

17 November 1997

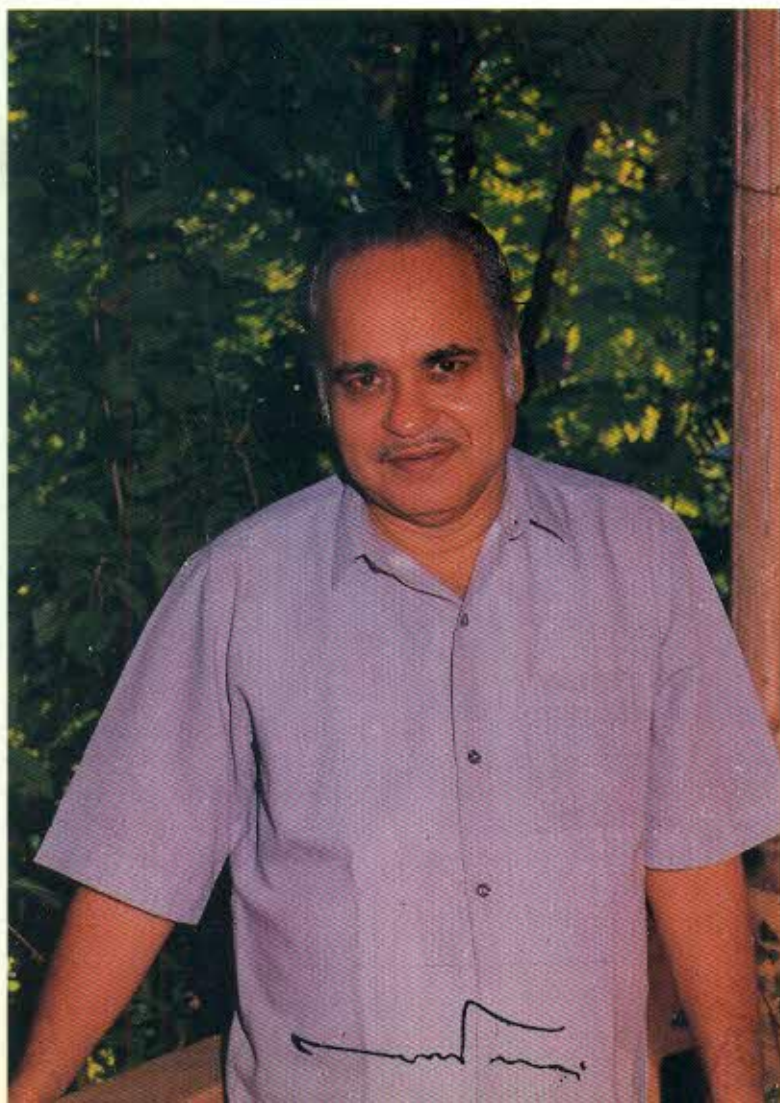


Sahitya Akademi
&
Goa Konkani Academy

invite you to

meet the author

Chandrakant Keni





Considered to be the pioneer of modern Konkani Short story, Chandrakant Keni made his debut as a writer around 1950 while still a high school student. There were several restrictions and strict censorship laws in Goa in those days which prohibited normal literary activity. Publication of books and periodicals required clearance from censors, which could be obtained only after submitting Portuguese translation of the entire text. He started writing short stories in this atmosphere. They could not be published in the absence of any periodical and self-satisfaction was the only motivation. However, one of his first short story did see light of the day in Konkani supplement of the Portuguese daily *Heraldo* around 1952 in his teens. He started contributing short stories in Marathi to a modest monthly magazine *Bharat Mitra* published in Goa, regularly for about five years. Some of his Marathi short stories were also published in various periodicals from Maharashtra.

He was just fourteen when Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated on January 30, 1948, but so intense was his emotional involvement in the freedom struggle that had just commenced in Goa (1946) that he had brought

together a small group of friends and residents of the village Cansaulim to hoist Indian tricolour on the historic day of 15th August 1947 on a telegraphic pole just outside his house. The incident went off unnoticed but did influence the future course of his life. No wonder, therefore, this young boy addressed the gathering on the sands of Cansaulim beach after immersion of Gandhiji's ashes, where part of it was specially brought. His speech did attract the attention of fellow villagers who waited with anxiety for next few days to see if he will be a victim of Portuguese wrath because he had appealed to people of Goa to take a pledge there and then that they shall not rest till Goa was liberated and merged with the mother-land. But, the Portuguese government preferred to ignore it.

It was against this background that Keni completed his primary and secondary education and later went to Mumbai with a view to pursuing higher education. Reacting Mumbai he strayed from his planned course and got himself involved in the activities of restoring his mother tongue Konkani to his rightful place and liberating Goa from Portuguese Colonial rule. There he joined the Konkani section of All India Radio as a staff artist which provided the necessary freedom and opportunity to his creative talents. He wrote several short stories, features and talks for AIR while simultaneously contributing to contemporary periodicals both in Konkani and Marathi.

