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Title: Need to revise the criteria for selecting Arjuna awardees.

SHRI M.B. RAJESH (PALAKKAD): Madam Speaker, I would like to draw your attention of this august House to a grave injustice and serious discrimination done in the selection of Arjuna Award winners. Earlier, the legendary athlete Milkha Singh himself had refused Arjuna Award in protest against this discrimination. This practice is still continuing, Madam. This year, Tom Joseph, former Indian Volley Ball Captain, an outstanding player, who had represented India continuously for 15 years and who has won six international trophies has been denied Arjuna Award for the 10th continuous year. This is the 10th time he has been denied Arjuna Award.

Madam, justification given is that Volley Ball is not a popular game. Whether the Selection Committee is of the view that only Cricket is the popular game?

12.00hrs

Some cricketers, who are part of this Selection Committee, are responsible for this. The entire credibility of Arjuna Awards is now in question. This is like the Nobel Peace Prize which was never given to Mahatma Gandhi.

So, I urge upon the Government to look into the process of deciding Arjuna Awards and also to look into the process of selection of this Selection Committee itself and make this whole process transparent so that this will not happen in future. Cricket is not the only game being played in the country. Football, Volley-Ball and many other games are played in the country and it is the duty of the Government to promote all those games, not just Cricket. Therefore, I request the Government to seriously intervene in the matter.

MADAM SPEAKER: Hon. Members

Shri Dilipkumar Mansukhlal Gandhi,

Shri P.K. Biju and

Shri P. Karunakaran are allowed to associate themselves with the matter raised by Shri M.B. Rajesh.