

Khabbar

North American Konkani Newsletter

Volume XXX No. 4

October, November, December - 2007

From:

The Honorary Editor,
"Khabbar"

P. O. Box 222

Lake Jackson, TX 77566 - 0222

XXX-4

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



FIRST CLASS

TO:

Khabbar Follies

In this section, Khabbar looks into the Konkani community and anything and everything that is Konkani from a Konkani point of view. The names will never be published but geographic location will be identified in general terms.

There is no doubt in my mind that *Khabbar* is a part & parcel of life of Konkanis in North America. In fact, *Khabbar* has developed a special relation with most of the Konkani families and here are some examples of those close encounters of a different kind.....

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Dues to *Khabbar* is probably the most talked about subject amongst Konkanis in North America. I recently got a check for \$3.00 from this family in NC! Eventhough, the annual dues is a low \$15.00, I was kind of surprised at this amount since this family has already paid their dues for the year! Well, I asked the family and here's the answer I got. "You know, I was processing my payment to the family dentist thru electronic payment system and accidentally hit the "*Khabbar*"

button instead of my dentist's, whose last name starts with a "K". Now, you know how you got the \$3.00 check!".

Editor's Reply:

Well a dentist's bill of \$3.00....! I won't be surprised if more Konkanis move to NC for a well deserved break in dental care and low charges!?!

And, for this family in NY, paying *Khabbar* dues is the most important thing that there is! He told me that *Khabbar* always gets the first check from his household every year prior to cutting checks to anyone else!! Wow, what a dedication to *Khabbar*!!!

SUBSCRIPTION FORM:

Dear Konkani family,

It is time to renew your subscription for 2008. The numbers on the mailing label clearly indicate the year/s the dues for *Khabbar* has been received since 2005. Please, note that you have the FREE access to the e*Khabbar*, the electronic version of *Khabbar*, by logging on to ekhabbar.com. If you want hard copy, then only remit your subscription at \$15.00/yr. **Please, don't pay for future years!** Fill the form below and send your subscription with a check payable to *Khabbar* to P. O. Box 222, Lake Jackson, TX 77566-0222. (Canadian Konkanis please pay cash or MO in US\$)

Name: _____

Spouse Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email ID: _____

.....**Children**.....

Name Boy/Girl d.o.b. Hobby/Interest

Comments, if any: _____

Quarterly Newsletter
For Circulation to the Konkani Community in North America
Volume XXX No. 4

October, November, December - 2007

Honorary Editor: Mr. Vasanth Bhat

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Make check payable to "Khabbar" & mail to P.O.Box 222, Lake Jackson, TX 77566-0222

The Editorial Committee reserves the right to exclude, edit and correct all material received for publication and does not accept any responsibility for views expressed by authors of the publications.

EDITORIAL

Dear Konkani family,
I hope all is well with you and your family.

This issue of *Khabbar* has been mailed to **ALL** families that have paid dues **at least once since 2005**. In other words, families who **have not** paid since 2004 will not be receiving this issue. The numbers on the mailing label clearly indicate the year/s the dues for *Khabbar* has been received since 2005 and if there is any error let me know. This issue has **not** been mailed to families that have specifically indicated that they will access *ekhabbar*. The on-line version of *Khabbar*, *ekhabbar*, will be on the web a **quarter** after the hard copies have been mailed.

It is time to renew your subscription for 2008. Send your subscription with a check payable to *Khabbar* to P. O. Box 222, Lake Jackson, TX 77566-0222.

The Advisory Committee of *Khabbar* is glad that the annual dues will remain the same at \$15.00 a year and for that you get:

- Four issues of the *Khabbar*,
- Annual Mailing List and
- Discounted advertisement rates.

The 2008 *Khabbar* Mailing List will be mailed **only** to families that have paid their subscriptions for 2007. The *Khabbar* Mailing List is a prized possession of our community and help me to keep it up-to-date. Send names and addresses of Konkani families that are not in the list to P. O. Box 222, Lake Jackson, TX 77566-0222, or email khabbar@hotmail.com and

rest be assured that I'll "*khabbarize*" them!

Khabbar will publish all the developments and progress made by **The North American Konkani Association (NAKA)** on an on-going basis. Send your constructive suggestions to any of the Directors of the NAKA Board. This quarter, the 2007 Konkani Youth Convention not only refunded to NAKA the seed money of \$5k but also their surplus. Thanks to the 2007 Konkani Youth Convention organizers, you started a trend and hope this trend will continue.

The NAKA sponsored **Konkani Sammelan - 2008 (KS-2008)** in Santa Clara, CA will be an experience no Konkani in North America should miss! Preparations are underway for this July 3rd to 5th gala event and your help is needed. Your participation, financial contribution, volunteer help, etc are all needed. Please, extend all the help you can.

The unofficial *Khabbar* correspondents in your area who send in the *hoon khabbars* on a regular basis are doing an outstanding job. **Remember, if it did not appear in *Khabbar*, then it did not happen in North America!** If your area is not represented wholly, let me know and I'll recruit more volunteers. You send the news items via email (khabbar@hotmail.com).

On the Quiz front, even after giving a relatively easy quiz in the last issue, I see, the member participation is poor! Hence,

the prize for getting correct solutions to 4 consecutive *Khabbar* quizzes will be discontinued from next year onwards!! Can I say, *Khabbar* has remained a champ!?!

With the Foundation Stone laid for the ambitious project, **Konkani Kendra**, the **Konkani Bhas Ani Sanskriti Pratistan** is looking for more financial support. Thanks to **Basti Ganapathi Shenoy** who has devised a method wherein families wanting to help **Konkani Bhas Ani Sanskriti Pratistan** can do so with relative ease! Call him at (702)-341-6706 or email: bshenoy@cox.net if interested to extend your help for this worthy cause.

Khabbar will always publish appeals for charity free of charge but cannot collect money on behalf of any charity. Families are encouraged to send the money directly to the concerned charities. It is amazing to see so many appeals come to *Khabbar* on a regular basis. *Khabbar* firmly believes in helping our people whether it is in India or here.

With the year 2007 fast approaching, I hope the struggle to rid terrorism from this world will materialize soon. Hope Peace & Tranquility will prevail.

Happy Holidays & Happy New Year to you all.

Devu Boren Karo.

Vasanth
Honorary Editor

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor will be considered for publication unless the writer requests otherwise. Letters may be edited for publication. Editor reserves the right not to publish anonymous letters. Initials only on request if the writer includes his or her name.

Dear Vasantuncle,

I'm attaching an article summarizing the first phase (mitochondrial analysis) of my research project on Konkani genetic diversity for your consideration to publish in the Khabbar. I hope you will be able to publish both the text and the figure. Please let me know if you need the figure in another format. I am currently working on the second phase (Y-chromosome data analysis) of the research. I'm working towards publishing this research as an article in a peer-reviewed genetics journal as soon as possible.

I am sending all the participants a summary of their individual mitochondrial and Y-chromosome results, along with a copy of this article. If anyone has any questions or would like more information, my e-mail address is aapai@alumni.upenn.edu. I want to thank you for your enthusiastic encouragement and support. I also want to thank all the Konkani men who participated in the study.

Regards,

Athma Pai

aapai@alumni.upenn.edu

Hi Vasanth,

Could you include the attached request to our call for nominations for awards for the next sammelan KS-2008 in the next issue of Khabbar?

Thanks a lot.

Bharat

bshiralkar@gmail.com

Dear Vasantmaam:

I am writing to request your support for the Souvenir issue being prepared for the 2008 Konkani Sammelan. The Souvenir Committee is accepting advertisements for publication in the souvenir. The prices for the advertisements are as follows:

Full Page: \$1,000

Half Page: \$500

Quarter Page: \$300

I look forward to seeking your help in making the 2008 Sammelan a success. Kindly contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely

Arun Kamat

kamat.arun@gmail.com

1655 Mariani Drive

Sunnyvale, CA 94087

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M: (408)529-0042

Dear Mr. Vasanth Bhat,

I am really happy to know that you are an alumnus of St Aloysius College. Mr. Bhamy Shenoy gave me your email ID.

I am happy to send you the third issue of the St Aloysius College NEWSLETTER.

This time I have highlighted the SAC High school. You will get some info on what is happening at St Aloysius High School...and also get to see some of the snaps of the High School.

I am also happy to tell you that St Aloysius has become AUTONOMOUS. We had the first ACADEMIC COUNCIL meeting and also the GOVERNING COUNCIL meeting recently. This is just the beginning of St Aloysius College becoming a Deemed University--I hope within next two to three years.

We have also formed a unit of Aloysian Alumni Association in US and Mr. Victor Pais, NJ is actively involved in the Financial Management Team. We already had three CONFERENCE CALLS, the last one being on 27th Sept. Mr. Shenoy also joined us in the Conf Call.

I have been circulating ALOYSIAN NEWSLETTER to our alumni. I want to send it to a larger number of recipients--our alumni and friends. Mr. Shenoy told me that you have a very good database of our Konkanis in US--and quite a few should be alumni of St Aloysius College. I'd be grateful if you could publish in KABAR a request item to access our NEWSLETTERS: Links given below.

<http://stalloysius.ac.in/alnews/alnews-Sept15.htm>

<http://stalloysius.ac.in/alnews/alnews-august15.htm>

<http://stalloysius.ac.in/alnews/alnews.htm>

and also request them to contact me (fr.denzil@gmail.com) in order that I may include them in the list of recipients of the NEWSLETTER.

Warm regards,

Denzil SJ

fr.denzil@gmail.com

PS: In case the NEWSLETTER does not show up on your desktop please click this link to have a look:

<http://stalloysius.ac.in/alnews/alnews-Sept15.htm>

Dear Vasanth,

Attached please find a write-up on our pilgrimage to Sri Vyasashram. I just can not bear to bring myself to put my name not because I am shy or any thing like that. But my experience at that place was so profound that I can not put my name since it makes me feel that I am boosting my ego. I simply cannot do that about this place. The only reason for writing the article is because you had said that it will be inspirational for other Konkanis to know about and visit the Ashram after reading our experience. Also, it is a labor of love for me to expound on the greatness of Sri Swamiji's work.

