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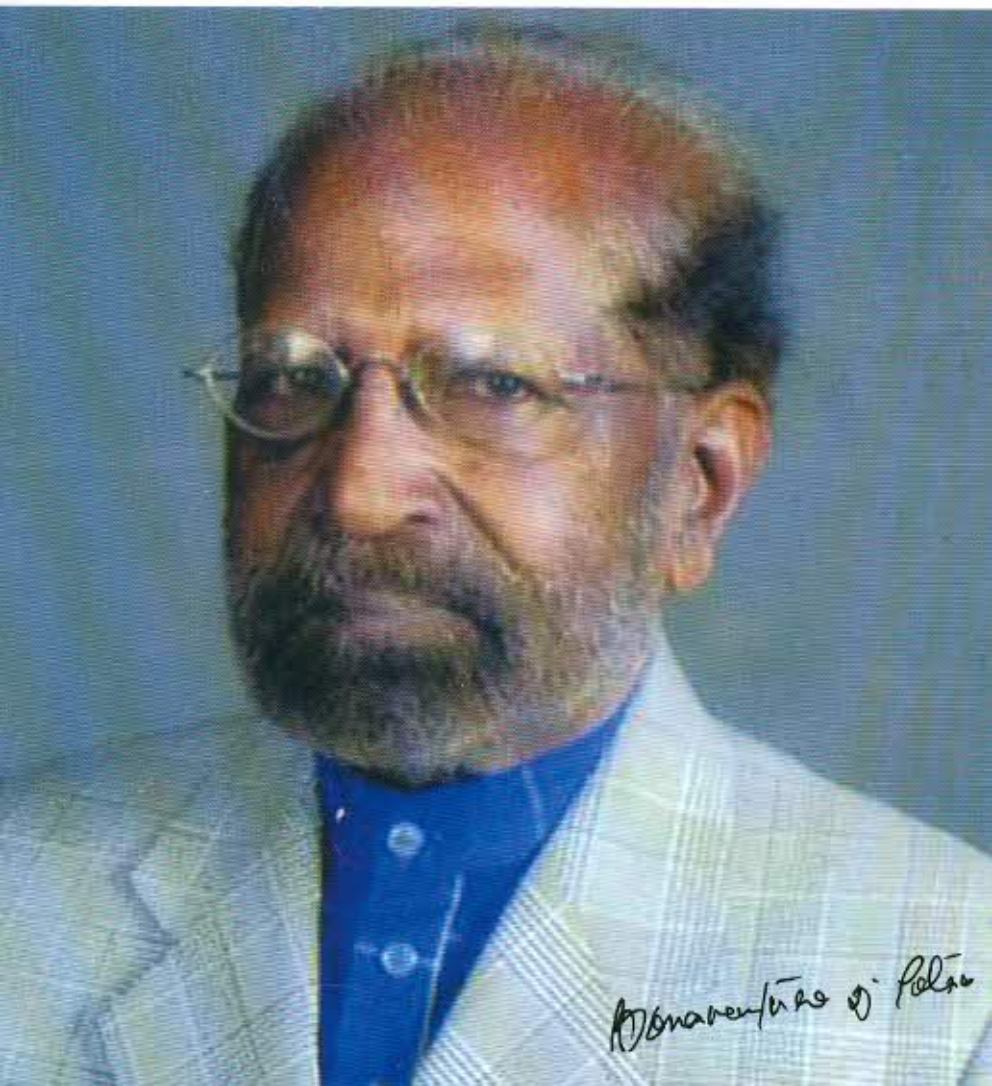


Sahitya Akademi

invites you to

meet the author

Bonaventure D' Pietro





Bonaventure Peter Fernandes, popularly known as Bonaventure D’Pietro to his fans, is a multifaceted personality, for he is not only a writer but also a musician, journalist, singer, and an accomplished artiste, besides a unique human being who could go to any extent for the cause of Konkani language, his mother tongue.

Born on 14th July, 1943, Bonaventure D’Pietro had his primary education in Church School at Anjuna where the children were taught to read and write Portuguese language.

Music was also taught in the school. In fact, the Church schools were used to prepare the pupils to face the then social and economic challenges of life.

