

## Padma Sachdev, the poet who took Dogri language to great heights

Writers and admirers pay tributes to the ebullient poet who was a legend well within her lifetime. The sparkling small-town Jammu girl won accolades for her poetry and prose as she navigated with typical rustic trademark, beauty, talent and an irresistible lust for life as she navigated the literary circles of Mumbai and Delhi.

A sense of great loss was felt nationwide with the passing away of Padma Sachdev, the first modern poet of the Dogri language. Born in 1940 in Purmandal, Padma announced her impressive arrival on the poetic landscape of the region with her soul-stirring long poem "Raje Diyan Mandiyan."

A bold shade of progressive poetry, as she recited "Ai Raje Diyan Mandiyan Tundiyan Ne...." in late sixties in a local poetic symposium, she stunned all. As Padma, who was just a teenager then, threw a lyrical poser, "... those who blinded me... those weapons used against us...do they belong to you... those forcibly took away all my belongings...do those horses carrying our brutally looted assets belong to you?..." veteran litterateurs present in the symposium were in awe of her revolutionary flight of imagination, weaved in a poignant manner.

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She was to the Dogri language what Mahadevi Verma was to Hindi and Amrita Pritam to Punjabi. She started dabbling in poetry in the sweet dialect of the Jammu hills and went onto win the Sahitya Akademi in 1971 for her book of poetry 'Meri Kavita, Mere Geet'. She went onto win many awards including the Padma Shri and the Saraswati Samman for her autobiography 'Boond Bawari' in 2015 and in 2019, she received the prestigious Sahitya Akademi Fellowship for lifetime achievement. Her autobiography was translated into English by Uma Vasudev as 'A Drop in the Ocean'.

She authored many books in Dogri and Hindi, and her poetry collections, including Meri Kavita Mere Geet, won her the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1971. She received the Padma Shri, the country's fourth-highest civilian award, in 2001 and was awarded the Kabir Samman for poetry for 2007-08 by the Madhya Pradesh government.

Sachdev also wrote the lyrics for the song Mera Chhota Sa Ghar Baa' from the 1973 Hindi film Prem Parbat. She also penned the lyrics for two songs for the 1978 Hindi film Aankhin Dekhi, including the famous duet Sonar, tujhe kaise milun sung by Mohd Rafi and Sulakshana Pandit.

She worked with All India Radio, Jammu and Mumbai and shifted base to New Delhi and Mumbai after marrying singer Surinder Singh.

Padma, along with other writers and activists, pressed hard for the recognition of the Dogri language. "When Atal Bihari Vajpayee became PM, I would nag him about it as I knew him as a fellow poet. So he would avoid me knowing what I was going to ask for!" she would recount. When official recognition came to Dogri in December 2003, Padma says it was the happiest day for her as the language had its own identity and was not just taken for a dialect."

In 2001, she was awarded the Padma Shri for her contribution to education and literature. Among her several awards also included the prestigious Soviet Land Nehru Puruskar and J&K Cultural Academy Lifetime Achievement award.

Karan Singh, son of the last Dogra king of J&K, Maharaja Hari Singh, also translated one of her poems into English and



hailed her commitment to propagating the language.

Behind her tinkling laughter was a life of struggle and resilience as she fought many setbacks and persistent health problems. She found a caring partner in classical singer Surinder Singh and she is survived by him and their daughter Meeta Sachdev. Adieu to Padma who will live forever in her poems.

## Kids Craft: Popsicle Stick Snowflakes



### You'll need the following:

Popsicle Sticks  
Tacky Glue, Hot Glue Sticks and Hot Glue  
Christmas Bells, Glitter Stickers  
Silver Glitter, Tinsel Pom Poms and/or craft foam balls  
Fabric Snowflakes, Twine for hanging

### Steps to make:

First you need to paint your Popsicle Sticks if you don't already have colored sticks. We started with colored sticks which make it much easier to create! But painting can also be part of the fun too so you could easily get plain popsicle sticks and paint them whatever color you like!

