ARJUNA Awardee DR. AJMER SINGH, EMINENT PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS PROMOTOR- A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study was to investigate the contribution and achievements of professor Ajmer Singh towards the promotion of Physical Education and sports in the country. A person about whom stories are passed onto future generations, people start calling him legendary and many aspire to emulate him. Such characters are very rare, perhaps very few and are born once in a blue moon. Professor Ajmer Singh was born in peasant family on 1" February 1940 in village Kap Kalan near Malerkotla. He was married to Sardarni Jaswant Kaur and had two sons - Mr. Swaranjeet Singh Aulakh and Dr. Amarpreet Singh Aulakh. It was concluded that Professor Ajmer Singh was the first eminent Physical Education in India who was also a sportsman of International standard. Professor Ajmer Singh was very knowledgeable and a committed teacher, a coach par excellence and an efficient administrator.

Key Words: Legend, Arjuna Award and Achievements.

INTRODUCTION:

A legend is a person having a special place in public esteem because of certain exception qualities or deeds. A person about whom stories are passed onto future generations, people start calling him legendary and many aspire to emulate him. Such characters are very rare, perhaps very few and are born once in a blue moon. Some people achieve great heights during life time, but get recognition much later unfortunately some times after they are gone. It is indeed a rare privilege to become a eminent personality in one’s own life time. This distinction is still more pronounced in case the achiever does not blow his own trumpet. He lets his work speak and leaves it to others sing his praises and pass on his example to new generations.

Sportsmen are the product of the culture promoted by a particular society in a particular era of history. They are the pillars of success in a particular society. It is an established fact that society has influenced them in the pursuit of excellence in sports and in turn they have contributed their bit towards creating a conducive culture and atmosphere for sports promotion.
Biography of Professor Ajmer Singh: Professor Ajmer Singh was born in peasant family on 1st February 1940 in village Kup Kalan near Malerkotla. He was married to Sardarni Jaswant Kaur and had two sons- Mr. Swaranjeet Singh Aulakh and Dr. Amarpreet Singh Aulakh.

Professor Ajmer Singh got his school education in the home village school only. He passed his Matriculation examination from SA Jain school, Malerkotla in 1955. After completing his F.A. from S.A Jain College, Malerkotla in 1957. He attained the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Govt. College, Malerkotla in 1959.

However, for professional education he moved out and did his Bachelor of Physical Education from LNCPE, Gwalior, in 1963, M.A. Physical Education from Panjab University, Chandigarh in 1966, he did his Doctorate of Philosophy from Panjab University, Chandigarh in 1986.

Professor Ajmer Singh joined LNCPE Gwalior, as Assistant Teacher from July to November, 1963 and later joined as Lecture in the Department of Physical Education, Panjab University, Chandigarh in November 1963.

The Golden opportunity came in his life to prove himself and he went to Nigeria as Senior Education Officer in Federal Govt. Girls College, Abuloma, Port Harcourt, River State, Nigeria. But after three years of serving as Senior Education Officer, he was promoted as Principal of the Federal Govt. College due to his sincerity, dedication, devotion and discipline. He served there from Dec. 1975 to June 1981.

He came back to India and joined Department of Physical Education as Director of Sports in June 1981 and continued till April 1990. It was again his good destiny and hard work which pushed him in selecting as a Dean of LNCPE Gwalior. He served there for three years i.e. from 26th April 1990 to 30th April 1993. He again came back to Panjab University, Chandigarh and joined as Director of Sports and stayed here till July 1997 to June 1999. It was principally due to his untiring became the first Vice-chancellor of the institute.

He came back to Panjab University, Chandigarh and once again joined as Director of Sports from June 1999 to January, 2000. On the last leg of his superannuation he was appointed as
Professor on Mulana Abul Kalam chair in the deptt. of physical education and from there he retired as Professor in Jan, 2002.

During his school days Ajmer Sigh was like other normal boys who enjoyed playing circle Kabaddi for the sake of fun only. During the course of his professional studied, i.e. B.P.E. at LNCPE, Gwalior he came under the influence of his coach Professor Karan Singh whose guidance converted him into an athlete and gave a new direction to his ambition. He set a new Indian University record in 400m race in the Intervarsity athletic meet at Chandigarh in 1963. He was a national champion in 200m, 400m, from 1965 to 1970.

He was selected to represent India in 200m, 400m, 4x400m relay race in 5th Asian games held at Bangkok in 1966. He was a member of India’s 4x400m relay race in 5th race team in the Tokyo Olympics 1964. Then he ran 200m and 400m races in commonwealth athletic meet at (Kingston) 1966. In the 1966 Asian Games held at Bangkok, he won a gold medal by completing the 400m race in 47.01 seconds and silver medal by completing the 200m race in 21.05 seconds, He also got a silver medal in 4x400m relay. He was included in the Indian athletics team thereafter for several years. He also captained the Indian athletics team in 1970 Asian games.

