

Structure of Charismatic Mobilization in Kali Bein River Cleaning Project

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ABSTRACT: This article examines the applicability of Max Weber's well known analysis of charismatic leadership and charismatic community to the charisma of the leader of a movement started to clean a river that holds religious history. The concept of charisma holds an important place in the studies related to collective action. The processes of routinization of charisma has been studied in order to assess whether the movement is moving towards the more sustainable and stable authority structure. The paper attempts to find out the locus of charisma and then goes on to find the evidences for the process of routinization of charisma.

Keywords: Charsima, Charismatic community, Routinization, Rational-legal authority.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper tries to explore the dynamics of charismatic authority structure in a movement initiated by a spiritual leader who on account of his efforts to save a river later became an eminent environmentalist. He is instrumental in mobilizing a community to save a dying river- the Kali Bein. The paper traces the locus of charisma and analyses the processes of making of a charismatic community and routinisation of charisma. This was accomplished with the help of observations carried out in the field, content analysis of the published material related to the work on the river and interviewing the key persons involved in the project, the *sevaks* and visitors as well.

The river Kali Bein¹ is historically very important. At Sultanpur Lodhi, more than 500 years ago, the first guru of Sikhs, Guru Nanak Dev, uttered *mool mantra* (the essence) of *Gurbani* (Sikh religious philosophy) at the banks of this river. It is named as '*kali*' because the color of its water is blackish. It is not directly an ice water stream. The folk lore goes like, "the Guru disappeared into the river and came out after three days and uttered the *mool mantra* which is the essence of *Gurbani*." Apart from its religio-philosophical significance, Kali Bein is also closely linked to the religious and cultural life of the Doaba region. Many historical *gurudwaras* are situated on the banks of the Kali Bein.

Kali Bein has been called the 'life line' of Doaba, the central region of Punjab. It drains out the excess of water from the waterlogged area of Mukerian and Dasuya tehsils of Hoshiarpur district and brings it to a larger area of Kapurthala district where it is much needed for the recharging of water table. In times of flood, the Kali Bein comes to the rescue of the lives and property of the people, especially in Kapurthala district, by draining out flood water. Kali Bein is thus very crucial for the life and economy of Doaba area, where more than 80 per cent of the people depend on agriculture.

The Kali Bein rises from Terkiana marshland in tehsil Mukerian of Hoshiarpur district. The water that oozes out in district Hoshiarpur flows in it. In past, Kali Bein was directly linked to the Beas River. With passage of time Beas changed its course and retired by a few hundred meters away from the place of Bein's origin. Since then the Kali Bein has been taking its water from waterlogged areas and marshes of Terkiana near the Beas. Here small quantities of underground water that oozes out at various places such as Dhanoa, Himmatpura, Vadhaia, Shatabkot, Terkiana, etc, in district Hoshiarpur, moves downwards in narrow waterways and join together to form a small brook in marshland of Terkiana. Beginning its journey from Terkiana marshland in Mukerian Tehsil of Hoshiarpur, Kali Bein, thus, moves in South-western direction. It flows through the districts of Hoshiarpur and Kapurthala.

¹ The Punjabi word *Bein* or *vein* is derived from Sanskrit word *veni* which means "a water body" or a "particular stream" according to Punjabi-Hindi Dictionary. In view of geographical situation and behavior of *beins* in Punjab, it seems a stream that moves in an intricately zigzag way.

Excessive pollution, encroachments and the scarcity of water are the main reasons due to which the river had been at the verge of extinction. The Beas River which was the main source of water for Kali Bein has moved away from the place of origin of the bein with passage of time. However, it went on supplying its water to the Bein through underground flow for some time. But with establishment of Pong dam in 1960, the level of water in Beas itself went down and it could not supply sufficient quantities of water for maintaining regular flow in the bein. Secondly, water level in Terkiana marshland, which also fed the bein, went down. Thirdly, due to the faulty practices of the authorities concerned, the gates of Budho-Barkat barrage were closed and stored water was not allowed to flow into the Kali Bein.

