in the meeting held at Attari. Dr. Faisal expressed his satisfaction on the working from both sides on the Kartarpur Corridor project. He also shared some problems in the way but he avoided to mention them.<sup>[42]</sup> In September 2019, the final agreement was signed between Pakistan and India after three rounds of negotiations amongst 'deep differences on various provisions



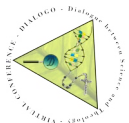
of the agreement, the Pulwama stand-off,' and composition of the committee to supervise the affairs of the Corridor and Indian elections.<sup>[43]</sup> The approval of the agreement made it a remarkable day and Muslims and Sikhs expressed their gratification.<sup>[44]</sup> The role of Ch. Muhammad Sarwar, the Governor, and Brig. Ejaz Shah, Interior Minister, played pivotal role in facilitating the Sikh pilgrims<sup>[45]</sup> especially in handling the poignant incident of Jagjit Kaur at Nankana Sahib<sup>[46]</sup> although it was revived later on 3 January 2020 by few troublemakers who staged dharna in front of the Gurdwara Janam Asthan, Nankana Sahib<sup>[47]</sup> but the main culprit was arrested by the Nankana police.<sup>[48]</sup>

## II. INTERPRETATIONS OF KARTARPUR CORRIDOR

The opening of the Kartarpur Corridor paved the way for the popularization of the Punjabi nationalism and reunion of the Muslim-Sikh communities after a long time. It has created a sense of unity among the Punjabis. Jaiteg Singh Anant resented the loss of the Punjabis only, first in 1947 and then in the Indi-Pak wars.<sup>[49]</sup> The Kartarpur Corridor can be interpreted in various ways. One of the most relevant results is the revival of the Punjabi brotherhood in the Punjab. The Punjabis met each other after 72 years and shared the hilarious memories of the joint living in the pre-partition Punjab and the painful stories of 1946-47 migrations. The Sikhs visited the paternal and maternal villages locating in different areas of the Punjab and met the old men and women whom they found still alive. The Muslims gave them an enthusiastic welcome, they kept on weeping to look at their forefathers' birthplaces. Many Sikhs took water or soil of the houses as the sacred relics to their homes—this brotherly affection set in a new era of the Punjabi brotherhood. The sharing of the traditions, values, past stories and joint living created a sense of unity between the Sikh and Muslim young generations, which can sensitize the Punjabi people to think of the Punjabi nationalism. It can further promote and sensitize the Punjabi language, literature and history. Some link it to the idea of the greater Punjab or Khalistan, but this is merely a sharing and celebration of the common culture.

The Kartarpur Corridor comprises

economic, religious, cultural, political, literary, archeological, social, regional and international domains. Although the Kartarpur Corridor has a direct impact on the Pakistan-India relationship but interestingly it will affect the internal politics and social trends of India in general and the Punjab in particular. The electoral history of India verifies that the ruling political party of India always used anti-Pakistan propaganda to win the elections. But the understanding on the Kartarpur Corridor can further impact the traditional strategy in the Indian electioneering campaign despite the fact the BJP will sell the enmity with Pakistan. In the past, we saw the confused BJP leadership sometimes talked against Pakistan and tried for some time to take credit of the Kartarpur Corridor. The Indian government on 550<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev decided to issue a currency having picture of the Guru to please the Sikhs. They have also decided to commemorate this year as the year of Guru Nanak Dev but generally it was realized that the BJP was not happy on the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor. On the other hand, 'BJP orchestrated attempts to control leading Sikh shrines' that created conflict between BJP and S. Akali Dal.<sup>[50]</sup> The Lok Sabha elections were likely to be held in March 2019 while the threatening environment created by the central government made the Punjab's Chief Minister scared and under-pressure therefore, he did not come to Pakistan on the earth-breaking ceremony of the Kartarpur Corridor despite of his family's direct and undeniable contribution to the history of Kartarpur sahib. He seemed least interested in this project. Perhaps he was under the duress of the BJP drive and he was also expected to be retired from the politics after this tenure. Moreover, the CM was under a constant pressure that PM Modi could topple his government and impose governor rule in the Punjab if some mistake was made by the Congressite CM. The Congress was also canvassing for the forthcoming state and the Lok Sabha elections. The elevating popularity of Navjot Singh Sidhu also disturbed the CM who objected the statements given by the Jatt Minister because this popularity could pave the way to the CM office in the coming time. If it happens, this will set in a new era of social, cultural and political history of the region because Sidhu is the only politician who has



