

D. C. Pavate: The Architect of Karnatak University Dharwad

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I. INTRODUCTION

To admire greatness in others, as Goethe said, increases our greatness. Therefore it is appropriate that I adapt the words flowing from men who have spoken formally, informally, objectively and impartially without fear or favor, after seeing him from afar and near. Even so, it would not be easy for anybody to pierce through the surface of Shri.D.C. Pavate's dynamic personality reaches its core reminding us of Sarojini Naidu's words: "Never was there a nature whose outer qualities provided so complete an antithesis of its inner worth".

Therefore the purpose of this article is not to eulogize or flatter a man who is no more but to remind ourselves to see the living relevance of values, ideals, ideas and deeds in the service of our motherland in general and Karnataka University, Karnataka Colleges in particular. This is so because philosophers, teachers, students and ordinary practical men have brought upon themselves a situation of collective irrelevance engendered by their dwindling effectiveness in the life of society and by society's indifferent treatment meted out to them. In particular an influential contemporary school of philosophy maintaining that philosophy is not a theory or doctrine excludes itself from relevance to the stubborn facts of daily life.

If we are honest enough it is time to indulge in heart searching self-examination so that we can see the relevance of Shri D. C. Pavate's genius as an architect of great institutions of learning and research like Karnataka University and its Karnataka Colleges, etc. Shri D. C. Pavate comes from an agricultural rural background of a hardworking family at Mamadapur in Belgaum District, There is much to learn about family values in the practice of his family when he says-. :iMy family life has been a happy one. We live

a simple and unsophisticated life with everyone in the family deeply attached to every other. To run the house and look after children has been the wife's responsibility which she carries out with singular devotion and efficiency. I have had no worries on the domestic front. Thus the family values cherished and nourished and extended to ordinary villagers as well as high dignitaries are: cordiality, grace, dignity,harmony,simplicity,efficiency,economy, frugality etc.

Shri D. C. Pavate's wife Girijadevi is thus an illustration of the saying "Behind the success of every great man there is a woman".

Shri Pavate had an exceptionally brilliant career all through his academic life from High School at Kolhapur, through Karnataka College, Dharwad to Wrangler at Cambridge University, England. Wranglers are mighty geniuses in mathematics. On his return from England he devoted himself to the cause of education serving as High School teacher at Belgaum, University professor at Benaras and Bombay. Looking to his academic excellence Bombay University made an exception in appointing him as examiner even though he had no experience of collegiate teaching. He joined the Education Service of the Bombay State as Inspector and rose in the administrative hierarchy to Assistant Director, Deputy Director and Director of Public Instruction (DPI). After retiring as DPI, it was a god-send to Karnataka University for Shri Pavate to be elected as its Vice-Chancellor. He was President of the Inter-University Board. He was appointed Governor of the then terrorist-stricken problem State of Punjab.

At a time when the administrative machinery of the Bombay Education Service was passing through stress and strain and was almost on the verge of collapse there was a need for a competent man who could deliver the goods. That was the person of D. C.

Pavate who was required to face the multidimensional problems of crucial changes and development which needed a remarkable administrative genius to cope with. It was a challenging task and indeed a testing period which could make or mar the careers of officers. Shri Pavate rose to the occasion in successfully facing the uphill task of educating the nation's young- a most complex thing which we have hardly begun to understand. In Shri Pavate's words, "My main interest has always been the spread of education and culture among the masses. I have always believed that we, as a nation, cannot make much headway, without giving every boy and girl an opportunity for the development of his or her talent.

Thus it is clear that our legitimate interests-institutional and national-can best be protected, not by men of narrow vision and deeply emotional prejudices but by men who strive to attain the greatest possible insight, foresight and a sense of worth which nags all civilized effort. This must be the most precious fruit of the whole of our educational endeavor. It is here that Shri Pavate's courage and wisdom are rooted. He had developed the ability to master orderly processes of thinking and discrimination and good taste. If we are to live and survive effectively we must draw our inspiration, as Shri Pavate did, from a wider vision of the greatness of experience. If we fail here it is little short of criminal neglect and irresponsibility. Shri Pavate had bright physical and mental eyes which could actively see through and through the logic of situation and persons and hold the scales right throughout public life. It is natural that one should take a healthy pride in doing work worthy of one's best efforts. As if to mock his idealism and practice it is a parody that a majority of students and teachers today are content to allow their precious years and energies to fritter away in the mere show of learning and shallowness. This narrow-visioned task of intellectuals can only lead us to disaster.

He had enough good sense and quick grasp of men and matters backed by commonsense, untiring energy of idealism, a healthy physique and family environment so that he could wholeheartedly devote himself to the cause of education of the nation's

young in general and Karnataka University in particular. In dealing with officers there is no parrying with words, no caution, no disguises, no diplomacy and no euphemism. He was remarkably sincere and completely devoted to duty. If religion is sincerity and penetrating sincerity, as Whitehead says, then Shri Pavate is deeply religious in the sense of developing reverence for duty. Thus it is the imperishable merit of Shri Pavate to have exemplified in his life's work and vision of the world these elements of reverence and order without which society lapses into riot as the passage quoted at the head of this article envisages.

