

Women finding their rightful place in Goa's freedom struggle

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Goan women have contributed immensely to the freedom struggle, right from 1928 to 1961. However, very few will know the names of the women who were leading satyagrahas and morchas to even cooking food for freedom fighters taking refuge in their homes. Prof Prajal Sakhardande, an associate professor of history and head of the department of History at the Dhempe College of Arts and Science, Miramar, has written the book, 'History of Women's contribution to Goa's struggle for Freedom (1928 - 1961)'. The book will be released today, March 22 at the residence of Sharda Savaikar in Miramar as the freedom fighter will be celebrating her 92nd birthday.

"I started researching on this subject in 1992 when I was doing my Masters as this was part of my assignment under Prof Pratima Kamat. Over the years, from 1992 to now, I have been collecting material and interviewing many of them who are surviving. I personally interviewed their family, got their original photograph from their family and wrote their biographical sketches. Right from the time of TB Cunha's foundation of the Goa Congress Committee till December 1961, I have covered all those women who have been involved in Goa's struggle," explains Prof Prajal about his fifth book.

Interestingly, since 63 years of Goa's

Liberation, this is the first English book that pays homage to these women in history. "There is not a single English book on women freedom fighters. There is one book by Nandini Mhadeshwar in Marathi and two articles in English which I have mentioned in my book," he adds.

The book features 40 strong-willed women who lived in Goa, were jailed during the Portuguese rule but still stood their ground. These were young girls, many in their early teens who wanted to make a difference and lead the fight from freedom. They came from different parts of Goa especially Canacona and Chandor. Some were housewives, who helped the underground freedom fighters by providing them food and shelter. Many of them went on to become scientists, teachers, doctors, lawyers, journalists,

gram sevikas, Panch members and still continued with fighting for Goa by participating in the Opinion Poll.

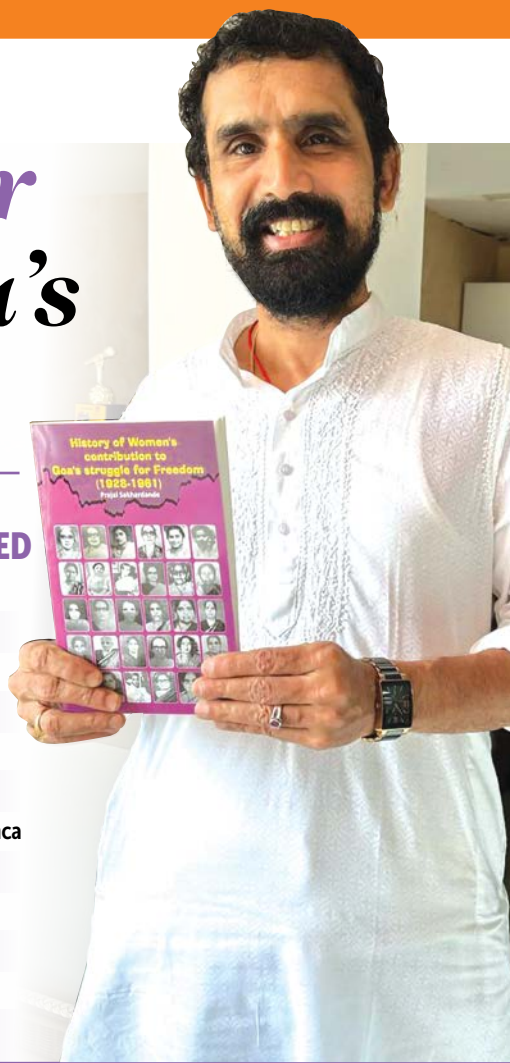
Two women who really stood out for Prof Prajal were Berta Menezes Braganza and Sharda Savaikar. Bertha Menezes Braganza from Chandor was the daughter of Luis de Menezes Bragança and the niece of TB Cunha. He elaborates, "At 18 years old, when no one women were in the freedom struggle, she took the first step to lead a satyagraha in Margao in 1928 and became the first woman freedom fighter. Bertha and her sister Beatriz, were both from a revolutionary family. They were influenced by their uncle, Dr TB Cunha,

PROMINENT WOMEN FEATURED IN THE BOOK:

- Irene Heredia
- Libia Lobo Sardesai
- Shashikala Kakodkar
- Shashikala Hodarkar
- Berta Menezes Braganca
- Beatrice Menezes Braganca
- Pramila Zambaulikar
- Vatsala Kirtani
- Mukta Karapurkar
- Dr Ratan Khaunte
- Sudhatai Joshi

who requested them to join him in the foundation of the first freedom fighters organization way back in 1928. Sharda Savaikar was the only woman to be beaten in jail. Her father and brothers were also freedom fighters who were jailed and since she was one of 11 siblings, her mother suffered for loss of income."

