



*The wise get this: Time, that manifests itself as days,
is a sword that slices off life.*

(Thirukkural, Chapter 34, 334)

(From the blog of Kannan's Translations of Thirukkural in English: A Modern Rendition of the Tamil Classic)



SOUND & PICTURE ARCHIVES FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN

SPARROW
Supplement

APRIL 2024

**A Pillar of Odisha Politics: Sushree Devi
(10 October 1950-10 January 2024)**

Sushree Devi, the mother of former Aul Assembly constituency MLA and ex-Odisha Minister Pratap Keshari Deb, passed away at her residence in Cuttack on Wednesday afternoon at the age of 73. Born on October 10, 1950, she had been unwell for some time, according to family sources.

Sushree Devi began her political journey in the early 1970s and was elected as the MLA from Aul Assembly constituency in 1990 as a Janata Dal candidate, serving until 1995. Later, she represented Odisha in the Rajya Sabha from 2002 to 2008, contributing significantly to various parliamentary committees during her tenure.

Her demise has led to an outpouring of condolences from dignitaries and political leaders. Higher Education Minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak expressed his sorrow and extended his condolences to her family.

—Namrata Lokhande

**A Kuyil Flies Away: Bhavatharini Raja
(23 July 1976-25 January 2024)**

A video of Bhavatharini singing in a music programme with Ilaiyaraaja, her father, is fresh in one's mind. As she sings, she breaks down in between and one can see Ilaiyaraaja's hand patting her shoulder and urging her to go on and himself singing the next line and Bhavatharini with her tears not yet dry, joining him. One did not know then that

Bhavatharini was ailing; one felt that she was an emotional person moved by the song. As the daughter of the legendary composer, she sang many songs for him. Her brothers Yuvan Shankar Raja and Karthik Raja who are also composers also had many songs sung by her for them. She also sang for other composers like Deva and Sirpy. Her song *Mayila Pola Ponnu Onnu* (A Girl Like a Peahen), composed by her father, became very popular and in 2000 she got the National Film Award for the Best Female Playback Singer for the song. Although she started her playback singing career in 1984,

her *Masthana Masthana* song in the film *Raasaiya* (1995) made her a well-known singer.

Composing for the film *Mitr, My Friend* (2002) directed by Revathi and for the film *Phir Milenge* (We Will Meet again) (2004) were additional feathers in her cap. She was married to an advertising executive, R Sabariraj. Bhavatharini died of stomach cancer. Media stories say that her family hid the fact of her suffering from final stages of cancer, from her. One does not know if such facts can be hidden but one's heart goes out to this young woman and one wishes she could have lived several more healthy years and sung many more songs.

—C S Lakshmi

**A gem from Awadh region: Kamla Srivastava
(1 September 1933-4 February 2024)**

Eminent folk singer Kamla Srivastava, known for her enormous contribution in the promotion of Awadhi folk songs passed away at the age of 93 due to cardio-respiratory failure.

Born in the family of poets and artists, Kamla Srivastava was surrounded by music from her childhood. Started her journey as a student of Bhatkhande Music Institute, deemed University of Lucknow and then becoming an assistant professor in Musicology-cum-practical she played various roles.

She was magnificent in all folk forms of Awadh region and also in Hindi and Bhojpuri. At one time she used to sing folk, light and classical music at All India Radio, Doordarshan and Sri Lanka Radio. She was a maestro in music and her euphonious voice would make the audience lost in it. Her immense experience in music and study of music makes her one of the most prominent musicians not only in Uttar

Pradesh but all over India. The richness of the Awadh region folk songs was a treat to listen to from her voice.

She would engage the audience with her charmed personality and creativeness. She was very active till her last days. She was also a part of a group called Kamla Srivastava and Group <https://anahad.ngo/groups/kamlasrivastava/>. Through this group many people came across Awadh folk and many other forms of music.

Kamla has been honoured with more than 50 awards, including the prestigious Yash Bharti. Along with singing and playing different instruments she used to write poetry and also lyrics in Awadhi, Bhojpuri and Hindi. She also wrote a book called *Geet Vatika* in 2010.

She is survived by her son, daughter-in-law and a granddaughter. According to her wishes her body was donated to King George's Medical University (KGMU) for research.

A legend passed away leaving the treasure of Awadhi folk, Sohar, Thumri, and many other forms of music in her melodious voice on all the different social platforms. Her contribution in promoting the Awadhi folk songs is not to be forgotten.

—Pooja Pandey



Death of a Senior Politician from Madhya Pradesh: Veena Verma (1 September 1941-6 February 2024)



Veena Verma died of a prolonged illness in Delhi at the age of 82. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and all the Parliament House members stood in silence and paid their respects to her for her remarkable life of dedication to public service.

Veena Varma was a Member of Parliament from Madhya Pradesh from the Indian National Congress party. She was elected to the Rajya Sabha for three consecutive six year terms, from 1986 to 2000. Apart from this, she has also worked as the Vice President of the Parliamentary Committee on Official Language, All India Mahila Congress and Indian Council. She had a special attachment to Bilaspur.

Abhishek Verma, an arms dealer and business person and son of Veena Verma wrote in X (Twitter): "My mother was a visionary leader who fought tirelessly for the rights of women in India. She was the original architect of the historic Women's Reservation Bill, which has been cleared by the cabinet and is

on the verge of becoming law of the land." He was also proud of his mother for being the first woman who brought the bill as a private member's bill in the Rajya Sabha in 1993.

Veena was from Jaipur, Rajasthan and a teacher by profession. She was married to the well-known journalist, writer and poet Shrikant Verma in 1967. Both of them had distinguished careers as Members of Parliament. Veena's positive contributions to Indian women's life both as a teacher and as a politician will be part of women's history.

—Asmita Deshpande



Rani Saheba of Khallikote, Odisha: V Sugnana Kumari Deo (1936/1937-10 February 2024)



V Sugnana Kumari Deo was a well-known politician from Odisha who served sixty years as a member of the Congress Party and later as a member of BJD (Biju Janata Dal).

V Sugnana Kumari Deo was born to King RVM Neeladi Deo, in Chennai on August 5, 1937. Sugnana Kumari Deo completed her MA in social Work from Madras University.

She was very good in academics and continued to study further by doing diplomas in Homeopathy, Stenography, and Interior Decoration. She was well-educated.

She came from the royal family of Khallikote. She was married to Purna Chandra Mardaraj Deo and was the daughter-in-law of Raja Ramchandra Mardaja Deo, former king of the princely estate of Khallikote in Ganjam district.

She started her political journey in 1963 when the seat was vacated due to the untimely demise of her father-in-law Raja Ramchandra Mardaja Deo. She was elected to the state assembly as a congress candidate. She left Congress in 1970 to join Utkal Congress, a regional political party but lost from Khallikote but again elected and won in 1974 and 1977 from Congress and Janata Party, respectively. She never lost any election from 1985 to 2014.

She was one of the prominent faces in the Odisha politics. She was a very senior leader who contributed a lot for the party in her own term and was also a Pro-term speaker of the 15th Odisha assembly. She was elected as a MLA eight times from Khallikote and two times from Kabisuryanagar. Her service for the society and people of Khallikote and Kabisuryanagar will always be remembered.

She passed away at a private hospital in Chennai. She was 87. Odisha Governor Raghubar Das, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and many other dignitaries expressed their condolences on the demise of V Sugnana Kumari Deo.

—Pooja Pandey



A Seeker of Truth All Her Life: Kamaltai Vichare (12 April 1929-7 February 2024)



A Loyal follower of Satyashodhak thoughts of Mahatma Phule, veteran Satyashodhak activist Kamaltai Vichare passed away on 7 February 2024 at the age of 95. Born and brought up in Pune, she was Satyashodhak Keshavrao Vichare's daughter-in-law. She has made notable contributions in social, political,

educational and women's empowerment fields at the state and national levels. But unfortunately, she and her work has been forgotten by those who write the history of the nation and the history of women.

She was diagnosed with cancer some 40 years ago and was taking treatment in one of the hospitals at Kurla. The then Chief Minister of Maharashtra Sharad Pawar was going to visit her in the hospital, so the hospital staff started cleaning the ward. Seeing this she asked one of them what the furious cleaning was about and was told that Sharad Pawar was coming to visit Kamaltai Vichare. She never told them that the Kamaltai Vichare he was visiting was herself. Like all great people, she never called attention to herself. She was active member of the Congress Party from 1960. She was secretary of the women's wing of All India Congress. In recognition of her work in different areas, she was conferred with a trophy with the silver figure of Rani Jhansi riding a horse by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on 18 April 1974.

In 1975, International Women's Year, she visited Berlin. Later she visited rest of Europe. Through All India Peace Organisation she visited Russia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia in 1985 which broadened her horizon. She used all her qualities in helping women and other under privileged people.

When 'Loop' (intrauterine device - IUD) became one of

the family planning methods Kamaltai successfully arranged the first loop camp in a village called Adur in Konkan in 1965. She also organised first five Loop Camps of India in Maharashtra and created a unique record.

She started five pre-primary and primary schools in backward areas and tried educating children. She started an organisation called Streehitavardhini through which she took up several projects of women's development and empowerment. Through this organisation she tried to provide training and skills to women to make them independent. For her 'Women's Development' was a key factor in any social or political activities. Wherever women's development work was going on she used to appreciate and inspire such developmental work. In order to trace and appreciate such work she set up a trust called 'Muktai'. If she found any girl or woman do something courageous and praiseworthy, she personally took note of it and appreciated it. She took active part in many women-oriented projects of the Government of Maharashtra. She set the 'Sansarshastra Abhyaskram' (Home Science Syllabus) which was approved by the Government of Maharashtra. In order to make the syllabus understood by students in the rural areas she organised 5-Day camps with 50 students in each camp, in 24 districts of Maharashtra. On 12 August 1986 she started Gharoba Consumer Cooperative Store. This was the first departmental store of Maharashtra which was run for women by women. On 1 January 1973 she started 'Stree Seva Sahakar Sangh' (Women's Welfare Cooperative Organisation), a nodal organisation. More than 25 women's industrial cooperatives were attached to this and were members of this organisation. This is one of the first of its kind in India. Her activities reveal how Kamaltai left no stone unturned when it came to women's empowerment.

As daughter-in-law of Satyashodhak Keshavrao Vichare, she was the first student of Satyashodhak Vidyarthi Sangh started by him. She started many study circles for girls and boys including girls in industrial workers' areas of Bombay. She was a member of the Advisory Committee of Social Welfare Department of the Government of Maharashtra. She was also the first woman senate Member of Mahatma Phule Agriculture University and Mumbai University. She was one of the vice-presidents of Mahatma Jotirao Phule Death Centenary Central Committee.

From Pangari, Vidarbha, she took part in 'Ek Gav Ek Panavatha' (For Every Village One Water Resource), the anti-caste movement started by Baba Adhav along with Prof. G P Pradhan and went to jail for a day for that.

She had close contacts with many well-known authors, artists and others in the social and political fields in Maharashtra. She was generous with money for the needy

and organisations, especially those which followed Satyashodhak principles. She was critical about present day politics and its religious connotations.

She visited Mahatma Phulewada on 3 January 2023 and paid tribute to Savitribai Phule on her birth anniversary. She was an avid reader even at the age of 95. Due to old age her body was becoming frail but till the end she was optimistic, had a sharp mind, a sense of humour and a genuine smile on her face.

That such women have lived in our times is what makes our lives worth living.

—Sharmila Sontakke



***Koi Toh Baat Hai, Jiski Mujhe Takleef Hoti Hai:* Malika Rajput (4 August 1986-13 February 2024)**



Koi to baat hai, jiski mujhe takleef hoti hai (There is something that bothers me)... So wrote Ghazal lyricist and actor Malika Rajput whose body was discovered hanging from a ceiling fan in one of the rooms in the Sitakund area of Sultanpur district. Malika Rajput, who was also known as Vijay

Lakshmi, was a multifaceted person who made significant contributions to whatever she took up. Born and brought up in Sultanpur, Uttar Pradesh, Malika moved to Lucknow, after her early education, to do her graduation studies in law.

In 2010, Malika made her debut in the Hindi film industry and played a minor role in the movie *Crime Partner* directed by Aditya Kaushik. The film flopped and was shelved. But Malika continued to do what she was good at—writing songs and ghazals. She earned a place in the Guinness Book of World records for co-writing a 1.25-hour long song *Teri Aakhir* (Yours Finally) with Javed Ali in 2013. However, her breakthrough came in 2014, when she acted in a supporting role in the Film *Revolver Rani* directed by Sai Kabir, in which Kangana played the main role. In the same year she was featured in the music album *Yaara Tujhe* brought out by singer Shaan. It was in the same year that she founded the SAAR (The Essence of Sympathy) for helping the underprivileged and became its chairperson.

Mallika Rajput joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2016. She participated in various rallies and campaigns for the party and had ambitions to seriously enter politics. However, she left the party in 2017 after she was charged with supporting a rapist although she said that the charges were false. She joined the Indian Youth Congress in 2017. Malika had always been a spiritually-oriented person and when her career in entertainment and politics did not fare well, she took to spirituality seriously and received initiation into *grihastha sanyasa* from Kapali Maharaj and came to be known as Vijay Lakshmi and later, Maa Maitrayini Yogini. The controversy surrounding the suicide of her spiritual guru and mentor, Bhayyuji Maharaj, brought unnecessary attention to her own life.

Mallika was always interested in writing, music and dance, so she decided to make a career and moved to Mumbai, where she got the opportunity to work with renowned artistes. For her album *Ek Ishara* with singer Hansraj Hans and the album *Yaara Tujhe* in which she collaborated with singer Shaan, the lyrics were written by Mallika herself. It is said that she wrote 6000 Ghazals and Shayris. She has worked with legends like Jagjit Singh and Anup Jalota.

She had published a book entitled *Ehsaas* (Feeling, 2019) which was a collection of soulful ghazals and received *Author Pages Award* 2020. She also authored *Namo Shasak*, (Namo, the Good Ruler, 2019) which focussed on the life and achievement of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The other books she authored were *Ek Ishara* (A Sign), a collection of ghazals, SAAR and *Ashwabala*, a love story entitled *Nagarvadhū*, *Ek Premkatha* (Courtesan, A Love Story).

She often participated in various sessions of Hindi Kavi Sammelan. Malika was trained in Kathak and used to learn classical forms of dance from Pandit Veeru Krishnan. In 2020, she founded the Oceanus Enterprises, a media company. The very next year she began practising as a criminal lawyer in Mumbai. Just two years ago, in 2022, she composed the song *Teri Khatir* (For You) which was sung by Javed Ali. In the same year she was appointed as the Secretary of the Bharatiya Savarna Sangh (Women's Cell) in UP. Not many know that she had two brothers one of whom was the media person, Prashant Singh Rajput. She was also married to Pradeep Shinde Janardan and her marriage seemed to be a happy one.

Her performances received good notices and she was also active on social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and her YouTube channel @rajputmalika, where her Ghazal videos are available. She was supposed to be part of the forthcoming web series *Ae Watan Mere Watan* directed by Kannan Iyer with Sara Ali Khan in the main role. No one knows what triggered the suicide; her mother has told the

police that she did not know when the incident took place as the family was sleeping. Maybe what she said in the ghazal about something bothering her was true and it remained unknown to others. Whatever the reason, a young life that had many things to look forward to has abruptly ended.

—Asmita Deshpande



A Journey Cut Short: Suhani Bhatnagar (14 June 2004-16 February 2024)



Suhani Bhatnagar was a much-loved actor known for playing young Babita Phogat in the movie *Dangal* (Wrestling Arena, 2016). She was born in Faridabad, to Puneet and Pooja Bhatnagar. Before her big role in *Dangal* she appeared in a print advertisement for Monte Carlo Kidswear in 2013. Suhani made the decision to take a hiatus from acting in

order to prioritise her education following her role in *Dangal*.

Her performance in *Dangal* earned her much praise and she won the *Star Screen Award for Best Child Actor*. However, tragically, Suhani passed away on February 16, 2024, at the age of 19. She had been suffering from a rare disease called Dermatomyositis, which causes inflammation and skin rash. She had also experienced complications from a leg fracture and the medication she took for it led to fluid buildup in her body and her eventual death. Suhani had been receiving medical care at Delhi's AIIMS hospital for some time. Her death has come as a shock to everyone. Her life journey had just begun.

She leaves behind her grieving parents and her brother Prerit. When young lives such as Suhani's are cut short it plunges not just her family but others too into deep sadness.

—Namrata Lokhande

All SPARRPOW Newsletters are available
online. You can download from
[www. http://www.sparrowonline.org/newsletters.htm](http://www.sparrowonline.org/newsletters.htm)

A Quiet Death: Jayam Vencatesan (12 February 1935-16 February 2024)



When my colleague Aarti Pandey and I reached SPARROW trustee Vidya Vencatesan's house in Worli on 25 September 2023, we had no idea we were going to meet her mother Jayam Vencatesan, an avid reader of Tamil fiction and a great raconteur of stories about her life and her times. She obviously worshipped her father Jagadeesan and had great

respect for her mother Neelambal. She recounted the stories in such a way that the entire scene unfolded before one and one became a part of it. Her father worked in India Cements under S N N Shankaralingam Iyer who was an industrialist and co-founder of India Cements Ltd. in 1946. Shankaralingam Iyer had a huge bungalow in Greenways Road and he built an outhouse for Jagadeesan in the same property and Jagadeesan and family lived there for many years.

What Jayam remembered about her father was his passion for education. He not only wanted his own children to study but wanted everyone interested in studies to be able to do so. He was a linguist who spoke impeccable English although he himself had studied only up to SSLC. One incident about her father she recalled with great emotion. A young student had come by one day. Earlier her father had helped him to fill up forms to get a scholarship. The student came to say that he had a scholarship but had no money to travel to Delhi. He had to leave that day to be able to join. He had come with his baggage. Jagadeesan immediately went with him to the Central Station and bought him a ticket. He put him in the train and requested the other passengers to give him food whenever they had food. He put his hand inside his shirt pocket and took out whatever was there and gave it to the boy and bid him farewell and all the best. He had no money to even take a bus back home. He began to walk back home and reached home an hour or two later with his legs swollen. His wife gave him the home remedy of a warm tamarind poultice applied on his legs. Jayam recounted this incident as if it were happening right then before her eyes.

Listening to her was a treat and I urged her to write her memoirs. She was arthritic and said her writing would be slow as she had problems holding a pen but that she would try. I told her she could speak into a recorder. She promised she would try. And then I said I must take a photograph with her and also take her photographs. She asked me to wait a bit and went in and wore a sari and her earrings and

chain that she had removed to be comfortable and happily posed for some photos.

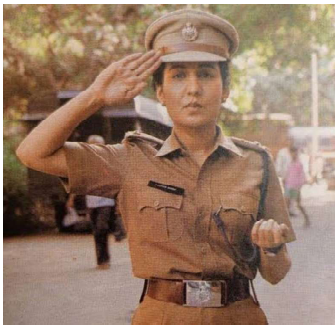
I never got to see those memoirs of hers. She passed away on 16 February 2024 less than five months after I had met her. For someone so vivacious, death came when she was in a coma in her bed. Vidya Vencatesan who had cared for her father with her mother and later her mother, felt her world was coming apart. But Jayam hated tears and drama. "I have raised tigresses not kittens," she would say, "don't you mew." So, her family just focussed on doing all she wanted. All her clothes were given away, all her medicines were distributed, all her furniture bed linen was donated. Poor people were fed for 13 days. There were zero rituals. Her daughter Vidya lit her pyre, immersed her ashes and went to work. Her sister Sowmya and brother-in-law Arup stood by Vidya. Soon after that Vidya left for Bologna, Italy and later to Lisbon, Portugal, to teach.

Wish I had met you a few more times, Jayam. We could have talked about life and stories and laughed together.

—C S Lakshmi



Flights of An Actor: Kavita Chaudhary (25 July 1957-15 February 2024)



Kavita Chaudhary who played the role of IPS officer Kalyani Singh in Doordarshan's Hindi serial *Udaan* (Flight, 1989) died on 15 February 2024 due to heart attack in Amritsar, her birth place. She was a student of National School of Drama. She was the younger sister of

police officer Kanchan Chaudhary Bhattacharya.

Kavita first appeared in the TV series *Apradhi Kaun!* (Who is the Culprit!) on DD National, in 1981. She made a mark playing the role of Kalyani Singh in *Udaan* and the serial became a big hit during 1989-1991. *Udaan* was also written and directed by her. The story of *Udaan* was based on the real life of Kavita's sister Kanchan Chaudhary Bhattacharya who decided to become a police officer when she saw her father being humiliated and the police refusing to register an FIR (First Information Report). The strong, positive character of Kalyani Singh gave inspiration to many girls and women to pursue their dreams. Same with the unforgettable commercial of *Surf* detergent where she portrayed a smart

and value-conscious housewife Lalitaji.

She also created a television show *Your Honour*, aired on DD National in 2000 which was about aspiring lawyers. *IPS Diaries*, a crime-based show being aired on Doordarshan since October 2015 was anchored by Kavita Chaudhary, shown as a retired police officer in the series. It features true crime stories, which are televised for the audience. She wrote the Hindi romantic comedy film *Badhaai Ho Badhaai* (Many Congratulations, 2002) as well, directed by Satish Kaushik.

In an interview she gave on 17 August 2000, on the day her TV show *Your Honour* was released on Doordarshan, she said that writing scripts was her passion and that she liked to back her projects with thorough research which made them realistic. While explaining her style of work she said "to conceive a subject, write, research and then direct it is a long creative process. I can't function without doing in-depth analysis of any subject I take up. It's just not my style of working."

Her close friend Suchitra Verma while paying tribute to Kavita, said that Kavita was battling cancer which she had kept private. Actor Anang Desai, who was Kavita's classmate in NSD and her friend, also paid a heart-felt tribute to her saying she died in the place she hailed from.

