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Sahitya Akademi



Institute
Menezes Braganza

invite you to

meet the author

Sheela Kolambkar





Debut foray through her maiden story 'Guerra' (war) brought Sheela Kolambkar to the forefront of Konkani fiction writing. With it dawned a new era. This short story won the first prize in the short story contest of the now defunct *Rashtramat* daily. This short story at that time came as a trendsetter, adding a dimension to modern Konkani literature.

Born on March 11, 1945, then known by her maiden name Sheela Naik did her schooling and college education in Panaji. To be expressive in toto and to give vent to the innermost creative feelings, there was no way other than taking to write in Konkani, she discovered. The Konkani language and literary movement was just taking shape at that time. Sheela got inspiration from her college professor S Nadkarni, and the Gyanapeeth awardee, Konkani writer and erudite scholar, Ravindra Kelekar. Her first short story collection *Oli Saanj* was published by Jaag Prakashan. Eminent Konkani and Marathi writer Laxmanrao Sardesai through his book of

literary criticism *Kathashilp* has analysed the stylistic approach of Kolambkar's stories from *Oli Saanj* as an incredibly beautiful canvas of words. He opines – "the authenticity and the artistic rendition of impressions of lifetime experiences is the mark of her stories. Impacting realistic experiences is the hallmark of her stories. She has mastered the technique of penning a story as is revealed from the fine endings and landings of her stories like – 'Satar', 'Bhaar', 'Baby', 'Mog', and so on."

Renowned translator Prakash Thali along with Santan Rodrigues translated 'Guerra' into English and was published in *Femina* (August, 1974). 'Guerra' story thus reached the nook and corner of the literary world of India depicting thereby the power of Konkani literature. Noronha in turn had translated 'Guerra' in Portuguese. Paul Crasto, an ardent scholar of Portuguese literature from the famed University of Leeds, read both translations of 'Guerra'. Impressed by the beauty and the depth of this story, he included it in a comparative critique along with another story by a Portuguese author of Goan origin - Maria Rocha - that was read in the University of Leeds.

Sheela's short story, 'Maggie', was yet another forceful story that was included in a Konkani textbook later. This story describes the emotional trauma as also the dream world of a poor school girl. With a poetic

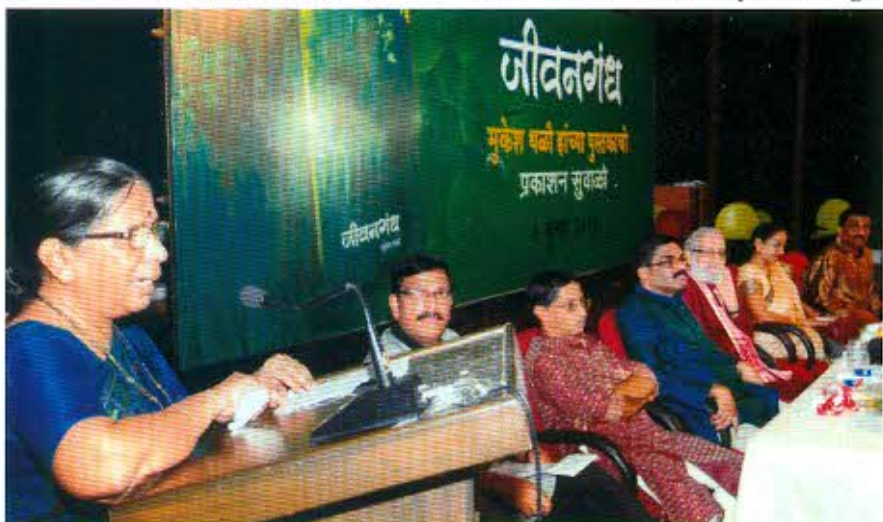
narrative, the story brings about a lyrical quality in the prose story telling genre. It was recognised as a milestone in Konkani fiction.

Sheela's 'Haum Vanzudnhai' story was brought to the small screen world with the screenplay and dialogues written by noted writer and translator Mukesh Thali. The telefilm won a prize at the Doordarshan's national level regional language telefilm category. Suspense and the story weaving technique brought out the best of Kolambkar.

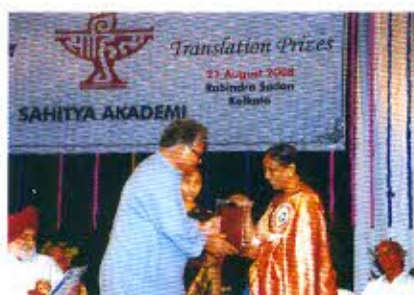
Sheela has enriched the domain of pen characters genre of Konkani literature. Her Sahitya Akademi Award winning book *Bhuim Chanfim* is a collection of character sketches which encompasses fictitious characters. In her recent book *Sheela Lekh* she has portrayed the characters of live personalities who include her father, grandfather, doctor cum sitarist sister and many a writer. She analyses the pros and cons of her own dear ones in a

balanced manner with utter candidness. While noting the multifarious facets of these characters, the reader encounters the nuances of the personality of the author herself. These characteristic facets bring forth the intense feelings of love, pangs of struggle and sorrows of the people around in her lucid and simple narration coloured with deep and keen observation.