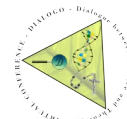
raised the voice for regional peace with a blunt determination. The Kartarpur Corridor is being perceived as a symbol of harmony and peace that will replicate the Pak-India relations as the dream of SAARC to ensure the borderless travel in South Asian region could not come true.<sup>[51]</sup> Many Sikhs believe that this Corridor will bring real peace in the region because Guru Nanak sowed the seeds of peace and harmony in this land. The development and trade will elevate the social and economic status of the Punjabis and other people.

The role of Navjot Singh Sidhu popularized the Congress in the Punjab. The daring and practical politics demonstrated by the Jatt Minister made the Sikhs realise that being friend of Imran Khan, Sidhu was welcomed with a great honour in Pakistan. They are also of the opinion that players are always bold and habitual of taking risk so Imran Khan and Sidhu exhibited the same zeal and enthusiasm and won the day. The Kartarpur *Langha* is a tremendous achievement of Sidhu and the role elevated his political stature to a remarkable point and this cracked the Akali Dal circles. Under the religious fervour, even many Akali leaders admire Sidhu's overture and achievement regarding Kartarpur Corridor. Therefore, in future, BJP can face a tough situation and lose many seats in the Punjab while the Congress can be elevated to a more effective position. The well-known newspaper, *The News*, analysed about the internal politics of India that both the political parties have been trying to project the Kartarpur Corridor as their respective success. The newspaper writes that the BJP government seemed skeptic to materialize the hopes of the Sikhs regarding the completion of the Kartarpur project because of the lack of consensus among the departments. They were taking up this project as a political gimmick in the coming elections therefore the reality could surface out after the elections.<sup>[52]</sup>

The offer to access the Kartarpur Sahib infused a sense of confidence among the Pakistani minorities. The initiative, development and the completion of the Kartarpur Corridor has defused the anti-Pakistan propaganda as for several years a strong lobby has been propagating about the plight of the minorities in Pakistan but now the bold step of the Kartarpur Corridor by the PTI government has made

the world realize about the real picture of the Pakistani society and conducive environment ensured by the Pakistan's government for interfaith harmony. The completion of Kartarpur Corridor is a jerking blow to the extremism in Pakistan. The facilitative and capacious attitude of the Pakistani government and the Punjabi Muslims has totally changed the Sikh perception towards Pakistan. Sidhu rightly articulated that 140 million Sikhs would work as mouthpiece of Imran Khan.<sup>[53]</sup> The same can be witnessed on the social media. The Sikhs in the UK, France, Germany, Canada and other countries had protested against the BJP government's measures against the Muslims in India and demonstrated their unremitting support for the Kashmiri people. They condemned the abolition of 370 and 35A by the BJP government. The acting head of Akal Takht Giani Harpreet Singh repeated the Sikh religious tradition to support the depressed faction anywhere in the world. He declared that Sikhs would support the Kashmiri people because their Gurus preach it. The Sikhs would stand against the barbarity inflicted on the Kashmiri women.<sup>[54]</sup>