Professor Ajmer Singh has guided and motivated many prominent international sportspersons:

2. Helen (Nigerian Student) (Athletics High Jump).
3. Enni (Nigerian Student) (Athletics 400m).

Professor Ajmer Singh has many awards and distinction to his credit, the important ones are listed below:

1. National award in 1964
2. Arjuna Award- 1966 which is the highest prestigious award for sports given by the Govt. of India.
3. Life Membership of the Alumni Association of the LNCPE, Gwalior.
7. Panjab University sports promoter award 1999
8. Till date only Physical Education in India who is an Olympian, Asian Gold Medalist, Arjuna Awardee, and Doctorate Degree in Academics.
9. Professor Ajmer Singh, as director of sports, contributed, in winning the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad trophy twice by Panjab University, Chandigarh.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To investigate the contribution and achievements of professor Ajmer Singh towards the promotion of Physical Education and sports in the country.
2. To study his philosophy with regard to Physical Education as a profession in India.
3. To enlist professional leadership qualities of Professor Ajmer Singh.
4. To find out his leadership qualities as a sports person, teacher and administrator.
5. To study the social trials specific to him.
6. To study his personality trials.
7. To find out the motivational factors that make him persist in sports.

HYPOTHESES:

1. Professor Ajmer Singh is an eminent physical education in India.
2. Professor Ajmer Singh is very knowledgeable and a committed teacher.
3. Professor Ajmer Singh is a coach par excellence.
4. Professor Ajmer Singh is an efficient administrator and a strict disciplainer.
5. Professor Ajmer Singh has contributed a lot for the development of physical education and promotion of sports in India.

METHODOLOGY:

Interviews with sons of Professor Ajmer Singh were conducted. Dronacharya Awardee, Professor Karan Singh and some of his former associates namely Brig Labh Singh, Olympian,
Mr. Gurbaksh Singh, Dr. Ajinder Kaur, Arjuna Awardee, Professor T.S. Brar, Dr. R.S. Brar, Dr. C.V. Rao, were also interviewed to collect valuable data regarding contributions, achievements, professional-career philosophy, leadership qualities and personality of Professor Ajmer Singh.

A sample of seventy veterans, teachers, coaches and students was used to get the information on the basis of a questionnaire.

Survey technique with the help of opinion rating questionnaire was also used to obtain responses and reactions from selected eminent physical educationists and sports persons from all over the country who could not be interviewed personally.

Data for this investigation were derived from the primary and secondary sources. To get the first hand information, investigator visited institutions like LNIPE, Gwalior, Panjab University, Chandigarh, etc. where Professor Ajmer Singh worked for a long time. Personal record of Professor Ajmer Singh was also investigated and desired information were derived. The investigator personally contacted Professor Ajmer Singh and conducted the interview. Various pictorial records of Professor Ajmer Singh were investigator. Some of the photographs relevant to different occasions were chosen as document for this study. Published material such as books, pamphlets, newspaper accounts were studied and information retained as documents for the investigations.

**Views of Professor Ajmer Singh:** He always viewed physical education as an integral part of total education. According to him sports is certainly a part of physical-education in educational institutions, that should not be separated. Physical education programme is for everyone, healthy and physically able students, while competitive sports are for few highly skilled boys/girls. Inter-school and inter-university sports competitions are part of educational system and is being looked (planned, organized and supervised) by physical education staff of the institutions. Hence, sports has to be an important part of physical education programme of the institution and should be inter-related and mutually supplementing programme (one dealing with physical education and other intramural and extramural sports programme). He states that:
1. The sports programme is Apex of the pyramid and physical education programme is the base.

2. Coaches or games/sports experts if engaged in education institutions should entirely be under the charge of physical education personnel. They should work as per physical education department rules and norms.

3. It would be very nice if institutions training coaches will also impart training to physical education personnel and vice-versa.

Professor Ajmer Singh has stated the following as probable reasons for India’s poor standard in sports:

1. Government, parents, Teachers, Public and Students do not consider sports as important and accord very, very low priority.

2. Physical education, as subject compulsory in schools and colleges.

3. Each country develops systems based on Geographical conditions (climate, food, habits, people’s interests etc.) In India we should have also developed indigenous technology to develop our sports systems but we have only copied the outdated technology of the other countries and thus are left behind and have not been able to match the progress made by countries that are leaders today. All this happened because sports in our country are in the hands of people who know nothing about is worse than the previous one because wrong/incompetent people are entrusted with the task.

4. Poor quality of teachers will produce poor students. Poor mechanics will spoil the machine rather than correct the faults. Similarly our poor quality of coaches is playing havoc with our sportspersons. We need institutions like I.I. Ts to train coaches and we need intelligent persons to come for coaching.

5. Programme of physical education and sports needs to be made compulsory in all educational institution from the primary level. In the absence of it we are suffering.
6. We do not have funds to tackle sports at all levels from school to university and state to national level.

7. Sports in the country is controlled by Politicians, Businessmen and Bureaucrats, who otherwise are overloaded in their domain.

