

18 October 2014



Sahitya Akademi

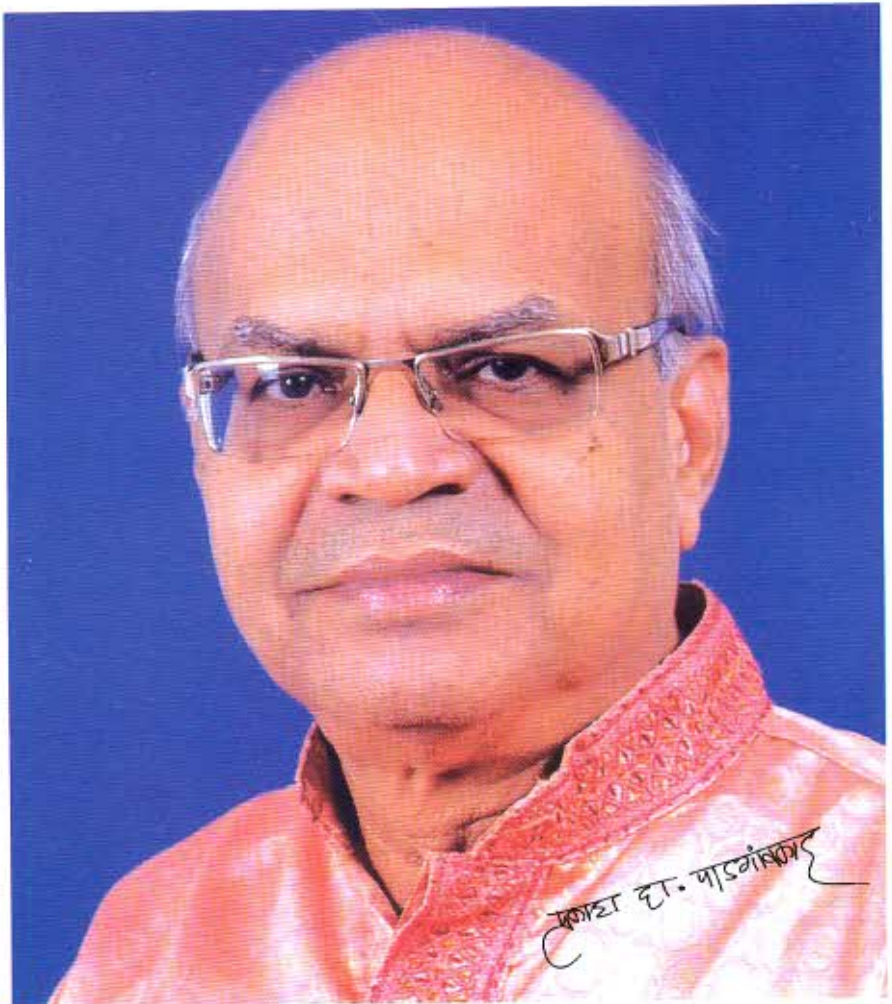


Kala Academy Goa

invite you to

meet the author

Prakash Padgaonkar



Konkani literature in Goa could blossom only after the liberation of Goa from the Portuguese rule in 1961. Political liberation from the foreign yoke helped release the populace not only from psychological bondage; it also set free the creative energies of young writers, especially from the masses. One such creative mind that rose slowly but steadily on the Konkani literary horizon was of Prakash Padgaonkar, a reputed poet and a much-respected individual in his own right. He assimilated within his poetic credo, the vision of the worldly as well as of the other-worldly, thereby nurturing within his creative range, the qualities of the realistic poet and visionary bard; one firmly yoked to the socio-political reality of here and now; the other finely attuned to the spiritual and the mystical core of the higher plane of human consciousness and metaphysical existence.

Born in Mumbai in 1948, Prakash Padgaonkar spent his early years in Goa. He was barely a lad of fourteen, when he joined the

famous Mauzo Studio in Panaji to seek out a living. This was coincidentally the epicenter of the Konkani movement that spearheaded both literary as well as the political baby steps that Goa as well as Konkani needed to take to safeguard their interests and identity. Fortunately, Prakash Padgaonkar was drawn into the vortex of this resistance movement. However, the urge for self-shaping was strongly manifesting itself in the young adolescent. Thus, the quest for growth and the thirst for knowledge soon drove him to a Night school. Prakash, as he is fondly known to his myriad friends, has not disappointed his well-wishers, readers and guides, then and now!