He would not mind being blunt and forthright when these things are . violated. For example, once he had gone to meet the Education Minister of the Mysore State. He found that instead of the Minister, the Secretary was doing much talking. Shri Pavate says he had to snub the Secretary in the presence of the Minister by pointing out that the duty of the Secretary is simply to give relevant papers and information to the minister. In all his official dealings he would insist that the persons concerned must keep to the points precisely relevant to the issues on hand. Nevertheless, in their formal and informal meetings with Shri Pavate people could not fail to experience politeness and sympathetic attitude in his adept handling of issues and situations. He had the quick and satisfactory dispatch of knotty problems that arose in discharging the responsibilities of his various capacities in the administrative hierarchy. In his decisions he had the quality of bold independence and freedom from party politics.

Though most of his youthful energy was devoted to the Educational Service of the Bombay State he was in the know of the happenings in Karnataka in general and Dharwad in particular. For instance, the first Vice-Chancellor of Karnataka University did not draw Rs. four lakhs out of the total five lakhs sanctioned by the Bombay government in spite of Shri Pavate's suggestion. In an age of propaganda and narrow parochial considerations the electoral college which voted Shri Pavate for the post of Vice-Chancellor must be congratulated for the tribute they gave to Shri Pavate's unflinching claims to public recognition and honor in virtue of his ability,

efficiency, fairness, frankness, friendliness, firmness, sincerity, idealism, leadership qualities and powers of organization.

The internal politics then prevailing in KUD was the cause of such prejudiced publicity which was not in the interest of the development of K.U.D. But Shri Pavate was equal to the occasion of extricating from the shambles that university was in.

On assuming charge as V. C. Shri Pavate's heart and head were set on making K.U.D and K.C.D buildings, staff, curricula of studies, a model after transforming the university into a teaching University instead of-merely examination conducting body. It was his dream to put K.U.D. on the national and international educational map of Universities. He has been a great builder who could, with determination, translate the dreamy vision into a realized and ever more realizable actuality as is evidenced in the physical and academic targets of the developmental progress of K.U.D. and K.C.D. to attain an all round personality.

But his immediate problems were facing communal politics, relations with the government, large-scale building programmes for class-rooms, library, student hostels, laboratories, teachers' quarters, improving standards of education, developing the gardens and so on. It is best to allow him to speak as to how he dealt with these problems. He says, " This I did by being fair and impartial to all colleagues and to all teachers. One can never win confidence unless one is strict about observance of rules and regulations and at the same time friendly and helpful." He did everything possible to usher in an atmosphere of academic freedom and thus help K.U.D. to grow from strength to strength. But the obstacle to this progressive growth, as he could see, was the existence of petty 'Politics' and groupism among teaching and non-teaching staff and students. The politics of groupism due to its short-sighted selfishness is interested in grabbing everything to itself. His firm adherence to rules and regulations could eliminate that evil. He advised teachers to mind their students and research and leave politics to the authorities.

So the determination not to fail in managing resources increased his responsibility and it was a test case for his hard work and creative ability. After working to create good will about K.U.D. he approached the Bombay government for funds. The Bombay government asked him to produce justification. Shri Pavate had gone ready with plans, estimates and with knowledge of sanctions given to buildings to Gujarat University etc. Since the education minister concerned was a man from Gujarat, he could not discriminate against the strong case of Karnataka University presented by Shri Pavate. It should be a great experience for anybody, as it was for Shri Pavate to go through the saga of effort to have an eye of keen supervision, sincerity and honesty of purpose in getting things actually done with utmost honesty and economy without sacrificing greatness of heritage and aesthetic taste. Shri. Pavate had to make decisions in the absence of architects, on the basis of common-sense and with the assistance of local P.W.D engineers whenever technical objections arose. As an architect of academic life he turned the University into a teaching and research temple of learning. He introduced many subjects and departments of studies and research. For this purpose, realizing that teachers are the keymen who count in building up the reputation of the University Shri Pavate, being partial to merit, attracted teachers from all corners of independent India irrespective of caste, creed, region or language. It was he who made it a rule that foreign experts must be there to examine Ph.D. theses.

Great appreciation has come from these foreign referees. He was proud to have developed K.U.D. to have attracted students from all over India and even from abroad.

A great concern is expressed all over India about the large percentage of failures in various examinations. Shri Pavate has this to say about the said problem: "Education is an organic process and unless the quality of the intake is reasonably good it is unreasonable to expect that the present situation will improve".

To maintain high standards of education the status of teachers must be held high. In so far as society

equates this status with the salary the teacher gets, Shri Pavate holds "That high salary was necessary but not sufficient, to ensure independent thinking and research". He acknowledges the fairness of the Mysore Government in accepting the conditions of matching expenditure in the implementation of the new U.G.C. scales.

Shri Pavate's Independence and impartiality in his actions made him write about his experiences as Governor to be judged by a wider public. That he had no love for the chair of Governor at the cost of self-respect is evident when he had to rebuff Prime Minister's secretary without fear or favor in discharging his duty.

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