

19 October 2014



Sahitya Akademi

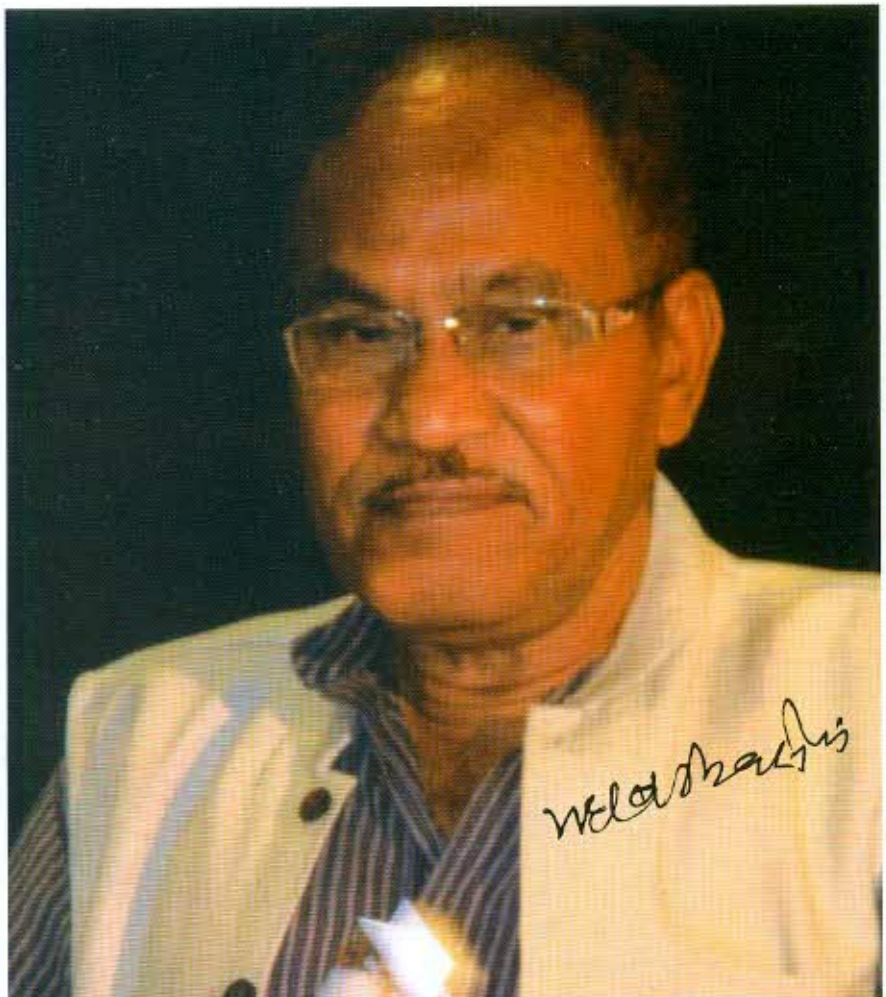


Kala Academy Goa

invite you to

meet the author

Mahabaleshwar Sail





Mahabaleshwar Sail is one of the most eminent writers writing in Konkani today.

Hailing basically from Sailaval, Ardhond, Kanakona, Mahabaleshwar Sail's family settled years ago at Majali, a town in Karwar on the border of Goa. Majali is immensely gifted with nature, and has mountain ranges; huge farms, lakes, and a river which seems to have been Sail's passion. It is but obvious that Sail evolved into an ardent lover of nature. He holds that a human being is incomplete without nature. Nature finds its own place in his writings. The short stories in his collection *Nimano*

Ashwaththama are based on nature.

Loosing his father at the age of fourteen, Sail had begun supporting himself and his family as a farmer quite early, and consequent hardship disturbed his early education. Nevertheless, for the next three years, he quite courageously accepted his field, cattle, and forests as his milieu which would later form a great source of inspiration and significant background for his creative writing. He still holds that this was the world that educated him, and takes experiences as his master and the backbone of his creative writing. It was later that he left home and had joined army. During the ceasefire in 1965 he wrote his first short story – "Vardi", and began as a creative writer. The genre of short story seems to have been his first love. He said, in one of his interviews, that many a time he thought of leaving short stories and getting into the nerves of novel writing but found it to be impossible.

Mahabaleshwar Sail's fiction successfully encapsulates the life in several social strata. He depicts characters with agricultural background, poverty stricken people, people working in smithies, army, and people living in forests. As a creative writer he kept on transcending the horizon



Former Central Law minister Ramakant Khalap releasing the novel *Kali Ganga*



President, All India Literary Convention, Kumta, with Chandrashekhur Kambar and R. V. Deshpande, then Karnataka Minister

that he himself had set in his earlier work. The variety of experiences that he deals with in his fiction knows no bounds. His novels *Khol Khol Moolan* and *Yugsanvar* wonderfully establish his remarkable research on the society and history. Blending his reality with fertile imagination and lucid language in order to achieve a high artistic degree is one of his striking characteristics as a fiction writer.

Kali Ganga is one his highly significant novels which has a river as its protagonist, and compassionately depicts the struggles the agrarian world and the lives of soldiers include, but the novel still meticulously maintains the frame of beauty by remarkable narration of the riverside.

As his characters come from several social and geographical area they allow him to welcome the use of various dialects of Konkani, and it is here that his fiction establishes linguistic affluence. He seems to be extremely well versed with the Konkani dialects that are used at Pedne in Goa to Karwar, and even to Cochin. Linguistically, his fiction is a rare blend of marvelous dialects of Konakni.

His reality certainly has a great and unusual variety, as it includes the experiences that range from rural, agrarian life to government

offices to forests. This variety has added to his multidimensional worldview which enriches his fictional imagination.