The polluting effluents into the river which include poisonous chemical wastage of factories and highly infectious wastage of hospitals had been seeping into the ground and polluting the underground water also. The water flowing into the river also contained fertilizers which contained nutrients such as nitrates and phosphates. In excess levels, these nutrients over-stimulate the growth of aquatic plants and algae which clog the water way and use the dissolved oxygen. Moreover, the areas on the banks of the river have been encroached by the builders of houses and other construction. Farmers who own lands adjoining the river also keep expanding their fields on the vacant and unused area of the Kali Bein. The passage of Kali Bein has narrowed down due to such encroachments which have often led to the frequent floods in the area. All these problems were leading the river to the verge of extinction. This plight of the river was identified by a local religious leader. The success of the Kali bein cleaning owes itself to the charisma of its leader Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal. Being a *nirmala* saint, working for spreading the *gurmat*² has been his duty, but the appalling condition of the bein gave him a mission, a mission to restore the glory of a river which held a very important place in Guru Nanak's life. His profound sense of mission and his leadership by example; his oratorical skills and emotional appeal in the communication to the people attracted people to the cause. He already had many followers who joined him while doing other welfare works. With these followers, he started to clean the river and ended up attracting thousands of supporters who helped clean the bein.

II. FINDING THE LOCUS OF CHARISMA

The locus of charisma has to be found either in social/historical or the personality of the charismatic leader. For Chinoy (1961), and Friedland (1964), social and historical contexts are critical determinants of charisma. Willner (1984), on the other hand argued that the charisma arise from the personality of the charismatic leader. She identified four factors that may attribute charisma to a leader: (1) the invocation of important cultural myths by the leader, (2) performance of what are perceived as historic or extraordinary feats, (3) projection of attributes "with an uncanny or a powerful aura, and (4) outstanding rhetorical skills. In order to gain insight on the locus of charisma we will examine the socio-historical and personality factors of the leader. Since Sant Balbir Singh (SBS) belongs to a sect in Sikhism, named *nirmala*, we will first outline the history of the *nirmalas*.

2.1 History of Nirmalas

The literal meaning of *Nirmala* is pure and pious. It is a sect in Sikhism which was initiated at the time of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth guru of Sikhs. He sent five of his chosen Sikhs, namely, Ram Singh, Karam Singh, Ganda Singh, Vir Singh and Sobha Singh to Benaras for deeper study of Sanskrit holy books with a view to consolidate the philosophical basis of Sikhism. They returned to Anandpur Sahib after completing their study around 1699, the year of initiation of *khalsa*. In those times, it took anyone 12 years to complete the study of Sanskrit holy books. But these Sikhs did it in 12 months only. Guru ji assigned them a task of translating Sanskrit holy books into *Gurmukhi* (the Punjabi script) and preaching *gurbani* to *gursangat*. These five Sikhs and their followers came to be known as *Nirmalas*. They wore saffron colored clothes. They established *kutiyas* or *deras* to preach *gurmat* in accordance with Sikh traditions. Some *Nirmalas* did not settle at one place and kept moving from one place to another preaching *gurbani* and bringing people out of the blind faith in *brahmanical* social order. The sect got established with the establishment of *akharas* at different places where *gurmat* is preached. However, the *Nirmala* sect does not come under the major sects of Sikhism. This could be because of their deep interest in preaching the *gurmat* rather than establishing themselves as a separate sect in Sikhism. This is a reason for their selfless service towards humanity.

2.1.1 Sant Lal Singh

He is the founder of Nirmal kutiya, Seechewal. He was born in Khanpur village of Nakodar tehsil of Jalandhar District. He left his job in the army to join ascetics in Haridwar, where he stayed for 14 years. He kept moving from one place to another and preaching *gurmat* in Doaba and Malwa regions of Punjab. Finally, he reached Seechewal where he spent the last five years of his life. He stayed at a place outside the village,

² Gurmat- Guru's teachings

which was surrounded by heavy vegetation. The place had been visited by other nirmala saints for meditation, but no one stayed there before Sant Lal Singh. He spent most of his time in meditation and praying. His desires were very limited. He also used water very judiciously. The women from the village used to bring food from him, but he accepted food only from a woman who had prepared it while doing *simran*.

