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Sahitya Akademi

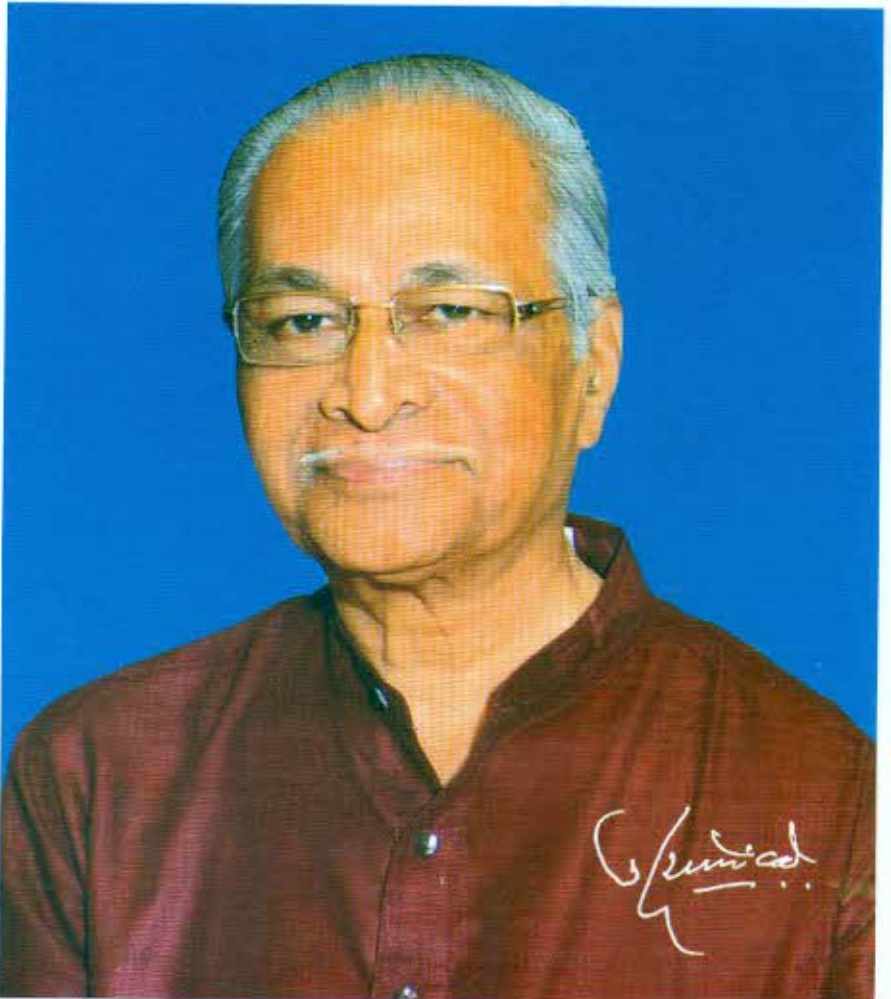


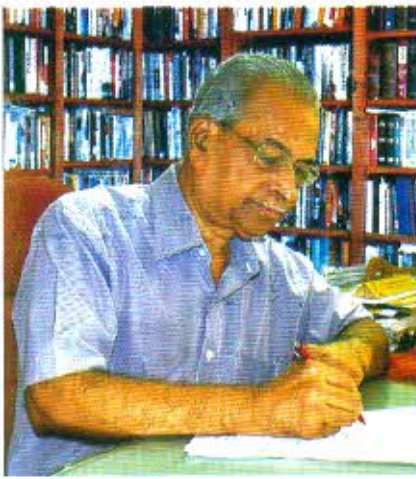
Konkani Sahitya Academy

invite you to

meet the author

Uday Bhembre





Uday Laxmikant Bhembre, distinguished writer in Konkani, was born at Margao, Goa on 27 December 1939. Rivon, a village in south Goa, is the place from where his family came. His grandfather Venkatesh Prabhu Bhembre was a small *zamindar* and had keen interest in agriculture. However, he had realized the significance of education and took pains to educate his children. Laxmikant Bhembre, Uday's father, did his studies in Portuguese and also passed matriculation examination. He obtained diploma in law. His uncles too were highly educated, one of

them a doctor, and another one a Portuguese teacher.

Bhembre came from the family of freedom fighters. His father Laxmikant Bhembre offered Satyagraha following Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia's initiative and was arrested in September 1946. After his trial by the Military court, he was sentenced to undergo imprisonment for four years and was deported to peniche jail in Portugal. After four years he was released along with his fellow freedom fighters but was kept under surveillance. He remained in Portugal for sixteen long years and was repatriated only in 1962 after the liberation of Goa. Bhembre was just seven year's old boy at the time of his father's deportation to Portugal.

Uday Bhembre's family shifted to Zambauli and he had his early schooling there. He studied three classes in Marathi and later completed his Segundo Gravo, IV standard in Portuguese. Since there was no much future for Portuguese education his family decided to send him to English school and he completed SSLC from Vasco.



With Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and others



being felicitated in Goa

While in school Uday showed keen interest in acting. Much before he came to writing, acting was his first love. This prompted him to participate in the stage performance of Konkani drama titled *Tachi Karamat* written and directed by Pundalik Narayan Dande.

After completing SSLC, he came to Mumbai for his college education and joined Siddharth College. Although Arts was his natural inclination, he had to join Science stream to honour the wish of his parents as they felt he should become an engineer. There he met several Goan students and actively participated in the activities of Konkani Association of the college and inter collegiate Konkani one act play competitions held annually in Mumbai. The association also published an annual issue called *Vidya*, and Bhembre edited one of the issues. In all these endeavours he received active support from the like minded friends such as Ana Mhambro, Laxmikant Talaulikar, Srikant Borkar, to name a few. And Konkani became the mission of his life

which is so until the date.

