

# CUSTODIAL DEATHS IN PUNJAB

## 1997-2001

In India where rule of law is inherent in each and every action and right to life and liberty is prized fundamental right adorning highest place amongst all important fundamental rights, instances of torture and using third degree methods upon suspects during illegal detention and police remand have become quite common. Use of excessive force and exceeding lawful authority by police usually causes custodial death. If torture of a suspect during police custody is a crime, causing death by beating in police custody is even more heinous crime and a most deplorable act. Custodial death is perhaps one of the worst crimes in a civilized society governed by the Rule of Law. The rights inherent in Article 21 and 22(I) of the Constitution of India require to be zealously and scrupulously protected. The sad part of the story is that the force which is supposed to protect the life and liberty of the citizen when behaves inhumanly and perpetrate crime it encourage lawlessness and breeds contempt for law.

Custodial violence is indeed a matter of great concern. Thinking of the pain and trauma that a victim suffers due to torture, the protection of his life and liberty from such inhuman treatment becomes the most sacred duty of every organ of justice delivery system. In custodial crimes, not only the infliction of body pain is worrisome, but also the trauma and mental agony which a person undergoes within the four walls of police station or lock-up. Whether it is third degree torture or death in police custody, the extent of loss caused to the humanity is beyond the purview of law. Repeated incidents of Custody deaths in the country have not only shaken the people's conscience, forcing them to take to the street against the inhuman torture techniques adopted by the police, but has also highlighted the hostile attitude of law enforcing agencies in containing such heinous crime against the humanity. Custodial violence including torture, death and staged encounter, strikes a blow at the Rule of Law, which demands that the powers of the executive should not only be derived from law but also that the same should be limited by law. In spite of clear prohibition in law from subjecting third degree torture upon any person, complaints regarding custodial torture and deaths in police custody or fake encounters are flooded in the Supreme Court and various High Courts including the National Human Rights Commission and State Human Rights Commissions across the country. According to a statement placed in the Lok Sabha in 2000, more than seven hundred and ninety persons have lost their lives in police custody in the country. Unofficial figures even go upto five figures. Showing deep concern over the increasing tendency among the police officials in subjecting third degree torture upon the suspect resulting in the custodial death of the suspect and the suppression of such occurrences by the erring cops, the National Human Rights Commission issued strict directions to all the State governments and Union territories in 1993 as under:-

“ In view of the rising number of incidents of custodial deaths and custodial rapes and reported attempts to suppress or present a different picture of these incidents with the lapse of time, the commission directs to all the District Magistrates and Superintendents of Police of every district in the country that they should report to the Secretary General of the National Human Rights Commission about such incidents within 24 hours of such occurrence or of these officers having come to know about such incidents. Failure to report promptly would give rise to presumption that there was an attempt to suppress the incident.”

In forgotten corners of dusty police stations lathi and roller continue to make harsh contact with flesh and bone. So secretly is this done, so discreetly,

that the democratic nation which houses these modest citadels of terror can continue to believe that it is indeed a democracy. Experience shows that worst violations of human rights take place during the course of investigation. When the police with a view to secure evidence or confession often resort to third degree methods including torture and adopts techniques of screening arrest by either not recording the arrest or describing the deprivation of liberty merely as a prolonged interrogation. Their acts of commission, corruption and barbaric methods of torture, kidnapping and ransom, fake encounters, eliminations and custodial deaths etc. put to shame any civilized society. When corruption and greed intermingle in such a state of affairs, many of the actions of the men in uniform take the form of contract killing, extortion etc. This also includes taking possession of valuables or property, terrorising the public to discourage possible witnesses etc. all in the name of fighting the outlaws. When the Policeman transgress the very law he fights to restore, what follows is, revulsion, revenge and further alienation. State terrorism can never take the place of armed conflict by certain groups of terrorists in any civilized society. State terrorism is no answer to combat terrorism. State terrorism would only provide legitimacy to "terrorism". That would be bad for the State, the community and above all for the Rule of Law. What is at stake here is the very definition of what constitutes humanity.

