

Release of the book "Konknni Cholchitram" on 21st September 2010 at Hotel Mandovi, Panjim, Goa

The release of the book "Konknni Cholchitram" on 21st September 2010 at Hotel Mandovi, Panjim, Goa, was a lively event that also brought back nostalgic memories of old Konkani movies and of the stalwarts who directed, produced and acted in them. Written by Isidore Dantas, the book was sponsored and launched by Goa Sudharop, a diaspora volunteer, non-profit organisation working for the benefit of Goa and Goans worldwide. And as the book was released at the hands of Ibonio D'Souza, Executive Director, Goa Sudharop, the band played a few bars of the song "Congratulations", a fitting tribute to a classic work so painstakingly put together by Mr. Dantas.

With excellent compering by Daniel F. D'Souza and Tina da Costa, the event commenced with songs from old Konkani films like Amchem Noxib, Sukhachem Sapon, Boglantt and others played specially for the occasion by Succoro and his troupe. Following this, students from Fr. Agnel School, Pilar enthralled the audience with beautifully performed traditional Goan dances. Flowers were then presented to the dignitaries on the dais by Trupti Naik from the Thomas Stephens Konknni Kendra and Prashanti Talpankar, the talented and well-known Goan actress who has acted in Konkani films like 'Aleesha' and 'Poltoddcho Munis'.

Ibonio D'Souza, Executive Director, Goa Sudharop then delivered his welcome address saying that the book is "a virtual one-stop, well-researched reference source of all the past 31 Konkani films". While appreciating Isidore Dantas' remarkable accomplishment in putting together this book against all odds, Mr. D'Souza also dwelt briefly on the need for both the Government as well as the people of Goa to support and encourage the Konkani film industry. Elaborating further, he said, "A thriving Konkani cinema industry will not only provide much-needed employment to Goans, but more importantly, it will help preserve Goa's unique traditions and lifestyle so as to enable the present and future generations to connect to their roots and secure our proud identity in this fast-changing world".

The next speaker was Tomazinho Cardozo, President of the Tiatr Academy of Goa. Whilst lauding the painstaking efforts of Isidore Dantas in bringing out this work, Mr. Cardozo also referred to the earlier work of Andrew Greno Viegas whose passionate interest in Konkani cinema had led to the first published treatise on the subject. He also explained that the Tiatr Academy of Goa had been unable to sponsor the cost of publishing "Konknni Cholchitram" due to the high costs involved, but was much appreciative of the fact that Goa Sudharop had come forward to sponsor the book.

Film Director Dharmanand Verenkar then spoke of how a film is an amalgamation of the work of different departments and how author Isidore Dantas had even mentioned details of some of the technicians who had worked in the films documented in the book. He too appreciated the role of Goa Sudharop in sponsoring the publication and launch of the book and added that more people would have access to the book if it could also be published in the Konkani Devnagiri script. He praised the work, saying that details like the notations and lyrics of many songs had been included, thus making it very useful.

Sanjeev Prabhudesai, Film Producer, who was the next speaker, then gave a brief but interesting talk. He said that he had been asked to speak about his own films, but instead preferred to talk about the book "Konknni Cholchitram". Calling it virtually a Konkani film bible, he said that every home ought to have a copy. He was all praise that in spite of being busy working at his job, the

author had still managed to put this book together in the little spare time that he must have had. Saying that the book in its present form would reach out to half the Goan population, he said that if published in the Devnagiri script, he felt the scope of readership would be much widened.

A review of the book was then presented by theatreperson Pravin Sabnis, who added that film makers are like a different breed, extremely creative in their work. Appreciating the book, Mr. Sabnis said he would recommend that teachers and educational institutions have quiz competitions based on the book so that students would learn more about Konkani cinema which is an important part of our cultural heritage.

The book was then formally released by Mr. Ibonio D'Souza of Goa Sudharop. Following this, author Isidore Dantas shared some of his experiences in bringing out the book. Relating his difficulties in getting it published, he expressed happiness that Goa Sudharop came to his rescue like a guardian angel and said that it was because of Goa Sudharop that the book finally saw the light of day. Talking about films produced by Goans as well as Mangaloreans and Saraswats from Karnataka, Mr. Dantas listed some award-winning Konkani films and spoke of the contribution to Konkani cinema by Bollywood personalities. He also mentioned many personalities who had made their mark in Bollywood like Kamala Gokhale, Ermeline Cardozo, Durga Khote, Anthony Gonsalves and Longinus Fernandes. He said that he was proud that noted film stars like Amruta Rao, Eesha Koppikar, Kashmir Shah and Deepika Padukone speak Konkani. He ended by individually thanking all those who had helped him in putting together his book.

Valerie Rodrigues, Trustee of Goa Sudharop, then proposed a Vote of Thanks. The function ended with refreshments for all whilst the band continued playing melodies of many more Konkani film songs including the old favourite "Claudia". Well wishers had a chance to congratulate and interact with the author who was also busy signing copies of his book for buyers.