—Sharmila Sontakke



SPARROW is a Women's Archives that collects oral history and visual material connected with women's lives and experience as important material for future research on women. Our intention is to make such material more visible and accessible to people interested in women's lives and history. Kindly visit our website, www.sparrowonline.org which will give you an idea about the work we are doing.

A Renowned Bengali Film Actor: Anjana Bhowmik (30 December 1944-17 February 2024)

Anjana, a Bengali film actress, daughter of Bibhutibhushan Bhowmick, a film actor, died in south Kolkata at the age of 79 after a prolonged illness.

Arati Bhowmik, nicknamed Babli completed her secondary education from Kochbihar Sunithi Academy in North Bengal in 1961. Later, she moved to

Kolkata to pursue her graduation from the University of Calcutta at Sarojini Naidu College for Women, Dumdum.

Her career in the film industry began at the age of twenty through the movie *Anustup Chanda* (Mathematics of Poetry, 1964), directed by Pijush Bose. Coming before to the film's release, she decided to change her real name from Arati to Anjana. Her acting talent was appreciated by both audiences and critics. She became one of the major heroines of Uttam Kumar, an important chapter to the golden period in the history of Bengali film industry throughout the mid-1960s and early 1970s. She and Uttam Kumar gave major hits like *Chowringhee* (1968), *Kokhono Megh* (Temporary Clouds, 1968), *Nayika Sangbad* (The Dialogue of the Heroine, 1967), *Roudra Chhaya* (Angry Shadow, 1973), and *Rajdrohi* (Traitor, 1966). At a certain time of her career when critics predicted she would not be successful without Uttam Kumar as hero, she paired with Soumitra Chattopadhyay in the highly acclaimed *Mahashweta* (Perfectly White, 1967).

Anjana married a Navy Officer Anil Sharma and settled in Mumbai. She is survived by her two actor daughters, Nilanjana Sengupta and Chandana Sharma. Anjana will always remain in the memories of those ardent fans of Bengali films of the sixties.

—Asmita Deshpande



**Once a SPARROW decides to fly high,
the sky is the limit!
The larger and bluer the sky,
the better!**

Staying Single for Science: Dr Bimla Buti (19 September 1933-24 February 2024)

Dr Bimla Buti passed away at the age of 90. She was a widely acclaimed Plasma Physicist in an era where it was dominated by men. Dr. Bimla Buti did her PhD from the University of Chicago, USA with Nobel Laureate Prof. S Chandrasekhar in 1962. Her professional life journey at

Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad, started as a faculty and continued till she retired as Senior Professor and Dean of Faculty. Her tremendous work throughout her career is commendable. Her publications include 140 research papers in reputed journals and four edited books. She got her first award (Vikram Sarabai Award in Planetary Science) in 1977 followed by many awards. SPARROW was very fortunate to conduct an interview with her in 2009 and publish her story in one of the SPARROW publications, *The Balancing Act: Stories of Women in Science*. Giving below the excerpts from the book.

“...when I was to go to US on a Government of India fellowship, one day, my maternal uncle—Mama—was visiting and I overheard my father telling him, “I’m very happy Bimla is going to the US. She’s got a Government of India fellowship.” And my Mama said, “Ah, why do you want to send her there? She’s done MSc, that’s enough.” My father said, “No, she wants to go and she will go.”... I was the first one in the family to go abroad.... Before I went to the US, not even a single day had I stayed in a hostel or any [other place]. So that was a big step...’ (Dialogue with Dr C S Lakshmi, 9 April 2009, at her residence, New Delhi)

“The Partition was a traumatic experience for many. When the Partition riots happened no one thought they would last so long or that they would shatter the lives of so many people. Bimla Buti’s father, Bodh Raj Buti, was an advocate in the Supreme Court in Delhi. But before Partition he lived in Lahore. When the Partition riots began in Lahore, like many others, he also thought that it would not last long. He packed off his two daughters to Karachi where his other married daughter stayed. He himself got busy working in a relief camp, helping in evacuating people and sending them to their destinations. His family in Karachi had to migrate to Delhi and Bimla Buti’s father was probably the last to leave Lahore and it was a while before he could contact his family. Bimla’s father was both a father and mother for her mother Jamuna

Devi had died when she was just two-and-a-half years old.

“Bimla’s father was very close to his daughter and very protective about her, but he was a person who knew when to let go and not come in her way. No wonder Bimla considers him one of the persons who has played a major role in her life. The other person who has played an important role in her life, according to her, is her guru, the Nobel Laureate, Dr S Chandrasekhar whom all his students call Chandra.

“These two men let her personality bloom and let her make her own choices. Her father gave her all the freedom in terms of her choices in life. Her teacher did the same in terms of her choices in scientific research. Bimla Buti says that she is a scientist by choice and she has remained so due to the support given by her father.

DAYS IN DELHI

“In Delhi Bimla joined a government school. She had suddenly been moved from one city to another. Everything was new but having seen so much turmoil, a different school and new teachers and new friends did not seem to matter at that point of time. There was not much to choose from. The school did not teach science. She opted for Hindi, Sanskrit and math.

“Bimla loved math. This made her consider engineering as a possible choice. But that meant going out of Delhi and her family was a little concerned since she was the youngest.

“Bimla too was not prepared to leave Delhi.

“Her brother-in-law was a medical doctor and he wanted her to study medicine. He tried hard to convince her and her father that she would do well in medicine. He said, ‘I can give you in writing that you will clear all the exams in the first attempt.’ She said, ‘I have no doubt about that. But I can’t even touch a frog, let alone cut a frog!’ So medicine was out. As she did not like chemistry she chose physics because of her love for math and decided to do Physics Honours in Delhi University.

“There were only three women in the BSc Physics Honours course and when she did her MSc Physics she was the only woman in the course. Bimla feels that it is possible that the way girls were socialized played a role in their opting for certain subjects. But she says that even now when things are different, few girls got to study science.

“Among those who choose science, most choose chemistry or biology; physics and math have few takers. This, she says, is strange. Bimla herself did not feel it odd to be the only girl among the students. She was too busy studying and too much in love with physics to bother.

“Once she completed her MSc she got a government fellowship to do her PhD in the USA. It gave her a choice of universities and she chose to go to the University of Chicago where she worked for her PhD under the Nobel Laureate Dr S Chandrasekhar.

(...)

“Bimla says with a smile that all that excitement about plasma is definitely justifiable. She explains that most of our universe is in plasma state and so scientists consider plasma to be the fourth state of matter. The branch of physics concerned with matter in its plasma phase is plasma physics. It only follows that plasma physics concerned with the fourth state of matter which is practically the entire universe and its source of energy has its application to all space programmes, says Bimla.

“One then understands why National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) was an important location in the science career of Bimla.

“In 1962 Bimla came back to India after completing her PhD. She joined Delhi University as a CSIR Pool Officer. She also taught MSc students during that period and she joined the National Physical Laboratory for a short while.

“Meanwhile she got a Research Associate’s position at the National Research Council of the US and went back to the US to do her first post-doctoral assignment with NASA at the Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland, near Washington DC.

“After over two years she returned to join Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi. During this time Prof. S Chandrasekhar was in Delhi to deliver the Nehru Memorial Lecture. After the lecture, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi hosted a dinner in honour of Dr S Chandrasekhar, Bimla Buti’s guru. Bimla was also invited and happened to share a table with many important scientists besides the Prime Minister herself.

“That is where she met Vikram Sarabhai who asked her if she would like to join the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) at Ahmedabad. She told him she would like to visit it first.

As soon as he went back he sent her an invitation.

“Bimla went there and liked the lab and its non-hierarchical structure that gave freedom to scientists. Sarabhai asked her if she would like to start a group there. She told him she would like it but that to start a critical group one needed a minimum number of people. He assured her that it wouldn’t be a problem.

“Bimla came back, spoke to her father and told him that she would very much like to take up this challenging offer. Initially he told her she already had a job in Delhi but when she explained what this job meant to her, as always, he told her she should do what was best for her career. And throughout her life that remained her father’s stand: that she should build her career in a manner which suited her best.

“The rest of Bimla’s twenty-three years of professional life were at PRL. She was a Senior Professor and the Dean for many years, after which she stepped down because she wanted to have more time for her own research.

“After her retirement she became CSIR Emeritus Scientist. During her years at PRL she had gone to the Jet Propulsion Lab at NASA a few times. After retirement she went there once again for research work. This time she was away for four years.

“After her return she has been busy doing meaningful work through the Buti Foundation (see www.butifoundation.org) that she set up in 2003. The Buti Foundation’s objectives are to promote education, health and research and provide library support.

“As a theoretical physicist she does not need a lab and all that is required is a good library. Pursuing science is a lifetime work which never stops, she says.

LIFE AS A SCIENTIST

“Very early in her career Bimla had decided that there were going to be no halfway measures in her life. She wanted to give her all to whatever she chose to do. She chose to remain single because she felt she would be torn between the family and her commitment to science.

“Her father accepted her decision. There was a time when the family thought that she should get married and they began to look for a suitable young man. But Bimla was firm in her resolve not to marry.

“In her long career as a scientist Bimla Buti has won several awards and honours. She is a member of many national and international professional bodies. She has travelled to countries around the globe giving lectures and has organized many national and international workshops and symposiums in India and abroad.

“Bimla Buti is a woman of few words and only those who have known her work as a scientist will know the amazing distance she has traversed as a scientist.”

—Pooja Pandey



A Committed Educationist: Suma Chitnis: (24 July 1933-27 February 2024)



On 6 March 2024, Vijayanti Wagle, daughter of Suma Chitnis, wrote this note on Facebook on the page of Suma Chitnis:

“My mamma passed away on Tuesday, February 27, 2024. With her passing, I am immersed in a delightful pool of memories of life with my mamma!

Wherever we lived, she made a warm and cozy home for my brother and me. It was a home that was filled with family, friends, and the many people my mother gathered and was engaged with from far and near. There was always much laughter, an exchange of ideas, animated discussion, and food!! In that home, she and my dad nurtured my brother and me with abundant freedom, inspired us to follow our passions, and taught us to love. I am who I am because of my mamma and dad. Thank you from the bottom of my heart, mamma.”

Suma Chitnis had spent the last few years with her daughter in the US. She kept in touch with her friends and colleagues. Those who worked with her like Lakshmi Lingam visited her in the US and wrote about it. Vibhuti Patel has written a tribute for her in *Quest in Education* magazine that she edits, in its April 2024 issue.

I was flooded with memories too. I never really worked with Suma Chitnis but had interacted with her first in the Women’s Lifecycle conference organised sometime in the early eighties if my memory serves me right. After that we

stayed in touch and when she became Vice-Chancellor of SNDT University (1990-95) she genuinely tried to get SPARROW a space in the Juhu campus not as a part of the Research Centre for Women's Studies but as an autonomous organisation that would collaborate with the Centre. Her efforts did not bear fruit. But she continued to show interest in SPARROW's work and I occasionally went to her place and sometimes slept there overnight when we spoke about a lot of things with regard to Women's Studies and scholarship. She always said that she enjoyed teaching but she wanted to do research. Education was her area of interest. Her PhD was on the subject "Educational Problems of the Scheduled Castes" and throughout her life her concern was regarding women and higher education. Nehru Centre has a recorded talk by her under the Jawaharlal Nehru Lecture Series on "Nehru and the foundations of education in Independent India" in two parts. Her concern about institutions and women's education was expressed brilliantly in her Durgabai Deshmukh Memorial Lecture (1992). She held important positions in various trusts like the Dorabji Tata Trust where she helped scholars to receive funds for research. She was on the panel of the Homi Bhabha Fellowship Trust when I was given the Homi Bhabha Fellowship. Many awards and recognitions have come her way for the important work in education that she took up as her commitment in life.

She was deeply into Bahina Bai and her poetry when I met her a few years ago and told me she wanted to come out with something solid based on Marathi Bhakti poetry. I often pulled her leg saying she was a Marathi chauvinist because there was one time when she forgot that I was not so proficient in Marathi and spoke only in Marathi and her husband, the gentle Mr Chitnis, had to remind her that she was speaking throughout in Marathi! "Did I?" she said and laughed and apologised.

She was in two minds about writing her autobiography but she had written a few chapters which she showed me which were very interesting. I have them with me and sometime back I had written to her saying she should complete it and send it to me. But now it will remain incomplete. However, that is only a document. Her own life was fully lived and rich with experiences which shaped her and which she used to shape her students and scholars around her.

—C S Lakshmi



"Forever Radiant: Tribute to Dolly Sohi's Eternal Light" (15 September 1975-8 March 2024)



The television world is deeply saddened by the passing of actress Dolly Sohi, known for her memorable roles in popular shows like *Jhanak*. Dolly succumbed to cervical cancer at the age of 48, just a day after the tragic loss of her sister, Amandeep, compounding the family's grief. Dolly gained recognition for her portrayal of Srishti Mukherjee in *Jhanak*, though

her health challenges eventually forced her to step away from the role, which was later taken over by Poorva Gokhale. She was rushed to the hospital due to breathing complications before her passing, as confirmed by her family to ETimes.

With a career spanning decades, Dolly appeared in several iconic shows, including *Bhabhi* (Sister-in-law), *Kalash* (Sacred pot), *Meri Aashiqui Tum Se Hi* (My Love Belongs Only to You), and *Khoob Ladi Mardaani Jhansi Ki Rani* (The Fearless Warrior Queen of Jhansi). Beyond her acting, Dolly was a vocal advocate for cervical cancer awareness. She criticised trivialisation of the disease within the industry, emphasising the need for a serious discourse around it.

Her resilience and dedication remain an inspiration, and her loss is felt deeply by colleagues and fans alike. Dolly leaves behind a legacy of strength and talent, and she will be fondly remembered by all who knew her.

—Namrata Lokhande



Virtual Tour - SPARROW Walk

<https://www.sparrowonline.org/virtual-archives/2024>

<https://youtu.be/vZn6asJ72Zo>

"I will come as a spirit in the wind": Muthammal Palanisamy:(5 February 1933-10 April 2024)

When news of Muthammal Palanisamy came one could not but remember her poem to her grandchildren about what would happen after her death which was in her book *Shore to Shore* on the trials and tribulations of an Indian indentured labour migrant family in Malaysia published in 2002 by

VGVM Management in Kajang. The Tamil translation of the book entitled *Naadu Vittu Naadu* came out in 2005 and an updated version was published in 2006. The book has seen several different editions and is also available as a sound file on writer Vijayalakshmi's YouTube account "Olipezhai". Her book on folk songs entitled *Nattupura Paadalkalil En Payanam* (My Journey in Folk Songs) was published in 2006 by the Kongu Ilaingyar Mandram in Coimbatore.

Second Asia Pacific Conference on Contemporary Research (APCCR, Malaysia, 2016) has an interesting analysis of Muthammal's *Shore to Shore* by Haslina Binti Omar, of the Universiti Putra Malaysia, in her paper entitled "Autobiography of a Malaysian Indian Woman: *From Shore to Shore*" in which she talks about meeting Muthammal and says that although Muthammal wrote this book for her grandchildren after a lot of hesitation because it speaks about the truth about many people, it is an important book to understand the cultural diversity of Malaysia. The paper gives a short note of her biography:

"Muthammal Palanisamy was born on 5 February 1933 in Kampung Raja Semalon in the Manjung district of Perak. She grew up on rubber estates, where life was difficult and food was scarce. Muthammal, in an interview published in *Star* online (August, 2005), describes how she tried her best to stay in school despite being able to have only one meal a day. Her parents placed a great deal of importance on education and this later influenced her as she not only created a learning environment at home for her four children, but also became a teacher and headmistress, a career which she pursued for over forty years. Growing up, Muthammal would listen to stories told by her grandfather and parents about their life experiences; she passed down this oral tradition to her own children and grandchildren, until she was prompted to write by her brother. Wanting to ensure that the stories would not be lost to future generations, Muthammal took three months to write her autobiography when she was 69 years old.

"*From Shore to Shore* concerns her family's experiences as indentured labourers from India and their struggle to make new lives for themselves in Malaya—beginning with her father setting sail for Malaya, sometime between 1912 and 1913. More than that, however, *From Shore to Shore* chronicles the life of an entire class of people who spent their lives at the mercy of their foreign employers in a land that was completely alien to them."

Muthammal later lived in Sitiawan with her Scottish-Indian husband, Spence Grant, the son of Robert Grant, a Scottish manager of one of the Malayan estates. Navin Manoharan, the editor of the online magazine *Vallinam* had done an interview with her for his magazine (<https://vallinam.com.my/navin/?p=831>) and also arranged an event to introduce her book and it is after this that her book got noticed by many. He writes on his Facebook page on 10 April that she had collected a lot of documents on the Siam-Burma Railway, also known as the Death Railway. [It is a 415 km railway between Ban Pong, Thailand and Thanbyuzayat, Burma (now known as Myanmar). It was built from 1940 to 1943. Those who built it were South East Asian civilians abducted and forced to work by the Japanese and a smaller group of captured Allied soldiers. It was built to supply troops and weapons in the Burma campaign of World War II. It is believed that at least 250,000 Southeast Asian civilians were subjected to forced labour to construct the Death Railway and that more than 90,000 civilians and some 12,000 Allied soldiers died in the course of the construction. The civilians were Tamils, Malays and also some Chinese] She had given him all the documents and asked him to publish a book with them. All the documents were in English and as many other books had come on the subject, he decided not to publish the book. He further says in his tribute: "I came to know from her daughter Raji that Muthammal was suffering from dementia in recent times. She wrote her autobiography for her grandchildren. She is a person who never wanted to project herself. The elegant image of her driving the four-wheel-drive Hilux car is still in my memories of her."

It was Muthammal's *Naadu Vittu Naadu* that had first reached the SPARROW archives library and I assumed that it was written in Tamil first and later translated into English. The English version which was the original version came later to the library. Meanwhile I translated into English a poem she wrote for her grandchildren regarding her death and her own poem would be a fitting tribute to Muthammal who courageously faced life and was willing to face death similarly. For her death was not an end. She still saw herself as a spirit hovering around her family.

A Grandmother to a Granddaughter:

Aatha, where would you go when you die?

What would you become when your body is burnt?
 The empty body would go out
 The life would remain in the house
 Why are you worried about body being burnt?
 I will remain within you as your life
 I will be the salt in the food you eat
 I will be beside you when you sleep
 I will be part of what you see
 I will be there in dream and reality
 I will be the earth you tread on
 I will be constantly your loving companion
 I will hold you if you stumble
 I will question you if you go wrong
 I will be part of your laughter
 I will be the sound of the bangles on your little hands
 I will hold you tight if you cry
 I will be the fire to burn your problems
 I will come as a spirit in the wind
 I will be close when you call out "Aatha"
 I will be a fellow traveller for all of you
 In your life's journey.

—C S Lakshmi



A Lustrous Creeper Sheds Its Light: Jyotirllata Girija (27 May 1935-18 April 2024)



The writer Jyotirllata Girija everyone admired was a many-faceted person. Born in 1935 in Vattalagundu, Jyotirllata Girija started writing in Tamil for children. Her first story appeared in 1950 in a children's magazine *Jingli*. She also wrote in *Kalkandu*, *Kannan*, *Poonjolai* and other children's magazines. Later in 1968 she wrote her first adult story in *Ananda Vikatan*. She was a prolific writer

who has to her credit more than 500 short stories, 25 novels, 50 novellas, 3 full-length plays, several articles on social issues, translation of major part in Tamil of Kiran Bedi's *As I see it* etc. She has won many awards for her work.

She was a bilingual writer. She has written short stories in English in *Femina*, *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, *Woman's Era* and many other magazines. Many articles of hers on social issues have appeared in *Alive and Open Page* in *The Hindu*. She wrote books in English too. She wrote spiritual-oriented books on Ramayana, Mahabharata, Buddha's

Dhammapada, on Puttabarthi Satya Saibaba, on the life of Jesus Christ and the Prophet and did translations of Thiruvalluvar, Avvaiyar, Naaladiyar. She translated her novels into English and also wrote original English novels and plays. Her *Gandhi Episodes*, based on Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography, was serialised in *METVERSE MUSE*, (Visakhapatnam), edited by Dr. H. Tulsi, in 2000-2001.

Goodbye to Violence (2014) was a translation by herself of her novel *Manikkodi* serialised in *Kalki* in 1992 after winning the first prize in a novel competition. After serialisation in the weekly, it was published in book form later and it received the Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar Literary Award in 1998. *The Inscrutable Mulla Nazruddin Episodes* (2014), *Caught in the Crossfire* (2014), *Mini Bharat* (2015), *My Motherland* (2015), *W(ealth)*, *W(ine)*, *W(oman).man.life*, a novel depicting the economic, political and social conditions prevailing in the present day and how they affect women, published in 2016, *The Impossible Girl* (2016), *What If Born A Girl?* (2018), *The Jewel of India*, a biography of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, retold in rhyming couplets published in 2015, *The War Is Not Yet Over*, her memoirs published in 2015, *The Have Nots* published in 2015, a dramatisation by Girija of her Tamil novel entitled *Illathavarkal* which was serialised in the Sunday supplement to the daily newspaper, *Tamil Nesan*, of Malaysia in 1975-76, *Instant Love* (2015), a translation of her Tamil novel titled *Madiyil Neruppu* serialised in the Internet Tamil weekly, *THINNAI*, were her other English works which she did along with continuous writing in Tamil. She also wrote poems.

Girija joined the Postal Department as a stenographer and rose to become the Personal Secretary to the Post Master General in the Head Post Office on Anna Salai in Chennai. She took voluntary retirement to concentrate on her writing. And she did not waste this period. One book after the other kept being published. It was difficult to keep track of all her publications.

Jyotirllata Girija was ailing for sometime and passed away on 18th April 2024.

