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Translation: Challenges and Solutions
Premchand Fellowship to Mr.Santhan Ayathurai, Eminent Sri Lankan Writer

Sahitya Akademi organized a Panel Discussion on "Translation: Challenges and Solutions" at Rabindra Bhavan Lawns on 30 January 2019. Sri Anupam Tiwari, Editor (Hindi), coordinated the programme. In the inaugural session Dr. K.S. Rao, Secretary, Sahitya Akademi, delivered the welcome address, in which he welcomed Smt. Asha Devi, eminent Kannada scholar and translator, Mr. Santhan Ayathurai, eminent Sri Lankan Writer and recipient of Premchand Fellowship for the year 2017, Prof. Chandrasekhar Kambar, President, and Sri Madhav Kaushik, the Vice-President of the Akademi, the panelists and the audience. Dr. Rao in his welcome address said that India has always been a multilingual society with a large number of languages and translational activity has always been a constant process in an Indian literary milieu. Smt. Asha Devi began her keynote address quoting a Bhakta Poet: "God give me the talent and strength to translate your words into silence and to communicate it to everyone." She said that challenges specific to the art of translation has many dimensions to it. Some are built in; some are eternal, some are construed for various reasons and some somehow emerge through socio political or ideological conflicts. Prof. Chandrasekhar Kambar, President, Sahitya Akademi, in his presidential address said that he felt proud to be part of the Indian literary tradition which encompasses a huge corpus of works both in Indian languages and English. He said that the British gave us English; no doubt the reading of English literature has brought about many changes in forms, modes and sensibilities in Indian English writing as well in writing in various Indian languages. After the presidential address Prof. Chandrasekhar Kambar conferred the Premchand Fellowship 2017 on Mr.Santhan Ayathurai, eminent Sri Lankan writer. Dr. K.S. Rao read out the citation of the Fellowship. Sri Santhan Ayathurai in his acceptance speech said he was overwhelmed by receiving the meritorious Fellowship awarded in the name of a literary genius, Munshi Premchand. He said Premchand championed himself as a writer of the people. He wrote about the ordinary people. He was one of the pioneers of realism not only in the Indian literature but also in the world literature as well. Sri Madhav Kaushik, Vice President, Sahitya Akademi, congratulated Sri Santhan Ayathurai, the Sri Lankan writer, for being the recipient of Premchand Fellowship for the year 2017. In his concluding remarks he hoped that Mr.Ayathurai functioned as a Cultural Ambassador for both the countries. About the just concluded inaugural session, Sri Kaushik further said that if translation would not have been there in the world, human civilization could not be at this stage. Translators are the selfless, sincere servants of language and literature. Madhav Kaushik further said that the translators have not got their due till now. But the coming 100 years will be dominated by the translators. Challenges will be there but courage will not diminish. he panel discussion started with a welcome note by the moderator Sri Mahendra Kumar Mishra, Hindi author and Odia translator. He welcomed the discussants by referring them as Pind Brahmand. He said that translation is not of a language but of a culture, in which the author perceived his own culture. Smt. Mini Krishnan, Consultant Editor-Translations,

OUP, and columnist suggested that collaboration is important between authors, translators, reviewers and publishers. She also said that in a rush to provide the new and global which has everything, we are missing out on fiction of older writers. Uma Vasuki, Tamil poet, fiction writer and translator and the recipient of Sahitya Akademi Translation Prize, said that the struggles of the translator, ensuring no damage to the soul of the original work and offering it in the language of being translated are truly overwhelming. Sri Alok Gupta, an eminent writer and translator in Hindi and Gujarati, said that a translation should be reviewed by another translator or by an institution for the literary merit of the work. Cultural and lyrical translations pose challenges as the translator's vocabulary lacks the details. Subhash Neerav, Hindi poet, fiction writer, editor and translates from Punjabi to Hindi and vice versa. Hed found that only the very well known writers were getting translated. So he took it as a challenge and discovered the lesser known but wonderful writers in Punjabi language and introduced them to the world through his translation. Prakash Bhatambrekar, Marathi writer and translator, said that in the modern scenario where the digital world has posed a threat to all the regional languages it has also affected the translations. The second big challenge is of readers—students, youth, teachers no one has the time to read out of syllabus material. O.P. Jha, well-known translator both in English and Hindi, said that the translator should visualize the images while translating. The cultural distance, the linguistic distances, geographical distances and technological advancement affect the translation. Gauri Shankar Raina, playwright, theatre director, T.V. producer and translator, said that translation from Kashmiri to Hindi and English faces a lot of challenges as the translation of many Kashmiri words is not available in other languages. There are only a few translators from Kashmiri to Hindi. Puranchand Tandon, critic, editor and translator, said that for literary translations there is no training, workshops discussion or debate. Sahitya Akademi and other institutions will have to find some ways to correct this. Literary translations do not have commercial demand and literary translators will be motivated only when they get a market. Alok Gupta, an eminent writer and translator in Hindi and Gujarati, spoke about translation from Gujarati to Hindi and vice versa. He said that the shortcomings of the translations were visible only to a person who himself is a translator. Janaki Prasad (1950) Well known critic, fiction writer, editor and translator, said that only translation can save the literary and cultural diversity of secular India. As a citizen of this secular country if he could contribute a single drop in the form of translation in this vast ocean it will be his privilege. Secretary Sahitya Akademi, Dr. K. Sreenivasarao proposed a vote of thanks, saying that shortage of good translations is mainly because of the shortage of good translators. He informed that sixty percent of Sahitya Akademi's award-winning books are yet to be translated. He urged good translators to come forward and join the mission.



(K. Sreenivasarao)