He used to tell everyone who came to him to do *simran*. That was the only way out of miseries, according to him. He did not like to meet too many people and spent all his time in meditation. He wanted his body after his death to be cremated, rather he wanted it to be offered to river Ganga so that it could become food for the living organisms in the river. He passed on 16th March, 1978.

2.1.2 Sant Avtaar Singh

He was born in 1953 in Jagraon tehsil of Ludhiana. He took over the charge of Nirmal kutiya in 1981. He spent many years in service of Sant Darbara Singh of Lopon. He also remained in company of Sant Sucha Singh at Kankhal in Haridwar. From there he came to take charge of Nirmal kutiya, Seechewal on request of the people of the village. He was 28 years old when he came to Seechewal. He got the bushes around the Nirmal kutiya cleared and improved the surroundings by planting trees. When he came to Seechewal, the villagers believed in superstitions. There was little cooperation and compassion among the villagers and they used to take drugs and intoxicants. Unlike Sant Lal Singh, he liked to meet people, listen to their problems and solve them as much as he could. He inspired people to come to Nirmal kutiya to hear *gurbani* and inspired the children and youth to learn to read *gurbani*. It was an entirely different atmosphere in Nirmal kutiya as compared to the times of Sant Lal Singh. Sant Avtaar Singh not only inspired boys but also girls to come to kutiya to learn *gurbani*. These children liked to do *sewa* in kutiya. He inspired everyone, irrespective of caste, religion and gender to come to Nirmal kutiya. He showed the people the path of communion with God by starting a stream of *gurbani* at Nirmal kutiya. He preached his followers to earn the wealth of *naam* by blending *sewa* (service), *simran* (meditation), and *satsang* (a spiritual discourse). He also worked towards spiritual transformation of the people of the area by preaching *gurbani* and teaching good moral values.

There are also some anecdotes that point towards the supernatural powers of Sant Avtaar Singh. One of them is related to curing a girl's eyes who due to some ailment could not see. She was a very ardent *sevak* of Sant Avtaar Singh. It is said that Sant ji had predicted for her that she for *sewa* only and should not be got married as it will not be good for her. She was got married though. But she had to leave her husband's house with her kids as they were violent and did not treat her well. She again joined Nirmal kutiya for *sewa* and got her two daughters educated.

Balbir was another dedicated *sevak*, who was lost in *sewa*, day and night. He left his college without completing his graduation to join *sewa* in Nirmal kutiya. Sant Avtaar Singh showed him the 'true' path on which he was to walk all through his life. He told Balbir that he will have to take charge of Nirmal kutiya as he is not going to live long. He knew what was going to happen in future and he prepared Balbir to handle everything after he is gone. He even knew the day and the way he was going to leave the world. On 27th May, 1988, he was assassinated by some extremists.

2.1.3 Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal

Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal has been leading the project to clean Kali Bein. He is a charismatic leader who has attracted lakhs of followers who offered their *karsewa* to clean the river. He was born in 1962 in Village Seechewal. He belongs to jatt community. His father was a small farmer. He has two brothers and three sisters. He had his elementary education from Government Elementary School, Seechewal and Matriculation from Matric High School, Nihaluwaal. He joined D.A.V. College, Nakodar afterwards. He had been a very intelligent student throughout and a very competent hockey player as well.

Balbir had a very spiritual bent of mind even since his childhood. He did not believe in fighting with his peers and always kept a good company. He used to go to Nirmal Kutiya regularly to do *sewa* for Sant Avtaar Singh along with other children in the village. He was Sant Avtaar Singh's favorite as he was very dedicated and a very diligent worker. He learned to read *gurbani* from Sant Avtaar Singh. In 1981, he left his college and family to join as a permanent *sewak* in Nirmal kutiya after Sant Avtaar Singh asked him to do so. His family was not happy with his decision but for him *sewa* was the only way of living. Day and night he tirelessly served Sant Avtaar Singh who chose him as his successor in Nirmal Kutiya. After Sant Avtaar Singh's demise Balbir Singh took charge of Nirmal Kutiya. His teacher had given him the strength of prayer and *simran*. For Balbir, serving his guru was like serving God. He considered himself very lucky that he had got this opportunity to serve a soul like Sant Avtaar Singh. His life revolved around his guru. It is said that Sant Avtaar Singh could see future. For this reason he chose Balbir Singh to continue the welfare and religious work after him. He "showed Balbir everything which scared him and he became nervous as he thought he was not capable enough to do everything all on his own." But Sant Avtaar Singh told him that he will always be by his side whenever he

would need him. Balbir Singh was anointed as Sant Balbir Singh by the *gursangat* as per Sant Avtaar Singh's wishes after his demise.