The product of such a school, Pietro, right from his childhood, was a keen observer of almost every happening that took place in the village or in his surroundings. He had developed amazing ability to analyze his experiences and also to narrate them in a befitting manner creatively. It was these early endeavours that compelled his creative mind to write his first novelette *Soitanacho Ghutt* (The Mystery of Satan), in 1958, at the very young age of 15. At that time he neither had money to bring it out in a book form nor had any publisher to publish it, as he was a complete novice in the Konkani literary world. He managed to get the novelette published in parts in the Konkani section of *O Herald*, a Portuguese daily. Late Allen D’Costa was the editor of the Konkani section of the daily. The editor, after getting feedback from



Receiving the Kala Akademy’s Literary Award from the then Chief Minister Smt. Shashikala Kakodkar

the readers, complimented "A novelist in Konkani is born." These words of encouragement had immense positive effect on the young D'Pietro.

But the financial conditions that his family was facing compelled D'Pietro to migrate to Bombay (now Mumbai) for a job in 1962. Unfortunately his enthusiasm for creative writing in Konkani suffered a huge setback due to his appalling financial conditions. There were long dull depressing moments in the creative sphere of D'Pietro's life at that time.

When in Bombay D'Pietro came in contact with Joaquim Antonio Fernandes, a scholar in Konkani language. Fernandes had a strong influence on D'Pietro as far as writing in Konkani with correct grammar was concerned. It is for this reason that we see the writings of D'Pietro, right from his first novel *Kallea Vistidachi Choli* (1972), were grammatically correct unlike any other writer who used the Roman script and achieved popularity by publishing work categorized as 'Romances'.

D'Pietro was a voracious reader in general and liked novels by James Hadley Chase in particular. The influence of Joaquim Antonio Fernandes made the dormant instinct of creative writing in D'Pietro come active and D'Pietro kept on writing novels and also publishing them without even realizing that he was drowning in financial debts because of this business.

It was his unconditional love for Konkani language that made him write, typeset, print, bind, publish his novels in the form of books and

even distribute them. He worked for a printing press and had the contract with its owner that allowed him to work during day time for the press and typeset his novels after the duty hours. He himself would print the pages, cut them to size and bind them. Thus his first novel *Kallea Vistidachi Choli* (1972), written in the Roman script, came out. Quite a bulky publication, possibly the first of its kind in Konkani language, dealt minutely with the tragedy that Goans faced due to unfriendly relationship between the Portuguese, who ruled over Goa, and the Indian Government. The novel was an instant hit. The first edition of 3500 copies was sold like hot cakes. Bonaventure D'Pietro became a household name among the readers of Konkani in the Roman script. D'Pietro's joy knew no bounds when the novel *Kallea Vistidachi Choli* bagged Konkani Bhasha Mandal's literary Award. In fact, it was the first award to be given to full-fledged novel by Konkani Bhasha Mandal in the history of fiction writing in Konkani.

D'Pietro's writings have strong roots in the Goan soil. As stated earlier he was much influenced by the writings of the celebrated detective writer, James Hadley Chase, but the themes of all his novels emphasized issues and problems of the Goan society at that time. The readers can experience the James Hadley Chase in him in the way he ends his novels. To keep suspense intact is his forte. No wonder that he was nicknamed "the Goan James Hadley Chase" by his fans.

Backed by huge success of his published books he went on to add nine novels in all to his literary treasure, besides he has other work such as two novelettes, a collection of short stories, a book on his religious experiences, a well researched book on Goan music and an adaptation of stories for children to his credit.

In his literary journey he touched upon various aspects of Goan society and seriously attempted to present issues with their factual and historical background. His novel *Mhojea Paicho Fonda* dwells on families and declining values while Jimmy deals with the Christian culture in Goa that seems to have developed inclination to westernization. In *Nazaretkar*, D'Pietro narrates his experiences in seeking grace from Jesus through his different friends and well wishers. *Songit Doulot Goenkaranchi* is yet another masterpiece from the pen of D'Pietro which enlightens the readers about the musical heritage of Goa.

