

*Library*

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**Sahitya Akademi**



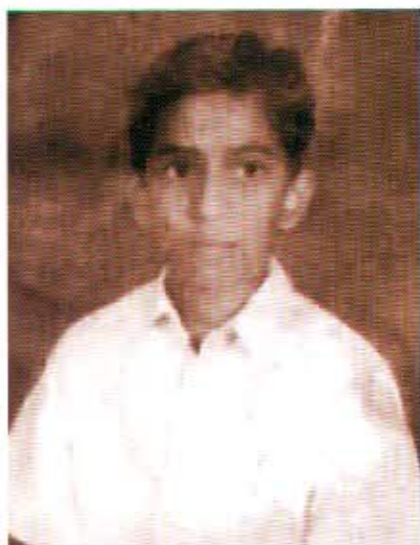
**Kala Academy**

invite you to

**meet the author**

**Edwin JF Dsouza**





**E**dwin Joseph Francis Dsouza was born in Mangalore on 14 June 1948 as the only child to Late Shri Martin Dsouza & late Smt. Stella Dsouza. His primary education was at a convent school and it was here, in 1959, that his first writing appeared in print in the school annual.

His talent for creative writing was spotted by his teachers when he was barely seven. He was in the habit of tearing up his note book pages,

cutting and stitching them into small booklets and writing detective stories and circulating them in the class. He was reprimanded by his teachers for this 'literary activity!'

From 6<sup>th</sup> standard onwards he was admitted to St. Aloysius College Institutions where he completed his SSLC, PUC. Later, having scored a good percentage in Science, he went in to do his Electrical Engineering, in 1967 at R.V.College of Engineering, Bangalore.

It was in the year 1964 that his novel *NimaNNi Xeli* (The Last Lamb) was accepted by J.S. Alvares, eminent writer, editor & journalist, who was Editor of two highly acclaimed periodicals, *Mithr*, a weekly and *Jhelo*, a fortnightly, and serialized it in the latter. This novel was an instant success and, in later years, has been serialized by other Konkani periodicals and published as a book as well. Following the



Receiving T. M. A. Pai Foundation Award for Vinchun Kadleli Porza



success of *NimaNNi Xeli*, Shri Alvares had no reservation in publishing Edwin's *Xetantlim Phulam* (Flowers of the Field) and even took a very narrow chance of serializing his first ever spy-thriller in Konkani – *Pilatan DilleM FormaNN* (Pilate's Verdict)

It was during these years that Jerome Cyril Veigas alias Sirivanth, noted fiction writer, started a publication, "Sallak Prakashan" which had an impeccable motto 'Mama Shakti Kamlanathah' (Lord Is My Strength). He published Edwin's novel *Jollim Vozram* (The Twin Diamonds) in the year 1968. So by the time Edwin sat on the last bench of the Engineering class he was well known in Mangalore and around as a writer of substance. Needless to say, he was never cut to be an engineer and when he quit his technical studies in the year 1969, no one was surprised. In the same year he met Jane Lobo, a petite lass from



*With wife, Jane*

Milagres, Mangalore, whom he married in 1975.

Edwin's mother, a very strong-willed lady had studied her son well and thought it best to keep him close to the roost. She exhorted her brothers and sisters who were earning petrodollars in Kuwait to finance a printing press in Mangalore and put Edwin in charge. However, Gemini Printers did not last more than three years, the simple reason being Edwin's



*Celebrating 60th birthday with wife Jane, daughter Ruth, son-in-law Sudhakar & grand child Anoushka*

non-compromising nature failed to make a businessman out of him. The press closed down with the publication of his own magnum opus – *Havu Xiataum* (I Live), the first ever novel in Konkani on objectivism and existentialism. The storyline was indigestible to the readers of those years and the novel failed miserably. Admits Edwin with a nostalgic chuckle, 'The white ants had a feast on the 800 of the 1000 copies of the book!'

However, amidst all these escapades he managed to study Commerce in the St. Aloysius Evening College and obtained a degree in Commerce in the year 1972. He also holds a Post Graduate Diploma in study of Konkani language.

'All is forgiven!' said his aunts and uncles although he candidly disclosed to them that he had obtained a third class degree in Commerce. A visa to Kuwait was sent to him and Edwin, who had just landed

with a job on his own steam with State Bank of India and was posted to Udupi, quit the job and landed in Kuwait in January 1973.

