
Participation of Eminent Athletic Personalities at Kila Raipur Rural Sport Festival-A Case Study

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Abstract: Kila Raipur; a village of Ludhiana district in Punjab is well known for its rural sports festival called 'Rural Olympics'. Purpose of the present study was to explore the salient features of this famous rural sports festival that has its origin in pre independence era. Grewals of this village has played a significant role to organize this sports festival successfully since its inception. Grewals are the descendents of Chandel Rajputs; the ruler of Budhel Khand, and comes in most educated classes among the Jatts of Punjab. In July 1934, the first sports meet was organized including volleyball, Kabaddi and a few athletic events. Since then it has been organizing as the annual rural sports meet. Information for this study was collected from primary and secondary sources. In 1934 this sports festival was started with few events and only local athletes took part in athletic events, but now it has become the competition arena of national and international athletes. Many eminent sports personalities have participated here including Gurbachan Singh Randhawa, Parveen Kumar and many more.

Keywords: *Athletic Personalities, Place of Event and Sports Festival.*

Introduction:

Festivals, mirthful or joyful celebrations, have been considered an important part of human life among all nations and in all ages. Many festivals including those of Olympic Games were regular features among the ancient Greeks. Saturnalia and Luper Colia were the important Roman festivals in which the Romans amused themselves and engaged themselves in games. It was customary among the ancient Greeks to suspend wars during the period of the Olympic Games so as to provide safe travel and transport to the participants and spectators from different states to the venue of the festival. This shows the high esteem in which the festivals were held. According to American Educator Encyclopedia, "festivals or

feasts are certain days or periods set apart for the celebration of some events". These days, therefore, may be said to be a period to enjoy and make merry.

History of Games and sports in India, Indian Mirror says, has a rich heritage. In the Indus valley civilization, people were much civilized and health conscious. They had swimming pools and perhaps indulged in water sports. People engaged themselves in different types of recreational activities using marbles, balls and dice of different shapes (Reet Howell, 1994).

Punjab is called the land of fairs and festivals. Almost every type of fair is held in the Punjab. Most of these fairs and festivals are held in rural areas. It shows the special need of rural people for such gatherings. Nijjar (1968) says „Fairs and festivals were very fairs and common with the rural people of Punjab“. Many of these are largely attended by the people from every walk of life. People of Punjab select certain spots for their meetings on certain occasions.

Almost seventy four years ago when people of Kila Raipur began to hold competitions in rural sports, none would have thought that this tournament will become a „movement“ in the Punjab. Now it has become the most popular village sports festival in India. This festival represents a great spirit of games and Punjabi culture.

Famous Athletic Personalities:

Rural sports festival started in 1934 with few events has now become the competition arena of national and international players. Many national and international athletes have been participating here. Kila Raipur is the only rural sports festival where many international athletes have participated. Name of some eminent athletic personalities who participated here are given below.

- Parduman Singh (Asian Champion in Shot put) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1953 & 1954
- Ishar Singh (Asian Bronze medal in Shot put) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1953, 1954 & 1956.
- Joginder Singh Habshi (Asian Medalist) participated at Kila Raipur in the year of 1956.
- Daljit Singh Grewal Lalton (Asian 1958-Gold Medalist in 4*400 Relay and also 10 Years National Record in 800 mts.) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1960, 1961 & 1962
- Gurbachan Singh Randhawa-First Arjun Awardee(Asian Gold Medalist in 1962) participated at Kila Raipur in the year of 1962

- Harbhajan Singh, Kila Raipur National Champion (Represented India in Indo-Pak Lahore Games in 1960, held Punjab Police Record of 100 mts. for 45 Years and Punjab State Record for 25 years .) participated at Kila Raipur from 1958 to 1961.
- Bakhshish Singh Brar (National record holder javelin throw) participated at Kila Raipur from 1959 to 1962.
- Nawab Singh Retd. SP (international athlete) participated at Kila Raipur from 1960 to 1962.
- Jarnail Singh (bronze medalist World Railway) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1960 & 1961.
- Harbel Singh (National champion of 400 mts hurdle) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1963 & 1964.
- Narinder Singh B.S.F. (Represented India in Iran and Seulen in Javellin Throw) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1967 & 1968.
- Parveen Kumar (Silver Medal in Commonwealth Games) participated at Kila Raipur from 1968 to 1975.
- Mohinder Singh Gill (Commonwealth medalist & Olympian in Triple Jump) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1966 & 1967.
- Gurdeep Singh Baba (National Champion in Shot Put) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1967, 1968 & 1969.
- Lakhbir Singh (National Champion in Pole Vault) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1966-1968
- Sucha Singh P.P. (Silver Medal in Asian in 400 mts.) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1967 & 1968.
- Ajaib Singh P.P. (Silver Medal in Asian 1970 in 400, 4*400 mts.relay) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1967 & 1968.
- Pritam Singh (National Champion in Javellin Throw, also famous Kabaddi player) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1967-1969.
- Lehmbhar Singh (Asian Medalist in 400 mts. Hurdels) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1971 & 1972.
- Prem Singh Sangrur (S.A.F. Games gold medalist in 5,000 mts.) participated at Kila Raipur from 1980 to 1988.
- Sukhwant Singh (Asian championship silver medalist in 1500 mts.) participated at Kila Raipur from 1980 to 1986.
- Dharam Singh PP (SAF Games gold medalist in 1500 mts) participated at Kila Raipur