Through the book, one will learn that Vatsala Kirtani was the first woman to be arrested on June 18, 1946 at Margao at the age of 21. Maria Calista Joaquina Araujo was the only woman to be jailed at Reis Magos and for the longest time too. Goa's first woman chief minister, Shashikala Kakodkar, was an 11-year-old schoolgirl when she participated in the June 18 Movement of Dr Ram Lohia along with another 11-year-old schoolgirl Dr Ratan Khaunte Naik was later went on to become Goa's first lady FRCS London. They are Goa's youngest women freedom fighters.



Building stronger support systems for people with Down syndrome



Mahera Kantawalla

Each child has unique strengths, whether it's a love for music, an eye for art, or the ability to connect with others in a deeply meaningful way. But the road to unlocking these strengths often requires more than just individual effort—it requires the entire community coming together to provide the right tools, resources, and acceptance. As anyone who's had the privilege of working with children with Down syndrome knows, support systems can transform the trajectory of their lives in unimaginable ways.

This Down Syndrome Day, reflecting on the theme 'Improving Our Support Systems', let's recognise that while our country and tiny state have made strides in providing support services, too many gaps still remain. For people with Down syndrome and other disabilities, these include gaps in access to essential services from childhood onwards, such as in education, healthcare, at the workplace, even community attitudes.

In November 2024, the 'Different Abilities, One Community' initiative of the Office of the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Goa, in collaboration with Sethu Child Development Centre, Dnyanavardhini Divyang Training Centre and Down Syndrome Federation of India, set a shining example of how communities can come together to promote inclusion and celebrate neurodiversity. The event brought together people of all abilities in a joyous, fun-filled celebration that showcased the talents of individuals with Down syndrome through dance performances and musical acts. Seeing them centre stage was a reminder of their limitless potential, a celebration of what they can do, and the fact that human beings are defined not by their challenges, but by strengths that may not always be visible to a gaze that doesn't expect to find them. The success of the event lay in

the way it brought people together, breaking down stereotypes, on a foundation of mutual respect and understanding.

Dr Nandita De Souza, founder, Sethu Centre for Child Development and Family Guidance, speaks from decades of experience when she says, "Every disabled child can teach us valuable lessons about strength, courage, patience. At Sethu, we're privileged to work with children and families who refuse to allow the barriers of ignorance, fear and callousness to dishearten them. The least we can do is be allies, offer support, create welcoming, inclusive spaces in our homes, schools, institutions and communities, and celebrate their presence in our lives. Whatever we 'give', I can guarantee we will receive a much richer bounty in joy, connection and inspiration."

This Down Syndrome Day, let's reflect on the spirit and success of initiatives such as 'Different Abilities, One Community' and commit to working towards a future where inclusion is the norm rather than the exception. Together, let's continue to build communities that empower everyone, regardless of ability, to thrive.

(Mahera Kantawalla is a senior occupational therapist at Sethu Centre for Child Development and Family Guidance.)

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—Dr Nandita De Souza, founder, Sethu Centre for Child Development and Family Guidance



Blood donation camp held at Chicalim



SMRC's VM Salgaocar Hospital, in collaboration with Caring Souls Goa, Jain Engineers Society Goa Chapter, and GMC Blood Bank, successfully hosted a Blood Donation Camp at the hospital premises. The event witnessed an overwhelming response from 41 donors eager to contribute to this lifesaving cause. The blood donation drive saw participation from individuals across Goa, including medical professionals, students, and local community members, all united in their commitment to saving lives.

The collected blood will be used to support patients in need, ensuring that local healthcare facilities remain well-equipped to handle emergencies. Speaking on the success of the event, representatives from SMRC's Hospital and GMC Blood Bank expressed their gratitude to all the donors and volunteers. The Caring Souls Goa and Jain Engineers Society Goa Chapter played a vital role in mobilizing support and spreading awareness about the importance of regular blood donation.

Preaching, Healing and Deliverance Retreat

A Preaching, Healing and Deliverance Retreat will be held with Rosary, Praise and worship, adoration, confession and Holy Eucharist, conducted by Fr Cajje, Fr Soccoro and team.

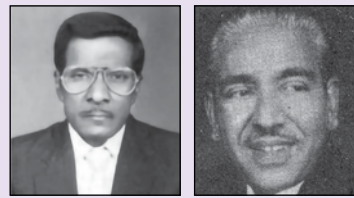
Venue: Emmanuela Hall, Parras Residency, Margao

Date: Every Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday
Time: 1 pm to 5 pm
Venue: Our Lady of Grace Church, Bicholim
Date: Every Friday, Saturday (9 am to 11 am) and Sunday (11 am to 5 pm)

100th birth centenary celebration of late tiatr artistes

Tiatr Academy of Goa in collaboration with Ravindra Bhavan, Margao and Ravindra Bhavan, Sankhali will be celebrating 100th birth anniversary of five late Tiatr/Khell-Tiatr personalities of yesteryears - Minguel Rod, Vincent de Saligao, Kamat de Assolna, Antonio Moraes and Mussolini Vales de Menezes.

