



Sahitya Akademi

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meet the author

Giraddi Govindaraj





*Receiving Karnataka State Rajyotsava Award  
from Chief Minister S.M. Krishna - 2002*

**B**orn in an agricultural family in 1939 in Abbigeri in Gadag district, Giraddi Govindaraj came to Dharwad in pursuit of higher education much against the desire of his parents who wanted him to take to agriculture. That was the first momentous turning point in his life. Giraddi was initiated into the world of literature while in college under the tutelage of such intellectuals as V. K. Gokak, S.S. Malavad, V. M. Inamdar and S. R. Malagi. His early poems were published while at college in *Sharadalahari* (1956) and *Rasavanti* (1961). These poems are part of the transition of Kannada poetry from Navodaya to Navya,

and attracted the attention of Gokak, Kanavi, Shivarudrappa and Adiga.

He graduated from Karnatak College with a BA degree in 1961 and M.A. in English from Karnatak University in 1963. Giraddi's first employment was as a lecturer in English, at the very college where he graduated from. After a diploma in English Studies from CIIL, Hyderabad in 1970, which initiated Giraddi to the world of Linguistics, he won a British Council fellowship on which he went to England in 1972 to do an M.A. in Linguistics at Lancaster University. He returned to India and successfully pursued a Ph.D. programme in Stylistics from



*With Jnanpith Laureate Girish Karnad  
and Marathi playwright Mahesh Elkunchwar*



Receiving Karnataka Sahitya Academy Life Time Award  
from Bhisham Sahni - 1992

Gulbarga University. Later, he joined Karnatak University in 1984 as a Reader in English where he continued to work till his retirement in 1999, as Professor and Chairman of the Department of Studies in English.

Along with poetry Giraddi also wrote short stories during his student days and it continues to be one of his occasional modes of self expression. Though he has published just a dozen short stories, each one of them is deeply rooted in the Kannada story telling tradition, recording either a momentary transgression of the protagonist from the norms and expectations of society or portraying individual moments of epiphany. Set mostly in rural north Karnataka, the stories not only dramatize human encounter / transgression sympathetically, but also dispassionately chronicle the way modernity is stealthily making inroads into these rural spaces. One of his stories, 'Hangu' has been filmed by Puttanna Kanagal and also telecast in "Ek Kahani" serial of Dooradarshan. His long short story 'Mannu' has been hailed as one of the landmarks in modern Kannada short fiction.

Giraddi has a lasting interest in drama which has in the past led him to direct as well as act in plays like *Evam Indrajit*, *Listen Janamejaya*,

*Post Office*, *Baaki Itihas*, *Kadadida Neeru*, etc. His love for theatre and drama is amply evidenced in his book *Englandina Rangabhoomi*, which is a lucid account of his impressions of British theatre with which he grew familiar during his sojourn in England.

Giraddi's academic engagement with literature also saw him seriously engage with literary criticism which propelled him as one of the most significant critics of Kannada Literature in 20th Century. Giraddi with the help of two of his friends launched a bimonthly little magazine *Sankramana* from Dharwad in 1963. Giraddi disassociated from the magazine after ten years but by then his reputation as a literary critic was firmly established. To date he has published more than a dozen books of literary criticism and has emerged a much respected interpreter of Kannada literature and culture.

Giraddi's pioneering collection of critical essays *Sanna Katheya Hosa Olavugalu* (New Trends in the Short Story) published in 1965, for the first time offers an in-depth analysis of modernist short fiction of Kannada and highlights its achievements. The book introduced many an author and text to the reading public. Similarly, his balanced assessment of twenty nine story tellers in *Mareyabarada*

*Haleya Kathegalu* amounts a virtual rediscovery of forgotten masters.

Though Giraddi initially used his critical energy to popularize the concepts, principles and techniques of Anglo-American formalism, his critical works from *Sahitya mattu Parampare* (1981) to *Pramanu* (2007) embed a combination of formalist and culturalist positions. Giraddi's scholarship ranges over the entire field of Kannada Literature, without being hinged to a period or a genre, from close readings of seminal texts such as *Yashodhara Charite* (a 13th century Jaina text) to contemporary writings mapping continuities in his cultural tradition.

*Talasparsi*, the title of festschrift volume presented to him on his 60th birth day, literally means, "the one who dives the bottom" metaphorically implies thoroughness and comprehensiveness which characterize Giraddi's critical efforts. Thoroughness and comprehensiveness characterize Giraddi's work as an editor of more than fifty volumes too including a critical idiom series *Shatamanada Sankalanagalu* and *Complete Works of Kirtinath Kurtkoti*.

Giraddi has evolved a style of subtle articulation of critical discriminations. He is extremely

readable and sharply focused. Of late, Giraddi has experimented fairly successfully with a complex literary structure which combines literary criticism, essay, pen portrait and literary episodes. It is an attempt to meld the objective with the esoteric, the epistemic with the intuitive in a bid to capture a literary culture in its entirety. *Atmiya* (2008) and *Sahitya Lokada Suttamitta* (2010) are attempts in that direction.

