Life and Works of Prof. K. S. Deshpande

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Man has been recording his experiences in one form or the other for his next generation. This is happening since ancient times to today. Many such instances are seen in Indian culture. Our ancestors have been guarding the recorded knowledge as a treasure. Due to the advent of science and technology, knowledge grows at a faster rate, gets consolidated in various disciplines and flows into libraries in the form of books, journals, records, graphics, films etc., in both analog and digital forms. Capturing such knowledge, storing it systematically and disseminating without any loss of time is a complex mission.

To achieve this, libraries have grown and influenced specialization in every walk of life.Great western thinkers like Mevil Dewey, Berwick Sayers and Indian scholars like Dr. S. R. Ranganathan, University of Bombay's Prof.Marshall, National Libraries B. S. Kesavan, Delhi University's Das gupta, Madras University's Prof. D. B. Krishna Rao have contributed their might and were instrumental in the development of librarianship. Prof. K. S. Deshpande is another name to be counted among the galaxy of these brilliant brains. He spearheaded the Karnatak University library for 35 years. That he dedicated all his life to the development of libraries is known to everyone who belonged to Library and Information Science (LIS) community.

Born in a highly cultured family on 5th May 1924, Prof. Deshpande secured a first class in Matriculation of University of Mumbai in 1941. He got a scholarship from Bombay Presidency and brought laurels to the Karnatak College, Dharwad. In the year 1947, he got a postgraduate degree in English and Kannada from the University of Bombay. He got a Diploma in Librarianship from the University of Bombay in 1950-51. In 1957, American Library Association, Chicago gave him an honorary Diploma in 1957.

Prof .K .S. Deshpande's began his career as a high school teacher, and he was a very simple man. He came out with flying colours in the Translator Examination conducted by the Public Service Commission, Bombay in 1950. Then he served as a translator in the Government's Home Department. During this time, i.e. while working , in 1950-51, he completed in-service training at the University of Bombay's library and obtaineda Diploma in Librarianship. Then in April 1951 he became an Assistant Librarian at the Karnatak University Dharwad and chose Karnataka as his sphere of activities and initiated scientific development of libraries.

The then Vice Chancellor, Wrangler D. C. Pavate encouraged and supported Prof .K .S. Deshpande's in building the Karnatak University library on scientific ground. Pavate's dedication, knowledge and enthusiasm gave boost to the young Deshpande. Prof .K .S. Deshpande's never looked back and oriented all his knowledge and might in developing the KUD library.

The Government of India, in recognition of Prof .K .S. Deshpande's brilliant managerial skills, sent him to the United States of America to visit libraries. He observed and studied the new trends in librarianship in the States. He adapted the observed practices to Indian conditions and took maximum advantage of the visit.

Subsequently, his field of activities didn't confine to the Karnatak University alone; other university librarians also took the advantage of Prof .K .S. Deshpande's knowledge and administrative skills.

While Karnatak University Library was evolving , another major activity was taking shape. This was Karnatak University's ambitious plan to start a postgraduate library training school. Prof. Deshpande was asked to spearhead the school. Prof .K .S. Deshpande gave a Midas touch to the school, it is flourishing even today.

At this timethe University of Mysore invited him to take over as the librarian and made him Honorary Professor. Then he was invited to be the Librarian of Bangalore University. In addition, he was asked to draw up a functional architectural plan of the proposed Library Building at Jnana Bharati.

While he was in University of Mysore, he gave a Report (plan) to the Government for upgrading the PG Centres at Mangalore and Gulbarga into full-fledged University Libraries. Almost all the Universities in Krnataka are benefited by his service. Many institutions were literally competing for getting Prof .K .S. Deshpande's service. There was an invitation and political pressure on him to take over as the Librarian and Professor of the North-Eastern Hill University. However, the Karnatak University was not willing to part with Prof. Deshpande's service. Many such services came in search of him: He served them and offered guidance being rooted at Dharwad.

During his career, Prof .K .S. Deshpande's was associated with many universities in designing the curriculum of their LIS courses. As a member of the UGC's sub-committee, he submitted a report or guidelines regarding the Library Architecture. He has shared his experience and knowledge through several national and international seminars/conferences. He has written many research papers and many books. Many scholars have successfully completed their Ph.D. under his guidance. He served as an Advisor to the Public Library Committee of the Government of Goa. He submitted a Report enabling formation of Goa Public Library System. It came natural for him to accept an invitation to take on a project and implemented it within the stipulated time frame.

