



Summary of my biography

My name is Hasmukhlal and I am the third son of the couple Mulchande Deuchande and Jaraubay Premchande. My parents were from the former Portuguese India, but early on emigrated to Mozambique, where they lived in the city of Inhambane. In this city, there was a commercial store, which was founded in 1901 by my paternal grandfather, Deuchande Lauchande, and which became famous under the name “Casa Matocolo”. In the language of Inhambane, Bitonga, ‘matocolo’ means ‘vitiligo’, a disease that manifests itself with a lack of pigmentation in the skin, that is, a lack of melanin, from which my grandfather suffered. As he got older, this lack of pigmentation affected almost his entire body and that is why, in Diu, many also called him “English”. I must say that, from my grandfather, I also inherited vitiligo.



My grandfather, Deuchande (Matocolo).



This building of Casa Matocolo is not the original. It was built by my father in the 1940s.



My parents got married in Diu, but my father emigrated to Inhambane before my mother did in order to help my grandfather, Deuchande, with his commercial activity.



On the left, the photo is of my father, and on the right, of my mother, both still young.



At the top is a photo of my father from when he was still young. At the bottom, on the left, is a photo of my parents at an older age and appearing serious. On its right is a photo of my parents in which they are smiling.

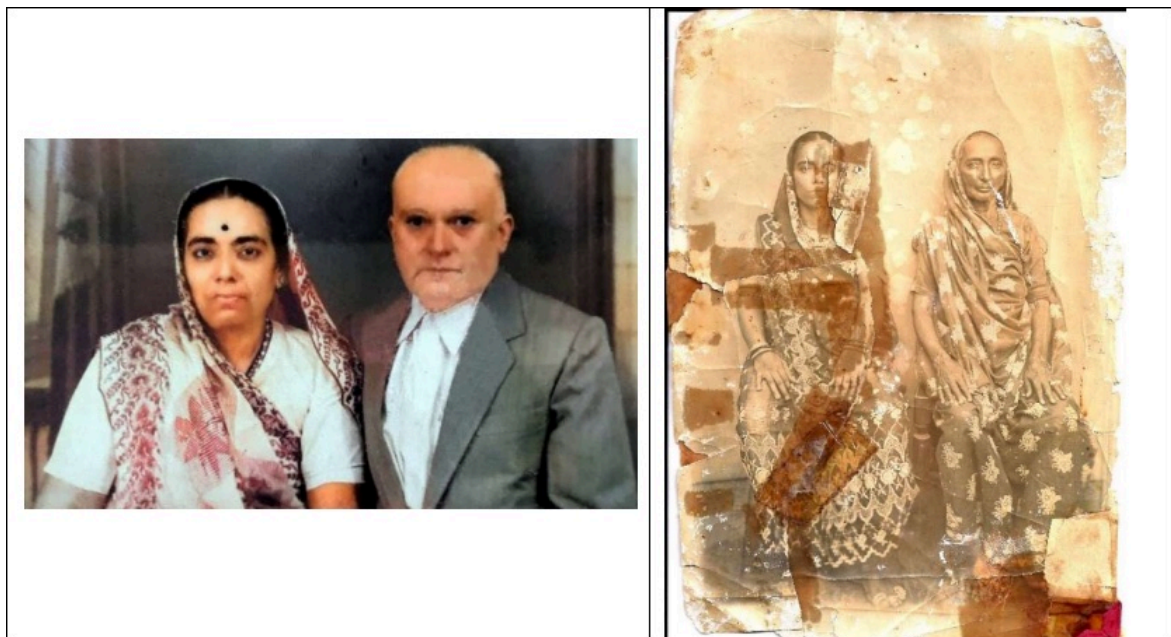


Photo of my father's sister Parsane fai, and her husband, Ramchande fua, and the photo beside it, an old one, appears to be of Parsan fai and Fuli fai.

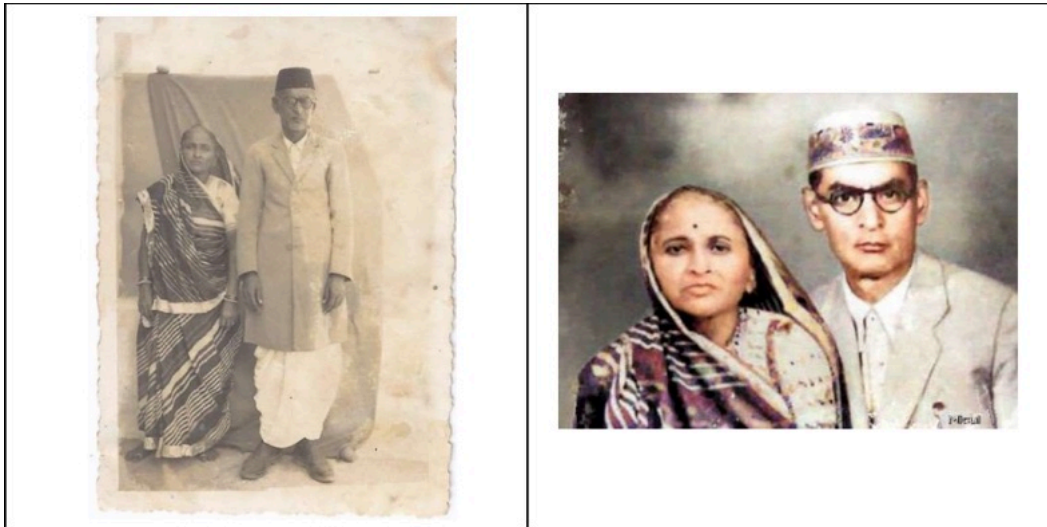


Photo where you can see my parents, my eldest brother Pranlal, my brother Jassantilal, me, my brother Champaclal and my sister Pramila.

Meanwhile, my eldest brother, whose name was Pranlal and who was born in Diu on the 3rd of April, 1931, was still very young when he, in the company of my mother, also emigrated to Inhambane. My mother was the daughter of Premchande Deuchande and Jekunvar bai, that is, my maternal grandparents. This maternal grandfather of mine, in partnership with 2 brothers, also had a store in Inhambane, a store that was known as Alfaiatria Jota Deuchande, which, in addition to general commerce, was mostly dedicated to the cutting and sewing services of clothes.



The following photos are of my maternal grandparents.



In this photo is my maternal grandmother Jekunvarbai and my maternal grandfather Premchande, and beside it is another photo of my maternal grandparents.

And it was here, in Inhambane, on the 3rd of October, 1938, that my brother Jassantilal was born, and I was born on the 10th of June, 1940, Camões Day. At that time, most births were carried out at home and due to a shortage of doctors and nurses, they were assisted by curious people and friends of women in labour. This also occurred when I was born. Inhambane was a small town and people's relationships were often somewhat familiar.

When I was born, in order for a newborn to be registered at the Registry Office, two witnesses were required and that is why, to register me, my father was accompanied by two people who were familiar and who also knew the gentleman (Mr. Max) who kept the records. They all chatted amicably and in the end, my father and the witnesses signed the document.



In the first photo, my mother is sitting with my brother on her lap and I am standing. In the second photo are my parents and in the third photo, my mother.



Only when I was 7 years old, and my father enrolled me in Primary School Carvalho Araújo, was it discovered that I had been registered under the first and only name of Hasmuklal.

The Primary School Carvalho Araújo was relatively close to our house and that is why I travelled to this school by foot.

Before beginning my first class of Primary Education, the language that I spoke the most was Gujarati, especially at home with my family, and outside home, I mostly spoke in Bitonga, the language of the original population of Inhambane. My Portuguese was poor.

