Chapter VII

EDUCATION AND LITERATURE
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Education plays a very important role in assessment of cultural history of a region. The history of mankind cannot be complete without the mention of education and literature evolved in different eras or period of time.

Education and Samskaras

The Samskaras had a greater significance and impact on our society in the past. The word Samskara is derived from the sanskrit root Samskargahan and is used in a variety of ways.\(^1\) It is seldom found in the early vedic literature. But its allied word ‘Samskrita’ occurs frequently enough in Rigveda, the Satpatha Brahmana, the Mimansakas, the Jaimini Sutras etc.\(^2\)

The Vidyarambha (Learning of Alphabet)

When the mind of the child was prepared to receive education, the Vidyarambha Samskara was performed to mark its beginning and alphabets were taught. The Samskara is variously named. It is called Vidyarambha, Aksararambha and Aksarlekhana by different writers.\(^3\) As its name suggest, it was more cultural than natural. It originated at a very early stage of civilization, when alphabets were evolved and utilised for writing purposes.

The Source of information

Through the Vidyarambha precedes the Upanayana. In order, the origin of the former is for posterior to that of the latter. The Grihyasutras, the Dharmasutras and the early Smritis do not mention it. Even the
medieval and the modern Paddhatis that describe the Samskaras do not contain it. The sources like Viramitrodayas, the Smriti Chandrikas, the Sanskar-ratnmala of Gopinatha Bhatta and the Commentary of Apararka on the Yajnavalkya-Smriti are very recent in the history of ritual literature in India and can be placed subsequent to the eleventh century. The astronomical details given by the original authorities like Vishvamitra, Brahaspati and Markandeya cannot be traced back anterior to the 7th A.D. or 8th century A.D and which leads to conclude that they flourished after these centuries.⁴

The later origin & its cause

It seems very strange that the Grihyasutras and the Dharmasutras that deal with even insignificant ceremonies like the First Outing and the First Feeding of a child pass over the Vidyarambha, which marked the beginning of the primary education and was thus a very important occasion in the life of the child. However, the some could be only explained by the fact that while many of the Samskaras originated in the Pre-sutra period, the Vidyarambaha did not come into existence till very late. Sanskrit was then a spoken language and Upanayana marked the beginning of primary education. Learning of Sanskrit did not require a preparatory training in reading and writing. The education of children began with the memorizing of the sacred hymns without any help of writing. Moreover, writing was unknown in early times. It has been proved on literary evidences, that the art of writing was known in India in the later Samhita Period (C.1600-1200 B.C.’s).⁵ There is however, no evidence, to show that letters were introduced earlier.

During latter period, Sanskrit ceased to be the spoken language of the people. The literature of the Hindus progressed and became
complicated with the evolution of sciences of grammar and exegesis, as a result different branches of learning came into existence. The increasing mass of literature was becoming too unwieldy for memory. In order to preserve the treasure of learning, alphabets were invented and the art of writing become known. At this time, for studying this literature, a preliminary instruction in reading and writing become necessary. Thus out of this necessity, the Vidyarambha Samskara came into existence.

The Samskaras originated earlier than its mention in the Smritis. This late recognition of “The Learning of Alphabets” as a Samskara was, probably, due to the fact that for very long time this Samskara was performed with the Chaula or Tonsure Ceremony. There was one more factor which facilitated the performance of the Vidyarambha with the Chudakerana. The latter was performed between the fourth and the seventh year of the child. This was the proper time for commencing the primary education also. So both the Samskaras were combined and performed together. The number of the tufts of hair to be kept at the time of Tonsure Ceremony was determined by the number of celebrated sages (Pravars) in the family. This a convenient suggestion that the primary education of the child should commence at the time when its Tonsure Ceremony was performed.

The Age

The Vidyarambha Samskara was normally performed in the fifth year of the child according to Vishvamitra. It could be performed even in the seventh year. But in any eventuality compelling its postponement due to some unavoidable circumstances, it was to be performed sometimes before the Upanayana Ceremony. The proper time of performance was from the month of Margashirshya to Jyestha. The month from Ashadh to
Kartik, when Lord Vishnu was supposed to be sleeping, were prohibited for this Samskar. During the Sutra and Pre-Sutra periods, the education session began particularly during the rainy season. It is very coincidences that the academic year in present days begins in June which is the season for beginning of monsoon i.e. rains.