For about four months he was without a job and even under such stressful mental conditions and disappointments he could hone his writing talents. Finally, he got a very low paying job as a typist in a company dealing with petroleum refineries. He put his miniscule knowledge of two years of engineering and spent hours learning to know and understand thousands of technical material used in the oil sector. He became an expert in International Tendering, a formidable salesman and in short, he had really landed. More so, when the newly revamped Kuwait National Petroleum Co. KSC, Mena Abdullah Refinery, Kuwait, picked him up and gave him the break of his life – he was hired as a Materials Coordinator of



*Receiving Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy Award*



Maintenance.

In the month of March 1976, Jane, his wife, had joined him in Kuwait.

However, Edwin and Jane's life (and that of thousands of other expatriates in Kuwait) was devastated when Saddam Hussain invaded Kuwait on the 2 August 1990. Under the most grueling circumstances Edwin and Jane along with their teenage daughter Ruth dared to stay back in Kuwait for 52 days after the infamous Invasion, until a safe airlift was organized by the Indian Embassy and Air India. Travelling home from Kuwait to Jordan by buses arranged by the Indian Embassy and then taking a mercy flight of the Emirates Airline, the trio landed in Mangalore in September 1990 with their body and soul intact and a single suitcase each to boot.

During the 16-year stint in the Middle East, the trio has traveled wide visiting-Greece, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, England, Bangkok, Singapore, Egypt and Baharain. Their exodus from Kuwait due to the Iraqi Invasion brought them through Iraq and Jordan.

Back in Mangalore they occupied "Fountainhead", their dream abode which was mercifully ready, in early 1990. "I named our home Fountainhead as a humble tribute to my mentor Ayn Rand," says Edwin who is

voluminously influenced by English literature.

Once settled, he plunged headlong into creating literature in Konkani, giving many 'firsts' to Konkani literature in Kannada script. He penned his 'first person' account of the Invasion and exodus, titled *Mohnv Ani Rogath* (Honey & Blood) and was published by *Raknno Weekly*.

At 63, he is a very content Konkani littérateur with 33 novels to his credit, nine literary awards, a film script, *Bhoxanne*, in Konkani, and a prestigious membership (2008-2012) of the General Council of Sahitya Akademi. He was the President of the 11<sup>th</sup> All India Konkani Sahitya Sammelan held in 1992 at Karwar, Karnataka. Out of his over 100 short stories many have been translated by him into English. Two of his short stories, first, "A Cup of Hot Coffee" is published by none other than Khushwant Singh in *Our Favourite Short Stories*, and the other, "Chocolates" is published in a Special Collectors' Edition of *Reader's Digest*.

A Member of the Rotary Club of Mangalore, he is presently the Executive Director of the Institute of Konkani, St. Aloysius College, Mangalore and edits *Amar Konkani*, a bi-annual Konkani research journal, published in dual scripts, Devanagari and Kannada.

## A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

### NOVEL

- 1967 *NimaNNi Xeli*  
1968 *Pilathan DilleM FormaNN*  
1969 *Xetanthlim Phulam*  
1972 *Hanv Xiataum*  
1975 *Te Aiylyaath*  
1991 *Vinchun Kadleli Porza*  
1992 *Mohvn Ani Rogath*  
1995 *Doryanth Pavs Podlo*  
1995 *Mojea Vodthanthle Gulob*  
2003 *UNNYa Bhaavadthache*  
2005 *Kallem Bhagaar*  
2010 *Dhahashath*

### ANTHOLOGY OF SHORT STORIES

- 1996 *Bethlehem*

### A CHRONOLOGY

- 1948 Was born on 14<sup>th</sup> June in Mangalore  
1959 First writing appeared in print  
1972 Obtained a degree in Commerce  
1973. Goa Konkani Academy Award For *Hanv Xiataum*  
1975 Married Jane Lobo  
1988 Louis Mascarenhas Foundation for *Vinchun Kadleli Porza*  
1992 T. M. A. Pai Foundation for *Vinchun Kadleli Porza*  
President, 11<sup>th</sup> All India Konkani Sahitya Sammelan  
1993 Konkani Bhasha Mandal, Goa Award for  
*Vinchun Kadleli Porza*  
1994 Louis Mascarenhas Foundation For *Hanv Xiataum*  
1997 Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy Award for *Bethlehem*  
1998 Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy Award for Literature  
1998 Sandesha Prathistan Award for Konkani Literature  
2003 Daijidubai Puraskaar for Konkani Literature