

Dr. BRR GOVT DEGREE COLLEGE JADCHERLA

Department of English



A PROJECT REPORT

ON

“RK NARAYAN”

Submitted By

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DECLARATION

We are hereby declare that the study project: “**RK NARAYAN**” is a record of work done by under the supervision of **M JAGAN**, faculty of English, Government Degree College, Jadcherla, Mahabubnagar District and that the project has not been previously done by any others in this college and any other college/University.

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Date : 27/06/2022

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Study project on “**RK NARAYAN**” is a bonafide Project work done by students listed below

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R.K NARAYAN

R K NARAYAN

Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami: (10 October 1906 – 13 May 2001) was an Indian writer known for his work set in the fictional South Indian town of Malgudi. He was a leading author of early Indian literature in English along with Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao.

Narayan's mentor and friend Graham Greene was instrumental in getting publishers for Narayan's first four books including the semi-autobiographical trilogy of *Swami and Friends*, *The Bachelor of Arts* and *The English Teacher*. The fictional town of Malgudi was first introduced in *Swami and Friends*. *The Financial Expert* was hailed as one of the most original works of 1951 and Sahitya Academy Award winner *The Guide* was adapted for the film (winning a Filmfare Award for Best Film) and for Broadway.

Narayan highlights the social context and everyday life of his characters. He has been compared to William Faulkner who created a similar fictional town and likewise explored with humor and compassion the energy of ordinary life. Narayan's short stories have been compared with those of Guy de Maupassant because of his ability to compress a narrative.

In a career that spanned over sixty years Narayan received many awards and honours including the AC Benson Medal from the Royal Society of Literature, the Padma Vibhushan and the Padma Bhushan, India's second and third highest civilian awards, and in 1994 the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship, the highest honor of India's national academy of letters. He was also nominated to the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian Parliament.

R. K. Narayan was born in a Tamil Brahmin family on 10 October 1906 in Madras (now Chennai, Tamil Nadu), British India into a Hindu family. He was one of eight children; six sons and two daughters. Narayan was second among the sons; his younger brother Ramachandran later became an editor at Gemini Studios, and the youngest brother Laxman became a cartoonist. His father was a school headmaster, and Narayan did some of his studies at his father's school. As his father's job entailed frequent transfers, Narayan spent a part of his childhood under the care of his maternal grandmother, Parvati. During this time, his best friends and playmates were a peacock and a mischievous monkey.

His grandmother gave him the nickname of *Kunjappa*, a name that stuck to him in family circles. She taught him arithmetic, mythology, classical Indian music and Sanskrit. According to Laxman, the family mostly conversed in English, and grammatical errors on the part of Narayan and his siblings were frowned upon. While living with his grandmother, Narayan studied at a succession of schools in Madras, including the Lutheran Mission School in Purasawalkam C.R.C. High School, and the Christian College High School. Narayan was an avid reader, and his early literary diet included Dickens, Wodehouse, Arthur Conan Doyle and Thomas Hardy. When he was twelve years old, Narayan participated in a pro-independence march, for which he was reprimanded by his uncle; the family was apolitical and considered all governments wicked.

Narayan moved to Mysore to live with his family when his father was transferred to the Maharajah's College High School. The well-stocked library at the school and his father's own fed his reading habit, and he started writing as well. After completing high school, Narayan failed the university entrance examination and spent a year at home reading and writing; he subsequently passed the examination in 1926 and joined Maharaja College of Mysore. It took Narayan four years to obtain his bachelor's degree, a year longer than usual. After being persuaded by a friend that taking a master's degree (M.A.)

would kill his interest in literature, he briefly held a job as a school teacher; however, he quit in protest when the headmaster of the school asked him to substitute for the physical training master.^[2] The experience made Narayan realise that the only career for him was in writing, and he decided to stay at home and write novels. His first published work was a book review of *Development of Maritime Laws of 17th-Century England*. Subsequently, he started writing the occasional local interest story for English newspapers and magazines. Although the writing did not pay much (his income for the first year was nine rupees and twelve annas), he had a regular life and few needs, and his family and friends respected and supported his unorthodox choice of career. In 1930, Narayan wrote his first novel, *Swami and Friends*,¹ an effort ridiculed by his uncle and rejected by a string of publishers. With this book, Narayan created *Malgudi*, a town that creatively reproduced the social sphere of the country; while it ignored the limits imposed by colonial rule, it also grew with the various socio-political changes of British and post-independence India.