**The Ceremony**

When the sun was in the northern hemisphere, an auspicious day was fixed for performing the Vidyaramabha Samskara. The child was bathed, Scented and decorated in the begining. Vinayaka, Sarasvati, Family Goddess and Brahaspati were also worshipped, besides Narayana and Laksmi were also propitiated. A Homa then was offered to mark the beginning of the Samskara. The teacher, facing towards the east, performed the Aksararambha of the child who was supposed to face towards the west. The Samskara consisted of writing and reading both. Letters were then written with gold pen and silver paper by a rich student or on rice with any pen by others. Phrases containing salutation to Ganesh, Sarsavati, family gods and goddesses and Narayana and Lakshmi were written on the occasion to mark beginning of the Vidyarambha. Then the child would worship the teacher and the latter made the child read thrice what was written. Having read, the child presented clothes and ornaments to the teacher and made three circumambulations round the Gods. The Brahmins were entertained and propitiated with sacrificial fees. The Brahmins, in return, blessed the child. The Soubhagyavati ladies, whose husbands were alive, waved lamps. The teacher was presented a turban (Pugree). The ceremonies used to end with dismissal of gods to their respective place.

Goans have been well known for their keen intelligence. They had, without any doubt, organized from ancient times, a system of
education that could develop and foster their intellectual well-being. The educational pattern comprised of the primary education and the secondary education.

The school in the villages were held either in the shade of a grove or in the porch of the temple, where the children were exercised in the knowledge of the three R’s. The village school master or the Aigals taught the pupils in reading, writing and arithmetic in these village schools called Pathshalas. These schools were the foundations of the village communities who looked after their maintenance.

The higher education was imparted by three types of establishments called the Agrahara, the Matha and the Brahmanpuri to which the student who had completed their primary course of instruction and were desirous of continuing and were desirous of continuing their studies, took themselves.

The agrahara consisted of a group of learned Brahmins who were noted for their scholarship. This was the place where the people from diverse races and from distant places assembled to receive learning. The agraharas have been described as the universities of medieval India, the Studium generale or the school of universal learning. These establishments were usually founded in the rural centers surrounded by natural atmosphere of calm and quietude, such as open places, shady graves, green fields so that better success in learning could be achieved. However, some of the centre’s chanced to grow up in cities.

The Matha was a typical Indian monastery with monks, ascetics and students living within its precincts. Important requirement for stay in these Mathas was adherence to strict celibacy and non adherence resulted in expulsion as a form of punishment. These institutions have been linked
to residential colleges. These Mathas were attached to some temples or had some temple attached to them. The position of education and religion as first place or secondary category thus changed accordingly. These Mathas were either Shaivites or belonged to Jains and Buddhists.

The Brahmnpuri was the rural educational agency of the Pre-Portuguese period. Institutions of this type were principally established in urban centres with the existence of Brahmin settlements. These were few due to the limited number of urban centres. The characteristic of agraharas being a corporate body having constituted a unit in itself lacked by brahmapuri’s and this differentiated the agraharas from brahmapuri’s.

Most of these education establishments were state foundations. The possibility of existence of few such institutions through the private enterprise cannot be ruled out. The higher the ruler’s motive was to promote the advancement of learning. There might have been a belief existed that establishment of an agrahara promoted the well being, promoted the kings or rulers not only to built agraharas but also encouraged them to issue grants for release of land for the purpose, which was utilised for the maintenance of the Brahmin or Priestly class teaching staff and also set apart as endowment towards teachers of the different branches of study. The performance of similar charities by the rich class people has also been recorded.

The agraharas consisted of a corporate brahmin community which was headed by an assembly consisting of the Mahajans or the leaders of the community who carried on the administration. The entire village occupied by the Brahmmins was the property of the agrahra and the assembly of the Mahajans controlled the properties of the agrahara.
The assembly being an executive body, had to perform other civic functions as well as were engaged in carrying out municipal duties.