The following photo was taken before I started my Primary Education:

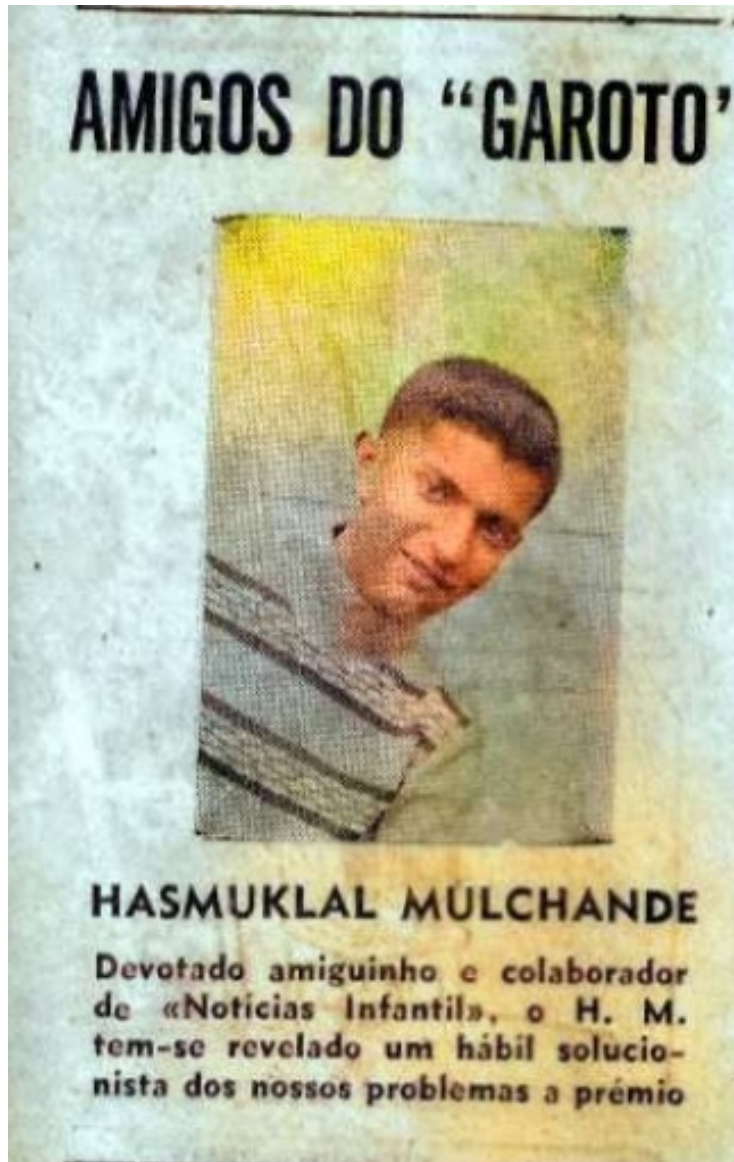


In this photo I am sitting next to my mother and in the middle is my brother.



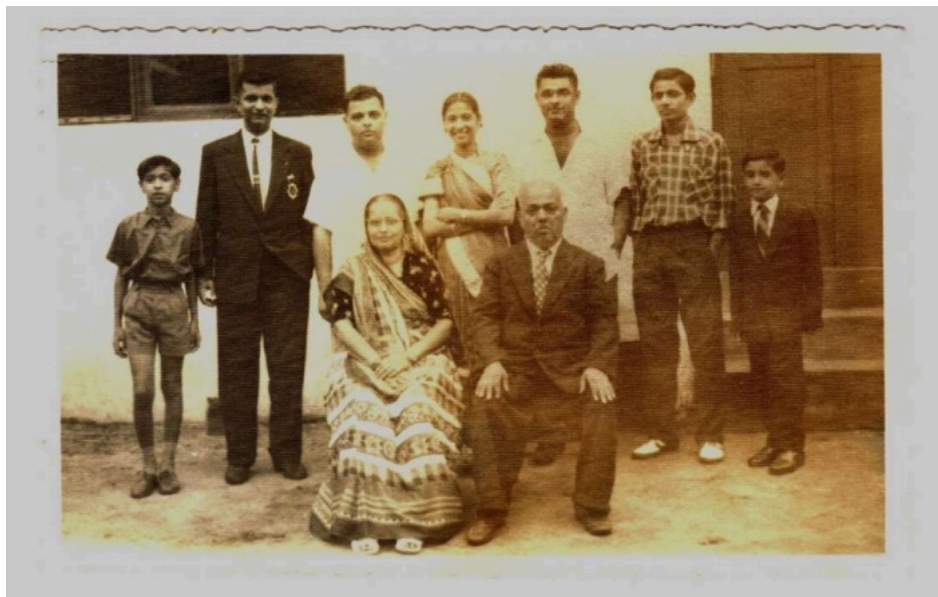
During my 4 years of Primary Education, I created friendships with several colleagues. The parents of some of these colleagues attended the Sports Group of Inhambane, where I too started going at times. The Sports Group of Inhambane was an “affiliate” of the Sports Group of Lourenço Marques, and both identified with the Eagle in their emblem as they were inspired by the football team, Sport Lisboa e Benfica. That is why, at that time in my childhood, I became a fan and supporter of Benfica and not only do I continue to be one today, I maintain this motto: in defeats, in draws and in victories, Benfica, always.

During my adolescence, I gained the habit, with my eldest brother, of reading newspapers daily and the most read was the newspaper “Notícias”, which, on weekends, published a children’s page, not only with stories in illustrated comics, like “Tarzan”, but also puzzles, like riddles to solve, and I became an active contributor to this page and won prizes several times, most of which were educational and general knowledge books. “Notícias Infantil” even made a reference to my collaboration, publishing a photograph of me during that time.





My eldest brother, Pranlal, must have been around 21 years old when he went to India (Diu) to get married. At that time, trips were made by boat, which left from Lourenço Marques. The boats took about three or more weeks to reach the port of Bombay, the city that is now better known as Mumbai. At the time, there were 2 very large boats, which each carried a few dozen passengers and which made these trips. One was called Kampala and the other was called Karanja. I cannot forget the emotion I felt when my eldest brother Pranlal left. He didn't go alone. He went in the company of my maternal grandfather Premchande, my maternal uncle Chandrakante and my maternal cousin Harilal Dharamcy, as well as other relatives. My uncle Chandrakante and my cousin Harilal also went there to get married as the brides were already "arranged" and when they left, I was alone, in the port of Lourenço Marques, waving my hands and wiping my tears with my handkerchief, at a time when I was about 12 years old. It was not easy at all...



This family photo was taken before the wedding of my eldest brother, Pratapbhai.



Photo taken after Pratapbhai's wedding with my sister-in-law and my parents.



Having completed my Primary Education, my intention was to pursue Secondary Education, which, in Inhambane, did not officially exist. Thus, despite having passed the admission exam for Secondary School and the admission exam for Technical School, because for the Secondary School and the Technical School I would have to continue my studies in Lourenço Marques, it was decided that I would take an interval of one year, because after a year, Inhambane would have the Secondary School course. During my interval year, I helped my parents at the Matocolo store in their commercial activity, serving customers, as the store sold a lot of things, such as clothing, shoes, books, ornaments, small tools, pens and ballpoint pens, etc.

After the official opening of the Secondary School, I became a student at the Colégio da Nossa Senhora da Conceição.



Photo taken with my colleagues from Secondary School. I am the last one in the top row.



Photo taken when I was a teenager with colleagues from Mocidade Portuguesa.



During my childhood, I learned the Gujarati language, which was taught to us not only at home by family members, but also at the homes of other Gujarati families at night (those who lived near our house). It was also taught at the Hindu Sarvajanic Sabha Association. I must say that this Association was a great centre for disseminating the entire Gujarati culture, from the language to the Hindu religion, Indian music and Indian literature, and also for the conviviality between little and big, that is, children and adults. Even for fun, there were several types of games, such as ping-pong, volleyball, carrom, card games and “chopat”, among others. Great friendships and even a taste for theatre in the Gujarati language were formed here.

I also acquired a taste for painting and in my adolescence, I painted at least two large sceneries which were used for theatrical performances.



Photo taken at the Inhambane Sabha on a day of Nariali Poonam, in which I am the third one sitting down in front of a column scenery painted by me.



This photo was taken at a Nariali Poonam a few years earlier, in which I appear to be the only child wearing a suit. The scenery had been painted by Jentilal Araquechande (Gindolo).



A scene from a theatre performance, in which you can see, in the background, a scenery with a waterfall painted by me.

I was born on Camões Day, and perhaps because of this, I was very young when I gained a taste for poetry. This taste became more evident when I was attending the Faculty of Medicine and I sometimes wrote verses in the pamphlets that my colleagues published during academic festivities. But after my Najni passed away, perhaps due to feelings of longing, I started to dedicate myself even more to poetry and until today, I have published countless poems, with many quatrains, mostly on Facebook. As for the quality of these poems, only the readers can rate them...

