

The poet in an administrator

Puranik was a
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poet, on
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seasoned IAS of
the Deputy Com-
missioner. The district,
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tinct feelings
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support, education and
the border areas of
are truly inspired
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in Maharashtra on
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mission.

in instant laurels
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Tels called on him
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commissioner gave
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that some day she
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a matrimonial knot.
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red in Maharashtra,
at our country India
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an action made him
in if the district. So,
advised from Belgium
a Cerebular quality a
this talent of poetry and administration
to re-
to be re-
to be re-



H K Rajagopal

of the Marathi? The DC himself
prevailed upon the municipal council-
lore not to press for his retirement. He
complicated with the Government order
and left Belgaum with affectionate
relations of both Kannada and Marathi
speaking people. The DC, who received
such warm, whole-hearted affection of
the district was Dr Siddavya Puranik.
In the realm of administration where
deal and dry interpretation of rules and
regulations engages an administrator
day and night a poet or philosopher
might find a minor touch to the art
of governing. In a democratic set up,
this talent of poetry and administration
comes close to an aptitude to the Ph-
ilosophical concepts of philosophy king, an
idea to cherish and realize for the end

Siddavya was a hard working stu-



Siddavya Puranik releasing a Kannada book on Urdu literature

dent. An incident in his boyhood days
would reveal the deep love he had for
knowledge. Once his class teacher func-
tioned testing the aptitude of his students.
He asked them to write down briefly on
their slates what they desired to have
most in life. The teacher was amused
when he went through the answers
varying from cash to fruits etc., till he
picked up Siddavya's slate to find
'Vilay' (Knowledge) written on it. The
teacher placed it in the unusual desire.

Though endowed with a poetic dispo-
sition and a flair for languages,
Siddavya wanted to become an engineer
and to be eligible for higher mathematics
in secondary school. Once the teacher
of mathematics begged Siddavya
uncharitably on a flimsy ground. With
his self respect wounded, Siddavya said
good bye to mathematics and joined the
Kannada class. He had found literature
in the pursuit of literature con-
tribution he made in the journals. It was
a tribute to his rich background of scholar-
ship in four languages — English,
Kannada, Sanskrit and Urdu — stood
him in good stead, as an administrator
and as a creative and critical writer.

After his graduation in

Omanian University, he pursued stud-
ies in law. Meanwhile, he was selected
as Tahsildar in the old Nizam's state.
He worked in the Revenue Department
and in 1956 he sought transfer of his
services to the state of Karnataka. He
joined the cadre of IAS and served as
deputy commissioner, director of infor-
mation and tourism and transport com-
missioner. When he retired in 1978 as
labour commissioner, tributes were
paid to him from all quarters for his
splendid services.

Puranik had an inborn talent for po-
etry which he displayed even in his
high school days. His early poetry, com-
posed under his pen name
'Kavyananda', is fanciful and romantic.
Over the years, his poetry developed
into a blend of deep thought and intense
feeling. More than the lyrical quality of
his verse, the subject matter — patriot-
ism, philosophical and humane —
makes a strong appeal. His poetry has
a tonic, invigorating effect. His well-
known poems, *Madala manasuvaga*,
Aavirida aviraga anasuvadeepa are
testimony to his love of life and human-
ism. His emphasis on the greatness of
man and the value of his struggle
against the odds of life is reflected in

his poetry.
In his long writing career, he
authored seven collections of poems
and five biographies of seers and poets.
He also wrote a collection of plays and
several critical essays.

His contribution to children's litera-
ture is a refreshing one. His first collec-
tion of poems, *Tuppa roti* at 49 won
him an award from the Government of
India. His nursery rhyme, *Aajana*
kollu namaya kudara, is known to
practically every Kannadiga.

Siddavya's deep and devoted study of
the sharanas of the 12th century culmi-
nated in a treatise entitled
Sharanacharuvamaya. It contains the
life-sketches of all sharanas. The lyrical
quality of the prose has lent charm to
the vivid word pictures of seers who
transcended their times. Though this
book was written as part of the adult
education programme, because of its
lively presentation and encyclopedic in-
formation it remains as a source-book.
Puranik's poetic odyssey in the later
years of his life branched off into two
distinct forms, the vachanas of the
sharanas and the quartets of Persian
poetry. Puranik's life-long involvement
in the study of vachanas inspired him

on September 1994.

to use this form as a medium for
own musings. He authored three col-
lections of the vachanas with his signa-
ture, *Savastana shava*, *Savastana*
The spirit of humility and introspec-
of the poet ring through the vach-
laced with refreshing images.

Puranik had made a profound study
of Urdu and Persian poetry. As an im-
portant, he composed quartets, simi-
lar to those of the Rumiya and brought
out a book called *Mazhar-e-Madani*
sequel to D V Guntur's *Mazhar-e-*
Manchamuna Raaga. Puranik
claimed that his Marathi-odda was the
younger brother of Manthamuna.

Puranik was one of our eminent co-
tors. He would spend in Karnataka, his
lish and Urdu with the same ease.
rare honour for his century came
him when he was degraded to ac-
pany Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan,
Freemier Garhbi, during his tour
Karnataka. Puranik translated K
Urdu speeches extensively into Kan-
with ease. Puranik's public lectur-
problems, whether it was the C
water dispute, the mediators of
tion or the problems of Kan-
were memorable because of the
tivity of his, simplicity of his
and sincere and sincere in his
and above all, the poetic touch.

He also had a stint in journalism as
the editor-in-chief of *Lokavani*, a Kan-
ada daily from Bangalore, he wrote
some popular columns.

His love for Kannada knew bound-
He would bear any hardship for the
cause of Kannada. His crusade
throughout the state as the Vice-presi-
dent of the Kannada Vikasa Vedha
of the people to work zealously for
the development of the Kannada
language and the state.

Honours and accolades came to
Puranik from many quarters. He pre-
sided over the 38th All India Kannada
Sahitya Sammelana held in 1977.
Gubarga. The Karnataka University
Dharwar, conferred on him an hono-
ary doctorate. He was the recipient of
a Rajyotsava award of the state. He
Karnataka Sahitya Academy award
honoured him. The first Biltawa Award
instituted by the Bharatya Bhaskar
Paribad of Calcutta came to him for
his work, *Vachanashana*.

During the last few years of his life,
Siddavya Puranik's home at Ali Ak-
road in Bengaluru became almost
place of pilgrimage for persons con-
cerned with the cause of Kannada.
them he was a living reference book.
source of inspiration. Puranik's know-
never attacked in his crusade for the
cause of Kannada language and litera-
ture till death took him into its arms
on September 1994.