
PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON CHILDREN IN R.K.NARAYAN NOVELS

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Abstract:

R.K.narayan is one of the most prominent in Indo – Anglian Literature during 20th Century he occupied the scene of Indian writing in English. Malgud, R.K.Narayan's most innovative creation, which is the scene of action of most of his novels and short stories. This study attempts an in-depth look into creation and delineation of child characters in R.K.Narayan's novels. The portrayal of child characters in R.K.Narayan's novels is generally incidental and subordinate. Still, R.K.Narayan presents them in various colors and hues and presents life – especially Indian life vis-a-vis children. This is an attempt to have a clean look into the treatment of individual of child characters in several prominent novels of R.K.narayan and to appreciate how artistically they are presented and derive the message they convey in the context of the present day Indian society. Balu in the Financial Expert and Raju in the Guide are instances of children affected by either parental disaffection or excessive pampering. So they become spoilt to children. The evil and immoral ways and means adopted by their parents cast their shadows on the impressionable minds of the children. As a result, they grow into crooked and stunted personalities. They nether neither elevates themselves nor provides their parents with any succor in their parents.

Keywords: Indo – Anglian Literature, subordinate, delineation, pampering,.etc

The rise and fall have been vividly delineated in the novel. The irony of the fate is that financial mountaineer comes back to the place from where he had started. Fate smiles on him and this man ascends the ladder of money but his slight mistakes lead his downfall. The empire of money shakes and finally crumbles down. It is clear from the title that this novel deals with greed, though it bears several ironic reverberations. In order to retain the full force of irony, the novelist mixes into the narrative element. But Narayan is very cautious in keeping himself within the boundary of probability so he succeeded in writing this novel.

Margayya was a man of money through and through, true to the adage attributed to him the financial expert. After his greed for money, it was his love of his son that predominated all his thoughts and actions.

R.K. Narayan's novel *The Financial Expert* has the locale of Malgudi situated near Madras, where facilities moved in the form of Banks, high schools, printing presses, tourist's home etc., is the town where industrialization has been begun. With the advancement of human knowledge, many mysterious things come into the light, as a result, the It is the novel of various facts of rural India...

The Financial Expert (1952) is a satire on the "modern desire for wealth"⁷ in society. It is an interesting story of a cunning business shark, who, without adequate corresponding ability, is over-confident to earn enormous wealth Margayya in *The Financial Expert* at the age of forty-two comes to the same realization. R.K. Dhawan remarks "Money alone is important in the world, everything will come to us naturally if we have money in our purse."⁷

Margayya is a middle-aged money lender. To help the simple, innocent villagers in getting loans from the Co-operative Bank he sets himself under the Banyan tree in front of the Bank in Malgudi. His strongest obsession is money, which is the railing passion of his life. In this pursuit of wealth Narayan's novel *The Financial Expert* is remarkable for a father-son relationship. Most probably in India, parents look for the birth of a male child than female. They believe that a son can save from 'Punnamanaraka' after their death. So the birth of male child signifies the perpetuation or prolongation of family. Sudhir Karkar very aptly remarks; "a number of myths and didactic passages repeatedly emphasize that begetting a son is one of man's highest duties and the only way he can discharge the debt he owes to his ancestors."⁹ Father-son relation is the central theme of the novel. Margayya and his wife Meenakshi married for a long time but have no children. After a long time, they are blessed with a male child. Their happiness has no end. Their attachment to the child is so precious.

But little did he realize that he was spoiling his son's his son's life beyond repair. In the name of providing his son with the best possible education, he made him a total stranger to any kind of learning. He never got any marks, he failed repeatedly in Matriculation and once and for all quit in utter disgust and defiance.

The attitude of Margayya's wife towards Balu is in sharp contrast with Margayya's. She was always far more balanced and mature in her approach to the boy than Margayya. Obviously, she endured what could not be cured. There were, of course, conflicts between the husband and the wife over their son, one supporting him while the other took him to the task. She realized quite early that Margayya pampered and spoiled the boy with his over-indulgence in him. But as his subdued and suppressed wife, she was able to do nothing about it. She was too weak and un-individualistic to influence and mend his son.

Finally, the mindless Balu succumbed to the manipulations of Dr. Pal, ruined his own life and brought about the inevitable disgraceful fall of his father. R.K. Narayan's fictional works are generally expositions of the laughable idiosyncrasies of human nature and the world; they are not essentially moral lessons that people can draw directly or discreetly. But 'The Financial Expert' is a glaring exception to this. It has a pertinent moral lesson to convey to its readers. It brings out the general way of the world that money corrupts and corrupts beyond redemption. Its corruptive influence is infectious and envelops related ones too. As Adi Sankaracharya observes in 'Bhaja Govindam' Man is harmful; it does not bring any solace or comfort. On account of money, there is a threat even from one's own sons. This is true everywhere in the world.