Inhambane was a small city, as it still is today. It is surrounded by the sea, which embraces it in such a way that it almost transforms it into an island, a paradisiacal island, where the vegetation was abundant, not lacking in coconut and casuarina trees, not to mention other trees, such as mango trees, cashew trees and sugar cane trees.

Most of the city's population knew each other and the atmosphere was pleasant and healthy.

The atmosphere at the Secondary School was also good, where, so much in the 1st cycle of Secondary Education as in the 2nd cycle, ignore my immodesty, I was a student classified as "distinguished". Whenever the grades were published, I was included in the "Honor Rolls" and "Applied Rolls". At the end of these 5 years and because in Inhambane the 6th and 7th years of Secondary Education still did not exist, I attended this 3rd cycle in Lourenço Marques. At the end of the 3rd cycle, I took the entrance exam for the University of Coimbra to become a student in the Medicine course, an objective that I managed to achieve.

Even before heading to Portugal, I was summoned to be inspected for the military, for which compliance was mandatory. But, despite having good health and a good physique, and even passing the inspection, I was not called up for military service. It is that at this time, there was a popular clandestine movement with the objective of fighting for the independence of Mozambique, and the Portuguese government, out of fear that non-"white" citizens with some education and culture would join this "revolt", did not include them in the army. I was happy because this way I could continue with my studies, that is, attend my Medicine course in Coimbra.



It was in the last quarter of 1961 that I left Mozambique to go to Coimbra, and a few weeks earlier, my parents, after 3 consecutive decades, had returned to Diu for a long and well-deserved “rest”.



Me, still young, in the company of my parents, and beside it, my parents, in the company of their 7 children and at the time their only daughter-in-law and 2 grandchildren.

On their return to Diu, my parents had taken 4 of my siblings with them (one of them was my recently married sister who travelled with her husband). This family separation had been emotionally difficult for me because only two of my brothers had remained in Inhambane, my eldest brother with his wife and their two children, and another brother who is approximately 4 and a half years younger than me.

This eldest brother of mine managed the store, that is, Casa Matocolo, and it was he who, in the first years, through Banco Nacional Ultramarino, sent me the amount of one thousand and five hundred escudos for my expenses every month. It should be noted that in the current era, one thousand and five hundred escudos are only equivalent to 7 and a half euros, but at that time they were enough for my entire sustenance, including rent payments where I lived and small extra expenses, such as the purchase of books and notebooks, the payment for haircuts, the purchase of clothes, mainly those of winter and outerwear, etc.

Far from the land where I was born, far from family and friends, my first year in Mainland Portugal was particularly painful.

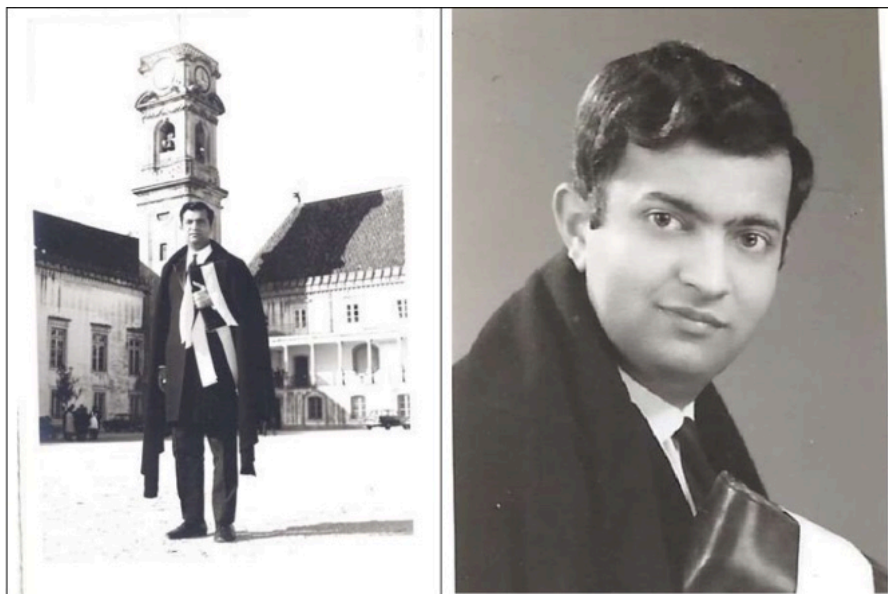
In Inhambane, I was used to listening to “All India Radio” and on weekends, watching Indian films at the Manuel Rodrigues Theater. In Inhambane, my socialising with friends, colleagues and relatives was also frequent and I often went to the Hindu Sarvajanic Sabha where I would have a lot of fun and absorb the Indian culture. This emotional burden worsened when, on the 18th of December of the same year, 1961, we heard, through the media, that Diu, Daman and Goa had been invaded by the Indian Union. The Portuguese news reporters “painted” the invasion as if it were a very heated war. At that time, cell phones practically did not exist, letters took weeks to arrive and I was very anxious as I did not know what the atmosphere was like in Diu and calling there was not cheap nor easy.



Little by little, I got used to life, focusing on my studies and creating new friendships with colleagues from the university and roommates at the boarding house where I lived, that is, the boarding house of Dona Emilinha, who was an elderly woman. Most of my roommates at the boarding house were also medical students. The boarding house was situated right behind the Faculty of Pharmacy, very close to one of the doors of Sé Velha, on a small street called Rua do Norte. Here, I had the opportunity to learn or know what the “Academic Traditions” of Coimbra were, such as that of a “freshman” not being able to go out after 6 pm, and if he did he would be subjected to hair shearing, as happened to me at least once, but it was a tradition without evil. The worst “evil” thing I saw was when a “freshman” colleague of mine once drank wine served out of a skull (half of a real human skull). This occurred inside of a “República” (Repúblicas were the residences of students who rented houses to live in together). The names of the Repúblicas were funny, like the “Galifões”, the “Corsários das Ilhas”, the “Bota Abaixo”, the “Rapa o Tacho”, etc, etc.

Outside of class and study hours in Coimbra, as it is a small city, we socialised with other people, even non-students, as if familiar. I remember that the maids from our boarding house often went to wash clothes at the Mondego river by foot, very close to the city centre, sometimes very close to the Santa Clara bridge, and us students would also go there with our “notebooks” to make the most of the environment in the summer to study. But most of the time, in the spring and the summer, I spent my mornings in the Jardim da Sereia to take advantage of the shade from the trees to study, as did some of my colleagues.

So gradually, I adapted to life in this city, which was very traditional in terms of events, such as Queima das Fitas in May, “Latadas” in October/November, and the Academic Association itself provided us with events to attend, for example, sessions of Coimbra Fado, whose poems were traditional and appealing.



In these two photos, I am dressed in academic attire (cape and cassock) and folder with yellow Medicine ribbons.

And the years went by. I, myself, for economic reasons, rarely went on vacation to Inhambane during these years, to which my parents and siblings had already returned after



about 5 years of staying in Diu. One of the times I went there on vacation, it was my fourth year of Medicine and it happened to be during the month of Nariali Poonam and therefore, as was tradition, there was a theatre performance on that day. The Directorate of the Hindu Sarvajanic Sabha asked me to give a speech in Portuguese as it was part of the conventions to have speeches which marked the beginning of the theatre session.



This news appeared in a Lourenço Marques newspaper.