To support himself he joined All India Radio, Mumbai as staff artist in the Konkani section and helped produce programmes such as talks, radio plays and songs as well. This job and his whole hearted involvement in the social- cultural activities demanded much of his time and hence he could not devote time to his college studies. This compelled him to discontinue his college education.

In 1961, Goa was liberated and it was in political turmoil. The issue of Goa's merging with Maharashtra came on anvil and Bhembre along with his like minded youth took antimerger stand and they opposed this move tooth and nail. His fiery oratory in anti-merger public meetings that were held in nook and corner in Goa ultimately led to historic victory in the opinion poll held in 1967.

In 1963, he left Mumbai and joined Marathi daily *Rashtramat*. This shifting of his base proved to be a turning point in his life. His daily column titled "Brahmastra" became immensely popular with the readers.

Impressed by his role in the historic opinion poll, the main political parties approached him to join full time politics and contest assembly elections in 1968, the requests he turned down. Instead he decided to complete his education and took B.A. degree from Poona university.

Bhembre resigned from his job and came back to Mumbai and enrolled himself for the graduate Law course in Govt Law College in 1968 and passed L.Lb. examination in 1971. To sustain himself financially he worked in the Union Bank of India between 1968 and 1970. After obtaining degree in law he worked as a junior with senior counsels in Mumbai.

Bhembre returned to Goa in 1974 and commenced legal practice. His legal profession demanded his time and attention; however, he worked tirelessly for the upliftment of Konkani and secular identity of Goa. He became secretary of the reception committee for the 10th session of Akhil Bharatiya Konkani Parishad in 1974 held in Panaji which was inaugurated by Suniti

Kumar Chatterjee, then President of Sahitya Akademi. Also he was honoured with the presidentship of the third Akhil Bharatiya Sahitya Sammelan held at Margaon in 1975. As a crusader for the cause of Konkani, he along with Ravindra Kelekar played pivotal role in getting recognition to Konkani as an independent literary language by the Sahitya Akademi.

Although Bhembre kept himself away from active politics, the circumstances forced him to become people's candidate from Margaon constituency for Goa Legislative Assembly in 1984 and was elected as an independent MLA and served in that capacity from 1984-89.

Uday has a fine ear for music and he scored music for his song titled "Channeache Rati" sung by Late. Ulhas Buyanv. The record was released by H.M.V. gramophone company in 1967 and became instant success. During his stint in All India Radio he wrote several lyrics that were set to music by eminent music composers such as Datta Davajekar and Srinivas Khale. These lyrics were included in his



Karnaparva released



at a literary function in Goa

much discussed and critically acclaimed collection of poems *Channeache Rati*. As an editor, he edited the Konkani daily *Sunaparant* for 12 long years. His editorials on several important social and political issues are still in the memory of the readers.

As mentioned earlier his poems and lyrics are full of subtlety of rhythm and they reveal metrical invention and musicality is the hallmark of these poems which is rare in the realm of Konkani poetry. In many respects Bhembre carries forward the legacy of Bakibab Borkar, his predecessor.

Bhembre also wrote short stories. Although they are few in number they show that he is a short story writer of considerable talent. In fact his story played a significant role in the making of modern Konkani fiction which was to reach great heights in Damodar Mauzo, Pundalik Narayan Nayak, Meena Kakodkar and Sheela Kolambkar. The sense of

craftsmanship is unmistakable in Bhembre's stories. His stories such as "Gothul" and "Ghar" are case in point. They portray society in a myriad ways where even people and incidents not quite pleasant are depicted artfully with an eye for streaks of humanity.

Bhembre's obsessive preoccupation with the issue of Konkani and identity of Goans made him write several polemical essays now collected in his recently published book *Asmityecho Kasai*. The views expressed in these essays may not be acceptable or palatable to many but he puts across his views in a highly convincing manner. He meditates on the issue of survival of Indian languages as the growing importance of English poses great threat to their existence.

But Bhembre's seminal work, without doubt, is the play *Karnaparva*. Karna, though not the main character in the epic *Mahabharata*, plays significant role in the Mahabharata war. Krishna wants to avoid the war for which he wants Karna as an instrument. The reality of Karna's birth is shrouded in mystery. Krishna tries to exploit situation to the advantage of Pandavas. The play revolves around the two



main characters namely, Kunti and Karna. The play interpretes the role of those two characters in new light.

He has written innumerable articles which are yet to be collected. The activist in him has done injustice to his literary talent. But Bhembre has no regrets, for activism is part of his life's mission.

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Channeache Rati* – Collection Of Poems
Bramhastra – Collection Of Journalistic Writings In Marathi
Karnaparva – Play
Asmitayecho Kasai – Collection Of Essays.

A CHRONOLOGY

- 1939 Born at Margao, Goa
1946 Laximkant Bhembre, his father, tried by the Portuguese Military Court and deported to Portugal
1957 Passes SSLC examination. Joins Siddharth College
1960 Joins All India Radio, Mumbai as staff artist
1963 Leaves his job and joins the daily *Rastetrawat* as Assistant Editor
1967 Plays significant role in the historic opinion poll
1971 Passes L. LB. (University of Bombay) and starts his career as an advocate. Marries Kishori Prabhakar Kudehadkar.
1974 Returns to Goa and starts legal practice
1984 Wins assembly election as an independent candidate
1996-99
1999-2001 President of Goa Konkani Academy for two terms
2015 Receives Sahitya Akademi Award for his play *Karnaparva*



with his family