Margayya's love of money and his misplaced, misdirected obsession with his son lead him to utter degradation, downfall, and destruction. Throughout his life, on account of his greed for money, he remained worried and sad. During the times he was in wait, he was able to enjoy a hearty meal or a carefree walk through the streets. But when he was submerged in currency notes, he lost all peace of mind; he spoiled his health he ate little and hardly ever slept. He cheated others and he created himself. He spoiled his own life and that of his people especially his son. Margayya and Balu's lives explicate (by contra suggestion, of course) Sri Krishna's message in the Bhagavad Gita oneself by one's own self, by no means one should degrade oneself. One's own self is one's friend, one's own self is one's enemy.

As a traditionalist R.K. Narayan identifies and analyses the characters of common men. As a committed artist, he identifies himself with the humanities of his people. As a psychologist, he analyses the state of his characters and their behavior in a realistic manner. As an economist, he insists on the principles of Gandhiji. So he pasteurized his characters under the circumstances of Malgudi. *The Guide* (1958) was appreciated for the technical novelty in "depicting the ironies of modern Indian life"²⁴ as well as "Social tradition in which the comic and the sad are not sharply marked off one from the other."²⁵ *The Guide* is technically an advanced and a sociological study of an Indian village atmosphere. To produce an impression of suspense and anticipation in the reader, Narayan jumbled the present and past events in this novel.

R.K. Narayan's novel *The Guide* is his most polished work of fiction. It is one of the most acclaimed novels of R.K. Narayan which won him the coveted Sahitya Akademi Award treats a very humanistic subject in a most fascinating way. The theme is such that it provides little scope for delineation of child characters. Still, the character of the protagonist Raju is dealt with quite at some length. It provides ample insight into how one's childhood influences and also affects one's grown-up life. In a brief gap, R.K. Narayan still finds scope to make pertinent observations about childhood and its impact on one's adult life. He also comments on the educational system in general and of the times in particular.

Raju is the only child of his parents. His mother is a homebound, orthodox lady. She is limited to the world of her husband and son. She is a vigilant housewife. Raju's father has only unsound beliefs about education such as unless a child is not beaten up regularly he will not be set right. With such beliefs, he sends Raju to a street side teacher instead of a good school. The teacher beats him more than he teaches him.

Raju's mother is full of love and care for him when he is a child and later when he grows into a boy. Raju grows as a child under his mother loves to care and father's strict guardianship in the traditional atmosphere of Malgudi. He is seen all times looking, after his father's shop selling fruits, peppermint, tobacco, betel leaf, parched gram to the passerby on the Trunk Road. And his mother tells him stories in the evening before going to bed. One of her mother's objectives, apart from entertaining her little son, is to educate him in the sense of traditional culture and morality. The theme of such stories narrated by mothers and grandmothers at bedtime is characteristically Indian with their positive moral lessons. Like thousands of Indian village-boys, Raju's first lesson, therefore, takes place at home with his mother as the chief instructor. Raju's education is an interminable drudgery to him, a fruitless exercise for his father and a cause of pity for his mother.

Any child's mind is like a clean slate. It is pure and unpolluted. Freedom is its innate quality. But unfortunately, the child's mind is subjected to a lot of pulls and pressures. Various impressions in the form of experiences get imprinted on his impressionable mind. They influence or affect him to the extent that they form the traits of his character. Every child's mind is charged with a wild imagination and craves for freedom. Raju as a child is full of this spirit.

A small incident leads Raju being sent to school. He picks up a quarrel with a cowherd boy and uses obscene language. He complains to Raju's father. He does not put The incident shows clearly that Raju's father does not dote on his son defend him in whatever he does. He shows love when he is expected to as loving father he takes his son to the town when he has to procure things for his shop. With the same fervor, he punishes his son when he goes astray. If Raju had picked up these qualities of reasonableness, uprightness, and strictness from his father his life would not have been such a disaster.