On one of the following holidays, I returned to Inhambane. That was when my father, already much older and who, not long before, had contracted Diabetes, saw this Diabetes

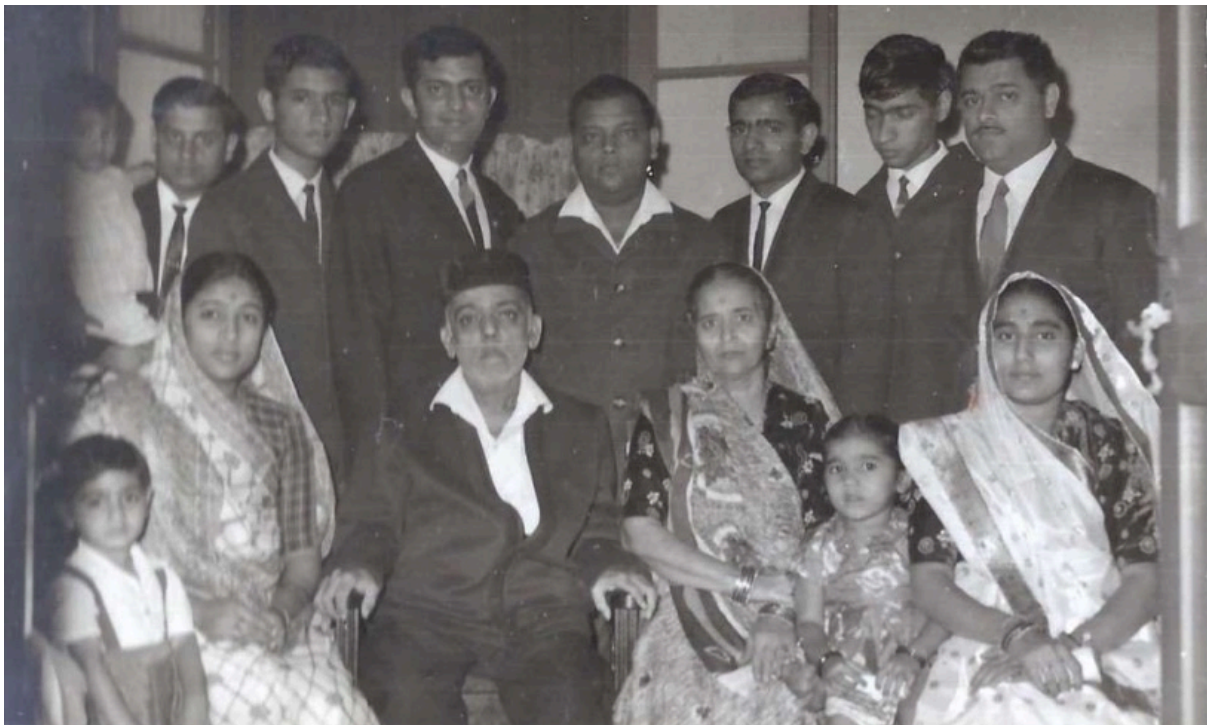


complicating his health, to the point of leaving him with gangrene in both feet, which had to be amputated, and also with Cataracts in his eyes that left him blind.

In Inhambane, access to adequate treatment was not easy due to the lack of professionals that were knowledgeable in these areas and also due to the lack of equipment in the hospital. One of the times that I went to Inhambane on vacation, it was precisely the year that my father had undergone the amputation of both feet and used a wheelchair. I do not like to self-praise, but I am also not one for false modesty and I must say that I spent a lot of time during this vacation talking to him. My mother would even scold me, saying that I should leave the house more often, but the love that I had for my father made up for everything.

A little before my parents returned from India to Inhambane, they “arranged” a commitment, as was usual at that time in our society, for my future marriage with a girl from Mumbai called Najni. Given my education and my respect for our ancestral habits, I did not reject this commitment and when, in 1968, I graduated in Medicine in Coimbra, it was decided that I would go to Inhambane to marry Najni. Even before beginning my internship, I fulfilled my promise, but Najni, who was born in Mumbai, had to go through “bureaucratic procedures” to obtain her Portuguese nationality, which delayed her journey from Mumbai to Inhambane and when she arrived at this Mozambican city, my vacation time was running out. That is why she had to subject herself to staying in Inhambane until my vacation the following year, 1969. She stayed at the house of my only sister Pramila whose husband, Mr. Sacarlal, my brother-in-law, had lived in Mumbai growing up.

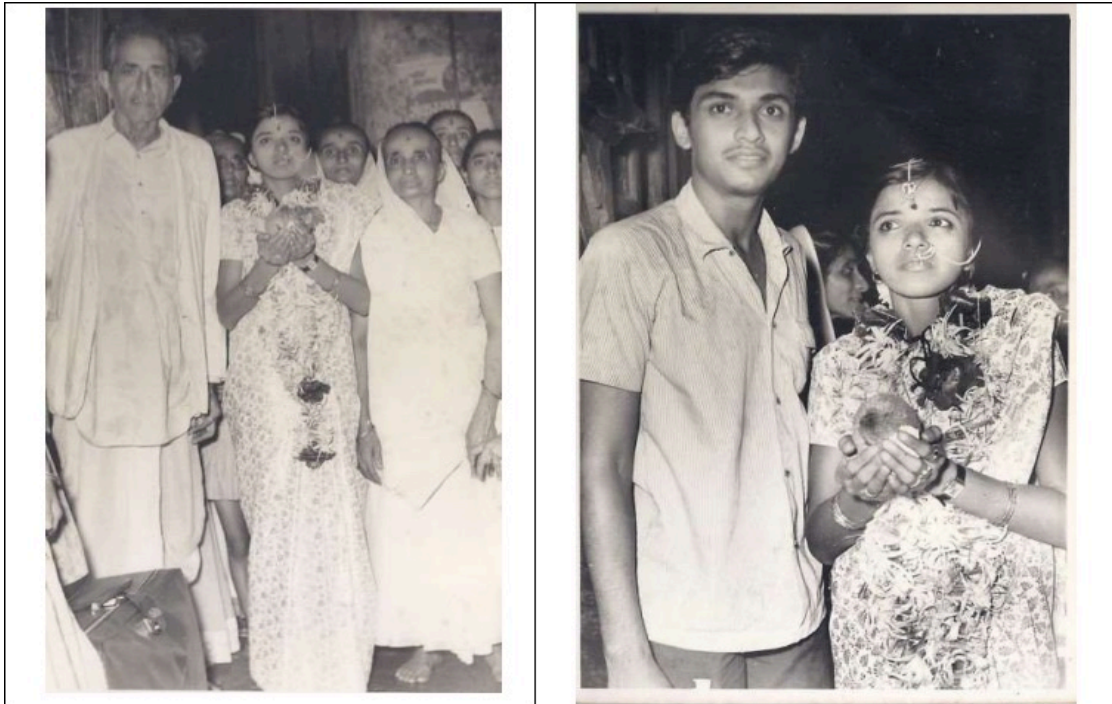
From my side, it will never be too much to thank my parents and family for the education and love with which they raised me.



Family photograph taken before my wedding.



Najni, on the other hand, was still very young when she left her entire world behind, including her parents, family, friends and the city of Mumbai itself, to marry me; she, who had never seen me, nor I her. We had only exchanged correspondence (letters), which, as I said, took several days to arrive. My culture and her culture were completely different. My education was mostly in Portuguese, although I had never unvalued Indian education, which, in me, of course, was rudimentary. All of Najni's education was Indian (Gujarati) and she knew no Portuguese. There was a clash of cultures that only love from both sides, towards our parents, towards our education and towards our origins, gave us the ability to overcome and to defeat our obstacles.



Najni between her parents, before leaving for Mozambique. At the same ceremony of her departure for Mozambique, alongside her brother Dilip.



The day that Najni arrived in Lourenço Marques from Mumbai. In the first photo, there is me, Najni, my mother and my brother Jassantilal. The second photo is the same as the previous one, but in place of my brother Jassantilal, there is my brother Champaclal.



Najni and I, at the door of our house in Inhambane.

As I already stated, our wedding was postponed until 1969. It took place on the 23rd of August in Inhambane. On the same day, or better said, soon after on the same night, my brother Champaclal, who is 4 and a half years younger than me, also got married. The Hindu priest who performed both of our marriages was the same. The weddings were very pompous, held in the hall of the Hindu Sarvajanik Sabha Association. Just because I find it “interesting”, I must say that a son of this priest, also a Hindu priest, was the one who carried out the wedding ceremonies for my three daughters in Lisbon.

My civil marriage had been done beforehand, only bureaucratically by proxy, and all documentation had to be validated later in a Lisbon registry office.



Me and Najni in a photo taken shortly after our wedding. Another photo of us, also taken after the wedding.