I am sure many who know that we had visited Hardwar will know that I wrote, but so be it.

Hope you understand

Best Regards

"Anonymous"

Hello,

We have started a site for a GSB temple in Thuravoor, Aleppy, Kerala, India. Please have a look when you get time. Please visit www.tdtemple.org and please send your comments and valuable suggestions. Thank you waiting for your reply. Regards

Jayadev Kamath

jayadevac@gmail.com

Hoon Khabbar

Congratulations:

DEVDUUTT, s/o Suresh & Vranda Kamath, London, Ont. was co-awarded the CAA's Patricia A. Curran Award for the patroller-of-year in a presentation ceremony in Oshawa in July. Devdutt and co-student, both Grade 6 pupils of Sir George -Etienne Cartier Public school reacted quickly and smartly to save a Grade 1 student on May 8th from a on coming van. Both Devdutt and the co-student shared a trophy, plaque and the cash prize.

KARISMA, d/o Arjun & Suchitra Nagarkatti of Thousand Oaks, CA, performed her *Arangetram* in the Pandallur/Tanjore Dance technique on 2nd Sept 2007 at the Countrywide Performing Arts Center, Scherr Forum in Thousand Oaks, CA.

As appeared in the Times Of India

KV Kamath is ET's Business Leader of the Year

5 Oct 2007, 0026 hrs IST, TNN

BANGALORE: There were a number of firsts to this year's edition of the jury meeting for the ET Awards for Corporate Excellence. For the first time the jury meeting was held outside Mumbai - the venue being Bangalore - and instead of one chairman, the jury was co-chaired by Azim Premji, chairman of Wipro, and N R Narayana Murthy, chairman of Infosys.

As usual the jury scrutinised the nominees carefully and every winner was chosen after considered deliberation.

The award for Business Leader of the Year came down to a contest between **KV Kamath, CEO of ICICI Bank**, and Anand Mahindra, vice-chairman of M&M. The jury decided to give the award to Kamath for the rapid strides ICICI Bank had made in recent times despite not-so-favourable conditions for the banking industry. The Company of The Year award went to India's largest telecom company, Bharti Airtel, and the jury believed that this was an amazing story for a company that only three years ago was a recipient of the

Emerging Company of the Year award.

Shobana Bhartia walked away with the Businesswoman of the Year award thanks to the growth that HT Media has seen in recent times under her stewardship.

Kamath has also won the recognition as **FORBES ASIA's 2007 Businessman of the Year**.

Congratulations to **Dr. VANITA BRAVER, MD** of Warren, NJ for publishing two more children's books! **MADISON'S PATRIOTIC PROJECT** (Star Bright Books/October 2007/\$14.95/ ISBN 978-1-59572-109-9) and **MADISON AND THE TWO WHEELER** (Star Bright Books/October 2007/\$14.95/ ISBN 978-1-59572-110-5) are the third and fourth books in the well-received Teach Your Children Well series. In **MADISON'S PATRIOTIC PROJECT**, Madison finds herself in yet another struggle. In celebration of President's Day, Madison is confident that her beautiful patriotic scrapbook will win her the first prize and free pizza. Despite her self-assurance, her classmate Jonathan wins the prize and Madison is devastated. With gentle counselling from her parents and her stuffed animal Courage the Lion, she does the right thing and congratulates Jonathan for winning. The story highlights an important lesson: sometimes, no matter how hard you try, you don't win. Trying your best and accepting that you won't always win are what truly counts.

In **MADISON AND THE TWO WHEELER**, Madison is determined to learn how to ride her bicycle without training wheels so she can ride with her best friend Emily, but one bad fall makes her lose her confidence. Her parents and her guide, Hope the Bluebird urge her to continue practicing, and eventually, Madison accepts the challenge. With renewed determination, she gets back on her bike and learns to ride as well as Emily. This simple tale emphasizes

the crucial lesson that determination can make any goal achievable.

The Teach Your Children Well series, beginning with bestselling books, **PINKY PROMISE** and **PARTY PRINCESS**, is a unique tool to help young children ages 4-8 develop moral values and confidence through self-reflection and decision making. Children will relate readily to Madison, a realistic and lovable protagonist on whom they can model their own behavior, and through the characters of Madison's mom and dad, Dr. Braver offers parents positive and appropriate responses for turning childhood's troublesome scenarios into teachable moments.

According to Dr. Braver, "character and morality are not innate gifts, but assets we develop through modeling. After all character is destiny." Please visit <http://www.drvanitabraver.com>.

CHAITRA SHENOY (28) a public interest lawyer, married, & living in NYC ran the marathon in San Francisco, CA in Oct. 2007 to raise awareness in the Konkani community about blood cancers. Knowing three Konkani women who have been affected by blood cancer, she put action into words. In less than five months, she raised over \$10k to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. She hopes to continue to raise awareness of cancer in the Konkani community and encourage her parents' generation and others to give back to the community that has given so much to them.

K. S. PAI of Willoughby Hills, OH has developed a website: <http://www.srivedavyasa.org/>. This digital collection is dedicated to the extraordinary life and exemplary literary and spiritual works of Bhagavan Sri Vedavyasa.

AJAY HEBLE, a professor at the University of Guelph and director of the Guelph Jazz Festival, is leading the \$4 million project that will span 7 years and bring together 33

researchers in a variety of fields plus 12 community groups. This multi-million dollar research project seeks to understand what happens when an adhoc group of people makes off the cuff music together.

Source: Globe and Mail Sept.2007

SHANTA RAGADE of Kitchner, Ont. Is having an exhibition of her new paintings at The Homer Watson House & Gallery, 1754 Old Mill Road, Kitchener, Ont. from Nov. 3rd thru Dec 16th 2007.

Dr. RAJARAMA SHENOY of Shelton, CT was a member of the NASA/Army UH-60A Airloads Program Team that was awarded NASA Group Achievement Award in May 2007 for "enabling for the first time, the characterization and understanding of a helicopter's complex, unsteady aerodynamic operating environment". He had previously received this NASA award in 1985 for his work on "Quiet Helicopter" Technology.

ANAND RAO, of Aliso Viejo, CA s/o Venkatesh & Vasanthi Rao of Laguna Woods, CA, was promoted as Manager of IT dept. at City of Garden Grove. At the age of 33 yrs, he is the youngest manager at the city office.

Konkani Graduates:

SANKET, s/o Gautum & Aruna Ullal, Hamilton, Ont. received the Millennium Excellence Award in May 2007. It is a Nation-wide award presented to "Students with high academic achievement, community service, leadership and interest in innovation". During graduation, he was also awarded the Lieutenant Governor's Community Volunteer Award for his, "Exemplary involvement in his community". Sanket Ullal is now in his first undergraduate year at McMaster University.

ABHIJEET, s/o Shrikrishna & Swati Pai, Scarborough, Ont. was awarded the Governor General Academic Medal for Academic Excellence in Grades 11 and 12, by the Jean Vanier Catholic Secondary School for the year of 2006-2007. He was also awarded for the highest academic

achievement by the Department of Math and the Department of Science. He is currently an Undergraduate student at McMaster University, entering his first year in the Engineering Program.

KAUSHIK BALIGA of Maple, Ont. was awarded "The Principal's Award for Student Leadership" from Ontario Principal's Council at his Grade 6 Graduation on 25th June 2007. His Principal, Mrs. Sandra Bauer, Arbor Glen Public School, gave this award to recognize his exemplary leadership throughout the year thru positive attitude, good citizenship, strong academic achievements and leadership skills.

AMBIKA, d/o Dr. Rajarama & Aneetha Shenoy of Shelton CT, completed Pediatric Residency Program at Yale New Haven Hospital in June 2007 and is currently pursuing Fellowship in Pediatric Pulmonology at Yale University Medical College.

New Arrivals:

PRIYANKA, a baby girl to Nitin & Pratibha Betrabet of Mississauga, Ont. on May 31, 2007. A sister to Eshan.

PREM, a baby boy to Muralidhar & Neeta Nayak of Mississauga, Ont. on August 6th 2007. A brother to Om.

NETHRA, a baby girl to Vosudesh & Susmita Pai of Marlton, NJ on September 14th 2007 in Marlton, NJ. The paternal grandparents are Karkala Panduranga Pai & Smt. Jannibai Pai of Hyderabad and the maternal grandparents are Rajanala Harendra Babu & Smt. Vani Rajanala of Hyderabad.

CALLUM PRAVEEN, a baby boy Ed & Rashmi Bhandarkar MacPhee of Ottawa, Ont., on September 17th 2007. Maternal grandparents are Ratnakar & Sudha Bhandarkar of Mississauga, Ont.

SHIV, a 7 lbs, 4 oz - 21 inches baby boy to Rakesh & Sharmila Rao Thakkar of Chicago, IL on Tuesday, Sep. 18th 2007 at 10:04 am. A brother to Anika. The proud grand mother is Dr. Sabitha Rao of Staten Island, NY.

SHLOK (4 pounds and 15 ounces) & **SACHIT** (6 pounds 5 ounces), twin boys to Shantaram & Shaila Bhat Bharadwaj of Winston-Salem, NC on Friday September 21st 2007 at 1.05 and 1.07 am respectively. Visiting the twins are the maternal grandparents Trivikrum & Vijaya Bhat of Goa, India.

TRISHA, a baby girl to Sid & Suchi Shenoy of Sammamish, WA on September 23, 2007. The paternal grand parents are Sathish & Gita Shenoy (formerly of Missasauga and presently in Dubai).

MIHIR, a baby boy to George & Smriti Joseph of Moorpark, CA on Saturday, October 13, 2007 at Moorpark CA. The paternal grand parents are J. & Reena Joseph of Mumbai and the maternal grand parents are Subraya & Shamala Shenoy of Clifton, NJ.