A Konkani Musical Show featuring some of the most popular songs of the late tiatr artistes will be showcased with performances of renowned tiatr personalities, including Wilson-Sharon Mazarello, Platilda, Michael de Benaulim, Edwin D'Costa, Sidhanath Buyao, Neves



Oliveira, Marcus Vaz, Aki Brown, Rishona and Rihanna. The live band music will be provided by famed musician Normano Cardozo and his Brigade.

Venue: Pai Tiatr Auditorium, Ravindra Bhavan Margao
Date: March 22 | **Time:** 5 pm
Venue: Ravindra Bhavan Sankhali
Date: March 23
Time: 5 pm



Herald Gaming Console

Dilbert



Garfield



Wizard of id



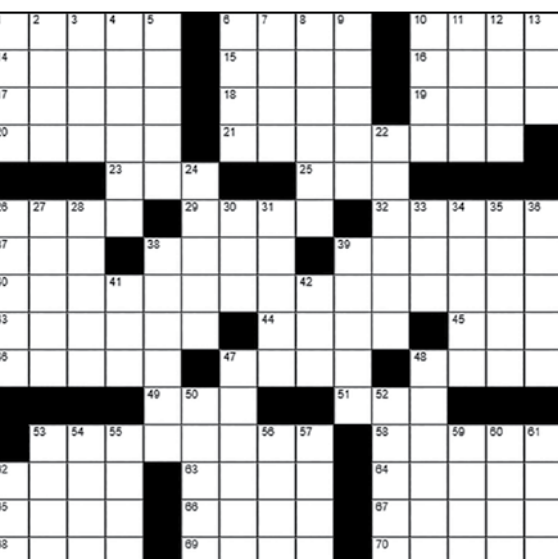
crossword 4799

ACROSS

1- Spicy sauce; 6- Spellbound; 10- Facility; 14- Hipbone; 15- Toast topper; 16- Laurel or Kenton; 17- Old finnish money; 18- Carry; 19- End in (draw); 20- Sows; 21- Encompass; 23- I see it now; 25- Bruins legend; 26- Overdue; 29- Kind of history; 32- Rasp; 37- Lyric tribute; 38- Notable periods; 39- Elevated; 40- In spite of; 43- List of corrections; 44- Makes a blunder; 45- HST's successor; 46- Arrive at; 47- Eye problem; 48- Pigsty; 49- Swelled head; 51- Actress Charlotte; 53- Infinite time; 58- Model; 62- Level; 63- Suffix with buck; 64- Dull finish; 65- 100 centavos; 66- Smell to high heaven; 67- Varnish resin; 68- Humanities; 69- ____-majesté; 70- Curved letters;

DOWN

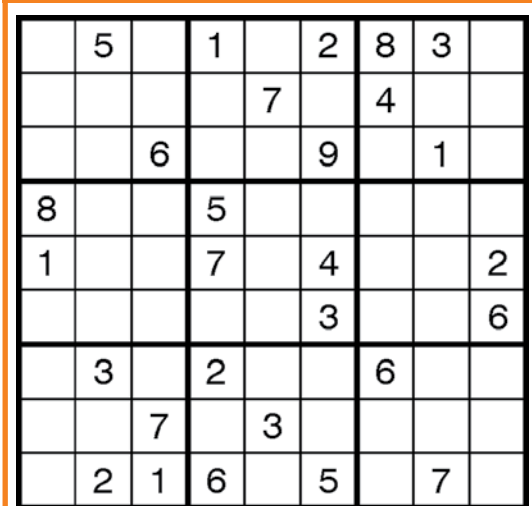
1- Drinks slowly; 2- Sheltered; 3- Queue; 4- Ice cream topped with syrup; 5- Mennonite sect; 6- Goes bad; 7- Moises of baseball; 8- Gasoline; 9- It's human; 10- Isaac's eldest; 11- Envelope abbr.; 12- Aforementioned; 13- U-turn from WSW; 22- Church instruments; 24- It comes from the heart; 26- Hermit; 27- Think the world of; 28- Aquarium fish; 30- Cheering word; 31- Good point; 33- Free



solution 4798



sudoku 4799



Instructions for Sudoku

9 x 9 letter: To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every number from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes

solution 4798