A few days after our wedding, celebrated religiously in Inhambane, Najni and I headed to Lisbon, where, at the Hospital de Santa Maria, I would do my internship and later my medical residency. In Lisbon, we began living in a room in a boarding house and we would have our lunch and dinner meals at the university canteen. Najni, who had grown up with almost only vegetarian eating habits, here became accustomed to non-vegetarian food. I still remember the first meal that we had when we came from Mozambique in a restaurant in Entrecampos, relatively close to our boarding house. It was a “rabbit stew”. Imagine the moral “distress” that Najni suffered because she had never, until that moment, eaten such an



“animal”. Not even at my parents' house did they eat rabbit, nor even turkey. Only her education and the respect that she had for me and my family made it so that she would have the strength to face these harsh realities of life.

I was doing my medical internship at the Hospital de Santa Maria, after which I would pick her up from the boarding house, which was nearby, on Avenida 5 de Outubro, right in front of Feira Popular, and we would go to have lunch at the university canteen. After bringing her back to the boarding house, I would take the bus to the Escola Nacional de Saúde Pública e Medicina Tropical, where I had to remain until around 5/6 pm. Then, I would return to the boarding house until nightfall, when we would go to the canteen again for dinner. Imagine the loneliness that she endured!

After finishing my internship, which was in the year that it was replaced by my medical residency, and after finishing my Tropical Medicine course, my primary intention was to return to Mozambique (Inhambane) where I wanted to practise my profession. But it was at that time that the war for the independence of Mozambique became more intense and as I was already earning a resident doctor's salary, at the advice of my parents and family and by our own intention, we preferred to stay in Portugal, because with the grade classifications that I had, I could apply to get the specialty of Gynaecology in Coimbra, a city that was highly coveted by resident doctors due to the well-known prestige and fame of the Gynaecology Services at the Hospital da Universidade. These services were in high demand, but there were only two vacancies. And I occupied, or In other words, I was entitled to one of them. This was the beginning of the “turnaround” of our lives.

I, who had completed my entire course in Coimbra, except for the internship, easily adapted to this city, where we rented a part of a house with a kitchen from a person I already knew, and as in Coimbra everything was nearby, including the hospital and the city centre, it was easy for us. Access to shopping or other facilities, from any location, was not difficult. Najni also began socialising with people, especially with the owner of the house, D. Teresa, with whom she learned to cook in the Portuguese way. Our life became calmer and on the 4th of August, 1970, our first son was born, whom we named Micul and who began to be raised in an environment of great affection. D. Teresa was an employee with the position of Dietitian at the Hospital da Universidade de Coimbra, and although Micul was born in the maternity ward, D. Teresa spent the night there on the first day after his birth and accompanied Najni, helping her with the treatment and feeding of the newborn baby (Micul). This D. Teresa, who at the time was separated from her husband, a merchant named Manuel, had a son called Pedro who taught Micul many games until he reached around 2 years of age.

But every rose has a thorn. Precisely when Najni's second pregnancy occurred, the military decided to re-inspect me and include me in the army, sending me to Mafra for the "recruitment". The good side was that some of my colleagues were in the same situation as me, and because we were doctors, our military tasks were light. Our weekends started very early. However, as soon as I finished my “recruitment”, I was deployed to Mozambique to face the war, and in May of 1972, in the company of our son Micul, Najni and I went to the “province” in Inhambane where my parents and other relatives lived. They were very helpful to us as I left Najni, who was pregnant, and our son at my parents' house, while I travelled North (outskirts of Tete) to fulfil my mission. The location of the mission was isolated, called



Bene, where I remained for about 2 weeks. But at times, the bad luck of some is the good luck of others: my doctor colleague who was in Vila Coutinho fell seriously ill and I was requested to replace him. And in fact, the world is small, as precisely in Vila Coutinho lived that brother of mine who got married on the same day as me in Inhambane. As I already had some experience in Gynaecology services, the army commander stationed in Vila Coutinho acted for me to stay there, that is, to not leave Vila Coutinho, as his wife had a gynaecological illness, and so I remained there as a senior Lieutenant and a Doctor and a Delegate of Health.



When I was a senior medical Lieutenant.

Meanwhile, on the 4th of September, 1972, in Inhambane, Najni gave birth to a girl, whom we named Hema.



Me, Najni, Micul and Hema, in a photo taken in a studio in Inhambane.



Vila Coutinho was a small town, in which there was a hospital that hired me to work in my spare time and also assigned me the position of Delegate of Health. As Delegate of Health, I had the right to have housing, to where, after a few months, I brought Najni and the children, who were in Inhambane.

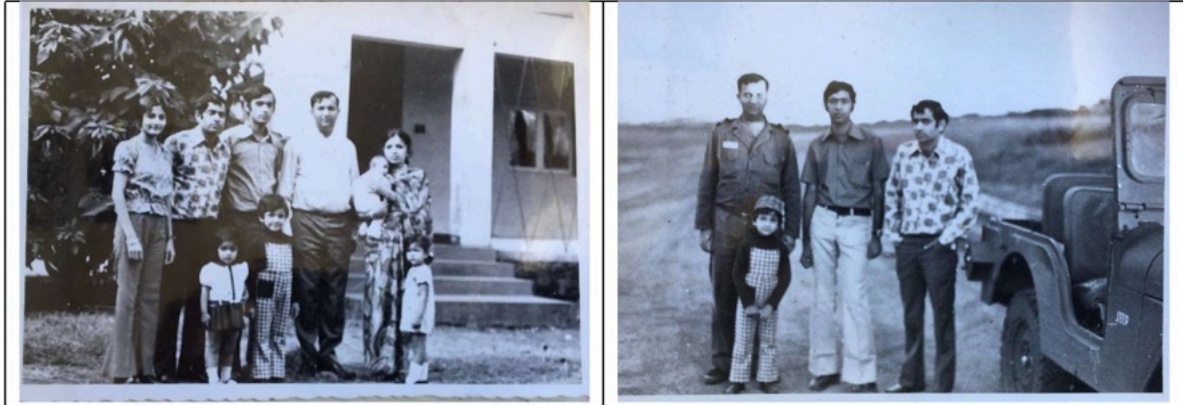


Photo taken in Vila Coutinho, behind the house of the Delegate of Health, who was me, after the birth of Sadna, who is in Najni's arms. Next to me is my brother Indracumar who had come to my house on vacation and next to him is our brother Champaclal and his wife Hasmukhi. Besides Sadna, the other children are Babita Champaclal and my children Micul and Hema.

The second photo was taken with my brothers Champaclal and Indracumar on the outskirts of Vila Coutinho.



When I worked as a military doctor in Vila Coutinho, my youngest brother, named Satendra, for some time also fulfilled his mandatory military service there and in this photo I am between him and our brother Champaclal.

It is true that, twice a month, the army would organise health campaigns for the nearby or surrounding areas, but on those outings, we never had the misfortune of being targets of a "mine". The locals would even say that the enemies or "terrorists", precisely because they also needed a doctor, would not act against us, nor would they lay "mines".



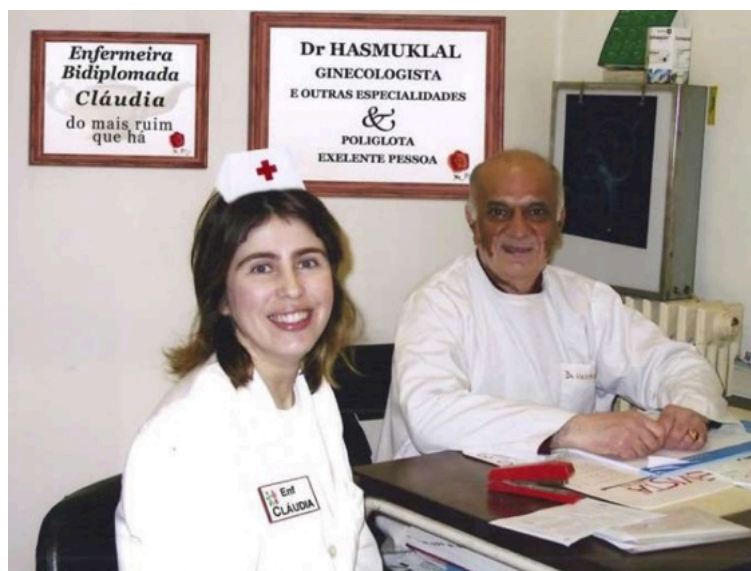
And it was in this environment of relative peace, in Vila Coutinho, that our second daughter was born in the annex of the hospital, that is, in the Delegate of Health's house, on the 23rd of March, 1974. We named this daughter Sadna.