The short note above would be the kind of note that anyone who only knew her as a writer would write. But I knew Girija as a friend from 1974 when I began my research on women writers. Our friendship went through several phases and we became close to each other and I knew her for who she really was—a person who believed in honesty and truth, an open and forthright person who did not believe in mincing words, one who never sought awards or fame. Her father Subramaniam was a school teacher. He dared to send his daughter to the only High School in his town which was exclusively for boys. This was unheard of in that small town. Her grandfather used to run a hostel for Harijan boys. When Girija spoke to me she recalled her father being an

extraordinarily progressive person and he taught Girija to live the way she wanted. Girija was very much her father's daughter. For a particular examination she had to go to another city and was planning to stay with a relative there. A boy studying with her also had to appear for the same and since he knew no one in the city she asked him to come and stay with her relative. She wrote to her father about this asking for his permission. Her father expressed his apprehensions that this may affect her marriage prospects in future. The daughter wrote back saying, "Must I worry about marrying any person who would be the kind to think that this is wrong?" The father gave his permission.

Over the years, Girija never failed to read what her friends including me, wrote and personally commenting on it. She read my last collection of stories, *Sivappuk Kazuththudan Oru Pachaip Paravai* (A Red-Necked Green Bird) and in a story I had quoted an old song and she told me the last line of that song was wrong. She gave me the right line. It was corrected in the second edition. She stayed with her younger sister Vanaja in Anna Nagar. Regular visits to her house when I was in Chennai became part of my routine. But one could not just land at her place. One had to ring her up, fix up a date and time and then visit her. She always remembered what I enjoyed eating and made them for me even though both the sisters had stopped cooking and got food cooked by a lady from outside. I would spend an hour or so chatting and laughing and she would remember all the old office jokes. In recent times I used to go with my friend Hema Manoj whom she became very fond of.

This April I was in Chennai. The previous time I was there I had gone and met her for a short time after her return from the hospital and she had not fully recovered. She was still not moving about. This time I wrote to her beforehand because I was in Chennai only for a short while and again messaged her when I was there. She wrote back saying I could be with her only for five minutes, would that be okay? I wrote back saying that I would come and visit her when she is in a better frame of mind, in my next visit to Chennai so that we can chat for long like old times. She agreed. From Chennai I had many places to go to. Even before my trip ended, on the 18th I got the news of her passing away. My heart sank. I wished I had met her for five minutes. You spent 89 years of your life doing exemplary work, Girija. I will remember you for the times we spent together all these years and for the five minutes I lost.

Opening A Flowered Doorway: Uma Ramanan (1954/1955-1 May 2024)



The news of Uma Ramanan's death came as a shock. The social media since has been remembering all her songs. She was not only a playback singer but also a live stage performer whose shows with her husband Ramanan used to run to packed

houses. She has appeared in more than 6000 concerts in a career spanning 35 years. Uma trained under Pazhani Vijayalakshmi for classical music and learnt Bharatanatyam under Padma Subramaniam. Even as a college student she participated in many inter-college competitions and that is how destiny led her to A V Ramanan, a television host, performer and actor and he took her as part of his team for stage performances. In an interview she has said that for the first performance he paid her Rs.30! Soon they were married and performed together on stage. Her musical career has been linked with the legendary composer Ilaiyaraja. She is well-known for singing on the stage some of his musical creations. Actually, her playback singing career began with the Hindi film *Play Boy* (1976). Soon after in 1977 came the Tamil film *Shri Krishna Leela* in which she sang. In 1980 she sang for the film *Neerottam* (Current) in which her husband A V Ramamnan was the composer. But the turning point in her career was the film *Nizhalgal* (Shadows, 1980) in which Ilaiyaraja was the music director and the song *Poongkathave Thaal Thiravai* (Open the Flowered Doorway) in Mayamalavagowla raga, composed by Ilaiyaraja sung by her became a hit song hummed by everyone and Uma Ramanan became a name known in every household in Tamil Nadu. After that there was no looking back. She has been seen as a rare find of Ilaiyaraja. Although she has sung for Mani Sharma, Deva, Shanker-Ganesh, T Rajendar and Vidyasagar, her best songs have been with Ilaiyaraja. Uma Ramanan had many more singing years left and it is a pity her end came so soon. She has left behind her songs which are still on the lips of many of her fans whose lives she has touched. Maybe some other flowered doorway has opened for her.

—C S Lakshmi

—C S Lakshmi



Many Feminisms, Multiple Locations: Indhu Alamelu Subramaniam (29 April 1972-7 May 2024)



Indhu Alamelu Subramaniam was born on April 29th 1972, in Bangalore. After finishing her Masters in Mass Communication, from Bangalore University, in 1996, Indhu worked with Association for Promotion of Social Action (APSA) on child rights issue. She later worked at Cambodia on children's rights and law. Indhu joined Hengasara Hakina

Sangha (HHS), a women's rights organisation working on women, rights and law in 1998. She took over as the director of HHS in 2005. She has extensively worked with rural women collectives in Karnataka on violence against women and their legal rights, actively worked with women in the garments workers union and interacted and trained various groups on the issue of sexual harassment of women at workplace. She has done significant research on shelter homes for women and girls in Karnataka. Indhu had also closely worked with the students of University of Washington, Seattle on issues of marginalisation in India. Apart from being a women's rights activist, Indhu was also a writer and poet. Here is a wonderful poem she wrote at the behest of journalist Anandita Sengupta.

When An Autodriver Plays SPB

It was a day, like any other
Bangalore day
a raintree was shaking off
bits of rain it held.
unseeing is impossible
labyrinths of memory
unceasingly dark.
a falling so light
seems like flight
until you intrude
with a joy so absurd
in a blink, another world
has replaced this one.

Indhu's voice was clearly heard in Ultra Violet which was India's first and only online community of young feminists. Ultra Violet featured a community of young feminists blogging on the various issues, challenges, and triumphs that affect women in India today. It was an initiative by Hengasara Hakina

Sangha (HHS). The site was started in August 2007. Poet, writer and journalist Anandita Sengupta was the founder and Executive Editor of the site. The Associate Editors were Indhu Subramaniam, Director of HHS and Usha B N, Programme Coordinator, HHS. Its mission, according to the sites' manifesto was: "women experience their lives from multiple locations and there are many different feminisms. Ultra Violet provides a place to explore and understand the ways in which young women in India are challenging, negotiating and transforming unequal power structures. It is also a space to celebrate women's histories, wisdom, creativity, laughter and love for life."

In one of her posts as Associate Editor Indhu had explained the need for such a space for 'young' feminists in India: "Though I don't subscribe to 'youth' in itself as a political category, I definitely feel, as young women calling ourselves feminists, we need to build collective identities, and arguments. There is a very real need for dialogue among us if we have to hold up half the sky, break bread and have cuppa in solidarity. This space and identity are important even if it means we just end up posing a counter to specious 'post-feminist' arguments."

Indhu passed away on May 7th, 2024 after being briefly ill. She will be immensely missed by all her friends, colleagues and family.

—Usha B N



Remembering A Friend and A Fellow Traveller: Dr Bhargavi Davar (18 July 1962-22 May 2024)



Dr Bhargavi Davar was a childhood survivor of psychiatric institutions in India, and had endured long term trauma. Completely rejecting the medical model in 'mental health' for over 30 years, and naming the system as 'violent', she started the first

organisation of people with psychosocial disabilities in India, Bapu Trust, named after her mother, in 1999. She led the largest population-based peer support programme for the global south, covering a population of one million people from low-income communities. To bring her learnings to the world, she started TCI (Transforming Communities for Inclusion) by travelling and sharing resources with other countries in

the Asia-Pacific region. TCI is now a global organisation working to realise the full human rights of people with psychosocial disabilities. Bhargavi has published several books and papers critiquing psychiatry and its practices. Her books include *Psychoanalysis as a Human Science: Beyond Foundationalism* (1994); *Mental Health of Indian Women* (1999); *Mental Health from a Gender Perspective* (edited, 2001); *Gendering Mental Health: Knowledges, Identities, and Institutions* (co-edited, 2015).

Bhargavi passed away on 22 May 2024. She is survived by her daughter, Netra Prabha Davar.

Remembering is honouring.

I remember. The first time we met in 1996 at Anveshi Research Centre for Women's Studies in Hyderabad. Your big, beautiful eyes that held an ocean of sorrow, and also the passion and confidence that foretold the force of nature you would become in the world where we fought, together with many others from around the globe, for self-determination as psychiatric survivors and persons with psychosocial disabilities.

I remember. All that I learned from you. The political conviction that you nurtured that led me away from a life in literature and into mad activism and research for over two decades. The clarity you brought, over the years, to my fledgling thoughts about madness in a mad-making world. The many discussions about women's rage and how it could be channelled, without having to let go of it, into something useful to connect with others. The inspiration you gave to advocate, to organize, to write about the non-consensus realities some of us live in.

I remember. Your home that became my refuge through the turbulent years of my life even as you were yourself riding rough waves. Our shared love of nature, and of growing things which you took to a whole other level through Aham Setu Sustainable Lives in Cities. The way you were a compassionate, liberating mother to your daughter.

I remember. Moving to Pune to work with you, my first 'proper' job, at Babu Trust for Research on Mind and Discourse, the organisation you set up in memory of your mother to fight against the violence and discrimination ingrained into the institutions that were supposed to care for those with psychosocial disabilities. The days in the office in Fathima Nagar and nights on the small balcony of my one-room home, listening to you as you analysed patriarchy and the collusion of psychiatry in disempowering women who deviated from the roles expected of us by diagnosing us with mental illness. Learning from you about the continued harm caused by the colonial notion of 'unsoundness of mind' that still exists in our legal frameworks and our institutions of care. Watching you lay the foundations for all that you would

accomplish in your life.

I remember. Watching, now from the periphery of your life, as you went on to spread your passion and your light, through your work on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), collaborating with global disability organisations in training disability rights advocates and their groups to strengthen their advocacy for inclusion and rights; through campaigns to end coercion in all its forms, especially in the form of the Mental Health Act; through Transforming Communities for Inclusion (TCI Asia Pacific and TCI Global); through your writing; through Seher Urban Community Mental Health and Inclusion programme; through your work in arts-based therapy.

I remember. Our first collaboration creating a mental health advocacy platform in the form of the print newsletter, *Aaina*, and our last, this time online, the platform Mad in Asia Pacific.

I remember. The differences of opinions, and oh, the irritations and arguments stemming from our stubbornness that was well-matched in intensity. The long, sullen silences that ended with even longer chats and emails, the catch-ups in London, in Pune, in Leicester, in Galloway, in Paris.

Most of all, I remember your unwavering belief in the idea of interconnectedness which was rooted in your deep faith in Buddhist principles. And how you went about pouring everything you were, everything you had, into making the world a kinder, more compassionate place. A whole life-time of work dedicated to decolonising the mind.

Rest now, my friend, my love, as we, all of us who were fortunate to have known you, continue to remember.

—Dr Jayasree Kalathil

Dr Jayasree Kalathil worked in mental health and anti-racism activism, advocacy and research for over two decades in India and in the UK. Having retired from this work in 2021, she is currently a full-time writer and literary translator. Her books have won the Crossword Book Award (2019), the JCB Prize for Literature (2020), and the V. Abdulla Memorial Translation Award (2023).



DO VISIT OUR WEBSITE

website <http://www.sparrowonline.org>

**JOIN US ON OUR
FACEBOOK PAGE**

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/sparrowngo/>

Death of A Freedom Fighter: Dr. Rohini Gawankar (7 May 1929-7 June 2024)



Rohini Gawankar left us to be in another dimension on 7th June 2024 exactly a month after her 95th birthday.

Rohinitai was born in Kolhapur in 1929 to Ghanshyam Desai-Sonwadekar and mother Shantabai Desai-Sonwadekar. If one tried to write a short bionote on her illustrious life it would read thus:

Prof. Dr. Rohini Gawankar is the retired head of the department of political science of S.N.D.T. Women's University, Mumbai, Maharashtra. She is the founder president of Maharashtra's Women's Studies Association and also Women's Development Cell of the University of Mumbai. She was the president of Maharashtra Political Association and vice president of Mahila Dakshata Samiti. She is a grassroots activist working for the orientation and training of women members of panchayats in Maharashtra. She was appointed as a central representative of Maharashtra state on central women's commission. She worked as editor and treasurer of Indian Association of Women's Studies. She has seven Marathi books and one English book to her credit and is also the co-author of twelve books in English and Marathi. Her book on Rani Jhansi Regiment has been translated into Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, and English. She has received the Rao Saheb Bambardekar Award for her research on the Rani Jhansi Regiment. She was felicitated by Zonata International Indira Gandhi Award for her social work at the grassroots level and has achieved many more awards for her work in this area.

What this bionote would leave out would be the shine in her eyes, her hearty laughter, her resonating voice that narrated unending stories to regale her young visitors whether it was a bunch of students or some of us from SPARROW, about how she started organising children when she was 14 and loudly sang patriotic songs during the Freedom Movement and how

she served as a messenger for the Prati Sarkar movement. Many of us, her admirers, often visited her home in Dadar climbing many steps and she insisted on serving healthy food and would tell us the recipes and how these preparations helped you to live a healthy life. In fact, she had written recipe books in Marathi of healthy food. She and her husband Hemchandra Gawankar, were perfect hosts. The happiness and joy of those moments spent with her no bionote can capture.

In 2021, at the age of 92, she addressed a PIB Mumbai Webinar on the "Role of Mumbai in Freedom Movement." There was not a single detail she forgot. She spoke about how when the freedom movement became leaderless, girl students and women of Mumbai kept it alive. She recalled that "Mumbai's girl students and women undertook various activities on their own initiative. Even before Indira Gandhi's *Vanar Sena*, Ushaben Mehta had started *Manjar Sena* (Cat Army) in Mumbai. This army was entrusted with mocking and teasing the police and the armed forces." She added that "Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru deeply appreciated the role played by Mumbai's women in the freedom struggle during 1930-1940 and called their efforts an inspiration for the whole nation."

Rohinitai's close friend and colleague, Dr Divya Pandey, paid tribute to her saying, "She was a respected, intelligent and extraordinary individual. At an early age of 14, she plunged into the country's freedom struggle. While fighting for freedom, she did not give up or neglect her education. While pursuing her PhD in Political Science she closely studied the involvement of women in Indian politics. She developed an

image of an impressive professor during her teaching days. She was always empathetic towards her students. She engaged in productive dialogue with women in rural areas and understood their issues. Through her writings, she brought light to her findings and studies. She was an impressive public speaker. She continued her good work till the age of 95. Words are not



Dr Divya Pandey, Dr Rohini Gawankar and
Dr C S Lakshmi, 2011, Mumbai.

enough to describe her. We lost this impressive multi-talented personality who had lived a full life but yet we wanted her to live more. May her soul rest in peace.”

SPARROW had a dream project to interview the veteran socialist Mrinal Gore and bring out her biography. Who else could we approach but Rohinitai to interview her? Rohini Gawankar interviewed Mrinal Gore and based on the interviews she wrote a biography of Mrinal Gore in Marathi and SPARROW decided to call the book *Paaniwali Bai*, the name Mrinal Gore was given by the many women whose lives she changed because she solved their water crisis. The book, printed by Mouj Prakashan was published in 2003.

SPARROW had an opportunity to record her memories in March 2011. The conversation with her ran into several cassettes. She spoke about her childhood, her involvement and entry into the Prati Sarkar movement (Alternative Government Movement), her married life, her father-in-law's attitude towards people, her education after marriage, the history of Gawankar family, her experiences in a job in the academic field, her retirement, her social work and experiences attached to it, her views about women's studies, Captain Lakshmi Sehgal, her belief in the relevance of the questions raised by women academicians.

When Rohinitai decided to move to an assisted living place in Pune, we kept getting news about her through Dr Divya Pandey. Finally, news came of her passing away and her body being donated. Her books, written in her passionate language will for ever be an inspiration to the coming generations.

—C S Lakshmi and Dr Divya Pandey with inputs from Asmita Deshpande.



SPARROW IN AUDIO

* /sparrowinaudio

<https://www.sparrowonline.org/sparrow-in-audio/>

The Cruel Drama of Life: Prabha Shivanekar (1943-3 June 2024)



A great folk theatre artiste who performed in more than hundred folk dramas passed away at the age of 81. She made the character of Gangi immortal in the Vag Natya (a comedy act and a folk drama) *Gadhavacha Lagna* (Donkey's Wedding) which was turning point in Marathi folk dramas.

Born in a village called Bhalgudi of Mulshi Taluka, Pune, she was consecrated as a Jogtin by her parents in response to a vow and had to lead a religious life. After the demise of her parents, she was raised by a distant uncle, who got her sister married. But because she had been dedicated to god, she was not allowed to marry. The uncle realised that it was difficult to protect her from the outside world and also difficult to take care of her expenses. So, he brought her to Mumbai and handed her over to Dadu Indurikar, a famous folk artiste and leader of a troupe. She joined his troupe and started doing all kinds of work including washing vessels and clothes. Dadu mentored her and took care of her like his own daughter. He was very famous in the Tamasha world for his spontaneous and humorous acting. Gradually she learnt the art of Tamasha from other senior women and Dadu himself.

In the 1950s/60s, there were no other means of entertainment for the working class in both rural and urban areas. Tamasha was an art form in Maharashtra whereby the audience used to watch dance and listen to music. From songs in sawal-jawab (Lavani), the rural audience used to learn some mythology and through Vag (the dramatic form) they used to get entertained as well as get informed of social issues. Prabha was trained expertly in dancing, singing and sawal-jawab and in the ways of attracting the audience. And one fine day, Dadu introduced her to the audience and she started performing regularly as a lead actress. There she met Shankarrao Shivanekar, a married man, and she began to live with him as his wife. He was a partner in Dadu's troupe and also a performer. Their troupe became very famous and used to perform in various corners of Maharashtra.

She got recognition when she performed as Gangi, a character in the folk play *Gadhavacha Lagna* directed, produced and co-acted by Dadu Indurikar. The play became very famous and they were even invited to perform it in the Parliament and in countries like UAE, Japan, etc. The then

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi watched it and congratulated them personally. The character of Gangi made Prabha so famous that she came to be known as Gangi. Spontaneity is the soul of comedy in any folk drama and Prabha was an expert performer. Subtle acting, perfect dialogue delivery and exact timing of comedy were her assets, because of which even after hundreds of performances her character remained fresh.

In 1973 they got the Sangeet Natak Akademi award for the best folk drama, which was performed almost daily. In the midst of this busy schedule, Prabha became pregnant but instead of being happy, Shankarrao told her to abort the child because it would interfere with the performances. At the hospital, she realised that she would never be able to conceive again because they had to remove her uterus because of some complications. This shocked her and at that moment the woman in her woke up and she threw Shankarrao out of the troupe and ended her relationship with him. She and Dadu later started performing the play again. With growing popularity of other mediums of entertainment, people started coming less to Tamasha. Dadu and she used to manage the upkeep of the troupe with great difficulty. Later they had to break up the troupe, everyone got scattered and Prabha joined another troupe as a performer.

In 2014, she was conferred with a lifetime achievement award named after the noted tamasha artiste Vithabai Narayangaonkar.

Her biography was penned by Prabhakar Ovhal as *Eka Gangichi Kahani: Prabha Shivanekaranche Jeevan Charitra* (Story of Gangi: Biography of Prabha Shivanekar) published by Prajakt Prakashan, Pune in 2015. SPARROW has reviewed this book in its SNL no. 37 of August 2018.

Towards the end Prabha was living in poverty in a hutment area in Narayangaon and was forgotten by the public. The days of her glory must have haunted her during those days. The drama of life is not always kind.

—Sharmila Sontakke



The One Who Was Annapurna, The Giver of Food and Nourishment: Prema Purav (15 August 1935-2 July 2024)



In her book *Feminism as Experience: Thoughts and Narratives* Dr Neera Desai introduces Prema Purav as the person who brought in a revolution in economic ideas and concepts in the area of women's workplace. She says that Prema Purav gave dignity and legitimacy to cookery and the kitchen, an occupation and a

space which hitherto had been associated with drudgery. She credits her with an amazing organising entrepreneurship which could bring to fruition the idea of women's self-sufficiency and the concept of women's self-employment.

Prema was the one who knew how the life of the working-class centres around food. She created Annapurna, which became a movement which shifted the individual woman's kitchen into the community space making it a community kitchen that supplied food to thousands of families thus empowering the *khanawalis* (food suppliers) who supplied food to mill workers. The Annapurna Mahila Mandal was founded on 8 March 1975, on the occasion of International Women's Year.

Social action was an integral part of Prema Purav's life. Born in Goa, in the small village of Khodeye, she was an active freedom fighter in the Goa freedom Movement. She worked with her brothers who were fighting against the Portuguese, walking to the forest carrying food for them. She began working with the Azad Gomantak Group, and the freedom struggle went underground. At one point she was shot at and injured. She was soon disillusioned with the Azad Group, and joined a communist group and later married a fellow comrade Narendra Purav, generally referred to as Dada Purav. When she came to Bombay, she got involved with the mill workers' union and that gave her an understanding of the life of women working in factories and how vulnerable these women workers were. There was no guarantee for their jobs and they had the responsibility of raising their children. In 1975, more than seventy-five thousand women lost their jobs in the mills. And in 1982 was the great strike and many workers lost their jobs. That was when women became *khanawalis* to supply cheap homemade food to the workers and also to earn some money for themselves. Cooking was what they knew best. But they were not organised and had to put in their own money or borrow money from

WHERE THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT
IS CONCERNED SPARROW IS
CONCEIVED OF AS A NATIONAL
ARCHIVES COLLECTING ORAL
HISTORY AND VISUAL MATERIAL FROM
ALL OVER INDIA.

moneylenders. When bank loans for women's enterprises became possible in 1975 Prema Purav utilised this opportunity fully and the Annapurana Mahila Mandal, a cooperative group, was born. Annapurna supplied food not just to factory workers but also other working people in offices, banks and schools. Annapurna Mahila Mandal now has branches all over Maharashtra. Annapurana, thus became a movement which according to Prema Purav was not only for women to stand on their feet but for them to soar high.

Prema Purav received the Padma Shri in 2002. In 2022 she received the Maharashtra Foundation's Dilip Chitre Lifetime Achievement award. She lived with one of her daughters in Pune and breathed her last there, at the age of 88, two months before turning 89. Her husband Narendra Purav passed away in the year 1982.