SHAUNAK & VED, twin boys, to Yatin & Ashwini Hoskote of Portland, OR, on November 13th 2007. Grand children to the late Vasant and Smt. Lata Hoskote (presently of Auckland, NZ), and to Dinaker & Jyotsna Rao of Austin, TX.

NAYNA, 6 lb. 2 oz. & 19" tall baby girl to Praveen & Shanthi Kamath of San Jose, CA on November 27th 2007, a sister to Neil. The paternal grand parents are Bola Annappa & Chandramathi Kamath of Mumbai and the maternal grand parents are Balkunje Sudhakara & Prathima Shenoy of Houston, TX.

Brahmopadesham:

Gopinath & Geetha Rao of Brampton, Ont. celebrated the sacred thread ceremony of their son, **Chi. TARUNJIT**, on July 2, 2007 in Chennai, India.

Newly Weds:

Sow. MANISHA, d/o Chandrakant & Geeta Shanbhag of Spartanburg, SC married to **Chi. SHALIN**, s/o Vishnu & Prafulla Patel on Saturday October 27th 2007 at Summit Pointe in Spartanburg, SC.

Sow. PALLAVI, d/o Vaman & Geeta Shanbahg of Moore, SC married to **Chi. PATRICK**, s/o Mr. & Mrs. Earl Lewis on Sunday October 28th 2007 at the Marriott Spartanburg, SC.

Relocation:

The **PANDITH** family, Srinivasa & Poornima and family have relocated within Orlando, FL to 10538 Boca Pointe Dr., Orlando, FL 32836. The new telephone is (407)-909-8059 and email ID: ppandith@yahoo.com

The **BHAT** family, Prashant & Seema, alongwith kids Samarth & Sarthak, have relocated from Hebron, KY to Goodyear, AZ and the new address is 10326 S. 182nd Avenue, Goodyear, AZ 85338. The new telephone is (623)-215-6512 and email ID: pbhat@amazon.com

Kirti Jewelers & KV Diamonds owned by **Suresh & Usha Shenoy** of Sugar Land, TX relocated to their new jewelry store and diamond showroom at 6655 Harwin Drive, #A101, Houston, TX 77036.

The **KUMAR** family, Kiran & Radhika, have relocated from Cannonburg, PA to W241 N2573 East Parkway Meadow Circle # 2, Pewaukee, WI 53072. The new telephone is (262)-347-0016 and email ID: bhandary_1947@yahoo.com

Obituary:

Smt. NALINI M. SHANBHAG (85) passed away peacefully in Mumbai on 17 August 2007. *Khabbar* sends heartfelt condolences to her son, Girish M. Shanbhag and family of Mississauga, Ont.

Smt. SITA RAO passed away peacefully on her 83rd birthday on Nov. 7th 2007 in San Antonio, TX. *Khabbar* sends heartfelt condolences to her sons, Srinath Rao & family of San Antonio, TX, and Anil Rao & family of Friendswood, TX and daughter Vidya Kamath & family of San Antonio, TX.

Smt. JAYA N. BHAT (57) of Mangalore passed away in Mangalore on Nov. 25th 2007. *Khabbar* sends heartfelt condolences to her broth-in-law Vasanth Bhat & family of Lake Jackson, TX and sister-in-law Vidya Nayak & family of Flanders, NJ.

KONKANI HAPPENINGS

The **Konkani Association of Southern California (KASC)** summer picnic held this year on August 11th 2007 at the Mission Bay Park, San Diego, was a well attended, fun summer event with about 88 members attending. Choosing a venue outside L.A. was in wake of the committee's idea of having local picnics to encourage participants from areas outside L.A.

For those who have missed this splendid event, it was a perfect sunny day at the Bay. The event started with a welcome speech from KASC President **Dr. Ramdas Pai** followed by a one to one introduction from all the attendees. It was a great opportunity to meet some new Amchigeles from San Diego. With special snacks like Tamales, Samosas for starters and delicious lunch catered by Bombay Coast Restaurant of San Diego, the day was bubbling with zeal and enthusiasm of all attendees. There were games like beach volleyball in the morning to a fun filled Antakshari (men vs. women) making it a day to remember.

We thank all committee members and volunteers for working very hard to make this event a grand success and every member that attended this fun event. Special appreciation for the tireless efforts put in by **Mohan and Vasanthi Shenoy** and for reserving this wonderful location with excellent facilities. Special mention about the initiative from our President Ramdas and Sudha Pai for coming early at 4 am and helping to set up the place. Special thanks to **Arvind and Beena Shenoy** for a great catering arrangement and personal menu selection. With this being a major success, we look forward to having many more such local picnics.

By: Rahul and Divya Kamath, Valley Village, CA

The **Saraswat Foundation** held their annual **Bhanap Picnic** on Saturday August 4th 2007 at Reichler Park in South Brunswick, NJ.

The **Michigan Konkani Association (MKA)** held their annual Ganesh Chathurti/ Dandiya/ Asthami function on September 22nd 2007 at Bingo and Banquet Hall, Pontiac, MI

Chitrapur Heritage Canada Inc. and Canada Sabha of Chitrapur Saraswats (CSCS) held a musical evening of exciting extravaganza of bhajans, tabla ensemble, film songs and dances on Saturday September 29th 2007 (3:00 PM to 8:00 PM) at North York Civic Centre, North York to celebrate the 300th Anniversary of Chitrapur Guruparampara and to raise funds for the Tercentenary projects and scholarship. The special guest was Dr. Frank Conlon, Professor Emeritus, Washington University, Seattle (Author of numerous books and articles based on Saraswat Culture and Practices).

The **Konkani Association of Ontario (KAO)** held their annual *Dandiya* on Saturday October 20th 2007 at Earl Bales Community Centre Banquet Hall in Toronto.

The **Konkani Association of Southern California (KASC)** held their annual Diwali on Saturday October 20th 2007 at the City of Arcadia Community Center with about 123 members attending. The cultural program started with a few pulsating Hindi film songs by **Supriya Bhat and Sridhar Rao**, followed by a grand colorful Halloween parade presented by the KASC youth representative **Kedar Gulvady** and his mother, **Uma Gulvady**. Next, prayers were offered to the Almighty with the traditional 'Aarti and Bhajans' led by **Nandini and Sridhar Rao**, followed by a talk on 'Significance on Diwali'.

After the raffle, **Shyam Amladi** rendered a few inspirational 'Abhangs', and entertained all with the first ever 'Konkani Qawwali'. **Deepti Kaval** accompanied on tabla by her husband, elated the audience with some festive 'Bhajans'. To top it all, there were rib-tickling standup comedy acts by **Radhika Hatttiangadi and Deepak Ubhayakar**.

The MCs for the event were **Divya and Rahul Kamath**. The event signoff was marked by a vote of thanks by **Beena and Arvind Shenoy** and a delicious dinner catered through Woodlands Restaurant, Artesia. Thanks to all committee members & volunteers for working very hard to make this event a grand success.

By: Rahul and Divya Kamath, Valley Village, CA

Konkani Association of California (KAOCA) held their annual Diwali function on Saturday Nov. 3rd 2007 at CET auditorium in San Jose, CA

Konkani Sabha Diwali function was on Saturday Nov. 3, 2007 at Sri Venkateswara temple auditorium, in Bridgewater, NJ. Over 250 people from tristate area attended the function which started with a brief but brisk dance of 'Dandiya', followed by Pooja and distribution of 'God Phovu' prasad. The strong turnout at the event was complemented by a record number of performances and performers. The highlight was the introduction of 'Konkani Idol' which allowed freestyle Karaoke and singing to live music accompaniment. The unanimous winner was **Akshay Kamath**, 14, who gave a tremendous performance in singing a classical Hindustani music raga 'Purya Dhanashri'. Second place was a tie between the contemporary singing of **Ravi Bhat** in the form of a medley of Hindi film songs and **Sujata Benegal's** rendition of 'Aaiye Meherban' from the movie 'Howrah Bridge'. There were three hilarious skits staged and provided for some light hearted and enjoyable moments. **Arun Manelkar**, our evergreen host, did a great job as the emcee and participated in skits and a solo dance wearing Hillary Clinton's mask. The evening's most glamorous, colorful and graceful event was the 'Rajasthani and Koli' dance choreographed and performed by **Suvarchala Kamath, Smita Bijoor** and troupe.

Shankari Pai did not disappoint in her culinary preparations and everyone enjoyed the sumptuous and authentic food dished out by her. Thanks to 'Elegant Affairs' for their generosity on the fabulous job in decorating the stage and reception areas. A "Big Thank You" to all the volunteers who contributed to the resounding success of the function which included team in dining area led by **Satish & Vrinda Kamath, Vineeth Nayak** for managing the sound system and website throughout the year, etc.

Submitted by Ganapathi Kamath, President, Konkani Sabha, gkamathCPA@yahoo.com

American Midwest Konkani Association (AMKA) celebrated their annual Diwali function on Sunday Nov. 11th 2007 at SVS Balaji Temple in Aurora, IL

Michigan Konkani Association (MKA) held their annual *Diwali Mela* on Saturday Nov. 17th 2007 at Southfield Civic Center in Southfield, MI.

The Konkani Association of Ontario (KAO) held their annual Diwali function on Saturday November 17th 2007 at Chingaucousy Secondary School in Brampton, Ont.

Houston Area Amchigale Society (HAAS) celebrated their annual Diwali at Sugar Land Community Center in Sugar Land, TX on Saturday, November 24th 2007 under the sponsorship of **Vasudev & Shobha Shenoy and Ramkrishna & Maya Prabhu**. The festivities included performances by children and teenagers, hilarious Konkani narratives, an enjoyable Konkani drama and a special segment of lively Konkani songs. A clothing drive was held for the benefit of The Star of Hope, a local shelter for the homeless.