However, in that same year of 1974, the "25 April" took place, and for this reason and also because in the "Metropolis" there were doctors who refused to go overseas for the "war", my stay was prolonged until the 25th of November, 1974, the day on which I returned to Portugal, accompanied by my wife and children. It was on this very day that General Spínola had to leave the position he held as President of the Republic and was replaced by Marshal Costa Gomes. I will just mention that the date of the 25th of November is Najni's birthday.

When we arrived in Lisbon, it was already night and the chaos at the military airport was enormous, but once again God protected us. The family and I arrived safely in Coimbra the next day. Here, I resumed my career in Gynaecology, which I completed at the Hospital da Universidade.

After completing my specialisation, I was pressured to apply to fill vacancies that existed in other cities in Portugal, as anyone who refused to apply could not continue to work at the hospital. It was for this reason that I left the hospital and became a doctor gynaecologist at the Hospital Militar de Coimbra and in some health centres in this city, where, conscious of this, I had already started working part-time. This happened in 1980, precisely the year in which, on the 3rd of June, my third daughter was born, the "youngest", whom we named Jalmira.

At that time, I worked, not only at the Hospital Militar, but also at the Centro de Saúde de Celas, at the Centro de Saúde de Sá da Bandeira, at the Centro de Saúde de Santa Clara and at the Centro de Saúde de Norton de Matos, all in Coimbra and in all, part-time. It was a very busy life. The following photo was taken at the Centro de Saúde de Sá da Bandeira in an environment of good disposition:



This photo was taken at the Centro de Saúde de Sá da Bandeira, where nurse Cláudia is interning with me in a positive atmosphere.



Because of the placements, some of my colleagues, as soon as they finished the Medicine course, even before carrying out any specialisation, headed to other places, as did my colleague Dr. Hasmucrai Amarchande, who returned to Mozambique to work, and as fate would have it, years later, he became the father-in-law of two of my children: Micul, who married a daughter of his called Dhwinkal, and Hema, whose husband is a Pulmonologist called Dhiren.



Photo of me and my colleague Hasmucrai Amarchande, with cape and cassock and folder with Medicine ribbons, when we were colleagues at the Universidade de Coimbra.

They say that the “world is small” and in fact, look at the coincidence: Dr. Hasmucrai, that is, the father-in-law of my children Micul and Hema, was the son-in-law of a cousin of my father’s and also of my mother’s, called Talaquechande Panachande, who lived in Porto Amélia, Mozambique, for many years. The following photo is of him:

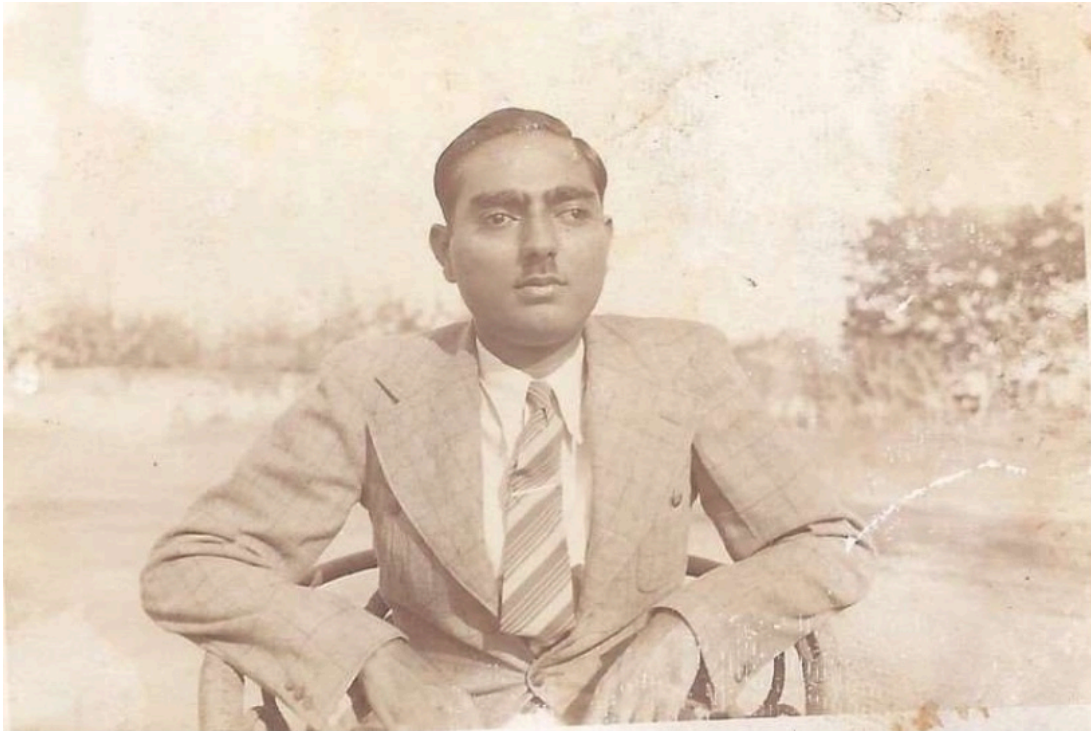


Photo of Mr. Talaquechande Panachande, who was my father's and also my mother's cousin and the father-in-law of Dr. Hasmucrai Amarchande, who was the father of my son-in-law Dr. Dhirendra and my daughter-in-law Dhwinkal.

But time and age do not forgive. After returning from Mozambique and because I had gained a lot of weight in Vila Coutinho, in 1991, I had a sudden heart disease with impairment of the coronary arteries and I was submitted, in the Hospital da Universidade de Coimbra, to coronary artery bypass surgery. Since then I have been “balanced” in this aspect as I take, among other medications, antihypertensives, anticoagulants, and also those that prevent the rise in cholesterol and triglycerides.

My wife, Najni, who contracted Ganglionic Tuberculosis before marriage, unluckily also fell ill with Rheumatoid Arthritis, which, little by little, progressed and worsened her health. Although we spared no effort to make her get better, her disease evolved negatively.

Given the aggravation of her illness, when I completed 36 years of public service, I felt obligated to ask for my retirement. At that time, the children, raised and married, were already living on the outskirts of Lisbon and I, myself, had preemptively bought a house in Santo António dos Cavaleiros. As soon as I retired, we started living in this house, but unfortunately, despite the medical care and medication, my Najni passed away on the 13th of February, 2014. Since then, despite my children's devotion to me, I have lived a solitary life made up of memories and the longing of my Najni, who, in life, had been a true heroine, one who left her own family, her land, her friendships and her healthy past to dedicate herself to me, subjecting herself to all types of sacrifices. As fate would have it, she would abandon everything to marry me. She, who was born and lived in India, where the climate was tropical with relatively high temperatures, began living in Coimbra, where the temperatures were much lower and the climate was cold. Her body did not have enough resistance to prevent Rheumatoid Arthritis from taking hold. For all of this, even today, in my subconscious, I feel responsible for the short duration of her life.



As I said before, our union had caused, between us, a clash of cultures, but the love that we had for our family and for our origins also resulted in love and understanding between us. In the daily life of a home, there is no household in which there is no “scolding” sometimes. But this, in general, happens in matters of “low” importance. Because what was essential in life, our relationship, became increasingly stronger and increasingly consolidated with the birth and growth of our children.

Najni was always a good wife, a good mother, and a good educator for our children. Najni’s collaboration was fundamental so that, even living in a city like Coimbra, where there were practically no Indians, we could transmit the Indian culture, including the Gujarati language, to our children. I do not think that I am exaggerating when I say that it is a source of pride for us.



In these 6 photos, there is me, Najni, and our 4 children when they were still young. Photos taken in Coimbra.



Me and Najni, in a garden with the children, now older, and me and Najni in the next photo.



Now lonely, all I can do is remember my past and my past is one which started in Inhambane, where I learned the Gujarati language, first with my parents and family and then with certain other Gujarati families. In this field, it would be unfair if I did not mention the Mulgy family, namely, the brothers Dharamcy, Jugaldas and Liladar, who, without any monetary or other benefit, in their free hours, most often at night, taught Gujarati to the children of fellow compatriots. The Hindu Sarvajanik Sabha Association did the same, also most often with night classes and the sacrifice of some members of the Hindu community.