SPARROW has a ten-hour oral history recording of Prema Purav done by none other than another great woman, Dr Rohini Gawankar. Many live long lives, but to live a long, meaningful life is possible only for a few people. Prema Purav is one of them.

—C S Lakshmi & Asmita Deshpande



Renowned Paediatric & Former Vice-Chancellor of University of Mumbai: Dr. Snehalata Shamrao Deshmukh (30 December 1938-29 July 2024)



She was born on 30 December 1938 in a middle class family in Ahmednagar. Her father Dr. Shrikrishna Joglekar was working in KEM Hospital as an excellent surgeon. Since her childhood, Dr. Snehalata was hardworking and determined. Her entire

outlook on life, goals and dreams in life were inherited from her father. Following in her father's footsteps, she scaled even greater heights of success. Dr. Snehalata Deshmukh was educated at the Indian Education Society (IES) School in Dadar, later graduated from the Ruia College, then gained MBBS degree from the GS Medical College (KEM Hospital), and further MS qualifications from there only.

At the age of fifty, she decided to step into the field of medical administration. For that purpose, she went to Delhi and completed the course of Medical Administration. In 1990,

she joined the Sion Hospital—where her father had earlier served as Medical Superintendent. During her five-year tenure, she took the initiative in creating a '*Breastmilk Bank*' for mothers who are unable to breastfeed their newborns due to medical reasons. Dr. Snehalata Deshmukh paid special attention to create the necessary facilities for patients and doctors. She always gave priority to the work of the '*Research Society*'. One major social campaign she spearheaded was that many newborn babies from the adjoining Dharavi slum areas had complaints of benign tumor growth on their backs. Dr. Snehalata Deshmukh and the doctors of Lokmanya Tilak hospital worked on this issue and proved that it happens due to deficiency of 'folic acid' in mothers. After that, tablets for 'folic acid' were distributed to pregnant women in Dharavi.

Dr. Snehalata Deshmukh played a significant role in the development of the Parle Tilak Vidyalya Association (PTVA) Institute, Andheri. She was a co-opted member of the governing council at Tata Memorial Centre, Department of Atomic Energy. She was also instrumental in establishing the neonatal department and advancing paediatric healthcare, at King Edward Memorial (KEM) Hospital.

She authored several books, such as '*Garbhasanskar Tantra and Mantra* (Pregnancy Ritual: Technique and Logic) and *Tanranyugatil Umalati Mane* (Blooming Minds in the Technological Era); *Take Care; Garbhavati and Balacha Aahar* (Pregnant and dieting); *Are Sanskar Sanskar* (Oh Ritual Ritual) in which she shared her vast expertise with the larger community. Her books on paediatric medicine, culture and women empowerment, her advocacy for holistic prenatal care through *Garbha Sanskar*, and her thought of blending traditional practices with contemporary scientific understanding will continue to inspire and guide generations of medical professionals, educationists and mothers.

Dr Snehalata Deshmukh was the dean of Lokmanya Tilak hospital in Sion before her appointment as the Vice-Chancellor of Mumbai University in 1995. During her five-year tenure, she made several bold and significant decisions. Dr Snehalata Deshmukh introduced many business-oriented courses. She also played a key role in founding the distance learning centre at the Ratnagiri campus of the University of Mumbai. Among her most notable initiatives, the inclusion of the 'mother's name on university degree certificates' raised the issue of men-women equality and emphasized that equality should come in all aspects of life.

In recognition of her contributions to social work and healthcare, Dr. Snehalata Deshmukh was honoured with 'Dr. B C Roy Award' in 1997 and 'Dhanvantari Award' in 2005.

She passed away at the age of 86 after a prolonged illness. Her passing is a profound loss to medical research,

academicians and civic body representatives but her legacy will continue to inspire in the fields of medicine, education and social welfare.

—Asmita Deshpande



Activist, Academician and Writer: Dr Vidyut Bhagwat (1948-11 July 2024)



One of the stalwarts of women's movement in Maharashtra Vidyut Bhagwat passed away on 11th of July 2024. She was 76. There are activists and there are academicians who carried the women's movement. Vidyut Bhagwat was both an activist and an academician.

Born in Pune she did her MA in Marathi literature and a PG Certificate in Linguistics. Later she got her PhD in Women's Studies (Sociology) from the University of Pune. She taught literature, linguistics and courses in Women's Studies at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels for more than two and half decades. She was the founder director of the Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Women's Studies Centre, University of Pune, from where she retired in 2008. Her active engagement with the anti-caste, peasant and women's movements in Maharashtra had influenced her research and teaching. Several of her projects on translation opened the space for interaction across different linguistic and institutional locations. She wrote and published extensively both in English and Marathi on social movements, social history of medieval and modern Maharashtra, feminist literary studies, feminist thought and theory.

She has written many books. Some of her most notable books are *Manavanshshastratil Lingbhavachi Shodh Mohim*, *Vadhtya Mooltatvavadala Shah: Susanvadi Lokshahichya Dishene* (A Quest for Gender in Anthropology, Rising Fundamentalism: Towards a Harmonious Democracy) (series editor), *Feminist Social Thought* (2003), *Women's Studies: Interdisciplinary Themes and Perspectives* (2012), *Samakalin Bharatiya Samaj* (Contemporary Indian Society) (2016), *Streeyanche Marathitil Nibandhalekhan* (Compilation of Essays by Women Writers in Marathi) edited by Vidyut Bhagwat, (published by Sahitya Akademi, 2013). Apart from these scholarly books, as a fiction writer she wrote her first novel in 2019 titled

Aarparavlokita (Seeing Through) published by Hariti Publication. She wrote this novel in her seventies. She received the prestigious 'Samajvidnyan Kosh Puraskar' in 2004-2005 for her book *Stree Praschnachi Vatchal: Parivartanachya Dishene* (Journey of Women's Issues: Towards Change), 2004 and the 'Maharashtra Saraswat Puraskar' for the year 2006.

Dr Vidyut Bhagwat has a special bond with SPARROW. Dr Neera Desai interviewed her in 1990 for her "Women in The Feminist Movement" project, later published by SPARROW. Dr Vidyut Bhagwat participated in the dialogue at The Visual History Workshop organised by SPARROW with Sushama Deshpande in Mumbai on 30th August 1998.

SPARROW has wonderful memories of interaction with her and will cherish them. Her daughter has written a note saying that her passing away was peaceful and she was surrounded by her friends and her daughter. They were all listening to Janabai's bhajans by Kishori Amonkar which Vidyut was very fond of, for almost two hours as she was slipping away. Knowing Vidyut, there could not have been a better way than to be carried away by music.

—C S Lakshmi & Sharmila Sontakke



We thank all our trustess and advisors who reposed immense faith in our efforts which has made it possible for us to spread our wings. They continue to stand by us. We also thank our funders, donors, supporters, well-wishers, friends and many more who have supported us in many ways.

The Doyen of Dance: Yamini Krishnamurthy (20 December 1940-3 August 2024)



It seems like yesterday that one sat in the audience and watched M Krishnamurthy, a scholar and poet explaining the meaning and hand gestures of a padam his daughter Yamini Krishnamurthy was going to perform with Yamini demonstrating what he was explaining. At one point he was talking about numbers and when he said 'hundred', Yamini took her pointing finger to the side of her eyes and rolled her eyes. "The eyes make up for the zeroes" her father said and there was a roar of appreciative laughter from the audience. With her father explaining before a dance item and her sister Jyotishmati doing the singing and the nattuvangam, Yamini's performances were a treat to watch.

Yamini was born into a family of scholars and art lovers on a full moon night on a full moon night in Madanapalli in Chithuru district of Andhra Pradesh to Krishnamurthi and Lakshmi. Her grandfather Mungara Govindamurti was a Sanskrit scholar and inspired by a character in a eleventh century Sanskrit text written in Kashmir, he named her Yamini Poornathilakam or "a beautiful mark on the brow of light". Her family moved to Chennai and Yamini grew up in a household learning several languages and learning to appreciate art. Later she went to Rishi Valley School and to Besant School in Chennai. Seeing her interest in dancing she was admitted into Kalakshetra, an institution founded by Rukminidevi Arundale. Later on, inspired by Balasaraswathi after watching a performance by her, she began to learn from Kanchipuram Ellappa Pillai, Kittappa Pillai, Dhandayuthapani Pillai, and much later the legendary Mylapore Gowri Ammal.

Yamini also learnt Kuchipudi from the best gurus Vedantam Lashminarayana Shastri, Pasumarthi Venugopala Sharma and Chinta Krishnamurthy. It won't be an exaggeration to say that Yamini was the pioneer who brought Kuchipudi to the modern performing stage and transformed it into a solo dance form. In addition, she learnt Odissi from Pankaj Charan Das

and Kelucharan Mohapatra. She felt she needed to train herself in music and was trained in vocal music by none other than M.D. Ramanathan and learnt the veenai from Kalpakam Swaminathan. She set up her own dance training institute, Yamini School of Dance, in Hauz Khas in New Delhi and made that the focus of her life. Her important creative works include a ballet, titled 'The Gandhian Order of Life' and another on Tagore and Subramania Bharati and their depiction of the Goddess Kali.

She began performing in 1957, and one could say she never stopped. If she did not perform on the stage she was performing in her mind. She was also generous with her praise for younger dancers. As Narthaki Nataraj says in her Facebook post on 7th August, when she performed with Yamini in the audience, Yamini told her that her dance was like that of Balasaraswathi. That is great praise.

Yamini's autobiography co-authored by Renuka N. Khandekar entitled, *A Passion of Dance* (1995), depicts not just her passion for dance but about how she was consumed by dance.

Yamini received many awards for her work, including the Padma Shri (1968), the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1977), and the Padma Bhushan (2001). The title of Asthana Narthaki was bestowed upon her by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam.

Yamini was a shooting star in the world of art and like a shooting star she dazzled the art scene. There won't be another like her for a long time.

—C S Lakshmi



*Once a SPARROW decides to fly high,
the sky is the limit!
The larger and bluer the sky,
the better!*

A Sitarist and Patron of Music: Manju Mehta (21 May 1945-20 August 2024)



An exceptional Sitar maestro, Manju Mehta passed away on 20 August 2024. Born in Jaipur, she hailed from a musicians' family. Her parents Manmohan and Chandrakala Bhatt were accomplished musicians. Her elder brother sitar player Pt. Shashi Mohan Bhatt was a disciple of Pt. Ravi Shankar. Her younger brother Pt. Vishwa Mohan Bhatt is also an internationally known artiste, a Grammy Award winner who plays the Mohan Veena.

Manju took her initial training from her elder brother Pt. Shashi Mohan Bhatt. After winning two consecutive State and Central Government scholarships, she was given the opportunity to study under Sarod player Pt. Damodar Lal Kabra, a disciple of Ali Akbar Khan in the Guru-Shishya Parampara. She did intense riyaz of around 6 hours a day during this period. She later also learnt from Pt. Ravi Shankar.

During one of her performances, she met Tabla player Nandan Mehta, who was a student of Kishan Maharaj and exponent of the Banaras gharana. Later they married and she came to Ahmedabad. She not only did performances, but also played a significant role in promoting Hindustani music in Gujarat. Along with her husband she founded Saptak, a cultural organisation in 1980, through which they tried to impart knowledge of classical music to the younger generation. And they started organising Saptak Music Festival, the country's biggest 13-day-long music festival. Held in January every year, it is the most followed music festival in the country. The festival starts on 1st January of every year and many great artistes of classical music have performed in it. After her husband's death in 2010 the whole responsibility of Saptak fell on her shoulders, and she carried it very well. Right from the selection of artistes to booking them she used a firm and transparent approach with clarity on budget. She ensured that every artiste looked forward to performing at Saptak. With teams of students as volunteers, the organisation of the festival went smooth.

With the highest rating in All India Radio's classification, Manju Mehta's sitar playing had uniqueness of style that combined tantrakari with the gayaki aspect. Manju Mehta was not only a fine sitar artiste belonging to the Senia Maihar tradition, but she was also one of India's most respected patrons of music.

She was the first woman artiste to receive Tansen Samman given by Government of Madhya Pradesh. She received it in 2018. Some of the other prestigious awards she has received are the Sangeet Natak Akademi, 2019 and the Dhirubhai Thakar Savyasachi Saraswat Award in 2016.

Apart from being a great performer, a great patron of music and a great organiser, she was also a good teacher, who taught many students. It would not be right to say that at 79 Manju Mehta died due to old age because she was guiding her students personally for their Guru Purnima performance just a month before her demise. One can only say that death has a way of taking people away earlier than they should be. She is survived by two musician daughters, Purvi and Hetal, who are continuing her musical legacy.

—Sharmila Sontakke



The Melody of Life: Madhura Jasraj (6 August 1938-25 September 2024)



Film Producer, Director, writer and wife of veteran classical vocalist Pt. Jasraj and daughter of great filmmaker V Shantaram, Madhura Jasraj passed away on 25h September 2024 in Mumbai at the age of 86.

When you are related to and living with legends, your own personality tends to get overshadowed. But this has not happened in the case of Madhura Jasraj. Being an artiste in her own right, she has left a stamp of her own in the field of music, cinema and dance. She inherited the legacy of art from her father as she was brought up in an artistic environment. V Shantaram had insisted on all his children including Madhura, learning some art form or the other. Madhura learnt classical vocal music, Bharatnatyam and also learnt Manipuri dance from Guru Bipin Singh. She later learnt Kathak from Gopi Krishna. She was also a writer. When she was in school, she used to publish handwritten manuscripts of her short stories and essays. She used to attend music programmes and conferences. It was in one such programme

that she had met Pt. Jasraj whom she later married in 1962. She is survived by two children, son Sarangdev Pandit who is a music director and daughter Durga Jasraj who is a TV personality, both of whom are following the creative legacy of their parents. An extremely talented person, she has directed plays and has written biographies. She wrote the biography of her husband, Pandit Jasraj, capturing his illustrious career as a classical vocalist associated with the Mewati gharana and in 2009 she made a biographical short film on him titled *Sangeet Martand Pandit Jasraj*. Thus, she has, in her own way, documented and restored the legacy of Pandit Jasraj. She did the same for her father V Shantaram. She single-handedly wrote, conceived and directed a documentary on her father V Shantaram which received many accolades. In 2010 at the age of 73, Madhura made history by directing a Marathi feature film *Aai Tujha Ashirwad* (Mother, Your Blessings) and she set a record as the Oldest Debutant Director in Feature Film Category, in the Limca Book of Records.

Her immense contribution of preserving and documenting the legacy of two great men in her life has left for us a rich and valuable documentation of the history of both the Prabhat Studios Era and Indian Classical Music. In future, her name will always be associated with this invaluable work of hers.

—Sharmila Sontakke



What others say.....

“...SPARROW is performing an invaluable national and international service in documenting the full range of women’s contributions to contemporary and recent Indian public life. SPARROW is a treasure—one we must all value and support, whether from near or far.”

*Abigail J. Stewart
Former Director
Professor of Psychology and Women’s Studies
University of Michigan*

A Successful Woman: Vimla Patil (1933-29 September 2024)



Vimla Patil, an editor, writer and a journalist died in Mumbai at the age of 91.

Born and graduated from Mumbai, Vimla completed diploma in journalism from Regent Polytechnic, London. She did her internship with *The Telegraph* and returned to Mumbai. In 1959 *Femina*, which later became a leading women’s magazine had just started where she got an opportunity to work. She left *Femina* in 1961 and from 1961 to 1966 she worked with the USIS (United State Information Centre) and later worked for *Span* monthly magazine where she interviewed many Hollywood stars and Indian musicians. After that she returned to *Femina* in 1973 as an editor and remained there till 1993. When women had to fight to make a career and prove their identity in journalism, Vimla started as an editor of a magazine.

As an editor, she checked, rechecked and refused many articles which were not with accurate details. She believed that the aim of writing is to communicate with the readers so her language used to be very direct and simple and she expected the same from her contributors. In her articles she advocated the cause of women right from the beginning. For example, she raised issues such as why a woman needed to get the signature of her husband while applying for loan in a bank and similar issues in the seventies itself. She always stressed the importance of proving wrong the perception that women were women’s worst enemies.

She also regularly contributed to and participated on AIR and TV. She had many articles and features to her credit in leading newspapers and magazines. She also penned many books like *Dal Roti: Indian Cuisine* (1985), *Food Heritage of India* (1990), *Prestige festival cookbook* (1992), *Celebrations: Festive days of India* (1994), *My times: Memoirs* (1997), *Bacchon ke Nam* (1998), *What’s In Your Name? Indian Baby Names and Their Roots* (1999), *Aahar - Food Treasures of India* (2000), *The Working Woman’s Cookbook* (2002), *Festival Cookbook* (2003), *Complete Indian Cookbook: Kashmir to Kanyakumari* (2003), *How to be successful and happy* (2006), *The Working Woman’s Cook Book* (2007), *Baby Names* (2015), *10 Essential Success Mantras from the Bhagavad Gita* (2016).

She travelled widely, espousing the cause of women and the promotion of Indian textiles and fabrics, through a number of shows and exhibitions. She played a big role in Miss India

beauty pageant through which Indian models reach international platforms. As an extension of this, she also managed the events of fashion shows. She wrote the scripts for sound and light shows at many historical monuments.

Vimla Patil is the typical independent, successful woman of her times who excelled in many aspects of her career and wore many hats and also retained a firm foot in the cultural heritage of the country. That is why she could organise beauty pageants and also write cookery books for the working woman and on *Bhagavad Gita*.

—Sharmila Sontakke



The Girl from Huzurpaga: Dr Rohini Godbole (12 November 1952-25 October 2024)



Dr Rohini Godbole decided to leave us all seventeen days before her 72nd birthday. Dr Rohini Godbole was an important part of SPARROW's book on women scientists *The Balancing Act: Stories of Women in Science* published in 2011. When she was honoured in 2021, with the Ordre National du Merite, one of the highest distinctions granted by France to honour eminent people, we were

all thrilled and we wrote on the Facebook the following note: SPARROW is absolutely thrilled that particle physicist and Padma Shri awardee Dr Rohini Godbole has been conferred with the Ordre National du Merite, one of the highest distinctions granted by France to honour eminent persons. SPARROW congratulates her with great delight.

Dr Rohini Godbole is part of our book on women scientists—*The Balancing Act: Stories of Women in Science*.

She told us when she spoke about her work: ... “That the work you do has something to say about how the whole universe is; why the universe works the way it works.... I would never trade this for anything else.”

An excerpt from the note “The Girl from Huzurpaga” on Dr Rohini Godbole along with some additional comments.

“...[For her PhD] Rohini decided to go to State University of New York at Stony Brook. The admission was for MS, to be followed by PhD. And here there were five girls among forty-five boys. Her PhD was in the area of theoretical high energy physics.

After five years of doing PhD Rohini had many post-doc offers in Europe and the USA. But she wanted to come home. Looking back she feels that it would have been a good idea to have established herself there before coming back. Maybe her life would have taken a totally different course had she stayed back.

Rohini came back and joined the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Mumbai. She was here for the next three years as a post-doc researcher.

Once one of her senior colleagues told her that maybe she should just look for a lecturer's job in a women's college in a mofussil town. Rohini was young and full of doubts herself. She wondered if she was good enough to teach in city colleges or IIT or to do research.

Rohini worked very hard for more than anything else she wanted to prove to herself that she could do science at a competitive level. She had very good collaborators at TIFR and she was enjoying her work there. What boosted her confidence at this time were the conferences she attended. She particularly remembers a conference she attended abroad. It was a five-day conference. On her way back at the Frankfurt airport, she met a Japanese colleague who had been at the conference with her. When it was time to catch their different flights, he referred to a research paper she had written and asked her if she was the same Godbole. When Rohini told him that she was indeed the same Godbole, he stood up straight, then bent low and said, ‘I respect that work.’”

Young as she was Rohini was thrilled with such compliments. However, steeped as she was in efforts to do research and make a name for herself as a physicist whose work is respected, Rohini did not pay much attention to jibes or comments about her being a woman in physics or being always referred to in parenthesis or being advised to forget about research now that she was in the university set up and not in an institute. If she was the only woman physicist to give a plenary lecture after which a male colleague would come up to her and say that he had not expected her to give such a good talk, she merely told him, ‘Thanks for nothing’ and moved on. If in an important physics conference to envision what physics should be in the twentieth century, she, as the only woman, would be asked to talk not about her vision in physics but about women in physics, she would just point out the irony of it all to her male colleagues who would merely tell her in surprise men could not be expected to talk on that.

Rohini brushed these incidents aside concentrating as she was on research.

“The International Union of Pure and Applied Physics held its first conference at Paris on ‘Women in Physics’ in March 2002.

Rohini was invited as the 'Asian success story invitee'. Rohini had to talk about her experience of being a woman physicist in India.

It was in this conference that she became aware that there were a number of issues that she had not noticed and had overlooked. She realised that some issues may appear peripheral and unimportant—like having a ladies' toilet or a crèche in big science institutions. But even these were important for women to do advanced science.

After that Rohini became an active participant in actions taken for women in science. Among her various attempts is the book *Lilavati's Daughters: The Women Scientists of India* in which many women scientists have spoken about their experiences while practising science in India...."

"Rohini feels that for a woman to have a career in science, she needs a family and a society which make it possible. Fortunately for her she had a set of parents who told her, 'The world is yours. Go; do what you can do.'

Rohini wants young people to venture into the world to do what they want. Echoing her parents she always tells them: 'Nothing else matters except your passion for science.'"

Rohini is a fellow of all the three academies of science. She is a member of several national and international commissions and advisory bodies including the Commission on particles and fields of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics. Her research, which includes a very large list of publications in reputed international journals, has been recognized with many awards and distinctions. A few from a long list are: the INSA Satyendranath Bose Medal (2009), the Asiatic Society of Kolkatta's Meghnad Saha Memorial gold medal (2008) and the IISc Rustom Choksi award for research in 2006."

Then came the Padma Shri in 2019. 2021 brings her the Ordre National du Merite.

