



Women's Lives, Women's Words

A Women Writers' Meet 2025

SPARROW Supplement



SOUND & PICTURE ARCHIVES FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN



**A cultural
event to
celebrate
women's
writing
through**

**dialogue and
discussion
on
the theme**

**STORIES TO KEEP
CHILDREN AWAKE**

WOMEN'S LIVES. WOMEN'S WORDS

a Women Writers' Meet

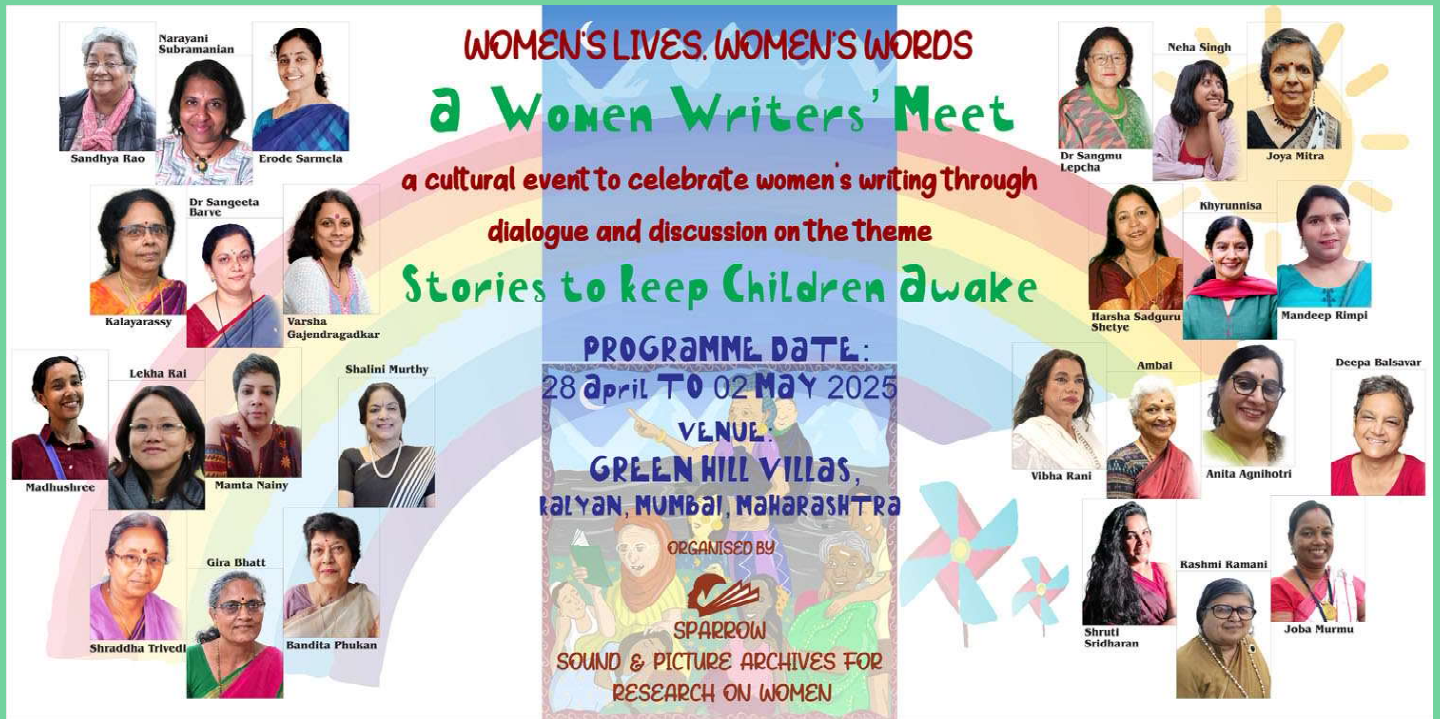
a cultural event to celebrate women's writing through
dialogue and discussion on the theme

Stories to keep Children awake

PROGRAMME DATE:
28 April TO 02 May 2025

VENUE:
GREEN HILL VILLAS,
KALYAN, MUMBAI, MAHARASHTRA

ORGANISED BY:
SPARROW
SOUND & PICTURE ARCHIVES FOR
RESEARCH ON WOMEN



Writers featured:

- Sandhya Rao
- Narayani Subramanian
- Erode Sarmela
- Dr Sangeeta Barve
- Kalayarassy
- Varsha Gajendragadkar
- Lekha Rai
- Madhusree
- Mamta Nainy
- Shalini Murthy
- Gira Bhatt
- Shraddha Trivedi
- Bandita Phukan
- Dr Sangmita Lepcha
- Neha Singh
- Joya Mitra
- Khyrunnisa
- Harsha Sadguru Shetye
- Mandeep Rimpi
- Vibha Rani
- Ambai
- Anita Agnihotri
- Deepa Balsavar
- Shruti Sridharan
- Rashmi Ramani
- Joba Murmu

A Women Writers' Meet 2025



A LONG TRADITION OF STORIES FOR CHILDREN IN MANY LANGUAGES



28 to May 02 Women Writers' Meet, Kalyan, Mumbai 2025





Just Kidding!

Maya Kamath's
Cartoons
(From SPARROW Archives)

WOMEN SPARROW SOUND & PICTURE ARCHIVES FOR RESEARCH

SPARROW

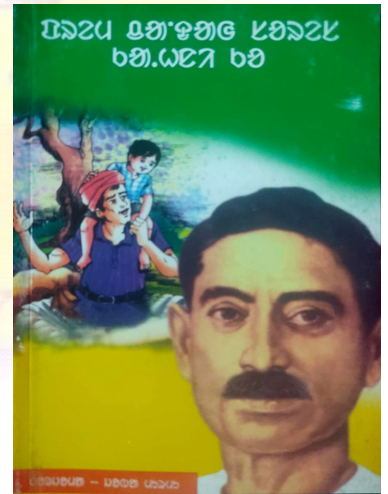
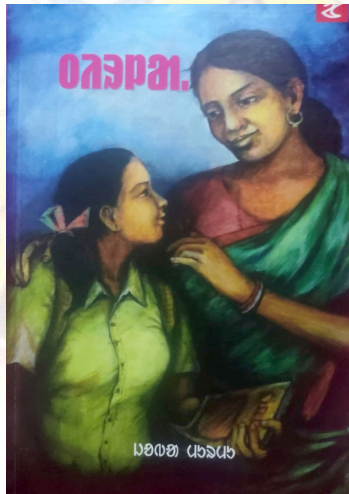


Joba Murmu (Santhali)



Joba Murmu is a Santhali writer and translator who is a tribal school teacher at Bal Vikas Primary School in Karandih, Jamshedpur. A postgraduate in Santhali literature, she has been writing since 2009. Joba's stories are aimed at empowering tribal women along with informative and entertaining stories for children. In the last two decades Joba has authored more than five books, including translations of works by two iconic literary figures in India - Munshi Premchand and Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore. *Sereng Anjle* (2015) is her translation of Tagore's *Gitanjali*. It received an award the following year from the All India Santhali Writers' Association. For her services to literature, she was awarded the Rabindranath Tagore Award in 2020.

During her college days, Joba was inspired to write by her father, Chote Ram Majhi, who himself is a renowned figure in the field of Santhali art and literature. She calls her husband, Pitambar Hansdah, who had received the Sahitya Akademi award in 2012 for his book of short stories for children, her guiding light. Her short story collection *Olon Baha* (The Imaginary Bloom, 2014) won the Sahitya Akademi's Bal Sahitya Puraskar in 2017. It is a book with moral stories for children. She has also written the script and lyrics of two Santhali feature films, *Tore Sutam* (The Divine Thread, 2015) and *Sagen Sakam* (The New Leaf, 2018).

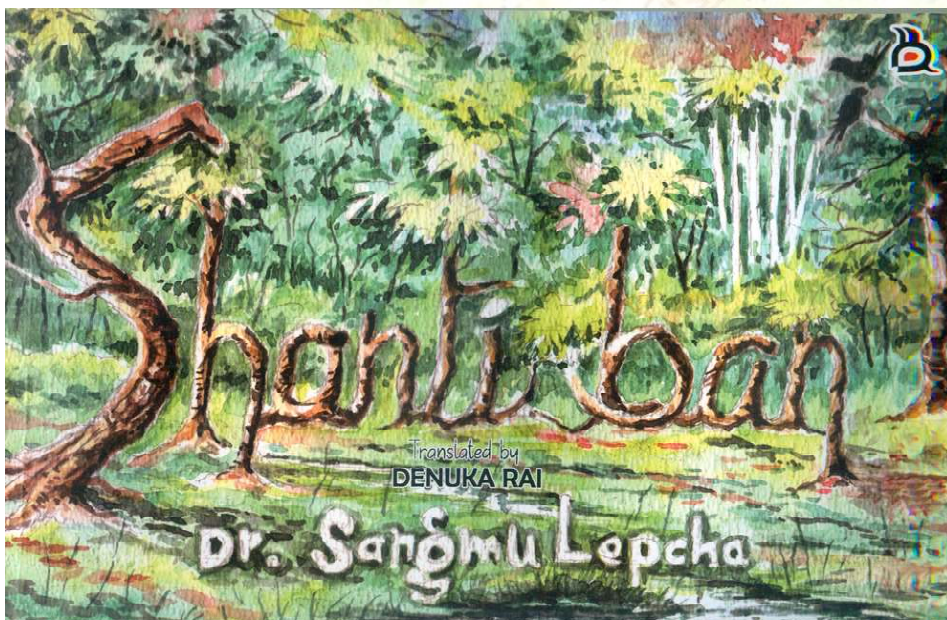


SANGMU LEPCHA (Nepali)



Dr Sangmu Lepcha is a children's writer based in Darjeeling. She is currently Headmistress, Barnsbeg High School, Darjeeling. With a remarkable background in Nepali Women Authors from Darjeeling, Sangmu Lepcha specialises in crafting female-centric content and captivating children's literature. Her enchanting graphic novel for children, *Shantiban*, published in 2021, is a collection of bird folktales from this region which conveys an important message regarding habitat destruction. It has been translated into English by Denuka Rai and published in 2023. A play based on the book was rehearsed sometime back in Café the Twins, Darjeeling, when children were encouraged to act out the tales. The play was an initiative of "Kathaghar—Nurturing the Young Through Stories and Beyond" and The Nepali Learning

Community—a community that reads curated Nepali books and engages in open dialogue and discussions. The children, although from English medium schools, were keen to learn their mother tongue Nepali. It has been said that *Shantiban* isn't just a book; it's a portal to enchantment and learning.



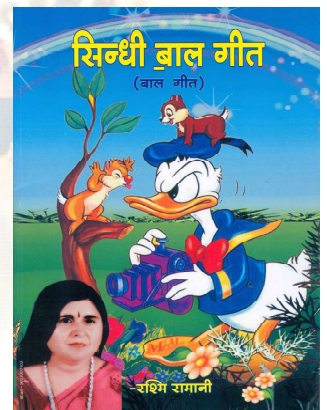
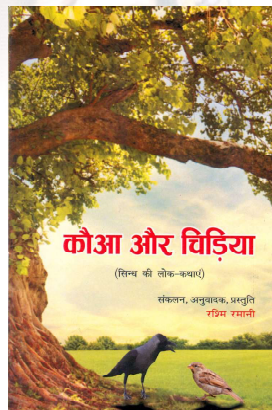
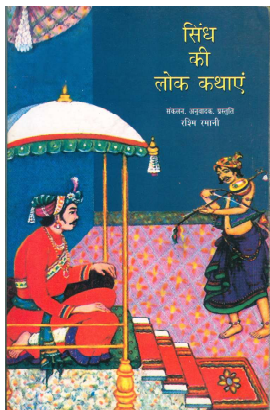
RASHMI RAMANI

Writer (Sindhi & Hindi)



Rashmi Ramani was born in Indore to parents who had come from Sindh (Pakistan) during the Partition. She was the eldest of five siblings and two of her younger sisters passed away and so she was brought up as a very precious child and given education and not forced into marriage unlike other girls who married at 17 or 18. Very fond of reading, she wrote her first story at the age of 12. But after that writing happened much later in her life. She is a bilingual writer who began to write in Hindi for adults and later was eager to learn her mother tongue Sindhi and learnt the Sindhi script from a woman who had not even passed fourth standard. Apart from folk tales of Sindh which she translated into Hindi as *Sindh ki Lok Kathayen* (2010), she brought out a book of folk tales in Sindhi, *Kaun Ain Jhirki* (2017) which got the Sahitya Akademi's

Bal Sahitya Puraskar in 2019. Apart from this she has brought out two poetry collections of simple and small poems for young children to read about birds, rainbows and other things around them. Many of her stories have been selected for animation, drama and stage-work by prominent people and drama groups. Writing about her on Facebook, her daughter recalled that everyday was a new day for her because every night her mother had a new story to tell her. She said her mother had a great memory to remember beautiful stories from her mother, grandmother and even great-grandmother. It was through these small stories by her mother that her daughter learnt about culture, history and qualities like compassion and kindness. A compliment from a daughter is the greatest award for a writer who writes for children and Rashmi has been bestowed with that award by her daughter.