Sant Balbir Singh took upon himself all the work that his guru left. Like his guru he kept inspiring the *sangat* that came to Nirmal Kutिया to do *simran* and to live a life as per the ideals Guru Nanak Dev has left for us, that is, *kirt karna* (work), *naam japna* (pray), *vand chhakna* (sharing). He himself was a tireless worker. In all his welfare works he is personally involved. He himself starts the work of cleaning the village and laying down the roads. He planted several trees and drove tractor himself in the fields and in the river to clean it. He was the first one to jump in the polluted river to start cleaning, followed by his followers, and later lakhs of villagers and city dwellers. Several times, he has done the work of a mason while constructing buildings and ghats along the river.

He wakes up early in the morning for prayer and has instructed all the students living in Nirmal kutiya to do the same. There's a recital of *gurbani* in Nirmal kutiya every morning and the evening. He translates *gurbani* for the *sangat* that comes in Nirmal kutiya and inspires them to do the good deeds and preserve the environment as per told in *gurbani*.

From the above account, we can conclude that the locus of charisma is located in socio-historical factors as well as the personality of the charismatic leader. Whereas, history gave him the status of a saint, his exceptional personality factors facilitated the support of lakhs of people who helped him clean the river. As per Willner's thesis, SBS fulfills all four of the criteria. He invoked a religious history of the river in order to mobilize people. His welfare works are not shallow promises of a leader, but he leads by example. He has done for the people and the environment what seemed impossible to people. His "heroic" and "extraordinary" works has mesmerized his followers. He definitely possesses a "powerful aura", which is reflected from the fact that when he speaks, no one questions. He does not only invoke religious history of the river, but for the rationalists he has all the arguments that can silence them, such as "its not only the river, but everything is sacred. Everything that is related to any kind of life is sacred and needs to be protected and preserved."

Lastly, he possesses the 'outstanding rhetorical skills', which help him convince his audience of his ideas and vision. Bass and Avolio (1993) in their model of transformational leader noted that charismatic leaders are transformational leaders who are able to motivate the performance of the subordinates to the levels that exceed their own and their leader's expectations.

"SBS has done what no one else could do. We never imagined in our dreams that it is possible to revive this river, but he has made it possible. Only he could mobilize people in such large numbers who worked tirelessly with him, doing what they had never done in their life before."

House (1977) while outlining the personal traits of a charismatic leader argued that they have a strong conviction in their own beliefs and ideals and a very high self confidence. Through these personality traits he is able to motivate high levels of task accomplishment. They do it through role modeling. This is clear from the following narrative about SBS:

"he has always been first to start any task. He was the first to jump in the weed and poisonous insects ridden river to clean it. Others just followed him. Nothing in this world can stop him once he makes up his mind to do something."

III. THE CHARISMATIC COMMUNITY

According to Weber, every charismatic leader gathers a community, a group of permanent helpers or co-workers. In addition to this inner circle of disciples, comrades or followers, there may also be an outer circle of adherents. These latter support the charismatic leader's mission with money or other services in return for their salvation. Those from the inner circle also constitute the "personal staff" of select disciples, who surround the charismatic leader. This inner circle is represented by the permanent *sevaks* who either live in nirmal kutiya or spend most of their time with SBS. They also constitute the members of Ek Omkar Charitable Trust. The driver who takes him around, the video recorder and the photographer who goes with him everywhere to record the events, the computer operator, the office bearer, also fall in the inner circle. The outer circle is represented by all the *karsevaks* who offer their voluntary service for the river and other activities on a regular basis. They are the people who come from nearby villages and towns to offer *seva* for the river. Together they form the charismatic community, the community bound by the common goal given to them by their leader.