While working with AIR, Keni came in contact with the eminent Gandhian scholar Acharya Kakasaheb Kalekar, and after his shift over to Delhi he could closely associate with several national, political and literary stalwarts. Besides working with various

Gandhian institutions, he contributed several articles to periodicals championing the cause of Goa's freedom. Later he established the "Goa Information Centre" at New Delhi to disseminate information about Goa. His literary activity continued unabated. He wrote several articles and short stories for periodicals in Konkani, Marathi, Hindi and English.

Goa's liberation in December 1961, opened a new chapter in his life. He returned to Goa in early 1962 and plunged himself in many socio-cultural, literary and political activities. He was an activist working for the development of Konkani and giving it its rightful place among other sister languages. He also championed the cause of Statehood for Goa. He started a trilingual weekly *Triveni* and subsequently a full-fledged daily *Rashtramat* in 1963 to mobilise support for his cause. He was the first editor of first ever Konkani daily *Sunaparant* (1987-1990). He was elected member of the standing committee of All India Newspaper Editors' Conference for two consecutive terms.

Chandrakant Keni is a prolific writer having more than 33 books to his credit which include col-

With Acharya Kaka Kalelkar



With Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru

lections of short stories, novels, personal essays, translations of books from other language into Konkani and dictionaries. His several manuscripts are under way. His literary talent has been duly recognised. He is the recipient of State Literary Awards thrice. He is also a recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award (1989) for his book *Vhonkol Pavnni* and Dr. T.M.A. Pai Foundation Award (1990) for his book *Bimbam Padabimbam*. Chandrakant Keni was also presented with Goa State Cultural Award in 1997. His short stories have been translated into several Indian and Foreign languages and two such translations have earned him International Literary Honours including British Council Award. Many of his writings have also been included in text books.

As a champion of Konkani language he is closely associated with many linguistic and literary movements and institutions. A founder member of Konkani Bhasha Mandal (Goa) he became its President (1972-76) as also President of All India Konkani Sahitya Parishad (1976-1978). Presently he is a member of the General Council of Sahitya



On 60th birthday felicitated by K.K. Pai and Mangesh Padgaonkar

Akademi and the Goa Konkani Akademi. He is also associated with several socio-cultural and educational institutions in Goa in various capacities. Notable among them is Gomantak Rashtrabhasha Vidyapeeth, of which he is a Chairman.

A staunch votary of Konkani he has been writing for the last thirty years. Keni's early stories have established his enormous talent and subsequent collections have reinforced it. He deals with vital issues of our time-victimization, rebellion, and disillusion. The writer's conscious involvement in these issues indicates what can be called modern sensibility. Keni does not look back in anger or forward in fear, but around in awareness. His emphasis is on the needs of human individuality, the traumas of the self distort, the image of reality, which leads to the dramatic conflict in many stories. Some stories illustrate the theme of bondage, entrapment by the forces of evil. Some of the bonds are forged by his characters for themselves. Some are imposed from without, through ironics of circumstances beyond their control.

In story after story, Keni depicts an agonizing struggle to break out of these bonds to achieve an

integration both personal and social, imaged as freedom to love and to accept love, to share and to meet. In the stories where the mode is ironic and tragic, the focus is upon the forces which block movement towards this goal. What first strikes a reader of Keni is his fidelity to the milieu he wants to present. The location in these stories is not restricted only to the region of Goa. It is in the non-fiction writing of Keni, one finds the writer's concern for Goa and Goans with this culture.

The fictional world of Keni has basis in reality. His most of the stories have an urban milieu. There are no psychologically complex beings and they are moved by primary emotions. Keni excels in his portrayal of the woman-psyche. His women are more memorable than men. We see them as mother or wife, mostly as beloved, sometimes complaining in a middle class home, tolerant or rebellious, sympathetic or simply resigned.

Chandrakant Keni emerges primarily as an artist and what one admires in his short stories is the invention of stories, which may help its author find his way to a sense of human integrity and noble ideas of how human beings may attain true relationship with one another. This is a distinctive feature of Sri Keni.

A Select Bibliography

Short stories

DHARTARI OZUN JIETALI

Goa : Gomant Bharati,
1964, 100 P., 18.5 Cm.

AASHAD PAVLLI

Goa : Jaag Prakashan,
1973, 122 P., 18.5 Cm.

ALLMIM

Goa : Sobit Sahitya,
1975, 108 P., 18.5 Cm.

VHONKOL PAVNNI

Goa : Kullagar Prakashan,
1985, 172 P., 18.5 Cm.

ZUIM VETAM THUIM

Goa : Satkar Samiti,
1994, 232 P., 18.5 Cm.

Kathikas (SHORT-SHORT STORIES)

TARE TARECHIM SONVGAM

Goa : Sobit Sahitya,
1975, 100 P., 18.5 Cm.

KATHIKA

Goa : Kullagar Prakashan,
1993, 80 P., 22 Cm.

MEGH-MALHAR

Goa : Satkar Samiti,
1994, 120 P., 22 Cm.

Novels/Novelas

EKLO EKSURO

Goa : Sobit Sahitya,
1975, 100 P., 22 Cm.