His journalistic career helped him gain deep knowledge and understanding of various aspects of life. He joined *Udentichem Noketr*, a weekly in Konkani in the Roman script in Bombay in 1964. Prior to that, he rendered his services to the *Goa Mail*. Returning to Goa he joined *Novem Goem*, a daily in Konkani in the Roman script in 1981. He rendered his services as Assistant Editor to numerous weeklies and monthlies like *Gulab*, *Vixtt*, *Goykar*, etc., all in Konkani in the Roman script. He has translated numerous articles from English into Konkani and for his excellent work in this field he was requested to translate parts of the *Povitr Pustok*, a prestigious religious publication of the Church of Goa, into Konkani.

The musician in him surprises everyone when one sees him playing his saxophone with grace. The education of reading and writing musical notes that he received in the church school in his early childhood set the foundation of musical capabilities in the young



Receiving State Cultural Award from Digamber Kamat, Former Chief Minister of Goa

D’Pietro. His love for music prompted him to strengthen and cherish it further. With sheer sincere efforts he mastered playing Saxophone. He plays any saxophone – Tenor, Alto and Soprano. He also plays, with same ease, clarinet and violin. During his stint in Bombay he formed two musical groups – *Bonaventures*, and *Bob Brown Combo (BBC)*. His musical abilities helped him earn his bread. At present, he leads a musical group *Pietros* in which members of his family participate.

He is a skilled actor too. He has contributed a lot to the *tiatr* stage of Goa as an actor. His popular *tiatrs*, which were staged in all parts of Goa are: *Dhunvor*, *Chitrkar*, and *Patang*. He has written and staged

numerous Konkani *khell-tiatrs* (folk plays), one acts, etc. He has penned lyrics for Mando and Dulpods and has contributed as a participant as well as a script writer to the programmes namely, *Bolkanvar Gozali* and *Sahitya Jhelo* that were broadcast the on All India Radio, Panaji.

Bonaventure D’Pietro is certainly a one-man institution who loves the Konkani language boundlessly and for which he made invaluable sacrifices. He is an ideal which inspires the young generation Konkani writers to work indefatigably for their mother tongue without expecting any reward.

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

SHORT STORY

Tera Numbrachi Kottri 1976
D’Pietro Publication

NOVELLETE

Mog vo Patok 1976
Rico Rod publication
Mhaka Jiyonk Zai 1977
Raikar Publication

NOVEL

Kallea Vistidachi Choli 1972
D’Pietro Publication
Clara 1972
D’Pietro Publication
Mhojea Paicho Fond 1974
(in 2 parts)
D’Pietro Publication
From Goa With Love 1975
Alfred Rose Publication

*Ek Bhatt Mungllurachea
Xharak* 1977
D’Pietro Puublication

Jimmy 1986
D’Pietro Publication

Tichea Mornna Uprant 1990
D’Pietro Publication

Janya Celli 2000
Omor Prkashan.

LITERATURE FOR CHILDREN

Gupi 2009
(Translation)
Dalgado Konkani Academy

OTHER WORKS

Nazaretkar (Religious
experiences)
2000
D’Pietro Publication

*Songit Doulot
Goemkaranchi* 2004
Research in Goan Music

A CHRONOLOGY

- 1943 Born at Anjuna, Goa
- 1958 First story published in *O Herald*
- 1962 Went to Bombay(now Mumbai) for employment
- 1964 Joined *Udentichem Noketr* in Mumbai
- 1972 First novel published
- 1973 Received Literary Award from Konkani Bhasha Mandal
- 1974 Received Literary Award from Goa Kala Academy
- 1974 Honoured by Kirol Goans Association Bombay
- 1977 Married to Olinda
- 1978 Returned to Goa
- 1981 Joined *Novem Goem*, a Konkani daily
- 1983 Staged Konkani *Tiatrs* in Goa
- 1996 Edited and published the tri-monthly *Arso*
- 1997 Re-started the Musical group *Pietros*
- 1998 Honoured by Anjuna Panchayat
- 2002 Felicitated by Lions Club of Anjuna
- 2004 Decorated with the prestigious TSKK's Antonio Pereira Puroskar
- 2005 Honoured by Kuwait Konkani Heritage in Kuwait
- 2006 Executive member of Dalgado Konkani Academy
- 2007 Honoured by Anjuna Parish
- 2008 Received Fr. Freddy Da Costa Puroskar
- 2009 Received Dalgado Konkani Academy Award for Life Time Contribution
- 2008 Honoured by Goa Government with the prestigious Goa State Cultural Award



With his family after receiving Fr. Freddy Da Costa Award