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# Srinivas - man to be remembered

Our Bangalore Bureau

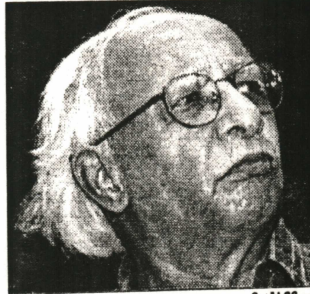
30 NOVEMBER

PROF M N Srinivas, who passed away early Tuesday morning, did path-breaking work in Indian sociology. He was a world renowned social anthropologist and an international authority on Indian society, in particular the caste system.

Among the numerous books and papers he wrote on these and related subjects is the *Remembered Village*, which has become a classic of sociological literature. Indeed, he wrote this book from memory and from whatever was left of the papers that survived a fire that burnt down his office at Stanford during 1970-71 (where he was visiting at that time).

His most recent works included a collection of essays titled *Indian Society through Personal Writings* and an edited volume on *Caste: Its 20th Century Avatar*.

Weeks before his death, Prof Srinivas, who was the J R D Tata visiting professor at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), spoke at the institute on 'Obituary on caste as a system', arguing that the old economic and social relationships that were characteristic of the caste system had broken down, but caste itself had survived as a means for secur-



ing access to resources of different kinds.

Prof Srinivas was not only an outstanding social scientist, but was also a sensitive human being. His scholarship was deep, and his appreciation of what shaped society included religion and science and technology as well. Despite his scholarship, he expressed his ideas in a simple, direct, forceful and very readable style.

He was one of the key authors of the Bangalore Declaration on Information Technology for Developing Societies, adopted in November 1998 at a seminar on the global village. At the time of his death, he was busy helping to organise a meeting at NIAS on 'Equity, Diversity and Information Technology'.

Prof Srinivas was a great institution-builder.

He founded the discipline of social anthropology in India, started departments on the subject at Baroda and Delhi, and was a co-founder of the Institute of Social and Economic Change (Isec) in Bangalore.

Before accepting the J R D Tata Professorship at NIAS, he had held a string of distinguished positions in India and abroad.

These included the posts of joint director at Isec, Professor of Sociology at the universities of Delhi and Baroda, and visiting positions at many famous overseas universities including Oxford, Cambridge, Stanford, Cornell and Canberra. After completing his PhD from Bombay University and D Phil from Oxford, he spent three years as a lecturer in Indian Sociology at Oxford.

Prof Srinivas has been widely honoured for his work within the country and abroad.

He was a fellow of the British Academy, Honorary Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute and Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was awarded the Padmabhushan and the T H Huxley Memorial Medal of the Royal Anthropological Institute in 1976 and the Kannada Rajyotsava Award in 1996.