What a journey it has been for Dr Rohini Godbole!

With great pleasure and regards we salute you!

You were one among great Particle physicist crusading for Women in STEM and you were also an inspiration to so many young girls aspiring to be scientists. Your life and your work will continue to inspire many scientists to go further in the path you have taken in science. And for young girls interested in science you will remain an icon.

—C S Lakshmi

website <http://www.sparrowonline.org/>
FB: <https://www.facebook.com/sparrowngo/>

Bihar Kokila, the Nigtingale of Bihar: Sharda Sinha (1 October 1952-5 November 2024)



Chhath Puja has just begun and the news of Sharda Sinha's demise has come. Chhath Puja is never complete without Sharda Sinha's Chhath songs for she sang 65 songs dedicated to this festival. Sharda Sinha was a folk-singer from Bihar. Known for her mesmerising voice and deep-rooted connection to Bhojpuri, Maithili, and other folk traditions, she

was fondly known as the 'The Nightingale of Bihar.'

Sharda was born on 1 October 1952 in Hulas village, Supaul, Bihar. She was the only daughter among eight siblings. He father, Sukhdev Thakur, who was working in the education sector encouraged her passion for singing. She got formal training in music from Bharatiya Nritya Kala Kendra. She completed her graduation and post-graduation in the field. She also got her Nritya Visharad in Manipuri dance. Later, alongside her artistic pursuits, she pursued academic excellence and earned a PhD and joined Samastipur College as a lecturer and later rose as a professor.

She got married to Braj Kishore Sinha, a Bihar Education Service officer from Begusarai in 1970. Her mother-in-law restricted her from singing. She did not even allow her to perform in the family's village temple, the Thakurbari. But with the support of her husband she continued her singing and over time, her mother-in-law came to accept her art. By 1971, Sharda Sinha began receiving offers from major music companies, marking the beginning of her formal music career. Though her foundation was in Maithili music, she also sang songs in Bhojpuri, Bajjika, and Hindi. She recorded more than a thousand songs in her career. Her efforts brought Bhojpuri songs into the mainstream, allowing them to resonate across the cultural landscape of Bihar and India. Bihar's cultural life is celebrated with her resounding voice during many events including marriage, sacred thread ceremony or festivals like Chhath.

Apart from folk music Sharda also lent her voice to Bollywood's Hindi films and web series. *Kahe Tose Sajna Tohari Sajniya* (Your beloved is Telling You) in *Maine Pyar Kiya* (I Fell in Love, 1989) Babul Jo Tune Sikhaya (Father, whatever you have taught me) from the film *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* (Who Am I to You? 1994) of Rajshree Productions; folk-inspired song *Taar Bijli Se Patle Hamare Piya* (Thinner than the electric wire is our sweetheart) in Anurag Kashyap's critically acclaimed film *Gangs of Wasseypur* (part II, 2012), Manish Harishankar's *Chafutiya Chokre* (Four Feet Boys, 2014) and

Nitin Neera Chandra's *Deswa* (Country, 2017) and more recently, her song *Nirmohiya* from the web series *Maharani* became widely popular. Sinha's last album on *Chhath Arag* had eight devotional songs, released in 2006.

Sharda performed when the Prime Minister of Mauritius Navin Ramgoolam visited Bihar. She also performed in the Bihar Utsav, 2010, at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

Sharda's reputation as one of the most renowned singers in Maithili, Bhojpuri, and Magahi is well-deserved. In 1991 she received the Padma Shri award. In 2000, she was honoured with the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. Her legacy of music was further celebrated with the National Ahilyabai Devi Award in 2006. In 2018, Padma Bhushan award was conferred on her, acknowledging her outstanding contributions to Indian art and folk culture.

Sharda had been battling with multiple myeloma, a form of blood cancer, since 2017, and was under special treatment at AIIMS, Delhi's Cancer Institute. Just a month-and-a-half before her passing, her husband, Braj Kishore Sinha passed away on September 22 at the age of 80. Despite all the tragedies and struggles, she sang a song celebrating *Chhath Puja*, which was released few days before her demise.

On her demise, President Draupadi Murmu said that Sharda Sinha gained immense popularity by giving her melodious voice to Maithili and Bhojpuri songs. She also said, "Her melodious singing will remain immortal. I express my deepest condolences to her family and fans."

A dialogue with Sharda Sinha in Mumbai, under SPARROW's OHRP Women Artistes Project on 21 November 2001, has been archived in SPARROW.

She is survived by her daughter Vandana Sinha, and son Anshuman Sinha.

The kokila of Bihar is no more but the songs it has sung will reverberate during festivals and other occasions everywhere forever.

—Asmita Deshpande & Sharmila Sontakke

**In India Women Spoke, Women Worked,
Women Wrote, Women Acted**



**Women Chose, Women Demanded,
Women Created, Women Rebelled**



**We Put Them
All Under One Roof
And Called it
SPARROW**

**35 years of Archiving Women's Lives,
Women's History**

SPARROW

For Change For Knowledge

**To Change the
World for Women**

Come Join Us in Our Mission,
in Our Dream



SPARROW
Sound & Picture Archives for Research on Women

Tel : 022-2896 5019
E-mail : sparrow1988@gmail.com
Website : www.sparrowonline.org
FB : <https://www.facebook.com/sparrowngo/>

**CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPARROW
QUALIFY FOR 80 G.**

REMEMBERING WOMEN FROM DIFFERENT WALKS OF LIFE

FROM SPARROW ARCHIVES

Adieu to the Trailblazing Dancer: Kalamandalam Devaki (25 November 1946-7 April 2023)



Kalamandalam Devaki was an innovative force in the realm of Indian classical dance, notably in the male-dominated domain of Ottan Thullal. Born in 1946 in Nelluvai, Thrissur, Kerala, Devaki's artistic heritage was formed by her family, with her father Kadambur Damodaran Nair and uncle Kalamandalam Gopalan Nair being

centrale influences. She managed to make history in her field of folk dance at the young age of twelve when she became the first woman to study Ottan Thullal at Kerala Kalamandalam under the mentorship of Malabar Kannan Nair.

Her immense dedication and expertise led to her becoming a master in the dance form, and her arangettam in 1961 observed the start of her illustrious career. Devaki's excellence over dance, Sanskrit, and abhinaya led her to turn into a well respected performer and teacher. She gained numerous accolades, including the Kalamandalam Prize and Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi Award. She broke gender barriers, ensured the continuity and relevance of Ottan Thullal, and found Dhanwanthari Kalaakshetram, a school dedicated to nurturing new talent.

Devaki's enduring impact as a trailblazer, artist, and educator will go on to inspire years and years of dancers, standing as a memoir to us of her compelling contribution to sustaining and growing the traditional practice of Ottan Thullal.

—Karen Sajan

An Ode to Triumph and Legacy: Jaya Mala (22 August 1958-26 April 2023)



Jaya Mala was a dynamic and prominent Kannada actress who made an enduring impact on Indian cinema. With a career which spanned across several decades, she turned into one of the most beloved personalities in the film industry, particularly during the 1980s.

Well-known for her phenomenal ability to carve her characters to life from several genres, Jaya Mala's on-screen presence was both irresistible and filled with compassion. Be it a romantic lead or an iron-willed woman, she showcases heightened emotion that resonated deeply with her audience. Her artistically enhanced performances granted her not only the reverence of fans but also the respect of her fellow peers in the industry. Beyond the screen, Jaya Mala was lauded for her humility and grace, and she was a supporter for emerging young talent, aiding to pave the way for many future stars. Throughout her career, she became a role model for many, balancing her success with kindness and dedication to her craft.

Even after her retirement, her contributions to Indian cinema remain influential, and her work continues to motivate actors and filmmakers. Jaya Mala's legacy as a pioneer in the film industry is etched in the memories of those who admired her, and her influence will live on in the stories and characters she so beautifully brought to life on the screen.

—Karen Sajan

Compassion, Social justice and a Journey to Empowering Lives: Gayatri Devi Yadav (1943-9 April 2023)



Gayatri was a remarkable social worker whose steadfast commitment to enriching people and transforming communities left a memorable mark. Her entire life was dedicated to the empowerment of women, marginalised communities, and those missing basic resources. An active advocate for women's rights, Gayatri concentrated on battling

gender inequality and broadening educational chances for underprivileged girls and women, notably in rural areas. Her faith in education as a motivation for social change encouraged her to cast initiatives that substantially positively impacted countless lives.

Apart from her endeavours in the field of education, Gayatri's compassion and activism led her to develop sustainable solutions for communities in need. She aced self-reliance and autonomy, enduring to equip marginalised groups with access to resources required for long-term advancement. Through her community-focussed programmes, Gayatri empowered many individuals to achieve independence and lead lives of dignity.

She has impacted extensively far beyond her immediate surroundings, proving to be an inspiration for aspiring social workers and activists. Gayatri's enduring legacy of social justice, empowerment, and community development stays on to motivate others, ensuring her work stands as a guiding light for those committed to growing equality and human rights.

—Karen Sajan



A Pioneer in Transforming Minds and Shaping Societies: Sherna Gandhi (1953-28th April 2023)



Shera was a revolutionary academic whose life-changing contributions to education and social sciences left a thorough impact on both academia and society. Her dedication to intellectual investigation and social prowess drove her to examine often-neglected aspects of human development, shining a

light on critical issues that had long been overlooked.

An acclaimed scholar and compassionate mentor, Sherna conducted her classes with wisdom and care, enabling a culture of critical thinking and deep engagement with societal challenges. Her ingenious teaching mechanism encouraged students to question norms and strive for meaningful change, equipping them with the tools to become agents of progress.

Sherna's advocacy for inclusive education and her drive to reform orthodox learning methods established her as a significant voice in the academic world. Beyond her scholarly pursuits, she enabled herself to tirelessly ensure marginalised communities had access to better education and resources, strongly assuming that education was the groundwork of empowerment.

Her enduring legacy is one of intellectual excellence, commitment to social transformation, and mentorship. Sherna's visionary work continues to inspire future generations of scholars, educators, and activists to use education as a powerful catalyst for societal betterment and meaningful change.

—Karen Sajan



SPARROW is a Women's Archives that collects oral history and visual material connected with women's lives and experience as important material for future research on women. Our intention is to make such material more visible and accessible to people interested in women's lives and history. Kindly visit our website, www.sparrowonline.org which will give you an idea about the work we are doing.

**The Tale of an Economist Inspiring Generations:
Padma Desai: (12 October 1931-29 April 2023)**

Padma Desai, a modern economist, made profound improvements to the field of industrialisation and economic policy, concentrating on the Soviet and Indian economies. Hailing from Surat, India, she embarked on an esteemed intellectual course shaped by her education at Harvard University, where she partnered with renowned

economists like Alexander Gerschenkron.

Padma Desai's seminal work, *India: Planning for Industrialisation*, co-authored with her husband Jagdish Bhagwati, critically analysed India's industrial planning policies and significantly influenced the country's economic liberalisation. Her groundbreaking research on Soviet economic systems, particularly in Perestroika in Progress, exposed the inefficiencies in resource allocation that led to the Soviet Union's economic downfall.

As a renowned professor at Columbia University, Padma Desai played a crucial role in advancing economic thought and mentoring future generations of economists. Her insights were highly valued by policymakers and global organisations, shaping the discourse on command economies and industrial policy worldwide.

Padma Desai's dedication to ardent scholarship and her capability to bridge academic theory with practical policy had an enduring impact. Her passing in 2023 marked the loss of a visionary economist, but her influential works and legacy of mentorship continue to inspire and inform the field of economics.

—Karen Sajan

**A Nabeesa Ummal: Standing Bold to Inspire
Generations with a Vision for better Education
and service (30 June 1931-6 May 2023)**

A Nabeesa Ummal was a trailblazer in education and politics in Kerala, celebrated for her unwavering commitment to women's empowerment and societal progress. Born in Attingal, Kerala, she shattered norms as the first Muslim woman in the region to earn a postgraduate degree in Malayalam. This remarkable achievement marked the beginning of

a distinguished career dedicated to education and public service.

Nabeesa served as a lecturer and later as the first woman principal of the Women's College in Thiruvananthapuram, where she worked to expand access to education for women and fostered an environment of intellectual growth and social reform. Her passion for improving the status of women extended beyond academia, as she transitioned into politics to make a broader impact.

In 1987, Nabeesa Ummal became a member of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, where she advocated for social justice and progressive policies. Her tenure as chairperson of the Nedumangad Municipal Corporation further demonstrated her commitment to grassroots governance and community development.

Nabeesa's leadership and advocacy for women's rights made her a beacon of hope and an enduring symbol of resilience. Her passing at the age of 91 in 2023 leaves a profound legacy, inspiring generations of women to pursue education, leadership, and meaningful social change.

—Karen Sajan



We thank all our trustess and advisors who reposed immense faith in our efforts which has made it possible for us to spread our wings. They continue to stand by us. We also thank our funders, donors, supporters, well-wishers, friends and many more who have supported us in many ways.

Nazrul Geeti Singer: Kalyani Kazi (1936-12 May 2023)



Eminent Bangla singer and youngest daughter-in-law of Nazrul Kazi, a Bangladesh National Poet, Kalyani Kazi died in Kolkata at the age of 87. She was famous as Nazrul Geeti Singer. She was suffering from leukemia for quite some time and died after multi-organ failure at SSKM Hospital. She is

survived by two sons and a daughter.

From her young age she was fascinated by rebel poet Nazrul Kazi Islam's poetry. She used to read his poetry and used to sing his songs in Prabhat Pheris. She studied in Bethune School in Kolkata where she started a girls' orchestra. She was the main drummer in the group. She wanted to be known as a Vrindagaan (Group Singing) director rather than a soloist on stage. Through her orchestra she wanted to preserve the correctness of Kazi Nazrul Islam's music notation. To preserve the correctness of Nazrul Islam's songs' notation she later wrote a book titled *Shrestho Nazrul Giti Swaralipi* (Notations of Great Nazrul's Geeti) in 2015 (published by Shubham, Kolkata).

At the age of 15/16 while visiting Ranchi, Bihar, she met Kazi Aniruddha, the younger son of Nazrul Kazi, who was a famous guitarist and fell in love with him. And with the help and support of Nazrul Kazi Islam's wife Pramila Nazrul Islam, she got married to Aniruddha. It was an inter-religious marriage which was against the norms of the then conservative society. After entering the Nazrul family as a daughter-in-law at the age of 18, she saw Kazi Nazrul Islam very closely. She has written a book *Ravi Parikrama* about Nazrul's close relationship with Rabindranath Tagore. She also wrote the memoir *Antaranga Aniruddha* in which she wrote about her childhood days, how she met accidentally with Kazi Aniruddha, about those days of love and it is a humble tribute to Kazi Aniruddha by his family. To promote Nazrul Music in West Bengal, recently West Bengal Government has built a Kazi Nazrul Islam Academy and Kalyani Kazi was the president of the advisory council of Kazi Nazrul Islam Academy. She was awarded the 'Sangeet Mahasamman' award by the West Bengal government in 2015 for her contribution to Nazrul Geeti.

The then Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina had expressed deep sorrow on the death of Kalyani Kazi. In her condolence message she had said, the death of famous

Nazrul Geeti singer has caused an irreparable loss to the music world. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee also paid tribute to her by saying in a statement that Kalyani Kazi's singing style used to enthrall listeners making them spellbound.

—Sharmila Sontakke



Gone Too Soon: Vaibhavi Upadhyay (25 July 1984-22 May 2023)



A tragic accident took away the life of a versatile actor at a very young age. Vaibhavi Upadhyay passed away in a car crash on 22 May 2023. She was with her fiancé travelling when their car plunged into a gorge in the Banjar neighborhood of Kullu district, Himachal Pradesh.

Born in Gujarat on 25th July 1984, Vaibhavi Upadhyay started her acting career in 2006. She acted in different TV shows, series, films, and many advertisements. Some of them are *Left Right Left* (2006), *C.I.D.* (2017), *Kya Qusoor Hai Amala Ka?*, and *Sarabhai vs Sarabhai*. She rose to fame in the role of Jasmine Mavani in the 2017 sitcom *Sarabhai vs Sarabhai* and was also nominated for an ITA Award for Best Actor (Female) Popular. Later she also acted in some films like *City Light* (2020), *Chhapaak* (Splash, 2020). She was a well-known face on the small screen and also in Gujarati theatre circles.

Her final Instagram profile's bio was, "I act for a living and live for acting."

—Kanchan Marathe



website <http://www.sparrowonline.org/>
FB: <https://www.facebook.com/sparrowngo/>



A Profound Keeper to Sanskrit Heritage: Ved Kumari Ghai (16 December 1931-30 May 2023)



Ved Kumari Ghai was an esteemed Sanskrit scholar whose lifetime of work in the field of ancient Indian culture and language made a profound and lasting impact on the realm of academia. Born in Jammu in 1931, Ved Kumari's deep passion for Sanskrit began early, leading her to pursue higher education at Banaras Hindu

University, where she earned both her MA and PhD. Her academic career spanned decades, during which she became known for her expertise in Sanskrit grammar, literature, and classical texts. She served as the head of the Sanskrit department at Jammu University, where her teaching shaped generations of students.

Ved Kumari's contributions also extended beyond India, as she was recognised internationally for her work on Panini's Sanskrit grammar. Throughout her career, she worked to preserve and promote Sanskrit, earning prestigious accolades like the Padma Shri in 2014. Her influence is also visible in the several scholars she mentored and the global efforts she initiated to keep the study of Sanskrit alive. Ved Kumari Ghai's passing in 2023 marked the loss of a scholar of immense knowledge and dedication. Her legacy as a promoter of Sanskrit and an educator will continue to inspire scholars for generations to come.

—Karen Sajan



A Film Mother: Sulochana Latkar (30 July 1928-4 June 2023)



Renowned actress Sulochana Latkar, known for her captivating performances in Hindi and Marathi cinema, passed away at 94 due to an age-related illness. This is not just a news about an actress but about an era, for Sulochana acted in more than 150 Marathi and more than 250 Hindi films.

Sulochana's original name was Nagabai for she was born on Nagapanchami day. But she was called Rangu by everyone. She was born in a village near Kolhapur. Her journey in films started as a negligible extra in Master Vinayak's Prafulla Pictures in Kolhapur. After Prafulla Pictures

shifted to Bombay, she was jobless. She got married to Abasaheb Chavan who was a friend of the great Marathi film director and producer Bhalji Pendharkar. So she joined Bhalji Pendharkar's Prabhakar Studio, where she initially did very small roles in films like *Maharathi Karna* (Great Warrior Karna, 1944) and *Valmiki* (1946). But Bhalji Pendharkar understood the qualities in her and he created a special character in his film *Sasurvas* (In-laws' Residence, 1946) for her and also gave her screen name 'Sulochana' meaning 'the one with the beautiful eyes'. Later she acted in many Marathi films like *Meeth Bhakar* (Salt Bread, 1949), *Chimani Pakhara* (Small Birds, 1952), *Vahinichya Bangadya* (Bangles of Sister-in-law, 1953), *Sangte Aika* (Listen What I Say, 1959), *Dhakti Jao* (Younger Sister-in-law, 1956), *Molkarin* (Maid, 1963), *Maratha Tituka Melvava* (Let All Marathi People Come Together, 1964), *Sadhi Manse* (Simple People, 1965) and many more. She ventured into Hindi cinema in the 1940s initially when her Marathi films used to be reproduced in Hindi, later she started getting roles in other Hindi films also. But because of her serene and unglamorous looks the roles she got were mostly in mythological or saint films. With advice from another veteran actress Lalita Pawar, she started accepting character roles. Her first major and unforgettable role in Hindi films was in the film *Sujata* (1959). She played the role of a mother in that film and left an indelible mark with her fine performance. Thus she became famous for her portrayal of warm and nurturing mother characters. She played mother to top heroes from Dev Anand and Dilip Kumar to Rajesh Khanna and Amitabh Bachchan in films like *Kati Patang* (A Free Kite, 1970), *Johny Mera Naam* (My Name is Johny, 1970), *Kasauti* (Criterion, 1974) and *Muqqadar Ka Sikandar* (King of Fate, 1978). She had often expressed her fondness for portraying motherly roles to actors and had said she shared a bond with them. On Bachchan's 75th birthday, she sent him a handwritten letter, which he shared on social media while paying tribute to her.

Apart from several awards she received for her different roles in the films, she was honoured with several top state and national awards. In 1997 she received Chitrapati V Shantaram Puraskar for her long career in film industry from Govt. of Maharashtra. In 1999 she received the prestigious Padma Shri, followed by the Maharashtra Bhushan award in 2001. Her significant contributions to Marathi cinema were recognised in 2003 when she was honoured with the Chitra Bhushan Award instituted by the Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Chitrapat Mahamandal, commemorating the birth anniversary of Baburao Painter, a founding figure in modern Marathi cinema.

Very few people know about the social contributions she made during different calamities. She helped with household

utensils to many families who lost their homes in floods. She helped many education institutes with fees and stationery for poor students. She also gave monetary help to many theatre and film workers. She was one of the trustees of Dr Kashinath Ghanekar Pratishthan through which financial help for medical expenses is provided to theatre workers and other artists.

—Sharmila Sontakke



A Guarding Force of Rabindra Sangeet and Dedication to Heritages: Banani Ghosh (1935-7 June 2023)



Banani Ghosh, a renowned Bengali musician and exponent of Rabindra Sangeet, passed away on 7 June 2023, leaving behind a profound legacy in Indian classical and folk music. Born in Mymensingh (now in Bangladesh), Banani Ghosh was introduced to music by her father, Prafulla Krishna Ghose, a renowned musician and poet. She received training in Hindustani classical music and was deeply influenced by the iconic Rabindra Sangeet exponent Kanika Banerjee, whose style she mirrored so closely that she earned the affectionate title of “*nakal mohar*.”