The Secret Revolution of Lord Krishna The Historical Context of the Bhagavad Gita Chapter: 3 Enter Kama: Orthodox Vedic Dharma becomes infected with Kama

By: - K. P. S. Kamath, M. D., Cape Girardeau, MO

Now something happened that gravely threatened the sacrifice-centered orthodox Vedic Dharma: Kama –selfish desire–infected the upper classes. During the post-Vedic period (1000 B. C. – 200 B. C.) the orthodox Vedic Dharma became increasingly corrupted by unscrupulous Vedic priests as well as desire-ridden aristocrats. Sacrificial rites (Karma) originally designed to appease Vedic gods (Devas) became exclusive tools of both these classes to seek personal wealth, pleasure, and power (2:42-43). Performing grand sacrifices with a great deal of ostentation and expense became a status symbol. Gaining Karma phala –fruit of Yajna (2:47) – became the end in itself. Devas were more or less forgotten. Selfish desire (Kama) for, attachment (Sangas) to and possessiveness (Moha, delusion) of wealth, power and social prestige infected all activities of the upper classes of the society. Every sacrificial rite was performed with a Sankalpa –design, will, intention or ulterior motive– to obtain one object of desire or another (6:2, 4). Delusion (Moha 2:52) and egoism (Ahankara 2:71) –"I" and "Mine"– poisoned the minds of both the performing priests and sponsoring nobles (16:12-18).

Dwandwa –pairs of opposites– is the symptom of mental stress

This state of mind that is highly fickle, restless and unsteady on account of hankering for, attachment to and possessive of wealth, power, title, land, heaven, etc. is described by the Bhagavad Gita as Dwandwa or pairs of opposites (4:22). The Dwandwa-affected mind is one that experiences extreme swings of opposites, “I love this, I hate this; I want this, I don’t want this; this makes me happy, this makes me sad; I gained this, I lost this; I was victorious, I was defeated; I was honored, I was dishonored” and similar pairs of opposites. We see this type of behavior in people who are obsessed with tangible Sense Objects such as wealth and material things, and intangible Sense Objects such as honor and power. The Dwandwa-affected mind is a stressed mind. It is indicative of a mind that is operating under the influence of one or more human weaknesses such as lust hate and greed. In other words, Dwandwa is a sort of mental fever or delirium, Jwara (3:30), the mind experiences when it is infected by various Guna-rooted human weaknesses.

Over time, the terms Kama, Krodha, Moha, Sankalpa and consequent Dwandwa –fickleness of mind -came to be strongly identified with people who had fallen into the abyss of sensuous pleasures engendered by sacrificial rites. These epithets repeatedly crop up throughout the text of the Bhagavad Gita. Since these human weaknesses are rooted in nature-born Qualities known as Gunas, those suffering from Dwandwa were said to be deluded by the Gunas. Deluded people’s minds become disconnected from Wisdom (memory, knowledge, judgment, reasoning, insight, moral values and noble virtues and hence they indulge in self-destructive behaviors (2:62-63) and evil acts (3:37-40). By and by these epithets came to symbolize orthodox Vedic Dharma itself as Kamyā Karma came to be identified as its primary modus operandi. Lord Krishna never gets tired of condemning these epithets throughout the Bhagavad Gita.

The theory of Gunas (the Nature-born Qualities)

Ancient Vedic scriptures recognized three basic personality traits or Gunas (Qualities) in people: Satvic, Rajasic and Tamasic (2:45; 14:5). These Gunas are products of Prakriti, or Nature. Gunas are the glue that binds the Atman to the body (14:5). Gunas, being rooted in Nature, harbor various human weaknesses in them, such as Kama (lust), Krodha (anger/hatred), Mada (arrogance), Moha (delusion), Matsarya (jealousy), Lobha (greed) and Bhaya (fear/insecurity). These weaknesses are allies of Senses which attract the mind to Sense Objects such as wealth, power, title, honor, etc. The more the mind comes under the influence of Senses and the Guna-rooted weaknesses more it loses touch with its Wisdom or Buddhi, and of course the Atman as well. Such a mind loses its discriminating power (2:60) as well as peace and happiness (2:66). How does one know that his mind is infected with weaknesses? Well, the appearance of Dwandwa, fickleness of mind, is the proof. It is the weaknesses in the Gunas that make us experience Dwandwa in the form of happiness and sadness, goodness and badness, virtue and vice and the like in our contact with Sense Objects (2:14). All our thoughts, emotions and actions are supposed to be affected by these Gunas (Chapter 14, 17 and 18).

Vedas claimed (14:5-18) that the Satvic personality traits consisted of qualities of happiness, enlightenment and goodness. The sedate priestly class, who more or less monopolized Vedic knowledge, claimed this trait. The Rajasic traits consisted of passion, attachment, greed and action. Kshatriya class personified this Guna. The Tamasic trait represented ignorance, laziness, indolence and heedlessness. The lower social classes –Vaishyas and Sudras- were assigned this Guna. These traits exist in all of us, and from time to time they dominate each other (14:10). We read elsewhere how the Varnashrama Dharma –the class system- was based on the Guna assigned to each class combined with their Karma or comeuppance from their previous life (4:13; 18:41-44).

Guna-rooted human weaknesses were essential survival tools once upon a time!

All the human weaknesses that society shuns today evolved in man for a good reason: survival. As man evolved in the wilderness over millions of years Mother Nature, Prakriti, gave him many survival tools: fear for his safety, lust for food and sex, hatred for his enemies, arrogance to dominate others, possessiveness and greed to ensure his survival in lean times and jealousy that forced him to compete with others for the same natural resources such as food and water. Over millions of years these survival tools became hard-wired into the brain and embedded into the genes of all humans. The basic goal of these survival tools was to further man’s personal safety and interests in the harsh environment of wilderness. In other words, the primitive man was basically a “Me, I and Mine” person.

When man gradually became civilized about ten thousand years ago, in order to bring peace and order in human society, he attempted to control these traits by means of laws (Dharma), morals (Neethi) and social etiquettes (Niyama). Man was forced to suppress these basic survival instincts and tools in return for being part of the peaceful, civilized society. In other words, man was forced to give up his selfishness and self-centeredness as the price for belonging in the society. He was forced to work for the welfare of others in the society (Karma) and do his socially obligated duty (Dharma) in return for the privilege of belonging to the society. Every person’s Karma was ordained by the dictates of his Dharma. It is the contention of the Gita that in the civilized society there is no room for “Me, I and Mine.” Karma Yoga, the selfless service to one’s fellow beings, especially by the ruling class (3:20-21), is the Gita’s antidote to man’s selfish acts rooted in primitive instincts and impulses we call the Gunas. Recognizing the deleterious role of Guna-based human weaknesses in the society, the Bhagavad Gita repeatedly exhorts (2:45; 14:19-20) one to “cross over Gunas.” In fact, the main purpose of Yoga is to control the power of the Senses and the Gunas; detach the mind from Sense Objects and to hook it up with the Atman:

“Vedas enumerate three Gunas. You must cross over these three Gunas, O Arjuna. Rid yourself of pair of opposites (Dwandwa, engendered by Sense Objects); instead, cultivate steadiness of mind. Be centered on the Self rather than on getting and keeping Sense Objects.” (2:45).

The ancient survival tools became weaknesses in the civilized society.

These ancient survival tools remain just under the surface within the modern man's mind as defects or personality weaknesses such as Bhaya (fear, insecurity), Kama (lust), Krodha (anger, hatred), Mada (arrogance); Moha (delusion), Lobha (greed) and Matsarya (jealousy). The more recently cultivated laws, moral values, social etiquettes and noble virtues (Divine Qualities 16:1-3) merely cover up these deep-rooted survival tools. Lord Krishna never gets tired of stressing the power the Senses and Guna-rooted weaknesses. Under right circumstances these relics of our prehistoric past, rooted deeply into our Nature, resurface in the mind and excite the Senses:

“The excited Senses impetuously mislead the mind of even a wise man who is striving to be perfect (2:60).” “Just as a gale pushes a boat over the waters, the mind under the influence of Senses is driven away from one's Wisdom (2:67).

Such loss of Wisdom invariably leads to self-destruction (2:62-63) or evil acts against others and society (3:37). For example, a very moral married man could suddenly succumb to lust (Kama) when he finds himself alone in a room with a beautiful woman. Likewise, an honest man could succumb to greed (Lobha) and steal money from the company he works for when his greed is kindled by a pile of money in the drawer. A seemingly secure man might become jealous upon looking at his friend's expensive car and buy one even more expensive one for him. In all these cases, under the influence of Guna-rooted weaknesses one's mind became disconnected from his Wisdom which normally helps him to discriminate right from wrong (3:40). In the post-Vedic period Kama Karma created Dwandwa in the mind of ritualists as well as in the society at large. As we will read later, it is the reactionary Dwandwa in the society that led to major social upheaval in the post-Vedic period. Pkamath001@gmail.com 10/20/07

Indian Genetic Diversity: A Study of Saraswath Brahmins

By: - Athma Pai

As a senior at the University of Pennsylvania, I conducted a project on the genetic diversity of Saraswat Brahmins (both GSB and SB) as part of my thesis research in molecular anthropology under Professor Theodore G. Schurr. This work was written up as my undergraduate senior thesis for the departments of Anthropology and Biochemistry at UPenn. This project started with my appeal for samples in the second quarter edition of the *Khabbar* (Vol. XXIX No. 2) in 2006. While the project is still going on, this article presents the highlights of the mitochondrial (maternal DNA) results.

As you all know, Konkanis are a minority group with complicated origins and varied cultural traditions. However, because of their strict endogamy (intermarriage), complex migratory history and broad geographical distribution in India, the extent to which the Konkanis are related to other Indian populations or have admixed with them is not clear^{i,ii}. In addition, no molecular genetic studies with this population have been conducted previous to this project. Thus, the goal of this project was to reveal new insights into the genetic history of this population, as well as contribute to our understanding of human genetic diversity in India as a whole.

