

A classic remembered

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M.N. Srinivas' *The Remembered Village* has been translated to Kannada

Nenapina Halli

A Kannada translation of M.N. Srinivas'

The Remembered Village

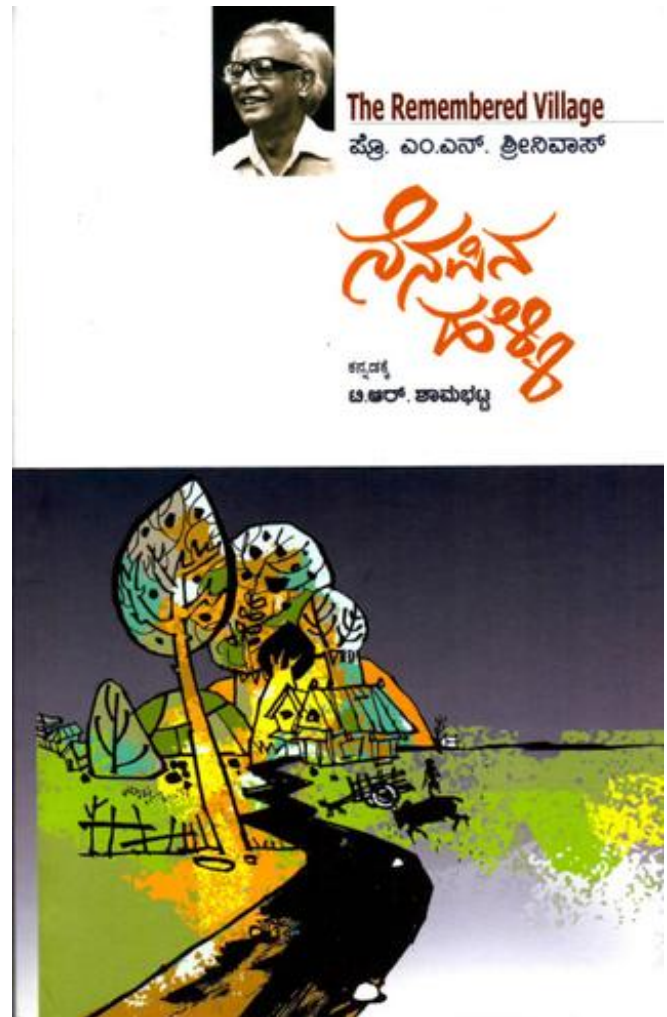
Translated by T.R. Shama Bhat, IBH, Rs. 450

The book, *The Remembered Village*, is the result of an extensive fieldwork undertaken by one of the distinguished sociologists of our times, Professor M.N. Srinivas. In the early pages of the book, a few interesting details about the making of the book are revealed. In 1970, Srinivas revisits Oxford to complete his monograph, on a fatal day, (24 April 1970), a fire is started by arsonists in which his three copies of the draft monograph are reduced to ashes. Subsequently, after being motivated by Professor Sol Tax (who has also written an introduction to the book), Srinivas recreates his work relying entirely on his memory. Hence the book is aptly named – *The Remembered Village* and also there is an acknowledgment of

the part played by the arsonists in the making of this book of 'memory'. The book was first published in 1976. In 2015, after 39 years of its first publication, Professor T.R. Shama Bhat, one of the eminent teachers of Sociology, has excellently translated it into Kannada.

Between the time Srinivas undertook his field work (1948) and the publication of the present translated work in Kannada, *Nenapina Halli* (2015), 67 years have passed. There have been many upheavals in rural India, particularly in the old Mysore village, Rampura. There is a vast difference between the just ended colonial ruled village then and the democratically elected *panchayat* led village now. There have been marked changes in the social, political and economic conditions of the people in the village now. In spite of all these, if the book, *Nenapina Halli*, haunts us after reading it and persuades us to read it again and again, there are innumerable well found reasons for that.

This unique sociological book in Kannada is also historically important. The study, which appears to have been undertaken in a structuralist framework, establishes the importance of fieldwork in the sociological understanding of a village. Though Srinivas cites the name of Max Weber once, and quiet often relates caste issues to his own well discussed concept - *Sanskritization*, he never mentions anything about the theoretical framework he uses in this study. He also makes a passing remark on the special difficulties faced by a fieldwork sociologist like him if he becomes a part of his own study. The study is replete with the social, economic and political issues of the people in Rampura. What is most valuable about the book is its translation in Kannada. The access to the sociological subtleties borne



out of serious fieldwork to a Kannada reader is achieved by exemplary translation of Shama Bhat. It might not be just a coincidence that the sociological work - *Nenapina Halli* resembles Raja Rao's fictional work - *Kanthapura*. Fictional potentialities of the sociological data collected during the fieldwork are fully put to 'creative' use in *Nenapina Halli*. It is to be noted that Srinivas' Rampura exists only in memory. Thus the 'remembered' village, Rampura, is an 'imagined' village like Kanthapura. Murthy in *Kanthapura* and Srinivas in *Nenapina Halli* explore the communities within the village through their memories. The similarities between the two villages – Kanthapura and Rampura, offer a good example for the proximity between creative and sociological writing. Creative writing has to be sociological and *vice versa*.

The eagerness and enthusiasm to transfer the sociological and creative spirit of Srinivas to Kannada is evident in every page of the book. To achieve this, Shama Bhat makes use of the linguistic techniques similar to the ones used by Raja Rao in *Kanthapura*. Shama Bhat, while being faithful to the semantics of the original, deviates markedly at every level of discourse to make it more intelligible to the readers. At the level of lexis, for instance, Shama Bhat does not translate verbatim from the original. He uses such words which can colloquially gel. For a word like 'wandered', Shama Bhat chooses 'andeleyuttiddaru' instead of usual 'alitha iddaru'; the word 'pure' referring to 'clean cloth', has become – 'shubra'; 'impertinence' and 'arrogance' have become 'kobbu' and 'bejavabdari'; 'cheating' becomes 'panganaama'; 'fork' is 'biruku'; Srinivas always uses 'rice' instead of 'paddy', but Shama Bhat uses 'bhattha' throughout the book; 'caustically interpreted' as 'anukUlasindhu emba tatva' 'sophisticated son-in-law' is 'najUkayya aLiya'. Similarly, at the syntactic level, the semantic component is given more importance, for example - "He was also one of those men who talked freely to women though he did not go as far as Sannu" is translated as – "Hengasara jathe langu lagaamillade mathanaaduvvara paiki avanU obbanaagidda. Adare sannuvina hAge mUrU bittavananthe varthisuttiralilla bidi."(p.456). Sometimes, Shama Bhat also makes a few semantic changes. An example – "The big patron attracted clients as a magnet attracted iron filings"(p.241) in English runs thus in Kannada:- "pOshaka doddakuLavagiddare, bellakke iruve muttuvanthe, aashritharu bhaari sankhyeyalli aathaninda aakarshitargutthiddaru" (p.344). The list of such linguistic novelties in the book is too long.

Nenapina Halli has four introductions, besides a preface of M.N. Srinivas and a detailed glossary at the end of the book. They are valuable in the understanding of the niceties of the book.

The book borne out of Kannada sensibility offers an exceptional experience of reading a wonderful sociological document and a good novel simultaneously.