K S D : As I Knew Him

K. N. Prasad,
Information Management Consultant
No 26, 'Triveni', 58th Cross, 4th Block,
Rajajinagar, Bengaluru – 560 010
Email: kadaba.n.prasad@gmail.com

I had known Prof. K.S. Deshpande since the day we met for the first time under unusual circumstances. It was a hot/cool afternoon in June 1968 in Bangalore. I was engrossed in a book on World War II in the cosy comfort of the then Public Library (now State Central Library) in Cubbon Park, when my friend Mr. D.R. Anandakumar, a former classmate during my P.G. Course in Central College, pulled me out of the library and took me to the newly built Bangalore University Library at the Central College. Along the way, he couldn't stop talking about the person whom we were going to meet.

At last, around 3.30pm, we entered the library, where he made me stand against a huge table with several books spread all over. But there was no sign of life around. I stood perplexed.Slowly, a person sitting on the floor on the other side of the table emerged and approached us. He greeted Anandakumar, who introduced me as 'book-worm'. By then,he was fully composed and- started talking to me (as if we had known each other for a long time).

After a while, he suggested that I take up a course in Library Science.This struck a chord as I was passionate about reading. He also gave me the option of doing the course either in Mysore or in Dharwad. I expressed my keenness for Dharwad, even though I belonged to Mysore. He suggested that I proceed to Dharwad immediately and meet with Prof. Kumbhar at the Dept. of Library Science for further consultation. The rest as they say is history. I joined the Dept. of Library Science, Karnatak University, Dharwad in July 1968.

Had I presumed Prof. K.S. Deshpande, would forget about me after I joined the Library Science course, I would have been utterly wrong. He kept an eye on my progress without speaking a word about it despite meeting with me 3-4 times during the year.

On the last day of the exam, after the viva voce, he telephoned me to meet him the next day at the Central College Library in Bengaluru. It seemed more like an order which I could not refuse. Although I had planned to spend a few more days in Dharwad, I nevertheless packed off my belongings and left for Bengaluru, the same night. The next morning, he appeared glad to see me standing before him. He advised me to work with Sri. T.V. Venkataramanaiah (TVV) to learn cataloguing of Kannada books. Although it was an honorary job, Prof. Deshpande came to my workplace everyday and discussed progress in my work,while also ascertaining from TVV. Many a times I wouldn't be cataloguing more than two or three books on a single day as I would spend more time in reading the book and discussing with TVV and Prof. Deshpande.

This went on for about six months before I ventured asking him about a more permanent job to allay my fears of remaining jobless forever. He merely said, 'wait, I will fix you soon.' And he did as promised. He called Mr. H.R. Ramachandra, the then University Librarian, University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, at Hebbal and requested him to assign a suitable post for me in his library. Mr. Ramachandra gave me a job of Library Assistant on daily wage basis with a promise to absorb me on a regular basis as soon as possible, which he did, within six months for a royal salary scale of Rs.175-10-EB-350. I was appointed as Library Assistant, but this time on a regular basis.

Prof. Deshpande was on my interview panel on three occasions and I was successful in all the interviews. The reason being that he had advised me once, as to how to face interviews. I followed them diligently and hence the success. The suggestions were: look decent (by appearance); wear decent dress; be calm and composed; never get excited even if you are provoked, answer to the point, donot exaggerate; wear a smile always; if you do not know the answer, say so but do not bluff; it is not a sin to not know the answer to every question; be bold and face the interviewer with confidence; do not exhibit nervousness. Despite doing well, if you do not get selected, the reasons may be different.

Here are the best advice I received from him:

- Never go to any meeting unprepared or under prepared. Do lot of homework whether for an interview, or for delivering a lecture or

any other meeting. I have followed his advice in organizing lectures, workshops, seminars and conferences meticulously.

- ❖ When you prepare to write an article or paper for presentation, ensure that you have clearly understood the topic on which you are writing. Make your presentation understandable by the audience; let there be clarity in the language as much as in the subject.

- ❖ Begin your presentation – oral or written, with an introduction to the topic and end it with a conclusion. Let the references given at the end be very specific.

I had the greatest privilege of working with him during the revision of the Karnataka State Public Library Act-1965. He was the Chairman of the Committee constituted by the State Library Authority appointed by the Government of Karnataka. It was a learning experience for me. The committee brought out several amendments to the existing Act. The whole exercise was appreciated by many including the law makers of the State. Prof. Deshpande was utterly disappointed at the apathy of the administrators. But he continued to impress upon the educationists, politicians whom he met later on, about the usefulness of the Amendments and why it should get the approval of the Government for the healthy growth of Public Library System in the State.

I saw in him a person packed with energy and bubbling with enthusiasm.
He was a **KID** which expression included **K**indness covering goodness, gentleness, helpfulness; **I**ntegrity covering ethics, honesty, truthfulness, trustworthiness and self-control; and **D**iligence covering hard work, passion and perseverance. He was a genuine representative of these characters, which even drew his detractors to him.

Whenever I approached him for his advice either on matters relating to our profession or anything personal, he would with all patience hear my views on them and only then advise me with inputs on how I need to be going about it.

He was not only fond of me but also the other members of my family. He always had great words of appreciation for my wife whenever she received

awards or recognition for her work in her medical profession. It may not be out of context if I mention the interest he took when I showed him a few of the English poems written by my younger son. He went to the extent of getting the opinion of scholars like Prof. K. Raghavendra Rao and R. S. Malagi. He insisted that I get the poems published.

He was always a source of inspiration not only to me but also to who ever came under his influence.

His scholarly writings have intuitive nature, possessing an intense sense of right and wrong. The quotations he used to support his views or statements were mostly drawn from English and Sanskrit literature.

Fourth August 2018 was a very sad day for the library professionals all over India, especially in Karnataka.

It was a big blow for me as for many others, as I cannot run up to him for his advice/guidance anymore.

No day passes without referring to his association in some context or the other. I feel I am blessed to have had him as a friend, a philosopher and a guide.

I conclude by recalling a stanza from Bhartrhari's *Nitishatakam*.

> *"Prayatnenakaaryesusidhirjananaam;*
> *Prayatnenasadbudhivridhirjananaam;*
> *Prayatnenayudhejaya; Syajananaamprayatnovidheya,*
> *prayatnovidheya"*
>
> Hard work makes people successful. Hard work strengthens wisdom. Hard work makes us win in the battle. So keep hardworking, keep doing Hard work.