For Sheela, "Writing is a spontaneous process. It's like a sneeze. When you suppress tingling sensation to sneeze, it causes uneasiness. When it is let out freely, you heave a sigh of relief. For me writing is such a peaceful relief." Though settled in Mumbai for over 42 years, though sunk in the cosmopolitan multilingual ocean of Mumbai, the consistency of her writing, the purity and the innate aroma of her mother tongue Konkani baffles many an avid *nizgoemkar*. "I love my language and that's it. There is no more secret if at all you find a fragrance of rare Konkani in my writings,



Delivers her speech at a book release function, (L-R) are Raghunath Sakordekar, Sanjeev Verenkar, Mukesh Thali, Suresh Amonkar, Smt Kalpana Deshpande, Amol Thali



Receiving Sahitya Akademi Translation Prize at the hands of Sunil Gangopadhyaya, then President of Sahitya Akademi

though I am far away from Goa, my Konkani territory," she says emphatically.

Being a forceful short story writer, Kolambkar has an impacting narration style that captivates the reader with a visualising insight into the vivid descriptions she makes. She has a unique style of delving deeper into the psyche of her characters analysing the cause of their behaviour in different emotional situations. The dialogic parts prove to be her forte.

Sheela has impeccable command and grip over the technique of the literary essay. She knows well the differentiating line between a short story and an essay. Her essays too have thematic variety of a wide range of subjects. The seamless, cascading and lyrical flow of her essays makes the reader spellbound owing to the rhythm and style of it. Music, to which she has an abiding flair, is interwoven in her images and words. The reader feels that he is actually listening to her words with rapt attention. Yet another salient feature of her essays is tongue-in-cheek humour.

Whenever there is a lesser

creative activity, Sheela engages herself in translation activity. She has won Sahitya Akademi Translation Prize for Translating Dogri short stories into Konkani titled *Bhangrachech Suknnem*. The amazing flair of highland Jammu has been brought to the shores of Goa with an ease in her translation. The reader feels he is reading the original work in Konkani while reading this translation and that is the actual power and success of the good translation. As a Mumbaiite, Sheela gets ample opportunities to share her views during Sahitya Akademi seminars or Antar Bharati events. These exchanges also endow her with a better exposure and a rare clarity to hone her skills towards perfection, she admits.

Sheela has given talks over All India Radio, Mumbai and also Panaji. It includes her essays and short stories. She has been writing extensively for children. The general notion goes that writing for children is not an easy task. Sheela does it with a rare expertise. She has published books for children and written articles for the then *Bhurgimani Rajhauns*, a magazine published from



Shares her experience in creative writing, S.S. Noor, then Vice President of Sahitya Akademi, looks on

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Panaji. "Writing for children came to me as a mother. While looking after them and caring for them, a mother has to carry a guileless heart, same as that of a child. Undoubtedly, the innocence, purity of mind and uncomplicated logic of the little ones is disarmingly fascinating. While narrating stories for my two sons, I mastered this art. So simple." Sheela shares her experiences with sincerity.

For Sheela, the habit of creative writing has grown into the truest joy emanating out of passion. Sheela has intense passion for travelling. This is evident from her travelogues. The vivid descriptions of flora and fauna and interactions with people from different lands have enriched her and readers alike.

Right now, she is busy writing a children's book, a collection of moral stories based on parables. A play is also incubating in the inner recesses of the mind called Sheela Kolambkar.

Short Story

<i>Oli Saanj</i>	1973
<i>Guerra</i>	2007
<i>Kathashilp</i>	

Essays and Character-sketches

<i>Bhuim-chanfim</i>	1994
<i>Sheelalekh</i>	2012

Children's Literature

<i>Tejas ani Ojas</i>	1996
<i>Nave bhetek Tejas ani Ojas</i>	
<i>Pankaj</i>	2005
<i>Kavlya kalya re</i>	2012

Translation

<i>Bhangrachim Suknnem</i> (From Dogri to Konkani for Sahitya Akademi)
<i>Dongravelo Uzo</i> (From English to Konkani for Sahitya Akademi)
<i>Parjalitti Gholl</i> (From English to Konkani for National Book Trust)



Speaks at a workshop at the Institute Menezes Braganza, Panaji-Goa

A CHRONOLOGY

- 1945 Born on 11 March
1965 Graduated with BA (Hons) Bombay University
1966-72 Served as asstt. teacher at Agshi and Santa Cruz – Goa
1973 First book published, *Oli Saanj*, by Jaag Prakashan
Married to Tukaram Kolambkar and settled in Mumbai
2003-07 Member, Konkani Bhasha Mandal, Mumbai
2002-07 Member, Sahitya Akademi's Konkani Advisory Board

AWARDS RECEIVED

- 1975 Kala Academy Goa state award for *Oli Saanj*
1987 First prize in translated stories Konkani category of *Vipula* -Tamil magazine
1997 Sahitya Akademi Award for *Bhuim Chanfim*
Goan Review periodical literature award
1998 January. Elected President of 14th Akhil Bharatiya Konkani Sahitya Sammelan held at Margao.
2006 Maithili Ratna Award at Third International Maithili Sammelan, Mumbai.
2007 Sahitya Akademi Translation Prize for *Bhangrachim Suknnem*
2012 Sahitya Akademi Samsung Tagore Literature for literary excellence at Kochi.
2014 Vimla V. Pai Vishwa Konkani Sahitya Puraskar in Mangalore.



with her family