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Ramesh Parekh





Ramesh Parekh, renowned Gujarati poet, has also remarkably contributed in the fields of short story, play, essay, and children's literature. He was born on 27-11-1940 at Amareli, a region of Saurashtra. He had his primary and secondary education at his native Amareli. In 1958, he passed his matriculation examination from Parekh and Maheta Vidhalaya, Amareli, in the first class. From 1960, he began service in the District Panchayat Office of Amareli. In 1982, he went to Gandhinagar to serve the Department of Rural Development of Gujarat, but as the climate there was not suitable to him and being away from his native place was unbearable to him, he came back to Amareli in 1983. After being in service for 28 years, he took voluntary retirement in 1988 and then onwards he has been engaged full time in creative writing. From 1991, he has settled down in Rajkot. From his primary school days, Ramesh Parekh was fond of reading and painting. As a student, he used to go to the library at Amareli and read numerous magazines and books, from which he got inspiration

for writing stories. In 1957, when he was studying in 10th standard, his first story 'Pretni Duniya' was published in *Chandani*, a monthly magazine devoted to short stories. He again published stories in many magazines like, *Kismat*, *Aram* and *Srirang*.

During his student days, Ramesh Parekh was interested in painting also. He had passed Elementary and Intermediate exams in painting; in matric too he had chosen painting as his favourite subject. In fact, he wanted to join the J.J. School of Arts, Mumbai to become an excellent painter but because of adverse financial circumstances his desire was not fulfilled and he accepted a job at the Panchayat Office.

Like painting, Ramesh Parekh had keen interest in music. He had taken regular training in music for six months and had also established a Moral Music Club with friends. He used to arrange musical programmes in those days and with his music-loving band of friends would visit the nearby villages for performances. This training eventually benefited his song writing, and in his beautiful compositions of poetry.

Ramesh Parekh's friendship with his contemporary poet Anil Joshi proved to be beneficial in his initial phase of writing poetry. He came in contact with Anil Joshi in 1968 and during his stay at Amareli both of them used to compose poetry together. While studying at Ahmedabad, Anil Joshi once presented a few of Ramesh Parekh's compositions before poets like Labhshankar Thakar, Adil Mansuri, Chinu Modi, Manhar Modi etc, in 'Re Math', Ahmedabad and from these, a ghazal was

published in *Kruti* an organ of 'Re Math'. The contact and company of Anil Joshi benefited Ramesh Parekh. Then onwards poems of Ramesh Parekh started getting published in many literary magazines like *Sanskriti*, *Navnit Samarpan*, *Kavita*, *Kavilok*, and *Kumar* and thus, Ramesh Parekh's individual personality as a poet started emerging.

The first collection of Ramesh Parekh's poetry, '*Kyan?*' appeared in 1970 and then onwards his odyssey as a poet has been continuing. After '*Kyan?*' came his, collections like *Khading* (1979), *Tva* (1980), *Sananan* (1991), *Khamma Ala Bapune* (1985), *Mira Same par* (1986) and *Vitan Sud Beej* (1989). In 1991, all his poems published till then was made available under the title of *Char Aksharnu Nam*, five editions of which have come out by now. His latest collections of poetry are *Le, Timira! Suraj* (1995), *Chhatima Barasakh* (1999), and *Swagat Parv* (2002).

The continuity and magnitude of his poetry have shaped the outstanding identity of Ramesh Parekh in the history of Gujarati poetry. His poems have won the affection of all Gujarati speaking

people. At the same time scholars, and critics have appreciated his poetry with reverence.

In the poetry of Ramesh Parekh one can detect the artistic expression of nature, love and spirituality; at the same time the poet can be seen articulating the current scenario in the society too.

In the poems from the collection *Khamma Ala Bapune*, through the character of Ala Khachar, the poet ridicules some of the follies in society. The poems of this collection remarkably lay open the snobbery, pomp, vanity etc., of human beings. The poems in *Mira Same Par* are a glow spirituality. These poems evoke ardent devotion and also bring out artistic dexterity.

Ramesh Parekh has successfully tried all forms of poetry like songs, ghazals, sonnets, blank verse etc. In many of his ghazals, there can be seen the expression of love, suitable to the nature of the ghazal. Also, urban and modern sensitivity are often articulated; and through the medium of ghazals, the poet has given a free flow of sound sense. In the blank verse compositions, social realism has been depicted and the poet has also chosen to say things in a contemplative manner. But



With friends Rajanikumar Pandya, Dilip Ranpuro & Kirit Dudhat



With Javed Akhtar

Ramesh Parekh's distinct identity has remained as an accomplished song-poet in Gujarati. If Nhanalal's position is like a milestone in Gujarati song-poetry, in the course of Gujarati song-writing Ramesh Parekh is a peculiar turning point. In the songs of Ramesh Parekh, the Gujarati song-poems appear as if adopting a new incarnation with freshness and delicacy of expression, wealth of rhyme schemes of folksongs and bhajans, power of the dialect and a distinct sensual imagery.