Next you need to hot glue your popsicle sticks together. Forming the shape of the snowflake, put a small bit of hot glue in between each popsicle stick. Once done, add a bit of hot glue to the back and add your twine for hanging. Adults should do this part. Now is the fun part! Time to decorate! We used Glitter Stickers and Silver Glitter on one, Christmas Bells and glitter, Fabric Snowflakes and glitter, Tinsel Pom Poms and glitter and just pure glitter on the final one. If you want to get the glitter on your snowflake ornament, just put a bit of the tacky glue and pour the glitter on top. Then shake off the excess glitter. Pretty easy and this craft will surely keep the kids occupied. And the best part is you'll have an ornament to cherish for many years to come!



## FUN RIDDLES

I have a stem, but I am not a flower.

I have a foot, but I cannot hop.

Children are too young to hold me.

What am I?

## English Proverbs and Meanings

\* **A friend's eye is a good mirror.**  
A real friend will tell you the truth.

\* **A good beginning makes a good end.**  
If a task is carefully planned, there's a better chance that it will be done well.

\* **A leopard cannot change its spots.**  
It is not possible for a bad or unpleasant person to become good or pleasant.

\* **A stumble may prevent a fall.**  
Correcting a small mistake

may help you to avoid making a bigger one.

\* **Better the devil you know than the devil you don't know.**  
It's better to deal with some body difficult but familiar, than change and risk dealing with somebody worse.

\* **Better untaught than ill-taught.**  
It's better not to be taught at all than to be taught badly.

\* **Blood will out.**  
A person's background or education will eventually show.

## Fresh Corn Cakes with Salsa



### Ingredients:

White whole-wheat flour (about 3/4 cup)  
1/2 cup plain yellow cornmeal  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt, divided  
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper,  
divided  
1 cup light sour cream  
2 large eggs, 2 tablespoons olive oil,

divided  
1 1/4 cups fresh corn kernels  
2 tablespoons minced jalapeño  
1/2 cup diced yellow squash  
1/4 cup chopped green onions  
1/4 cup chopped fresh basil  
1 1/2 teaspoons white wine vinegar  
1 medium tomato, chopped

### Method

Weigh or lightly spoon flour into a dry measuring cup. Combine flour, cornmeal, baking powder, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper in a large bowl. Combine sour cream, eggs, and 1 tablespoon oil in a bowl, stirring until smooth. Add sour cream mixture, corn, and jalapeño to flour mixture; stir just until combined. Heat a large nonstick griddle over medium-high heat. Divide corn mixture into 8 equal portions (about 1/3 cup each); shape into patties. Add patties to griddle; cook 6 minutes on each side. Combine squash, green onions, basil, vinegar, tomato, remaining 1 tablespoon oil, remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon pepper in a bowl; toss. Place 2 corn cakes on each of 4 plates; top evenly with salsa.

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## Mocha Chip Muffins



### Ingredients:

Wheat bran  
Whole-wheat flour  
Granulated sugar  
Baking powder  
Baking soda

Ground cinnamon  
Pinch kosher salt  
Unsweetened applesauce  
Lowfat buttermilk  
Olive oil  
Large egg  
Instant espresso powder  
Mini chocolate chips

### Method

Heat the oven to 350 degrees F and line a 12-hole muffin pan with 10 paper liners. In a medium bowl, combine the wheat bran, flour, sugar, baking powder, soda, cinnamon, and salt. In a large bowl, combine the applesauce, buttermilk, oil, and egg; stir in the espresso powder. Add the flour mixture to the bowl and mix to combine. Fold in the chocolate chips. Divide the batter among the lined muffin cups and bake until a wooden pick inserted in the middle comes out clean, 20 to 22 minutes. Let the muffins cool in the pan for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack. (For mini muffins, bake for 14 to 16 minutes.)