Giraddi has won many awards, among which Sahitya Academy Gourava Prashasti (1992), Karnataka Nataka Academy Fellowship (1993), Rajyotsava Prashasti (2002), A. Na. Kru. Prashasti are significant. He has presided over prestigious conferences, directed workshops and refresher courses and has been convener of national seminars. He is now the president of Dharwad Sahitya Sambhrama Trust.

Giraddi has occupied many a prestigious position, such as the President, Karnataka Sahitya Academy (1998-2001), Member, Executive Board, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi (2003-2008), Convener, Kannada Advisory Board of Jnanpith Award and Saraswati Samman.

Dharwad Sahitya Sambhrama under his stewardship has created a sensation among Kannada literary circles.



*Participating in a National Seminar on Sarala Das and Bhakti Parampara (2005) with Telugu University Vice-chancellor G.V. Subrahmanyam and Jnanpith Laureate Indira Goswami*



*President of Dharmasthala Sahitya Sammelana:  
honoured by Padmavibhushan D. Veerendra Heggade*

### **A Select Bibliography**

#### **POETRY COLLECTIONS**

1. Sharada Lahari (1956)
2. Rasavanti (1961)
3. Marilyn Monroe and Other Poems (1974)

#### **FICTION**

1. AaMukha – EeMukha (1970)
2. Ondu Bevina Marada Kathe (1978)
3. Mannu (1976)

#### **CRITICISM**

1. Sanna Kateya Hosa Olavugalu (1965)
2. Janapada Kavya (1971)
3. Navya Vimarshe (1975)
4. Kadambari: Vastu mattu Tantra (1976)
5. Sahitya mattu Parampare (1981)
6. Inlandina Rangabhumi (1983)
7. Natak Sahitya mattu Rangabhumi (1989)
8. Satatya (1992)
9. Vachana Vinyasa (1997)
10. Kannada Kavya Parampare mattu Bendre Kavya (2004)
11. Pramanu (2007)
12. Kalpita Vastava (2009)
13. Kavyavannu Kuritu (2010)

#### **LINGUISTICS**

1. Kannada Diglossia (English, 1998)
2. An Introduction to General Linguistics (1983)

#### **MISCELLANEOUS**

1. Hidiyada Haadi (2007) -Essays
2. Atmeeya (2008) -Pen Portraits
3. Sahitya Lokada Sutta Mutta -Literary Episodes
4. Jaya by Devdutt Pattanaik (from English) - Translation
5. Edited eighteen books

#### **COLLECTED WORKS**

1. Samagra Srijana - Vol 1 (2001)
2. Samagra Srijana - Vol 2 (2011)
3. Samagra Vimarshe - Vol 1 (2001)
4. Samagra Vimarshe - Vol 2 (2001)
5. Samagra Vimarshe - Vol 3 (2012)
6. Giraddiyavara Sanna Kathegalu (2009)



*Receiving A. Na. Kru. Prashasti in Bengaluru  
with his wife Saroja - 2014*

### **GENERAL EDITOR**

1. Twenty two books in Critical Idiom Series
2. Six Volumes – Shatamanada Sankalanagalu
3. Twelve Volumes – Complete works of Kirtinath Kurtkoti (In Progress)
4. Aryavarta (Collection of critical essays on Arya's works)

### **AWARDS**

1. British Council Scholarship for doing M.A. in Linguistics (1972-73) in U.K.
2. Karnataka Sahitya Academy Gourava Prashasti (1992)
3. Karnataka Natak Academy Fellowship (1993)
4. Karnataka State Rajyotsava Prashasti (2002)
5. Shrikrishna Prashasti (2002)
6. B.H.Shridhar Prashasti (2008)
7. Gourish Kaikini Prashasti (2010)
8. M.P.Prakash Sahityasiri Prashasti (2010)
9. A.Na.Kru. Prashasti (2014)
10. G.S.S. Prashasti (2014)
11. Karnataka Kalpavriksha Prashasti (2014)
12. Yaksamba Kannada Kulatilaka Prashasti (2003)
13. Sirigannada Rashtriya Ratna Prashasti (2011) and many others

### **HONOURS**

1. President, Karnataka Sahitya Academy, Bengaluru (1998-2001)
2. President, Gadag District First Sahitya Sammelana (2000)
3. Preesident, Vichara Bharati Sahitya Sammelana, Mumbai (2009)
4. President, Dharmasthala Sahitya Sammelana (2011)
5. President, Dharwad Sahitya Sambhrama Trust (since 2013)
6. Member of the Delegation of Indian Writers to China sent by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi as part of Cultural Exchange Programme

### **OTHERS**

1. 'Hangu' story filmed by Puttanna Kanagal in "Katha Sangama"
2. 'Hangu' story telecast in "Ek Kahani" serial from Doordarshan
3. Has acted in and directed several plays in Kannada
4. Has chaired several sessions and has presented papers in State, National and International Seminars
5. Has worked as director and resource person in several workshops and refresher courses in English and Kannada

### **VISITS ABROAD**

England, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Holland, Belgium, Ireland, China