The initiative of Kartarpur Corridor taken by the Pakistani government has blocked the Indian propaganda in which the Sikhs were misguided that the Pakistani Muslims did not respect the Gurdwaras and the Sikh sacred places. In the past, Sikhs were brainwashed that the Gurdwaras in Pakistan were full of dirt (Muslim *gandgi sutt dendei ne*) and they had demolished the Sikh sacred buildings but now Sikhs are obviously clear about the Indian blame game against Pakistan.<sup>[55]</sup> Many Sikhs living in different countries scared enough from the extremism did not come to Pakistan but the Sikhs arrived in Pakistan expressed their feelings and emotions that they had slight fear when they were planning to come to Pakistan but as they got along with the people of the Pakistani Punjab they found nothing strange. All people, language, responses and environment were familiar and all this made them very comfortable and happy.<sup>[56]</sup> They enjoyed a warm hospitality and love of the Punjabi brothers and many times tears sprang to their eyes on the devotional welcome by the Punjabi Muslims. On the other hand, the Indian government took up the Kartarpur Corridor initiative as a political gimmick. Initially,





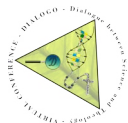
the approval of the Kartarpur Corridor was not included in the cabinet meeting agenda. Even the media in Delhi opposed this proposal and declared it 'as corridor of terror.' Amrinder Singh and anti-Kartarpur corridor faction shared their grievances on different occasions:<sup>[57]</sup>

The Chief Minister in Punjab has vented his frustration at the reluctance of the Centre to sanction the necessary funds for development to start the construction of the infrastructure for the Corridor. Vocal voices in the press, too, have raised security concerns about the development, with some sections openly hostile, citing the legacy of Sikh militancy and the on-going insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>[58]</sup>

Despite the opposition by many in India, the Corridor was enlisted later in the cabinet agenda with its main objective to counter the Pakistan's move.<sup>[59]</sup> The BJP intended not to approve this Corridor but the rejection could root out the BJP and Akali Dal politics from the Punjab therefore the BJP's hate-ridden politics failed to further damage the Guru's mission in the Punjab<sup>[60]</sup> and they approved this project. On the other hand, the world witnessed Pakistan's respect for Sikhism and the moral and political support to the Sikh community as to Gurharpal Singh, 'no formal opposition has been expressed against the initiative.'<sup>[61]</sup> The Kartarpur Corridor has been taken as a liberal gesture at international level and Pakistan was admired as an anti-terrorism country. In a meeting of UN human rights chapter, Director, Sikh Human Rights Group Dr. Jasdev Singh Rai (an eminent writer and human rights activist) appreciated Imran Khan's endeavour to facilitate the Sikh community by opening Kartarpur. Now the Sikhs in UK and other continents feel that Sikhs are safe while traveling in Pakistan.<sup>[62]</sup> To dent this situation, the BJP forces in the coming days can try to sabotage this mutual understanding just to reassert in the politics with their extremist agenda.

Guru Nanak Dev's message of interfaith harmony, love and peace can be seen in the Gurdwaras wherein people belonging to every religion can go and eat food. In Kartarpur Sahib, the presence of a Christian Langri, Muslim and Sikh visitors amused Gurmeet Kaur because Nanak's teaching was being practiced there in the real spirit. Gurmeet Kaur writes that all the people irrespective of their religious

