# Sikh State of Mind

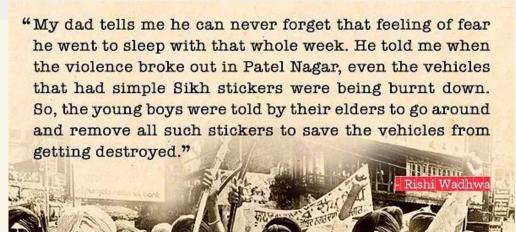


Exploring the experiences of the Sikh community involved in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots and the long-term impacts on mental health.

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### Introduction

The anti-Sikh riots of 1984 refers to a series of organised pogroms against the Sikh community across India. This targeted attack led to thousands of deaths and human rights violations. As this was a government prompted genocide, it was distorted by the media at the time and Sikh voices have not been widely documented. The full extent and following consequences are still unknown.



# Methodology

- This research project will be using a qualitative methodological approach, structured as a narrative inquiry acknowledging the dynamic human experience and how stories can provide a primary means of understanding.
- Semi-structured interviews will be conducted centred around the participants experiences, moving between the internal and external world of the storyteller to develop a rich layer of understanding and information about the Sikh community, uncovering the nuances of their lived experiences while maintaining a person-centred approach
- The philosophical underpinnings of this research is a combination of constructionism and feminism; the relationship between the researcher and participant is a collaboration creating a sense of power and autonomy for the participants over their narrative.

#### Translations

**Boliyan** are couplets that are sung in Punjab, often sung in accompaniment of bhangra dances. A boli expresses typical situations and their emotions and is usually passed down generation by generation orally.

**Kirtan** is a Sanskrit word meaning "narrating, reciting, telling, describing" of an idea or story, specifically in Sikhi.

# **Objectives**

- To explore the experiences of Sikh people who survived these attacks as well as the long-term impacts this has had on their mental health.
- To develop a richer cultural understanding in order to improve counselling and psychotherapy services for the Sikh community.
- To honour the culture of the participants and centre their voices.

## Analysis

The analysis and data collection are simultaneous in that the initial analysis will begin during the first interview through analysis of non-verbal behaviours and adjusting the direction of the interview depending on answers given.

The data will be presented in a poetic form by using the participants words verbatim in found poetry, which honours the cultural practices of boliyan and kirtan.