If you have ever been the victim of Police torture the term "torture" is enough to make your backbone straight for the trauma of such inhuman act leave a trail of mental disorders throughout the lifetime. Article 1 of the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading treatment or punishment, defines torture as "any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed or intimidated or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or that person acting in official capacity."

The Article 4 of the Convention says, "each state party shall ensure that all acts of torture are offences under its Criminal Law."

Justice S. Mohan of Supreme Court of India speaking for the bench in the case of "Arvinder S. Bagga Vs. State of U.P." aptly observed, "Torture is not merely physical, there may be mental torture and psychological torture calculated to create fright and submission to the demands or commands. When the threats proceed from a person in authority and that too by a police officer, the mental torture caused by it is even more grave."

Justice Kuldip Singh and Justice Dr. A.S. Anand, the pillars of Human Rights movement in India observed in the landmark Judgment on Custodial crimes, titled "D.K.Basu Vs. State of West Bengal that "Custodial violence, including torture and death in the lock ups, strikes a blow at the Rule of Law, which demands that the powers of the executive should not only be derived from law but also that the same should be limited by law. Custodial Violence is a matter of concern. It is aggravated by the fact that it is committed by persons who are supposed to be the protectors of the citizens. It is committed under the shield of uniform and authority in the four walls of a police station or lock-up, the victim being totally helpless. The Protection of an individual from torture and abuse by the police and other law enforcing officers is a matter of deep concern in a free society. "Torture " of a human being by another human being is essentially an instrument to impose the will of the "strong" over the "Weak" by suffering. The word "torture" today has become synonymous with the darker side of human civilization. It is a calculated assault on human dignity and whenever human dignity is wounded, civilization takes a step backward—flag of

humanity must on each such occasion fly half-mast. In all custodial crimes what is of real concern is not only infliction of body pain but also the mental agony which a person undergoes within the four walls of police station or lock-up. Whether it is physical assault or rape in police custody, the extent of trauma, person experiences is beyond the purview of law.” He further observed in another judgment on human rights dealing with the effect of torture in the mind of common citizen, titled “ State of M.P. Vs. Shayamsunder Trivedi and others” and held that “tortures in police custody, which of late are on the increase, receive encouragement by this type of an unrealistic approach of the courts because it reinforces the belief in the mind of the police that no harm would come to them, if an odd prisoner dies in the lock-up, because there would hardly be any evidence available to the prosecution to directly implicate them within the torture. Torture in custody flouts the basic rights of the citizens recognized by the Indian Constitution and is an affront to human dignity. Police excesses and the mal-treatment of detainees /undertrial prisoners or suspects tarnishes the image of any civilized nation and encourages the men in “Khaki” to consider themselves to be above the law and sometimes even to become law unto themselves.”

Historian Badriana P. Bartow also explained the trauma of torture in his own words,” Torture is a wound in the soul so painful that sometimes you can almost touch it, but it is also so intangible that there is no way to heal it. Torture is anguish squeezing in your chest, cold as ice and heavy as a stone paralyzing as sleep and dark as the abyss. Torture is despair and fear and rage and hate. It is a desire to kill and destroy including yourself. ”

The temple of Justice, as he is known, Mr. Justice V.R.Krishna Iyer the then Chief Justice of Supreme Court, dwelled in detail the evil of torture in a case titled “ Raghbir Singh Vs. State of Haryana” and observed, “we are really pained to note that such things should happen in a country which is still governed by the Rule of Law. We cannot but express our strong displeasure and disapproval of the conduct of the concerned police officers. We are deeply disturbed by the diabolical recurrence of police torture resulting in terrible scare in the minds of common citizens that they are under a new peril which the guardians of the law gore human rights to death. The vulnerability of human rights assumes a traumatic, torture some poignancy when the violent violation is perpetrated by the police arm of the State whose function is to protect the citizen and not to commit gruesome offences against them as has happened in this case. Police lock-up if reports in newspapers have a streak of credence, are becoming more and more awesome cells. This development is disastrous to our human rights awareness and humanist constitutional order.”