backgrounds should be allowed to go to the darbar because 'After all, Baba Nanak belonged to the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and the atheists alike.'<sup>[63]</sup> Samiullah Malik, a known journalist from UK, told that although the Sikhs supported Kashmiri people in Europe but he had disagreed with Imran Khan and Gen. Bajwa on the Kartarpur corridor policy. Before that he along with other friends had chalked out a solid plan on Kartarpur corridor as a gesture for religious harmony and presented to Gen. Parvez Mushraf<sup>[64]</sup> The role of religio-political parties in Pakistan is usually criticized especially being against the minority rights, but at the initial stage neither religious people nor religio-political parties opposed the Kartarpur Corridor that is a good sign of accommodating attitude of the religious political parties towards the Sikhs. A weak sound on Qadian few miles away from the border was listened which made no point so was not taken up by any faction. Navjot Singh Sidhu's presence in the Qadiani community provided a small stuff to this small rival group but it did not appear as a counterpoise. The Punjabis desired to facilitate the Sikh brothers on the Kartarpur chapter. The Jamiat Ulama-i-Islam (F) staged Dharna politics against Imran Khan and the major demand was the resignation of the Prime Minister but having thin stuff for, Maulana Fazlur Rehman criticized the Kartarpur Corridor that could not embarrass the government, officials and masses in the Punjab. He shared his reservations on opening Kartarpur border and closing border with Afghanistan<sup>[65]</sup> although the Afghan border issue was a timely hitch and there is already no visa restriction for both sides to cross the Pak-Afghan borders. The Maulana expressed the same while addressing in the Tribal Rights Conference that 'This is very strange that Pakistan's border with Afghanistan has been sealed, while the policy towards India has been softened by establishing a new corridor on the eastern border.'<sup>[66]</sup> The government and Punjabis did not bother the negligible anti-Kartarpur Corridor whisper and enthusiastically hosted the Sikh pilgrims coming from different corners of the world. The world admitted that the PTI government had opened the Kartarpur corridor with good intentions and its main purpose was to project the Pakistan's belief on the interfaith harmony and equal rights and privileges of the minorities in the country as propounded in the speech of Quaid-i-Azam MA



Jinnah on 11 August 1947.<sup>[67]</sup> MA Jinnah shared his future vision of Pakistan:

“Now, if we want to make this great State of Pakistan happy and prosperous, we should wholly and solely concentrate on the well-being of the people, and especially of the masses and the poor. If you will work in co-operation, forgetting the past, burying the hatchet, you are bound to succeed. If you change your past and work together in a spirit that every one of you, no matter to what community he belongs, no matter what relations he had with you in the past, no matter what is his colour, caste, or creed, is first, second, and last a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges, and obligations, there will be no end to the progress you will make. ... You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place or worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the State. As you know, history shows that in England conditions, some time ago, were much worse than those prevailing in India today. The Roman Catholics and the Protestants persecuted each other. Even now there are some States in existence where there are discriminations made and bars imposed against a particular class. Thank God, we are not starting in those days. We are starting in the days where there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another, no discrimination between one caste or creed and another. We are starting with this fundamental principle: that we are all citizens, and equal citizens, of one State.”<sup>[68]</sup>

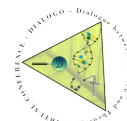
The vision of Quaid-i-Azam advocated in the speech vividly ensured the minority rights but the subsequent governments could not follow the direction set by the founding father.

The number of the pilgrims of Kartarpur Sahib remained fluctuating and attracted less number of visitors from India after November celebrations but the facilitative environment will convince more and more to visit this sacred place in future. After 550<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary celebration of Guru Nanak Sahib in November 2019 the number of the Indian visitors decreased. In November 2019, 11000 people came from India while in December 22717 Sikhs visited the Kartarpur Gurdwara. But from day to day this

number downed and the main reason is that most of the Sikhs residing in rural or urban areas don't possess the passports. Moreover, the Indian youth avoid having their passports stamped by the Pakistani authority under the fear that their applications for western country visa may be turned down which can undermine their career. Kartarpur in the coming decades will feed the people belonging to different religions of the region. Pakistan and India will get economic benefit from this Corridor especially Pakistan will attain more economic benefits than India. Visitors coming to Pakistan from all over the world will travel, eat, stay and buy from the holy places which will play an important role in the economic stability as Iran, Saudi Arabia and Iraq earn a lot from the religious tourism and they attain not only commercial benefits from travel, food, stay, shopping, taxes, etc. but also secure the sympathy and mutual understanding which helps the people to contact. Such endeavours to create a peace zone will directly affect the foreign policy of the countries and both can agree to start the commercial activities. The Pakistani Muslims can be facilitated on the Urs of the Muslim saints having tombs (mazar) in India if the Kartarpur is permitted to play its peaceable role.