Banani’s formal music education at Rabindra Bharati University, combined with her mentorship under Dilip Kumar Roy, initiated the concretisation of her illustrious career. She rose to greatness in the 1970s, developing the start of a strong voice on All India Radio and Doordarshan, where her rendition of Rabindra Sangeet mesmerised audiences. Ghosh also created valid contributions globally, living in Switzerland and the United States, where she founded Antara, a Rabindrasangeet institution that trained thousands.

She celebrated the works of Rabindranath Tagore internationally, setting up the Rabindra Mela and staging memorable dance dramas like *Shapmochan* and *Bhanushingher Padavali*. Banani Ghosh’s passing marks the loss of a true ambassador of Bengali music, whose voice and work will continue to inspire generations of musicians and music lovers around the world.

—Karen Sajan

An Actress Forgotten: Asha Nadkarni (1943-29 June 2023)



Eminent yesteryear actor of Hindi and Marathi film industry Asha Nadkarni died on 29 June 2023 at the age of 80. She was suffering from kidney disease for a long time.

She hailed from Pune. She was born in a middle-class family of Saraswat Colony of Somvar Peth, Pune. Later the family shifted to Mumbai. From a very young age she was interested in

dance which led to her debut in film industry. V Shantaram gave her opportunity in the film *Mausi* (Maternal Aunt) (1958) when she was 15 years old. V Shantaram also gave her the screen name ‘Vandana’.

Later from 1958 to 1973 she acted in many Hindi films, such as *Navrang* (Nine Colours, 1959), *Guru Aur Chela* (Teacher and Disciple, 1973), *Chirag* (Light, 1969), *Farishta* (Angel, 1968), *Shreemanji* (Mister, 1968), *Inspector* (1970), *Dil Aur Muhobbat* (Love and Heart, 1968), *Albela Mastana* (Carefree and Joyful, 1967), *Begunaah* (Innocent, 1970). She acted in leading roles and also in supporting roles. She also made her impact in dance numbers. Apart from these Hindi films she also performed in Marathi films such as *Shree Balasaheb* (Mister Balasaheb, 1964), *Kshan Aala Bhagyacha* (Moment of Bliss, 1962), *Manala Tar Dev* (God is there if you believe, 1970) and others. She acted with great directors like Datta Dharmadhikari, Datta Chavan, Chand, B R Ishara, Ravi Khosla. She shared screen space with great actors like Sunil Dutt, Kishore Kumar, Asha Parekh, Sharmila Tagore in Hindi and actors like Kashinath Ghanekar and Raja Gosavi, in Marathi. *Yeh Sach Hai* (It is True, 1975) was her last film which was directed by B R Ishara. An expressive face, variations in acting and dance were her forte that made her famous. She left the film industry in the 1980s when she was diagnosed with kidney disease. The entertainment industry has a very short memory and soon she was forgotten. But her memorable performances are part of film history.

—Sharmila Sontakke



website <http://www.sparrowonline.org/>
FB: <https://www.facebook.com/sparrowngo/>

Queenie Hazarika, The Queen of Melodies: Sudakshina Sarma (8 August 1934-3 July 2023)



Sudakshina Sarma was an artiste whose vocal prowess and cultural resonance have carved an incredible mark on the musical heritage of Assam. A laureate of Sangeet Natal Akademi Award which she

received along with her husband for her contributions in Assamese music and Jyoti Sangeet, she was a maestro of melodies, more than just a singer; she was a custodian of cultural richness, a storyteller through music.

Nirupama Hazarika was born in Guwahati to Shantipriya and Neelakantha Hazarika. She was the fourth child in a family of ten, the younger sister of Bhupen Hazarika and the elder sister of Jayanta Hazarika, both of whom were musicians. She was nicknamed Queen as a child which lead to her moniker Queenie Hazarika during her singing career. She attended Pan Bazar High School before continuing her education at Handique Girls College.

Her older brother, Bhupen Hazarika, was a big influence on her interest in music; he introduced her to various Assamese cultural icons, including Rupkonwar Jyotiprasad Agarwala, Bishnu Prasad Rabha, and Phani Sarma, among others.

Queenie's career began at the age of 10, when she was given the opportunity to record two songs composed by Bishnu Prasad Rabha. That same year, she recorded two more songs, one of which was penned by her father; both songs went on to become popular hits. With a career spanning seven decades, the musical Queen has recorded songs in a range of Assamese music styles, both traditional and modern, including Borgeet, Kamrupi Lokgeet, and Goalpariya Lokogeet.

She has worked as a playback singer in various Assamese films, and some of her most well-known songs are *Jetuka Bolere*, *Kotha Aru Cur*, and *Sharatkalor Rati*. According to Queenie, her most decorated song to date is *E Joi Roghunandan*. She performed this song during Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Guwahati in 1946. Sarma and her husband sought to popularise Jyoti Sangeet, songs penned by Assamese writer and lyricist Jyoti Prasad Agarwala. The duo also collaborated on Rabindra Sangeet, which has songs composed by musician and Indian patriot Rabindranath Tagore. She collaborated with her husband on various albums, including

Kamalkuwari More Praneswari, Moyu Bane Jao Swamihe, Nahar Phule Nushuwai, Rati Puwaelre Kuruwai Pare Rao, and Ur Ur Ur Neel Akashat. The multi-talented Queenie was not just a playback vocalist but also an artist for All India Radio in Guwahati. She and her husband were also members of the Assam unit of the Indian People's Theatre Association.

Queenie married composer and musician Dilip Sarma in 1954, and her husband changed her name to Sudakshina Sarma following the wedding. The couple has two sons and one daughter. Her spouse died in 2008, but she continued to work in the music industry and died on July 3rd, 2023. The country, particularly the state of Assam, lamented the passing of a legend. Her singing and lovely melodies will endure forever.

—Aaroshi Suvarna



Politician Rajani Dugganna (8 August 1934-3 July 2023)



Rajani Dugganna was an Indian politician who served as the 24th mayor of Mangalore City Corporation. She was a member of the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), the party's first woman mayor, and the city corporation's fifth woman mayor. At the young age of twenty-three, she began her career in politics. She was a member of the local BJP Mahila Morcha, president

of standing committees, and the Mangalore City Corporation's mayor for one term. She has served as a member of the Surathkal Town Municipal Council for the last ten years and has spent the previous twelve years as an MCC member. She has never lost a local body election that she ran for.

She has three girls and one son from her marriage to K Dugganna.

—Aaroshi Suvarna



website <http://www.sparrowonline.org/>
FB: <https://www.facebook.com/sparrowngo/>

A Gandhian from Birth to Death: Karuna Phutane (1957-3 August 2023)



Sarvodaya activist Karuna Phutane died in Gopuri, Wardha, on 3 August 2023 at the age of sixty-six. Improving common people's life by living a simple life was the teaching given by Mahatma Gandhiji and Acharya Vinoba Bhave. There are very few who walk on this

path. Karuna Phutane was one of them.

She was born to Ranjitbhai Desai and Bindibai. Ranjitbhai was from Gujarat and Bindibai from Bihar. So one can say Karuna learnt to appreciate unity in diversity right from her birth. She imbibed Gandhi's thoughts from the family she was born into. She took active part in Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan Movement, the much-admired socio-agricultural movement, started by Vinoba Bhave in 1951, in which village landowners were persuaded to give land to the landless. She had not received any conventional school or college education for she studied in Brahma Vidya Mandir, under the guidance of Vinobha Bhave. Brahma Vidya Mandir is located within the Paunar Ashram, Maharashtra. It was founded in 1934. It was created for women to become self-sufficient and practice non-violence within the community. (It is now run by women from different states of India for common spiritual attainment. The women live a deeply contemplative life by contributing to the cause of the society. The women are actively involved in *rishi kheti* (earning livelihood from farming with simple, inexpensive tools, without the help of bullocks that are within the reach of the poor), spinning, manual labour and other works related to the management of the Ashram.)

She was proficient in Marathi, Gujarati, Sanskrit, Hindi and English. She was known as the spiritual daughter of Vinoba Bhave. She started spinning, weaving, writing, proof reading, publishing and doing agriculture and animal farming. She started her social activities with Shanti Sena started by Jayprakash Narayan. She got married to Vasant Phutane who was also one of the Shanti Sainiks working at Rawala in the Vidharba region of Maharashtra. They channelised their energies towards organic farming and an environment-friendly lifestyle. Karuna taught environment science in colleges at Warud and Shendurjana Ghat and convinced many of her students to persuade their parents to switch over to organic farming. She was also deeply concerned about the

indiscriminate felling of trees in the area.

The couple also conducted Live with Nature programmes during holidays. She was active in forming women's groups, starting public libraries and leading anti-alcohol movements. In 2008 she took over the responsibility of Gram Seva Mandal and set an example for making administration activities transparent.

She held important positions in the organisations such as Anandaniketan at Sevagram, Maharogi Seva Samiti at Dattapur, Magan Sangrahalay, Dharamitra etc.

Her life was truly Gandhian in its ideals, simplicity and devotion. There are very few left whose lives are like lamps shining with the oil of Gandhian teachings. One of them has been extinguished.

—Sharmila Sontakke



Mahbanoo Tata: Iranian Queen of Statistics (26 April 1942-7 August 2023)



Mahbanoo Tata, an Indian-born Iranian statistician, is broadly recognised as a pioneering figure in modern statistics in Iran. Born in Bombay into a Zoroastrian family, she went on to earn her Ph.D in statistics from Purdue University in 1967. After completing her studies, Mahbanoo Tata moved to Iran, where

she became instrumental in shaping the development of statistical education and research. Her career was etched by her teaching at illustrious institutions such as Sharif University of Technology, Iran Azad University, and Allameh Tabatabai University, where she introduced new statistical methods to a generation of scholars. Mahbanoo Tata's work granted her the title "Mother of Statistics of Iran" due to her immense influence on the country's statistical community.

A revered member of international scientific organizations, including the International Institute of Statistics, her contributions to statistical education and research are still felt today. Her mentorship nurtured myriad students who went on to contribute to the field. Her customs continue to inspire statisticians and scholars, enabling her work to remain leading for years to come.

Mahbanoo Tata's demise in August 2023 leaves a significant void in the academic community,

—Karen Sajan

A legacy of politics and social justice: Nibedita Pradhan (7 July 1963-10 August 2023)

Nibedita Pradhan was a transformative figure in Odisha's political landscape, most notably recognised as the first woman mayor of Cuttack, a role she held from 2004 to 2009. Born on July 7, 1963, Nibedita Pradhan dedicated her life to public service, working tirelessly to improve the lives of her constituents. As a Member of the Odisha Legislative Assembly, she brought about considerable reforms that enhanced urban development and infrastructure, improving the living conditions of Cuttack's citizens.

Nibedita Pradhan was also a staunch advocate for education, healthcare, and women's rights, intensifying social justice throughout her career. Her leadership brought significant progress in empowering marginalised communities and advancing gender equality. Her work as the mayor involved numerous initiatives that led to the growth of the city and its people, cementing her legacy as a forward-thinking leader.

Nibedita Pradhan's untimely demise at the age of 60 left a deep impact on the state's political community. Her contributions, however, will stay an enduring part of Odisha's improvement, and her commitment to service continues to inspire future generations of leaders committed to social change.

—Karen Sajan

**An Important Voice in Marathi Literature: Ambika Sarkar (29 January 1932-10 August 2023)**

With the death of Marathi short story writer and translator Ambika Sarkar Marathi literature world has lost a writer who gave voice to the emotions of women. Educated women who were trying to follow modern thoughts and advancement coming with Independence are central characters of Ambika Sarkar's writings. Ambika Sarkar born as Ambika Bhide in Mumbai, completed her graduation from Wilson College. Later she did her MA in Economics from University of Bombay's School

of Economics. She was a professor of Economics in Elphinstone College (from 1955 to 1960) and later in Sydenham College (till her retirement in 1992).

Around her college days (during 1952-1953) she wrote seven or eight stories one after the other. One of those stories even received a prize in a competition. She was a voracious reader which turned her into a writer. She has many short story collections to her credit like *Chahul* (Indication, 1980), *Pratiksha* (Waiting, 1981), *Shantavan* (Appeasement) and novels like *Eka Shwasache Antar* (Distance of a Breath, 1990) and *Anta Na Arambhahi* (Neither End nor Beginning, 2008) to her credit. Her writing was woman-centered. Readers appreciated the protagonists of her books who were women who wanted to live by breaking traditional notions of human relationships. Her language was precise and sober and never loud and maudlin. Her short stories were published in magazines like *Satyakatha*, *Hans* and *Deepavali*, which are considered standard literary magazines of Marathi. Theosophy and Buddhism were her subjects of interest. Other than her literary work she also translated books in Marathi. She translated *The History of My Going for Refuge* written by Sangharakshita and *Bodhisattva Ideal* edited by Sangharakshita in Marathi respectively as *Mazya Sharan Gamanacha Itihas* and *Bodhisattva Adarsh*. She co-translated Esther David's novel *The Walled City* as *Tatabandi* with Gauri Deshpande and translated the novel *The Reader* by Bernhard Schlink in Marathi as *The Reader* and a novella *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry as *Chhota Rajkumar*.

Ambika Sarkar was not a prolific writer but whatever she has written will remain as a very important part of Marathi literary history.

—Sharmila Sontakke

**Melody of Mappilapattu: Vilayil Faseela (1959/1960-12 August 2023)**

Vilayil Faseela was a celebrated Mappilapattu singer from Kerala, whose melodious voice still echoes in the hearts of many fans and one who made the cultural tapestry of the region known to people worldwide. Born as Vilayil Valsala in Malappuram district, she began her journey of music in the early 1970s while still in the fifth grade. Her career spans over four decades; she performed over 5,000 songs, leaving an indelible mark on the Mappila music genre. One of her

popular works includes her collaboration with V M Kutty, which also popularized Mappilapattu beyond traditional audiences.

Faseela's services have been honoured with numerous awards, including the Kerala Mappila Kala Academy's Lifetime Achievement Award. She also contributed her voice to films like Mailanchi/Mylandhi and 1921, demonstrating versatility. After marrying T K Muhammadali, she converted to Islam and took the name Faseela Mohammedali, balancing her personal and artistic lives. Her passing on 12th August 2023 in Calicut at 63 marked the end of an era, yet her passionate melodies continue to resonate, inspire, and unite listeners across generations.

—Pritika Mehta



A Balancing Act: Sudharani Jena (6 February 1942-22 August 2023)



Sudharani Jena was a pioneering figure in the Odia film industry. A doctor by profession and an artist by passion, Sudharani Jena began her illustrious acting career in the 1960s, debuting in *Parinama*, a film by Kabiraj Krushnachandra

Tripathy Sharma. Her performances in classics like *Gapa Hele Bi Sata* (Story, though, is True, 1976), *Ram Balram* (1980), *Kaveri* (1980), *Jhiati Sita Pari* (The Girl is like Sita, 1980) and *Topae Sindura Di Pata Sankha* (A Drop of Sindoor and a Pair of Conch Bangles, 1980) earned her numerous accolades, including the Best Actress award for four consecutive years—a testament to her extraordinary talent and dedication.

Despite a brief hiatus, she returned to the silver screen in 1976, carving a niche with her versatility and charm. Beyond her cinematic achievements, Sudharani Jena's unique ability to balance her medical profession with her passion for acting reflects her multifaceted brilliance. She will be remembered as an inspiration, both on and off the screen.

—Pritika Mehta



Versatile Actor: Seema Deo (27 March 1942-24 August 2023)



Versatile actor in Marathi and Hindi film industry, Seema Deo was born as Nalini Saraf on 27 March 1942 in Girgaum, Bombay. She was living in a chawl in Girgum. Initially she was not interested in acting in the films. She had immense love for dance. But people told her mother to enroll her in films when she was 16. She went to the studio, and passed the screen test. And that is how she started her journey in films in the late 1950s and early

1960s. She made her debut in the Marathi film *Jagachya Pathivar* (On the back of the World) in 1960 directed by Raja Paranjape and in Hindi film *Miya Bibi Razi* (Husband and Wife are in Agreement, 1960). She considered Rajabhau Paranjape as her Guru, under his directorship she learnt acting, body language, dialogue delivery etc. And she always with respect gave him the credit. She was working in the films before and after her marriage also. She worked with great artists of Indian film industry like Sanjeev Kumar, Ashok Kumar, Meena Kumari, Rekha, Balraj Sahni, Rajesh Khanna, Amitabh Bachchan and more.

Seema Deo was married to veteran Marathi film director and actor Ramesh Deo, and together they have been an influential couple in the Indian film industry. They have two sons, both are active in film industry. She quickly gained popularity from her acting skills and versatile performances. Over the years, she has appeared in numerous Marathi and Hindi films, earning critical acclaim and a loyal fan following. Some of Seema Deo's notable Marathi and Hindi films include *Jagachya Pathivar* (On the back of the World, 1960), *Miya Bibi Razi* (Groom and Bride are Agreed, 1960), *Vardakshina* (Dowry, 1962), *Anand* (Happiness, 1971), *Naseeb Apna Apna* (Everybody's Fate, 1986), *Jetaa* (Winner, 2010) and so on.

Apart from acting, Seema Deo also ventured into film production along with her husband Ramesh Deo. They have produced several successful Marathi films together under their banner, such as *Ya Sukhanno Ya* (Let Happiness Come, 1975), *Sarja* (1987), *Jeeva Sakha* (Close Friend, 1991), *Chor Chor* (A Thief, 1992), *Chal Gammat Karu* (Let's Have Fun, 1994), *Vasudev Balwant Phadke* (2008), *Jetaa* (Winner, 2010). Throughout her career, Seema Deo has portrayed a wide range of characters, showcasing her versatility as an actress. She has won several awards and accolades for her contributions to Indian cinema, including the prestigious

Maharashtra State Film Award for Best Actress in 1964 for her role in the film *Pahu Re Kiti Vaat* (How Long To Wait?) She has also been awarded with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2022.

Seema Deo's dedication to her craft and her commitment to quality cinema have made her one of the most respected actresses in the Indian film industry. Even though she has done more work in regional cinema, her talent and performances have earned her a special place in the hearts of audiences across the country.

Such a talented actress passed away on 24th August 2023 at the age of 81. She was suffering from Alzheimer's disease in the last years.

—Kanchan Marathe



Tower of Strength and Courage: Sarojini Balanandan (15 May 1938-29 August 2023)



Sarojini Balanandan was a prominent figure in Kerala's political landscape and a tireless advocate for women's and workers' rights in Kerala. Born in Shaktikulangara, Kollam, to Kesavan and Narayani, Sarojini was deeply influenced by notions of social justice and equity from an early age. Her marriage to the

prominent communist leader E. Balanandan in 1957 marked the beginning of a life dedicated to activism and service. Even as a young woman, Sarojini displayed remarkable resilience, balancing her responsibilities at home and work during challenging times, including the Emergency, when her husband was forced to go underground due to his involvement in labor strikes.

Sarojini began her career as a clerk at the Ashoka Textile Workers' Cooperative in Aluva and later worked as a dairy farmer to support her family. Her political journey gained momentum in the 1970s when she became a leading voice in organising women in working families. One of her most notable contributions was her involvement in the fight against the hoarding of essential goods in Ernakulam Broadway, which had caused steep price hikes. Despite facing violent opposition and physical assault during the strike, Sarojini and her fellow activists emerged victorious, forcing traders to reduce prices.

Her activism extended to the labour movement, where she participated in numerous rallies, including the CITU's all-India strike in 1986, during which she sustained serious injuries. Undeterred, Sarojini continued her mission, becoming the Panchayat President of Kalamassery (now a municipality) from 1979 to 1984, where she was celebrated as the region's first woman administrator. Her leadership roles expanded further when she became the state president of the Mahila Association in 1983, holding the position for 14 years, and later serving as its All-India vice president. In 1985, she joined the CPI(M) State Committee, a position she held for 27 years, contributing significantly to Kerala's political landscape.

Sarojini's impact extended beyond activism and politics. As Chairperson of the State Social Welfare Board from 1996 to 2001, she implemented initiatives to improve the lives of women and marginalized communities. Even after stepping down from the state committee in 2012, she remained active in public life, participating in protests and strikes whenever her health allowed. Her steadfast commitment to social justice endured until her final days, exemplified by her involvement in party activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

She leaves a legacy of courage, determination, and unwavering dedication to the causes she believed in. Her contributions to women's empowerment, workers' rights, and social equity have left an indelible mark on Kerala's history, inspiring countless individuals to continue the fight for a just and equitable society.

—Pritika Mehta



Choosing Death: Aparna P Nair (30 November 1989-31 August 2023)



Malayalam cine-serial actor 34-year-old Aparna was very active on Instagram. Just a few hours before her death she posted her daughter's photograph with the caption: "My Unni, playful little girl." Who could imagine that she would hang herself a few hours later? Aparna hanged herself in her house in Karamana Thali.

Aparna's sister filed a complaint saying that her husband Sanjith's excessive drinking and neglect forced her to take this drastic step.

She had been a part of a few TV serials and some well-reviewed films. *Chandanamazha* (Rain of Sandalwood, 2014—

18), *Atmasakhi* (Close Friend, 2016–18), and; *Meghatheertham* (Rain, 2009), *Mudhugauv* (Kiss, 2016), *Mythily Veendum Varunnu* (Mythily Comes Again, 2017), *Achayan* (Elder Brother, 2017), *Neeranjana Pookkal* (Pure Flowers, 2017), *Devasparsham* (The Divine Touch, 2018) *Pen Masala* (2018), *Kodathi Samaksham Balan Vakeel* (Advocate Balan Present Before the Court, 2019), *British Bungalow* (2019), *Nalla Vishesham* (Good Occasion, 2019), and *Kalki* (2019) are some of the T v serials and films she has acted in.

In her last call to her mother, she sounded extremely depressed. She leaves behind two young daughters. Her decision to end her life has shocked the film industry. It takes a lot of courage to die but even more to orphan two innocent children.