Dr. Martin Luther King (Jr.) in a letter to his country men once wrote, “Injustice anywhere is threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of density. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly.” In a similar tone, the famous legal luminary Blaise Pascal also said “Justice without power is inefficient; power without justice is tyranny..... Justice and power must therefore be brought together, so that whatever is just may be powerful and whatever is powerful may be just.” Custodial violence and abuse of power by the police is not only peculiar to this country, but it is widespread. It has also been the concern of international community because the problem is universal and the challenge is almost global. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which marked the emergence of a worldwide trend of Protection and guarantee of certain basic human rights, stipulates in Article 5 that “ No one shall be subjected to torture, or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Despite the pious declaration, the crime continues unabated, though every civilized nation shows its concern and takes steps for its eradication. In England, torture was one regarded as a normal practice to get information regarding the crime, the accomplices and the case property or to extract confessions, but with the

development of common law and more radical ideas imbibing human thought and approach, such inhuman practices were initially discouraged and eventually almost done away with, certain aberrations here and there notwithstanding. However, in spite of the constitutional and statutory provisions aimed at safeguarding the personal liberty and life of a citizen, growing incidents of torture and deaths in police custody has been a disturbing factor.

The third report of the National Police Commission in India expressed deep concern at the increasing incidents of custodial violence and lock-up deaths. It took serious note of the demoralizing effect which custodial torture was creating on the society as a whole. The Protection of the individual from oppression and abuse by the police and other enforcing officers is indeed a major interest in a free society; but so is the effective prosecution of crime, an interest which at times seems to be forgotten. The quality of a nation's civilization can be largely measured by the methods it uses in the enforcement of criminal law.

We cannot whisk away the problem. Any form of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment would fall within the inhibition of Article 21 of the Constitution whether it occurs during investigation, interrogation or otherwise. If the functionaries of the government become lawbreakers, it is bound to breed contempt for law and would encourage lawlessness and every man would have the tendency to become law unto himself thereby leading to anarchism. No civilized nation can permit that to happen. Does a citizen shed off his fundamental right to life, the moment a policeman arrests him? Can the right to life of a citizen be put in abeyance on his arrest? These questions touch the spinal cord of human rights jurisprudence. The answer indeed, has to be an emphatic "No". It is an obligation of the State to ensure that there is no infringement of the indefeasible rights of a citizen to life, except in accordance with law, while the citizen is in its custody. The precarious right guaranteed by Article 21 of the Constitution of India cannot be denied to convicts, undertrials or other prisoners in custody, except according to procedure established by law. There is a great responsibility on the police or prison authorities to ensure that the citizen in its custody is not deprived of his right to life. His liberty is in the very nature of things circumscribed by the very fact of his confinement and therefore his interest in the limited liberty left to him is rather precarious. The duty of care on the part of the State is strict and admits of no exceptions. The wrongdoer is accountable and the State is responsible if the person in custody of the police is deprived of his life except according to the procedure established by law.

It is often seen that when a complaint is made against torture, death or injury in police custody, it is difficult to secure evidence against the policemen responsible for resorting to third degree methods since they are in charge of police stations easily manipulate the record and tamper with the evidence. The trial court and the high Court, if we may say so with respect, exhibits a total lack of sensitivity and a "could not care less" attitude in appreciating the evidence on the record and thereby condoning the barbarous third degree methods which are still being used, at every police station, despite being illegal. The exaggerated adherence to and insistence upon the establishment of proof beyond every reasonable doubt, by the prosecution, ignoring the ground realities, the fact situations and the peculiar circumstances of a given case, often results in miscarriage of justice and makes the justice delivery system a farce. In the ultimate analysis, it is only the society that suffers. It needs no emphasis to say that when the crime goes unpunished the criminals are encouraged. The courts must also bring a change in their outlook and attitude particularly in cases involving custodial crimes and should exhibit more sensitivity and a realistic rather than a narrow technical approach, while dealing with such cases, so that as far as possible within their powers, the guilty must not escape and that the victim of the crime has the satisfaction that ultimately the majesty of law has

prevailed, failing which the victim becomes frustrated and contempt for law develops. Police is no doubt, under a legal duty and has legitimate right to arrest a criminal and to interrogate him during the investigation of an offence but the law does not permit use of third degree methods or torture of accused in custody during interrogation and investigation with a view to solve the crime. End cannot justify the means. By torturing a person and using third degree methods, the police would be accomplishing behind the closed doors what the demand of our legal order forbid. No society can permit it. The action of the State, however, must be "right, just and fair". Using any form of torture for extracting any kind of information would neither be "right, nor just nor fair" and therefore, would be impermissible, being offensive of Article 21.