Inscriptional evidence of the time reveals that the Mahajans controlled education as well as civic administration while the professional staff were proficient in religious as well as secular subjects such as “the Rig-veda, Yajur-veda, Sam-veda and Atharvveda, the Vedangas, The eighteen Puranas and Smritis in Veda, in music, dialectics in Vatsyansutras and in the knowledge of languages; they were versed in natakas and rhetoric and took pleasure in offering food, medicines, asylum and knowledge of science, they were diligent in discharging the six fold duties of the Brahmin; they were like an adamant fortress in giving shelter to those who saw their protection.

The student community largely depended on the charities of the rich and the benevolent. The charities were given by way of scholarships for supporting the poor and deserving students. These scholarships enabled free education as well as free lodging and boarding. Students who were unable to pay any honorarium or attract any scholarships used to do household work in the teacher’s house.

Religion dominated the curricula of the agraharas. But due place was found also for the teaching of mathematics, astronomy, medicine and politics.

Although the higher education was imparted through Sanskrit medium in primary schools at least the medium of instruction was Konkani.

The Brahmins who conducted the agraharas were mostly karhades, while the primary education was in the hands of the Saraswats.
Religion deeply saturated all spheres of Hindu life and the sphere of education was no exception. There were many rituals connected with the student’s life. Vidyarambha Samskara ceremony was performed at the commencement of primary education. At this ceremony, the worship of the deities was followed by that of the guru or the primary teacher and the boy was then handed over to him. Several other ceremonies performed to initiate the new student in to learning in a solemn and religious way leads one to believe that an educational career was treated akin to a religious one.

Although teachers were held in great reverence, there were no teachers training colleges of the modern type. A teacher was held competent to teach if he had recited the passage (Gayatri Mantra) 12,000 times. These recitations might have increased the spiritual worth of the teacher, but it could not have had any effect on his teaching capacity.

Books were rare; written by hand on materials that were fragile and easily perishable. This condition led to the development of prejudice against learning acquired from books alone. A good teacher was required to impart education orally. There was neither definite scale of fee for the pupil nor a scale of pay for the teaching staff.

In spite of the best intentions, the educational establishments such as the agraharas lacked in, in internal organization of the universities of the modern times. Education too, was undoubtedly individualistic as regards both the guru and the shishya and the teaching of one guru did not conform to the teaching of the others. The teaching lacked scientific organization.

This traditional society made education privilege of a small community of high castes and left the bulk of the people illiterate. The subjects taught were basically hereditary, traditional and religious and
education was unorganised from the beginning to the end. The absence of Printing Press greatly handicapped the spread of education.

**Education in Ancient Goa**

Goa in ancient times might have been a part of Mouryan Empire. The inscriptions in Brahmi at Arvalem caves and on Shiroda copperplate etc. corroborate the existence of mouryan rule in Goa. There must have been Gurukul system of education prevalent in Goa and Bicholim taluka was no exception to it, because Gurukul’s were the centers of learning during the Mouryan region. Many cities and towns had come into prominence accordingly. The exalted position of Taxila as the top center of learning in India was challenged through many small cities and towns which were gradually coming to be recognised as educational centers of knowledge of the three Vedas and eighteen Puranas. Besides practical knowledge of Law, Medicine, art of warfare, horse riding was also being imparted to the interested students. In Goa too, there might have been similar arrangement available on par with such smaller centers of learning in India.