—Asmita Deshpande



Sharing the Joy of Music: Malini Rajurkar (8 January 1941-6 September 2023)



The country has lost one of the finest exponents of Hindustani classical vocalist of Gwalior Gharana, with the death of Malini Rajurkar. Born and brought up in a middle-class home in Rajasthan, Malini graduated in mathematics from the Savitri Girls' High School and College, Ajmer. After her graduation she taught

mathematics in the same school for three years. But elementary music classes revealed the talent of Malini. With a three-year scholarship she completed her Sangeet Nipun from the Ajmer Music College. During these three years she studied music under the guidance of Govindrao Rajurkar and his nephew, who was to become her future husband, Vasant Rao Rajurkar. Vasant Rao served as the Principal of Government Music College at Ramkote, Hyderabad. So, they shifted to Hyderabad.

She received *taalim* of Gwalior Gharana but also absorbed good musical qualities of stalwarts of other Gharanas such as Pt. Kumar Gandharva and Pt. Jeetendra Abhisheki. According to her, "You get nowhere if you just copy your guru. Change is part of growth. Do Bhimsen (Joshi) or Jasraj sound the same over the years? You must add something of your own to make your style original." So, she created her own style. She was famous for khayal as well as Tappa (a

semi-classical form of vocal music having its origin in folk music) and Tarana singing and music lovers cannot forget her singing of Marathi Natya Sangeet. She performed in many important music festivals of India such as Gunidas Sammelan (Mumbai), Tansen Samaroh (Gwalior), Sawai Gandharva Festival (Pune), and Shankar Lal Festival (Delhi) and many more. She forged a special connection with the audience in Pune at the annual Sawai Gandharva festival for nearly five decades. While paying tribute to Malini Rajurkar, Pandit Bhimsen Joshi's son Shriniwas Joshi said, "She was pregnant when she sang for the first time at Sawai Gandharva. Panditji tuned her tanpura which calmed her nerves." She also toured the US, UK, Canada and the Middle East and regularly performed on Akashvani and Doordarshan. She never wanted her singing to interfere with her family responsibilities and that is the reason she has no disciples. Though she happily guided many upcoming artistes, she did not take regular classes. Many awards and felicitations were conferred upon her such as FIE Foundation Award (Ichalkaranji, 1991), Felicitation by World Marathi Convention (1999), Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (2001), Andhra Academy Award (2002), Tansen Puraskar by Government of Madhya Pradesh (2005), Ustad Hafiz Ali Award (2005), Master Dinanath Mangeshkar Memorial Award (2008), Manik Verma Award by Pune Bharat Gayan Samaj (2010). But what she considered greater awards were great artistes like Kumar Gandharva, Mallikarjun Mansur, K G Ginde, Bhimsen Joshi, Jeetendra Abhisheki, Prabha Atre, Manik Verma coming to hear her and appreciating her. Gowri Ramnarayan wrote an article on Malini Rajurkar entitled "She is a connoisseur's delight" in The Hindu on 19th March 2004 in which Malinitai said "I sing because it gives me *anand*, joy. I want to give that *anand* to others."

It was at her husband Vasant Rao's insistence and support that Malinitai started performing. With the death of her husband, she stopped performing. Age-related ailments began to affect her later and she passed away in Hyderabad at the age of 82. She is survived by two daughters. As per her wish, her body was donated to Osmania Medical College.

Someone who gave so much joy to others through her music always leaves behind musical memories that never fade away. Memories of Malini Rajurkar's music will live on.

—Sharmila Sontakke



A Rare Guru: Manik Bhide (1935-13 September 2023)



In Hindusthani Classical Music, The Guru Shishya Parampara has been the most important and the only way to carry forward this glorious tradition through generations. A disciple learns the approach, the nuances of music from his / her Guru. According to many eminent musicians and artistes, knowledge obtained without a Guru is incomplete. A guru's place is very important in Indian classical music. Hence, the death of an artiste

like Manik Bhide is not just the loss of a fine vocalist but also the loss of a great Guru of Jaipur-Atrauli gharana. Born in Kolhapur in 1935, Maniktai received encouragement from her parents to take up classical singing. In Kolhapur, she started learning at the age of 15 from Madhukarrao Sadolikar of Jaipur Gharana. She later learnt from Manik Verma in Pune for a few months. After her marriage to scientist Govind Bhide, she shifted to Mumbai. Through a family friend she went to meet Mogubai Kurdikar but instead she met Kishori Amonkar and became her student. She learnt from Kishoritai for 15 years and also accompanied her in many music concerts all over India.

Her musical journey was not that easy for she was living in a joint family. Though she was a great follower and admirer of Kishoritai, Kishoritai was a temperamental person and this created a strain in their relationship and Maniktai discontinued learning from Kishoritai. She decided to devote her time to teaching. She performed in many well-known classical music conferences, but considering her musical merit, her performing career was not as rigorous as other artistes of her times. She did sing regularly for the radio and recorded her music. Her renditions of many raagas, such as of Bihag and Nayaki Kanada are beautiful. Maniktai was a well-known Guru of her Gharana legacy. She wanted her daughter Ashwini Bhide learn music from Mogubai Kurdikar, but Mogubai suggested that she herself was capable of teaching Ashwini. So, she started teaching Ashwini the Jaipur-Atrauli gayaki. She had also taught many other students which include Geetika Varde-Qureshi, Vandana Katti, Dr. Jyoti Kale, Sveta Hattangdi Kilpady, Dr. Nishad Matange, Meenal Bhide, Maya Dharmadhikari, Sandhya Deshmukh and many others.

She received Manik Varma Puraskar conferred by Manik Varma Pratishthan in 2004. For her contribution to classical music she was honoured with Pt. Bhimsen Joshi Lifetime Achievement Award by the Government of Maharashtra in 2018.

The worst that can happen to a musician is to be afflicted by Parkinson's disease. And it happened to Maniktai. She died a slow death at her house at the age of 88. We are fortunate that when we listen to Ashwini Bhide we can think of her mother.

—Sharmila Sontakke



The Legacy of a Carnatic Virtuoso: Sikkil Neela (9 September 1938-17 September 2023)



Sikkil Neela was a notable figure in Indian classical music, known for her extraordinary skill and contribution to Carnatic music. Born into a family steeped in musical tradition, she and her sister

Sikkil Kunjumani formed the legendary Sikkil Sisters duo. Together, they mesmerised audiences across the globe with their mastery of the flute, creating music that was both intricate in rhythm and profound in its emotional depth.

Neela's career was adorned with numerous accolades highlighting her dedication to her craft and exceptional talent. Her artistry was not just limited to performances; she also played a pivotal role as a mentor to aspiring musicians, ensuring that the rich tradition of Carnatic music would endure for generations to come. Her teaching was marked by the same passion and precision that defined her performances, leaving an impact on her students.

Neela's passing on 17 September 2023 is an immeasurable loss to the music world. However, her legacy remains alive through her timeless recordings and the countless musicians she inspired. As a torchbearer of the Carnatic music tradition, Sikkil Neela will forever be remembered for her contributions to the art form and the joy her music brought to listeners worldwide.

—Pritika Mehta



Memories that Come with a Papad: Jaswantiben Jamnadas Popat (1930-21 September 2023)



A successful entrepreneur who was inspiration to all women passed away leaving behind a big brand named Lijjat.

Jaswantiben was a very ordinary semi-

literate woman staying in a chawl of Mumbai with her family. There were many such middle-class families staying in that chawl. She and the women of other families started realising that they should earn so that they can contribute in their household incomes. She could not get a job as she was semi-literate. So she took the initiative with six other women and started a small business of papad-making, the skill all of them knew. In 1956 they started this business with an investment of Rs. 80, which she had borrowed from a social worker. They made four packets which they sold to a neighbouring shop. Initially, the business saw many ups and downs. But subsequently, the demand for their papads increased considerably and today this papad brand has become a popular household name all over the country.

When the business was set up first, the company was named Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad. Later in 1962, it was renamed Lijjat Papad. This women-centric effort started by Jaswantiben has now grown into a business with a turnover of Rs. 1600 crores with 60 branches that give employment to 45000 women across the country which has made them self-reliant. Jaswantiben did not have any knowledge about running a business when she started. But she gathered up courage and had the perseverance to make a profit out of her business. With hard work, her business grew so much that it is now known even internationally. Currently, the papad is sold all over the country as well as exported to 15 other countries including England, the USA, Singapore, Thailand, and the Netherlands. The business now is not limited to only papads but also other household items such as detergent powder, masalas and flours. It is a business which is not just a business but through this Jaswantiben has empowered women. Many women literate/illiterate/semi-literate and urban/ rural began to earn an income. As Lijjat believes in the philosophy of Sarvodaya and collective ownership, all the employees are considered co-owners. This has built tremendous confidence in all of them.

With tireless hard work, a small seed sown by Jaswantiben to earn an income has now become a huge tree. Jaswantiben

had not even dreamt of this but with so many people to water with care the seed sown, the tree is now firmly standing on the soil with sturdy roots. In recognition of Jaswantiben's initiative, hard work and as one of the founders of Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad, a women workers' cooperative, Government of India honoured her with Padma Shree in 2021.

People may not know this entrepreneur by her name Jaswantiben Jamnadas Popat but there is hardly anyone who has not tasted Lijjat Papad! Lijjat Papad will truly live after Jaswantiben reminding us of her every time we bite into a crispy Lijjat Papad.

—Sharmila Sontakke



Bringing Narratives to Life on Stage: Tripurari Sharma (1956-1 October 2023)



Tripurari Sharma was celebrated for her pathbreaking contributions as a director, playwright, and educator. A graduate of the prestigious National School of Drama (NSD), she redefined contemporary Indian theatre with her innovative approaches and unwavering focus on social issues. Tripurari's work was

deeply rooted in the narratives of marginalised communities, particularly women, and she used the stage to bring their stories to light. Her plays, characterised by their emotional depth and poignant themes, struck a chord with audiences across the nation, urging them to reflect on pressing societal concerns.

Tripurari's influence extended beyond her creative works. As an educator and mentor, she nurtured a new generation of theatre practitioners, instilling a sense of social responsibility and artistic integrity in them. Her dedication to the arts was recognized with numerous accolades, including the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, a testament to her enduring impact on Indian theatre.

The legacy she leaves behind—in her groundbreaking works and the countless lives she touched—continues to inspire and challenge societal norms, ensuring her spirit remains a part of the Indian theatre

—Pritika Mehta



Lights, Camera, Action! Director's Cut: P Jayadevi (1958-4 October 2023)



P Jayadevi was a groundbreaker in Tamil cinema, popularly known for being one of the first women directors in the Tamil film industry. With a career spanning acting, directing, producing, and screenwriting, she carved a path for women in a male-dominated field. Beginning her journey as a theatre artist and later transitioning to films, Jayadevi appeared in over 20 films before fulfilling her dream of becoming a director. As a producer, she played a pivotal role in the industry, creating over 15 films and introducing incredible technicians like P C Sreeram and Velu Prabhakaran.

Her directorial debut, *Nalam Nalamariya Aaval* (I am Okay, Want to Know if You Are, 1984), marked the beginning of a prolific career throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Jayadevi's bold storytelling often explored challenging themes, as seen in *Puratchikkaaran* (Revolutionary, 2000), inspired by Periyar's teachings, and *Power of Women* (2005), which tackled gender dynamics and societal issues. While her work was not without challenges, including delayed productions and controversies, her determination and vision remained steadfast.

Her contributions as a pioneer and visionary continue to inspire filmmakers and audiences alike, leaving behind a story of resilience, creativity, and empowerment.

—Pritika Mehta



A Beacon of Resilience and Inspiration: Karthyayani Amma (1922-10 October 2023)



Karthyayani Amma was a remarkable woman whose story illustrates determination and the unyielding pursuit of knowledge. Born in Cheppad, Haripad, Kerala, she was unable to complete her education as a child due to her family's financial constraints. Despite life's hardships—working as a street sweeper and maid, raising six children, and living in a social housing facility in her later years—her love for learning never waned. At the age of 96, inspired by her daughter and guided by her great-

grandchildren, Karthyayani Amma achieved national acclaim by acing the Kerala State Literacy Mission's Aksharalaksham programme, scoring 98 out of 100 marks. Her words, "The tests were way too easy for me," captured the essence of her indomitable spirit.

Her extraordinary journey made her a national icon, earning accolades like the Nari Shakti Puraskar, India's highest civilian honor for women, and recognition as a Commonwealth of Learning Goodwill Ambassador. From meeting film stars to receiving a laptop from Kerala's education minister, she inspired millions with her unwavering zest for life. Her story, immortalised in Vikas Khanna's documentary *Bare Foot Empress*, continues to inspire generations to pursue their dreams, regardless of age or circumstance. Karthyayani Amma's legacy will forever resonate as a testament to the transformative power of education and determination.

—Pritika Mehta



A Talented Star Gone Too Soon: Renjusha Menon (1988-30 October 2023)



Renjusha Menon was an Indian actress who made her mark in Malayalam television and cinema. Her artistic journey began with her debut in the popular serial *Sthree*, which opened doors to other celebrated roles in series like *Nizhalattam*, *Magalude Amma*, *Balamani*, and *Ente Maathavu*. Renjusha's charm and talent were not confined to the small screen; she also ventured into Malayalam cinema, debuting in the 2006 film *Classmates*. Her noteworthy performances in films like *Thalappavu* (Turban, 2008), *Marykkundoru Kunjaadu* (Mary Had a Little Lamb, 2010), and *City of God* (2011) solidified her reputation as a gifted actress. Beyond acting, Renjusha was also a trained classical dancer with a degree in Bharatanatyam, reflecting her deep-rooted connection to the performing arts.

Renjusha's sudden and tragic passing on 30 October 2023 at the age of 35 left the entertainment industry and her fans in shock. She was found in her Thiruvananthapuram apartment, where she had been living with her family, who mourn the loss of a vibrant and talented soul. Renjusha will be remembered for her captivating performances, her dedication to her craft, and the impact she made on Malayalam entertainment in her brief but impactful career.

—Pritika Mehta

Queen of Classical Culture: Leela Omchery (31 May 1929 –1 November 2023)



Leela Omchery was a revered Indian classical singer, musicologist, and writer whose varied contributions to classical music, dance, and academia have left an unforgettable mark on Indian culture. Recognised as the receiver of the prestigious Padma Shri award, Leela Omchery's

work perfectly blends tradition with innovation, ensuring the perpetuation of India's rich classical heritage.

Born into a family deeply rooted in music in Thiruvattar, Tamil Nadu, Leela Omchery's early exposure to Carnatic music came under the tutelage of Thiruvattar Arumugham Pillai Bhagavathar, her grandmother, and her mother. Alongside her younger brother, well-known playback singer Kamukara Purushothaman, Leela Omchery cultivated her talents, laying the foundation for a lifetime of musical excellence. Her academic journey was as illustrious as her musical career. She earned degrees in Carnatic and Hindustani music from institutions like Government College for Women, Punjab University, Meerut University, and Delhi University, where she also completed her PhD.

Leela Omchery held esteemed positions, including Professor at Kamukara School of Music and the University of Delhi, where she mentored numerous MPhil and PhD students. A member of prominent cultural boards such as AIR, Doordarshan, and ICCR, her influence extended beyond performance to shaping the discourse around Indian classical arts.

She was married to the acclaimed writer Omchery N N Pillai and resided in New Delhi. She nurtured a family legacy that includes her daughter, Deepti Omchery Bhalla, a noted classical dancer. Her contributions will continue to inspire generations of artistes and scholars.

—Pritika Mehta

First Western Odisha Rajya Sabha Member: Saraswati Pradhan (30 May 1925- 1 November 2023)



Saraswati Pradhan, who was an ardent advocate of gender equality and who encouraged participation of women in politics passed away at the age of 98. Saraswati Pradhan was an eminent personality from western Odisha who had entered politics. Her political career was an extremely successful one. Saraswati was the first woman Deputy Education Minister

from western Odisha. She was also the first Odisha woman politician elected to the Rajya Sabha as a member of the Indian National Congress. She was an MLA from Bhatoli constituency in Bargarh district from the Congress party for two terms in 1961 and 1967. In 1971, she once again contested under the Biju Pattnaik-led Utkal Congress party but lost. However, she was elected as a Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha and remained in the Rajya Sabha from 1972-1978. She was the chairperson of State Social Welfare Board, Odisha.

She was born on 30 May 1925 in Kendupali village, a small village of Bargarh district. After completing her Bachelor of Education, she began working as a teacher in Lady Lewis Girls' High School in Sambalpur and later worked for a few years in George High School in Bargarh. In 1957, she became the headmistress of Kamgan High School. She was married to Duriyodhan Pradhan. Saraswati passed away after undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Bhubaneswar. She is survived by her two sons and two daughters.

Her journey as a political leader with commitment towards people and their causes should be a learning experience to many young future leaders in Odisha.

—Asmita Deshpande

DO VISIT OUR WEBSITE

website <http://www.sparrowonline.org>

JOIN US ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/sparrowngo/>

Positive change is possible only
when we understand women's
lives, history and struggles for
self-respect and human
dignity.

The Endearing Grandmother of Malayalam Cinema: Subbalakshmi (21 April 1936-30 November 2023)



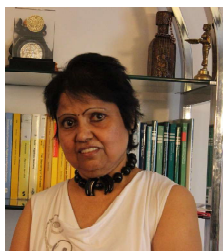
Subbalakshmi was a cherished figure in Malayalam cinema, known for her heartwarming grandmother roles and multifaceted contributions as an actor, singer, and composer. Starting her film career in her sixties with *Nandanam* (2002), she quickly became a household name with memorable performances in movies like *Kalyanaraman*, *CID Moosa*, *Rappakal*, and Tamil and Telugu films, including *Vinnaithaandi Varuvaayaa* and *Ammani* (Will You Cross the Skies for Me? 2010). Subbalakshmi also left her mark in Hindi films like *Dil Bechara* (Poor Heart, 2020) and recently appeared in *Beast* (2022), demonstrating her enduring talent across languages and generations. Beyond acting, she was the first female composer at All India Radio in South India, a playback singer, and a dubbing artist, showcasing her versatility and dedication to the arts.

Off-screen, Subbalakshmi was deeply loved by her family, which included her daughter, actress Thara Kalyan, and granddaughter Sowbhagya Venkitesh, who shared the news of her passing. Her legacy spans over 75 films, 65 TV series, and numerous advertisements that brought her closer to audiences. Subbalakshmi's warmth, humour, dedication to her craft, and innocent, toothless smile leave a mark on Indian cinema, and her captivating presence will be fondly remembered for years to come.

—Pritika Mehta



Paving the Way for An Inclusive STEM Workforce: Lakshmibai Venkataramani (12 December 1944-2 December 2023)



Lakshmibai Venkataramani was also known as Lucky Venkataramani. In 1976, she earned her PhD. from the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in India. Through her life she showed that women can do best of the best in math and spent her professional life inspiring a generation of women mathematicians. Venkataramani Lakshmibai Venkataramani was emeritus professor at the department of mathematics at Northeastern University, Boston. She served for nearly

three decades. Her research was focussed on Algebraic Geometry and Representation theory, especially the theory of Flag Varieties and their Schubert subvarieties.

In 2012, The American Mathematical Society selected her as one of the inaugural fellows. Her research work was widely published and frequently sought at international level. She was the co-author of the monograph *Singular Loci of Schubert Varieties*; (Progress in Mathematics 182, Birkhäuser, 2000) with Mathematics professor Sara Billey. She also co-authored two monographs with Justin Brown: *Flag Varieties: An Interplay of Geometry, Combinatorics, and Representation Theory* (Texts and Readings in Mathematics 53, Hindustan Book Agency, 2009) and *The Grassmannian Variety: Geometric and Representation-Theoretic Aspects* (Developments in Mathematics 42, Springer, 2015).

As an educator or mentor, she was always eager to help her students and spend time for them especially encouraging young women studying and researching mathematics.

In an uncategorised article entitled “Honoring a Professor, Remembering His Mom” written on September 9, 2024, in the portal of Faculty Excellence, Research, Diverse and Inclusive Communities, Victoria Tsang pays a rich tribute to Lakshmibai Venkataramani and talks about how her son Girish Venkataramani would like to remember his mom. That article given below would be the most apt tribute to Lakshmibai's life and her work.

It is widely known that there's historically been a significant underrepresentation of women working in STEM fields. Even today in the United States, only 25.2 percent of employees in mathematical occupations are women. Northeastern Professor Emeritus of Mathematics Lakshmibai Venkataramani was one of the inspiring women who helped pave the way to a more inclusive STEM workforce.

Lakshmibai was born in 1944 in a remote, small town in southern India. She was always good at math, even as a young girl, but faced the obstacle of societal expectations when it came to pursuing a career in the field. At the time, women were expected to marry and become housewives.

“In the 1970s, being a mathematician as a woman was very difficult. Even today it's difficult, you're very much a minority,” says Girish Venkataramani, “But back then in India, it was unheard of.”

While Lakshmibai did get married, she never gave up on her love for math, earning her PhD while pregnant with Girish. She then resumed her career and followed her passions, leaving India to teach in Europe and later in America.

Lakshmibai joined Northeastern's mathematics department in 1987, teaching undergraduate and graduate classes and tackling algebraic geometry and representation theory research. Her work was widely published, and she was highly sought after to present at prestigious conferences.

Before retiring in 2019, Lakshmibai dedicated her time to being a role model and mentor, especially to young women studying math. She built meaningful relationships with many students as a professor and advisor, and helped shape their careers outside of the classroom. She even inspired several of her students to become professors themselves.

Lakshmibai passed away in 2023, but the impact she left on her students, Northeastern, and the mathematics community endures. As a world-renowned female mathematician, she inspired women everywhere by excelling in a traditionally male-dominated field. "She loved teaching and doing research," says Girish Venkataramani, her son. "It was through mathematics that she lived her life."

In honour of his mother's achievements, Girish established the **Lakshmibai Venkataramani Fund for Math Graduate Students**. The fund supports a fellowship that celebrates Lakshmibai Venkataramani's life, and her role in elevating women and people from diverse backgrounds to pursue careers in mathematics. The fellowship will be awarded to a graduate student pursuing a graduate assistantship in the math department, or to a mathematics graduate student who desires to attend professional development opportunities.