For the last many years, the State of Punjab is reeling under the sordid situation where battle like conditions prevailed and gun-battles were going on between the security forces and armed rebels(Sikhs). It started with the political problem, but assumed un-seeming proportions with every organ of the State failing to ensure law and order. The Police has become man-eater and resorting to extra-judicial methods in eliminating whosoever they suspect to be a rebel. There is an un-declared curb on raising voice by the masses. Even the women and children are not spared. They are beaten, tortured and even killed publicly by the devils in khaki, still the judiciary in the country watch these gory incidents with unwarranted calm and turns a blind eye to the police excesses. It is often said that the period of turbulence is over in Punjab and rule of law has been restored by the Shromani Akali Dal-Bhartiya Janata Party alliance led government. But figures disclaim this theory. More than seventy five reported custodial deaths in four years and a thousand reported incidents of custodial tortures of innocent people, casts a slur on the law enforcing machinery in the State. It will be our endeavour through this book to explore as to how far the State government and its law enforcing agencies have cared for the fundamental right to life and liberty of its subjects and respected their human rights. Here is a fact finding report by the organisation which needs pointing attention of every law abiding person and human rights activists around the globe.

The tall claims of the Punjab government of restoration of rule of law have proved a farce with custodial crime becoming an order of the day. Policemen still consider themselves above the law. They have no fear of law or the Court. They know that they will be exonerated in the name of national security or maintenance of law and order. Their mindset is the same as it was during the earlier days of State terrorism. Their actions are the same. Rather, their authority has become more powerful with no action against their illegal actions. Under these circumstances, can any saner element boast of Punjab's situation as peaceful?

During the dark days of State brutality in Punjab at its helm, people were less afraid of the satan than of a policeman. It was this fear and frustration, which routed the inhuman Congress government and offered an opportunity to the largest Sikh political party in the state, Shromani Akali Dal to end the Police Raj and establish rule of law. But even after four years of the so-called popular rule in the State, the situation has not changed a wee bit. When more than seventy people have lost their lives in Police custody since the Akali government came into power, it would be great folly to call it a State ruled by law? Where the government is under bounden duty to protect the life and liberty of every citizen, loss of even a single life in Police Custody certainly casts a blur on the government, lest every organ of justice delivery system should bow down in shame. The moot question that arises is that how the situation has been mis-handled that it has become so serious that every person is feeling insecure and prone to police brutality? Is it not a failure of the government where the police force has turned man-eater and the courts and the elected representatives of the people have closed its eyes and ears? The answer to all these questions must be emphatically "betrayal of the oath".

It is an abysmal state of affairs in Punjab. Not only the government has failed to check its brutal force, but the judiciary or the human rights agencies have miserably failed to show its existence. It seems to be a matter of the past now that the judges were moved on reading the heart rending news of torture deaths in the morning day newspaper and took suo-moto cognizance of the matter. They also do not feel concerned today on learning that innocent people are being killed like animals. One wonders if they would feel disturbed on hearing the wails of torture victims in the Police stations in Punjab. Every Court granting police remand of a suspect fully knows that he is going to be given inhuman third degree treatment. It is their folly to believe that only third degree treatment could extract the truth from the suspect. It is no secret that the first thing a policeman does with the suspect in police remand is to give good bashing and then tell his fault. The title page of this book clearly exhibits the mindset of the police force in the state even today.