During the period of the Banvasti Kadambas rule over Goa, Agraharas were centers of learning. The subject related to Vedas, Puranas, Itihas, Dharmashastra’s, Grammar Logic, Philosophy, astrology were taught to the students. In Goa, Buddha Viharas existed which may have been centers of learning likewise such Viharas in other parts of India. Cave no. II at Lamgaon (Bicholim) might have been used as Vihara by Buddhist monks and it could have been used at some times as one of the centers of learning in those days. The copper plates dating to period from 4th century A.D. to 14th century A.D. from Goa find references of learned Brahmins. Considering the existence of temples in almost all the villages
of Bicholim it can be logically presumed that such learned Brahmins who were required in these temples for carrying out the religions functions, used to educate and impart knowledge’s to the students, at least at the primary level. A copper plate inscription of 1127 A.D. of Kadamba king Tribuvanamalla mentions establishment of Brahmapuri wherein 12 Brahmin families were made to settle and a temple of Bharati /Saraswati was built nearby their houses.\textsuperscript{13} Anther copper plate of 1391 A.D. mentions establishment of a Brahmapuri near Goa Velha by minister Madhava of Vijayanagar king Harihara IIInd.\textsuperscript{14} Tribhuvamalla’s another copper plate of 1099 A.D. clearly cites donation of land to a Brahmin Nagvarya for setting up Agrahara It can, therefore, be safely inferred from the above that Agraharas and Brahmanpuris existed during the dynastic rules of Kadambas over Goa, The sanguem taluka was also known as Ashtagar and it is a corrupted Version of ‘Ashtagrahar’ a place or region having eight agrahars. Learned Brahmins used to reside in agrahars and impart education without charging any fees. The agrahars would normally had the temple, homshala (Place for carrying out Yagnya or sacred fire) Pathshala, Bhojanshala (eating place for lunch & dinner) and Rugnalaya (Medical dispensaries / hospitals) at the center and houses of the Brahmins would surround them\textsuperscript{15}. Once the agraharas were founded, people like businessman, grocery merchant would crowd the place with their shops and establishments. These settlements would then have a facade of a well established town. The administrative control of such establishment was vested with the Mahajans.\textsuperscript{16} These centers were confluence of religion, culture and arts. Agraharas and Brahmapuris arrangement and control was with the Mahajans. The only difference between them was that the agraharas were sects of learning in the villages while the Brahmanpuris learning in the cities. Besides the monasteries (Maths) of the religious
institutions also provided facility of education and learning to the students. These monasteries existed in Goa since medieval times.

Before 1510 A.D. Goa was under the rule of Yousuf Adilshaha of Bijapur for a brief period of 21 years. Most of the noblemen in his court were Hindus and he had a tolerant disposition as such there was non-interference on his part as regards the prevailing Hindu educational system. In fact, Yonsuf Adilshah had his official work in Marathi language and had even opened Marathi schools in Goa including Bicholim (Bhatgram)\(^17\).

Secular education was not in practice in those days. As such, the religion and education were interrelated and resulted in Hindus and Muslim getting education of choice and knowledge of religious books of their respective religions. The Hindu had their education from Brahmin Agrahars teachers on the precincts of the temple, houses of the landlords or rich class people whereas the Muslims had the facility available in their mosques.

**Educational Scenario after 1510 A.D**

Portuguese made a entry in Goa in 1510. Only Tiswadi (Ilhas) taluka of the present was under their domain. The Bicholim taluka came under Portuguese rule in 1781 A.D. When Portuguese entered Goa, there must have been in Goa small centers of learning called ‘Parishads’ where learned Brahmins initiated the youths in to the realm of Vedas and Puranas, besides teaching subjects like grammar, mathematics, astrology, literature, philosophy and ayurveda. Elementary education was imparted by Brahmin ‘Sinais’ or ‘Shenois’ in the schools run in the vestibules of temples, porches of big residential houses and verandahs of village administrative offices\(^18\).
A beginning of education on western lines was made when Alfonso de Albuquerque established the first school in 1512 A.D. to prepare the natives for public posts. The teaching methods in the Parish schools were rudimentary. Portuguese had made ‘Portuguese Language’ as the compulsory medium of instruction for imparting primary level education.

In 1831 Viceroy Do Manuel Do Portugal established six schools at places like Bicholim, Ribandar, Ponda, Colvale, Panaji and Margao. Another seven primary schools in Goa were set up out of which six were in the Bicholim Taluka. At that stage six Portuguese Primary Schools were set in ‘Novas Conquistas” with exemption from the teaching of religion.

In the year 1842, twenty Portuguese Primary Schools were started one each in the villages of Bicholim, Sanquelim, and in other taluka villages namely Goa Velha, Diwar, St. Cruz, St. Estevam, Sao Pedro, Quepem, Pona, Pernem, Majorda, Raia, Cancona, Curtorim, Loutulim, Aldona, Anjuna, Candolim, Serula and Nagoa. These primary schools had benches and drawers and the classrooms were clean which attracted the students and Parents wished that such schools opened by the Government in their locality.