Shamin et al (1993) focused on levels of motivation that a charismatic leader may enthrall in his followers or in Weber's words 'charismatic community'. According to them a charismatic leader ties the self-concepts of their followers to the collective goals and experiences associated to the mission. They hypothesize that charismatic leader achieves his motivational outcomes through 4 mechanisms : (1) changing follower perceptions of the nature of work itself; (2) offering an appealing future vision; (3) developing a deep collective identity among followers, and; (4) heightening both individual and collective self efficacy.

As far as changing the perceptions of the nature of work is concerned, it was mostly common untrained people who drove big machines to clear the river, caught poisonous insects, lifted heavy loads, entering the dirty sewage waters to pull out the weeds. They did everything that they had not done before. The work that even the trained people would hesitate to do was accomplished by the laymen without any complaint. Rather they drew a feeling of fulfillment from doing it, because they were told they were doing *seva* to save a river that their Guru was so close to. They were told that it's not just a river, but a place of worship they needed to clean. The people kept pouring in thousands of numbers to save their guru's river. Hundreds of tractors were brought by the farmers to help clear the river bed and the banks. Many of them have to be returned because they did not need so many tractors. Donations started pouring in not only from within the country but from NRI's living in other countries as well. Some of the NRI's have bought the boats for the river and the JCBs were also donated by them.

Secondly, SBS told people that they will have not only a clean river but a clean and healthy environment and soil as well. Planting of trees, building treatment plants for sewerage water to be used for agriculture, building up of roads for better transportation of the people as well as the agricultural produce to the market were all part of the vision of SBS, which he fulfilled. The region which was turning into a wasteland due to unavailability of water for irrigation in one part and water logging in the other has become a prominent producer of fruits and vegetables. The groundwater level has improved, the soil fertility has improved, and people have better roads which have made markets approachable. The researcher saw a prominent contrast between the roads built in the region by SBS and his followers and the approach roads to villages and cities in other areas. Not only this, the youth of the region are more positively engaged in either *seva* or profitable works rather than wandering directionless and getting addicted to drugs.

Thirdly, the way the followers have taken upon the challenge of cleaning the river despite all the odds thrown in their way have instilled a strong sense of collective identity in them. They have not only worked together for a common cause but have also fought together for getting that task accomplished. They do not derive any material benefit from doing so. All they derive is a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. It is the best example of cooperation among people coming from different backgrounds just at the call of their leader. Within a span of few years the people have seen a tremendous change in their region and their lives. In words of a tourist who came to see the river and pay obeisance at the gurudwaras in Sultanpur Lodhi:

“when we turned towards the road leading to Sultanpur Lodhi, it seemed that we have entered a different world altogether. The city is beautiful and so is the river. You never want to leave from here. sitting on the river bank is like doing meditation. You can feel that everything that has been built around the river, the banks, the places to sit, the flowers, the trees, has a personal touch of people who have built them. Even if you are alone there, you never feel alone. I would like to come here often and offer *seva*. I want to be part of such a magnanimous work.”

In a charismatic movement there aren't any formal norms to follow when it comes to completion of the tasks, there isn't any strict time limit as well. The work is completed with sheer dedication and voluntary will. Since there is rarely a target for a specific work, or the high expectations from the leadership, the satisfaction level from even the little input is high. On the other hand, on leader's call the followers put all their energy, effort and time to complete the work. One *sewak* narrated:

“Sometimes we kept working for nights and days together on baba ji's call. We find satisfaction from doing it and we don't feel tired no matter how hard we work. When you do *seva*, all you think of is doing it with full dedication and not think of anything else. There is no parallel to the feeling when we complete a work with *seva*. Besides, nothing seems difficult. Baba ji is so innovative that even a trained engineer would not think of the techniques and designs that he can think of. We don't need a particular design or plan. Baba ji just draw a line with his foot and tell us to lay the stones there, and we do it. Everything comes out to be so perfect that you wonder how easily a seemingly difficult task has been completed. For example while lining the river with banks, ‘*chhote baba ji*’ (the younger guru) led us to build the banks like the government build on the canals, the slopes. In some areas these were built. But we could not build gentler slopes because of the constraints of the area. When baba ji saw them, he thought that this type of banks do not let the people come near the water. It will increase the distance between people and the river. So given the land constraints the best option that he suggested was to build stairs instead. They will let people approach the river with ease.”