R. K. Narayan with his wife Rajam 1935

While vacationing at his sister's house in *Coimbatore*, in 1933, Narayan met and fell in love with Rajam, a 15-year-old girl who lived nearby. Despite many astrological and financial obstacles, Narayan managed to gain permission from the girl's father and married her. Following his marriage, Narayan became a reporter for a Madras-based paper called *The Justice*, dedicated to the rights of non-Brahmins. The publishers were thrilled to have a *Brahmin Iyer* in Narayan espousing their cause. The job brought him in contact with a wide variety of people and issues. Earlier, Narayan had sent the manuscript of *Swami and Friends* to a friend at *Oxford*, and about this time, the friend showed the manuscript to *Graham Greene*. Greene recommended the book to his publisher, and it was finally published in 1935.^[1] Greene also counselled Narayan on shortening his name to become more familiar to the English-speaking audience. The book was semi-autobiographical and built upon many incidents from his own childhood. Reviews were favorable but sales were few. Narayan's next novel *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), was inspired in part by his experiences at collage dealt with the theme of a rebellious adolescent transitioning to a rather well-adjusted adult; - it was published by a different publisher, again at the recommendation of Greene. His third novel, *The Dark Room* (1938) was about domestic disharmony-showcasing the man as the oppressor and the woman as the victim within a marriage, and was published by yet another publisher; this book also received good reviews. In 1937, Narayan's father died, and Narayan was forced to accept a commission from the government of *Mysore* as he was not making any money. In his first three books, Narayan highlights the problems with certain socially accepted practices. The first book has Narayan focusing on the plight of students, punishments of caning in the classroom, and the associated shame. The concept of horoscope-matching in *Hindu marriages* and the emotional toll it levies on the bride and groom is

covered in the second book. In the third book, Narayan addresses the concept of a wife putting up with her husband's antics and attitudes

Rajam died of typhoid in 1939. Her death affected Narayan deeply and he remained depressed for a long time. He never remarried in his life; he was also concerned for their daughter Hema, who was only three years old. The bereavement brought about a significant change in his life and was the inspiration behind his next novel, *The English Teacher*.⁴ This book, like his first two books, is autobiographical, but more so, and completes an unintentional thematic trilogy following *Swami and Friends* and *The Bachelor of Arts*. In subsequent interviews, Narayan acknowledges that *The English Teacher* was almost entirely an autobiography, albeit with different Malgudi; he names for the characters and the change of setting in also explains that the emotions detailed in the book reflected his own at the time of Rajam's death

Bolstered by some of his successes, in 1940 Narayan tried his hand at a journal, *Indian Thought*.⁵ With the help of his uncle, a car salesman, Narayan managed to get more than a thousand subscribers in Madras city alone. However, the venture did not last long due to Narayan's inability to manage it, and it ceased publication within a year. His first collection of short stories, *Malgudi Days*, was published in November 1942, followed by *The English Teacher* in 1945. In between, being cut off from England due to the war, Narayan started his own publishing company, naming it (again) Indian Thought Publications; the publishing company was a success and is still active, now managed by his granddaughter.⁶ Soon, with a devoted readership stretching from New York to Moscow, Narayan's books started selling well and in 1948 he started building his own house on the outskirts of Mysore; the house was completed in 1953. Around this period, Narayan wrote the story for the Gemini Studios film *Miss Malini* (1947), which remained the only story written by him for the screen that came to fruition.