In the year 1843, a school was opened at Mulgaon village in Bicholim. Within a period of hundred years, ninety Portuguese primary schools were opened in Goa. Besides this, seven Marathi Portuguese primary schools to teach portuguese with the help of Marathi were opened at Bicholim (Dicholi), Sanquelim, Valpoi, Ponda, Quepem, Dabal (Saguem) and Canacona.

In 1907, the Portuguese primary education was made two tier i.e. *Primeiro Granv* and *Segundo Granv* and the normal school (Escola Normal) course duration was revised to three years duration.
By the decree of 30th November, 1869, education was made compulsory for children of the age group 9-12 who resided within a radius of 3 kilometer from the school.

With the setting in of the republican regime in Portugal, one more Marathi school at Sanquelim was opened in 1911. Private imitative was, however, aroused by the establishment of the republic, especially in the Hindu community. Due to a democratic and secular approach in respect of public affairs, many private societies sprang up catering, especially to the needs of primary education through the medium of Marathi.

Atmoddhar Sangh, Sanquelim with a school and library was one in institution from Bicholim Taluka which did good work in the field of Education without any help from the Government.

Private Marathi Primary Schools which were always by the Hindu Community to satisfy their cultural and religious needs, took considerable leap forward with the beginning of the republican regime. The Hindu community would always have primary education of their children through Marathi in spite of the fact that for secondary education they had to go in for English or Portuguese. And this they did even when primary education (O grau) through Portuguese was made compulsory by the Portuguese authorities. They would repeat their primary education through Portuguese and then continue their secondary education through the medium of their choice.

English was popular and was being studied mostly at secondary stage in response to the needs of emigration, with just as much determination in Marathi at the primary stage for cultural purposes. A limited sector of population who were interested in government jobs or pursing higher education in Portugal for better prospects leaned heavily on Portuguese while majority sector of population opted for English education as they felt need or urge to immigrate to British India or the outside world.
This they did going to Mumbai, Dharwad or part of British India. And thus, English school, started by private imitative which begun in the last years of 19th century, went on expanding slowly and steadily throughout the years.

Vidyavardhak Mandal was founded on 1st August 1912 in Bicholim and started their school on 1st January 1913.\textsuperscript{29}

The private Marathi and English schools, both primary and secondary the syllabus followed were according to the Maharashtra pattern. The secondary schools were affiliated to the S.S.C.E. Board, Poona and prior to the creation of the Goa Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, to the Bombay University for preparing students for its Matriculation examination.

**Literature**

**The status or Position of Literature in Pre-Portuguese Society**

Before the advent of Portuguese, most of the rulers of Goa and particularly the kadamba, patronized learning’s and there is evidence of the learned men at their courts. The inscriptional evidences show that the king used to spend a portion of their wealth to support leaned men at their courts. There were almost negligent prose composition belonging to this period among the learned men, the poets were accorded a higher place and they produced poetic works due to the encouragement received to them.

The many titles mentioned in the inscriptions of this period indicate that the learned men which the king supported and rewarded at their courts were Brahmins.

The inscriptional evidences reveal that the king bore academic titles which were a proof that they received some training, however unscientific and traditional such training could have been. Despite all academic glories of the Kadamba period hardly any literature of
importance of this period has survived. It is averred that the Portuguese persecution were so violent that the brahmins who fled Goa had no time to carry away this literature or that the Portuguese destroyed it as they suspected it of pagan doctrines.

Most of the composed literature was in sanskrit as the kings also used it for their grants and inscriptions. The language of the people differed very much from the ornate language of literature. Sanskrit, a classical language was utilized by, the priestly class of the Brahmin caste to perpetuate their dominating influence on society and to emphasize their distance above the rest. Although the Shilaharas expressed their grants in Sanskrit, the last lines were in Konkani which shows that the language of the people was extended some recognition. The Konkani literature of the time was written in Kannada and Nagari scripts.

There is no evidence of large production of literary works. All that written work available was practiced in calligraphy and the printed word had not seen the light of the day as there was no printing press. High costs involved and the hard labour further impeded literary activities.