Patience and perseverance seem to be the twin qualities that stand represented in the very initials of Prakash Padgaonkar's name. That may perhaps explain not just his zeal and dedication as a poet, but also his unfaltering efforts to educate himself and evolve as an individual, capable of mature thought and expression. This attitude drew him to accept a



at a book release function along with his mother, Suresh Amonkar, Chandralekha D'souza and S. S. Kulkarni

humble job at All India Radio, Panaji, while it ensured he could continue his college education through evening classes at Dhempe College, Miramar. None the less, his gaze may have been on his poetry, though!

Never the one, to turn away from his poetic Muse over the years, the deeply contemplative and philosophical Padgaonkar has been creatively active as a poet consistently for over four decades. He attracted critical attention even

problems of the marginalized and the down-trodden.

His volumes of poems have been making their appearance in the literary domain at regular intervals. Soon, critical acclaim was re-inforced by literary recognition, when his third collection of poetry, *Hantv Monis Ashwatthamo* won him the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award. In this volume there is clear orientation towards modernist verse, even while the themes have a philosophical focus.



at the poets' meet organized by Sahitya Akademi

with his very first volume of poems *Uzwadachi Pavlam* (The Footsteps of Light), which appeared on the Konkani literary scene in 1976. When he joined MMTC, his job firmly established his bond with the Industrial and Port City of Vasco, which was in the words of Prof. M. S. Kamat "a mini-India as one could find in this city people from all over the country. The complexities of this port-city deeply influenced his writing and gave birth to his next volume of poems *Vascoyan* (The Lay Of Vasco). This collection reveals his turning away from romantic self-absorption to realistic issues of societal concern and burning

Humanistic fervour and idealistic concern for human destiny are marked features of much of Padgaonkar's poetry of this time. The next volume of verse was to continue with this preoccupation while it added the veneer of symbolist representation to modernist expression. Significant volumes of this stage are *Kavita: Kaal Railwaychyo*, *Man Harshancho*, *Pavsya Pannyacho*. This was followed by *Sorg Ghadpak Dhartarecho*, *Vhaunti Nhay Kalachi*, *Brahmand-Yogi Chirantanacho*. His latest volume of poems *Punararthopanishad* is expected to be published in near future.

It can be seen that in the 1990s,

Prakash Padgaonkar's poetry assumes a visibly spiritual, almost a mystical aspect. The influence of the Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and his concept of the super-mind seem to have made deep inroads into Padgaonkar's vision. The unceasing yearning for evolution, the incessant urge for blending the mundane with the metaphysical, are palpable in much of his poetry from the nineties to now. But this aspiration for the higher reality has not divorced his poetic sensibility from the native context and experience. Padgaonkar's poetry is deeply rooted in the Goan soil, folklore and creative manifestation of Goan ethos.

Although Padgaonkar has undergone hard times in his younger days, it has not dented his spirit or coloured his approach to life with gloom and pessimism. In fact, his verve and optimism are the strong planks of his poetic experience, and his zest for life is amply reflected in his poetry.

If there is something that adversely affects Padgaonkar's spirit and vitality of his verse, it is the anguish caused by the impact of



with M. T. Vasudevan Nair

inhuman industrialization and the impersonal attitude of contemporary humankind that undermines universal human values that he propagates. What pains him the most is the soulless marginalization and heartless alienation of the vulnerable. This sensitive approach and human empathy are the wellsprings of his creativity.