The analysis of this genetic diversity was conducted by screening for common mitochondrial and Y-chromosome markers commonly studied with respect to world genetic diversity. These two types of DNA are particularly useful since they contain information about the maternal and paternal lineages, respectively, that are present in human groups. Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) is a circular DNA fragment which does not get recombined in the replication process. Each person (both male and female) inherits their mtDNA only from their mother, so looking at mtDNA variation is a study of a maternal lineage. The Y-chromosome is a sex chromosome that undergoes very little recombination with other chromosomes and is purely paternally inherited. Given its nature as a sex chromosome defining the male gender, only males can be studied for Y-chromosome variation. Both mtDNA and Y-chromosomes have characteristic non-disease causing mutations that can be assessed by molecular biology techniques to assign maternal and paternal haplogroups (genetic lineages) to the person. These haplogroups have been well studied for their place of origin, evolution time, and the frequencies in various world populations. mtDNA haplogroup frequencies are often used to assess group or female migration patterns, cultural patterns, population variance, and species variation among all primate species. Y-chromosome variation is often used to study male migration patterns, cultural patterns, and population variance.

The large diversity of traditions and cultural practices of people on the Indian subcontinent has led to an intensification of genetic diversity research of Indian communities. Remarkably, approximately one fifth of the human gene pool belongs primarily to people inhabiting the Indian subcontinentⁱⁱⁱ. Early work focused on estimating the distinctions between groups in the well-known Indian caste system, delineating proto-Asian versus West Eurasian origins of peoples, estimating molecular dates for waves of settlement of the subcontinent, and mapping genetic data onto language trees^{iii,iv,v,vi,vii}. Much of the population genetics work focused upon the South Asian continent has been centered around solving problems of major haplogroup (M, N, and R) differentiation and clustering, caste differentiation, and regional variation^{iii,vii}.

Although well studied for their culture and religious practices, there has been very little genetic work done specifically on the Konkani community. The complex migratory patterns and high degree of endogamy as a minority high-caste Indian group makes the community an interesting target for genetic work. The only ascertainable work that has been done on Konkanis was a classical genetic marker study by Bhatia et. a. (1976) in which ABO and Rhesus blood marker variation was assessed in members of the community in various Indian cities^{viii}. Because of the nature of these marker systems, the Bhatia study provided limited information about the degree of geographic separation and endogamy affecting genetic variation in Konkanis. However, the increased resolution available through newer molecular methods and a growing knowledge of genetic ancestry markers allows us to more thoroughly investigate the genetic make-up of the population.

The first step of this project involved participant recruitment and sample collection. The samples used in this study were collected from members of the North American Konkani community. At the Hamilton Sammelana, I distributed 100 kits with help from relatives and friends, after which I distributed 50 kits to other participants. Out of 150 total kits, I received 116 back. Since most participants were either first or second generation immigrants from India, there should be relatively little sampling difference between North American Konkani communities and communities found in India. Samples were collected in such a way as to minimize the effects of endogamy and close familial relationships.

Most of the laboratory work on these samples has been completed to analyze both mitochondrial and Y-chromosome lineage specific markers. The mitochondrial data has been statistically analyzed, and I am still working on statistical analyses of the Y-chromosome data. Therefore, the conclusions presented below only account for maternal Konkani lineages. Both the mitochondrial and Y-chromosome data are being prepared for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

There are many interesting conclusions that can be drawn from careful inspection of the mitochondrial results. The Konkani community is certainly a unique world population. The attached figure indicates the wide distribution of Konkani maternal haplotypes. The end circles indicate a particular sequence of mutations (haplotype), with the variable sizes indicating the number of people who have that haplotype. The majority of haplotypes are Indo-European Indian-specific types, but each branch is unusually diverse with a large number of mutational positions (on branch lines) per lineage. Elements of the haplotype and haplogroup variation show evidence of low maternal diversity with a high predominance of basal M types. In addition, the Indian-specific West Eurasian types (N, R, U, and J) found within the Konkani data set are more indicative of ties to Indo-European (Aryan) communities rather than from indigenous populations, establishing the Konkans as a caste community. Overall, the mtDNAs observed in Konkans are primarily Indian-specific haplotypes that are closely related to many of those appearing in Northern Indian populations. The results – in concert with legendary, historical, linguistic, and cultural elements – point to the northern Indian origins of the Konkani community. Statistical measures indicate that the community experienced a population expansion some time in the past, rather than undergoing recent subdivisions that reduced diversity in the population. Separated analysis of the four religious subdivisions (mutts) indicated that there are no significant genetic differences between the four religious sub-castes, most likely because of the freedom of intermarriage propagated between these sub-castes.

When compared to other Indian populations, Konkans exhibit values well within the ranges of general Indian diversity. Statistical models indicate high endogamy with low outside admixture for some time. It is hard to ascertain the degree of admixture with other Indian populations based on maternal evidence alone, but a more complete picture using Y-chromosome data would probably fill out the preliminary indications of very low direct and recent admixture. It is probably more likely that the Konkani population arose from the same ancestors as many of the other populations. The same can be said for their migratory route, although it seems clear that they migrated from the north and moved into the south at later dates.

The complexity of interpreting the results from the Konkani data set also aligns them with other Indian populations. The mitochondrial gene pool of India seems to be an intricate web of complex population structures. The overall analysis of this study shows that there are clear distinctions between the tribal and caste populations present on the subcontinent. When focusing on the caste populations of India, it is clear that there are multiple factors which play a role in determining the genetic affinities, relationships, and branches of these comparison populations. From the summary statistics, there is no one element among geographic, linguistic, and religious affiliations that creates absolute divisions within the society. This observation is quite interesting, since many other areas of the world have principal factors that enable a classification of subpopulations. Genetics can be added to the growing list of factors such as culture, religion, and language that are too complex to describe as singular features. Instead, it is necessary to take all of them into account when putting together the population history of the subcontinent.

Although this study points towards many interesting conclusions and factors that are useful in elucidating Konkani and general Indian population history, it also strongly points to further research that will be necessary to obtain a more complete picture. Y-chromosome data will help to provide a clearer picture of the migratory patterns, variable admixture rates, and possible influences from non-Indian populations because of differential male and female gene flow.

The diversity of Indian populations represents an important area that has been underrepresented in genetics research. It is clear from this study of Konkans both as a group and as part of the broader Indian gene pool that there are many complex patterns and trends that can be elucidated with more samples from more populations. The uniqueness of India lies not in its multi-faceted population structure, but rather in the ability for those multiple facets to mix with each other, influence each other, and still find a way to maintain distinctions while together in one nation. It is this intermingled nature of the distinct homogeneous units of Indian society that must be tapped by geneticists to help study the complexity of human genetics.

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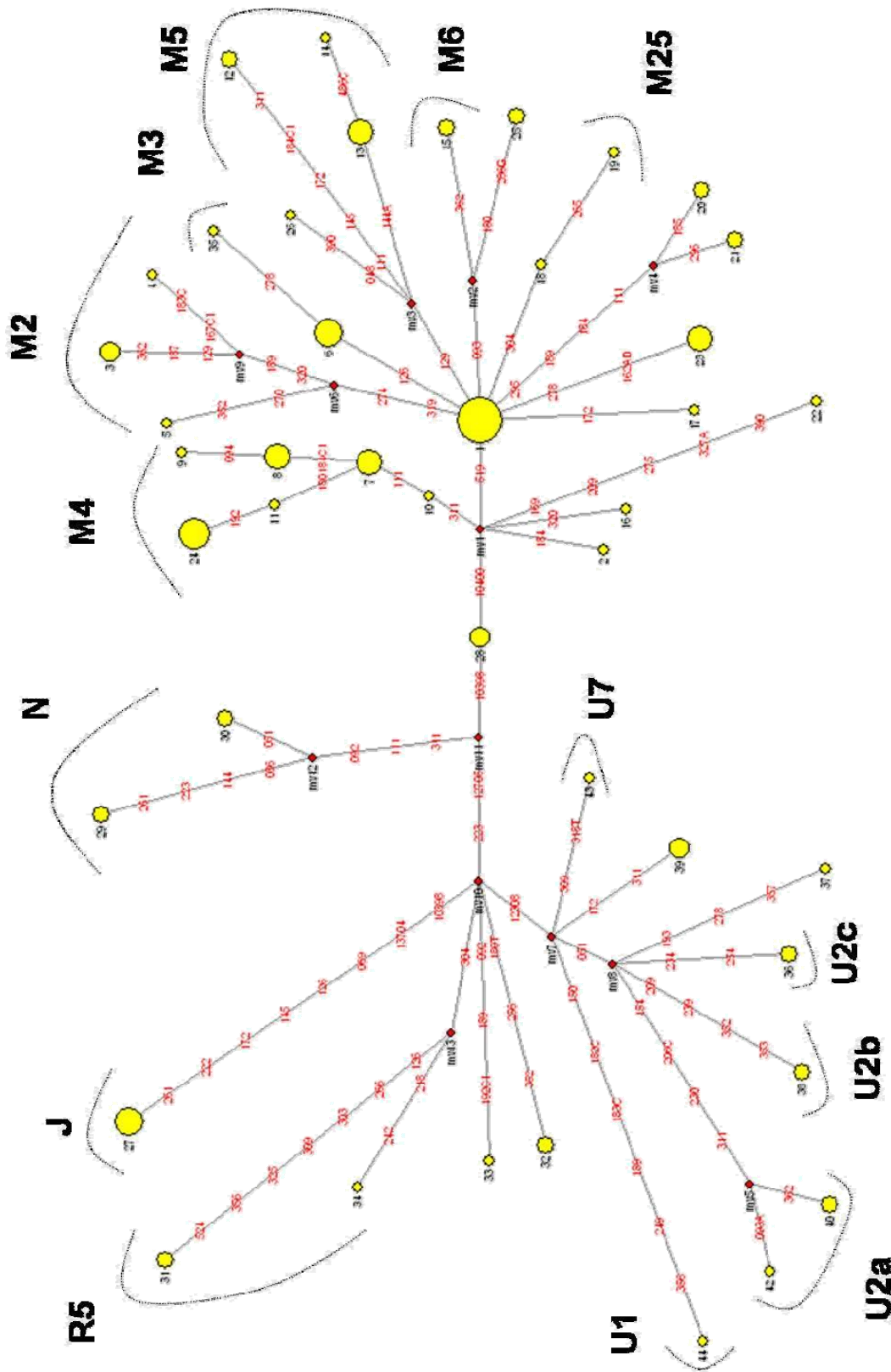
¹ Baig, M., A. Khan, et al. (2004). "Mitochondrial DNA diversity in tribal and caste groups of Maharashtra (India) and its implications on their genetic origins." Annals of Human Genetics **68**: 453-460.

