



Dr Balakrishna B. Yeole

It is awfully distressing and painful for me to write an obituary for my dear friend Dr. Balakrishna B. Yeole.

We knew each other well for the past 4 decades, from the day he joined the Bombay Cancer Registry of Indian Cancer Society as assistant to the statistician Mr. V.A. Deshpande. I was in the interview committee for selecting the candidate. Apart from M Sc degree in Statistics, he had completed his training in Demography in the International Institute for Population Studies, Bombay. Thus, he was well equipped to do statistical work as well as demography for the registry.

As the in-charge of the cancer registry at Bombay, he extended the population-based cancer registration to Pune, Aurangabad and Nagpur. He looked after all the 4 population based cancer registries, which nobody else could achieve then. He worked with the 4 registries for more than 16 years before the National Cancer Registry Programme of Indian Council of Medical Research took shape in 1982. He was undoubtedly one of the leading architects of cancer registration in India under the National Cancer Registry Program (NCRP) and outside.

In 1997, he received his PhD degree from Tampere University in Finland, working under Prof. Dr. Matti Hakama. He presented a remarkable study, "Cancer in India in the Year 2001"

His unwavering contribution to scientific knowledge on the subject was enormous. His penchant for writing research articles on cancer registration was unmatched. He had authored more than 150 statistical - epidemiological publications on cancer. Several other registries and statisticians have collaborated in his effort on joint studies. He was such an affable person unmindful of his vast experience and seniority that even junior members

from registries shared quality time with him on subject matters. Further, many registry staff were benefited by taking training in the Bombay Cancer Registry.

He travelled widely to visit several cancer registries all over the world and presented research papers in most of the scientific meetings of International Association of Cancer Registries.

It was always a pleasure and a privilege to have him in the Annual Review Meetings of the National Cancer Registry Programme of Indian registries. His well thought out comments and suggestions were appreciated by all and offended none. He was a lovable friend, both in the meetings and outside of it – without rancor or remorse towards anyone.

Everyone remembers that during the last annual review meeting of NCRP in Bangalore in December 2010, when the session came to a close , he stood up, raised his hands and the statement, “Well friends, I will meet you all in the next review meeting if I am alive !!!”

Was it a premonition?

He was a friend, guide and a critic loved by all colleagues. We used to communicate at least twice a month for the past several years wherever we were located. He has left us some work to be completed, which now has turned out to be a mission for me. Our condolences to his dear wife and children.

My prayers for this departed friend.

P. Gangadharan



Dr Yeole with Professor Gangadharan