



I am very sad to learn a few hours ago that M S Gill (Dr Manohar Singh Gill, 87) has passed away today in Delhi. He was one of the most distinguished civil servants of post-Independent India with special interest in defending the interests of the farming communities. He served for many years at the highest administrative positions in Punjab and later at the Centre. I have had a very long association with him and the family. He was in the mould of M L Darling, a civil servant in Punjab during the colonial period, who wrote one of the classics on Punjab peasantry. Gill was a competent civil servant with an academic talent. The Economic and Political Weekly invited me to edit a special issue on Punjab in 2017. I chose M S Gill as the only contributor who was not an academic. He wrote a brilliant piece on the agrarian challenges for Punjab. He was also a brave man, not afraid of taking action when it was needed. As a Sports Minister at the Centre, he removed KPS Gill from heading India's hockey federation. My friend Prof Bhupinder Brar remarked jokingly then: you needed a Gill [M S) to humiliate the arrogant Gill [KPS]. I had several sittings with him and one of them was on my book on federalism and the Punjab economy. I was impressed that he had read the book (not an easy one to read) before I reached his house for the tea. I always felt that I needed to spend more time with him than I did. I will miss him enormously. One of his daughters was my student for a brief period and the other two are my friends. What a talented set of daughters of a proud father! I am thinking of them and his wife Vinnie Gill. M S Gill has left a brilliant and inspiring legacy for Indian and especially Punjab civil servants to follow.

– Pritam Singh

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