Indian Literature has always held the mirror to the Society which in turn has reflected the systematic progression of Indian Culture. In the growth and development of culture, literature has played definite role by its universal applicability and originality of thought which stamped the ideal of ‘Satyam Shivam Sundaram’. The earliest pieces of literature that mankind knows are Vedas which reflect the ideal, “Truth is beauty, beauty is truth all that we need to know”. Close examination of the passage of Indian literature reveals that in harmony with the cultural efflorescence or decay, literature also either rose on the high pedestal or fell to the depths of degeneration.\textsuperscript{30}
Literature, whether it is fiction, drama, poetry or prose, whether it is in English, Portuguese, Marathi or Konkani, whether it is for religious or secular purpose, has always been the yardstick to measure the height of a Society’s culture. A good book is the life, spirit of a mastermind, and the art of good writing is the most precious gift of God to man. The contribution of Goans in this area to the main stream of Indian literature is immense, but it is not well known. Bicholim Taluka does have a literary contribution of its own.

The linga (phallus) of Aravalem caves which has a seven line Sanskrit inscription in box headed characters was in fact fashioned out of a pillar of schist from the temple of Shiva (Rudreshwar) is most probably in literary style. It would have been a good example of poetry had it been fully completed. In fact, it would have been a fine example of Sanskrit poetry in the Anustubh meter had it been fully completed.

**Portuguese Scenario till 1961 A.D**

Portuguese arrived in Goa in 1510 A.D. Jesuit Missionaries are credited with introduction of first Printing Press in Goa in 1550. Initially it was religious literature in the form of bulletins. The first book printed in 1556 A.D in St. Paul College of Jesuits was ‘Conclusiones philosophicas’.

Like in other parts of Goa, whatever literature that was available in Bicholim was mostly handwritten till the introduction of printing press in Goa. A.K. Priolkar, researcher and historian got to see a handwritten script of Dnyandev’s ‘Yogvasishth’ at Pali (Pale) village of Bicholim taluka. Altogether 4 (four) handwritten periodicals were in circulation namely ‘Suprabhat’, ‘Seva’, ‘Azad’ from Sankhali (Sanquelim) and ‘Vijayanand’ (Bicholim). Vaman Narayan Palekar from Bicholim started weekly
‘Gomantak’ in 1928 and the contents were both in Marathi and Portuguese. It was edited by Mahabaleshwar Rudraji Prataprao Sardesai and Vaman Narayan Palekar was the director. Its Portuguese section was edited by Dr. T.B. Cunha. Vasant Borkar and Narayan Suryarao Sardesai used to look after its management side. It closed down only after 3 issues.

Vaman Narayan Palekar is also credited with writing the biography of R.M. Sukhtankar, in 1926. He also wrote ‘Lahan Mulanche Vyakaran’ i.e Grammar of small children in 1930. Besides above, he has also written ‘Kshatratejacha Pratap arthat Govyantil Ranyaanchya Bandachi Dhamdhum’ in 1928.

Ganesh Sadashiv Shirodkar from Sankhali has written ‘Marathi Portugez Shabdsangrah’ in 1912 and printed at Sadanand Mudranalaya, Ribandar. The Shabdkosh is named as ‘Vocabulario Portugez’. It contained 1000 words having 78 pages and priced at 6 Annas.

Sakharam Pandurang Barve wrote 6 plays namely ‘Pranayi Kitak’, ‘Jalata Gomantak’, ‘Naradachi Naradi’ in the year 1931, ‘Punarjanm,’ ‘Sant Tukaram’and ‘Nandakishor’. Poet Pandoba Dubhashi from Bicholim has written vedantpar Kavya (Poetry on Vedas). Gondaji Naik Lavanidar from Sankhali (Sanquelim) wrote many ‘Povadas’ of historical importance on the acts of bravery by Rane family and their fights with Portuguese power in Goa. He has also composed ‘Lavani’s’ to appreciate the beauty (Lavanya) of the God Vithal of Vithalapur-Carapur, Sankhali.
Post Liberation Period (1961 onwards)

After the liberation of Goa from Portuguese regime in the year 1961 A.D., the Government of Goa put an emphasis on giving a thrust to education sector aiming for higher level of literacy amongst the people. A new generation of writers came forward in the literary field. They also contributed alongwith the writers belonging to pre-liberation period.