Prof .K .S. Deshpande's kept himself abreast of the new developments in the field of LIS. At the same time he was concerned about the problems of publishing world. He provided many practical solutions to the problems of publishing industry. He strived to develop a taste for reading and public libraries in the society.

In order to spread the library culture, he initiated publication of a journal titled *Timeless Fellowship*. This was published by the Karnatak University Library Science Association (KULSA). He shouldered editorial responsibility. His hard work and national/international professional contacts made *Timeless Fellowship* a significant journal in LIS.

Triggered by the success of *Timeless Fellowship*, Indian Council of Library Development (ICLD), Delhi, decided to bring out a half-yearly publication and invited Prof Deshpande to be the editor of the publication. Needless to say, he handled this responsibility also with great success.

Although the Karnatak University retired him from librarianship, librarianship never let Prof .K .S. Deshpande to retire. Most of his time was dedicated to the development of reading and library culture, no wonder, he remained active and dynamic till the very end of his life.

Generally a Librarian is referred as professor of professors. This was 100% true in the case of Prof .K .S. Deshpande . Anyone who cames in search of information/books, was warmly welcomed – be it in his cabin or at his home. He had that hypnotic power to convert anyone into an ardent reader. His lectures to LIS students were not only inspiring but were embellished with his rich literary flavor. He was indeed a walking encyclopedia.

He used to immerse himself completely into any work he undertook. He worked with many social institutions in different capacities. A few outstanding instances of his social service are, as Working President of *Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha*, as President of Gandhi Peace Foundation, as Founder President of the Dharwad Unit of Family Planning Association of India, as Vice President of Dharwad District branch of Bharat Scouts and Guides. He used to keep himself busy in all such activities.

Prof .K .S. Deshpande has worked as a member of editorial board of Kannada *Vishvakosh* (Encyclopaedia). A massive compilation of University of Mysore's Kannada Bibliography reflects Deshpande's hardworking personality.

He firmly believed that reading is a fundamental right. Throughout his life he lived for this mission and has spread this message. To love books means, being in touch with the knowledge acquired through generations. A man can be both ultra modern or traditionally ancient at the same time if he reads. Books are the link between past and present. So long as the man loves books, one need not be pessimistic about the future of humanity. Prof .K .S. Deshpande's advocated reading for such a great mission.

Prof .K .S. Deshpande's can be described as a book lover, readers' guide and custodian of timeless human spirit. There are not many librarians of Prof .K .S. Deshpande's caliber. He can be compared with America's Appleseed, John Chapman. Just as he planted an apple tree wherever he went, Deshpande developed a library wherever he went.

Prof .K .S. Deshpande had an attractive personality with broad forehead, chiseled face, healthy attitude and ever-smiling outlook. Those who are associated with him got infected by his charm and open-mindedness.

Prof .K .S. Deshpande's grandfather Ra. Ha. Deshpande was the first man in North Karnatak to secure M.A. degree. He established *Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha* in 1890. This institution was instrumental in renaissance of Kannada and Karnataka. His house was a pilgrim place for all those who struggled for the development of Kannada language and literature. Late Galaganath, a champion of Kannada Culture found homely shelter in Ra. Ha. Deshpande's house.

Prof .K .S. Deshpande's father, Shripadrao, could have been a teacher, but he chose to work for the cause of Kannada. Nadoj Patil Puttappa says that no one can excels Prof. Deshpande when it comes to introducing the world of books and enticing people to adopt reading culture. Puttappa further says that Deshpande was born in the family of scholars, and he was a man with timeless spirit.

Prof. Deshpande was given Ranganathan-Kaula Award for Lifetime Achievement in the year 2000. Besides being a great librarian, Prof .K .S. Deshpande was also a great writer. The following is a list of his titles. *Library Science: A Study, Library Development in India, America, Land of Libraries, University System in India, Kannadad Gudi, Gnanadegula, Karnataka Vishvavidylaya, Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sanghad Sansthapaka Ra. Ha. Deshpande yavar Jeevan Charitre and Gandhiji Endendigoo Prastuta. He edited Granthalaya Rajat Deepti: A Commemorative Volume of Silver Jubilee Celebration of* Department of Public Library, Government of Karnataka. In addition, he has written many research papers in English and Kannada.

He was appointed as the Chairman of a Committee constituted by the State Public Library Authority, Government of Karnatakato revise the Karnataka State Public Library Act-1965.

Prof K. S. Deshpande's friends, followers and students joined together and presented him with a felicitation volume titled *Prabuddha* to show their gratitude.