

R. K. Narayan's The Guide- Realistic Portrayal of Indian Society

Kailas Vijayrao Karnewar*

M. A., NET

Abstract – R. K. Narayan, a renowned novelist wrote many novels and short stories but the novel The Guide brought him name and fame. In this novel he used realistic technique to depict different traditions, ritual, blind faithfulness of Indian people about religious aspect and socio-economic condition of then India, through the characters like Raju, Rosie and Marco. He strikingly described the problems which are faced by Indian people, deteriorating family relations, and also he reveals how greed of money, sex, love resulted in ultimate demises. Therefore basic aim of this paper is to study religious, cultural nature of Indian society and how modernization adversely affects Indian family relations and other different problems.

Keywords – Realistic, India, The Guide, religious Family Relations, Customs, Socio-Economic

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INTRODUCTION

One of the eminent novelists, famous story writer Rasipuram Krishnaswami Ayyar Narayanaswami, or R. K. Narayan was born on October 10, 1906 Chennai. After completion of bachelor degree from the University of Mysore R. K. Narayan went to the United States in 1956 at the invitation of the Rockefeller Foundation. He started to write the short stories in newspaper "The Hindu" in this way his literary career begin.

R. K. Narayan published 14 novels, over 200 short stories, a memoir, 2 travel books, innumerable essays, and 2 plays. Right from His 1st novel Swami and Friends (1935) to His last published work was Grandmother's Tale (1992), which in many ways reinforced the concerns and motifs of his writing in his long career—themes like exile and return, education (in the widest sense of the term), woman and her status in the society, myths and the ancient Indian past, tradition and modernity, Malgudi and its culture, appearance and reality, the family (Ramanan, 2014). This earns him name and fame. He won many awards like Sahitya Academy Award in 1958, the Padma Bhushan in 1964, and the AC Benson Medal by the Royal Society of Literature in 1980, besides the Padma Vibhushan in 2000. So R. K. Narayan is identified as the most distinguished Indian novelists writing in English.

The Guide was the first novel written in English which won R.K. Narayan not only Sahitya Akademi Award in 1960 but also several other awards. The book was adapted into both a movie (1965) and a

play of the same name (1968) (Osborne-Bartucca, 2019). In the Guide R. K. Narayan depicted the protagonist journey from Railway Raju to Saint Raju. While describing this journey we come to know different things facet of Indian life especially south Indian like religious nature of Indian, urban superiority versus pastoral simplicity, mixing of eastern and western culture, human emotions like love greed for money, infidelity. Though his art form is western, his theme, atmosphere, situations and scenes are truly Indian (Ataullah, 2010)

2. RELIGIOUS NATURE OF INDIAN PEOPLE

According to William Walsh (1979), "The religious sense of Indian myth is a part of Narayan's grip of reality of his particular view of human life and his individual way of placing and ordering human feeling and experience. What one can say about Narayan without qualification is that he embodies the pure spirit of Hinduism." Indian people are truly religious people. R.K. Narayan beautifully exposes their religious nature. First Rosie, a heroin of this novel, belonging to family traditionally dedicated to temples as dancer her mother, grandmother and before her, her mother even as a young girl she danced in her village as "Devdasis", (Garg, 2015) which is also a religious ritual in India.

The blind faith of Indian society on Sadhus and religious men is depicted in their acceptance of Raju as a swami however, by becoming a sadhu and accepting traditional belief in sacrifice, self-

discipline and purification, he brings harmony and order to his spiritual life (Vanathi, 2017).

After being released from jail, instead of going to his village (Malgudi), he preferred to stay in the temple near the river Sarayu near Mangala village. The religious people of Mangala village believe in him gradually considering him as a great sadhu. He decides to fast for 11 days in order to please the god of the village, not to let them down. At the end he made sacrifice to save the life of villagers. Fasting, superstition about rain, blind faith on god and on Sadhu, moksha all this religious aspect and religious nature of Indian people is charmingly described by R. K. Narayan. V. S. Naipaul aptly says that "Narayan's novels are ... religious books ... and intensely Hindu (Vanathi, 2017).

3. PROBLEMS OF INDIAN SOCIETY

Narayan's novels represent a middleclass section of Indian society where life is steeped in consciousness (Sarkar, 2011). India is a totally dependent on agriculture. In novel "The Guide" R. K. Narayan describes the problem of country. Dependent on agriculture, agriculture depends on monsoon. If monsoon is not sufficient then this worsens the condition of agriculture leading to the unavoidable famine, deficiency of water, vanishing cattle, hoarding by traders, unrests, penance, pujas and sacrifices to please the god of rain.

From Rosie we come to know that in modern India rituals like "Devdasis" still exist today. She marries with Marco only to set herself free from that stratum of Indian society. Raju's mother wanted that Raju should marry her brother's daughter in a traditional manner. Raju's father wanted that Raju should run his shop near railway station. Rosie once again wanted to do carrier in dancing but her husband refused to do so. This indicates that Indian people are quite sticking to their old beliefs they don't accept the new beliefs very early compare to other people.

4. FAMILY RELATIONSHIP

Rosie is the daughter of a dancer and therefore belongs to a lower caste. She did not marry Marco out of love but because of his social status. Though she likes dancing, she sets it apart when wedded to Marco because he does not like. Their marriage is not very satisfying and Rosie begins to have an affair with Raju. When Marco finds out, he leaves her behind and went to Madras. For this situation both are equally responsible. The disharmony between husband and wife is caused by their difference in the interest at the time of marriage she was aware of that fact Marco did not like dancing at that time she decided to set it apart. And on other part it is duty of every husband to fulfill all the wishes of wife but Marco fails to fulfill the wishes so she takes the help of Raju. A woman was considered and treated as an inferior thing in a male controlling culture. She was

treated as a slave; On the contrary the men had every type of liberty (Kailas Vijayrao Karnewar, 2019). Due to this reason husband –wife relation is deteriorating.

Narayan treats the mother and child relationship with great sensitivity and feeling. A mother is generally very affectionate and self-effacing and her children. Again, it is the child who is seen defying the piety of this relationship. A grown-up child becomes a source of great mental uneasiness to his or her mother (Rai, 2016).

When Rosie entered in the life of Raju the family life of Raju got disturbed. She finds it impossible for herself to put up with the immoral living of her son with a tainted woman. The mother's attitude on husband wife relationship is systematically straight. She asks Rosie to return to her husband and fall at his feet (Dr. Kumar, 2017). This makes condition more worsen leading mother left behind her son Raju.

Beside all these facts R. K. Narayan also depicted in "The Guide" that the love, sex, money are important part of human life. These are the driving forces of society. The greed for, money, love, sex corrupts every human being that is why Raju was in jail for two years and Marco left Rosie alone.

5. CONCLUSION

R.K. Narayan's *The Guide* is a fine example of realistic portrayals of Indian scenario as this technique was used by in tragedy *King Lear* Shakespeare skillfully exposes the chaos, illness and turmoil of Lear's dominion with unadulterated realism of his art (Ramanan, 2014). With the same skill R. K. Narayan portrays the journey of different phases of Raju's life like Station food vendor, a tourist guide, a sentimental adultery, a manager of Rosie, a jailbird, martyred swami while portraying transformation of Raju from Railway Raju to spiritual awaken Raju Narayan put forward different religious, cultural, social, economic aspects of Indian society. He also focuses on deteriorating family relation, religious nature of Indian society, and different problems of Indian society like drought, blind faith on sadhu, superstitious nature of Indian people.

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Corresponding Author

Kailas Vijayrao Karnewar*

M. A., NET