



THE GLORIOUS HISTORY OF SPORTS IN PUNJAB NEED TO REGAIN THE PARADISE LOST Concept Credited By:Shri V.V.S.N Rao

Background: History of sports in India dates back to ancient era when there were competitions in Archery, Wrestling, Mace fight (Gada Yudh), etc. The stories of Archers, Wrestling and various other sports are replete in Indian folklore.

However, the history of modern sports in India starts from 1920s when YMCA Madras took initiative to organize All India Olympic Games (which turned into modern National Games) and decided to send Indian contingent to participate in the Modern Olympic Games in Paris in 1924.

Sir Dorab Tata came forward to form the much needed Indian Olympic Association in 1927 and Maharaja Bhupinder Singh took over as President of IOA in 1928 and successfully fielded Indian contingent including the legendary Hockey team in 1928 Olympic Games at Amsterdam where India won its first Gold in Hockey.

While raising funds for Indian contingent in Olympic Games, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh made earnest appeal in the following words which became the guiding principle of Indian Olympic Association in the years to come:

‘Youth taking part in these Games become ambassadors of goodwill. Careful selection, intensive training and proper equipment are the most essential to field a competitive team.’

Punjab took the lead to show the rest of India in promoting sports in the country, After Maharaja Bhupinder Singh’s tenure as President, IOA from 1928 to 38, Maharaja Yadavinder Singh took over the rein of Indian Olympic Association from 1938 to 1960 and then Maharaja Balinder Singh took over from 1960 to 1975.



The Indian Representative at International Olympic Committee, **Shri Guru Dutt Sodhi** proposed to convert the Far East Games into Asian Games as most of the countries in the Far East had gain independence from the British domain and it was the right time to '*display the spirit of unity and level of achievements*' in

Then comes the name of **Flying Sikh Milkha Singh** who participated in three Olympic Games 1956, 1960 and 1964 and made a sensation by reaching the finals of 400 M Race in Rome Olympic Games 1960 where he narrowly missed the medal.

Smt Kamaljeet Sandhu became the first Indian Woman to win an Asian Games Gold Medal when she won the Gold Medal in 400 M Race in Bangkok Asian Games 1970.

After many years of draught in Body Building, **Shri Prem Chand Degra** became Mr World and Mr Universe.

Born on 1 December 1955 (age 65) at Babri Nangal village in the Gurdaspur district of Punjab, Premchand Degra has striven hard to mould his body to be crowned Mr. Punjab, Mr. North India, Mr. India (9 times in a row), Mr. Asia (8 times), finally Mr. World (Middle-weight class), and Mr. Universe. He is currently residing in the city of Hoshiarpur (Punjab), India. He is running a world class gym in the city of Hoshiarpur. There are several such legends in Punjab and needs a separate book to write on each of them.

The Conspiracy: Pakistan repeatedly remarks that if there were no Punjab in between Islamabad and Delhi, it would have been a cake-walk for Pak Army to capture Delhi in one day. With this idea, Pakistan is systematically inducting various elements in Punjab to misguide the youth, serious among their mala-fide scheme is the induction of drugs to spoil the youth of Punjab. It has further infiltrated West Punjab's in the guise of Sikhs to raise separatist slogans and vitiate the social harmony. By diverting the attention of the public towards separatist movement, various campaign, it has succeeded in infiltrating not only big cities but also remote villages to make the youth addicted to drugs.



It resulted in the downfall of Punjab's overall performance in the National Games which is the yardstick of any State's progress in Sports. Punjab competed with the Services in the National Games for the top place and it was ranked Number One in 2001 National Games. Then the downfall started and it ranked 7th at Guwahati National Games 2007, 9th in Ranchi National Games in 2011 and slightly improved to be ranked 5th in Trivandrum National Games 2015.

The Proposed Solution: In order to combat these elements and to bring back the Sikh Youth on the right path, it is proposed to set up Centres for training in Gatka, Sangat & Pangat to teach the rich history and teachings of Sikhism to the youth and also to set up Sports Academies in all 23 Districts and Chandigarh.

1. To begin with, it is proposed to conduct Mini Marathon in all Districts in the age group of 14 to 16 years.
2. The first ten boys and girls will be selected to undergo regular athletic training under a Coach for which they will be provided with training kit, refreshment after training.
3. The Coach will be paid lump sum amount as honorarium to meet his conveyance expenses.

One **Mini Marathon** may be conducted on trial basis and based on the response from the participants, officials and sponsors, more & more Districts may be covered. Efforts may be made to selected sportspersons on the basis of their performance in School Games and Sub-Junior and Junior category in the District and the State Championships and admit them under the Day Boarding Scheme to provide the much needed support to excel in sports.

Sports Academies may be established in the village/city of legendary sportspersons of yesteryear after their name. For example, Football Academy may be established in Mahalpur in the name of legendary Football Captain Jernail Singh. Similarly, Hockey Academy may be set up in Shansarpur in the name of Olympic Golden Hatrick Balbir Singh who won three consecutive Gold medals in 1948, 1952 and 1956 Olympic Hockey Gold Medal.



Athletic Academy may be set up in Patiala in the name of Smt Kamaljeet Sandhu who became the first Indian woman to win 400 M Gold Medal in the Asian Games 1070 in Bangkok. Weightlifting & Body Building Academy may be set up in the name of Mr World & Mr Universe Prem Chand Degra. There are many other legendary sportspersons in whose name Sports Academies may be set up to bring the youth of modern Punjab back on sports ground and keep them away from unhealthy habits and mould them to bring laurels not only for the State but also for the Country.

Corporates, Individuals, Institutions etc are welcome to sponsor such initiatives so that we can rebuild our Sports & also provide a future to the youth who is already handling a menace of drug use , unemployment, & religion conversion affecting the life of each & every one at the grassroots level.