"It's a way to remember my mom and continue her legacy," says Girish. "Nothing more than math has been the love of her life, and I want to give the younger generations, especially students who are underprivileged, the opportunity to accomplish as much as my mom did during her life."

—C S Lakshmi

website <http://www.sparrowonline.org/>
FB: <https://www.facebook.com/sparrowngo/>

Golden Era's Leading Lady: Leena Sequeira (1937-8 December 2023)



Leena Sequeira, fondly known as Leelavathi, was an iconic actress and producer who predominantly worked in Kannada and Tamil cinema, with contributions

to Telugu, Malayalam, and Tulu films. With a career spanning over five decades and more than 600 films, she began her journey with *Nagakannika* (Serpent Girl, 1949) after a stint in theatre. Leelavathi was known for her powerful performances as a lead actress in classics like *Rani Honnamma*, *Bhakta Kumbara*, and *Santha Thukaram*, and for her impactful character roles in films such as *Gejje Pooje* (Anklet Ritual to Initiate into Prostitution, 1969) and *Naagarahaavu* (Cobra, 1972). Her collaborations with Rajkumar in diverse roles are particularly remembered. She was honoured with accolades including the Dr Rajkumar Award and Filmfare Awards for her outstanding contributions.

Born in Mura, Dakshina Kannada, Leelavathi overcame early hardships, including the loss of her parents at six, by pursuing her passion for dance and theatre. Transitioning to films, she captivated audiences with her talent and versatility. Beyond acting, she was a cherished figure in the industry and a source of inspiration for many.

—Pritika Mehta



Nurturing Children to Build a Nation: Shobha Bhagwat (29 August 1947-8 December 2023)



Shobha Bhagwat, a scholar of child psychology and writer who mainly wrote children's books, passed away in Pune at the age of 76.

Born and brought up in Mumbai, Shobha was very intelligent and she passed her SSC with very good marks. Knowing her inclination, her teacher suggested that she should pursue Arts Studies. So Shoba did her BA in English and MA in Marathi and Sanskrit. After marriage to architect Anil Bhagwat she went to America. Though she was working there and they were green card holders they decided to come back and

work in India. While returning they bought a van and travelled in the van around the U.S. and 30 different countries of Europe on their way back. They travelled almost 50,000 kms. This was a record in itself.

After a break of five years to raise her two children, she started working at the Indian Institute of Education (IIE), Pune, as a Research Assistant. During her tenure there she went to Brazil on an education programme organised by Government of India. In IIE she did research on adult literacy and informal education with Dr Chitra Naik, for which she worked with slum children and women from rural areas. This entirely changed her perspective on education.

Later she worked in Streevani where with the President of the organisation Dr Frances Maria Yasas, she took up research on Dalit women. The book *Dalit Purushanchya Atmasharitratil Stree-Pratima* (Images of Women in Autobiographies of Dalit Men, 1987) is the outcome of the seminar organised by Streevani. This book was edited by Shobha Bhagwat.

She became founder-director of Garware Bal Bhavan in 1985. She felt that lack of playgrounds for children was one of the biggest problems in all cities in India. Shobhatai worked to find an answer to this problem four decades ago and made it a reality. Bal Bhavan in Pune is a fun centre for children between the ages of 3 and 12. Various activities are conducted in this entertainment centre for children to play after school. This activity, which has been carried out on such a large scale, was a rare one not only in the country, but also in the world. This activity was not just limited to running a recreational centre, but Shobhatai and her team of 50 dedicated, trained child care professionals, utilised the centre as a base, to also mould the children into compassionate, articulate, clear-thinking individuals and also guide their parents into becoming socially aware, responsible adults through all its multifarious activities. Holistic development of children and child rights were issues that occupied her mind all her life. As training was also given on how to implement such activities throughout the year, more than twenty-five hundred trainees have started more than 350 Bal Bhavan centres in Pune alone. About fifty such centres have also been started in the state.

With Shobhatai's hard work, creativity and initiative, Bal Bhavan got recognition in and out of India. She proved through her studies, action programmes and her work, that parenting was a science, and an art. As her husband was not just an architect, but he was scholar of marriage counseling, together, she and her husband Anil Bhagwat, conducted more than 300 marriage counseling workshops in India, England and the US where they did the counseling to the young people those who wanted to get married and explained them the

meaning of marriage as a 'life partnership'. They also conducted more than 1000 parents' counseling workshops to build healthy relationship between parents and children.

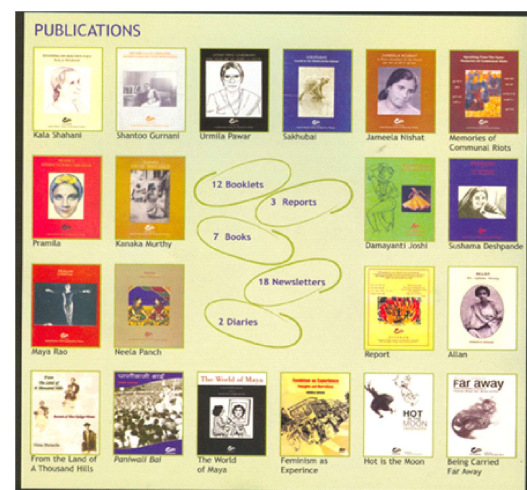
She also worked in the Advisory Committee of UNICEF for two years. She was connected to many educational institutions with different affiliations.

She was a regular writer in newspapers and has also participated in discussion programmes on Akashvani and television. She has written a few books for children such as *Aapli Mulay* (Our Children), *Garancha Paus* (Hailstone Rain), *Mul Navacha Sundar Koda* (A Nice Puzzle Called Child), *Saara Kahi Mulansathi* (Everything For Children), *Gammatjatra* (Fun Fair), *Amhi Gharache Raje* (We Are the King of Our House) (Drama), *Manjarachi Varat* (Wedding Procession of A Cat), *Bahurup Gandhi* (Polymorphous Gandhi), *Divaswapna* (Daydream), *Shikshan ani Shanti* (Education and Peace), *Mul Sarya Gavacha* (Child Belongs to the Whole Village), *Balmajur ani Shikshan* (Child Labour And Education), *Denara Jhad* (Donor Tree) are the translation works by her.

She was one of the founder trustees of *Miloon Saryajani*. In *Miloon Saryajani's* January 2024 issue there is a detailed tribute to her. In the same article there are two small articles written by her daughter Abha and son Shonil in which both of them mentioned their parents by their names as Anil and Shobha. That shows what a close-knit family theirs was.

It is always difficult to lose a mother who was your friend and whom you called by her name but she has left behind many precious memories for everyone in the form of her books. Continuing to promote her books will keep her alive for everyone.

—Sharmila Sontakke



A Prominent Childcare Provider with a touch of Healing Maternal Aid: Sailakshmi Balijepally (25 January 1974-16 December 2023)



Dr Sailakshmi Balijepally, a motivating Indian pediatrician and humanitarian, passed away on 16 December 2023 at the age of 49, left an indelible mark on the fields of child and maternal health. Raised in Secunderabad, India, she was deeply influenced by her parents, both doctors, and her elder sister, a cardiologist. Sailakshmi Balijepally gained her medical education at Gandhi Medical College, earning qualifications as both a physician and a surgeon.

Her staunch commitment to service became prominent during the 2001 Gujarat earthquake and the 2008 Bihar floods, where she volunteered to provide medical aid regardless of personal challenges. These experiences shaped her mission to address gaps in healthcare access, especially for children and mothers. In 2009, she founded the Ekam Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving child and maternal health and well-being in underserved communities.

In recognition of her exceptional leadership, Sailakshmi Balijepally was honoured with the prestigious Nari Shakti Award in 2015 by the President of India. Under her stewardship, the Ekam Foundation partnered with various organizations, including Royal Enfield, to enhance healthcare services and provide essential medical equipment. Her vision also transcended borders with the establishment of Ekam USA, further advancing her mission on a global scale. Dr. Sailakshmi Balijepally's compassion and dedication have transformed countless lives, ensuring her legacy continues to inspire generations to come.

—Karen Sajan



All SPARRPOW Newsletters are available online. You can download from

www. <http://www.sparrowonline.org/newsletters.htm>

website <http://www.sparrowonline.org/>
FB: <https://www.facebook.com/sparrowngo/>

A Life of Passion: Dr Anjali Kirtane (4 May 1953-18 December 2023)



Writer, researcher, short film maker Dr Anjali Kirtane breathed her last on Saturday, 18 December 2023 at Mumbai after a prolonged disease. She received the legacy of writing and researching from her mother, the famous poet Padmini Biniwale. She stood first in Mumbai University in BA and received Dadoba Pandurang Tarkhadkar Gold Medal of Mumbai University. Later she completed her PhD. Her thesis was "Moliere's Influence on Marathi Drama". She started writing in the eighties and she did a lot of writing in different genres such as poetry, short stories, creative articles, travelogues and biographical writings.

While writing biographical books she did thorough research and that was how she found out Anandbai Joshi's grave in America. She became famous because of her research work. While writing on personalities she felt that she should make documentaries on these personalities so that the work of these important personalities would reach more people. She trained as a documentary film maker and produced three biographical short films on three eminent personalities of Maharashtra: 1. *Dr. Anandibai Joshi: Kaal ani Kartutva* (Dr Anandibai Joshi: Life and Times), 1992, 2. *Sangeetache Suvarnayug* (Golden Age of Music) a film on Pt. D V Paluskar, 2015, 3. *Durga Bhagwat: Ek Shodh* (Durga Bhagwat: A Research Study) 2003, a film on writer Durga Bhagwat.

She was working as one of the sub editors of the 4th volume of Marathi Vangmay Kosh, a big project of Maharashtra Rajya Sahitya Sanskruti Mandal. From 1982 to 1986 she was working in the Marathi department of Popular Prakashan, but in order to focus fully on writing she left the job.

The biographical books *Dr Anandibai Joshi: Kaal Ani Kartutva*, 1997 (Dr Anandibai Joshi: Life and Times), *Bahurupini Durga Bhagwat* (Multitalented Durga Bhagwat), *Ganyogi Pt. D V Paluskar* are credited to her. Apart from these she wrote *Athavani Pravasachya* (Memories of Travel), *Cherry Blossom* (Travelogue of France) 1987, *Passion Flower* (Short Story Collection), 1984, *Mazya Manachi Rojnishi* (Diary of My Mind)(Novel), 1998, *Paulkhuna Laghupatachya* (Footmarks of Short Films), *Kaleidoscope*, 2000, *Hiravi Gaani* (Green Songs)(Poetry Collection), 1987, *Shadaj Ekantacha* (First Note of Solitude)(Poetry Collection) 2022, *Soyareek Gharashi* (Relation With the House) (Creative Articles Collection) 2023,

Veda Mulaga ani Shahani Makade (Mad Boy and Wise Monkeys)(Novel for Children) 1990, *Butakyanchya Deshat Gulliver* (Gulliver in the Nation of Dwarfs)(Children's Play), *Manaswini Pravasini* (A Sensible Traveller) (Research Articles) and *Abhijat Sangeetache Suvarnayug* (Golden Era of Classical Music)(On Classical Music).

She frequently wrote articles in the Diwali Issues. Even the 2023 Deepavali issue has her article in it. While she was getting treatment in the hospital, she was working on a book of biographical sketches *Athavanincha Payrav* (Sound of Footsteps of Memories) which was published by Majestic Prakashan just a few days before her demise.

Her documentary *Dr. Anandibai Joshi: Kaal ani Kartutva* got Best Short Film Award by Government of Maharashtra. She was felicitated with the Madhusudan Satpalkar Lifetime Achievement Award. *Mazya Manachi Rojnishi* received Best Novel Award from Majestic Publications.

—Sharmila Sontakke



A Bridge Between an Author and a Reader: Mrudula Joshi (1943-21 December 2023)



Mrudula Joshi, a well-known Marathi writer and editor and wife of Principal Prabhuram Joshi, passed away at the age of eighty.

She was actively involved in the Marathi publishing industry for the past five decades. After completing her Master's in Marathi and Sanskrit from Bombay University, Mrudula Joshi inadvertently entered the field of Marathi book

publishing. Since 1972, she was working as an assistant editor and then chief editor in the Popular Prakashan, a publishing house of veteran publisher Shri. Ramdas Bhatkal. She received many awards and appreciation for her untiring work as field editor and writer. In the year 2000, she received the distinction of Editor of the Year from Federation Indian Publishing, New Delhi.

There is a Marathi YouTube channel Chakori Baheril Charchaugh (Women Outside the Daily Grind) run by Medha Jambotkar, which has taken interviews of about 25 women working in various walks of life. Mrudula Joshi was interviewed on 25th February 2023 and what she spoke was an intense narration.

Mrudula Joshi always said, "An editor is a bridge between a publisher and an author or an author and a reader. Editors must understand the needs of authors, readers and publishers." The rapid changes taking place in the field of Marathi publishing are having an impact on the field of book publishing. Ramdas Bhatkal and Mrudula Joshi painstakingly compiled the first 'style book' in Marathi language, '*Popularche Ritipustak*' (2015). It is an important reference book for anyone working in the publishing business and is useful and essential for all writers, printers, publishers, typographers, journalists. Mrudula Joshi received a national award for this book. She also wrote a few more books like *Abhijan Priyajan* (Elite Loved Ones, 2015); *Priya Suhrida* (Dear Kindred Soul, 2009) including a biography of her husband entitled *Prabhuram* and a biography, *Pursuit and Rhetoric of Dinkar Kelkar: Preserving Heritage of India* all of which were well-received and appreciated.

Eighty years of work in the publishing field along with active participation in the Indian Memory Project where she has contributed some beautiful sepia toned photographs with narratives, make her life a rich tapestry of shared stories and images—a life enriched by Marathi culture and heritage and Marathi intellectuals who made it possible.

—Asmita Deshpande

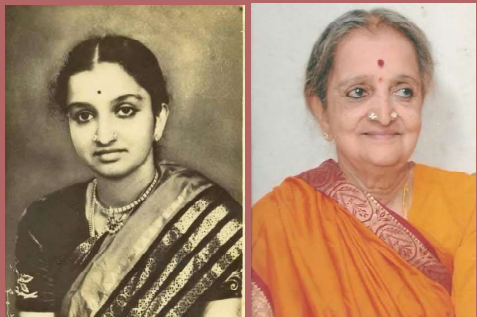


<https://www.sparrowonline.org/sparrow-in-audio/>

linktr.ee/sparrowinaudio - Here's the Linktree link that contains all the other links.

Happy Listening!

Remembering Dr GOWRI KUPPUSWAMY (Born 3 August 1931 - Died 6 June 2023)



Dr Gowri Kuppuswamy is a known name, who for over five decades was a vocalist in demand, performing at three concerts in a day. Be it any occasion, cultural event or marriage, Ganesha festival or any auspicious occasion, Gowri Kuppuswamy was the first choice. Such was the power of her soothing voice that transcended music lovers into a different world. It was a mix of classical music and Bhavageethe with only Rashtrakavi Kuvempu's poetries finding life in her melodious voice, the few lines of which she also sang.

Gowri Kuppuswamy was born on 3 August 1931 to R. Natesan and Balakujam couple in Pudukkottai district in Tamil Nadu. Having an inclination towards music as a child, it was her upbringing at her maternal grandparents home in Pudukkottai that naturally ingrained music in her. Gowri Kuppuswamy was 15

when she got married to Kuppuswamy on 3 June 1946 at Pudukkottai. Kuppuswamy was working as a scientist in Bengaluru, before he got a job in the newly founded Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), Mysuru, in 1950.

It seems to be divine intervention, as Mysuru, which had produced doyens of music, percussionists and composers like Mysore Vasudevacharya, Mysore Varadacharya, Veene Seshanna, Piteel Chowdiah to name a few, got a new addition in Gowri Kuppuswamy, who went on to set a new precedent in the field of music. Piteel Chowdiah, who heard her singing, coaxed her to perform at Bidaram Krishnappa Sri Rama Mandira, Shivarampet in Mysuru.. A known name already, Chowdiah was smitten by the mellifluous voice of Gowri Kuppuswamy. He encouraged her further and since then there was no looking back for Gowri Kuppuswamy.

Wadiyars, the royal family of Mysore, during whose rule, stalwarts in music were produced under their patronage, were also quick to notice the talent of Gowri Kuppuswamy. She has sung at the marriage of Gayatri Devi, the eldest daughter of Jayachamaraja Wadiyar and has presented concerts in most of the ceremonies of royal family including their marriages. Her tryst with music got a deeper connotation, when she joined University College of Fine Arts, Manasagangothri, as a lecturer in Vocal Music since its inception in 1967. Gowri Kuppuswamy was summoned by the then Vice-Chancellor of Mysore University Prof. D. Javaregowda who was keen on having her as a faculty. From PUC to MA in Music.

She taught many students, till her retirement in 1992, after 25 years of service. Her ardent student is Smt. Manjula Ramesh, who quietly does Nadopasana, singing and teaching. Her students are Vasudha Ravi, Brindha Manickavasakan, Priyanka Raman, to name a few of the many to whom she has reached out with the musical legacy!

Kuppuswamy was not just a spouse, but also a great pillar of support to his wife. From preparing the notes for the concert including the timings and arranging transport, with required wherewithal, all was handled amicably by Kuppuswamy. The attention to details by Kuppuswamy was often evident, when he used to remind his wife of stretching of the timing of a rendition by bit. Kuppuswamy passed away at the age of 87 on Oct. 1, 2010. Since then, Gowri Kuppuswamy has been living with her son in Pondicherry, but often travels down to Mysuru to stay for a few months here, as she feels indebted to the city for giving her everything.

Gowri Kuppuswamy, a Tamilian by birth, deserves a standing ovation, for how she picked up the smatterings of Kannada and perfected in the language of the land, which she made it her home after her native Tamil Nadu. It is evident with the musical notations written in Kannada, still preserved by her daughter-in-law Rama Hariharan, who was her student in early 80s. Rama was learning music under the tutelage of Gowri Kuppuswamy, when she sought her hand for her son.

Gowri Kuppuswamy learnt Music from Pudukkottai Shri K V Venkatarama Iyer, 'Kalaimamani' Kolkata K.S. Krishnamurthy, 'Kalaimamani' Tanjavur S. Kalyanaraman, 'Sangeetha Kalanidhi' Padma Bhushan M.L. Vasanthakumari and 'Sangeetha Kalanidhi' Padma Bhushan R.K. Srikantan and fine tuned her prowess in vocal in different stages of life.

Her concerts include Ganapathi festival at 101 Ganapathi temple, Agrahara, Mysuru, where she performed for 25 years, Chowdiah Smaraka Ramotsava Samiti, Mysuru, Nada Brahma Sangeetha Sabha, Mysuru, Gayana Samaja, Bengaluru, Malleshwaram Sangeetha Sabha, Bengaluru, Ragalaya, Bengaluru, Hubli Sangeetha Sabha, Hubballi, Music Academy, Madras, Annamacharya Sangeetha Samiti, Tirupati, Rasika Ranjani Sabha, Calicut, Cochin Sangeetha Sabha, Ernakulam, to name a few.

For over 50 years, Gowri Kuppaswamy enthralled music buffs on radio as she regularly performed from Mysuru, Dharwad, Madras and Pondicherry Stations of All India Radio (AIR) besides performing on TV from Tashkent (USSR), Singapore and Trivandrum.

Gowri Kuppaswamy was awarded Ph.D degree for her thesis 'A Comparative Study of the Scales of Carnatic and Western Music' by Arizona University, USA, way back in 1982 and was conferred Hon. Doctorate by Karnataka State Dr. Gangubai Hangal University for Music and Performing Arts, Mysuru, on March 7, 2017.

Gowri Kuppaswamy was recently chosen for the one-time Sangeet Natak Akademi Amrit Award-2022 for Carnatic Music which she is yet to receive from the President of India.

She has jointly authored 45 books with Dr. M. Hariharan including The Ragas of Tanjore, Tillana in Tamil, Purandaradasar Sahityangal in Tamil, Purandaradasara Kritigalu in Kannada, Music of Indian Art and Archaeology in English. to name a few. While three more books are ready to go to print.

Dr. Gowri Kuppaswamy, taught students interested in Carnatic Classical Music at her flat in Jayalakshmiapuram in Mysuru. Though age took a toll on her health, what kept her going was her passion for initiating the uninitiated into the field of music.

Dr Gowri Kuppaswamy's daughter Dr. Radhika Prabhakar, who is Pathologist in Singapore, was a Bharatanatyam dancer. Radhika's husband Dr. K.S. Prabhakar is a Nephrologist at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

—Unique Music World.

<https://www.facebook.com/100064359031698/posts/1118206817001276/?rclid=zkbwGslweP2iNm8J#>



SPARROW

Sound & Picture Archives for Research on Women

Women's Archives With A Difference

Different ways of **seeing**
Different ways of **remembering**
Different ways of **writing history**

Unusual Vibrant Focussed Dedicated
Communicative Contemporary

CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPARROW QUALIFY FOR 80 G.

Donations can be sent by cheque or draft marked
to **SPARROW OR** can be sent by wire transfer to:
FROM INDIA

Name Account Holder: **SPARROW**
Name of the Bank: **AXIS BANK**

Saving Account No. **917010041910597**
IFSC Code - **UTIB0000701**
Branch: **Dahisar West Branch**

Address: **B Wing, Madhuban, L T Road, Dahisar (West)**
Mumbai-400068. Tel No. 022- 28940257/ 9/ 61

SNL 43 Supplement 2
Publication Number: 100
Published by: Sound & Picture Archives for
Research on Women
The Nest
B-101/201/301, Patel Apartment,
Maratha Colony Road, Dahisar (E),
Mumbai-400068
Phone: 022-2896 5019

COVER PAGE: Drawing by painter Kruti Thaker
EDITOR: Dr C S Lakshmi
DESIGN AND LAYOUT: Pooja Pandey

E-mail: sparrow1988@gmail.com
website <http://www.sparrowonline.org/>
FB: <https://www.facebook.com/sparrowngo/>

