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IN MEMORIAM



Professor Jai Parkash Singh
(November 1, 1931 - September 6, 2024)

It is very difficult to write 'In Memoriam' of a person who was very respectable, dear, and helping hand in my life like Prof. Jai Parkash Singh, who was also known for his excellence in teaching and research. He was commonly known as Dr. J.P. Singh among his students and Colleagues. I came in contact with him in 1982 when I got transferred from Govt. College Malerkotla to Govt. College for Boys, Ludhiana and shortly our acquaintance changed into deep friendship. It is due to his encouragement that I joined Department of Geography at Punjabi University, Patiala in 1988. Although I shifted my residence from Ludhiana to Patiala, yet our relations, and affection for each other did not fade. My last visit to him was on April 5, 2024 when I and Dr. Lakhvir Singh Gill visited him after participating in a Quiz Contest at Khalsa College for Women, Ludhiana. He was quite hale and hearty at that time. Although he had some problem in hearing, yet he had full strength in voice and command on language. His sudden demise on September 6, 2024 was shocking for the family and all those who have been associated with him as students, colleagues or otherwise.

Prof. J. P. Singh belonged to a landlord family of village Partap Singh Wala, which was

established by his great-grandfather S. Partap Singh on the land belonging to him. At that time, the village was located in the vicinity of Ludhiana city but after the acquisition of its land under various urban development projects it has become a part of Ludhiana Municipal Corporation at present. Even after having such a wealthy background, he was a down to earth person. Nobody could judge from his lifestyle, working habits and social interaction that he was such a rich person, and even I did not know about it for a long time. Although we have been colleagues in the same profession and working together, yet he always provided me the affection and guidance of an elder brother for which I am and will always remain indebted to him.

Dr. J.P. Singh was born on November 1, 1931 at village Ramnagar (the village of his mother) in Muktsar district, two months after the death of his father S. Harbant Singh who died at a very young age. Dr. J. P. Singh and his elder brother were brought up by their mother while she was staying at her parental home at Ramnagar. Thus, his childhood was spent at the maternal-ancestral village without the support of his father.

Prof. J.P. Singh completed his early school education at Muktsar while staying at

Ramnagar village. Thereafter, he shifted to Ludhiana and joined Malwa Khalsa School from where he completed his matriculation. Afterwards, he studied at Govt. College for Boys, Ludhiana and passed B.Sc. Honours in Geography with English and Astronomy. Thereafter, he did his post-graduation from the department of Geography at the same college, and completed it in 1953. Dr. J.P. Singh's quest for education did not stop even after joining government job and remaining in service for many years, which led him to enroll for Ph.D. in the Department of Geography, Panjab University, Chandigarh, while remaining in service. He did his Ph.D. under the supervision of a distinguished geographer Late Prof. Gurdev Singh Gosal in 1982.

He began his academic career when he was selected as lecturer in geography through Punjab Public Service Commission and joined Government Mohindra College, Patiala in November, 1956. He stayed at Mohindra College, Patiala for 6 years and was transferred to Government College for Boys, Ludhiana in December, 1961. Taking into account his long-standing experience in teaching postgraduate classes and his academic excellence, he was invited by Dr. Bhagat Singh, Vice-Chancellor Punjabi University, Patiala to join as Professor in Geography in July 1987. During his stay in the university he graced the seat of Chairperson in the department and other responsibilities of the university being among the senior most. He retired from the university in April 1993 and was re-employed for two years. During his short stay in the department, he supervised Ph.D. and M.Phil students apart from his own research publications.

Dr. J. P. Singh was an untiring and hard working person; a calm and cool personality. I still remember the day when we went to Jammu

from Ludhiana to attend a marriage and returned on the same day after travelling a distance of about 570 kilometres. He himself was driving the car and the road network at that time was not as efficient as at present. Even after joining Punjabi University, Patiala he did not shift his residence and preferred to travel daily from Ludhiana to Patiala covering a distance of about 100 kilometres and back which was a two hours journey. Although he commuted from Ludhiana to Patiala, yet he was never late in any meeting or missed his class.

Prof. J.P. Singh was an academic of repute both in teaching and research. His key areas of interest were Population Geography, Political Geography, Geography of Resources and Industries and Regional Geography of India. He contributed several research papers in national and international journals and in edited books. Such was his interest in research that he started contributing research papers as early as in 1963 when he was teaching in the college, where there was no environment for research and he himself was not Ph.D. at that time. His areas of interest were very unique, as he published research papers on 'Prospects of Textile Industries in Punjab', 'Prospects of Iron and Steel Industry in Punjab', 'Development of Forest-Based Industries in Punjab' etc. While staying at Punjabi University, he also contributed research papers in Punjabi in the Journal known as "*Samajak Vigyan Pattar*" published by Punjabi University, Patiala. He also prepared a Dictionary of Geography Terms along with Dr. S.S. Dhillon in Punjabi, published by Punjabi University. This dictionary included terms used in Physical Geography, Political Geography, Population Geography, and Agricultural Geography. It is very useful for those who want to write geography books in Punjabi. Such was his

dedication to work that despite his very old age; he was searching and exploring a vast material collected by him when he was in service to write a book on India. He was writing but unfortunately he could not complete it and it is still in state of a draft.

His interest in education and service for community led him to the formation of Partap Charitable Trust in December 2000 in memory of his great-grandfather Sardar Partap Singh. Under this Trust, he founded Partap Public School providing education from nursery to standard XII. The school is affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). Adjoining the school, he established Partap College of Education for Teaching ETT, B.Ed. and M.Ed. classes. The college is affiliated to Punjab University, Chandigarh. Both the institutions have emerged as premier educational institutions of Ludhiana city. The institutions established on his ancestral land are shaping the lives of hundreds of students every year.

My 45 years long association with Prof. J. P. Singh abruptly ended with his sudden and

unexpected demise. The vacuum created by his demise is unlikely to be fulfilled. His death is an irreparable loss for the family, relatives, friends, colleagues, students and all others who remained in touch with him. The geography fraternity of Punjabi University has lost a noble soul, a teacher, a researcher par excellence and above all a very good human being. Prof. J. P. Singh shaped and influenced the careers and lives of thousands of his students and people around him. However, this process will continue for years to come through the educational institutions established by him and he will remain alive in the hearts and souls of all those who will be associated with these institutions in any capacity. He will be deeply missed and remembered for his honesty, discipline, good behaviour and academic excellence. We have lost him from our sight, but he will always be in our hearts and prayers.

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