



## A study of Indian Identity in the novel “The Guide” by R. K. Narayan

**Dinesh Kumar**

Email : [dineshduhan449@gmail.com](mailto:dineshduhan449@gmail.com)

### **ABSTRACT:**

In the pantheon of early 20th-century Indian English fiction writers, R. K. Narayan stands alone as an unrivaled master. Where he writes, MALGUDI, is very similar to a central tale in his work. His works, which are varied and extensive, are a reflection of his vast life experiences. His astuteness is enhanced by the massive spectacle of Copious Characters, striking and predictable with life. No matter how he has portrayed reality, he remains detached and immaculate, essentially holding a mirror up to nature. He never pushed for his own unique line of thinking or method of communication. This paper's modest goal is to examine Narayan's short fiction, particularly his superb book THE GUIDE, and the cultural and social methods that inform it. This paper briefly introduces readers to Indo-Anglian writing, revealing how Indian writing in English has a robust convention behind it, and highlighting R.K. Narayan as arguably the most extraordinary of the Indian writers writing in English and the most imaginative of the Indian journalists exemplifying the enormous adaptability and flexibility of English. It neatly analyzes how, at his best, Narayan is a meticulous chronicler of the contradictions of human life and an intense observer of the possibilities of the conventional, employing a straightforward expositional style of portrayal that focuses on a variety of topics and ideas outside of the standard by which humans are evaluated.

**Keywords** Novel, Writer, R.K. Narayanan, semiotics and the guide, traditional and social approach, literarily words, etc.

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to provide a critical analysis of R.K. Narayan's book The Guide via the lens of the Indian identity presented within. Examining how Narayan's portrayal of Indians in this work reflects Indian culture and history is a priority for this project. Three of India's most prominent English-language novelists of the 1930s, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, and Raja Rao, were inspired to write about important issues they witnessed, such as freedom from colonial rule, the East-West divide, communal strife, and the plight of India's untouchables, the homeless poor, and the exploited working class. All of Mulk Raj Anand's



main works, including *Two Leaves and a Bud*, are a fight against societal exploitation. *The Guide* (1958), *The Financial Experts* (1951), and *The English Teacher* (1953) by R. K. Narayan all deal with societal problems such as casteism, inequality, injustice, gender-bias, and superstition (1945). In practically all of his works, including *Kanthapura* (1938) and *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960), Raja Rao reproduced the Indian Sanskrit rhythm in the syntax of English and displayed the tales and legends of Hinduism. The narrative strategies and distinctive styles of these writers have helped Indian literature in English to flourish and grow. In his autobiography, *My Days*, Narayan describes his grandmother and the talents she still retained in her latter years: "Grand parenting was a wrong job for her: She ought to have become a school inspector's." She was driven by a deep desire to shape the minds of the next generation. He learned the Tamil alphabet and classical music from her. Learning about Indian classical mythology and culture at a young age helped him internalize the material and give his life and work more significance down the road. In fact, R. K. Narayan has been writing ever since he was a little boy. He took a deep interest in the lives of others around him. These characters would later appear in his books. His protagonists are often middle- or lower-class Indians who provide a distinct flavour to his works. Narayan pursued a career in journalism since he loved the field so much. When he wasn't blogging, he was publishing articles in periodicals. He had visited the United States in the 1950s, but nothing about the country had stirred the imagination of our author, an Indian by birth. He never stopped identifying as an Indian. For over sixty years in *Indian Writing in English*, he constructed characters using an Indian creative perspective.

The importance of family is central to all of his works published before India's independence. The majority of these books were written in the first person. Narayan's first book, *Swami and His Friends*, was recommended to him by Graham Greene, and thus the author decided to publish it. There are around 10 books and approximately 150 short tales by Narayan. He often picks characters from the South Indian middle class. Narayan's writings, like those of other regional novelists, are set in Malgudi and its environs. Margaret Parson once said that reading Narayan's books was the best way to get an understanding of India's complex culture and people. Narayan took home the Sahitya Oscar for his work on *The Guide* (1958). Apparently, several Brahmins prayed to God for rain while standing in knee-deep water for twelve days straight, and suddenly it started raining.



This study will examine his book "The Guide" in light of the humanistic principles it contains. Contrary to Narayan's belief that deviation or confusion caused by non-adherence to norms definitely leads to adverse outcomes, the protagonists of 'The Guide' actively resist the traditional, religious, and familial duties they are expected to fulfill, only to drift accidentally towards their destined destiny. That so, as already said, Narayan does not actively nurture a moral perspective in his work. They are unintentional but necessary components of his storytelling craft and the cultural milieu that serves as the backdrop for his narratives. Narayan's message in "The Guide," then, must also be gleaned by individual readers in accordance with their own instincts. From the very beginning of 'The Guide,' we are immersed in the ordinary lives of people from all walks of Indian life. Gradually, ordinary occurrences become extraordinary ones as a result of destiny, chance, error, or folly. The hero might just as readily experience unanticipated good fortune as unanticipated tragedies. The characters seem to have trust that all will work out for the best in the end. In a sense, this illustrates the novelist's underlying perspective and the style of life he seems to endorse. Like a leaf blown around by the wind, Raju finds his lowest moment in jail, is granted a second opportunity, and looks forward to a brighter future.