Apart from poetry, Ramesh Parekh's contribution in the field of short story, play, essay, children's literature etc., has been remarkable. As a result, from him we have a collection of short stories entitled *Stanpurvak*; three act-plays entitled *Sagapan Ek Ukhanu* and *Surajne Padachhayo Hoy*; collections of articles like *Honkaro Apo To Kahu* and *Chalo, Ek Bijane Gamie*; a volume on appreciating poetry, *Shabdni Jatara Satya Sudhi*. He has edited anthologies of Gujarati poetry like *Gira Nadine Tire* and in *Aa Padakhu Faryo Le* and the ghazals of Amrut Ghayal. Children's literature too is an essential area of Ramesh Parekh's creativity. Collections of children's poems like *Hauk*, *Chin*, *Dariyo Zullam Zulla*, *Hasie Khullam Khulla* and *Chapti Vagadata Avdi*

Gai; books of children's stories like *De Talli*, *Hafarak Lafarak*, *Kuama Paninu Zhad* and *Jantar Mantar Chhu*; series of children's stories *Jadui Divo* and children's novel *Ajab Gajab Khajano* further embellish Ramesh Parekh's image as an incredible craftsman of children's literature.

Ramesh Parekh's books have received many awards from the Government of Gujarat, Gujarat Sahitya Akadami, Gujarati Sahitya Parishad and Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad. For his collection of poems, *Vitan Sud Beej*, Sahitya Akademi has awarded him in 1994. Moreover, for his entire literary contribution, he has received several awards like Kumar Chandrak, Dhanji Kanji Suvarnachandrak and Sanskar award. Ramesh Parekh has also won the celebrated Narsinh Maheta Award by the Adyakavi Narsinh Maheta Sahitya Nidhi.

Thus, Ramesh Parekh is celebrated as an accomplished creative writer of Gujarati literature having a multidimensional personality. However, his first and foremost identity has remained as a prolific poet. Ramesh Parekh's stature as an epoch maker poet of Modern Gujarati poetry is undisputed. Immensity and pervasiveness of life-experience and exactitude of articulation set apart Ramesh Parekh.



With Morari Bapu

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Poems

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A CHRONOLOGY

- 1940 Born on 27 November at Amareli (Gujarat)
- 1958 Passed S.S.C.E.
Served 28 years in District Panchayat, Amareli
- 1970 First publication *Kyan* a collection of poems
Kumar Chandrak Award for best poetry
- 1979-82 Narmad Suvarna Chandrak for best poetry
Uma Snehrashmi Award for best poems *Khadij*
First prize of Gujarat Sahitya Akademi for *Hauk*
First prize of Sahitya Parishad for *De Talli*
- 1980 Mahakavi Nhanalal Award for the book *Twa*
Natwarlal Malvi Award for *Chin* from Gujarati Sahitya Parishad
- 1982-83 First prize for best Gujarati film song *Nasibni Balihari*
- 1983 Dhanji Kanji Suvarna Chandrak for best poetry
- 1985 CAS Critic Award for *Khamma Ala Bapune*
- 1986 Ranjitram Suvarna Chandrak for best creative works
- 1988 Gijubhai Badheka Suvarna Chandrak for best creative works for Children
Sanskar Award for best creative works from Sanskar Pariwar, Baroda
- 1989 Kala Gaurav Suvarna Chandrak from Jilla Panchayat, Amareli.
- 1991 Arvind Suvarna Chandrak Award for best poetry from *Mira Same Paar*
Shrimati Shulekhaben Shah's Award for *Mira Same Paar*
- 1994 First prize for best Gujarati film song for *Manvini Bhavai*
Received gift for best creative works from Ramesh Parekh Parva Samiti
Sahitya Akademi Award for *Vitan Sud Beej* (Collection of poems)
- 2000 Mahendra Bhagat Award by Gujarati Sahitya Parishad for *Surajne Padchhayo Hoi* (a three act play)
- 2004 Narsinh Mehta Award by Aadhyakavi Narsinh Mehta Sahitya Nidhi, Junagarh



With Chinu Modi and Bhagwati Kumar Sharma