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Sahitya Akademi

meet the author

Vyasaraya Ballal





*“Two things that have contributed to my creative zeal are my aesthetic aspirations and a desire, born out of a frustrated and difficult childhood, to probe what is real”*

– Vyasaraya Ballal

Sri.Vyasaraya Ballal, an eminent fiction writer in Kannada was born in 1923 at Udupi, a temple town in coastal Karnataka. He had his matriculation from the Madras University in 1939 and he left Udupi to join an employment in Caltex (India) Ltd., at Bombay in 1944. The next five decades he spent in Bombay metropolis.

His three years (1947-50) journalistic experience in a socialist political weekly at Bombay was translated in his novel *Hemantha Gana* (Autumn Song) published in 1954. After 30 years of its publication a young critic of present generation held it as the first political novel in Kannada to symbolise the death of idealism. The structure of this novel was also admired by him.

His intellectual response to the immediate surroundings, the pain of the squalor, poverty, the apparent and not so apparent meanness, greed, selfishness, the desire to possess, the desire to dispossess, anger hatred, lust, all motivating behaviour patterns have urged the creativity of Sri Vyasaraya Ballal.

“He is a serious but sedate writer who creates suspense only through straight narration of episodes without recourse to devices of style and sentence manipulations. The episodes themselves are remarkably complex, bringing out a human clash of wills and suffering. The setting chosen is generally Bombay, but sometimes he is given to describing his rural or mofussil memories. Most of his characters belong to the salaried white collar.

Ballal is an idealist given to philosophical musings that have found a place in a collection of stories entitled *Badukina Adarsha* (The goal of life). But his idealism makes him an objective observer of city life, its stresses, strains, clash of wills and feelings of restlessness.

The central theme of his Sahitya Akademi award winning novel *Bandaya* is class conflict. The trade union activity and ultimately violence and cruelty associated with it – which is part of our everyday life”

*Bandaya* actually means revolt and a Naxalite leader on whom the realisation dawns that the type of revolt that they were practicing in the agrarian set up was anti-life comes to Bombay to organise labour for the historical ideal of changing the establishment, and gets baffled when he is forced to contend with the type of violence practiced by him earlier



With K. Shivarama Karanth

in the labour movement itself. The novel centers on class struggle and examines the structure of violence inherent in this struggle and the cruelty that it necessarily has to accept.

Most of his short stories and novels have their themes in an urban setting and the complex nature of life of Bombay, its impact on human relations have greatly contributed to translate his direct experiences into creative ones.

Initially he was just a short story writer; the feeling of frustration and anger found expression in some of his stories voicing social concern or social protest. However soon he realised the interaction between individual behaviour and social pressure patterns is not so simple and its proper understanding was necessary to get a truer perspective of life and human relations. This understanding has been the main stay of his stories and novels that have attempted to

probe all relationships in the context of the basic urges of man and the choices he or she has to make as a social being. His craving for expression, to be creative without constraints, arose from the village ritual background where he could observe even as a young boy, the exploitation of Indian woman, the indignities which she had to suffer to be able to adjust herself in a closed society. He could also observe her aesthetic perception, in spite of all this hardship, in all that she used to do. Of course, his observations as a young boy, were limited to his own lower middle class background and relationship formed under a rigid caste consciousness but as he grew older and started looking around he could see more clearly the nature of relationships everywhere that promote creativity, harmony and joy and those which do not.

His several works have been translated into Hindi, Gujarati, Malayalam, Marathi and English. He visited Europe, UK and USA. Two Kannada movies have been produced based on his novels *Anurakte* and *Vatsalya Patha*. Many of his stories have been included in representative anthologies published by the Sahitya Akademi, Kannada Sahitya Parishat, Bangalore. Selected Short Stories of the World in Kannada published by Navakarnataka Publications, anthologies of short stories in English and Kannada published by the Government of Karnataka at the time of World Kannada Conference held in 1983, Commonwealth quarterly publication 'Anthology of Short Stories' etc., All his novels have gone into several reprint editions.



With Artist K. K. Hebbar



With Yashwant Chittal

## A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

### SHORT STORIES

Badukina Adarsha	1950
Kadu Mallige	1957
Sampigeya Hoo	1958
Manjari	1975
Trikala	1992

### NOVELS

Anurakte	1953
Hemantha Gana	1954
Vatsalya Patha	1957
Uttarayana	1969
Bandaya	1985
Akashakkondu	
Kandilu	1995
Hejje	2000

### TRAVELOGUE

Nanobba	
Bharateeya Pravasi	1987

### BIOGRAPHY

Khurshid Nariman	1976
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### POLITICAL SATIRE

Sangraha	
Bharatayana	1984

### PLAY

Giniyu	
Panjaradalilla	1995
<small>(adaptation of Ibsen's 'A Doll's House')</small>	
Mullelide Mandara	1995
<small>(adaptation of Shaw's 'Pygmalion')</small>	

### POLITICAL ESSAYS

Kattuvevu Navu	
Swatantrayakke	1996
Aivathu Varsha	1998

### ART

Kalavida Hebbarara	
Rekha Lavanya	1999



With Ha. Ma. Nayak

## A CHRONOLOGY

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| 1923 - Born at Udupi   | 1987 - Best novel prize for <u>Bandaya</u>   |
| 1939 - Matriculation of Madras University.   | 1987 - Muddana Memorial Lecture at M.G.M.College, Udupi.                                     |
| 1944 - Employed by Caltex (India) Ltd., Bombay   | 1988 - Member, Kannada Advisory Board 1988-92, Central Sahitya Akademi                       |
| 1947 - Married Rajivi  | 1988 - Best travelogue prize   |
| 1947-50- Started writing as journalist. Associate Editor in Kannada Political News weekly 'Nudi'               | 1988 - Presided over the Madras Kannadigas Conference at Madras.                             |
| 1950 - First short story collection, <u>Badukina Adarsha</u> published.  | 1990 - Maharashtra Government Gourava Puraskar (Rs.1 lakh)                                   |
| 1952 - First prize for a short story by All Karnataka Novelists and Short Story Writers Conference, Bangalore. | 1991 - Honoured by Kannada Sahitya Parishat.   |
| 1953 - First novel <u>Anurakte</u> published.  | 1995 - Honoured by Karnataka Government.   |
| 1957 - First prize for <u>Anurakte</u> by Government of Mysore.  | 1996 - 'Gadya Bhaskara' Prashasthi at Udupi Paryaya.   |
| 1983 - Karnataka Sahitya Akademi award for distinguished writers.  | 1996 - Presided over Dakshina Kannada Literary Conference at Karkala.                        |
| 1985 - Chairman, Kannada Sahitya Parishat, Bombay Division.  | 1999 - Felicitation by Bangalore Kannadigas and presentation of felicitation volume 'Akkare' |
| 1986 - Seminar on Ballal's Works and honour to him at Bangalore.   | 2000 - Aa Na Kru Prashasti by Aa Na Kru Foundation (June -2000)                              |
| 1986 - Sahitya Akademi award for the novel <u>Bandaya</u>  | 2000 - Niranjana Prashasti by Shivarama Karanth Adhyayana Kendra, Puttur (June - 2000)       |



Sri Vyasaraya Ballal with his family members