When the protagonist, Raju, in the book "The Guide," sets out to fulfill his ambitions, he is met with doubts about his culture's norms and values. When it comes to Rosie, he has no interest in following the rules of society. He breaks a fundamental social norm by moving in with the other man's wife, Rosie (married to Marco). There is widespread opposition against him, especially from his widowed mother, but he ignores the gravity of the issue. Because of his involvement with Rosie, he loses money and faces social isolation, but he refuses to change his habits and contribute to greater peace and stability in either his own life or the world at large. Eventually, Raju's life grinds to a complete halt, and he draws the contempt of everyone around him as a result of his unpredictable behavior. Narayan's support of conventional and religious values, together with his funny narrator, create a rich and full existential picture that is striking. His novels' underlying ideals provide a moral framework against which to view his protagonists and antagonists. Narayan gently mocks certain unusual, arrogant, or hypocritical adherence to ancient rituals, yet his humour is able to distinguish between the permanent and the bizarre. Narayan describes Raju in a light hearted yet serious tone in his work The Guide. Raju is a regular, average person. Seeing him stumble through the process of becoming adulthood is a



humbling and inspiring spiritual and moral experience. Time after time, we see Raju grow up in front of our eyes. This trend may be seen in the interactions between Raju and his mom, Marco and Rosie, and Raju and Rosie. At first, there is serenity and order in these connections, but it doesn't last. Because the people in these relationships have conflicting goals and worldviews, the connections between them never develop to their full potential. Narayan's work displays his extensive understanding of Indian classical literature, philosophy, religion, morality, and ethics; but, as has been said, he does not overburden his audience with lengthy explanations of his worldview. Narayan sees the flaws in human nature not with the compassion and enthusiasm of a missionary, but with the insight and empathy of a creative. So, Narayan tries to depict a view of life beyond the narrative mask of his books, a life of contrasting dualities such as appearance and truth, beliefs and betrayals.

### **Review of literature**

(S. Gupta et al., 2015) studied “Narrative Levels and Voices : A Study of R . K . Narayan ’ s “ The Guide” identified, and Narayan's Malgudi is a fictional city that serves as a hub for his imaginative works. For the most part, it determines the stage upon which Narayan performs his works. An effort has been made in this Research Paper to demonstrate how, within the framework of the Malgudi volumes, Narayan offers the social features, standards, and mores that have had and continue to have a significant influence on the edification of the lives of Hindu people.

(Kumari, 2020) studied “RK Narayan ’ s The Guide : A portrait of a spiritual guide” discovered that, and in his book The Guide, Rashi puram Krishnaswamy Narayan has told the story of a man who represents the shift from the old ways to the new in the South Indian social and cultural landscape. Narayan has shown the shifting nature of the human scene via the protagonist Raju, who is caught up in the knot of family responsibilities, moral quandaries, and the corrosive effects of excessive consumerism on his community.

(Agnelo, 2016) studied “The concept of Indianness in R.K.Narayan's The Guide” discovered, and The Guide elucidates, the Indian way of life and the rich cultural and historical traditions of India. R.K. Narayan has portrayed Indian culture with typically Indian people and an appropriately Indian setting. The book centers on Raju, Rosie, and Marco. Through 'The Guide,' R.K. Narayan has painted an accurate portrait of India's social scene. This work reflects the characteristics of Indian culture, including rituals and etiquette.



(P. S. Gupta et al., n.d.) studied “R . K . Narayan ’ s The Guide : A Study of Time and Space Department of Mathematics and Humanities , Co-Supervisor Kurukshetra” found that and Time and Space are the important constituents of narrative fiction that decide the form that a creative work takes. The very existence of the text depends on the manipulation of time and space.

(Arunachalam, 2017) studied “human values in r . K . Narayan ’ s ‘ the guide ” It was discovered and published in 1958 that R. K. Narayan's most celebrated work is The Guide, which earned him not just widespread recognition but also the 1960 Sahitya Academy Award for Fiction. Narayan's "The Guide" is an improbable place. This research paper seeks to demonstrate how Narayan, in his book series "The Guide," portrays the human and societal ideals, practices, and traditions that have played and continue to play a significant part in moulding people's lives throughout history.

(Rani, 2013) studied “The Existentialism in R . K . Narayan ’ s The Guide” observed, and Rasipuram We bow to you, Swami Krishna Like Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand, Narayanswami Iyer (also known as R.K.Narayan) is often credited as one of the first authors to write in Indian English. The first Indian English novel was written by chandra Chatterjee in 1904 (Rajmohan's Wife), but the genre didn't advance much for a long time, with authors primarily producing historical or romantic novels until Mahatma Gandhi came along and shifted the focus of fiction to his works and ideas. However, it wasn't until the era of 1930–1970 that authors such as Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand,

### **Conclusion**

Numerous readers and critics, including E.M.Foster, Graham reene, William Walsh, and M.C.Catchlion, praised Narayan's tales. His tales and novels have been adopted by several universities and made required reading for undergraduates and graduate students. Narayan gives his readers this type of literary privilege. His literary legacy is a priceless gift to future generations, illuminating the richness and diversity of Indian culture and heritage. In this respect, R.K. Narayan's "The Guide" is illustrative of the tragedy's use of realistic depictions of Indian setting. Shakespeare's unfiltered realism in King Lear brilliantly reveals the anarchy, disease, and anguish of Lear's reign. R.K. Narayan does an excellent job of portraying Raju's metamorphosis from Railway Raju to spiritually awakened Raju, and he does the same with his various other incarnations, such as a food vendor at the Station, a tourist guide, a sentimental adulterer, the manager of Rosie, a



jailbird, and a martyred swami. Narayan presented several facets of Indian society, including its religious, cultural, social, and economic facets. In addition, he discusses the decline of Indian families, the religious makeup of Indian culture, and the many issues plaguing Indian society, such as drought, blind confidence in sadhus, and superstition. R K Narayan's greatest work, "The Guide," was out in 1958. The Sahitya Akademi Award is given in recognition of its excellence. The supernatural is interwoven with philosophical and moral themes in the film "The Guide." Starring Dev Anand and Waheeda Rehman, two of Bollywood's biggest names from the '70s and '80s, Guide was a nostalgic look at the industry's golden age.

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