The study of recent cases of people being killed in Police custody and in the prisons have given a clear message that whosoever is taken into custody by police is sure to lose his life, lest he is too hard to bear the police torture, no matter, whether he is innocent or too poor to bribe the policemen. Punjab Police, known for its fake encounters, custodial deaths and other heinous crimes, received a big blow when the encounter theory of killing a youth, Kashmir Singh of Pandori Rukman in Hoshiarpur district on 14<sup>th</sup> March, 1997 came out to be a cold blooded murder. Even the Sessions Court, Hoshiarpur convicted the police party and sentenced them to life imprisonment for the offence of murder. National Human Rights Commission, also awarded a compensation of Rupees five lacs to the next of kin of the deceased. Similarly, the tale of torture methods described by the brother of Devinder Singh alias Bhola, a youth of village Hassanpur in Ropar district who was tortured to death on September 18, 1999 shook the state with grief. The accused policemen have recently been sentenced to life imprisonment for the custodial death. Many victims of police brutality have even gone un-noticed. What was the fault of Iqbal Singh of Jaitu in Faridkot when he was picked up by the Muktsar police on January 5, 2001 and was so badly tortured that he died in the lock-up? But the police is so hardened liar that it claimed that the victim had committed suicide by hanging himself in the bathroom of the lock-up. Similar story was cooked up by the Police in the case of Surinder Pal who died in Police Station Dasuya in District Hoshiarpur on 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2001. The same day Avtar Singh, a youth of Ludhiana was shot dead by a militant turned Police Inspector Gurmeet Singh Pinky in Ludhiana because he objected to their drinking session at a public place. Is the life of these victims so valueless that the State government or the Police authorities could not afford to pay ex-gratia compensation to the next of the kin of the deceased killed by the Policemen ? The tragedy does not end here. Exactly a month later in 2001, Jaspal Singh, a 17 year old Dalit youth of Village Saheri in District Ropar fell to the torture methods of Punjab police and died in Police Station Morinda on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2001. To add insult to the injury, every organ of administration including the civil and police administration in the district tried their level best to save their policemen who were responsible for the tragic death. The courts also showed little concern at this dastardly act. Another dalit youth, Madan Lal of Kapurthala was tortured to death in Police Station Kapurthala on 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2001.

One thing quite similar in all these incidents was that the police authorities and district administration failed to take necessary action against the guilty persons, unless the masses came to the street and protested by laying road blockade, dharna and even gherao the police station. In other words, the public outcries and street protests played an important role for forcing the authorities to take strict action against the erring cops.

Nothing could be more better conclusion of this topic than the words of Abraham Lincoln "If you once forfeit the confidence of our fellow citizens you can never regain their respect and esteem. It is true that you can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time."

## LIST OF CUSTODIAL DEATHS IN PUNJAB W.E.F. JANUARY 1997- UNTIL AUGUST 2001

### 1997

1. **March 14, 1997:** Kashmir Singh, a Youth of village Pandori Rukman near Hoshiarpur, was abducted from his house in the village alongwith his father Ajit Singh by a police party headed by Sub-Inspector Gulzar Chand, SHO of Police Station Taran Taran(City) and after dropping his father, killed him in fake encounter. Later on the Sessions Court at Hoshiarpur held it to be a fake encounter and sentenced the accused policemen to life imprisonment for the dastardly act. Similarly, the National Human Rights Commission awarded a compensation of Rupees five lac to the next of kin of the deceased.
2. **April 7, 1997:** Paramjit Singh, son of Pritam Singh died in Police Custody of P.S.Dakha, Ludhiana.
3. **April 17, 1997:** Ravi Kumar Verma, a migrant labourer of Ludhiana died in Police custody of P.S.Division No.4, Ludhiana.
4. **May 28,1997:** Jagsir Singh(25), a resident of village Bilaspur, District Faridkot died due to Police torture in P.S.Bilaspur.
5. **June 30, 1997:** Narinder Singh(18), a resident of village Fetahpur, District Amritsar was beaten to death by the police of P.S.Amritsar.
6. **July 20, 1997:** Jaggar Singh of Kotduna village in District Sangrur, died in Police Custody of P.S.Dhanaula, District Sangrur.
7. **July 21, 1997:** Baljeet Singh (24) son of Nahar Singh, a resident of village Burj Dhilwan, District Bathinda was killed in Police Custody of Police Station Maur, District Bathinda.
8. **August 15, 1997:** Satnam Singh alias Satti, a resident of Jalandhar district, died in Police custody of P.S. Adampur.
9. **August 30, 1997:** Pala Singh, son of Gurcharan Singh, a resident of village Bhai Bakhtaur, District Bathinda was killed in Police Station Kot Fatta, Distt.Bathinda. He allegedly by consuming poison kept in the Police Station. The Punjab State Human Rights Commission awarded an interim compensation of Rupees fifty thousand to the next of kin of the deceased.
10. **September 1, 1997:** Jagan Nath alias Jagnoo son of Ranjha Ram, a resident of village Pasla in Jalandhar district was killed in Police custody of P.S. Guraya, Distt. Jalandhar. Painfully, the Punjab Human Rights Commission, dismissed the complaint into his death for no valid reasons.
11. **September 5, 1997:** Sham Lal son of Banta Singh, a resident of village Ajnali, District Fatehgarh Sahib was beaten to death by a police party of P.S. Gobindgarh. Ironically, this Complaint also met the same fate in the Punjab State Human Rights Commission.
12. **September 12, 1997:** Babu Ram(25), a resident of Malerkotla was killed in Police Custody of P.S. Ahmedgarh, District Malerkotla.
13. **September 21, 1997:** Kala Singh, a resident of village Shadipur Mommian, District Patiala was killed in police custody of P.S.Patran, District Patiala.