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¹ Kivisild, T., S. Rootsi, et al. (2003). "The Genetic Heritage of the Earliest Settlers Persists Both in Indian Tribal and Caste Populations." American Journal of Human Genetics **72**: 313-332.

¹ Palanichamy, M., C. Sun, et al. (2004). "Phylogeny of Mitochondrial DNA Macrohaplogroup N in India, Based on Complete Sequencing: Implications for the Peopling of South Asia." *Ibid.* **75**: 966-978.

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Guest Essay: True Education – A Simple & Practical Way to Ignite the Thinking of Students

By BHAMY V. SHENOY

After 45 years, I returned to my ancestral village of Bantwal, near Mangalore in Karnataka, for a stay of more than two months. It is a typical rural town, surrounded by small villages dependent upon farming and beedi rolling. In this town is a five-year degree college with 1,000 students. Most of them are first generation literates. A large percentage (99 percent) is not accustomed to reading books other than textbooks, despite the college having a good collection. These students, for several reasons, are also not accustomed or allowed to ask questions, as in many other colleges. Because of the well-critiqued education system of ours, they are also not encouraged to think and develop their own solutions to any problems. They are not encouraged to offer their comments. To bring about some change in this rigid and learning-unfriendly environment, I experimented with a seminar series called "True Education" during my stay. The seminars, held between June and July at S.V.S. College, were a great success.

I had 19 sessions with a group of 20 students. Nineteen of the participants were young women. We limited the participation so that everyone could be given personal attention. All of them turned up regularly even though none of the topics would help them score more marks. None of the students could relax or daydream since everyone had to either ask a question or comment on topics of wide-ranging interest. I noticed a remarkable improvement during a short span. Students who were hesitant to speak up before the beginning of the seminar series were completely transformed, and by the end of the sessions there was not enough time to respond to all their questions.

The topics covered were: philosophy of writer Jiddu Krishnamurthy; the NGO movement in India; world and Indian history; India's energy crisis; communism, socialism and capitalism; holding a mirror up to Indian society; politics and corruption; major world conflicts; citizen responsibility; reservation; the status of education; management principles; the world's religions; science, superstition and modern gurus; energy and environment; reasons for India remaining poor even after 60 years of independence; liberalization, privatization and globalization; and critical factors for India's development. I spent just 15 minutes at the beginning of each session introducing the topic. The remaining 75 minutes were spent on questions and answers.

During the valedictory, every student made a short presentation on what they got out of this seminar series. Everyone wanted this experiment repeated for the benefit of other students who missed the opportunity. One said that he learnt more during these 19 sessions than he had during his entire 15 years of education. Many young women mentioned that they had started reading newspapers critically. Many talked about the courage they had acquired as a result of their participation to ask questions not only in the classroom but also in government offices. All had determined to take up some civic cause to fight against, like untouchability, casteism, the dowry system, gender bias, child labor, plastic menace, water harvesting, tree planting, improving the local hospital.

Some teachers who observed the program in action wondered how they would complete the syllabus if students started asking questions as a result of this program. On the other hand, others were happy that some of the students had already started asking questions and were taking a greater part in classroom discussions. Two of the women participants spoke at the valedictory about how they objected when they saw an underage boy serving coffee at a meeting. But for these seminars, they said, they would never have observed such things and also would never have had the courage to point out such unlawful acts.

Five more colleges from the towns of Mulki, Udupi, Kundapur, Moodabidri and Karkal have already come forward to implement this program. There is hardly any cost involved, nor is prior permission required from the government. Through this program, we can encourage students to develop independent thinking and critical questioning abilities, without having to wait for our political class to take the necessary steps to change the education system. What we need are a few-just one or two per college-committed teachers to get involved. Every well-informed and concerned educationist can join this effort either as a facilitator of the seminar series or by sponsoring someone to conduct them if they themselves are unable to do so.

Bhamy V. Shenoy (bhamysuman@hotmail.com), a retired manager of the Houston, TX-based oil company ConocoPhillips, is a trustee of Pratham, an NGO for slum education, and editor of Catalyst, a newsletter that promotes the NGO movement. He travels between Houston and Mysore, Karnataka.

A Pilgrimage to Sri Vyasashram in Haridwar

By A *Khabbar* Regional Reporter

It was about ten years or so ago that we visited India with a plan to bathe in River Ganga in Haridwar like all devout Hindus yearn to do. We left Delhi at noon on a summer day but could go only as far as Meerut in about four hours!. Approaches to Haridwar were all blocked due to a big festival in the region. Pilgrims from all over the northern parts of India walk barefoot for hundreds of miles to bring Ganga water in earthen pots back to their homes during this festival. Consequently we were forced to return with our desire to bathe in Ganga unfulfilled.

After all these years, finally we could align our vacations to make another attempt at visiting Haridwar! Following my brother's strong recommendation, we decided to stay at the Kashi Mutt Vyasashram in Haridwar. We flew into Delhi from New York and after an overnight stay at a comfortable well known hotel, we went to Haridwar in a comfortable Minivan. The traffic was very slow since it was the sugarcane harvesting season. We reached Haridwar just in time for performing the Ganga Pooja at the Harki Pauri, and then headed to the Sri Vyasashram, which is about 4 km north of Haridwar city center. Harki Pauri area is very fast paced with unscrupulous Pandas and cursing beggars lining the streets everywhere. Enroute to the Ashram we drove through narrow winding streets of Haridwar before finally reaching the gate leading to the ashram compound. It was totally a new world inside the gates with a pathway leading to a well tended flower garden, past the visitor residence hall and a circular community hall, and the beautiful and towering temple of Sri Vyasa Maharshi. Two elephant figures across from the temple open up to a stairwell that leads to Navagraha temple and to the Ghats of River Ganga.

Upon our arrival at night, we got keys to our rooms from the Temple office, which is near the entrance to the temple complex. We quickly washed ourselves in the guest room and participated in the Pooja at the temple. It is really a blissful feeling as one enters the doors of the temple complex and looks up at the towering flight of steps. At the top of the stairs is the temple Sanctum Sanctorum in which Sri Vyasa Maharshi's vighra is placed at the center with four of his famous disciples, Paila, Vaishampayana, Jaimini and Sumanthu seated at four corners. There were a number of Konkani speaking and local Hindi speaking people at the temple. Some of the people had taken up permanent residence in the Ashram and most others were either out of town visitors or local people.

Every one in the Ashram was friendly and helpful. After the pooja, we were invited to dinner in an adjoining building. There were probably 30 or 40 people for dinner that night. Every one picks up a stainless steel plate and cup from the dining hall and washes them with soap and water under a row of taps. Then one goes and sits in two rows on long mats. The food was simple but very tasty. There were Chapathis, Dalithoi, Masla Randhai and rice, followed by delicious Madgane. Every one was offered Milk (milk is from the Ashram cows). This is the only time when milk is served in the Ashram. The milk milked in the morning is used only for Pooja and to feed the Sanyasis. After dinner everyone is expected to pick their plates and wash them and place them back in the dining hall. After the dinner we retired to our rooms around 9PM. The rooms were clean and had three single beds in each room with a foam mattress and a pillow. Bed sheets were clean and the Ashram provides Razai (Blanket) during winter months. The room has attached bathroom with a shower and east-west toilet facility. We were given rooms with electrical heaters but we did not use them. We advise potential visitors to the Ashram to take two bed sheets and a bath towel per person. In winter months an additional blanket may come in handy.

During the night the temple bells rang every hour on the hour from multiple temples around the Ashram. One must bear in mind that there are reportedly more than 5,000 temples in Haridwar! The feeling at night is surreal. Thoughts of being surrounded by the Himalayan mountains to the North, Ganga river flowing just by the side of the ashram and the feeling of being in a place that can be considered the cradle of Sanathana Dharma keeps one in a state of sublime bliss throughout the solitary night. Personally I felt very blessed and at peace with the surroundings.

I sprang up in bed at the sound of Sri Vyasa Suprabhatha on the loud speakers around 5AM and I quietly ventured out through the garden between the Guest House and the temple. There was still plenty of time before the sunrise. I could not have been happier!. At a little before 6AM, I noticed the locals slipping through the gate with Lotas (mugs) making a bee-line to the dining hall. I remembered my brother telling me not to miss this moment because it was the path way to heavenly nectar doled out at the Ashram.... the most delicious Masala Chai available only until a large pot of it runs out every day before dawn.

It was still dark and we carefully went down the steps to the river and took bath in Ganga at about dawn. The river here flows in two branches and the water close to the Ghat is only knee deep in December. However, the water flows at a very rapid pace. I did a "Sashtanga Namaskar" in the water before I could get completely wet. Even though the water was probably cold, we did not really feel cold at that moment since we were going through a rush of satisfaction and fulfillment. After all, it is here at Haridwar where most of our Rishis lived, bathed, composed Vedas, taught Upanishads, compiled Puranas, Smrithis, and defined the path of life for all of us! The beauty and tranquility of the area is really hard to explain and it can only be grasped by being at the banks of Ganga at the Vyasashram.