It is very common in human experiences knowingly or unknowingly sometimes we have to face certain incidents which one should have to continue in unavoidable circumstances within the same mark. Some may not yet through and get rebuked and some gets through successfully and attains good name and fame. This happened in the case of Raju in the novel. Of the minor characters in the novel, are the old school masters of the Pyol School, Velan, Gaffer, Joseph, Mani, Raju's father, and his mother. So far the schoolmaster is concerned; he provides an interesting study in human psychology

Unfortunately, with the advent of the train at Malgudi, Raju's formal education comes to an end. His father manages to arrange a shop at the railway station, which though it makes for the economic needs of the family, proves to be an obstacle to Raju's education at school. Raju's father does not bother about his son's education for the sake of economic prosperity and security. Narayan appears to be critical at this point of average Indian guardians, who consider their children's education only as a means to achieve a material end. And as soon as this material end is achieved either through formal education or even otherwise, their concern for education comes to its natural end. But Raju is critically conscious of his predicament. He finds himself ill-at-ease with his shop-keeper's occupation, "Selling bread and biscuits and accepting money in exchange seemed to be a tame occupation. I always felt that I was too good for the task." (P.42)¹⁷

After Raju's father died, his mother advised Raju to keep himself to the running of the shop at the railway station. She is orthodox in thinking. She believes Karma Siddantha. She comes to the decision that what has happened as something is fated to happen.

The characters in this novel differ in their thoughts, beliefs, habits, ambitions, and conduct. R.K. Narayan has his own way affecting the social revolution and appears different from Mulk Raj Anand even if he is known for his concern for common people. The opinion of Dr. R.S. Singh appears apt when calls Narayan "a writer of surface realities."³⁰ Since the novelist seem to present him as a Narayan appears critical of the ignorance, superstition and absurdities in the Indian masses that repose their full confidence and mortgage their thinking to the so-called Raju-like-Swami who exploit in turn the respect and the confidence to their mean, selfish advantages, all in the name of religion and spiritualism.

The Guide and The Financial Expert are further and perhaps more reinforcing illustrations of the fact that false values and unwholesome attitudes of parents are disastrous to their children. None of the beautiful and impressive attributes of the boys in Swami and Friends and the Leela in The English Teacher can be found in Raju and Balu.

In The Guide, Raju is the only son of his father who is a petty-shopkeeper. The Father is sparsely educated and belongs to a lower stratum of society. He has only unsound beliefs about education such as unless a child is not beaten up regularly he will not be set right. With such beliefs, he sends Raju to a street side teacher instead of a good school. Raju fails to

imbibe high more values and norms of an ideal life. So he becomes a fraud and a hoax. As a boy, if Raju had been groomed properly and wisely perhaps he would have become an entirely different kind of person. Balu in The Financial Expert is a- still worse case. In The Guide Raju's father does not cast an evil influence on his son though he is not able to inspire him to adopt any lofty ideals. But Margayya pampers his son badly right from his early childhood. He never tries to lead him on the right path. Far from it, he deliberately prompts and encourages him to indulge in undesirable acts. Even as a child the boy is disobedient and defiant. But Margayya does not bother to put him on the right track. He has two loves in his life. One is the love of money and the other is the love of his son. As long as the two do not fall out with each other Margayya is all for his son, being totally blind to his faults. He wants to see his son highly educated and to have 'good' life, but in his opinion quality education is that which is bought at a high price. 'Good' life according to him is that life which can be obtained by throwing away money. These fallacious convictions lead him downfall and vengefully wreck irreparable ruin to his son.

The child characters in The Guide and The Financial Expert are totally devoid of the beauty of childhood innocence. They are delineated as evil forces receiving evil and perpetrating evil. If the children are brought up in false value systems they naturally get spoilt. This is well portrayed in The Guide and The Financial Expert. The unwholesome attitudes of parents are disastrous to their children.

Thus the child characters in The Guide and The Financial Expert are totally devoid of the beauty of childhood innocence. They are delineated as evil forces receiving evil and perpetrating evil. Parents with Margayya's attitude should know that Education and teachers cannot be purchased. They are not commodities in a shop but are 'Essential Health' to a good society.

Raju fails to imbibe high moral values and norms of an ideal life. So he becomes fraud and hoax. As a boy, if Raju had been groomed properly, and wisely perhaps the world has become an entirely different person. Balu in The Financial Expert is a still worse case. In The Guide Raju's father does not cast an evil influence on his son though he is not able to adopt any lofty ideals. But Margayya pampers his so badly right from his childhood. He never tries to lead him on the right path. Margayya has scant respect towards teachers. He treats teachers as mere puppets who can be obtained by throwing away money. These fallacious convictions lead him to his downfall and vengefully wreck irreparable ruin to his son. Thus the child characters in The Guide and The Financial Expert are totally devoid of the beauty of the childhood innocence. They are delineated as evil forces receiving evil and perpetrating evil.

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