14. **October 3, 1997:** Manfool Ram, a dalit of village Dakha, District Ludhiana died in Police custody of P.S.Mullanpur Dakha, District Ludhiana.
15. **October 24, 1997:** Bhagwan Singh,(35 ) a resident of village Jhughe Lal Singh, District Fazilka died in Police custody of P.S. Fazilka (Sadar).

16. **October 26,1997:** Bhola Singh, a resident of village Matti in District Mansa died in Police custody of P.S. Mansa.

## **1998**

17. **April 7, 1998:** Paramjit Singh, son of Pritam Singh, a resident of Ludhiana died in police custody of Ludhiana police.
18. **April 25, 1998:** Dr.Om Parkash Jail, an eye-specialist of Ludhiana died of heart attack due to Police beating at his residence by an Assistant Police Inspector of CIA Staff, Moga.
19. **August 22, 1998:** Karnail Singh(60), a resident of village Jagatpura in District Taran Taran died due to beating by policemen in P.S. Chabal, Taran Taran.

## **1999**

20. **January 26, 1999:** Jasbir Khan(25), a resident of village Sohana, District Ropar was beaten to death in Police custody of P.S.Sohana.
21. **August 15, 1999:** Lakhbir Singh alias Lakha (35), a resident of village Ratoke in District Taran Taran was killed in police custody of P.S.Sarhali, District Taran Taran.
22. **September 18, 1999:** Devinder Singh alias Bhola(21), a resident of village Hassanpur in District Ropar was tortured to death by policemen of CIA Staff, Ropar The three policemen responsible for the gruesome killing have been sentenced to life imprisonment by the Sessions Judge, Ropar.
23. **September 26,1999:** Jagdish Rai Jain(49) a resident of Bathinda died in Police Custody of P.S. Paras Ram Nagar, Bathinda.
24. **December 11,1999:** Gurbhej Singh(21), a resident of Amritsar died in police custody of P.S.Amrtisar.

## **2000**

- 25.**January 4, 2000:** Gurdev Singh(42), resident of village Uggi, District Jalandhar was beaten to death in police custody at P.P. Uggi, Distt. Jalandhar.

- 26.**January 11, 2000:** Hargobind Singh, a resident of Sirsa died in Police custody at P.S. Tapa, District Barnala. The National Human Rights Commission has awarded a sum of Rupees five lac as interim compensation to the next of kin of the deceased, while the Punjab State Human Rights Commission failed to take cognizance of the incident, inspite of being approached by the aggrieved party.

