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HUMOUR IN “THE FINANCIAL EXPERT” BY R K NARAYAN

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Abstract:

R K Narayan is one of the best novelists writing directly in English that India has produced. He is a simple and pure writer with no pretension to be known as scholar or idealistic missionary or even the great writer. His story telling methods have a beginning, middle and an end. Narayan's achievement as a comic writer is remarkable. His novels are the great source of mirth to his many readers. He is the most brilliant realist writing at the moment. His art of narration, his ethical problems, his mastery of the medium, his subtle humour and irony and above all his unique style – a style that is pure, simple and unsophisticated – make his novels unique. His humour has a universal quality and by it he is qualified to have a place in the main-stream of the great comic traction.” As humorist he has a greater affinity with the world's great humorists from Chaucer to modern age. His humour is varied and all pervasive.

KEY WORDS:

novelists writing , idealistic missionary , achievement , simple and unsophisticated .

INTRODUCTION

R.K.Narayan is one of the most famous and widely read Indian novelists. His stories were grounded in a compassionate humanism and celebrated the humour and energy of ordinary life. Narayan evokes diction of unusual freshness and rare ingenuity with the English literary idiom. He was a vital and dynamic writer who explains human behavior by the means of comedy and simplicity

“*The Financial Expert*” is a comical novel. The comedy is produced both by the character and situations as well. The characters of the novel are so comical that we are compelled to laugh. Margayya and his son, Balu are the most comical characters in the novel. In the very beginning of the novel the description of Margayya's personality is very humorous. He has a little barber's box and keeps an ink-pot, a pen, an ink blotter, a small register and some loan application forms of the Co-Operative Bank. He uses spectacles but wants to avoid them because he does not wish to look old. He has taken the glasses on trial and now he has completely forgotten to go that way again. He hates the idea of being old. His certain habits are the source of laughter. When he leaves his house he assures his son that he will bring tiny toys for him, but he returns with empty hands every evening. His dressing sense also brings laughter: “He keeps a new gorgeous dhoti and shirt in his box with a piece of camphor for special occasion, but when his pride hurt he abandons his old dress and puts on the new one. Now he thinks himself rich and asks Arul Doss, the peon of the Co-operative Bank, to receive his old dress, and now he displays an air of superiority before his customers. His talk with his customers and the inner working of his mind is always a source of the laughter for the readers.

Balu is a very obstinate and naughty and only child of Margayya. His parents love him very much

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and this excess of love has spoiled him badly. He is constant source of embarrassment for his parents. He has unending demands before them. Balu's mother says: "It's impossible to manage him during the afternoon. He constantly runs out on the street. I don't have a moment's rest or peace. He teases his mother every time and denies taking his food without ghee. Margayya has high hopes about Balu's future. He wants to admit him in a reputed school and after he wants to send him to America for future studies. But Balu is very dull in his studies and can not pass even his SSLC exam. He blackmails his teachers. When he is forced by Margayya to pass this exam he leaves his house and runs away to Madras. He returns home only with one condition that he will never be forced for his studies and will be free to act according to his own wish. He wants to enjoy life without doing anything. After coming home he only takes rest, eats delicious food, smokes too much and remains out of the house for a long time. His obstinacy, mischief and the perplexity of Margayya demands the laughter of the readers. The description of Balu's teacher waiting for his father is very interesting and as well as comic too. Balu tells his teacher that his father has asked him to meet him. The teacher is frightened and anticipates his dismissal from the service. He is very much disturbed because his dismissal will cause a great loss of good salary. The teacher waits for Margayya till quite late in night. When Margayya comes he is bewildered. But to his relief Margayya does not remember that he has called the teacher and asks him why he is staying there so late in night. The teacher says that he only wishes to see him so is waiting for him. Margayya pays no attention to him and allows him to leave.

