

OSD (P)

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Sahitya Akademi

invites you to

meet the author

Nagesh Karmali





contribution to society with awe and respect.

Karmali had his first stirrings as a poet at the tender age of 15 in his village Quepem. His childhood was full of hardships and struggle. Despite it, he had intense yearning to complete his higher education but could not do so owing to financial crisis and other unfavourable conditions prevailing then. He lost his father in 1950 and, being the eldest son, was compelled to shoulder the responsibility of the whole family. He had to do odd jobs to support his family. He was quite fortunate to get a forceful teacher like Bakibab Borkar, eminent poet, in his primary Portuguese education. He proudly admits that poet Borkar gave him a deeper insight into the wider realm of poetry.

He developed love for reading books at a very young age. He continued his voracious reading later and read Premchand, Rabindranath Tagore, Krishna Chandar, Amrita Pritam, Khalil Gibran, Fernando Pessoa, and so



*Being presented Tamrapatra as Goa's freedom fighter by S. K. Banerji,
Hon. Governor of Goa*



With Ali Sardar Jafri, Pundalik Naik and Shantaram Rane

on. Even at this age of 78, his passion for books and knowledge knows no limits. His personal library is very vast and detailed information about the various strides and steps in the development of Konkani Movement is systematically arranged and documented in his library.

In its early stages of revival, the Konkani language was ridiculed as a mere dialect. In the midst of cacophony of opinions, Karmali was lucky to come across the literary work of Shenoi Goembab, the legendary Goan who is revered for his indefatigable toil for the language. He joined the Konkani Movement which had just started gaining momentum in Goa. He actively participated in the Liberation movement of Goa which was given a new impetus by Dr Ram Manohar Lohia. Karmali's activities against the oppressive Portuguese regime cost him a few years of incarceration at the Aguada Jail. The solitude of the jail

shaped both, his poetry and his personality. There he came in contact with other freedom fighters. He also absorbed himself in books and this voracious reading habit introduced him to the world's great writers and poets.

Karmali's contribution to the liberation struggle of Goa is immense. He was an active member of the NCG (National Congress of Goa). He organized several activities to evoke anti-Portuguese feelings among the people from 1953. In his capacity as a competent organizer and co-ordinator, he created a group of zealous and tireless workers for the movement. He was quite firm about his role of saving the motherland from foreign rule and establishing the identity of Goans which is, of course, rooted in the mother tongue.

In 1966, Karmali joined the All India Radio, Panaji, as a staff artist. Being a committed writer, he felt he was reborn when he chose to write in Konkani. Amongst the odds he

faced in life, Karmali said, "My life and my poetry were themselves caught in a struggle. When heaps of words in prose would not do, poetry came to my rescue." In his stint at the radio station, he wrote several radio scripts, plays, features and other programmes carving an imprint of his own upon the developing Konkani language. His voice and delivery had an individual touch and he thus became a household name. He encouraged many a young, promising, talented writer to write and even inspired them to publish their books. Due to these Karmali's own literary creation took a long time to see the light of the day. Being a government employee he could not directly involve himself in the Konkani Movement. But he made amends by participating and organizing various literary activities even in the remotest villages of Goa. Through 'Lalita' cultural programme he took the lead in organizing poetry recitation programmes in remote

villages.

He is closely associated with several literary institutions. He is a founder member of the Konkani Bhasha Mandal, Goa and the All India Konkani Parishad. He was executive member of the Goa Konkani Akademi and presided over the 13th All India Konkani Sahitya Sannam held at Kochi, Kerala in 1996. Nagesh Karmali currently wages a relentless war against social injustice, inequality, ignorance and hypocrisy. Though his prose overflows with clarity, vigour and conviction, Nagesh Karmali excels in poetry. In spite of its many facets, Karmali's poetry is a statement of revolt. Committed to socialism, he takes on the capitalist oppressors in his verses. His poetry, serious in all its intent and purpose, is not without its lighter side.

Karmali won the Sahitya Akademi Award for his collection of poems *Vanshalakullachem Dennem* (our debt to our heritage) in 1992. This collection was



Being honoured by Madhu Dandavate

published in 1989 after a span of 10 years from his earlier two collections, namely, *Zorgot* (High tide) and *Sanvar* (Annihilation). *Vanshalakullachem Dennem* contains 41 poems written between 1979 and 1989. Being deeply influenced by socialism after coming under the spell of Dr Ram Manohar Lohia, he expresses his fury at the tyranny of the rich over the poor in words packed with protest. *Sanvar* carries forward the same theme with greater vigour and fury. In his latest poetry collection *Thaang Athang* (Fathomable and fathomless) published in 2003, Karmali shows a mature sensibility coupled with boundless depth.

Karmali writes poetry that has a distinct local flavour and idiom; he aspires to transcend both space and time and attain a universal character; he desires to carry forward his heritage. His poetry has a sincere appeal to be one with nature, to be one with mankind and to respect the sacrifices made by our ancestors who have shaped us

with identity and strength. His poetry will thus inspire and ignite generations to come.

Karmali has contributed hundreds of articles on topical, literary, social and other critical evaluation subjects to various magazines and dailies. Karmali is known for his consistent translations. He has translated Mohan Rakesh's Hindi play *Aadhe Adhure* into Konkani and it was received with overwhelming response on stage. His translation of Adya Rangacharya's play *Kelu Janamejaya* into Konkani is regarded as an exemplary translation by critics.

Karmali, ever active and enthusiastic worker, is undoubtedly one among the Konkani stalwarts whose indelible imprint on every facet of the language will continue to impress and inspire generations to come.



Nagesh Karmali with his family on his 60th Birth Anniversary

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

POETRY

Zorgot, 1979, Panaji, Ixttagot
Prakashan
Sanvar, 1979, Priyal, Jaag Prakashan
Vanshalakullachem Dennam, 1989,
Valvoi, Apurbay Prakashan
Thang Athang, 2007, Kankona, Om

Shree Dutta Padmaja Prakashan

TRANSLATION

Mhaji Bhuim, 2007, Panaji,
Ramachndra Anant Naik (Fernanda
Naique's Portugues poems into
Konkani)

A CHRONOLOGY

- 1933 Born in Kakoda-Goa
1952 Joined liberation movement of Goa.
1954 Arrested on 15th February 1954 in Rivona and was jailed at Reis
Magos
1954 edited handwritten magazine *Zot* in Reis Magos prison
1964 Married to Mohini Narvenkar
1966 Joined All India Radio Panaji as Staff Artist.
1972 was awarded Tamrapatra by the Central Government
1992 won Sahitya Akademi Award for his poetry collection
Vanshalakullachem Dennam
1993 Was honoured with State Cultural Award by the Goa
Government
1995 Participated in the National Symposium of Poets Event of All
India Radio
1996 Presided over the 13th All India Konkani Sahitya Sammelan
held at Kochi-Kerala
2005 Was honoured with Janaganga Sahitya Puraskar by Konkani
Kala Sahitya Kendra, Curchorem-Goa.
2007 Was honoured with prestigious State Literary Award
2008 Was honoured by President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil as a
Freedom Fighter at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi.
2009 Honoured by Goa Konkani Akademi conferring Sahitya
Pratibha Jeevan Gaurav Puraskar



*Being felicitated as
Goa's freedom fighter by Smt. Pratibha Patil, President of India*