- 27.**April 23, 2000:** Ram Kumar, son of Sadhu, a resident of Ludhiana died in Police Custody of CIA staff, Sirhind, Distt.Fatehgarh Sahib. Painfully, the complaint seeking inquiry into the tragic death was dismissed by the Punjab State Human Rights Commission and adding insult to the injury, refused by the Punjab & Haryana High Court.

- 28.**April 29, 2000:** Dalbir Singh(40), a resident of Jalandhar was shot dead in Police custody at P.P.Maqsoodan, District Jalandhar.

29. **July 15, 2000:** Budh Singh(35), a resident of village Dargapur in District Taran Taran died in police custody of P.S.Naushehra Pannuan, District Taran Taran.
30. **July 15 and 16, 2000:** Bagga Singh, a resident of Naushehra Pannuan was tortured to death in Police custody of P.S.Naushehra Pannuan, Distt.Amritsar.
31. **August 23, 2000:** Sonu(18), son of Hira Lal, a dalit labourer of Abohar was tortured to death in Police custody of P.S.Abohar.
32. **September 2, 2000:** Balbir Singh(23), a resident of Sangrur was killed in Police custody of P.S. Sangrur.
33. **September 9, 2000:** Chuhar Singh, a resident of village Gogon in District Hoshiarpur died in Police custody in P.S. Mahilpur, District Hoshiarpur.
34. **October 13, 2000:** Raju, a dalit youth of Ludhiana was beaten to death in Police Custody of CIA Staff, Ludhiana.
35. **December 2, 2000:** Sarwan Singh(35), a resident of village Bootan in District Kapurthala died in Police Custody of P.S. Subhanpur.
36. **December 14,2000:** Gurdev Singh, a resident of village Samana in District Patiala was beaten to death in P.S. Samana, Distt. Patiala.
37. **December 28, 2000:** Pawan Kumar, a dalit youth aged 27 years, resident of Hoshiarpur died in Police Custody of P.S. Model Town, Hoshiarpur.

## **2001**

38. **January 5, 2001:** Iqbal Singh(35), died in Police custody at P.S. Muktsar. The Police called it a suicide death, while people alleged it to be a custodial death.
39. **January 7, 2001:** Surinder Pal, a resident of Batala in Distt. Gurdaspur was killed in Police Custody. He was picked up by Hoshiarpur police and brought to Dasuya Police Station in Hoshiarpur and tortured due to which he died. The Police said that he committed suicide by hanging in the police lock-up. No One has been arrested so far.
40. **January 7, 2001:** Avtar Singh, a youth of Ludhiana was shot dead by Inspector Gurmeet Singh Pinky of Punjab Police under the influence of liquor for over a small issue of giving passage to pass through the street where the Police Inspector had his house.
41. **February 7, 2001:** A poor Dalit Youth, Jaspal Singh of village Saheri in P.S. Morinda, Distt. Ropar died in Police custody at Morinda Police Station.
42. **February 15, 2001:** A Scheduled Caste Youth, Madan Lal, aged 32, died in Police Custody in Police Station Kapurthala.
43. **February 19, 2001:** A poor mason Rakhdev, hailing from Uttar Pradesh was killed in a Police encounter at Ludhiana.
44. **March 6, 2001:** A dalit youth, Maninderjit Singh(19), resident of village Kohali, District Amritsar was beaten to death by the police.
45. **March 27, 2001:** Nahar Singh, a 35 year old dalit youth died in Police Custody at P.S. Khanna, Distt.Ludhiana.

46. **May 2, 2001:** Karnail Singh(50), a resident of Haibowal, Distt.Ludhiana was thrashed to death by the police in P.S.Haibowal, Ludhiana.
47. **June 2, 2001:** Kulwinder Singh(20), son of Amarjit Singh, a resident of village Kokari Kalan, District Moga, was beaten to death in P.S.Mehan Kalan, Jagraon, Distt. Moga.