I also miss the good years that I spent in this Association, where above all, on the weekends, I had fun playing cards, carrom and ping-pong and listening to and learning live Indian music.

And in the “Mandir” (Temple) of the Sabha, where my mother was even one of the administrators for many years, I got to know our religion better.

I also miss the time that we spent in Coimbra, where, even Najni, as a result of the friendship that some neighbours gave to her, learned to do hand embroidery and a lot of traditional Portuguese food, such as chanfana and a variety of cakes.

Regarding me, I miss, from when I was still single, playing football with my colleagues, having fun at student parties, and the good atmosphere of the places that I attended.

Still regarding longing, with it, I remember my happy childhood and youth in Inhambane, the marble games in which marbles were hit against walls or used to dig small holes in the sand, the games of hide-and-seek, not to mention ping-pong (table tennis) and card games. I also recall, with nostalgia, my childhood when I was a contributor to the children’s page that the newspaper “Notícias” published on Sundays. In the literary competitions that this Lourenço Marques newspaper held, I even, on a few occasions, won prizes, which were books on general knowledge.

I also miss the time when I performed military duties together with civil duties in Vila Coutinho, where, on the street where I lived, there was a club where I would spend a few spare hours playing cards or ping-pong with Portuguese people who lived nearby and with whom I created bonds of friendship. At this club, on weekends, I also played the lottery, and my brother Champaclal, who was the manager of a banking institution that existed there, with his wife, kept my wife and I company.

Going back to talking about the nostalgia of the episodes that I experienced when I worked as a gynaecologist in Coimbra, I still remember that, for some years on Saturdays, I travelled, often accompanied by family, to give lectures on topics about Family Planning in several cities in the central area of the country. More than once, I travelled, in my own vehicle, to cities such as Figueira da Foz, Viseu, Guarda, Lamego, Castelo Branco, Aveiro, etc., where, the Director of the Centro de Saúde de Celas, at the time Dr. Veiga Vieira, as well as some doctors with other specialisations and employees of the Centro de Saúde de Celas, were present.



In fact, as a corollary of this work of mine, the Portuguese State appointed me to represent our country in Morocco, in 1980, in a complete Family Planning course with practical and theoretical classes, in Rabat, the capital of Morocco, the country where I stayed for 3 consecutive weeks and where, in addition to meeting colleagues from neighbouring countries who were also present, I had the opportunity to travel to other cities, such as Marrakesh and Constantinople and even villages, where I got in touch with the residents to better practise this course.

I remember that, as a gynaecologist, at the request of certain laboratories of pharmaceutical products, I was one of the first (me and some colleagues from my department) to carry out the testing of some contraceptive pills that were provided free of charge to previously selected patients of ours. The same happened with contraceptive intrauterine devices, the so-called IUDs, which at the time were made of copper or hormones. Even excluding practice sessions, I am not exaggerating when I say that, throughout my life as a gynaecologist, I have inserted more than three thousand intrauterine devices. Regarding pills, I witnessed some funny episodes in which ladies forgot that the intake had to be daily and got pregnant or had haemorrhages (metrorrhagias) and I even know of a rare case, in which, instead of the patient attending her consultation, it was her partner who attended it...

Another occurrence that I remember is from when I was already in the final year of my Medicine course and Coimbra received a visit from surgeon Cristian Barnard who, in South Africa, had been the first in the world to perform a heart transplant. He was a world famous doctor, which is why some of my colleagues and I, taking advantage of his visit to the university buildings, including the famous "Torre da Cabra", or clock tower, and the Hall of Doctorates of Full Professors, asked him for an autograph, which, in my case, was registered on the wide yellow fifth-year ribbon of my university folder. To my surprise and that of my colleagues, the next day, the then-famous Flama magazine published this event, placing, on the cover of the magazine, the photograph of our meeting with Dr. Barnard.



Cover of Flama magazine, where I appear, in the company of some colleagues, with Dr. Barnard.



I could have continued to perform my duties as a gynaecologist of the Portuguese State until I was 70 years old, but unfortunately, the negative progression of my wife's illness "forced" me to ask for my retirement when I reached the age of 65. Professionally, it was not easy to leave Coimbra, where I had a private practice in the zone of Celas, to where, at the insistence of my patients, me and my wife, who was my assistant at the clinic, were sometimes "forced" to travel. But her illness continued to worsen and I really had to suspend all of my activity as a gynaecologist.

Today, being an octogenarian, I live solely on my retirement salary and as you know, "age doesn't forgive". As the years go by and as I get older, my own health is deteriorating. In this world, the percentage of people who celebrate their own centenary or hundredth birthday is still small. And I have a sense of this reality. Even though there are "ups" and "downs", I do not regret the life that I have lived until now.

When I leave this world, I will take with me the consolation of having been born in the womb of a wonderful family, having had a father and a mother of whom I am very proud and who raised me with love and affection, and having been a brother to well-educated and friendly people.

My parents were humble people, but rich in virtues, and I recognise the sacrifice and the commitment that they made to make their children happy. They spent a lot of blood, sweat and tears to get me to where I am in life.

It was following their example that my wife and I raised our children; we taught them what we learned from our parents: to respect our origins, the Hindu religion, our mother tongue (Gujarati), our traditions, pride for our entire culture. That is why I say with pleasure that the 4 children we had are all good children and always friends with their parents.

Since I am talking, or rather, writing about our children, I will mention, for those who do not know them, that Najni and I became parents to 4 children and that the age difference between the eldest, the only male, and the youngest is around 10 years. Until they reached adulthood and got married, they all lived with us in a pleasant family environment and all of them, thanks to God, completed a university degree in Coimbra.

The eldest son, whom we named Micul, graduated in Pharmacy, is married to a lady called Dhwinkal, and is currently the father of 2 children (a daughter called Urvi who is older than her brother called Mehul). Of the 3 daughters that we had, the eldest graduated in Medicine, with the specialisation of family medicine. We named her Hema. Her husband is also a doctor, with the specialisation of pneumology. Hema is the mother of two daughters, Khea and Hetal. Our second daughter completed a degree in Law and currently works as a lawyer. Her name is Sadna. Sadna's husband is dedicated to the field of commerce and is called Dinesh. Sadna is the mother of 3 children (one boy and two girls; the boy is the eldest child and is called Neel and his sisters are called Maya and Vinita). Our youngest daughter, like her brother, completed a degree in Pharmacy and also completed her doctorate and is connected to the Pharmaceutical Industry. This one's name is Jalmira and she married a civil engineer, whose name is Febin. Jalmira also has 2 children, a boy and a girl; the boy is called Jhit and the girl is called Neha.



All 4 of our children are doing relatively well in life and when young, as students, had good grades and never failed. I would also like to add that all of the nine grandchildren that I have are very good students, with relatively high grades or classifications, and that to this day, none of them have given me or my children the displeasure of failing in any subject or school year.

Throughout my life, I have had some unusual experiences, such as the one of me liking domestic animals. Back when I attended primary school, I “forced” my parents to accept, from their friends, a small, furry, white dog, which I began to dedicate myself to, and on the second day, I wanted to build him a “kennel” with bricks and stones that we had in the backyard of the house. However, on the 3rd day, when testing the solidity of this “kennel”, I climbed on top of it and fell, fracturing a bone in my left hand, and the truth is that the day after this fall, the dog “disappeared” from the house, although I suspected that my parents thought it best to “return” the gift and I had to heal the fracture with bandages and well-justified “scoldings”.

Another funny episode happened on one of the first trips I took, after my marriage, with Najni and our 2 first children, to India. In Mumbai (Bombay), I was staying at my in-laws' house, where, like in many Indian homes, people had the habit of taking their shoes off at the entrance of the house. One day, we had a plane trip scheduled for Diu and we had to leave at dawn. Before daybreak, before taking the taxi to the airport, in a “hurry” and in the darkness, I put on my shoes and only when we arrived at the airport did I see that I had my shoe on one foot, but on the other foot, I had worn a shoe belonging to my brother-in-law's eldest son, who wore the same size as me. Only I know the embarrassment that I felt. Upon arriving in Diu, one of the first things that I did was go to a store and buy new shoes...