### III. RESERVATIONS

This is a natural phenomenon that any policy or project attracts or offers divergent responses. The contradictory opinions help to verify the merits and point out the demerits. Such criticism refines the planning and work. Luckily, many groups with different reservations emerged and shared their respective opinions about the Kartarpur corridor which definitely guided the policymakers and management and it will further steer out them in the future refinement endeavours. Many times it happened that policy is blocked on a trivial opposition but the Pakistani government ought to be admired that despite internal and external criticism and border aggression, they accomplished this sacred mission. The Kartarpur Corridor project was partly criticized by few on different grounds. Not a single Muslim from any Muslim country except Pakistan showed any concern over the Qadiani question but a small group within Pakistan shared few anti-Kartarpur project posts



on the social media which was suffocated with the hilarious celebrations by the federal and provincial governments along with the Punjabi masses. A 40-member delegation of the Muslim Ulama<sup>[69]</sup> visited Kartarpur Corridor under chairman, Pakistan Ulama Council & Muttahidda Ulama Board Maulana Muhammad Tahir Ashrafi on 1 January 2020. They expressed their satisfaction on the arrangements. They stated that only Sikhs could benefit from this Corridor while Qadianis cannot cross the Pakistani check-posts. They demanded the government to take stern action against the propagandists who are linking Qadiani question to the Kartarpur Corridor. Maulana Ashrafi also condemned the mongers who try to sabotage the noble mission.<sup>[70]</sup> Gurharpal Singh talks of the tilt of the state policy of Pakistan towards the communities based on the religious rather than ethnic identity as mentioned by Ian Talbot. The access to the Sikh religious places instead of cultural exchange means to marginalize the 'Punjabi ethno-nationalists' by Pakistan:

Designating Sikh issues as religious and essentially of access to sacred places controlled and managed by the Pakistan state, denudes them of their shared political and cultural importance that contradicts the official narrative of the two-nation theory.<sup>[71]</sup>

First, the two-nation theory is not an official narrative of Pakistan as Quaid-i-Azam on 11 August 1947 had clearly structured the state policy that all the religious communities would be considered as equal in Pakistan. It meant the end of the 'religious nationalism' and revival of the 'territorial nationalism' after the achievement of Pakistan. Now all religious communities are citizens of Pakistan. All-India Muslim League highlighted the religious identity to collect the Muslims on one platform from where they could struggle to secure their due rights usurped by the Hindu majority. In the perspective of 'Islamic Republic,' minorities, ethnicity and Sikh sacred places, it is necessary to know the two-nation theory, philosophy and strategy of the All-India Muslim League, 'Islamic republic,' etc. Misconception regarding two-nation theory during the freedom struggle can be quoted from different political magnets in the meaning of their own interpretation (communitarian interpretation). The term 'two-

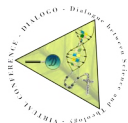
nation' does not contain word either 'Islam' or 'Muslim' rather it denotes that when a group of any society accepts new religion, it brings several changes in their personal and social life. These changes establish their separate identity. Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism as different philosophies bifurcated the society into different religious identities therefore two-nation theory means 'a religious group different from other religious groups' on the basis of their respective distinct beliefs or religious philosophies. The two-nation theory interprets that the Muslims follow different tenets (of social life and beliefs from dressing, eating, drinking to hereafter life) from other religions. Being different from other religions is a two-nation theory. Any religious group could/can adopt this term but it is attributed to the Muslims of British India because they owned, used and popularised this term in the writings, oratory, statements, dialogues, conferences and scholarly and religious literature of the day. All-India Muslim League assembled the Muslims based on the religion of Islam, but the strategy or action was based on the political philosophy popularized by the British. Therefore, the League leadership worked on the western political lines. Political party, nationalism, elections, assembly, party manifesto all were the legacy of west; therefore, the policy of the government was not contradictory to that of the State of Pakistan.