Contributors


R.K. Barve brought out a novel ‘Homkund’ in 1978 on the background of Shirgaon village of Bicholim and another novel ‘Rasamukta’ in 1981. Adv. Amrut Kamsar published a weekly ‘Bahujanvani’ from Bicholim in 1978, however had to close it only after four issues. Amongst younger generation writers, Dr. Prakash Vazrikar, a Konkani writer from Vazri hamlet in Sanquelim has written Konkani plays, the prominent work being ‘Ek Buto phullo’. Vithal Gauns from Navelim has also contributed to Marathi Literature, his prominent work being ‘Katharin’ – a collection of stories published in 1994 A.D. Jaiwant Vinayak Suryarao Sardesai from Bicholim has to his credit ‘Shree Kshetra Narve
The Major Contributors

Gurunath Naik

Gurunath Naik from Sanquelim has contributed vastly by writing detective novels in Marathi. He has written more than 1000 detective novels and is the leading writer in Goa and Maharashtra included. Besides detective novels, he has also written adventure stories like ‘Chhota Shipai’ (1975), ‘Pitkya Ani Wagh’ (1976) ‘Rockycha Parakram’ (1976) and ‘Mangalawarchi Swari’ (1976).

Vaman Raghunath Varde Valaulikar alias Shennoi Goembab

Vaman Valaulikar is considered as the father of Konkani Literature. Born on 23rd June, 1877, he hailed from Bicholim town. He had his initial schooling in Marathi and later in Portuguese. His uncle took him to Bombay for further education. During the journey by steamer ship, a friend of his uncle casually called him as ‘Goembab’ which tag got him fixed throughout his life as he used to write in Penname ‘Shennoi Goembab’. He first wrote a play in Marathi ‘Ramrajyabhishek’ when he was in Mumbai. After his return to Goa, he wrote a book named ‘O Mestre – Portugez’ (Portuguese – Teacher). ‘Konkani Mullave Pustok’ (A Konkani primer) which was written by him was published in 1940. He wrote ‘Abhagi Subraia (The unfortunate Subraia) and play entitled ‘Bhidest Raiabab’ (The timid Raiabab) which was an adaption of Oliver Goldsmith’s play “She stoops to Conquer.” The other literary works of him included “Albukerkan Goen Koxem Jikhlem” (How Albuquerque
conquered Goa) written in 1910 but published in 1955 and a long poem in verse entitled “Goenkaracho Mumboikar” (Goan turned Bombaywalla).

He has written Konkani plays ‘Mogachem Logn’ (1931), “Jhilba Rano”, (1936) and “Pounachem Toplem” (1948). His major work “Goemkaranchi Goem a bhaiilli Vasnuk” (Goan settlers outside Goa) was published in 1928. “Konkani Bhaxechem zoit” (Konkani’s triumph, 1930) was another masterly work containing articles published in some weeklies of Goa and Bombay, which championed the cause of Konkani language. In order to explain the case of Konkani to Marathi Speakers, he wrote several articles in Marathi later collected as “Kahim Marathi Lekh “(Articles in Marathi). “Puniatmo Ram Kamat “(Ram Kamti, the virtuous soul) (1939) and “Abbe Farria” (1941) were the biographies written by Shennoi Goembab on the life Ram Kamat, a highly pious and virtuous man and Abbe Faria, the father of the modern hypnotism, respectively. “Gomantopanishat” (1928) is a bunch of tales of knowledge and wisdom and “Magnum opus” by Shennoi Goembab.

His books for children include “Bhurgeanlo Ixtt (Children’s friend) (1935), “Konkani Poilem Pustok” (Konkani text book Std I, in Roman script) (1939), “Bhurgeanlem Viakoronn” (Grammar for children) (1941) etc. Though his writings are many and varied, they revolve around on one basic objective which is twofold to show the basic strength of Konkani and to awaken the slumbering soul of the Konkani people.
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