Dr. Pal plays an important role in the comic events of the novel. He is interesting in playing cards, going to cinema and enjoying the company of girls. He is the only one who provokes Balu for demanding his share of property. His style of talking with Margayya and driving a Baby Austin gives him comical appearances. There is a great deal of comical episodes in the novel. The most humorous of them is when Balu snatches the red-account book from his father and runs with it in the street. Margayya is chasing and cursing Balu. Some passers-by in Vibayak Mudali Street stop to watch this ridiculous scene. Margayya shouts loudly and asks them to catch his son. When Balu is encircled by so many people, he at once throws the red-book into dirty gutter. He stands upon the edge of the gutter without any care and looks at that book with great fascination. There is no trace of book left anywhere. Margayya loses his temper and begins to beat Balu. But the humorous thing is that Margayya is condemned by the crowd for being so much cruel with such a child and Balu gains the sympathy of the crowd.

One more interesting and comic situation is: Margayya's wife Meenakshi is not at home. She has left Balu in Margayya's custody. But even then his hands are burnt while burning the paper in the lamp. Hearing his shriek his mother comes in from the neighboring shop and she begins to scold and condemn Margayya for his neglect of duty of taking care of Balu. With this readers are compelled to smile.

Another laughter-provoking episode is when the priest is forcing Margayya to drink milk just like a baby. The priest says to him, "Drink that milk, it will make you all right." But Margayya replies very emphatically that he does not like milk. But the priest becomes angry and says, "You push away milk with the back of your hand as if it were a tumbler of ditch water." Margayya feels sorry for it. The priest warns Margayya, "Milk is one of the forms of Goddess Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, when you reject it or treat it indifferently, it means you reject Her. Hearing this Margayya becomes very cautious and very reverently touches the tumbler of the milk and very respectfully drinks milk, taking care not to spill even a drop.

Margayya's effort to search his horoscope in dim lights is also a humorous incident. One funnier situation is born when the family of Margayya's brother always peeps in his house, they come to his house when something is wrong in the house and provides them food but when everything is normal they never meet him or talk with the family. The best comic scene in the novel is Margayya's performance of Lakshmi Pooja in order to become rich in the society. The priest gives him some 'mantras' to recite and gives certain instructions to follow during that Pooja Vidhi. Margayya wanders in search of red lotus, the skin of the deer and the most challenging one was the ghee made of milk drawn from a smoke-coloured cow. Margayya gives a long list of articles to Meenakshi such as jaggery, turmeric, coloured cooked rice, fruit, refined sugar, black-gram cake, sweetened sesamum, curd, spiced rice and various kinds of fruits and honey. All these materials are going to be used in Pooja Vidhi. He would require these in small quantities in morning and evening offerings. He gives his wife hundred rupees to manage all this and there is no money left for household needs. For this Pooja, a room is decorated nicely. An image of Goddess Lakshmi is placed on a small pedestal. Margayya confines himself in the room and provokes the curiosity of the neighbours. He wears a red silk dhoti and applies sacred ash on his forehead and body. He recites the mantras given by that priest for a thousand times each day. After it his jaws suffer from severe pain, his tongue becomes dry and he feels that he will faint with hunger. This goes on for forty days. When he comes out from the room, he has a beard and moustache and hair on his nape. He looks like he has lost ten pounds in weight.

With all these various comic incidents of the novel "The Financial Expert" is a fine example of Narayan's excels as a true humorist.

HUMOUR IN "THE FINANCIAL EXPERT" BY R K NARAYAN

In short We can find Narayan's art of comic characterization attained its apex of excellence in Margayya, the financial expert. His growth from petty money to a money-mystic is phenomenal, and catastrophic is his crash at the end. Margayya represents a curious blend of practical wisdom, financial acumen, mental alertness, and superstition. His long penance to propitiate Lakshmi is in interesting juxtaposition with his wizardry which sends several large banking institutions into a flutter. - Shive K. Gilra.

CONCLUSION

Humour of R.K.Narayan is the direct course of his intellectual analysis of the contradictions in human experience tragically or comically. Narayan's novels are straightforward realistic pictures undisturbed by fantasy. The intellectual interest is the main spring of his inspiration and that is the angle from which he approaches all the aspects of his subject matter. The result is that he analysis actions and diagnoses motives. All these lead to subtle undercurrent of humorous remarks. He has not to find humorous incidents to make his readers laugh.

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