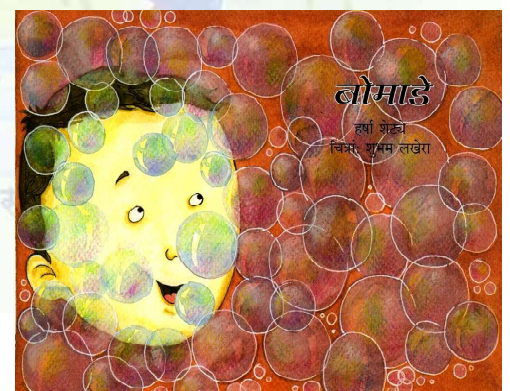
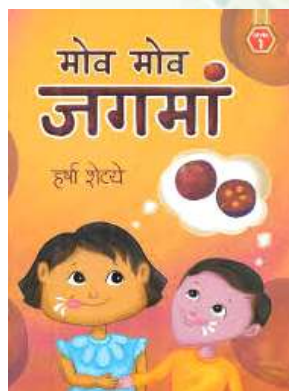
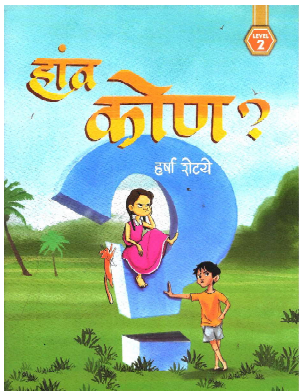
HARSHA SADGURU SHETYE

Writer (Konkani)



Harsha Sadguru Shetye who writes under the name of Harsha Shetye, is a notable Konkani author from Goa, recognised for her diverse literary contributions, children's literature being one of them. With a deep connection to the Konkani language, she aims to introduce young readers to Goan culture and heritage through her works, such as *Amurchavar* (Tender Blossom), *Mhoji Mati Mhoje Mollob* (My Soil, My Sky), *Motyanchi Mall* (Pearl Necklace) and *Champu in Ranchikud* (Champu in the Kitchen). Her other popular books for children include *Jagma* (Indian Plums), *Mov Mov Jagmam* (Soft, Soft Plums), *Phullam* (Flowers), *Bomade* (Bubbles), *Nuste Jay Ge* (Do You Want Fishhh) and *Haum Kon?* (Who am I?). *Jagma* is a book of poems. *Phullam* is about the various flowers of Goa. *Bomade* is a fun story which triggers the

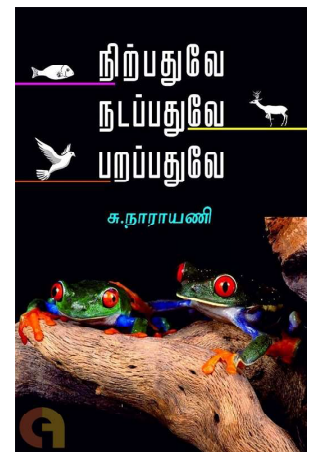
thought process of a child about bubbles. In *Haum Kon* Harsha sets children thinking with her riddles on vegetables. *Mov Mov Jagmam* is the story about how a mouse and a squirrel fetch runeala plums for children who savour and relish them. It is based on a song game Konkani children in Goa play where children sing pressing the berry in their hands: *Chanye chanye goad kar, hundara hundara mov kar* (Oh squirrel, make my jagam sweet, oh mouse, make it soft). She has won several awards and in 2024, she received the Sahitya Akademi's Bal Sahitya Puraskar for *Ek Ashil'lem Bayul* (There was a Girl Child), a children's novel based on her childhood in various moods and activities with historical incidents. She has done extensive research on the region's cuisine and natural heritage particularly its birds and wildflowers. Through her writing, Harsha Shetye encourages the use of the Konkani language at home and inspires future generations to appreciate their linguistic and cultural roots.



NARAYANI SUBRAMANIAN Writer (Tamil)



Narayani Subramanian belongs to Kumbakonam and did her graduation in Biotechnology. Her Master's in Marine Biology and PhD on coral reef fish were done as a research scholar in the Department of Ocean Studies and Marine Biology, Pondicherry University, Port Blair Campus. She is currently concentrating on fisheries research. She has written 15 science books for children and young people in Tamil and has won awards for her science writing. Some of those books are *Nirpathuvae, Nadappathuvae, Parappathuvae* (All Things That Are Standing, Walking and Flying, 2015) with its title taken from Bharathiyar's famous poem, *Kadalum Manitharum*, Part 1 and 2 (The Sea and Human Beings, 2022, 2024), *Vilangkulaum Paalinamum* (Gender and Animals, 2022), *Soozalum Pennkalum* (Environment and Women, 2023), *Kadaloadu Uravadu* (Engage with the Sea, 2023), *Aazhkadal Athisiyangal* (Deep Sea Wonders, 2023), *Aazhkadal Suuzalum Vaazidangalum* (Deep Sea Environment and Living Spaces, 2023), *Miinkal Paayum Marikadal* (Wavy Sea Where Fish Jump About, 2024) and *Kadalsaar Suuzhaliyal Katturaikal* (Articles on Ocean Environment, 2024). *Nirpathuvae, Nadappathuvae, Parappathuvae* written in 2015, is a book on environment which talks about hundreds of rare animals. The impact of the book was such that it was felt by some reviewers that the future could be entrusted with people like Narayani. *Vilangkulam Paalinamum* written in 2022, questioned notions of so-called inborn qualities and biological qualities when it comes to gender. It was seen by many as an enlightening book that destroyed hatred and sowed the seeds of love. Narayani is passionate about making science accessible to the public and enjoyable to children. She calls herself a confused agnostic, a hard-core feminist and a very passionate naturalist.



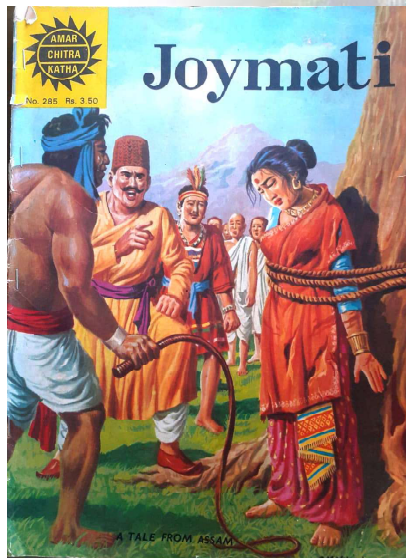
BANDITA PHUKAN

Writer (Assamese)



Bandita Phukan was one of the first women graduates in mechanical engineering in the North-East. She entered the literary world as a translator. But later began to write children's novels in Assamese. Her first children's novel *Jumi, Rima aru Xihont* (Jumi, Rima and Those Others) became so popular that so far seven editions of this novel have been published. Since then, she has written 40 children's novels out of which ten are science fiction. In 2011, she received the Bal Sahitya Puraskar awarded by the Sahitya Akademi for her children's novel *Seujia Dharani* (The Green Earth) based on environment. National Book Trust has published her children's novel *Kokar Jimi* (Grandfather's Jimi) and translations of it in 14 regional languages of India. Amar Chitra Katha, Mumbai,

has published her comic *Joymati* based on the life of Ahom princess Joymoti Konwari of 17th century, who died a martyr, written in English and translated it into 14 languages of India. After a long career as a mechanical engineer, Bandita is now a full-time writer.



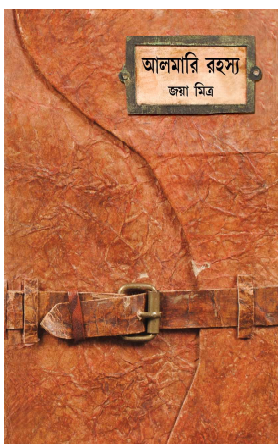
JOYA MITRA Writer (Bengali)



Joya Mitra is a writer-activist, chronicler, storyteller with a passionate wanderlust, wayfarer, friend of everybody and a lifelong student of mother nature. Joya was imprisoned without trial for a long time during the turbulent seventies for being a part of the ultra-left youth movement. Joya Mitra has been a popular writer for the last three decades. She is acclaimed for both fiction and non-fiction literary works. She has more than 32 published works to her credit which include many books for children. Her books for children that have been appreciated are, *Bhalo Rakasher Boi* (Good Monster Book, 2014), *Rupali Beter Jhanpi* (A Basket of Silver Canes, 2019) and *Surjer Niger Gram* (Sun's Own Village, 2022). *Surjer Niger Gram* is about the fiery-

coloured palash tree flowers in the Kurumdi village and it opens beautifully the world of nature to children and young people. Many prestigious awards have come her way. Among them is the Bal Sahitya Puraskar of Sahitya Akademi in 2022 for her short story collection *Char Panch Jon Bondhu* (Four-Five Friends). What she spoke at the Pustakayan Book Fair in Delhi, on 15 November 2022, summarises her urge to write for children. She said: "Childhood is the most promising part of human life. The children possess the capacity to be happy under all circumstances. They have the natural power to believe and to react if they are given the slightest support. That is why, I think, they should be exposed to the most positive thoughts and experiences."

জয়া মিত্র



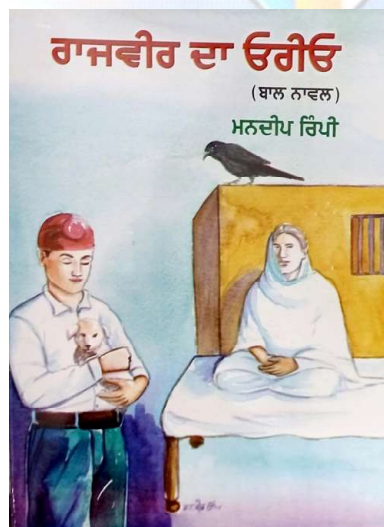
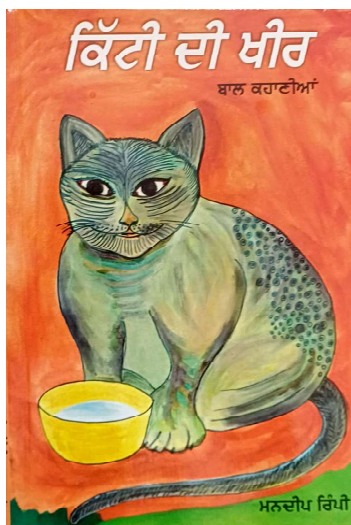
MANDEEP RIMPI

Writer (Punjabi)



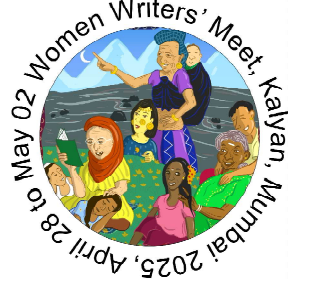
Mandeep Kaur Rimpi who writes under the pen name Mandeep Rimpi, holds two MA degrees and a B.Ed. degree and is a primary school teacher at Ropar, Punjab. Mandeep has two poetry collections to her credit: *Jadon Tu Chup Si* (When You Were Silent, 2020) and *Chuhi Nu Bukhar Chadiya* (The Mouse has Got Fever, 2020). Her short story collection *Kitty Di Kheer* (Kitty's Porridge, 2021) was awarded the Bal Sahit Puraskar by Guru Kashi Sahit Academy, Damdama Sahib, in 2021 and has also been recommended by the Education Department of Punjab for school libraries. *Han! Main D C Lagna* (I Want to become a DC, 2023) is her second short story collection. In 2024 came the novelette for children *Rajveer Da Oreo* (Rajveer's Puppy, Oreo), which was

featured in *Shahmukhi* magazine in Pakistan, translated by Ashraf Suhel. *Dekhiyo!...Kidre Pul Ka Jayeo!* (Lest We Forget!, 2023), recounts the tales of valour of the sahibzades (sons) of Guru Gobind Singh and other Sikh heroes. She has written three acclaimed novels: *Zindagi Parat Aayi* (Life Has Returned, 2022), *Han! Main Lalchi Haan!* (Yes! I am Greedy, 2023) and *Waqt De Khise Chon* (From the Pockets of Time, 2024). Mandeep's love for storytelling was honed further during the COVID pandemic, when audios and videos of her stories were uploaded on YouTube regularly. She has been conferred the Mata Bhajan Kaur Nikkian Karumblan Award in 2025 for her contribution to children's literature.



