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File



Sahitya Akademi



Gujarati Sahitya Parishad

invite you to

meet the author

Chandrakant Topiwala



In modern Gujarati literature Dr. Chandrakant Topiwala is considered to be a writer of classical taste. He is one of those critics who are sensitive and sound and who like to deal with the hard and the tough. Amrutlal, his father and Lilavati, his mother played a fundamental role in his growth. Chandrakant was born in Vadodara on 9th August, 1935 and received his education at Mumbai, passed S.S.C.E. in 1954. He was the student of St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. He got his Bachelor's Degree with Gujarati Language and Literature in 1958 and Master's Degree in 1960. Dr. Chandrakant Topiwala was a brilliant student and he received Shri Balvantrai K. Thakore Gold Medal for the best performance at post-graduate level. During this period he married Shalini Vakil (b. 1938). In 1982 Gujarat University awarded him Ph.D. Degree for his thesis on *Generative Poetics*, prepared in self guidance. He was also deputed for a film appreciation course by Gujarat University, at FTII, Pune.

Dr. Chandrakant Topiwala, after his post-graduation, joined as a lecturer in Gujarati, at Madhavani Arts and Commerce College, Porbandar. In 1962, his first anthology of his poems *Maheraman* was published, which was quite traditional. In 1965 he joined Navajivan Arts and Commerce College, Dahod (PanchMahal), as a Professor and Head of Gujarati Department. Dr. Chandrakant Topiwala served that college as principal from 1971 to 1984. During this period he worked hard to uplift the academic standards and image of that institution. From 1984 to 1996 Dr. Topiwala, as a director of K. L.

Svadhyaya Mandir-Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, prepared *Gujarati Sahityakosh* (Part : 2 & 3) and some other reference-books with the help of his colleagues. At present he has dedicated his retired life for the benefit of Gujarati Language and Literature. Dr. Chandrakant Topiwala served many academic and literary organizations. In 1977 and again in 2000 he worked as a member of the advisory board in Gujarati of National Book Trust. In 1980 and again in 1996 he was selected as a member of the Gujarati advisory committee of Bharatiya Jnanpith of which he was to be the convener in 1984. In 1982 he was elected as a president of the association of professors of Gujarati. In 1987 he was the convener of the session of literary criticism in the 34th conference of Gujarati Sahitya Parishad at Vile Parle, Mumbai. He has actively participated in some regional and national seminars on Gujarati language and literature. In 1999 Dr. Topiwala delivered Thakkar VasANJI Madhavji Vyakhyanmala at Mumbai University, Mumbai. These lectures, *Sahityana Itihasni Abhidharana*, was later formed a book on the concept of literary history.

His poetic genius is well-manifested not only in poetry, but in criticism and translation as well.



With Sitanshu Yashashchandra



With Umashankar Joshi

His literary contribution includes five anthologies of poetry, sixteen books on criticism, eight works of translations and eighteen edited books. His service to literature flows on.

We can see the continuity of B. K. Thakore's tradition in his criticism. Dr. Chandrakant Topiwala is one of our leading critics of the modern generation, who are engaged in paving the way for evaluating the new literary writings. He is always keen and active to know the various streams of World Literature. He likes to judge a book in hand in the wider perspective of modern literature. He has a special inclination for studying the niceties of creative language as seen in the modern as well as in medieval writings. His prediction modernity and modernism is not doubt; his views on modern poetry and criticism are quite evident from his writings; but his basic faith in the classical is deep-rooted and strong and so he has never favoured or advocated anything which is lower in taste.

Dr. Topiwala's first anthology of poems, *Maheraman* (1962) was the outcome of the traditional way of poetry-writing but before the decade ended he came out with the anthology of modern poems *Kant Tari Rani* (1971). He quickly imbibed the freshness of modern poetry and criticism and transformed himself into a 'cruel-modernist'. Dr. Topiwala began to reveal the spirit of modernism in his creative and critical writings, in its different facets. *Kant Tari Rani* drew the attention of fellow-poets by its bold experiments. The real sunshine of his poetic genius is experienced in some poems of *Pakshitirth* (1988, enlarged edition : 2004), *Black Forest* (1989) and *Avagaman* (1999). In *Pakshitirth* some topological poems open the dimension of space, reminiscent of paintings of the French painter Cezanne. According to the poet, the geo-poetics which began in *Pakshitirth* has been developed in *Black Forest* in a much more internal and transparent way. The spirit of modernism has been softened with the advancement of his poetic pursuit. In *Avagaman*, his poetry has reached the post-modernistic open level of the poetic language, as Dr. Topiwala upholds. His creative use of images, symbols, myths and some new rhythmic patterns and forms has definitely contributed enriching Gujarati poetry.



With Rajendra Shah

As Dr. Topiwala himself mentions, his critical work is the extension of his love for poetry; not only that, his attraction for different faculties of knowledge and philosophy also results from it.