Gurmeet Kaur dissatisfied with the construction and decoration of all the Gurdwaras in India and elsewhere including Kartarpur Sahib shared her reservation about the loss of the nature exhibited around the Kartarpur Sahib:

Sikhs at large do not want Kartarpur Sahib to turn into a tourist hotspot like Darbar Sahib in Amritsar. The serenity, the presence of Baba Nanak in the forests around the River Ravi, the trees, the farms, the quiet premises, the chirping of the birds and the organic langar served in the open yard, is what makes Kartarpur Sahib unique and that must stay.<sup>[72]</sup>

Gurmeet Kaur further criticizes the decoration and beautification of the Gurdwaras in India:

We Sikhs have lost most of our heritage sites due to a lack of planning in architectural preservation, a lack of farsightedness and



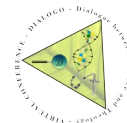
enlightened leadership. Kar Sewa groups have marbled all Gurdwaras in East Punjab and any heritage and artefacts from the Guru period have been destroyed. Thankfully, Pakistan heritage sites, due to little access to these self demolition units, have remained largely intact.<sup>[73]</sup>

Gurmeet also proposed the government to declare the Sikh sacred places as the national heritage which would be highly appreciated at the world level.<sup>[74]</sup> The preservation of the green fields was a good proposal of Gurmeet Kaur but to facilitate the pilgrims the construction of roads, langarkhana, sitting lodge, offices, etc. could not be overlooked. No Gurdwara throughout the Subcontinent retains its original shape and surrounding because the devotees do believe that they decorate and beautify their own houses so how they could tolerate the Gurdwaras left in a poor condition. Being border area Pakistan was to build a strong fence around the fixed area to contain and restrict the movement of the visitors therefore the Pakistani authorities were left with no option except what they did. The Sikh pilgrims could question if these sacred places lack roads and other facilities for the pilgrims or if the sacred buildings present as ruins. Therefore, the economic realities be realized and the sacredness of the buildings ought to be ensured. The well-educated and artistic brains sought to preserve the green premises but the common Sikhs were more concerned with their religious desire to have *khuley darshan* or visit the Kartarpur Sahib. The government of Pakistan completed the project according to its own planning and feasibility. Therefore, the construction planned on the Kartarpur Sahib was inevitable but yes the further construction must not destroy the green fields around the Gurdwara Sahib.

Imran Khan talking on Pak-India relation highlighted the difference between the state policy and mass aspirations. He expressed his feelings that he went to play cricket in India having image of the Indians as enemies but his cricket fans' love made him surprised.<sup>[75]</sup> Imran Khan's policy statement on the Kartarpur Sahib clearly pledged that the government had planned to develop Kartarpur Sahib to highlight the soft image of Pakistan at the international level. This Corridor was to project the brotherly commitment with the minorities living in

Pakistan and belief on the interfaith harmony.<sup>[76]</sup> Imran Khan also evaluated the importance of Kartarpur Sahib as a religious tourism resort because he strictly sees the status of Kartarpur for Sikhs as the Muslims feel about Makkah and Madina<sup>[77]</sup> but it created apprehension in few Sikh circles because they desired to retain its sacred image. Religious tourism is an international phenomenon and Muslims visit Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, India, and other Muslim countries under the religious devotion. In Pakistan, retired Army Chief Gen. Aslam Baig in a TV interview attributed this Corridor to the Sikh struggle for Khalistan<sup>[78]</sup> but his contention was rejected by the Pakistani people who believe that the Kartarpur Sahib project is not a political gimmick<sup>[79]</sup> but a symbol of interfaith harmony, Pakistan is a multi-religious society and the Prime Minister and other government persons have been considering it as a policy of religious harmony.<sup>[80]</sup> Harsimrat Kaur Badal stated that people in India attributing the Kartarpur Corridor to Khalistan don't believe in the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev.<sup>[81]</sup> But if we talk on the Khalistan struggle, it ostensibly deals with the question of Sikhism and Sikhs. *Raj krega Khalsa* is their religious tenet having purely a political vision. Hindustan is a political achievement of the religious community called Hindus while Pakistan is a political achievement of the Muslims so what about the Sikhs? This religious tenet will come true but the strategy to win it is the major question.