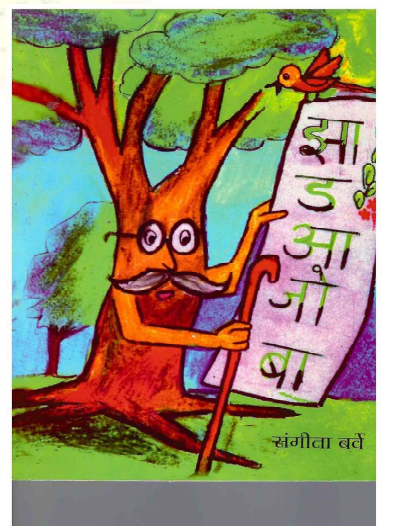
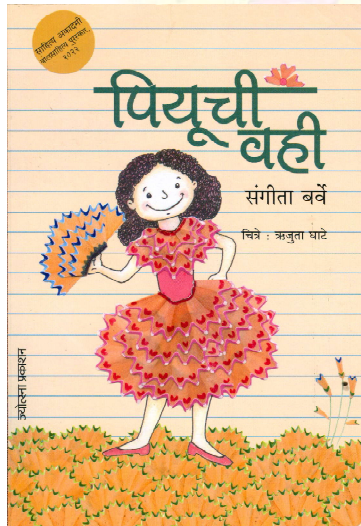
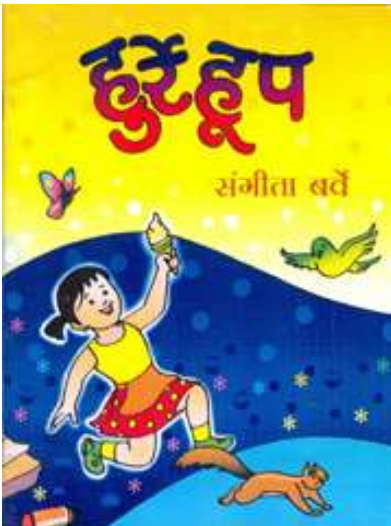
SANGEETA BARVE

Writer (Marathi)



Dr Sangeeta Rajeev Barve has a Master's in Marathi and Ayurvedic Dietics. She is an acclaimed poet but is also very popular as a writer who is recognised for her classic work on children's literature in Marathi for the past more than 25 years. Sangeeta's books in Marathi for children include *Gammat Jhali Bhari* (It Was So Much Fun, 2001), *Raanaphule* (Wild Flowers), *Jhaad Ajoba* (Grandfather Tree), *Kharu Tai and Sawali Bai* (Squirrel and Shadow), *Hurrehup* (Hurry Up, 2010), *Aditichi Sahasi Safar* (Aditi's Adventures, Translated from Suniti Namjoshi's Aditi Adventure Series in English), *Piyu Chi Vahi* (Piyu's Diary, 2017), *Ujedacha Gaav* (Village of Light, 2022), *Nala Damayanti and Other Stories*, and *Pathya Pustakatil Kavitanacha Rasaswad* (Appreciation of Poems in Textbooks). Sangeeta has written

and directed Marathi plays for children, which are performed by children in many programmes like "Pulotsav," "Kirkoskar Vasundhara Utsav" live on stage and in the form of Musical VCDs like *Raanaphule*, *Gammat Jhali Bhari* and *Ya Re Ya Sare Gau Ya* to name a few. Sangeeta is also a songwriter for films. She has recently scripted a short film *Chandana* produced by Sagarika Music Co., Mumbai, in which she has also written two songs on the subject of girls' education and their struggle in life. Sangeeta was conferred with Maharashtra Sahitya Parishad's Ga. Ha. Patil Award for her exemplary work in children's literature. She is the current chairperson of Amarendra Bhaskar Balkumar Sahitya Sanstha, Pune.



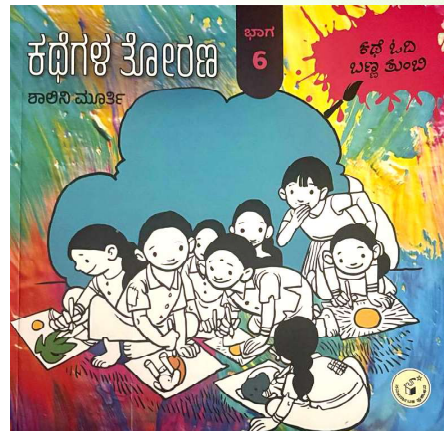
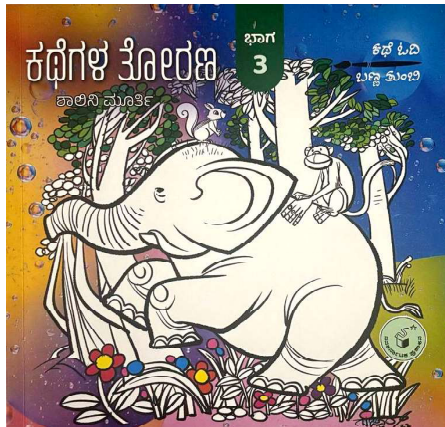
SHALINI MURTHY

Writer (Kannada)



Shalini Murthy hails from Udupi in the Karavali region and is an award-winning author recognised for her work in both children's literature and in the social contributions she has done. Her first book, *Ajathashathru* was an account of the social service done by the late Dr. U Chittaranjan. She then penned 12 children's books in the *Kathagala Thorana* (Festoons of Stories) series. Her desire to inculcate positive values in children from an early age drives her passion for writing children's stories and producing podcasts. The books feature illustrations by renowned artists, allowing children to colour them according to their imagination. Some prominent awards for Shalini's children's stories include the N D'Souza Award for Children's Stories from the Karnataka

Sangha, Shimoga, and the Karnataka Lekhakiyara Sangha Award for Children's Stories. She contributes regularly to newspapers and periodicals. She has a great commitment to the environment and is known in several circles as "The Green Woman." Shalini Murthy's interest in artistic mediums extends beyond writing, into areas such as oil and watercolour painting and stained-glass designs. She is also a celebrated cook.



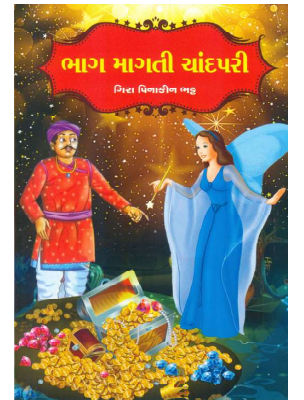
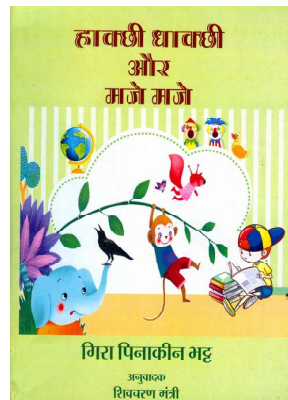
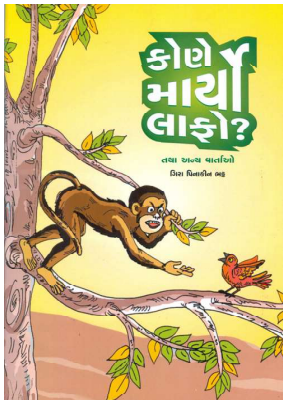
GIRA PINAKIN BHATT

Writer (Gujarati)



Gira Pinakin Bhatt, who calls herself a housewife when asked about her occupation, has a total of sixty-three books published since 2011. She has written poetry, inspirational books and short stories in Gujarati. Among them, a total of 50 books are related to children's literature. Her books include Activity and Picture books and books on environment and animal world books. Some of her books that have drawn children to read books are *Drau Drau Dabeli Pau* (Drau Drau Dabeli Pau, 2014), *Kone Maaryo Lafo?* (Who Gave A Slap?, 2019), *Bhag Magati Chandpari* (Fairy Who Asked for Her Share, 2019) and *Hakkchche Dhakchche No Maja Maja* (Crow and Elephant Entertain, 2018). One of her children's literature books has been translated into Hindi. Four other books

are in the process of being published. Her books are seen as being vibrant and engaging with captivating stories that transport young minds to a world of not only adventure and learning but also feeling and understanding. Two of her recent books have received much praise. *Elihouse* (2024) has been called a collection of heart-warming stories. It is an anthology of carefully curated tales that touches the heart and celebrates everyday magic. *Patpat Hu Parpoto* (2024) is a vibrant and engaging book for kids that sparks their imagination and fosters a love for reading from an early age. Both the books have been seen as must-have additions to home libraries. Gira has received many awards. In 2020, her book, *Kone Maaryo Lafo?* (Who Gave A Slap?) received the second prize from Gujarat Sahitya Academy. In 2023, she received the Anju Narshi Gurjar Children's Literature Excellence Award for overall contribution to children's literature. In 2024, she received the Bal Sahitya Puraskar of Sahitya Akademi for her book, *Hasati Haveli* (Merry Mansion).



G KALAYARASSY Writer (Tamil)



G Kalayarassy a native of Karaikal, has settled down in Puducherry. She retired from State Bank of India. She has written and translated books for children in Tamil, seven of them published by the Tamil Nadu Text Book Corporation, under the Tamil Nadu Government's 'Ilam Thalir Ilakkiya Thittam', a programme meant for taking children's literature to government school children. Among her well-known novels for children are *Manthirakkudai* (The Magic Umbrella, 2021), *Neelamalai Payanam* (Journey to the Blue Mountain, 2022), *Peithottam* (A Garden of Ghosts, 2023) and *Bootham Kaakkuk Puthaiyal* (Treasure Guarded by a Goblin, 2022). She has also written

biographies of Kittur Rani Chennamma and Periyar for young people apart from writing essays on international children's cinema entitled *En Appavin Dragon* (My Father's Dragon, 2024) and many other story books for children to read. Her *Manthirakkudai* novel translated into English as *Magic Umbrella* (2024) by N Kalavathy is a delightful and adventurous story about a young girl who discovers a magical umbrella that allows her to fly. This engaging book not only entertains children with its magical elements but also educates them about the wonders of wildlife and the importance of respecting nature. *Neelamalai Payanam* translated into English as *Journey to the Blue Mountain* is an unusual adventure novel about three boys and a girl on an expedition to the Nilgiris looking for a plant species, long thought to be extinct. It is currently in print. Besides promoting children's reading habits, she collaborates with the editorial team of the <https://chuttiulagam.com> (World of Kids) website and contributes to *Poonchittu* (A Tiny Bird) children's monthly e-magazine.



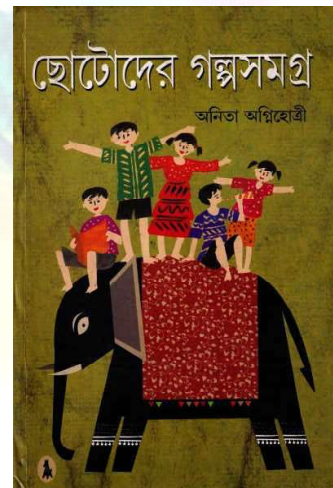
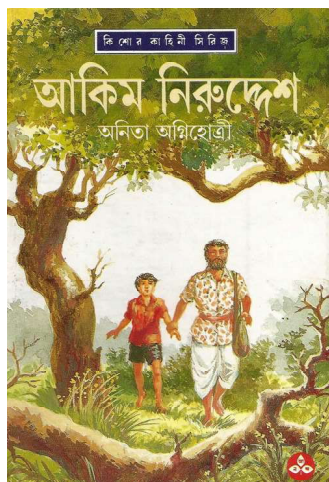
ANITA AGNIHOTRI

Writer (Bengali)



Anita Agnihotri belongs to Kolkata. Her literary oeuvre spans across all genres - poetry, novels, short stories, writing for children and critiques of development. Anita started writing as a child. Her first poem was published in *Sandesh*, the children's monthly, edited by the film maestro Satyajit Ray. Anita joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1980. She served as a Secretary to the Government of India before her retirement after a career in Civil Service spanning three and a half decades. Anita has authored over five volumes of children's stories. Some of her books include, *Akim O Porikonye* (Akim and the Fairy's Daughter, 1993), *Akim O Dwiper Manush* (Akim and the Island People, 2004), *Akim Niruddesh* (Akim Missing, 2004), *Ratan Master er Pathshala* (Ratan Master's School, 2004), *Bandi Rajkumar* (The Imprisoned Prince, 2004), *Joyramer Sinduk* (Jairam's Box, 2006), *Ebu Gogo* (2009), *Chhotoder Galpa Samagra* (Collection of Children's Stories, 2012) and *Chhotoder Galpo Mela* (A Fair of

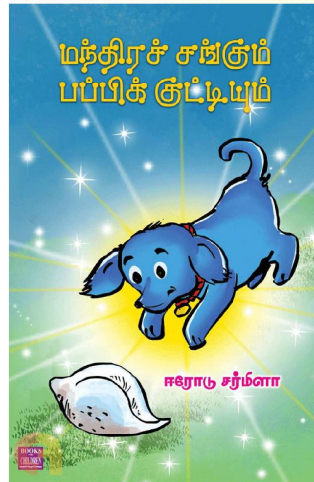
Children's Stories, 2020). *Gachera Gelo Berate* (The Trees Have Gone for An Outing, 2023) and a collection of children's stories are two of her recent books. What Anita writes for children are real stories of real lives, of forests, rivers, animals and birds



ERODE SARMELA Writer (Tamil)



M Sarmela Devi, who writes under the pseudonym Erode Sarmela, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Tamil, Kongu Arts and Science College, Erode. She writes stories for children and young people in Tamil and is also an avid storyteller. Two of her stories are part of the book *Hundred Best Children's Stories* edited by Sugumaran, published in 2025. Among her books which are very popular with children are *Maghizini IFS* (2022), *Mandira Sankum Pappu Kuttiyum* (Magic Conch and Pappu Kutti, 2023), *Thunichalkari* (The Brave Girl, 2024), and *Aandhaiyum Marngkothiyum* (The Owl and the Woodpecker, 2024). One of her stories "Evan Sonnathu Rajannu" (Whoever Said I Was the King) was chosen as a story for promoting the Tamil Nadu School Education Department's 'Vasippu Iyakkam' (Readers Club) in 2022. Yet another story "Kodai Kuthoogalam" (Summer Fun) has been selected and published by the Tamil Nadu Text Book and Educational Services Corporation (TNTB & ESC) in 2024. Her novel *Thunichalkari*, a novel for teenagers, has been translated into English by Viji Ravi as *Nila the Brave*, and published in 2025.