A very versatile poet, Padgaonkar's poetry embraced a wide variety of subjects. M. S. Kamat has opined that it "ranges from ghettos to cosmos and from earthquakes to ballistic missile. Whatever may be the theme of his poetry, the moving is always towards the spiritual. His flights of



at a book release function along with Govind Kale, Aravind Bhatikar, Kiran Budkuley and Tanaji Halarnakar

imagination spring from the mundane to empirical and therefore the poet is equally comfortable with matters pertaining to physics and metaphysics, light and darkness, hope and despair. Here is a poet who writes with intense passion, deep intensity and a sublime empathy. The search of self, search within are his driving forces. Yet his concern for fellow men and his deep rooted humanism are the brilliant embellishments of his poetry. Padgaonkar, the poet is fascinated by the many splendored beauty of nature in its myriad

forms as also by that divine force which created the cosmos and millions of years ago and ever since holds it in exquisite harmony and balance. Padgaonkar's poetry is a replete with a vision for better future for mankind as much as with a sense of gratitude towards the creator of the universe.

In conclusion, it must be maintained that the initial promise that Padgaonkar's poetry displayed has been realized in the trajectory of his creativity. As Suresh Amonkar reminds us, the prophetic words of the master-poet Bakibab Borkar that "Padgaonkar with his humanist and contemplative approach to life would emerge as a leading poet on the Indian literary scene" have been vindicated by the poetic journey of Padgaonkar. Today he is not just the poet of the elite in their armchairs, his poems have found their way into popular anthologies and in the syllabi for secondary and graduate students. They have also been aired on All India Radio Broadcasts.



With his family

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Poetry

| | |
|--|------|
| <i>Uzvadachim Pavlam</i> | 1976 |
| <i>Vascoyan</i> | 1977 |
| <i>Hav Monis Ashwatthamo</i> | 1985 |
| <i>Kavita: Kaal-Relvecho, Man Harshancho, Pavsapanyancho</i> | 1993 |
| <i>Sorg Ghadpak Dhartarecho</i> | 1994 |
| <i>Vhaunti Nhai Kallachi</i> | 2003 |
| <i>Brahmand- Yogi Chirantanacho</i> | 2008 |
| <i>Punarthopnishad</i> | 2014 |

Children's Poetry

Devachem Channem (in the offing)

A CHRONOLOGY

- 1948 Born on December, 4
- 1962 Started working in Mauzo Photo Studio, Panaji.
- 1964 Joined Night school in Panaji.
- 1968 Joined AIR, Panaji as class IV Employee.
- 1970 Joined evening classes at Dhempe College, Miramar, Panaji.
- 1974 Joined MMTC LTD, Vasco-da-Gama as Jr. Assistant.
- 1977 Konkani Bhasha Mandal Award to the book *Uzvaddachim Pavlam*.
- 1978 Married to Leela Apa Bandekar.
- 1979 Kala Academy Goa Award to the Book *Vascoyan*.
Attended Poetry Workshop organised by Sahitya Akademi in Mumbai
- 1985 Konkani Bhasha Mandal Award and Kala Academy Goa Award to the book *Hanv Manis Ashwatthamo*.
- 1986 Sahitya Akademi Award to the Book *Hanv Manis Ashwatthamo*.
- 1989 Participated in the symposium of Poets in the four day International seminar in New Delhi to mark the Birth centenary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and second century of French Revolution.
- 1996 Participated in multi-lingual National Symposium of Poets at New Delhi organised by All India Radio.
- 2000 Advisory committee member of All India Radio.
- 2002 President, Konkani Lekhak Sangh, Goa.
- 2003 Participated in South Indian Poets' Meet in Thunchan Memorial Trust, Tirur, the Premier Literary and Cultural Centre of Kerala.
Chairman, Reception Committee of 16th Akhil Bharatiya Konkani Sahitya Sammelan held in Goa.
Participated in the two day gathering of Poets from Western and North-Eastern parts of India at Shillong, Meghalaya organised by Sahitya Akademi.
- 2005 Dr T.M.A. Pai Foundation, Manipal, Best Book Award to the book *Vhaunti Nhai Kallachi*.
- 2007 Government of Goa presented 'Rajya Sanman'.
- 2008 Retired as Senior Manager (Vigilance) from services of MMTC LTD.
- 2010 Government of Goa presented 'State Cultural Award'.
- 2012 Renowned Konkani Magazine *Bimb* presented 'BIMB' Puraskar.



Receiving the Sahitya Akademi Award at the hands of V. K. Gokak