## **LIST OF PRISON DEATHS IN PUNJAB w.e.f. JANUARY 1997-TILL JUNE, 2001:**

### **1997**

1. **January 13, 1997:** An Undertrial, Vijay Kumar, died in District Jail, Kapurthala.
2. **February 14, 1997:** An Undertrial, Ranjit Singh hanged himself in Central Jail, Sangrur.
3. **August 14-15, 1997:** Amrit Singh (45), an undertrial died in Central Jail, Jalandhar.
25. **October, 1997:** Natha Singh, a daily wage labourer of Sangrur died in at District Jail, Sangrur.
26. **November, 1997:** Tirath Singh son of Narinder Singh Kler, a resident of village Kler, District Amritsar died in Amritsar jail.
27. **December 13, 1997:** Hukam Chand, an undertrial, died in Central Jail, Patiala.

### **1998**

7. **April 7,1998:** Rajinder Singh, an undertrial died in the Central Jail,Patiala.
8. **April 25, 1998:** Gurjet Singh, an undertrial died in Central Jail, Patiala.
9. **May 12, 1998:** Sunil Kumar Munjal, a resident of Abohar died in Central Jail, Ferozepur.
10. **July 23, 1998:** Bhil Ram, an undertrial and a resident of Ludhiana died in Central Jail, Ludhiana.
11. **August 27,1998:** Tarlok Singh, an undertrial lodged in Central Jail, Gurdaspur allegedly committed suicide in the jail.
12. **September 27, 1998:** Surinder Dass, an undertrial allegedly committed suicide in Central Jail, Patiala.
13. **October 1, 1998:** Kulwant Singh (55), an undertrial, died in Central Jail, Patiala.

### **1999**

14. **May 18, 1999:** Malkiat Singh, an undertrial, died in Central Jail, Patiala.
15. **December 12, 1999:** Joginder Singh, a resident of village Kaler Kalan, District Gurdaspur died in Central Jail, Gurdaspur.

## 2000

16. **February 13, 2000:** Sangram Singh(40), an undertrial lodged in Central Jail, Amritsar died in the jail.
17. **February 21, 2000:** Joginder Ram, an undertrial, died in Bathinda Central Jail.
18. **April 6, 2000:** Kirpal Singh(35), convict lodged in Central Jail, Patiala died due to TB in the jail.
19. **April 9, 2000:** Parvinder Singh(30), an undertrial lodged in Central Jail, Patiala died in the jail.
20. **April 12, 2000:** Surinder Singh(50), a resident of village Khankhana in Nawanshehar who was undergoing ten years imprisonment in Central Jail, Patiala died in the jail.
20. **April 22, 2000:** Raj Singh, a convict died in Central Jail, Bathinda.
21. **May, 2000:** Darshan Singh, a convict died in Central Jail, Jalandhar.
22. **May 25, 2000:** Dalip Singh(50) son of Ranjit Singh, a resident of village Mithubasti in Jalandhar district died in Central Jail, Jalandhar.
23. **August 31, 2000:** Pheera Singh(53), an undertrial lodged in Central Jail, Ludhiana died in the jail.
24. **October 31, 2000:** Gora Masih, son of Sohni Masih, a resident of village Sanehia in Batala District and lodged in Central Jail, Gurdaspur died due to TB.
25. **November 1, 2000:** Surinder Singh, an undertrial lodged in Central Jail, Gurdaspur, died in the jail.
26. **December 12, 2000:** Joginder Singh(85), an undertrial lodged in Central Jail, Gurdaspur, died in the jail due to non-provision of timely medical aid.

## 2001

26. January 1, 2001: Jagdish Singh, an undertrial, died under mysterious circumstances in Central Jail, Bathinda.
27. January 7, 2001: Ranjodh Singh(35), an undertrial, died while in Police custody of Muktsar police. According to Police, when he was being taken for production in court, he complained of chest pain and soon thereafter he died. But the inmates of Muktsar jail says that the victim was healthy when taken out and he was beaten to death in police custody.
28. **February 2, 2001:** A Pakistan prisoner, Farookh was killed in Amritsar Central Jail by other inmates. No case has been registered except transferring three lower Class employees of the jail.
29. March 13, 2001 :A life convict Pardeep Singh alias Deepa (27), was found dead in Central Jail, Patiala.
30. **May 25, 2001:** Gurnam Singh, an undertrial lodged in District Jail, Kapurthala died in the jail.