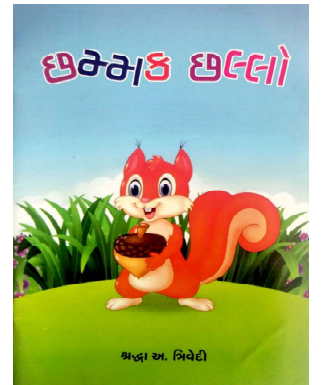
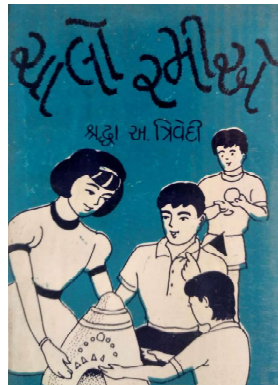
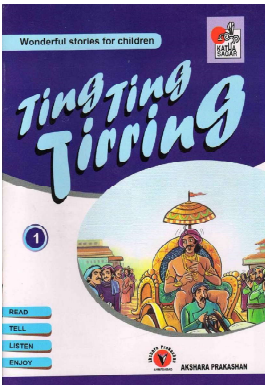
SHRADDHA TRIVEDI

Writer (Gujarati)



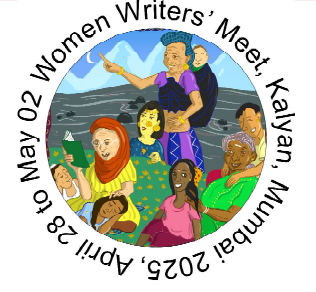
Shraddha A Trivedi, a retired professor, lives in Ahmedabad writes in Gujarati and has always been interested in children's literature. She took up the subject 'Form and Development of *Bal Katha* in Gujarati' for her doctorate. She has several books on children's literature to her credit. She has so far written 13 Children's story collections, 3 Children's drama collections and 30 edited books of children's literature. Her books like *Ting Ting Tirring* (2013), in a set of 5 volumes, *Zip Zap Zoom* (2013) written in a set of five volumes, *Akbar Ane Lilo Godo* (Akbar and the Red Mouse, 2014) in the Akbar-Birbal series, and *Mithubhaini Mithi Vato* (Mithubhai's

Sweet Words, 2014) were eagerly read by children. *Majano Vartakhazano* (A Treasure Trove of Story Entertainment, 2013) is a translation of Sudha Murty's children's stories and *Khushino Janmdivas* (A Happy Birthday, 2024) is a translation of Prakash Manu's children's stories. She also has written a book of Russian folk tales that she has edited and rewritten. *Pavitrata Na Paya Par* (When Perfection Eludes, 2014) is a translation of Sudha Murty's *House of Cards*, a novel meant for teenagers. Shraddha has received several important awards for her books. Two of her books *Chhammak Chhallo* (1989) and *Pahelun Inam* (First Prize, 1991) have won the NCERT awards in the years they were published. She was conferred the Gujarat Sahitya Academy awards for *Chalo Ramie* (Let's Play, 1994), *Durgano Dipak* (Durga's Dipak, 1997) and *Char Chatur Natyamala-Birbal* (2000) in the years the books were published. The Sahitya Akademi's Bal Sahitya Puraskar came in 2013, for her contribution to children's literature. After this came Shri Jambha Jhala Special Award (2017) for outstanding contribution to the field of children's literature in the second decade of the 21st century and Anju Narshi Gurjar Children's Literature Excellence Award for overall contribution to children's literature (2023) making her one of the most popular writers of children's literature in Gujarati.



VARSHA GAJENDRAGADKAR

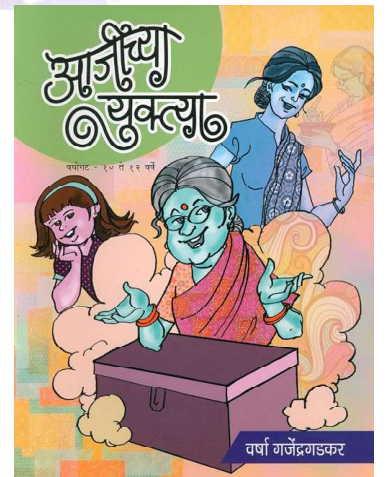
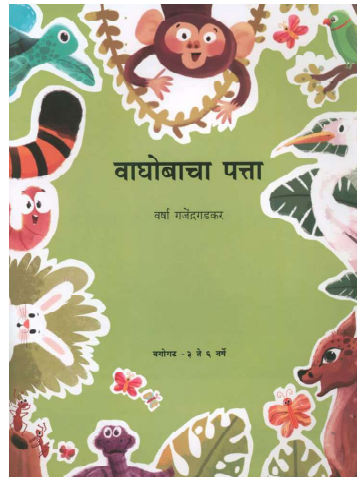
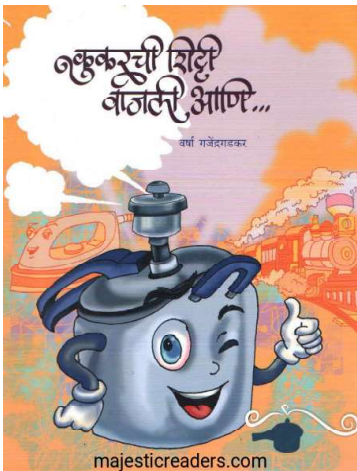
Writer (Marathi)



Varsha Gajendragadkar who lives in Pune, has a post graduate degree in Environmental Sciences. She has been known as a writer, translator, columnist and language editor. She has been writing consistently for the last three decades on various environmental issues. Varsha has contributed extensively to the field of children's literature. She has been known for her conscious and constant efforts to create awareness about nature and environment amongst children through her writing. Her work has been recognised by distinguished literary institutes in Maharashtra and the government bodies like Maharashtra Rajya Sahitya Aani Sanskruti Mandal. Ten of her best books for children have been brought out as a collection

Varsha Gajendragadkar Yanchya Balsahityacha 10 Pustakancha Sanch in

2022. These include books like *Meenucha Dost* (Meenu's Buddy), *Aajichya Yuktya* (Grandmother's Tricks), *Vaghobacha Patta* (Tiger's Address), *Paani Sarvansathi* (Water for Everyone), *Havaman Shastradnya Anna Mani* (Meteorologist Anna Mani), *Aavaj - Goad Aani Karkash* (Sound - Sweet and Shrill), *Nagobacha Vetola* (Coil of Cobra), *Rohancha Ravivar* (Rohan's Sunday), *Seemacha Vaadhdivas* (Seema's Birthday) and *Cookerchi Shitti Vaajli Aani...* (The Pressure Cooker Whistled And...). Varsha has been conferred with many prestigious awards including awards from Maharashtra Sahitya Parishad, Pune, Maharashtra State Literary Awards and Marathi Bhasha Samvardhan Samiti.

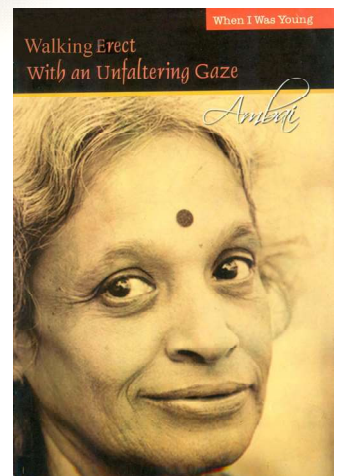
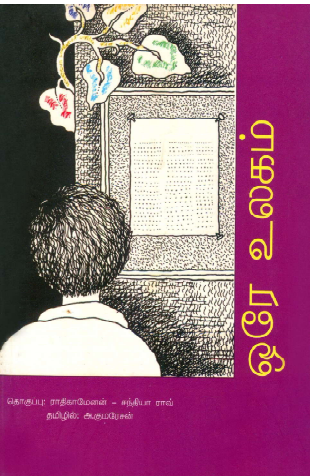


AMBAI Writer (Tamil)



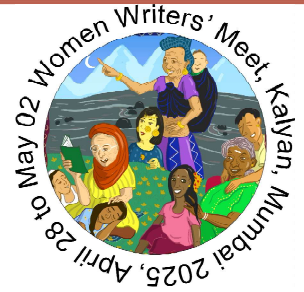
C S Lakshmi who writes under the pseudonym Ambai, is a well-known Tamil writer. She wrote her first adventure novel *Nandhimalai Chaaralilae* (At the Lower Slopes of Nandi Hills, 1962) at the age of 16, for a novel competition announced by the children's magazine Kannan. It won the first prize in 1960 and was later serialised in the magazine. She has written a short autobiographical piece for young people for National Book Trust which was published in the year 2023. Her short story for children and young people, "Nirmalam" was translated as "Clear Sky" and published in a collection of stories by Bharati Puthakalayam and Tulika in their *Ore Ulagam* and *One*

World collections of stories, in 1998. She has also translated some stories from English into Tamil. She is currently the director of SPARROW (Sound & Picture Archives for Research on Women).



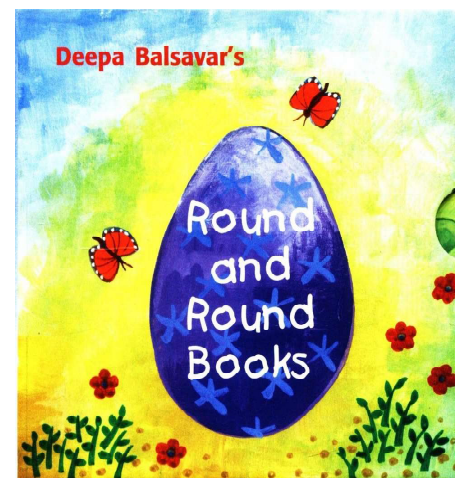
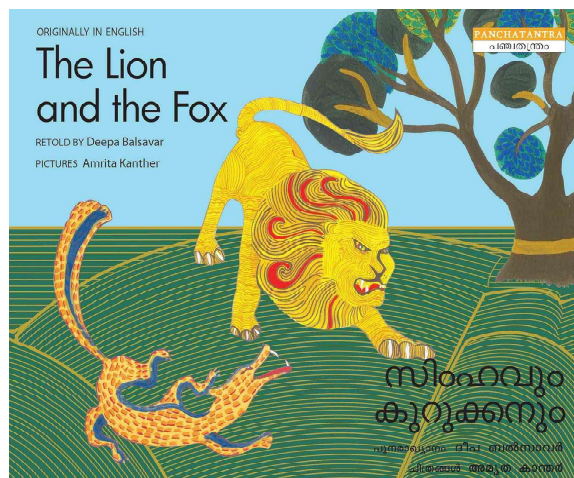
DEEPA BALSAVAR

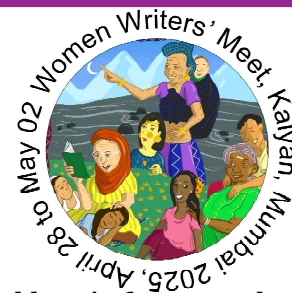
Writer, Illustrator (English)



Deepa Balsavar is a writer, illustrator and storyteller. For over 30 years Deepa Balsavar has been developing educational material, writing and illustrating books mainly for children and conducting workshops for the young and slightly less young in schools and other organisations. Her story book *The Seed* (Tulika Publishers, 2005) was chosen by the White Raven Library, Germany, as one of the outstanding books for young children, for the year 2006. *The Lonely King and Queen* (Tulika Publishers, 2011) has been translated (apart from various Indian languages) into Swedish and her *Nani's Walk to the Park* (Pratham Publishers, 2018) has won numerous awards. Deepa is the recipient of the Tata Trusts Big Little

Book Award 2021, for her contribution to the world of children's illustration. Deepa has been a consultant with UNICEF on the *Meena* Project in South Asia. She developed scripts, discussion guides, comic books and activity sheets for children on issues concerning Child Rights. She has also trained script writers in Bangladesh for *Meena* animation films. In the past she has illustrated innovative literacy programmes for the Chhattisgarh government and mathematics workbooks for the government of Jharkhand through UNICEF in India. She has illustrated the NCERT textbooks on Environment Education for classes III & IV. She is currently adjunct Associate Professor in the Dept. of Communication Design at IDC – the Design School at IIT Bombay.