After bathing, we went back to our rooms, bathed once again in hot water in the guest house (hot water runs in the taps from approximately 5AM-8AM and again in the evening) and participated in the Pooja at Sunrise. Following the Pooja, breakfast was served in the dining hall. Once again, the breakfast was simple and yet very tasty. We were served Spinach Adai (like soft Surnali) with Mooga Dali Thoi and coffee. Unfortunately, the time we had planned for visiting Haridwar was too short and we had to leave the Ashram soon after breakfast. God willing, we will visit the Ashram again, hopefully not in too distant a future.

PS: The Ashram does not charge room rent, but the devotees can make generous donation so that the Ashram can continue the tradition of performing Pooja, providing for the travelers, and providing care to Sanyasis and the poor. The telephone number to book rooms at the Ashram is: 91-133-426 0110

His holiness Srimath Sudhindra Thirth Swamiji was not in Haridwar when we visited, but we were fortunate to get Darshan of His Holiness and that of his disciple Shrimath Samyameendra Thirth Swamiji, in Ambalameedu (near Cochin) during the following week. I am glad to report that His Holiness did not look a day older than I remember seeing nearly 18 years ago. His Holiness was as thoughtful and engaging as ever. Swamiji showered blessings on all and reminded us to chant Sri Rama Naam and remember Sri Hari's name in our hearts and mind at all times.

For those interested to know more about Sri Vyasa Maharshi the following passages are taken from:

<http://www.gsbkerala.com/gsbmutt.htm>

According to Bhagawat Purana, Shri Vedavyasa is the seventeenth incarnation of Lord Vishnu. He was born 5000 years ago as the son of Parashara and Satyavati. Vedavyasa recompiled the sacred texts of the Vedas so that they might become more easily understandable to men. It was thus that there came to be four Vedas. Vedavyasa's real name was Krishna Dvaipayana. He came to be known as Vedavyasa because he divided the Vedas. These sacred texts came to be known as Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda. Vedavyasa taught the four Vedas to four of his disciples. Paila was taught the Rig Veda, Vaishampayana the Yajur Veda, Jaimini the Sama Veda and Sumanta the Atharva Veda. The Puranas are known as the fifth Veda. Vedavyasa composed the Bhagavata Purana and initially taught it to his son Shukadeva. Vedavyasa later taught the Puranas to his disciple Romaharshana who was the father of Suta, the narrator of the Bhagavata Purana. In addition to his works on the Vedas, he also composed the Mahabharata, the longest epic ever seen by mankind. His hermitage (ashrama) was on the banks of the river Saraswati.

Additional information about the ashram is also available at:

<http://www.gsbkonkani.net/Maths/SHRI%20KASHI%20MATH%20SAMSTHAN.htm>

KONKANI CALENDER

January 2008	February 2008	March 2008
7 th Amavasya (Dark Moon)	6 th Amavasya (Dark Moon)	5 th Maha Shivaratri
14 th Makara Sankranthi	12 th Kumbha Sankranthi	7 th Amavasya (Dark Moon)
18 th Yekadashi	13 th Ratha Sapthami	13 th Meena sankranthi
22 nd Poornami	16 th Yekadashi	17 th Yekadashi
25 th Sankashta Chaturthi	20 th Poornami	21 st Holi Poornami
	24 th Sankashta Chaturthi	24 th Sankashta Chaturthi

Khabbar thanks Sri P. V. Kamath of Mumbai for furnishing the Panchang and My Astrologer-version 1.0 by Mr. Muralidhar Shenoy, Durham, N C.

My Sincere Thanks to

Some readers go out of their way to help Khabbar. Monetary means is one of them. The Advisory Committee of Khabbar has decided on publishing the names of the families that has contributed \$50.00 or more to Khabbar. This quarter, the following have extended their help and thanks to you

Names	Amount, \$
Ravindranath & Sharda Shenoy, Montville, NJ	115.00
Vinayak & Shantheri Pai, Ruidoso, NM	95.00
Vittal & Maya Shenoy, Charlotte, NC	50.00
Gopinatha & Padmavathy Mallya, Delran, NJ	75.00
Parushuram & Vimala Bhatt, Yorktown Heights, NY	55.00
Gopal & Pratibha Bhandarkar, Bayport, NY	65.00

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Description	Credit, \$	Debit, \$
Balance Carried over since Khabbar Vol. XXX No. 3	3,467.00	
Money Received:		
Subscriptions (46) and donations	1,024.00	
Advertisements (4)	100.00	
Interest	4.00	
Sub Total:	1,128.00	

Money Spent (Khabbar Vol. XXX No. 3):		
Printing- Khabbar (435) - 20 pages		394.57
First Class Mail-Khabbar (390)		226.20
Canada Khabbar (15)		27.00
Overseas (20)		60.00
Mail Fines, computer paper & labels, envelopes, service fees, etc.		442.23
Sub Total:		1,150.00
Final Balance:	3,445.00	

Money spent on this issue was not available during press time.

KWIZ

The last quarter's quiz: The ten children at Ram's party were given a bag containing 60 laddus. They shared them out so each girl got seven laddus and each boy got five, except for the birthday boy, Ram, who took two extra laddus. How many girls did Ram invite to his party?

The Answer: 4

The following gave the correct solution:
 Shivadev Ubhayakar, Rancho Palo Verdes, CA
 Govind Kamath, Austin, TX
 Praveen Kamath, Centreville, VA

Sachin Kamath, Plainview, NY
 Jyoti Nayak, Houston, TX
 Amie Miklavcic Pai, Richmond, NC
 Swati Kamath, Las Vegas, NV

This Quarter's Quiz

By

"Vasanthmaam"

Continuing with the Konkani tradition of quizzing, here's the brainteaser for this quarter. If you can solve this correctly, send it to Khabbar address to have your name published in the next issue.

To the best of Mensa knowledge, only one other word can be made from all the letters in the word **CALLIGRAPHY**. Can you figure out what it is?

KS-2008 Update:



Konkani Sammellan 2008

July 3rd- July 5th Santa Clara, California

Update on Konkani Sammellan 2008 Activities

Organizing committee is happy with the rate at which delegates are registering. At this rate, we expect over 1800 registrations by M/May'08. However, due to site & capacity restrictions, we might be compelled to put a ceiling on maximum number of attendees allowed to this event. To avoid disappointment, we encourage you to register as early as possible. We will soon make available the list of delegates registered on our website. The registration can be done either Online or by mail-in of registration form. For details, please visit www.konkanisammellan.org.

Hyatt Santa Clara reports ~40% of rooms set aside at discounted rates for this event as already been booked. Hyatt Santa Clara adjoins Sammellan site. It is the perfect accommodation for KS2008 delegates. A few of the key advantages would be: No commute time, Helps to be on time & occupy prime seats for the various events, Take power nap after hearty Konkani lunch, Freshen up during breaks. Hotel bookings can be made at <http://www.konkanisammellan.org/2008/hotelreg.asp>.

Plan your travel early & save. Hospitality committee has negotiated discounted rates for your travel to KS2008 with Continental Airlines & with Avis & Hertz for your car rentals. Take advantage of these great offers. Details are available online at <http://www.konkanisammelan.org/2008/travelreg.asp>.

Entertainment time slots, Seminar formats & Keynote sessions are finalized. Plans are being made to host a grand opening & closing ceremony. You will not want to miss; the Konkani Idol & the music show being planned for July/4th. Food Committee has finalized the menus and is sure to be Yum-Yum Konkani cuisine. Logistics are being worked out to seat all sammelan delegates at the same time at lunch, breakfast or dinner.

We continue to request your help with articles, poems, artwork & photographs for publication in the Souvenir. We would like to remind you, the last date for submitting entries to Essay Contest & publishing articles in Souvenir is fast approaching. Souvenir & Essay guidelines are available online at <http://www.konkanisammelan.org/2008/souvenir.asp>. We solicit your help in securing advertisements for the Souvenir.

Various Konkani hubs across US, Canada & Key Konkani publications in India & US continue to help us spread the word & keep you informed. However, if you need to reach us & require additional information, Key contacts are published at <http://www.konkanisammelan.org/2008/contact.asp>.

And as always we need your continued support & help to raise funds for making this a memorable Konkani event.

Devu Baren Karo

Nominations for Distinguished Awards of Excellence – KS-2008

Do you have friends or relatives that have outstanding achievements? Here is your opportunity to get them recognition at the Konkani Sarmelan 2008. The Sarmelan plans to honor distinguished Konkanis from North America for their achievements. Please take a few minutes to nominate deserving candidates. The Awards Committee is soliciting nominations of candidates in the following six categories:

1. Arts – for demonstrated excellence in the performing, visual, or liberal arts.
2. Science/Research – for achievements in the fields of biological, physical, mathematical or medical sciences.
3. Technology – for contributions to engineering and technology in engineering, computer science or other technical fields.
4. Entrepreneurship/ Professional Achievement – for having demonstrated leadership, business acumen and management skills in their chosen fields.
5. Education/Public Service – for outstanding teaching or administrative skills in Education, having held public office or performed social/ spiritual work.
6. Outstanding Youth – for distinguished academic and extracurricular achievements.

Nominations (including the award category and a description of the candidate's achievements) should be addressed to: KS 2008 Awards Committee at : bshiralkar@gmail.com (preferable) or mailed to c/o Bharat Shiralkar, 1127 Quail Ridge Ct., San Jose, CA 95120. Thanks !

KONKANI APPEALS

Dear Vasanth maam,

Thank you so much for your reply and sorry that I could not reply immediately as I had to go to other town for work. It would be greatly appreciated if you publish my appeal in Konkani *Khabbar's* next edition in December. Also I will write an e-mail to American Konkani Association (AKA) for the possible help they can do for me.

I would like to tell something about me in brief so that it would give you a bit idea how you wish to put my appeal in your next edition of Konkani *Khabbar*.