Thus, as Conger (2011) said, “charismatic leaders transfer the nature of work by making it appear more heroic, morally correct and meaningful. They de-emphasize the extrinsic rewards of work and focus instead on intrinsic side.”

IV. ROUTINISATION OF CHARISMA AND INSTITUTIONALISATION

Charisma is not a permanent source of power. It either dissipates or gets transformed into other forms of authority, that is, routinised charisma, traditional authority, rational-legal authority or a juxtaposition of two or more forms of authority. The processes through which this happens are routinisation of charisma and

institutionalisation. Routinization involves succession of the charismatic leader. It involves linear evolution of charisma to stable structures of authority like the office of charisma. Routinisation according to Weber, is the return to a more mundane and ordinary mode of existence that emerges after the death of the charismatic leader (Takim,2006). However, Weber did not envisage the process of routinisation of charisma while the leader is alive, which we can see in the case of anointing the *nirmala* successor by SBS during his lifetime. In addition, Weber did not speculate on the possibilities of the concurrence of two types of authority.

SBS succeeded SAS in accordance to latter's wish after his death. It was more of the traditional authority as a leader of the *nirmala* sect. Thus, initially SBS started from the power accrued to him by tradition, the tradition of naming a successor in *nirmalas*. Weber has described traditional authority to be rigid, which does not change overtime, does not facilitate social change, tends to be irrational and inconsistent, and perpetuates the status quo. However, traditional authority in this case brought about enormous changes in not only physical but social atmosphere as well. It is because after attaining the title of *nirmala* saint SBS went on to create charisma around him by working for selflessly and tirelessly for the people and the environment. Here, strongest of the types of authority has been charismatic authority. He was able to project a sense of urgency in everything he did like construction of roads, laying down of sewerage systems and cleaning the river. The followers were simply willing to do whatever SBS asked him. In certain instances, he would just ask the idle and laid back youth to come with him and do *seva*, and they would just go with him because they could not say no to him. Later, they found that doing *seva* is very fulfilling spiritually and had given them a purpose in life.

When we analyse the types of authority in this case, we find traditional and charismatic authority working in harmony. Whereas, traditional authority is inflexible and not in favor of change, charismatic authority, on the other hand is a revolutionary force that brings about drastic changes in traditional or rational-legal systems. However, they work in consonance when it comes to SBS. He invokes the Sikh tradition of offering *seva* for the *guru* and *sangat*. He does so by invoking verses from Guru Granth Sahib such as:

Pawan guru pani pita, mata dharat mahatt.

(The air is our teacher, water is equivalent to father, and the earth is our mother.)

When we work to keep these in good health, we are serving God and our family itself. The *seva* for the environment brings the same fruit as the *seva* of our *guru*. He pointed out towards the religious history of the Kali Bein which is "blessed to have a very important part in Guru Nanak's life. How can we keep a river polluted which has given us the essence of *gurbani* when Guru Nanak emerged out of it after 3 days of disappearance and his dialogue with the Almighty." He calls the water of the river "*charnamrit*"³. He invokes tradition and charisma both to bring people together for a common cause. Thus, whereas tradition provided historic legitimacy, charisma worked to sway people in doing what might have seemed impossible is SBS has not been leading them. However, it was not the pure form of traditional authority for the SBS to begin with. The ultimate traditional authority in Sikhism which lies with Sikh priests or *jathedar* of *Akal Takht* which also controls all gurudwaras and religious activities of Sikhs through Shiromni Gurudwara Prabandak Committee. In its typical form of supporting status quo and opposing any kind of social change, the high priests in the very beginning tried to thwart the work to clean the river. Here, charisma had to come face to face to tradition and the power struggle continued until charisma won through determination and the strength of people behind it. SBS's mission to clean the sacred river encourage the people to throw their weight behind him. Leader and the followers had their way as the high priests could not afford to arouse the wrath of the community by holding up on an issue which had become so close to people's hearts. Their *guru's* river needed to be revived, this belief had been infused in the community by their charismatic leader. The charismatic authority has been challenged by tradition every now and then.