from 1980 to 1988.

- Hakam Singh (SAF Games gold medalist in 800 mts) participated at Kila Raipur from 1980 to 1986.
- Surinder Singh (SAF Games Gold Medalist) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1983-1985.
- Amritpal Singh (National record holder of long jump, participation in junior world championship) has been participating at Kila Raipur since 2002 till date.
- Maha Singh (National Champion in Long Jump, Asian Grand Prix Gold, and World Railways Gold) has been participating since 2000 till date.
- Rajesh Kumar BSF (International long jumper) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 2002-2004.
- Kuldeep Mann (Junior Asian championship silver medalist in shot-put) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 2002 & 2003.
- Gurwinder Singh (Junior Asian championship silver medalist in 4*400 mts relay) participated at Kila Raipur from 2000 to 2004.
- Shamsher Partap Singh (National Champion in Long Jump) has been participating since 2005 till date.
- Maninder Singh (Junior SAF athletics gold medalist in 4*400 mts relay) has been participating since 2006 till date.
- Gurwinderpal Singh (Indoor Asian games participation in 4*400 mts relay) participated at Kila Raipur in the year of 2007.
- Vishal Saksena (National Champion in 100mts) participated at Kila Raipur in the year of 2007.
- Bainsh V.B. Kerala (SAF Games silver medalist, participation in junior world championship in 4*400 mts relay) participated at Kila Raipur in the year of 2007.
- Sunil Kumar Haryana (Junior Asian championship silver medalist in 4*400 mts relay) participated at Kila Raipur in the year of 2007.

Girls section:

- Manjit Walia (Asian Medalist in 100 mts. Hurdels) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1959 & 1960.
- Sandesh Sodhi (Asian Participation in 100,200 mts.) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1966 & 1967.

- Rajwant Kaur (Bronze Medal at National Level in Hurdles) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1975 & 1976.
- Gurmit Kaur-Golden Queen (Asian Games bronze medalist, National Champion in Shot Put, Discus Throw and Javelin Throw) participated at Kila Raipur from 1980 to 1988.
- Surjit Kaur Banga (Asian and World Cross Country Participation) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1984-1986.
- Neelam J. Singh (Asian Gold in Discus Throw) participated at Kila Raipur from 1986 to 1998.
- Amandeep Kaur (South Asian Champion in Shot Put) participated at Kila Raipur from 1990 to 1996.
- Deepinder Kaur (National Level Player in 100, 200mts.) participated at Kila Raipur from 1992 to 1995.
- Ramla Devi (Participation in Asian grand prix meet) participated at Kila Raipur from 1992 to 2004.
- Joti Sikdar (Asian games gold medalist in 800 & 1500mts) participated at Kila Raipur in the years of 1996 & 1997.
- Mandeep Kaur (Participation in junior Asian championship in 4*400 mts relay) participated at Kila Raipur from 1992 to 1995.
- Rupinder Kaur Kila Raipur (Participation in indoor Asian games) participated at Kila Raipur from 1994 to 2004.
- Sagardeep Kaur (Asian championship gold medalist in 4*400 mts relay) participated at Kila Raipur in the year of 2003.
- Davinder Kaur (Silver medalist in 4*100mts relay Raja Bhalindra Singh international invitation meet) participated at Kila Raipur from 1997 to 2003.

Conclusion:

No doubt, it is a rural competition, but it is organized as any national or international competition. The tournament was started with three events. Now it attracts more than 4000 sportsmen and women-both of recognized and traditional sports. Kila Raipur Sports Festival got this honor that many prominent sportsmen and women participated here including Parduman Singh, Gurbachan Singh Randhawa, Lehmbhar Singh, Manjit Walia, Parveen Kumar, and many more.

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