

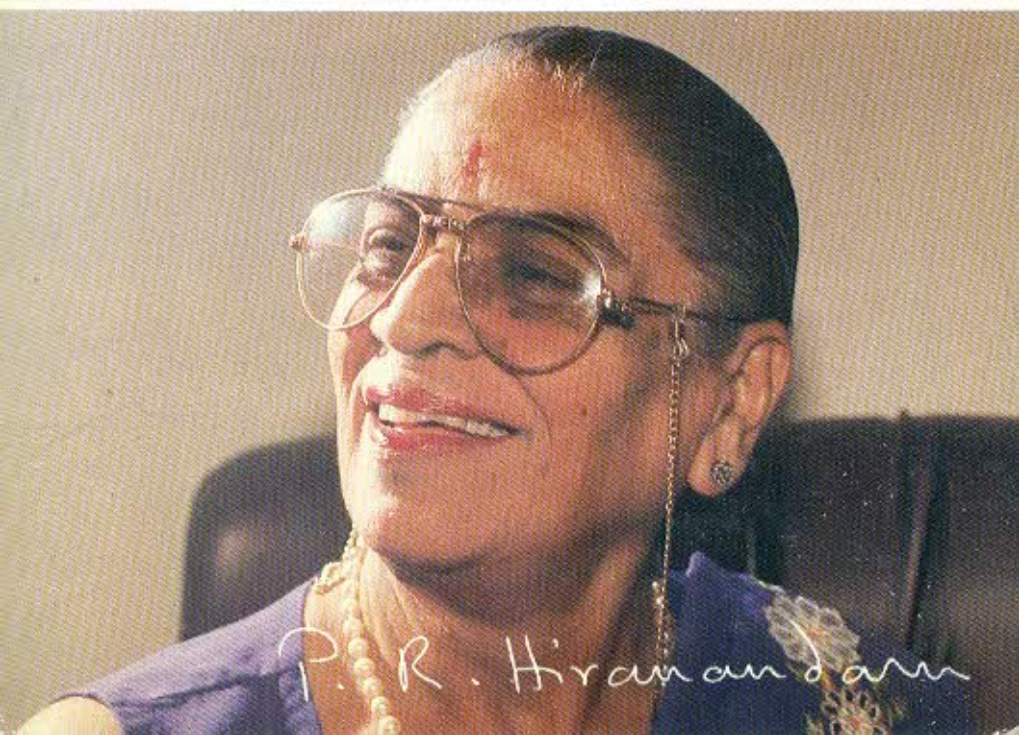
17 September, 1991



Sahitya Akademi

meet the author

Popati Hiranandani



P. R. Hiranandani

Where a maiden of tall and willow form
Steeped in tenderness and charm
Stands at the door of a stranger
And entrusts to him her entire life
And
The stranger
With the flash of quiet smile
 adoring his lips
Accepts her without a word
Like the line of fate on his palm.

(from 'I belong to a land')

A poet by instinct, Popati Ramchand Hiranandani, who considers herself a daughter of the soil, excels in every literary genre she has touched upon. Born at Hyderabad Sind (now in Pakistan) in 1924, she was the second eldest among seven children. She lost her father at the age of ten and started working at fourteen. At the age of twenty-one she refused to get married to a man who demanded dowry from her mother. Firmly and quietly independent, she has carved out a distinct niche for herself both in Sindhi literature and in Sindhi community.

She started her career as a music teacher. After graduating from the Benaras Hindu University with distinction in Sanskrit, she moved to teaching languages and literature. She retired as Head of Sindhi Department, Kishinchand Chell-

aram College, Bombay. During the last years of her teaching at this college, the University of Bombay associated her with postgraduate teaching and research programme — a rare honour, indeed.

*O sky! I am the earth
you are the eternal Man
and I am the eternal Woman
How can I give vent to my feelings?
And what does Man know
of the Pathless heart of a Woman?*

(from 'I am yours but you are not mine')

A prolific writer, Popati Hiranandani is pro-life. She is, in fact, a very popular writer in Sindhi, and has successfully protracted in her writings different aspects of life of the struggling Indian woman. She has written about fifty books which include such genres as story, novel, play, poetry, essay, criticism, philology, and history of literature and her Sahitya Akademi Award winner *Munhinji-a-Hyati-a-ja-sona-Ropavarga* (The golden and silver pages of my life) is a revealing autobiography of a crusading Indian woman and writer. This profoundly engaging autobiography of hers gives a remarkable insight into Sindhi society, the social and political upheaval following the partition of India and the great tragedy overtaking the country.