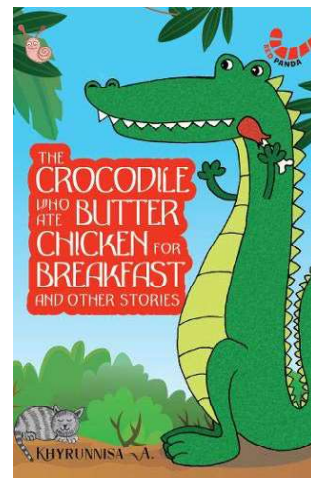
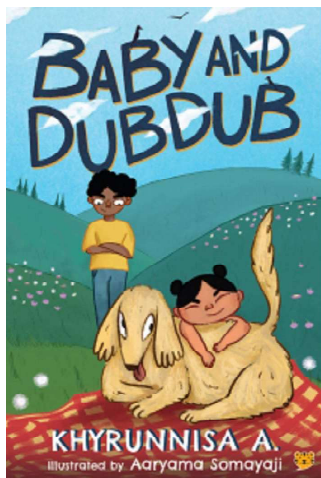
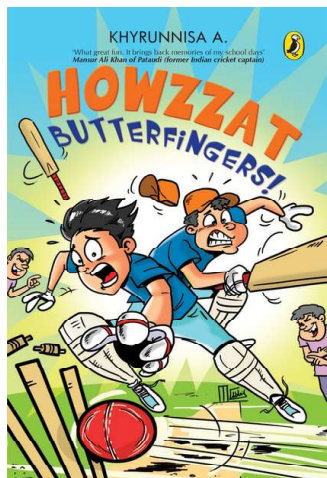


KHYRUNNISA Writer (English)



Khyrunnisa A is an award-winning writer of children's fiction who also writes for adults. She has written 17 books to date. Humour is her forte. She created the popular comic character Butterfingers for the magazine *Tinkle* and authored the hilarious Butterfingers series of books for older children published by Penguin Random House (Puffin). *Howzzat Butterfingers!* (2010) is her first novel. There are four novels, three collections of short stories and one comic book in the series so far. Her novel, *Smash It, Butterfingers!* (2021) was short-listed for Sahitya Akademi's Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2024 (English) and long-listed for the JK Paper and Times of India Author Awards 2022 (Children's Literature) and *The Couch Potato*

Who Said Ouch and Other Funny Stories (2024) was long-listed for the Kalinga Literary Festival 2024 Book Awards (Children; English). The best-selling *Tongue in Cheek: The Funny Side of Life* (2022) and *Chuckle Merry Spin: Us in the U.S.* (2022) are her two humorous books for adults. Two collections of delightful animal stories, *The Lizard of Oz and Other Stories* (2019) and *The Crocodile Who Ate Butter Chicken for Breakfast and Other Stories* (2020), the charming novella, *Baby and Dubdub* (2021), *The Couch Potato Who Said Ouch and Other Funny Stories* (2024) and the very recently published *Agassi and The Great Cycle Race* (2025) are some of her other books. She has written one picture book, *Ka Kha Gha* (2023). She worked as Associate Professor of English at All Saints' College, Thiruvananthapuram, and is now a full-time writer residing in Thiruvananthapuram.

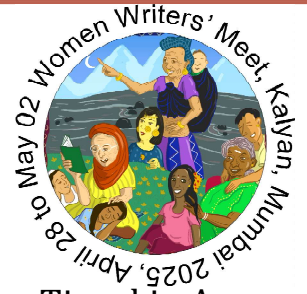


LEKHA RAI Storyteller



Lekha Rai is an entrepreneur originally from Tinsukia Assam and now resides in Siliguri. She has done her Masters in English literature and is a Certified Storyteller from Kathalaya International Academy of Storytelling, Bangalore. She has eight years of experience teaching English literature at the Sikkim Manipal University and SRM University, Sikkim. She is the founder of the independent bookstore cum Café named 'The Twins' at Salbari, Darjeeling, which has been promoting local writers. She is also the founder of the "Kathaghar-Nurturing the Young Through Stories" an initiative which focuses on conducting monthly storytelling sessions for children, using stories and games to teach valuable lessons. She has been conducting

storytelling sessions at different schools. She has contributed a piece to an anthology which will be published by Zubaan. She is working on a project for partial fulfillment of Diploma in storytelling under the guidance of Geeta Ramanujan



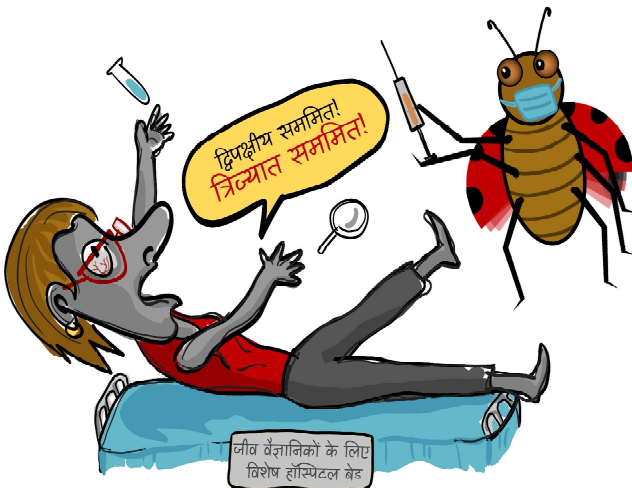
MADHUSHREE

Illustrator



Madhushree is a former student of mathematics, a trained dancer and a self-taught comics-maker. Madhushree now primarily works as an artist and sometimes, art teacher. She has also been interested in understanding, through her practice, the connection between art practice, education and development of children and youth. Her primary subjects of drawing have been contemporary socio-political-economic events and science for children, but she likes to draw whatever comes her way. So far, she has worked with various publishers, magazines, news forums, collectives and individuals as a comics-maker, illustrator and book/cover/poster/logo designer. She is currently also working collaboratively on a longform graphic novel.

The painting for this Meet's banner from which we have also made the logo has been done by Madhushree. Madhushree says she finds it difficult to draw "beautiful" people or children, as her concept of beauty is very different.



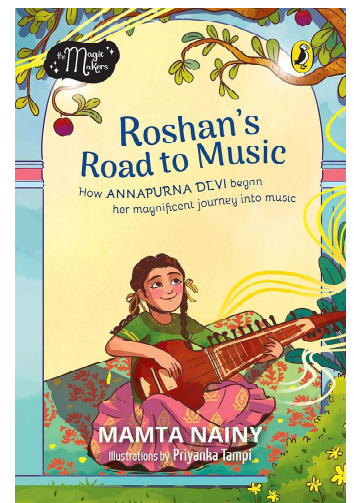
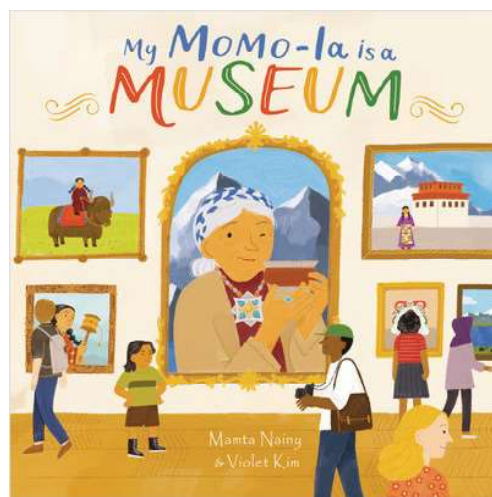
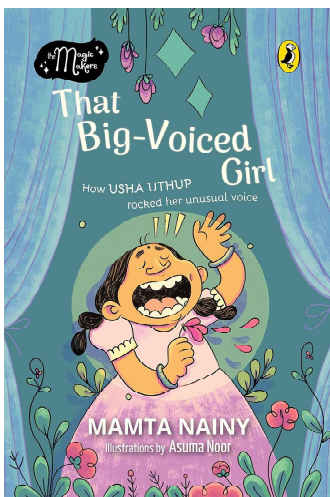
MAMTA NAINY

Writer (English & Hindi)



Mamta Nainy, a children's author, editor, and translator is based in New Delhi. She describes her "Eureka moment" as an apple falling on her head while she was sitting under a mango tree, which led her to start writing for children. Actually, she was in advertising thinking of writing a magnum opus in her name when a small girl inspired her to write a picture book. That is how *Bioscope* (2011) happened where Guddu takes you on a tour through the heartland of Mithila. The book made it to the IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People) Honour List in 2012. She has since been writing for children in English and Hindi and has authored more than thirty-five books for children. The themes

of her books range from a grandmother losing her dentures, mother-daughter bonding, arts and crafts of India, deep connection between a child and the natural world to biographies and they make delightful reading. Some of her books which have kept children enthralled are *Milky Way* (2017), *A Brush with Indian Art* (2018), *A Saree for Ammi* (2019), *Muthassi's Missing Teeth* (2019), *Aai and I* (2021), *Kesar and the Lullaby Birds* (2022), *Arthi's Bomma* (2023) and two fascinating biographies, *That Big-Voiced Girl* (2022) and *Rebel with a Cause* (2024) on Usha Uthup and Ismat Chughtai. Her books have won many prestigious national and international awards. Mamta says that she is inspired by the unfettered imagination of children and is passionate about stories that are inclusive and empowering. She finds it easy to get into the shoes of children and thinks that the only good part about being an adult is that she can choose to have an ice-cream for breakfast and a cake for lunch



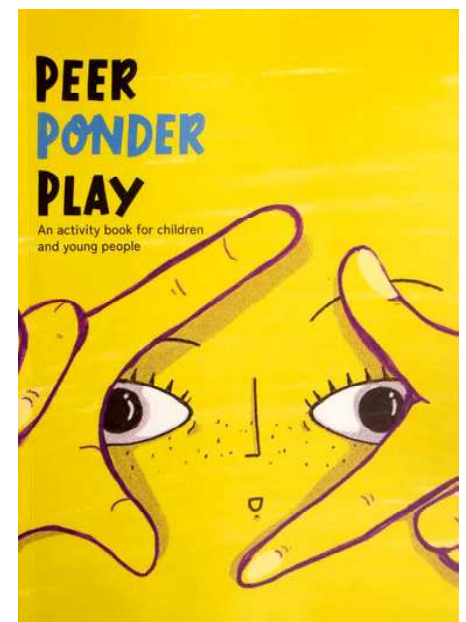
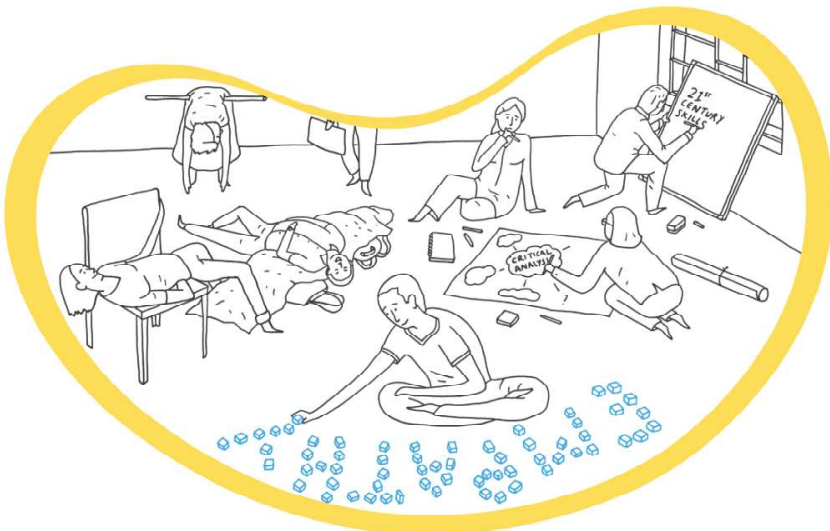
SHRUTI SRIDHARAN

Educator & Theatre



Shruti Sridharan is a practising theatre professional with a Master's degree in Theatre Arts (2003-05) from Mumbai University. Since then, her career has spanned a myriad of work experiences - editor of a leading Indian travel magazine, curator of a performing arts center, assistant director for television and cinema, General Manager for a drama-based corporate training organisation, acting coach specialising in working with children, and more. Since 2016, she has also been a part of the core team managing LitLive, the Mumbai LitFest. Her specialised area of practice lies at the intersection of Arts and Learning. Her book *Peer Ponder Play* is an award-winning activity book for curious learners of all ages. The book which aims to take children on a journey of

Looking, is considered the perfect gift for the young art explorer. Over the past fifteen years, she has been a drama facilitator working with children and teachers in schools around the country, and is also the Founder and Partner at an Arts-in-Education consultancy called Sphere Arts Education (estd. 2018).