8. Indian sportsperson do not have high ambitions due to lack of facilities and job security.

9. Compared to foreign sportsmen Indians do not work with total commitment or sincerity, and they lack mental toughness.

10. There is no programme on mass to scale to find talented sportsperson and to groom them systematically.

11. We have not reached the grass root level i.e., the villages. Village youths are neglected a lot even though there is no dearth of talent and capability in them.

12. Women sports are even more neglected.

Views of eminent physical educationists: According to Professor Karan Singh (Dronacharya Awardee), Professor Ajmer Singh developed into a person perfectly as an individual and sportsperson during his time. Sports was his first love and due to his hard work, dedication and passion for sports, he is able to strongly advocate physical education for all and coaching as an ‘offshoot’ of physical education.

Professor C.V.Rao observed that his (Professor Ajmer Singh) interest in athletics was so much that it motivated and inspired him more and more for the development of sports and physical education.

According to Brig Labh Singh, Professor Ajmer Singh is a great personality ‘The Living Legend’, His devotion to duty and sacrifice to the cause/mission are par-excellence. Professor Ajmer Singh enjoys the goodwill and respect of thousands of his students, colleagues, sports persons, sports fraternity of India not only through length and breadth of our country but in foreign countries too. He is a rare “Life on the Planet Earth”, The Man of Millennium.
When asked to describe Professor Ajmer Singh in one line, Professor Gurbakhsh Singh Sandhu said “he is an man of action and a man of wisdom”-and old adage that describes him perfectly as an individual person he was found to be full of understanding and compassion whose heart and hearth were always open for all. As a teacher he was knowledgeable and his deep understanding of students pedagogy helped him become a much-loved teacher. In his capacity as an administrator and coach, he was able to empower and coach people much beyond their capacity.

Of the same view Dr. Rashpal Singh terms him as in individual who is “all in one”. In fact besides being an excellent academician and administrator he is one of the few people in the field of Physical Education who have so effectively integrated knowledge with empirical experience. It is thus no wonder that athletics who have had the privilege to be coached by him had a winning edge and advantage.

Arjuna Awardee Dr. Ajinder kaur of course reveres him as a demigod for she feels that seldom does one come across individuals who are so complete in every aspect and excels at everything too. The wonderful thing about Professor Ajmer Singh is that while striving for perfection both from himself and those around him, he has never ignore the human angle nor ever lost his sense of humor. In fact, it appears that he is one individual with multiple personalities and the beauty is that they all have integrated to make a prefect whole.

FINDINGS:

Results of opinion rating survey indicated that Professor Ajmer Singh was very friendly, cooperative, Health conscious, regular in his daily exercises, religious man and a source of support and strength to everyone. He possesses a very pleasant personality and his attitude towards others is always human. He has lot of patience and perseverance.

As a teacher Professor Ajmer Singh was very popular among students and has all qualities of an excellent teachers such as punctuality, fairness, up-to-date knowledge, skill of inspiring and motivating the students. He maintained warm and friendly relationalship with his colleagues.
Professor Ajmer Singh’s coaching abilities have been well recognized. Under his supervision as Director of sports, Punjab University, has been conferred by Abul Kalam Azad Tophy by the Presidents of India twice. He himself was awarded Arjuna Award for his excellent performance in sports. Based on his experience, the daily schedules for athletics were always on scientific lines. He was always receptive to new ideas and a committed professional. He always gave recognition and status to his athletics. It is because of these qualities and hard work that he has produced national and international level athletes.

Being a good administrator his approach was always democratic but he did not compromise with his principles. His planning was excellent. He has the rare quality of handling complex problems with competency and clarity. He never hesitates to own responsibility of his decisions. He always encouraged responsible and efficient workers and honoured all good suggestions from all quarters.

Professor Ajmer Singh is very intelligent, knowledgeable and well read, person who is sincere to his assignments. He is fond of books and latest sports magazines. He has lived by the motto ‘learning by doing’, Because of scholarly approach he has written many books and commented on ‘sports’ it is a noble venture where one should celebrates his humanity also.

CONCLUSIONS:

On the basis of the findings/information of the present study the following conclusions have been drawn:

1. Professor Ajmer Singh was the first eminent Physical Education in India who was also a sportsman of International standard.
2. Professor Ajmer Singh was very knowledgeable and a committed teacher.
3. Professor Ajmer Singh was a coach par excellence.
4. Professor Ajmer Singh is an efficient administrator and a strict disciplinarian.
5. Professor Ajmer Singh contributed a lot for the development of physical education and promotion of sports in India.
SUGGESTIONS:

1. It is suggested that similar case study may be conducted on other eminent personalities of physical education & sports.
2. Similar study may be carried out on the institutions who have contributed similarly for developing physical education and sports in the country.
3. The finding of this study may prove as a motivational tool to the budding athletics/sportsman.
4. The finding of this study may be a source of inspiration to the various physical educationists.

References