Basically I am from Agumbe which is almost 30 miles from Udipi and my dad owns a small piece of farm land as well as a grocery store. I finished my schooling in my native town with a distinction and then I finished my PUC in Bhuvanendra College, Karkala. But then I had to discontinue my education due to financial condition of my family getting bad. Then I joined a call centre wherein I worked for three years where I had to assist bank customers in US over the phone sitting in India. Once a sweet old lady who owns a green house in Nebraska was my customer on line and she appreciated my politeness and hard work and then she took my e-mail address and after some time we became very good friends. Then she told me that if I come to US she will put me in her customer service job of her company. So then she sponsored me a J1 agriculture exchange visa and I am working under her now. She is 72 now and a great personality. She likes me a lot and considers me as her grandson. Also she has provided me free accommodation now.

Mean while when I told them that I could not do graduation due to financial problem at home they are all encouraging me to save some money here so that I can go to college and go for good job. Also one of her daughter is a doctor and they are looking for some good nurses. But due to shortage of nurses in US they are not getting enough nurses to work for them. So they wanted me to do associate degree in nursing (which will take just two years) so that they can keep me in US by sponsoring a green card.

I have already found and applied for a college in Norfolk, NE. Nursing has lot of prerequisite courses and all of them should be completed before take admission. I am taking some of them now. All of them are credit hour classes and I am spending all my money saved on them now. Then from January 2008 I will start regular nursing class which will cost me \$3,500/ semester. The college I have joined is the one with the least fee college in Nebraska. But still it is big money for me. My employer has given me an assurance of some help from her side. Also I can work 20 hours/ week from second year of my college. So according to my plans still I will go short of money for the college. So I am looking for might be some small helps or small loan arrangements from organisations like AKA which will be of great help to achieve my goal.

Thanks so much for your time and sorry that I had to make you read my big story. Bye now. If you need any more information about me you can e-mail me Thanks again and have a good day. Bye.

Pavan Mallya

pvmallya@yahoo.com

Sent: Fri 10/10/07 10 :40 PM

Dear Vasanth,

I would like to bring the following to the attention of fellow Konkani. The Canara Engineering College is the only Konkani Linguistic Minority Institution of higher education in Karnataka and probably in the whole of India. 35% of the seats are reserved for Konkani in this Institute.

I was fortunate to visit this wonderful institute and meet the principal Dr.Premkumar, and the secretary of Canara High School Association, Mr. Annappa Pai in December 07. The institute is situated in a picturesque area, has many amenities and a well equipped computer lab. Konkani was the language heard in the corridors and the classrooms. According to the principal, the graduating students consistently receive good job placements. This Institute came into being due to the dedication, hard work and financial assistance of many Konkani, as well as significant loans from banks in the Mangalore area.

Both the principal and secretary expressed their desire to make other Konkani aware of this unique institute that we should all be proud of. They are especially interested in connecting with Canara Primary and High School alumni, as there is an established alumni association in Mangalore that is active and growing.

For further information, please contact:

1) Mr. Annappa Pai
Secretary, Canara High School Association
A.S.R. Pai Road, Mangalore 575006
Phone: 0824- 2493210
Email: info@chsassociation.in
Web: www.chsassociation.in

2) Canara Engineering College
Phone: 0824-2278666/2278667-670
Email: canarait@sancharnet.in , cec@canaraengineering.in
Web: www.canaraengineering.in
3)Canara College
Phone: 0824-2492366
Web: www.canaracollege.com

Vimala P Bhatt

vimalabhatter@hotmail.com

NAKA, the North American Konkani Association

The NAKA Board now consists of:

Vasanth Bhat, Damodar Baliga and Nina Padukone (Founding members), Ramesh Kamath & Bharat Shiralkar, Vasant Acharya & Sandhya Kamath, Suren Kamath, Sudhir Golikeri & Suresh Shenoy, Ramadas Kamath, Ashok Bhatt & Sadanand Mankikar. Seema Kamath, Ranjit Shiralkar & Sheila Shenoy (Youth).

This quarter, the Konkani Youth Convention – 2007 seed money & surplus was deposited to NAKA account. The Board has been busy developing fund raising strategy for **KS-2008** and other ways to help preserve our culture here in North America.

If any North American Konkani have any constructive suggestions, please, contact any of the NAKA Board Members or send them to NAKA, 2465 Bergen Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11234. Phone: (718)-251-4795 and Email: naka1@indiatimes.com

NAKA - Statement Of Accounts

Date	Description	Credit, \$	Debit, \$
09/10/2007	Balance from last report	68,014.84	
11/30/07	Interest	352.96	
12/01/07	2007 Konkani Youth Convention - Seed money refund & Surplus	6,502.32	
12/01/2007	Final Balance:	74,870.12	

Signed: Damodar Baliga, Treasurer, NAKA

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Non Subscribers	\$25.00	\$45.00	\$85.00	\$160.00
Non Konkani	\$50.00	\$90.00	\$170.00	\$320.00

The Advisory Committee of Khabbar has unanimously decided NOT to accept any ads. wherein the advertisers prefer to stay anonymous by using Khabbar reference.

WANTED:

Any Hoon Khabbar, sunshine news, your or your child's promotion or achievement, articles of interest, etc. are always in need to be published in Khabbar. Share your joy or grief with fellow Konkans. Send your contribution to: Khabbar, P. O. Box 222, Lake Jackson, TX 77566-0222. email: khabbar@hotmail.com

KONKANI CHARITIES

The American Konkani Association (A. K. A.) is helping eligible Konkani youth by granting College Loan Scholarships. Send your generous contributions to: American Konkani Association, 1613 Maple Avenue, Berwyn, IL 60402

KONKANI CHARITIES

The Saraswat Foundation is helping poor deserving Bhanaps in India. Send your donations to: Saraswat Foundation 178 Norman Drive, Morrisville, PA 19067

KONKANI CHARITIES

The Three river Area Konkani Association (TAKA) is a non-profit organization helping the needy Konkans in North America and India. Send generous contributions to: Three river Area Konkani Association 111 Volpe Dr., MONROEVILLE, PA 15146

KONKANI COOK BOOKS

The two Konkani Cook Books, "Indian Cooking Konkani Style" and "Millennium Masala Konkani Style" published by American Konkani Association (A. K. A.) are for sale. The cost per book is \$12.00 + \$1.50 for S & H. Mail checks payable to A.K.A. to: Mrs. Sandhya Kamath, 440 Glencrest Dr., Barrington, IL 60010, Phone: (847)-277-9771 skamath@aol.com

FREE

"Proud To Be Konkani" CD

Courtesy of KS-2002, the hit song "Proud To Be Konkani" CD's are available for FREE. Contact: khabbar@hotmail.com to get your FREE copy.

THANKS

In the events of celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary, we, **Damodar & Shankari Pai** of Dix Hills, NY want to give our deep heartfelt and sincere thanks for those who hosted and each and every one who participated with their specialty food and made this occasion festive. Arun and Sheela Manelkar did fabulous and meticulous job hosting it on June 9th and beautiful cake by Ravi & Pushpa Baliga and outstanding performances by Ganesh from Mangalore and all 19 families who came. And we also want to thank all 11 families of NY Konkani pot luck for their party with their respective specialty food.

Honoring all those who came, participated and made the wonderful food for our 25th anniversary, we want to thank them by giving 5 items free for Konkans during Konkani Sabha's Diwali function at Bridgewater in NJ. The free items were:

- 1) Keshar Bhath (25 (8oz) cups),
- 2) Puliyo gre (Tamarind) rice, (25 (8 oz) cups),
- 3) Devasthanana saaru (25 Qts),
- 4) Papads (200 pcs) &
- 5) Home made lime pickles (8 lbs)

Thanks. With Good wishes, love and regards

Damodar & Shankari Pai, Dix Hills, NY

MATRIMONIAL DIRECTORY

Mr. Basti Ganapathi Shenoy of Las Vegas, NV is maintaining a list of Konkani youth that are eligible for matrimony. Interested boys and girls can send in their information to:

Mr. Basti Ganapathi Shenoy

8017 Celebreeze Crt., LAS VEGAS, NV 89145

Phone: (702)-341-6706; Email: bastishenoy@gmail.com

Please call weekends only 10:00 AM to 10:00PM (PST)

APPEAL

I hope you are aware of my free service of Matrimonial Information to our Samaj since 1988. To meet the expenses towards the free publication of the SOIRIKA, your financial help is required. Your contribution will also be utilized to provide Mangalasutra, Sarees, and marriage expenses of the poor brides and also for the remarriage of young widows. Your contribution, big or small, may kindly be sent to by way of DD or check in favor of "GSB Matrimonial Trust" and sent to: Sri B. N. Baliga, 5th Main, Near Band Box, Bangalore 560 009 (INDIA) <http://www.soirika.com>

MATRIMONIAL ASSISTANCE

As a service to Konkani community, Sri. B. Srinivas Kamath will offer free matrimonial assistance. Contact:

B.S.Kamath

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many years to come

APPEAL

A great opportunity to serve an Indian Charity Organization (Anandashram) which shelters already 26 poor old people and which is also going to offer the services of a "Hospice" (Palliative Care center)-a home for the terminally ill Cancer patients of our society. Income Tax Payees in USA get the benefit of Income tax Exemption for their donations, if they donate directly to Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) - America with the suggestion that they should donate the same amount to Anandashram Seva Trust @, Puttur, since CAF America has recognized Anandsharam as one of the recipients of their grants. Hence, the donors in USA can help us directly or indirectly thru CAF America, King Street Station, 1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 150, Alexandria, VA 22314-2840, to build this Palliative Care Centre. Please, visit our website: www.oldagehome-india.org

Dr. P. Gowri Pai, Anandshram Seva Trust, Darbe PO, 574 202, Puttur, D. K., Karnataka, INDIA Email: drgowripai@gmail.com

