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IN MEMORIAM



Prof. Jasbir Singh
(March 15, 1932-June 19, 2020)

It is very difficult to write in memoriam of a beloved teacher who has been an instrument in shaping your destiny like Prof. Jasbir Singh, an internationally renowned Agricultural Geographer. I still remember the way he was teaching and making the subject clear to the students. In fact, teaching of Agricultural Geography for him was not more than the narration of his personal experiences of farming to the students. He used to say in the class that farming is such a beneficial and profitable venture that a farmer can produce everything except salt in his fields and therefore he cannot die due to hunger. He was known for his punctuality and discipline in the class and no one could dare to enter his class once he was in. His demise on June 19, 2020 at Fresno, California in USA was shocking for all those who have been associated with him as students or otherwise.

He was born on March 15, 1932 at his maternal-ancestral village 86A6R near Montgomery, at present in Pakistan. However, his parental house was not in Pakistan. His elders, migrated from Barnal Kalan Satian village near Nawanshahr to Chanalon village near Kurali in Rupnagar

district in Punjab and finally to Mundebar Jampur near Jagadhri in Haryana in 1946 in search of greener pastures. His father Dr. Shamsheer Singh was in Military Medical Corps and became Prisoner of War (POW) during World War Second (1939-46) at Singapore, from where he was released after the end of war. Thus, his childhood was spent without the patronage of a father. As a result, he did his schooling and graduation at various places. He studied up to 5th class at Khalsa High School Kurali, where his father also did matriculation. Afterwards he moved to his maternal village in 1941 and studied at Khalsa High School Montgomery. He joined Government College at Montgomery for graduation but shifted to Government College Ropar after Partition of India, from where he failed and decided to go for farming, therefore discontinued studies. However, his father was posted as Medical Officer at Jail Hospital Ludhiana, which provided him a chance to continue his studies and he completed graduation and post-graduation from Government College, Ludhiana, where he stood first in the class at PG level.

He was selected lecturer through

Public Service Commission and joined Government Mohindra College, Patiala in June 1955. From where, he went to United Kingdom for Ph.D. in 1965. He did his Ph.D. from The University of Edinburgh, under the supervision of well-known Agricultural Geographer, Professor J.T. Coppock and Co-supervisor Dr. D.N. Mac Master, Associate Professor. He set a record of completing Ph.D. in two years and reported back to Government Mohindra College in 1967. He joined as a Reader and Head in the Department of Geography, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra which was opened in 1968. Taking into account his research and standing in the field of Agricultural Geography, he was selected as University Grants Commission (UGC) Professor in Agricultural Geography in 1975.

Prof. Singh completed 12 research projects sponsored by the ICSSR and UGC. He himself has published four books like (i) *Agricultural Geography of Haryana*, (ii) *The Green Revolution in India: How Green It is?*, (iii) *Agricultural Development in South Asia*, (iv) *An Agricultural Atlas of India: A Geographical Analysis*. Apart from these, he also co-authored five books such as (i) *Agricultural Geography*, (ii) *Determinants of Agricultural Productivity: A Sample Study of Operational Holding for Land Use Planning*, (iii) *Dynamics of Agricultural Change*, (iv) *Agro-environmental Units and Agricultural Land Use Planning: Indian Perspective* and (v) *Geomonitoring of Biophysical Environment and Area Development: Haryana A case Study*. However, major landmark among these books is 'Agricultural Geography' an internationally accepted text book on Agricultural Geography, which has been translated into Chinese also. Another reference book at sub-continental level was 'Agricultural Development in South Asia'.

He has published several research papers in the national and international journals of repute and out of these two deserving a special mention are: Singh, Jasbir (1979), "A new technique of delimiting agricultural production typology in food-crop dominated economy: Haryana case study", *Geographia Polonica*, vol. 40, pp. 209-216 and Singh, Jasbir and Dhillon, Sher Singh (1983), "Statistical Technique for Agricultural Regionalization-A New Approach (India: A Case Study)", *Asian Profile*, vol. 11, No. 2. All these publications of his were the result of his dedication towards punctuality and hard work. He has been the first person to report in the department in the morning and last to leave in the evening.

Prof. Jasbir Singh supervised seven Ph.D. research scholars and out of these five have been lucky enough who have got the chance to be his colleagues in the department. During his academic career, Prof. Singh visited several countries like United Kingdom, Scotland, France, Italy, Switzerland, USA, Australia, China, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to present his research work. Attachment with Department of Geography at Kurukshetra University was so much that he denied the offers of Professorship at Punjabi University, Patiala and Readership at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. So, he stayed at Kurukshetra for 28 years and placed the department on the International map. In 1994, he was honoured with a life time title of Professor Emeritus at Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra. However, he left Kurukshetra for Patiala to look after his ailing father and mother.

Although he has gained maximum heights in his academic life, yet his love, affection and emotional attachment with the agricultural land at village Mundebar Jampur

did not fade. Along with academic excellence and professional achievements, he remained in touch with his agricultural land located at village Mundebar Jampur in tehsil Jagadhari, Yamunanagar District, Haryana, where he has established “Shamsher Singh Farm”, a compact piece of 24 acres of agricultural land on Yamunanagar-Saharanpur road after the name of his father.

Both his son and daughter have migrated to USA. Although he has been visiting and staying with them, yet he did not like to stay there permanently due to his affection with the Indian soil, particularly with the village Mundebar Jampur. He wanted to spend his old age in touch with his village and agricultural farm and never wanted to go to USA. However, in the fag end of his life he has

to move to USA with very heavy heart as no one of his close relatives was in India to look after him, particularly when he was not maintaining good health. Thus, his wish to dissolve in Indian soils could not be materialised as he passed away at Fresno, California in USA.

His death is an irreversible loss for his family, relatives, friends, colleagues, students and academic world as a whole. He will be deeply missed and remembered for his honesty, discipline, good behaviour and academic excellence. May God provide peace to the departed soul!

Dr. Omvir Singh, Professor,
Department of Geography,
Kurukshetra University,
Kurukshetra (Haryana).

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