I only travelled to Diu a few times, but one of the times was when, in the 70s, us, the brothers resident in Portugal and also my sister Pramila, who lived in Inhambane, convened in Diu to do “Sapta” there, that is, a religious ceremony for the peace of the souls of our parents. The photo in which I appear wearing a “Pagdi” (traditional hat) was taken at that time. It was a short time after I had a “bypass” operation on my heart due to failure of the coronary arteries.



Photograph taken of Najni and I, in Diu, when we went there to do “Sapta”.



This photo was taken in Mumbai. Najni is next to her sister called Gunvanti, who is holding one of our daughters in her arms. In the photo, you can also see Najni's mother, accompanied by some ladies and children, including our children.

Another time we were there, so were my sister and my brother-in-law, that is, my sister's husband, and the following photo is a memory of that meeting. My youngest daughter, Jalmira, also appears in the photo.



In the photo above, there is me, Najni, my sister Pramila, my brother-in-law Mr. Sacarlal and Jalmira. Photo taken in India, to where my sister and brother-in-law had also travelled. In the photo below, there is me, Najni and our 4 children. It was taken in Diu.



Photos taken in the famous “Bootghar” garden in Mumbai, with me, Najni and our 4 children.

Another episode from my life that I remember happened in Coimbra: on a Saturday morning, I was alerted by a neighbour that my car, which I had parked the day before on our street, Nicolau Chanterenne, near the entrance to our house, was very damaged at the rear. Whoever caused the accident had crashed his car into mine and had fled. This happened on the Friday night before the Saturday. On Saturdays, all repair workshops in Coimbra were closed, except for one, where I handed mine over for repair. Luckily or thanks to God, the person who damaged mine also went there to deliver his for repair, and that is how I discovered the person responsible for the accident who had to pay the expenses.

Earlier, when I wrote about my children, I briefly explained that there are 4 and I spoke about the studies and profession of each of them. I will just add that the 4 children, without exception, have always been good friends with their parents and dedicated to their family. All of them have qualities that, for me, are a source of pride, and given the solidity that they had in their upbringing, I have faith that they will always continue in this way.



In the first photo at the top is my son Micul and his wife, Dhwinkal. In the second photo at the top, there is my daughter Hema with her husband, Dr. Dhiren. In the first photo at the bottom, there is my daughter Sadna with her husband, Mr. Dinesh, and in the last photo, there is my daughter Jalmira with her husband, Eng. Febin.



On the day I turned 83 years old, my 4 children, with their respective partners, in a garden on the outskirts of Lisbon.



In this photo are all 9 of my grandchildren during lunch at my house.

Speaking of other close family members, besides my parents, who for me, in this earthly life, represented God transformed into two admirable human beings, it would be unfair not to mention my siblings. My parents had 9 children, two of whom died during childhood because the diseases that caused their deaths were difficult to cure at that time. A sister named Shakuntala, who was born about 3 years after me, died from whooping cough, and a brother called Krisnucumar, who was born about 6 years after me, died like his sister, also very young, in Inhambane, after contracting a severe form of Malaria.



Of the remaining 7, another 3 died as adults. My eldest brother, who was born in 1931, died with around 70 years of age, and throughout his life there were occasions in which he assumed, as far as I am concerned, the responsibility of a true guardian, performing duties for me like a true “father”. This brother was called Pranalal, even though he was known as Pratapbhai. His widow, who currently has difficulty moving around, is fortunately still alive and her name is Nirmala.

Another brother, also older than me as he was born around 1 year and 8 months before me and who is unfortunately also deceased, accompanied me in my phase of growth, that is, my childhood and adolescence. He had a personality full of courage and an adventurous spirit. That is why he was still a teenager when he left Inhambane to go to Quelimane to work in the commercial sector on the outskirts of this city. He stayed there for some years. This brother's name is Jasantilal, who, in 1961, travelled with our parents and other relatives to Diu, where he met his future wife, that is, my sister-in-law with whom he got married. A few years later, this brother of mine owned a small commercial store in Inhambane, where, for futile reasons, Samora Machel's government expelled him from Mozambique to Portugal without the right to even take luggage. Even before the expulsion, he was kept in preventive detention in Inhambane for several days. This brother of mine was the father of 7 children. In Portugal, he managed to overcome his difficulties, until he died due to a sudden heart attack in 2020. His widow, that is, my sister-in-law, is called Tarulata (Bhabhi) and is about 3 years younger than my brother.

Another brother who died as an adult was called Indracumar, an intelligent brother who, after completing the Commercial course in Technical School, had been a good bank employee in Mozambique. But due to the “Overseas War”, he had to be incorporated into the army and was stationed in the North of Mozambique, in a war zone so heated that it made him contract a mental illness which largely contributed to his death. Due to his state of health, this brother of mine never got married and died still single.

Of the 9 siblings, only 4 are currently alive: besides me, still alive is my only sister, who is about 16 months younger than me and whose name is Pramila. This sister was always a dedicated daughter to my parents, and to us, her brothers, a good sister. It was this sister who, shortly after her marriage, travelled accompanied by her husband, who was called Sacarlal, together with our parents and 3 brothers, to Diu in 1961. She had 5 children, two of whom are twins. When she was still relatively young, she became a widow, but fought all of her setbacks and managed to get all of her children to complete higher education. Another misfortune that she had in life was that her eldest son also died, as happened with his father, also young in age, after having been married and having children.

Of my two remaining living brothers, the one who I already mentioned is around 4 years and a half younger than me, I remind you, has the name of Champaclal. He, after finishing the Commercial course in Technical School, became a brilliant bank employee. This brother of mine is the one who got religiously married on the same day as I did. His wife, that is, my sister-in-law, is called Hasmukhi. They are the parents of 3 daughters and this brother of mine is also already retired. At a very young age, he became involved with Indian culture and music, having even been one of the founders of the musical group “Stars”, and for many years now, on Sundays in Lisbon, he gives a programme about Indian culture and music on Radio Orbital. This programme is very popular, especially among Gujaratis, and has the



name “Swagatam”. The daughters of this brother have also started their families and have stable lives.

Lastly, I will remind you of the name of, among the living, my youngest brother: he is called Satendra. As I also mentioned before, he is about 11 and a half years younger than me. This brother of mine also took the Commercial course and was also a distinguished bank employee, having retired at the appropriate age. His wife's name is Malti and they have 2 children who are currently already married and parents themselves, also doing well in life.

Right at the beginning of the description of this summary of my biography, I wrote that the registration of my name at the Inhambane Registry Office had been done in the presence of witnesses, before Mr. Max, who fulfilled this duty. This Mr. Max also suffered from Vitiligo and his friends, in a joking tone, sometimes also called him “Matocolo”. However, a small distraction meant that I was only registered with one name. As everyone knew each other, they stayed conversing in friendly chatter, and at the end, everyone signed the document and left without adding my surname. Similar distraction or confusion also happened with other Hindus born in the Province of Mozambique. And this mistake contributed to those who only had one name not managing to obtain a Covid-19 vaccination certificate. This was so evident during the Pandemic that even TVI decided to have an interview with me, sending reporter D. Luísa Alagoa to my house, who came with her team. This interview, I believe, greatly contributed to dispelling bureaucratic doubts. To add to the conversation, TVI also heard the opinion of Dr. Kiran H. Parmanande, a cardiologist from our community, who at the time lived in the Azores, but who had been a victim, in the place where he was born, of the same mistakes that happened to me.

The 5 photos that follow are part of the interview with me at my house in Santo António dos Cavaleiros, by the TVI team led by D. Luísa Alagoa, during the Pandemic caused by Covid-19.







And thus, I conclude the summarised account of my life and some episodes experienced by me, which I decided to publish at the request of the Vanza-Darji Community in London. I thank them for this request, particularly Mr. Paresh Amarchande, who requested this biography from me.

I just regret not being able to show many photographs taken during my childhood in Inhambane because they were left at my parents' house, and, after my departure from the Land of Good People and their passing, I lost “track” of them.

Thank you very much for your patience and the time that you spent reading this.

Hasmuklal Mulchande.

(Translated from Portuguese to English by Diya Dipac)