Following Wallace, Dr. Topiwala considers every poem and every step in criticism, a challenge and an adventure. Literature, essentially, an art of language, has a multi-dimensional, multi-layered and multiphonic form. If poetry provided his criticism with grace, the criticism has provided his poetry with perspective. His deep interest in the study of various patterns of the literary language covers a considerable area of his criticism. His first work on criticism, *Aparichita, Aparichita* (1975) is a good example of his language-oriented mode of criticism. *Had Parana Hans Ane Albatross* (1975, revised ed. 2002) provides us with a monograph on symbolism and some specimens of French symbolic poetry translated in Gujarati. In *Madhyamala* (1983) we get his appreciative structural study of Medieval Gujarati works. In *Pratibhashanun Kavach* (1984) Dr. Topiwala's critical ability is well-demonstrated. *Samsarjanatmak Kavyavijnan* is his important contribution to Gujarati literature. In this book the applied criticism is based on Chomsky's criteria of transformational - generative grammar. How the linguistic

meaning is deviated in the creative work is effectively discussed with apt illustrations. *Vivechanano Vibhajit Pat* gives substantial evidence of his critical genius. His critical works cover many areas of literature. His criticism is well-supported by his scholarship, sincerity, honesty and theoretical thrust.

Dr. Chandrakant Topiwala has taken keen interest in translating some important literary works from English into Gujarati. Poetry being his favourite genre, enjoys translating especially but loves editing too.

Dr. Chandrakant Topiwala's sincere efforts are widely acclaimed in the literary world. B. K. Thakore Prize of 'Kavilok' for *Black Forest*, 1988, first prize of Gujarat Sahitya Akademi for the translation *Ithaka Ane Jerusalem*, 1996, Ramprasad Baxi Award and Ramanlal Joshi Award for the *Bahusantvad* (critical essays), 2001, are conferred upon him. In 2002, Gujarat Sahitya Sabha honoured him with Ranjitram Suvarna Chandrak. He received Premanand Suvarna Chandrak in 2004.

Dr. Chandrakant Topiwala is like Wordsworth's 'Solitary Reaper'. He avoids the mob. He enjoys solitude. He avoids repeating himself. He is both, a तत्त्वाभिनिवेशीभावक as well as तत्त्वाभिनिवेशीसर्जक. Greham Green said once: 'Every writer needs to have a chip of ice at his centre.' Dr. Chandrakant Topiwala is such a litterateur in whose heart there is chip.



A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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1971
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1988
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1989
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1999
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1975
- HAD PARANA HANS ANE
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1975
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1984
- SAMSARJANATMAK KAVYAVIJNAN
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1985
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1986

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1972
- SONNETS TO ORPHEUS
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- MAITHILI SAHITYANO ITHAS
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1987
- ITHAKA ANE JERUSALEM
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- THE RAVEN
Ahmedabad, Sanskriti
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1999
- ISHWARNI YATANA
Ahmedabad, Kavilok Trust Prakashan
70p
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A CHRONOLOGY

- 1936 Born on 7 August at Vadodara, Gujarat
- 1958 B.A. with Gujarati – Sanskrit from St. Xavier's College, Mumbai
- 1960 M.A. with Gujarati – Sanskrit, Mumbai University.
Awarded B.K. Thakore Gold medal. Married to Shalini Vakil (B. 1938)
- 1961 Joined as a lecturer in Madhvani Arts and Commerce College, Porbander
- 1962 *Maheraman* first anthology of poems
- 1965 Joined as a professor and Head of the department, Navjivan Arts and Commerce College, Dahod (Panchmahal)
- 1971 *Kant Tari Rani* highly experimental publication of an anthology of anti-poems
Appointed as a principal
- 1972 *Contemporary Gujarati Poetry* translations of modernist Gujarati poems in English
- 1973 Nominated member of the board of University teaching at Gujarati University
- 1975 *Aparichit* ઓ *Aparichit* બે first collection of critical essays, mainly based on linguistics – oriented approach
- 1977 Member of advisory board in Gujarati of National Book Trust
- 1980 Member of Gujarati Advisory Committee of Bharatiya Jnanpith
- 1982 Awarded Ph.D. for *Generative Poetics* – thesis prepared in the self guidance
Elected President of the association of professors of Gujarati
Deputed by Gujarat University for film appreciation coarse at FTII, Pune
- 1984 Joined as a director, Kasturbhai Lalbhai Research Institute and an honorary director of Gujarati Sahitya Parishad
Convener of Gujarati Advisory Committee of Bharatiya Jnanpith
- 1985 Editor *Bhashavimarsh* a research magazine of Gujarati Sahitya Parishad (1989)
- 1987 Convener of the session of literary criticism in the 34th conference of Gujarati Sahitya Parishad at Vile Parle, Mumbai. Visited European countries
- 1988 B.K. Thakor prize by Kavilok for *Black Forest*
- 1990 Chief Editor: *Gujarati Sahitya Kosh Part II* of Gujarati Sahitya Parishad
- 1991 Editor: *Parab* a literary magazine of Gujarati Sahitya Parishad (till 1996).
Member, Sahitya Akademi (Gujarati Advisory Board)
- 1996 Retired from Gujarati Sahitya Parishad
Member again of the language advisory committee of Bharatiya Jnanpith
Chief Editor: *Gujarati Sahitya Kosh Part III* of Gujarati Sahitya Parishad
- 1997 Visited America
- 1998 Gujarati Sahitya Akademi award for *Ithaca Ane Jernaleen* (Translations of C.P. Cavafy's and Yehuda Amichai's poems)
- 2000 Member of Gujarati Advisory Panel of NBT
- 2001 Ramprasad Bakshi Award & Ramanlal Joshi award of Gujarati Sahitya Parishad for *Bahusambodh* (critical essays)
- 2002 Awarded Ranjitram Suvarna Chandrak
- 2004 Premanand Suvarnachandrak

