



Big little
Book
award

Nagaraj Shetty

Author (Kannada)



Shortlist 2018

"Today, authors are striving to understand from the child's viewpoint, their environment, and their requirement."

How did you become a children's author?

It happens. I started as a short-story writer for adults. The first time when my poem 'Navilu Gari' for children won an award in Sudha, I felt encouraged. By then my wife also encouraged and inspired me to write more for children and from then on it has been more writing for children. Another treasured moment was when, notable author, Shivram Karanth, wrote his first preface for 'Navilu Gari'. He also happened to mention that after Rajarathnam, I haven't seen such poems like in 'NaviluGari' being written for children. This was a feather in my cap and further encouraged me to write and indulge in Kannada children's literature.

Do you feel that there has been a shift in Kannada children's literature over the last few decades?

Definitely. In the last decade, we have writing that is much closer to the child's language. This is a positive shift from older styles. Today, authors are striving to understand from the

child's viewpoint, their environment, and their requirement. There is a constant upgrading in their style, content. Each day they are enlarging their canvas in writing for children by including new type of narration, boldly including themes on science, technology and other aspects into stories.

What has been your most treasured experience in your writing journey?

In my growing up years, my grandfather had several stories to tell us. From insects, to the world of nature, snakes to scorpions. He often wove these from his keen observation of nature. Later in my life, I was able to grasp the magic in nature and recast his stories and combine my experiences with nature in the form of stories and poems. This experience of bringing to life lived experiences with magic, has been very satisfying in my writing life.

Who are your favourite authors and why?

All stalwarts in the world of literature have had an impact on me, rather all of us. In today's age, I must mention Srinivas Udupa, H S Venkateshmurthy, N D'souza, Nirmala Surathkal, Govinda Reddy, Biligiri Krishna Murthy, Vijaya Sri and many more such writings I enjoy. Their way of narration is new. The young generation is demanding new stories and their necessities are becoming fresh possibilities for us authors.

According to you, what role does an award play in promoting children's literature?

Awards have an impact in a good way, often. It pushes and encourages the author to write more. Awards in a way inspire, after I won my first Kannada Bala Sahitya Academy award, along with me several other of my friends were motivated to write for children.

Have your books been translated into other Indian languages?

Karadi Rasayana is being translated into Hindi and is likely to be published mid-2019. This is being done by Padma Binani Foundation. A few of my short stories have been translated to Hindi and Marathi.

How can we encourage young authors to write for children?

A few ways I can think of is by consistent orientation to the world of children's literature. Exposure to writing of other authors/ books of different countries. We can enable and equip authors through workshops and by creating a place to discuss different genre.

