



K.S. HEGDE



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Kawdoor Sadananda Hegde, an eminent parliamentarian and a highly reputed jurist, was born on 11 June 1909 at village Kawdoor of Karkala Taluk in South Kanara district of the erstwhile State of Mysore. Brilliant in studies, he was educated at the Kawdoor Elementary School, the Karkala-Board High School, St. Alosius College, Mangalore, the Presidency College, Madras and the Law College, Madras.

After completing his studies, Hegde entered the legal profession in 1933 and worked as Government Pleader and Public Prosecutor from 1947 to 1951. Hegde was elected to the Rajya Sabha as a Congress Party nominee in 1952 and was a member of the House till 1957, making outstanding contributions to its deliberations. He was a member of the Panel of Chairmen in the House and of the Rules Committee of Rajya Sabha, besides being a member of the Public Accounts Committee.

Hegde was a champion of the farming community and did his utmost to promote their cause in Parliament and outside of it. In 1954, Hegde was chosen as an alternate delegate to the Ninth Session of the United Nations General Assembly and served on its Second Committee with distinction. He was also a member of the Railway Corruption Enquiry Committee and of the Governing Body of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

In 1957, Hegde resigned from the Rajya Sabha when he was appointed a Judge of the Mysore High Court, a position which he held for nine years. He was appointed as the first Chief Justice of the Delhi and Himachal Pradesh High Court in 1966 and

a year later, in 1967, he was appointed by the President of India as a Judge of the Supreme Court, in which capacity he delivered many judgments of far-reaching significance. He was known for his uprightness and authority and as a learned Judge who always gave precedence to the Rule of Law. On 30 April 1973, Hegde tendered his resignation when one of his junior colleagues was appointed as the Chief Justice of India.

Thereafter, Hegde once again started taking an active part in the socio-political movements. In 1977, he was elected to the Sixth Lok Sabha from the Bangalore South constituency on the Janata Party ticket. He functioned as the Chairman of the Committee of Privileges till 20 July 1977.

On 21 July 1977, Hegde was elected as the Speaker of Lok Sabha following the resignation of Dr. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy to contest the election to the office of the President of India. The lone motion proposing Hegde's name for the office of the Speaker, which was moved by the then Prime Minister Shri Morarji Desai, was carried unanimously. The election of Shri K.S. Hegde as the Speaker in his very first term as a member of the Lok Sabha was a testimony to his stature, ability and acceptability to all sections of the House.

Hegde's impressive judicial background, coupled with his legislative experience, enabled him to ensure the smooth conduct of the proceedings of the House. It was his constant endeavour to give opportunities to all members to participate in the proceedings of the House to the extent possible. He was convinced that the effectiveness of the House could be improved only when members maintained decorum and discipline and observed the rules scrupulously.

Speaker Hegde strongly felt the need for a continuous review of procedures and practices of Parliament so that they were in tune with the emerging needs and situations. He was equally convinced that whatever modifications were made

should be such that they helped in making the best utilisation of the parliamentary floor time in the interest of the nation. He also stressed the need for devising appropriate institutional arrangements within the Legislatures to facilitate the realisation of the parliamentary aspirations of members. True to his convictions, he preserved and sustained the authority of the Chair all through his tenure.

Hegde laid emphasis on improving the effectiveness of the members so that they could meaningfully perform the multifarious roles required of them. He wanted that effective research and reference assistance should be extended to the members so that they could frame their own questions and motions appropriately and also could get factual information and data for making effective participation in the discussions. He was equally keen that the State Legislatures should have their own well developed library and research services so as to make the members fully informed and well equipped to perform their varied roles.

Hegde firmly believed in parliamentary diplomacy and inter-parliamentary cooperation. He led Indian Parliamentary Delegations to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conferences held in Ottawa (Canada) in September 1977, in Kingston (Jamaica) in September 1978, and in Wellington (New Zealand) in November-December 1979. Hegde also led Indian Parliamentary Delegations to the 65th Inter-Parliamentary Conference held in Bonn in September 1978 and the 66th Inter-Parliamentary Conference held in Caracas (Venezuela), in September 1979. He attended the 5th Conference of the Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers held in Canberra (Australia) in August-September 1978. Further, he led Indian Parliamentary Delegations to Romania, Bulgaria and Poland in June 1979 and to the former Soviet Union in June-July 1979.

A voracious reader, Hegde was a forceful writer who had to his credit several acclaimed publications like *Crisis in the Judiciary* and *Directive Principles*.

As Speaker of Lok Sabha, K.S. Hegde made a distinctive contribution not only in upholding the dignity of the high office, but also in consolidating parliamentary conventions and traditions. After demitting office of the Speaker on 21 January 1980, he settled down in his native place in Karnataka. Hegde passed away on 24 May 1990 at the age of 81.

Offering his tributes to Shri Hegde, the then Vice-President of India and Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma, described him as a distinguished jurist and erudite scholar. Condoling his death, the then Speaker of Lok Sabha, Shri Rabi Ray, observed that Shri Hegde was an eminent jurist and accomplished scholar. Paying homage to the departed soul, the then Prime Minister, Shri Vishwanath Pratap Singh, said: "He was a person of great learning and great insight into the judicial system ... As Speaker, he has set traditions that will be the guiding path for times to come ... we have lost a person of great learning, understanding and patriotism". The Bharatiya Janata Party leader Shri L.K. Advani described Shri Hegde as a man of integrity and said: "There are very few people who are so humble and ... at the same time they are totally committed to the principles that they have adopted in their lives and Shri K.S. Hegde was an ideal example of those principles".