Getting Ishwari Bai Foundation Award from actor Shashi Kapoor.



With her Mother.

*I took my mother's hand in mine. Don't cry my dear mother. Please leave me alone. I just don't want to be insulted in the name of 'maryada' (respectability) and 'parampara' (tradition). Don't degrade our religion by oppressing a woman who wants to uphold her dignity. **

And I remained single a fearless and courageous woman.

(From 'Munhinji a hyati a ja Sona' Rupa Varqa')

Popati Hiranandani has fought many battles with her pen and with the power of her arguments by raising her voice against social evils and injustices at political level, and has taken a bold stand against traditional hypocrisies. She has been an untiring writer throughout her literary career of over five decades. She has also written four books in English SINDHIS: THE SCATTERED TREASURE, THE COWARD (Short Stories), HISTORY OF POST-INDEPENDENCE SINDHI LITERATURE and I BELONG TO A LAND, a recent volume of poems. Her books in sindhi have been translated into various Indian languages. She has also written radio plays and dance dramas and has participated in many discussions on television.

Popati Hiranandani has travelled extensively in Europe, Far East Asia and other foreign countries and delivered lectures on Indian philosophy and the Vedas during her tours abroad.

Apart from the Sahitya Akademi Award (1982), she has won many awards and honours for her contribution to literature. She was honoured at the 50th Marathi Sahitya Sammelan at Ichalkaranji in 1974 and at All India Women Writers' Conference at Nainital in 1975. She received the 'Woman of the Year' Award in 1988 and the Maharashtra Gaurav Award in 1990.

In her writing one message stands out clearly: TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE, she says quoting Polinius's advice in HAMLET. Finally, a poet of great sensitivity, she writes:

*I am a wave
a wave of water
When I see the moon
I send my heart to him
I place him on my bosom
And fondle him, rock him
And make him dance with me.*

(from 'The beautiful life of mine')



With Indira Gandhi.

A Select Bibliography

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Felicitated by 'Assen Sindhi' Association of DUBAI.

A Chronology



*Felicitated by
Akhil Bharat Lekhika Sangh, Nainital*

- 1924 Born Hyderabad-Sind (Now in Pakistan).
- 1943 B.A. (Honours) with Sanskrit Benares Hindu University.
- 1960 Visited Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong, Part time Professor H.R. Commerce College and National College of Arts & Science, Bombay.
- 1962 Awarded by Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli Sahitya Sabha and Sadhu Vaswani Mission for Collection of Essays.
- 1964 Visted England, Spain and Paris, Professor and Head of the Department of Sindhi, K.C. College of Arts & Science, Bombay.
- 1968 University teacher — University of Bombay.
- 1970 Member, Panel of Advisors, Audition Committee, All India Radio, Bombay. Educationist and Litterateur on the Sindhi/Urdu Tex Book Committee, Pune. Member, Advisory Board for Sindhi, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India.
- 1972 Member, Sahitya Akademi's Advisory Board for Sindhi. Visited England & Spain.
- 1973 Visited Hong Kong & Japan, Evaluator of Books for Children and Neo-Literature, N.C.E.R.T., Delhi. Member, General Council, Sahitya Akademi.
- 1974 Secretary, All India Sindhi Language & Literary Association. Felicitated as an eminent writer by 50th Marathi Sahitya Sammelan held at Ichalkaranji (Maharashtra).
- 1975 Honoured as a distinguished woman-writer at Nainital by Akhil Bharat Lekhika Sangh.
- 1977 Member, Selection Committee for Dictionary of Scientific and Technical Terminology.
- 1979 Member, Selection Committee, Union Public Service Commission, New Delhi.
- 1980 Examiner for assessment of books Directorate of Languages, Gujarat State. Award for the Collection of Stories by Ministry of Education, Govt. of India.
- 1982 Sahitya Akademi Award for autobiography *Munhinji-a-Hyati-a-Ja Sona Roopa Varqa*.
- 1983 Visited South Korea.
- 1988 Convener, Sahitya Akademi's Advisory Board for Sindhi.
- 1989 Priya Darshani Award as an eminent Sindhi writer.
- 1990 International Latif Award from 'Sadaeen Gadu Sindhi Association' and 'Assen Sindhi' Award from Sindhis settled in Dubai. Maharashtra Gaurav Award.
- 1991 Jhulelal Award from International Sindhi Panchayat Federation, Bombay.