The Kartarpur Corridor reflects the honour for Sikhism and other religions in Pakistan but if it encourages other movements in the world it will be a natural phenomenon as the French Revolution affected the movements in the other countries but the Pakistani government has done it purely as a noble cause. The counteraction to such impact may be decent and human attitude of the Hindu majority towards the minorities including Sikhs, Muslims and Dalits which can convince the Sikhs not to go for separation. The Hindus had already experienced it by subjugating the Muslims which ultimately dragged them to launch the Pakistan movement. Therefore, instead of creating doubts on the Kartarpur Corridor, the BJP government should remember the Hindu suppression of the Muslims in British India resulted in the creation of Pakistan.



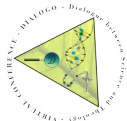


Keeping the past in mind, they should respect the rights and integrity of the Sikh community living in India otherwise no courageous nation can be enslaved forever. Therefore, India should accommodate the minorities by addressing their grievances.

### CONCLUSION

Time has cleared the Sikhs and Muslims that rulers and masses are totally different components of any society therefore decisions taken by the Mughal rulers cannot be translated as the will and consent of the Muslims living in Mughal India. The Sikh question started during the British rule and still seeks solution. Despite having cultural, political and social heritage and sacred places in Pakistan, the Sikhs joined India in 1947 while having played a patriotic role for India they were still humiliated and their sacred places, honour and lives experienced unforgettable wrath and barbarity at the hands of the Hindus therefore the Sikh question is yet to be solved. I think, either they can go for the sovereign state or autonomy within the union having right to sign agreement on the Sikh sacred places anywhere in the world. Sikhs embraced failure in 1947 because they lacked 'unity' and 'leadership.' These problems still persist in the Sikh world therefore before targeting any option they will have to eliminate at least this lacking. The saints contributed marvelously to the religious conversion as well as the communal peace in the Subcontinent. There were the saints who spread Islam and Sikhism in the Hindu dominated society without imparting fear and violence. Interestingly, these saints are still playing pivotal role in maintaining interfaith harmony, coexistence and communitarian peace in South Asia. It is pleasant feeling that the Sikh prayers have turned truly fruitful after 72 years and 14 million Sikhs utter 'Pakistan zindabad' with the religious fervour because the devotees always pray for the prosperity and security of the sacred land.<sup>[82]</sup> Many Sikhs appreciated the PTI government and suggested that Imran Khan ought to be awarded with international peace prize.<sup>[83]</sup> The Kartarpur Corridor, being a revolutionary step, will cast a tremendous impact on the politics of India, Kashmir and social setup of Pakistan. Being situated on the Pakistan-India border, it will never be freed from