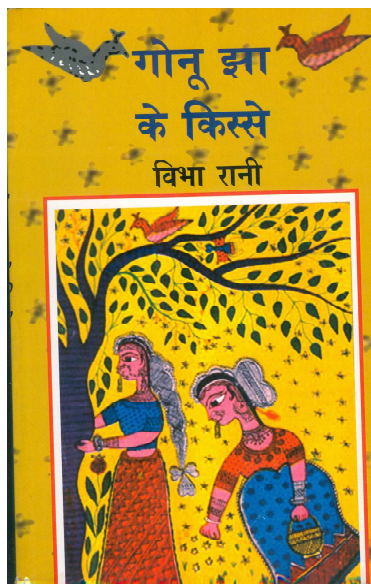
VIBHA RANI

Writer, Theatre, Storyteller (Maithili)



Vibha Rani is a veteran writer, theatre practitioner, folk presenter and an actor. Apart from her original literature writing in Maithili and Hindi, she has brought the oral tradition of Maithili folk culture into print and performance for children. She has collected folk tales of Mithila and published them under the title of *Mithila ki Lok Kathayen*. Another project of hers is to collect the stories of Gonu Jha who was a ready-witted character and a contemporary of the King of Mithila in the 13th century CE, who is also known as Birbal of Bihar, and have them published through Vani Prakashan. Some of the stories of Gonu Jha were enacted by children from her solo theatre classes. Other folk tales of Mithila have been published online

and can be found in notnul.com. Vibha is a fantastic storyteller of Maithili folk tales for both children and grown-ups. She performs folk tales under the title of "Khisra Kahe Khisni" (The Woman Storyteller Tells Stories). Vibha creates songs from the typical idioms (fakra) of Maithili and sings them. These songs are very popular among children, as they not only enjoy singing and listening to the stories behind the songs, but they also get an opportunity to sing with the artiste and learn Maithili





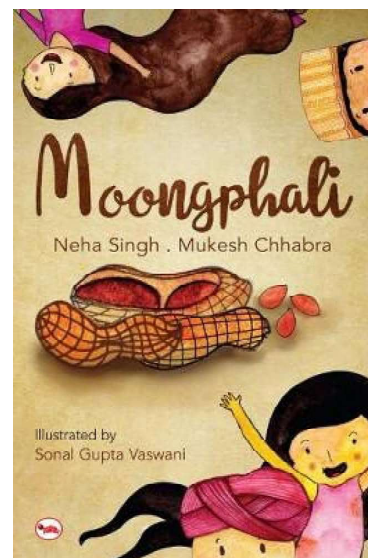
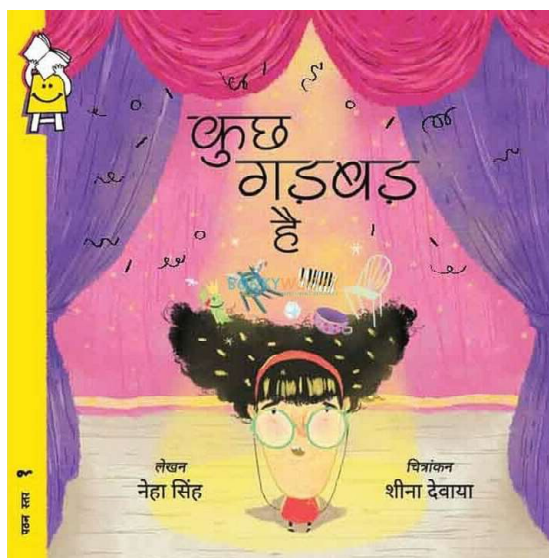
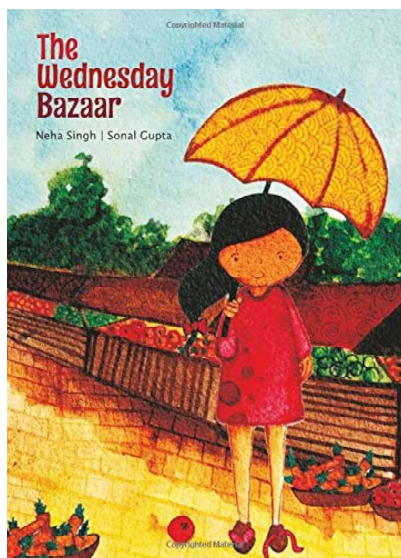
NEHA SINGH

Writer, Theatre, Film maker (English & Hindi)



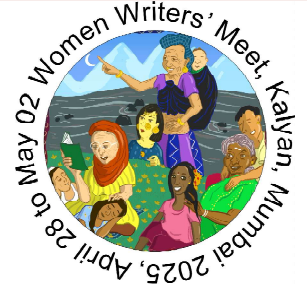
Neha Singh is a Mumbai-based children's author, theatre practitioner and women's rights activist. She has 20 published titles to her name in both Hindi and English. Neha Singh started writing for children in 2011 and her first book, *The Wednesday Bazaar*, was released in 2014. Since then, she has written seven further books for children and young adults and been featured in an anthology. Neha has contributed stories to *The Hindu Young World Anthology* (2019) and *Thank God it's Saturday*, a Westland Publication (2020) which is a collection of cool cat stories. She also writes poems, fiction and non-fiction in Hindi for children and young adults that feature regularly in the children's literary magazines like *Cycle*, *Pluto* and *Chakmak*. Her poems and stories have been turned into posters, bookmarks and poetry cards for children.

Neha's books have been nominated for several Indian and international awards. Her book *I Need to Pee* won a special commendation at the South Asia Book Awards (USA) in 2019. Neha runs her own theatre company called "Rahi" with a special penchant for plays that are around themes for women and children. Music, interaction, immersion and local dialects are the mainstay of her plays. Neha is also a filmmaker and has written and directed films and also acted in a film.



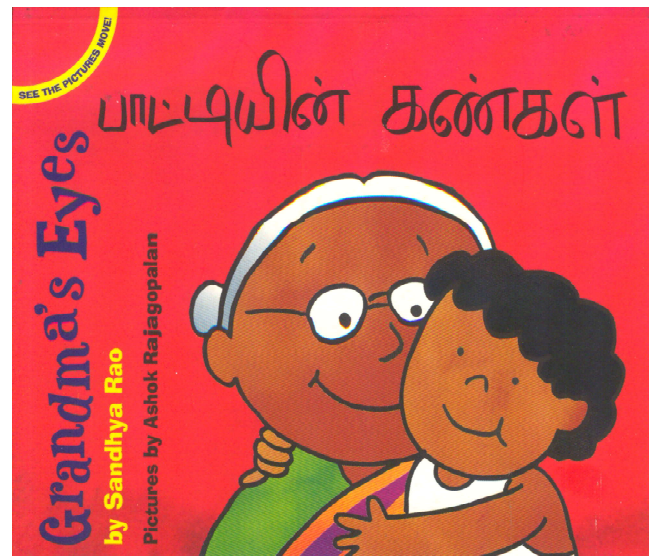
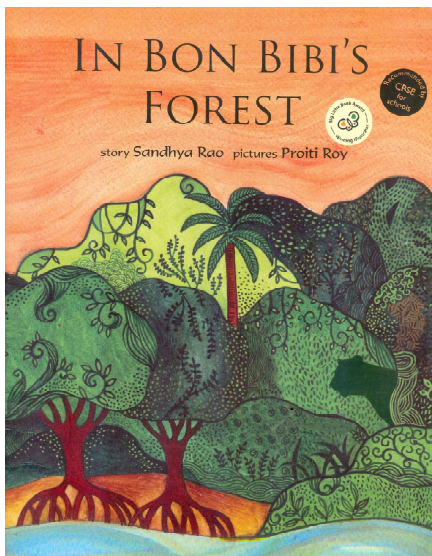
SANDHYA RAO

Writer (English and Hindi)



Sandhya Rao is a writer and editor with nearly 40 years of experience in mainstream journalism as well as publishing. Some of her books for children include *Ekki Dokki* (1996), *My Friend the Sea* (2005), *My Mother's Sari* (2007), *Picture Gandhi* (2015), *My Gandhi Scrapbook* (2015), *Okaasama Otousama* (2014), *Dream Writer* (2016) and *Think, Eat, Save* (2017). Sandhya's stories take up unusual themes. *Ekki Dokki* is an endearing Marathi folktale about two sisters. Ekkesvali has one hair on her head. Donkesvali has two and thinks she's great. In *My Mother's Sari*, the sari Mother wears every day is sometimes a train, sometimes a river, or a swing, or a hiding place.... Based on real accounts *My Friend the Sea*, is an

imagined story of a boy in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami that hit several countries. Sandhya's books have been translated into several Indian languages and have received many prestigious awards. *My Mother's Sari* received the Outstanding International Book, United States Board for Books for Young People, USA award in 2007 and Best of Children's Writing - Contemporary Award in 2018. *My Friend, the Sea* received the Ambitious Children's Book Project Award of Berliner Kinder und Jugendbuchpreis, Germany. Sandhya enjoys meeting young readers and hearing from them what inspires them and how they want to change the world. She works with the *Hindu Business Line* newspaper and lives in Chennai





STORIES TO KEEP CHILDREN AWAKE

Dreaming the Meet

That was the theme of the Women Writers' Meet held this year from 29th April to 1st May 2025 at Green Hill Villas in the Bapsai village in Kalyan. When we planned the Meet we did not realise what a learning experience this Meet was going to be for us in SPARROW.

Four months before the Meet we began our work by trying to identify writers who wrote for children and young people, going through Sahitya Akademi's Bal Puraskar awards,

through writers we knew already and through word of mouth. It will not be an exaggeration to say that what followed was voracious reading of books, poems and stories followed by emails, WhatsApp messages, inbox messages, and phone calls. We were speaking to writers who wrote in Nepalese, Sindhi, Punjabi, Assamese, Khasi, Mizo, Bengali, Kannada, Maithili, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati, Konkani, Santhali and English from different regions ranging from Darjeeling to Thiruvananthapuram, who knew nothing about SPARROW and were convincing them to come for a Meet which we told them they would enjoy. We were also contacting theatre practitioners and story tellers who worked with children and illustrators who drew for children's stories.

Much to our relief and joy almost everyone we contacted agreed to come although a few could not make it and a writer who wrote for children in Khasi was a man! Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih, is a well-known writer and a SPARROW awardee, who writes in Khasi and English. He said he would love to come but will not be able to change his gender! But he did suggest Rimi Nath. Rimi had written a story for children in English with Meghalaya as background but it had not been published. So, we had to leave her out. Then we found Amabel Susungi who had worked on Khasi lullabies and had brought out a book entitled *On Mother's Lap*. And what was more, she was also a singer! She was excited about coming but had a programme in Delhi and the dates of the Meet did not suit her. And we could not get anyone from Mizoram either. We had identified Cherrie Lalnunziri Chhangte who teaches at the Department of English, Mizoram University,

Aizawl, whose areas of interest include poetry, folk literature, and culture studies. Her book *The Blaft Book of Mizo Myths* is a fascinating work but we could not get through to her. We knew about a PhD scholar, Hannah Lalhlanpuui, in the Department of English, Mizoram University, Aizawl. One of her areas of interest was children's literature. But the dates did not suit her and she could not come. Another person we really missed was Siri who writes in the name of Dr Siri. A qualified dentist from Telangana, Siri is a prolific and popular writer of children's literature in Telugu. She has been writing for children for the past 15 years also helping blind children perform dance in their school programmes and creating audio books for blind children. We were thrilled when she agreed to come but in the last minute, she could not make it because her child fell ill. Another person who could not make it was Rashmi Narzary who is a Sahitya Akademi awardee for children's literature in English and her many stories including tales from the heart of Bodoland would have added so much to the Meet. But although she had agreed to come, she could not make it due to bad health. However, we were thrilled about the twenty-five people who confirmed their participation and were excited about the Meet!

Then began furious activities simultaneously on four fronts: travel, programme schedule, brochure and posters and banners. Aarti took over planning the travel, and she had a well laid out plan that she worked out with Pooja. In the earlier Meets since the themes were about women's lives and their expression, we had programmed conversations with each writer to cover her life and her work. We wanted this programme

schedule to be different. So, we thought we would put up a few questions to each writer about her writing for children and young people and how she arrived at that particular genre of writing. We also thought it would be fun if there is an anchor person who would read out the lead questions and who would also read questions meant for her and answer them. (Some writers did not appreciate this "fun" approach. We heard a bit of grumbling, but never mind, it was something different and a good attempt at trying a new way of interacting and fun as far as we were concerned.) We also put into the programme a reading session where each writer would get to read a portion of her story or her poem in the original language with the translation on the screen. We thought it would be wonderful to involve the illustrators and theatre artists in a workshop with children. So, an Interactive workshop with 25 students of Zilla Parishad School, Bapsai, to encourage them to sing, dance, tell stories and draw was put into the programme schedule. Their principal, Sunita Dinesh Avhad was very enthusiastic about the workshop and this made the detailing of the workshop easier.

All SPARROW Meets are planned with films and this time we chose films involving children. The films chosen were *Chakori* which tells the story of a girl who learnt how to ride a bicycle and how her life changed after that, the 1954 classic *Boot Polish*, which depicts a young India in the years following Independence trying to deal with its young population needing education, *Suman*, a FTII Diploma film, which talks about the passage from adolescence to youth, *Chatpat Chunmun*, who outsmarts boys who refuse to play with her, films from Meena

UNICEF Animated Series that bring out right to education, son preference, dowry, nutrition, health care and other issues concerning girl children, *Mere Appa*, about a rare moment of closeness between a 9-year-old boy and his father, *Nil Battey Sannata* about a single mother and her dreams for her daughter and *Sesham Mike-il Fathima* which narrates the story of Fathima Noorjahan, a young Muslim woman from Mallapuram, who aspires to become a football commentator. We added our usual Hot Chocolate sessions in the night where we really serve hot chocolate, as part of the programme schedule. (One of the participants said later that serving hot chocolate at night was not a good idea as it was not healthy but the entire SPARROW team loves hot chocolate and we really can't give up on our Hot Chocolate tradition that we follow in all the Meets!) As always, the Hot Chocolate sessions were to discuss important issues and questions that arise from the Meet like writing in mother tongues and translations and issues that are related to them. Like our earlier Meet in Mizoram, we programmed not one but three book releases: Two Tamil novels *Neela the Brave* by Erode Sarmela, G Kalayarassy's *Dinosaur Sonna Kadhai* (A Story told by a Dinosaur) and Neha Singh's Hindi novel, *Nikki, the Detective*. And who else could we invite to release the books except our dear Dr Charanjeet Kaur, one of our trustees and a friend of SPARROW? We put her name in the schedule so she cannot say no! Before the programme schedule could be done and sent, we first needed a logo to begin the whole thing. We tried several ways of doing it through AI but found the created logos wanting. Fortunately for us, Madhushree came forward

and she designed a beautiful logo that fitted the theme perfectly.