EK SAPAN SAPNELEM

Goa : Kullagar Prakashan,
1980, 80 P., 18.5 Cm.

RAAT BHOR PAUS

Goa : Kullagar Prakashan,
1991, 120 P., 18.5 Cm.

VIRATT

Goa : Satkar Samiti,
1994, 100 P., 22.5 Cm.

BARMI DIS

Goa : Satkar Samiti,
1994, 120 P., 22 Cm.

SHRINIVAS

Goa : Kullagar Prakashan,
1996, 64 P., 22 Cm.

Essays

BIMBAM PADDBIMBAM

Goa : Kullagar Prakashan,
1989, 150 P., 18.5 Cm.

PRATIBIMB (Marathi)

Mumbai : Majestic,
1994, 194 P., 22 Cm.

KASAVLECHEM

RAYAM FEST
Goa : Goa Konkani Akademi,
1996, 48 P., 22 Cm.

SAHITYA SWADHYAY

Goa : Kullagar Prakashan,
1996, 96 P., 22 Cm.

Books for Children

FULAMCHO HAAT

Goa : Sobit Sahitya,
1970, 48 P., 22 Cm.

KANYACHEM KOPYALEM

Goa : Kullagar Prakashan,
1985, 48 P., 18.5 Cm.

CAMIL

Goa : Rajhans,
1996, 32 P., 22 Cm.

Educational

ENGLISH-KONKANI-HINDI
VOCABULARY

Goa : Goa Konkani Akademi,
1984, 100 P., 18.5 Cm.

LESSONS IN KONKANI

Goa : Maya Book Stores,
1985, 64 P., 22 Cm.

Translations

VONNTI

Goa : Kullagar Prakashan,
1992, 84 P., 18.5 Cm.

KASHINATH

Goa : Jaag Prakashan,
1977, 58 P., 18.5 Cm.

HUKMACHI RANI

Goa : Kullagar Prakashan,
1966, 64 P., 18.5 Cm.

Edited Works

KONKANI KATHA

SANGHRAHA
Delhi : Sahitya Akademi,
1989, 248 P., 22 Cm.

BHUIM CHAFIM

New Delhi :
1958, 64 P., 18.5 Cm.

TEEN DASKAM

Goa : V. M. Salgaocar Foundation,
1993, 384 P., 22 Cm.

ITIHAS

Goa : Mathagam Mutt Sankul
Samiti,
1993, 200 P., 22 Cm.

GOA, KONKANI ANI

MAHARASHTRA
Goa : Nav Gomant Prakashan,
1964, 80 P., 22 Cm.

USNI VAYNAM

Goa : Kullagar Prakashan,
1990, 48 P., 22 Cm.

A Chronology

- | | | | |
|------|--|------|---|
| 1934 | Born in Goa | 1982 | Elected Chairman of Gomantak Rashtrabhasha Vidyapeeth. |
| 1952 | Left for Mumbai | 1984 | Nominated Member of the General Council of Goa Konkani Academy and still continues to date. |
| 1954 | Joined Konkani Section of AIR as a staff artist. | 1988 | Kala Academy's Literary Award for <i>Vhonkol Pavnni</i> . |
| 1955 | Left for New Delhi to work with Acharya Kakasaheb Kalelkar. | 1989 | Sahitya Akademi Award for <i>Vhonkol Pavnni</i> . |
| 1956 | Established the "Goa Information Centre" at New Delhi. | 1990 | Instituted Kullagar Award for contribution in Konkani language or literature. |
| 1961 | Organised a thanks giving function at Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru's residence on the eve of Goa liberation. | 1992 | Honoured at Kannada Sahitya Sammelan. |
| 1962 | Returned to Goa and worked as Organising Secretary of Bharat Sevak Samaj | 1993 | Felicitated by Lions International for outstanding contribution in Social Service. |
| | Started a trilingual (Konkani, Marathi, Hindi) weekly <i>Triveni</i> and was its Editor. | 1995 | National Award for Free & Fair Journalism by Federation of Small & Medium Newspapers. |
| 1963 | Started daily <i>Rashtramat</i> editor, and its founder. | | Visited Thailand to participate in Indo-Thai Literary meet. |
| 1965 | Elected Member of the Standing Committee of All India Newspaper Editor's Conference. | | Elected Chairman of Goa Editor's Guild. |
| 1967 | Spearheaded the campaign against Goa merger. | 1996 | Kala Academy's Literary Award for Marathi book <i>Pratibimb</i> |
| 1973 | Elected President of Konkani Bhasha Mandal (Goa). | 1997 | Goa State Cultural Award for meritorious literary contribution. |
| 1975 | Kala Academy Award for <i>Fulancho Haat</i> a novel for children. | | Nominated Member of the Konkani Advisory Board of National Book Trust, India. |
| 1976 | President of the 11th of All India Konkani Sahitya Parishad at Mangalore. | | |
| 1979 | Established Kullagar Prakashan. | | |

With U.R. Anantha Murthy, Kartar Singh Duggal and others