It was not only tradition, but rational-legal system also, that challenged the charismatic authority of SBS. Several times their acts had been declared illegal and the bureaucracy had to interfere. Deliberately stopping the flow of the polluted water of industries and cities by the public is illegal according to the rule. However, it was necessary to save the river. So the leader and the people dauntlessly carried out what was good to save the river irrespective of what the law says.

However, he had prepared SBS to take up the challenges as big as SBS has already accomplished. SBS inherited from SAS not only the *nirmala* sainthood, but also his visions which were infused in him while he tirelessly served SAS. He served SAS like he was an incarnation of God and all his commands came directly from God. In accordance with *nirmala* tradition, SBS is doing what SAS started, that is, spreading of *gurnat* among them, teach them moral values, compassion and a simple way of living, educate them and prepare a generation of *sant sipahis*. Through his sheer dedication towards his goal of doing *seva*, he has created a huge followership. Although, its his charisma which has attracted huge crowds to clean the river, but if he were not a *nirmala* saint would he had been able to attract so much of followers? Probably not. Thus, he derives his

³ The pious water touched by the divine guru's feet.

charisma initially from traditional authority of a *nirmala* saint and then to his magnanimous welfare works and cleaning of the kali bein river which had never happened before in the history of *nirmalas*. When he nominated Sant Sukhjeet Singh (SSS) as his successor, he did not do it just to take forward the *nirmala* tradition but also to sustain the welfare works. He broke away from tradition of anointing unmarried men as *nirmala* saints by anointing SSS who is married and has a family. Besides unlike his predecessors, he anointed SSS as a saint while he is still alive. Thus, SSS becomes “*chhote baba ji*” for the followers.

V. CONCLUSION

Salient features that characterize routinisation process according to Weber are- delegation of authority, transmission of knowledge, and establishing a network of disciples. There is a clear case of delegation of authority, although to a certain extent as the charismatic leader is still active and leading, to the successor. SSS has his share of duties and takes over the charge of *nirmal kutiya* and the work related to the river and the Trust in absence of SBS. As far as transmission of knowledge is concerned, it's all in the form of *gurmat* which is the primary purpose of *nirmalas*. The transmission of knowledge regarding the activities of *nirmalas* to the successor is a continuing process. A network of disciples who form the inner circle of SBS is already there which confirm that the process of routinisation of charisma has already begun.

For Weber, charismatic authority is antithetical to bureaucratic authority because of its aversion towards bureaucratic rules and hierarchies. However, since charismatic authority in its pure form exist only *in statu nascendi*, it inevitably move towards more stable form of rationality, that is, rational-legal authority. Although bureaucratic and charismatic authority are antithetical, yet pragmatic situations bring about combinations of the two. Radical movements require the elements of both, an inspiration from charismatic authority to challenge the existing order, and formal organisation structures to a certain extent to facilitate cohesion and collective action (Andreas, 2007).

The rational-legal structures that have been introduced are the Ek Omkar Charitable Trust, the office bearers, the quarterly magazine, recording of the activities of the Trust and the *nirmal kutiya*, the use of print and social media to spread awareness, a state of the art museum that showcase the life of Guru Nanak, and Nanak hut which sells the ration supplies to the people on a rate lower than the market.

The Trust works on rational-legal principles. It is headed by SBS himself. It has founder members, a president, a secretary, a treasurer and other staff. Meetings on a regular basis are held with a decorum. All the communication to the administration is done in the name of the Trust undersigned by the president of the Trust. The donations are taken in name of the Trust. There isn't any economic activity observed. Everything is run on donations which is very typical of a charismatic authority as Weber had noted, “charismatic leader scorns traditional or rational everyday economizing, the attainment of a regular income by continuous economic activity.” From the above discussion, we can conclude that the process of routinisation of charisma has begun already. However, since the charismatic leader is very much in scene it cannot be ascertained how far it will be successful. Some rational-legal structures are definitely in place but they are still in very rudimentary form. The whole movement relies heavily on the charisma of the leader.

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