Along with the programme schedule there was the task of getting the publications of the various writers and parcels began to come regularly. Each book that came got added to the list of readings we were already doing and non-stop WhatsApp messages running late into nights went back and forth between Pooja, Sharmila and C S Lakshmi about choosing what to translate for the brochure which we inevitably plan like a book to keep. Translations were done and edited and reedited and we also took the help of other generous friends Dr Rajshree Trivedi, a writer and also Principal of Maniben Nanavati Women's College. While the brochure was being prepared the posters were being designed by Manik Sonkar with Pooja pursuing the writers for resumes and searching the web for extra details on the writers, and the entire library team with Sayali, Lata, Namrata headed by Sharmila, checking the short notes on the writers. Once the posters were done there were the banners to do. This time we planned really big banners and every time a banner was printed and brought there was great excitement. Meanwhile Asmita, Aarti, Pradeep and Pramod got busy with purchasing bags from an NGO and buying note pads, pens and special snacks of Maharashtra to put in the bags and drawing note books, charts, acrylic and water colours and brushes and colour pencils for the school kids.

In the earlier part it was said that we were planning on four fronts. Actually, it was five. We were also going to film the Meet as we always did. We approached our filmmaker friend R V Ramani who had worked with us for filming the Mizoram Meet. He readily agreed and lights

and mikes and other things needed for the filming of the Meet had to be arranged too.

The Meet Happens!

Since we had organised a Meet successfully in Aizawl, Mizoram, 2023, we thought this Meet would be a cakewalk for us. It was not! After initial plans to have the Meet at Dharamshala which got aborted due to various reasons although it involved a good trip to Dharamshala to be with our Buddhist nun friend Ven Tenzin Paldron at the Thosamling Nunnery, we had to make different plans. Other places like Shillong and Guwahati were also considered but did not work out. Then began a desperate search for an ideal location around Mumbai. Aarti, enterprising as always, visited many resorts and reported and since many things had to be taken into consideration including the budget, a second round began with Pooja, Aarti and C S Lakshmi which finally led us to the Green Hills Villas in Bapsai and its wonderful owner Mukesh and his wife Kamini. But budget was still an issue. That is when generous friends, whom we have acknowledged at the end of this report, stepped in to help us. Once the venue was decided all other plans about food, menus, ways to have fun and also do serious work began to take shape. Menus were discussed with Mukesh and Kamini who wanted to give us the best of Maharashtrian food and also other food. Coordinating the travel plans and getting everybody to Bapsai was now the most difficult part. But it was somehow done successfully with a few minor glitches. As the first group arrived and we gave the welcome drink we knew the Meet had started and a lot

of work lay ahead! As various groups arrived and we saw their happy faces, we were sure everything would go well and it did.

In all our Meets we make room sharing arrangements in specific ways. We see to it that different language writers share a room so that they have space to communicate and discuss after the Meet hours. It has always worked well. This time writers from two languages refused to cooperate. They decided to share their rooms with their own language writers which upset us somewhat but we let it go and did not want to make an issue of it. But we decided never to allow this in our forthcoming Meets.

The sessions started on the first day with Shruti Sridharan singing a song composed by her grandfather, V V Sadagopan, for children. All the sessions went wonderfully well with writers speaking from their hearts and enjoying the food with different menus with no complaints. One could feel the warmth, affection and camaraderie that was filling the air. At times it was so palpable that one could feel it in one's body. Particularly wonderful was the play that Vibha Rani, Lekha Rai Deepa Balsavar, Neha Singh, Madhushree and Shruti Sridharan put up for the children and the songs that Sangeeta Barve made children sing. The children enjoyed the play about a lion entering a palace immensely and also loved drawing whatever they wanted with help from Madhushree, Deepa Balsavar and others. Then there was the dance performance of Aarohi, Pooja's daughter, which enthralled everyone.

Everyone forgot about the hot weather during the Meet, and at the end of the day before the Hot Chocolate session many jumped into the swimming pool to cool themselves.

The last day celebrations went on quite late ending with a rain dance facilitated by the many showers fixed on poles on the open roof space near the swimming pool. Everyone got drenched and screamed and shouted calling an end to the Meet.

Thus ended a wonderful Meet which has given SPARROW many friends and well-wishers.

Apart from a regular project grant this Meet was made possible with generous donations from the following friends and well-wishers:

Mr. Aroon Raman, Ms. Afried Raman, Mr. C Y Gopinath, Mr. Kawal Mohan Singh, Ms. Mridula Maluste Sood, Mr. Arvind Kumar Nangia, Prof. G .V Prasad and Prof. Kamala Narasimhan.

Dr. Giri Shankar, G S Ventures, has sponsored the drawing kits and The Estate of Mehlli Gobhai has sponsored the lunch for the student participants from Zilla Parishad School, Bapsai



FROM MUMBAI AIRPORT -TERMINAL 1



FROM PUNE BY ROAD

**ARRIVAL OF
ALL THE
WRITERS
FROM ALL
OVER INDIA**



FROM MUMBAI AIRPORT -TERMINAL 2



FROM MUMBAI BY ROAD



**ARRIVAL @
GREEN HILL
VILLA, KALYAN,
MUMBAI**





Welcome address by C S Lakshmi



Screening of Virtual Tour-SPARROW Walk
<https://www.sparrowonline.org/virtual-archives/2024>
<https://youtu.be/vZn6asJ72Zo>



Screening of film *Chakori* (1993) directed by Sumitra Bhawe and Sunil Sukthankar from SPARROW archives.

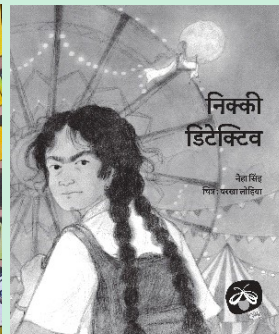
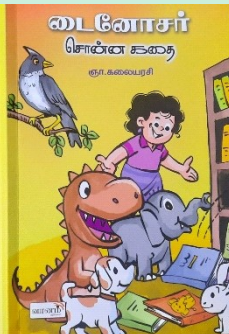
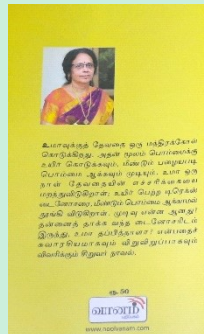
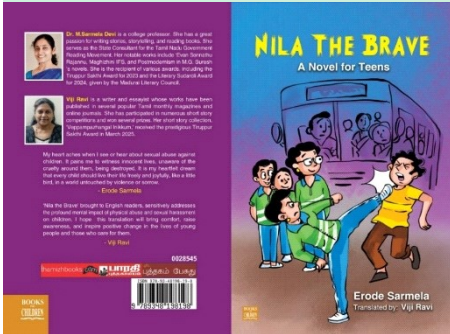


Bandita Phukan felicitated Dr C S lakshmi



Inauguration of the Meet with a song by Shruti Sridharan

INFORMAL LAUNCH OF THREE BOOKS



RELEASED BY
DR CHARANJEET
KAUR

Erode Sarmela's translated novel *Nila, the Brave* published by Bharathi Puthakalayam Book for Children, G Kalayarassy's Tamil novel, *Dinosaur Sonna Kadhai* (A Story Told by the Dinosaur) published by Vaanam Pathippagam and Neha Singh's Hindi novel, *Nikki, the Detective* published by Jugnu Prakashan, Ektara Trust.



Dr Charanjeet Kaur and Erode Sharmila. Narmata Lokhande receiving the first copy on behalf of SPARROW ARCHIVES



Dr Charanjeet Kaur and G Kalayarassy. Dr C S Lakshmi receiving the first copy on behalf of SPARROW ARCHIVES.



Dr Charanjeet Kaur and Neha Singh. Aarti Pandey receiving the first copy on behalf of SPARROW ARCHIVES.



L to R: Erode Sarmela (Tamil) Dr Charanjeet Kaur (SPARROW Trustee), Dr C S Lakshmi (Director, SPARROW), Neha Singh (Hindi), Aarti Pandey, (SPARROW Staff) Namrata Lokhande (SPARROW Staff) and G Kalayarassy (Tamil) with first copy of *Nila, the Brave*, *Dinosaur Sonna Kadhai* (A Story Told by the Dinosaur) and *Nikki, the Detective*.

THEME FOR THE DAY 1: WRITING FOR CHILDREN IN MOTHER-TONGUES

Anchor for the Morning Sessions: Anita Agnihotri



Joba Murmu responds to lead question.



Sangmu Lepcha responds to lead question.



Rashmi Ramani responds to lead question.



Narayani Subramaniam responds to lead question.



Harsha Sadguru Shetye responds to lead question.



Bandita Phukan responds to lead question.



Joya Mitra responds to lead question.



Joya Mitra responds to lead question.



Sangeeta Barve responds to lead question.



Shalini Murthy responds to lead question.



Gira Pinakin Bhatt responds to lead question.



G Kalayarassy responds to lead question.



Anita Agnihotri responds to lead question.



Shruti Sridharan anchoring the afternoon sessions



Erode Sarmela responds to lead question.



Shraddha Trivedi responds to lead question.

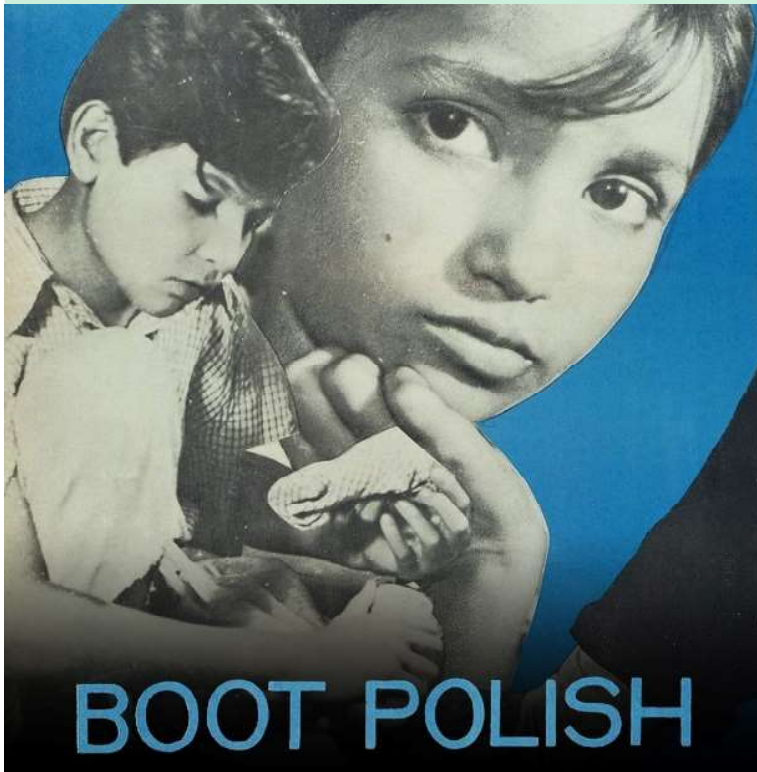


Varsha Gajendragadkar responds to lead question.



Ambai responds to lead question.

FILM SCREENING



Screening of film *Boot Polish* (1954)
Directed by: Prakash Arora,
Produced by: Raj Kapoor.

HOT CHOCOLATE SESSION

THEME FOR DISCUSSION: HOW MUCH DO STORIES TOLD IN MOTHER TONGUES HELP IN ROOTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF THE COUNTRY AND FORMING THEIR PERSONALITIES?

MODERATORS: MAMTA NAINY, LEKHA RAI, VIBHA RANI, NARAYANI SUBRAMANIAN



Vibha Rani with the participants.



Mamta Nainy with the participants.



Narayani Subramanian with the participants.

THEME FOR THE DAY 2: WRITING IN ENGLISH, STORYTELLING, THEATRE, DRAWING AND FILMS FOR AND ON CHILDREN

Anchor for the Morning Sessions: Neha Singh



Deepa Balsavar responds to lead question.



Khyrunissa responds to lead question.



Lekha Rai responds to lead question.



Madhushree responds to lead question.



Mamta Nainy responds to lead question.



Shruti Shridharan responds to lead question.



Vibha Rani responds to lead question.



Sandhya Rao responds to lead question.



Neha Singh responds to lead question.

INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP with 25 students of Zilla Parishad School, Bapsai, with their principal, Sunita Dinesh Avhad.

Workshop jointly conducted by Sangeeta Barve, Deepa Balsavar, Madhushree, Lekha Rai, Shruti Sridharan, Neha Singh and Vibha Rani to encourage students to sing, dance, tell stories and draw.