the watch, monitoring and supervision by the agencies of both the rival countries which can hatch any conspiracy anytime. The Kartarpur Corridor is presented as the Pakistan's initiative therefore BJP was not comfortable with the project so can never tolerate the success or a sense of superiority of Pakistan in the foreign and internal affairs. The existing tide of extremism can restrict the governments to maintain their respective administrative influence in the affairs relating to permit, process of the permit, documentation, searching the visitors, suspicion on the visitors which sometimes can cause an ill-will. Therefore, at the Kartarpur point Pakistani government should deploy Sikh and minority personnel along with other Pakistani officials for the checking and searching the visitors. Pakistan ought to devise a mechanism to ensure respect and security of the Sikh visitors. Some precautionary measures should be taken to prevent any negative image of Pakistan and to avoid any embarrassment and propaganda. The Pakistani policymakers should work out the contingency plan to counter any emergency and embarrassing situation. The facilitation of the Sikhs should be the main objective of any policy designed or to be designed by the Pakistani authorities. The first embarrassing incident on the place took place when a girl Manjeet Kaur<sup>[84]</sup> from district Rohtak of Haryana State eloped with a Pakistani boy Awais Mukhtar from Gujranwala and was returned to India. The Pakistani government immediately introduced biometric entry and exit so that no one could sneak into the other territory<sup>[85]</sup> which has blocked such incidents in future. These incidents may occur in future as a human mistake or defiant nature but the governments ought to deal with them as individual act instead of allegation on any country. Individual cases should not be politicized by the stakeholders. The Sikh position regarding oppressed groups in the world specifically their support for the Muslims locked in the Indian-held Kashmir and victims of the citizen act is highly plausible and admirable. This open support to the Muslims and other marginalized groups of India has been appreciated by the nations of the world who believe in the human rights and interfaith harmony. The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres visited the Kartarpur Corridor and considered it as "a practical proof of Pakistan's



desire for peace and interfaith harmony.”<sup>[86]</sup>

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The governments of Pakistan and India will have to realize their responsibilities to materialize the hopes of the Sikhs and peoples of the world regarding peaceful environment for the pilgrims. The spirit of the agreement between Pakistan and India can be maintained by taking the measures on the basis of the religious harmony in the real sense. Following recommendations are listed:

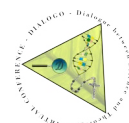
- [1] Holy places should not to be politicized. The foreign office of Pakistan should not retaliate aggressively against the ill-tempered and irritable statements made by the Indian politicians or officials on the Kartarpur Corridor as such action by Pakistan will provide India an opportunity to damage the undertaken noble cause.
- [2] Mechanism of safety, monitoring, and administration chalked out already extensively must be implemented in a true spirit and services of the people belonging to the minorities should be hired for this purpose. The other officials ought to be monitored on the basis of civility, cooperation, soft-spoken ability, and expertise in English and Punjabi languages. Rude and short tempered attitude of any of the deployed personnel should not be tolerated by the authorities.
- [3] Despite the effort to keep this project limited, basic facilities such as medical treatment, water in winter and hot weathers, arrangements compatible to the temperature, electricity and related staff, etc. will broaden its horizon and ultimately much will be required to do on the site. Therefore, the administrations should be mentally prepared to deal with the changing situations. For the exchange of notes and information between the two check-posts will be useful mechanism for both the countries.
- [4] Although the Corridor is being said to cover 4 km but in fact it will stretch by the time over vast areas so what will be the status of this area, will be the major question. The green fields around the Gurdwara should

be retained and the further construction should be planned miles away from the Kartarpur Sahib.

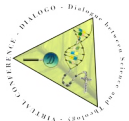
- [5] The mechanism to resolve any issue be clearly drafted and the Sikh representation should be made compulsory if any problem emerges.

### REFERENCES

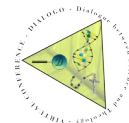
- [1] Secret Police Abstract of Intelligence, 1943, file no. 411, para. 397 and 407.
- [2] Many write 17 years. Jagtar Singh, 'Kartarpur Corridor: Divided Sikh Homeland to get reconnected on November 9,' 25 October 2019, <https://www.google.com/search?q=Jagtar+Singh%2C+%E2%80%98Kartarpur+Corridor%3A+Divided+Sikh+Homeland&oq=Jagtar+Singh%2C+%E2%80%98Kartarpur+Corridor%3A+Divided+Sikh+Homeland&aqs=chrome..69i57.704j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8,20/12/2019>.
- [3] Mehrban's *Janamsakhi* disseminates comprehensive details of Guru Nanak's time at Kartarpur Sahib. Dalvir S. Pannu, *The Sikh Heritage*, 24, 181, 208.
- [4] *Ibid.*, 208-211.
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