Sail has traveled extensively in India and foreign countries during his life in armed forces. He participated in the war against Pakistan in 1965, and he transformed many of the experiences of the war into his fiction which were taken as quite unconventional, and considered to be a major contribution to Konkani fiction. Returning from the war he took up a job for which he needed to stay in the deep forest at Yellapur, Karnataka. The novels *Adrista* and *Aranyakand* imaginatively present his experiences in the forest. Right from the beginning he seemed to have taken it as a prerequisite that not a single experience should get skipped from his fiction. Both of these novels brilliantly render different forms of the forests, as they narrate how the forest can be a savior of the human beings on the one hand, and how it can prove to be a terminator on the other. In *Aranyakand* people mistake their road for the other and tragically meet their death out of hunger and dearth of drinking water. Sail's brilliant narrative technique evokes compassion on the one

hand, and the fact that how nature can be too horrific to bear on the other. *Adrista* dexterously deals with the strain between the conscious and subconscious. Lakshmikant Motegaonkar, noted director, made his movie *Paltadcho Manis* on Sail's *Adrista*, and the movie bagged the Critic's Award at Toronto Film Festival.

He presents his characters in a remarkable style. The sisters – Suman and Manjula – in the novel *Kali Ganga*, the protagonist Antonete in *Khol Khol Moolan*, the priest – Simao Pires in his highly acclaimed novel *Yugsanvar* are some of the characters that leave a permanent impact on the readers' mind. His *Yugsanvar* undoubtedly is one of the most significant novels in Konkani. It sagaciously depicts the forceful religious conversions and tortures meted out to people by the Portuguese rulers in the 16th century. His narrative technique in *Yugsanvar* is exceptional, for it does not only show patience, objectivity, deep research but also teaches the readers how to value these human virtues. The novel has been appeared in Marathi and English too and has received acclaim.

Yet another of his significant novels *Hanvtthan*, which is translated into English, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, also epitomizes his unique art of



with wife - Shalini, daughters - Seema, Sarita, and Son - Devdatt

combining his deep research, command over the language, imagination, and wonderfully deals with the way in which the traditional business of pottery is pitiably descending because of the globalization that has set in. It depicts the agonized people who have been attached to their soil for generations together are now getting gulped by the soil only because of capitalism and globalization.

Mahabaleshwar Sail also writes in Marathi, and has written non-fiction as well. Actively associated with many literary organizations such as Goa Konani Bhasha Mandal, Konkani Sahitya Academy, Karnataka, Goa Kala Academy, All India Konkani Parishad, Goa Konkani Academy, Entertainment Society of Goa, etc., Mahabaleshwar Sail is a recipient of a number of prestigious awards



Then Goa's CM Digamber Kamat Presenting G S Amonkar memorial award, along with Suresh Amonkar

including the Sahitya Akademi Award. True to his genuine spirit of a committed creative writer, he humbly said, on receiving the Vishwa Konakni Award, "Now I will go home, get some papers and

will begin to write." Sail has been in Goa for last forty seven years, and considers the place as epicenter and of immense inspiration.

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Novel

<i>Kali Ganga</i>	1996
<i>Adrist</i>	1997
<i>Aranyakand</i>	1997
<i>Yugsanvar</i>	2004
<i>Khol Khol Moolan</i>	2005
<i>Hanvotthan</i>	2009
<i>Vikhar Vilkho</i>	2012

Short story

<i>Paltadche Taaru</i>	1989
<i>Taranga</i>	1991
<i>Baynet fighting</i>	2005
<i>Nimano Ashwaththama</i>	2009
<i>Don Moolanche Zaad</i>	2011

Translation

<i>Kavve aur Kala Paani</i>	2007
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Non Fiction

<i>Srijanurja</i>	2012
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Aranyakand and *Yugsanvar* published in English by Oxford University Press and Harper Collins India Publication respectively.



with U R Ananthamurthy

A CHRONOLOGY

- 1943 Born on August 04
- 1958 Began life as agriculturist
- 1961 Joined Indian Army in January (until 1966)
Worked, in November-December, with a team which was supplying ration and military weapons to Goa border from Belgaum for Goa Liberation
- 1962-63 served as Shanti Sainik on Egypt-Israel border on behalf of UNO
- 1965 Was on mountaineering expedition in the Himalayan region for 30 days. Took active part in Indo-Pak war in Punjab, Hussainwala sector
- 1966 Married to Shalini
- 1966-67 worked with a forest contractor in the deep forest of Yellapur, Karnataka
- 1967 Joined Goa Police (until 1970)
- 1970 Joined Indian Post & Telegraph Department as Postmaster (until 2003)
Daughter Rajashri born
- 1989 First book *Palladche Taaru* published

Awards Received

- 1993 Won the Sahitya Akademi Award for the short story collection *Taranga*
- 1989 Goa Kala Akademi state award
- 1993 Goa Konkani Bhasha Mandal Award
- 1996 Goa Kala Akademi state award
- 1997 Dr TMA Pai foundation, Manipal award
- 2002 Senior Fellow of department of culture, Govt. of India, and submitted thesis on *Christian Gawda community of Goa*
- 2005 President of All India Konkani Sahitya Sammelan, Kumta
- 2006 Goa State Cultural Award
- 2007 Katha Award from Katha movement, New Delhi.
Goa State award
Janaganga Sahitya Puraskar
G. S. Amonkar memorial award
- 2009 Felicitated at Toronto Canada international film festival, and subsequently by the Govt. of Goa
- 2010 Vimla Pai Vishwa Konkani award
- 2012 Maharashtra Sahitya Parishad Puraskar
- 2013 Bhairu Ratan Damani Puraskar