Children singing song along with Sangeeta Barve.



Neha Singh addressing the students.



Vibha Rani as Lion from the play



Lekha Rai as a King from the play



Neha Singh and Shruti Sridharan addressing the students along with Madhshree, Lekha Rai, Vibha Rani and Deepa Balsavar enacting play with different characters.



Sandhya Rao and Sangeeta Barve helping children to draw



Gira Pinakin Bhatt and Sangmu Lepcha with students (*Hum bhi agar bache hote!*)



Children enjoying drawing session



Madhushree helping students to paint



Deepa Balsavar helping students to paint



Harsha Shetye making her hand mark with paint



Dr C S Lakshmi making her hand mark with paint



Bags painted by students



Dr C S Lakshmi addressing students and thanking Principal Sunita Avhad for bringing children for the workshop



Principal Sunita Avhad thanking SPARROW for inviting students



Writers who conducted the play were happy to pose with greetings made by students.



Dr C S Lakshmi giving gifts to principal Sunita Avhad for other students in the school.

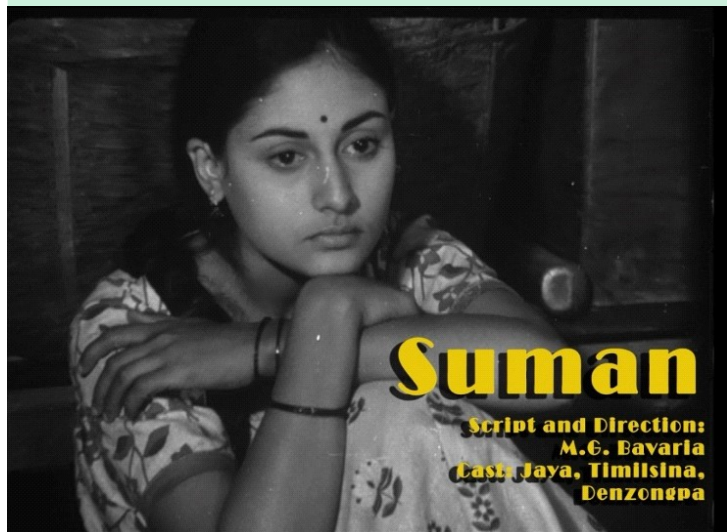


SPARROW Team, Principal Sunita Avhad, Harsha Shetye and Erode Sarmela with students

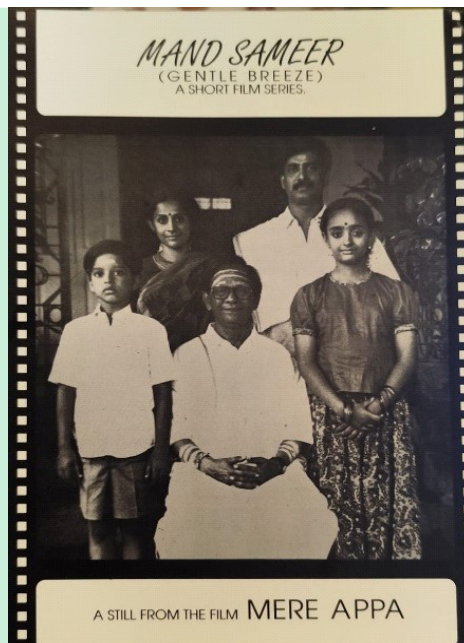


SPARROW Team with students

SCREENING OF FIVE SHORT FILMS



Suman (1970) Directed by Madan Bavaria



Mere Appa (1994)
Directed by
Vishnu Mathur



My Parents Don't Fit
(2020) Directed by Neha
Singh



Meena UNICEF Animated Series
(1993)



Chatpat Chunmun (1989)
Directed by Asha Dutta

HOT CHOCOLATE SESSION

SHOULD THERE BE A CONCERTED EFFORT TO TRANSLATE STORIES NOT ONLY FROM INDIAN LANGUAGES TO ENGLISH AND VICE VERSA BUT ALSO FROM ONE INDIAN LANGUAGE TO ANOTHER SO THAT STORIES FROM DIFFERENT REGIONS AND LANGUAGES INCLUDING MARGINALISED INDIAN LANGUAGES ARE AVAILABLE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE? WHO SHOULD MAKE THIS CONCERTED EFFORT?

MODERATORS: SANDHYA RAO, KHYRUNNISA, JOBA MURMU, SHALINI MURTHY, SHRADDHA TRIVEDI.



Shraddha Trivedi with the participants.



Sandhya Rao with the participants.



Joba Murmu with the participants.



Shalini Murthy with the participants.



Khyrunnisa with the participants.



Gira Bhatt with the participants.



Joya Mitra with the participants.



Sangmu Lepcha with the participants.



Rashmi Ramani with the participants.

THEME FOR THE DAY 3: LISTENING TO POEMS & STORIES AND WATCHING STORIES FILMS TELL.

Anchor for the Sessions: Lekha Rai & Shruti Sridharan



Joba Murmu reads from her story "Gilheri" in Santhali.



Sangmu Lepcha reads her poem "Butterfly and I" in Nepali



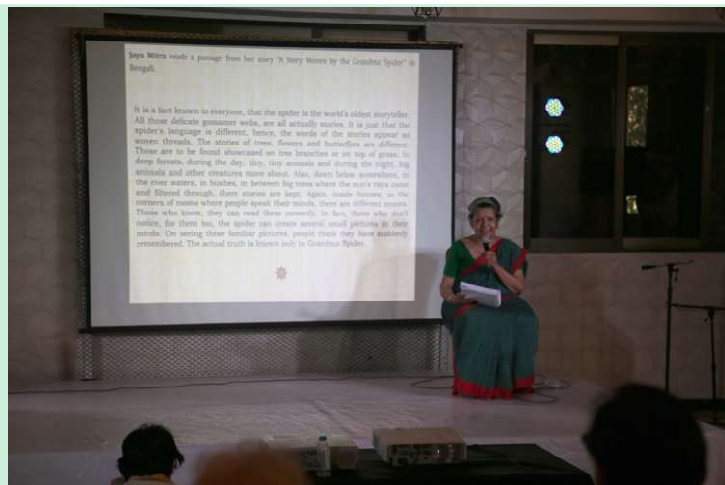
Rashmi Ramani reads her poem "Bird O Bird" in Sindhi.



Harsha Sadguru Shetye reads her short story "Owlet Visits the Fair" in Konkani.



Bandita Phukan reads a passage from her story "How the Change Came About" in Assamese.



Joya Mitra reads a passage from her story "A Story Woven by the Grandma Spider" in Bengali.



Mandeep Rimpi reads from her story "Kitty Di Kheer...." in Punjabi.



Sangeeta Barve reads her poem "Grandfather Tree" in Marathi.



Shalini Murthy reads from her story "A Silkworm's Prayer" in Kannada.



Gira Pinakin Bhatt reads from her story "Who Slapped Me?" in Gujarati.



Kalayarassy reads a passage from her novel *Magic Umbrella* in Tamil.



Erode Sarmela reads a passage from her novel *Nila the Brave* in Tamil.



Shraddha Trivedi reads from her story "Eshaben and the Rat" in Gujarati.



Varsha Gajendragadkar reads a passage from her story "Meenu's Buddy" in Marathi.



Deepa Balsavar reads from her story "The Gift" in English.



Khyrunnisa reads a passage from her story "Throw" in English.



Lekha Rai reads from her story "Tashi and the Magical Pony" in English.



Mamta Nainy reads from her story "A Sari for Ammi" in English.



Vibha Rani reads from one of her Gonu Jha stories "Sharing Fish" in Maithili.



Neha Singh reads a passage from her story "On the Metro" in English.



Narayani Subramanian reads a passage from her book *Deep Sea Wonders* in Tamil.



Sandhya Rao reads a passage from her story "In Bon Bibi's Forest" in English.

SCREENING OF TWO FILMS

Discussion about the films. Moderators: DEEPA BALSAVAR, NEHA SINGH, SHRUTI SRIDHARAN, MAMTA NAINY & KALAYARASSY



Nil Battey Sannata (Zero Divided by Zero Equals Nothing, 2015 Directed by Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari.



Sesham Mike-il Fathima (Up next, Fathima on Mike, 2023) Directed by Manu C. Kumar.



Deepa Balsavar with the participants.



Neha Singh with the participants.



Shruti Sridharan with the participants.



Bandita Phukan



Harsha
Sadguru
Shetye



Joba Murmu



Vibha Rani



Sandhya Rao



Shruti
Sridharan



Deepa
Balsavar



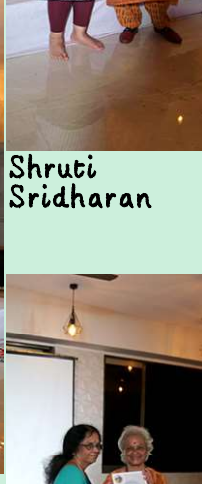
Khyrunnisa



Gira Pinakin
Bhatt



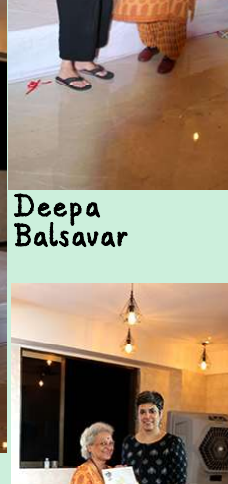
Narayani
Subramanian



Lekha Rai



Mandeep
Rimpi



Shalini Murthy



Kalayarassy



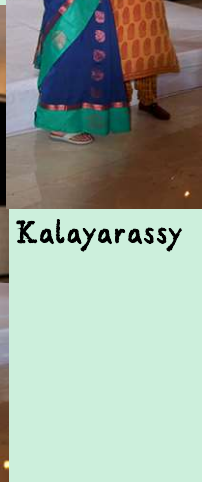
Sangeeta
Barve



Mamta Nainy



Shraddha
Trivedi



Erode Sarmela





Distribution of SOUVENIRS TO THE WRITERS



Rashmi Ramani



Varsha
Gajendragadkar



Joya Mitra



Madhushree



Neha Singh



Sangmu Lepcha



Heartfelt thanks to all the writers by Dr C S Lakshmi



A BIG THANK YOU to GREEN VILLA owner Mr. Mukesh and his wife Kamini and to all the workers of GREEN VILLA.

SONG AND DANCE AND FUN



Song & Dance by Aaroahi Chamlagain



Dance in full swing

GROUP PHOTO TOH BANTA HAI!



Writers with Dr C S Lakshmi, R V Ramani and Assistant Shakti.



Writers with R V Ramani & SPARROW Team.



RANDOM CLICKS!



Deepa Balsavar and Sangeeta Barve going through books of all the writers kept at books exhibition table.



C.S. Lakshmi with Sandhya Rao. Sangmu Lepcha going through SPARROW books kept at books exhibition table.



SPARROW Team with Sangeeta Barve, Erode Sarmela and Varsha Gajendragadkar



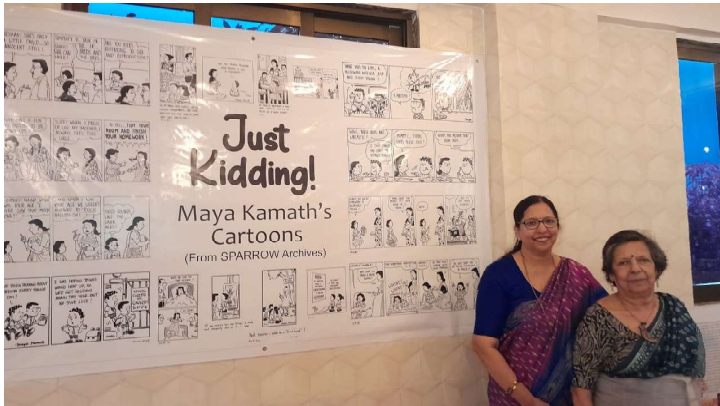
L to R: Khyrunnisa, Neha Singh, Vibha Rani, Erode Sarmela, Shruti Sridharan and Narayani Subramanian.



SPARROW Team with writers.



Anita Agnihotri starting the first day's sessions.



Harsha Shetye and Joya Mitra with Maya Kamath cartoons banner.



READY TO POSE !

L to R: Shalini Murthy, Erode Sarmenla, Varsha Gajendragadkar, Harsha Shetye, Sangeeta Barve, Mandeep Rimpi, Joba Murmu, Kalayarassy with Deepa Balsavar and Shruti Sridharan.



Shoot still: Shruti Sridharan, Filmmaker R V Ramani and Assistant Shakti.



Airport chaos ! Drawing by Madhushree.

DEPARTURE



GOODBYE HUGS !



GROUP PHOTO BEFORE DEPARTURE



C S LAKSHMI
WITH SPARROW
TEAM

Till we meet again !

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A circular diagram illustrating various media types. At the center is a yellow circle. Surrounding it are ten colored circles, each containing a media type: Thoughts (red), Voices (light green), Action (grey-green), Images (orange), Stories (pink), Films (green), Songs (brown), Cartoons (orange-red), Photos (olive), and Posters (light blue). A red line connects the central circle to the 'Voices' circle.

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