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CHAPTER – 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

It is a truth, universally acknowledged that Rasipuram Krishnaswami Narayanswami popularly known as R. K. Narayan is a unique Indian writer in English and even a cursory glance at his literary achievements should convince anyone of his unique success story, reading almost like a legend. One is bound to view the kaleidoscopic images of the aura of Narayan's legend flash upon memory while beholding them with awe and admiration. He is an internationally reputed novelist. Narayan always insisted on living by pen alone. He has created an imaginary locale Malgudi for his novels. He enjoyed the largest readership, his novels being translated into several Indian and foreign languages. He had the fortune to see his novels turning into Films and T.V.serials. He was awarded the Rock-Feller Foundation travel grant. He was recipient of the Sahitya Academy Award and was often nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature.

It is only when one tries to review these images of Narayan that one becomes aware of their immense diversity. It is no less than viewing a legend. However closely you know the writer and his world, ultimately you realize that the so called familiar, almost the next door image of the writer, simply alludes you. The problem is: which Narayan image should one single out and highlight? A story-teller par excellence? A creator of the imaginary locale, Malgudi? A delineator of the most memorable characters like Margayya, Raju, Vasu and the tiger called Raja? Or a writer as a cultural ambassador of India? OR? In fact many such ‘ORs.’

In fact, an indepth study of established writers like Narayan reveals that the individual images though stand magnificently on their own; do contribute, in the final analysis, to entirety of the writer’s aura. As in architecture, the sum total of the individual parts makes the whole structure.

The aura of the legend, one needs to note, as huge and formidable as Narayan's essentially grows over the years-decades really. As Rome was not built in a day, so indeed is the story of the legend or a legendary figure - like Narayan's. How does it
happen? What factors contribute to or, really, are responsible for the making of a legend? Lionell Trilling, writing on Jane Austen, points out:

Every established writer exists in the aura of his legend: the accumulated opinion one cannot help being aware of the image of his personality that has been derived, correctly incorrectly, from what he has written. (Trilling, 1966: 3)

1.2.1 R. K. Narayan: Biography

R.K.Narayan, one of ‘the Big three’ (Sharan, 1993:1) of the Indo-Anglian fiction, the other two being Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao, was born on 10th October, 1906 in Madras. ‘Rasipuram Krishnaswami Narayan’ is R. K. Narayan’s full name. As is the custom in the South ‘R’ the first initial of his name ‘Rasipuram’ represents a village in the district of Salem, to which his ancestors belonged. (Mohod, 1997:18) The second initial ‘K’ stands for the name of his father Krishnaswamy Iyer, who was a school teacher. Long before Narayan’s birth the family had moved to Madras, the state capital. Krishnaswami Iyer, soon after Narayan’s birth got a job in Mysore as a school master and the family moved there. His mother, Gnanam took his brothers and sisters to Mysore. Consequently, R. K. Narayan spent his childhood under the supervision of his grand mother, Ammani who called him Kunjappa. He is the product of South Indian conservative Brahmin family of Madras. The Indian child of this class and caste is introduced to the classical Indian tales, myths and legends very early in life, in Narayan’s case by his grandmother, (Purohit, 2011:2) “like the nonconformist hymns of Lawrence’s childhood they become woven into man’s consciousness giving an ultimate shape to his life.” (Lawrence, 1955)

Narayan was never a good student. He hated school, as is obvious from his very first novel ‘Swami and Friends.’(1935) Later he even failed college entrance examination. Amazingly, he failed in English which he thought was his strongest subject. During the extra year that he had after he failed to enter the college, Narayan read a lot and even began to write. Eventually, he graduated from Maharaja Collge, Mysore, the experience of which can be found in his novel ‘The Bachelor of Arts.’(1936) Different suggestions came in from different quarters to Narayan. One could become a lawyer,
or a minor civil servant, or what not. At first he toyed with studying for an M. A. in literature. In ‘My Days’ he writes about his transitional period:

While I was going up the stairs of the Maharaja college with my application for a seat in the M. A. class, a friend met me halfway and turned me back, arguing that this would be a sure way to lose interest in literature. I accepted his advice and went downstairs, once for all turning my back on college studies. (Narayan, 2006:79)

Narayan’s father expected his financial support to the family after graduation. He worked for a while in the Mysore secretariat and later for four or five days in village school. These jobs did not suit his temperament. His first experience as a teacher “soured him on that profession for life.” He felt that he did not have “the patience, the presence or the ‘discipline’ indispensable for a civil servant. He could not even become sub-editor of a newspaper for the want of shorthand writing. In such circumstance, he resolved not to “sell himself”—but “simply to write novels and live off the joint family system.”(Mehta, 1971: 163-64)

He had to face lot of funny and humorous criticism from inside as well as outside. His father occasionally enquired him “What are you attempting on that road-roller?” (Narayan, 2006:86) In spite of this criticism and opposition Narayan remained firm in his decision of becoming a writer. The account, Narayan gives, of how he began to write:

On a certain day in September, I bought an exercise book and wrote the first line of a novel; as I sat in a room nibbling my pen and wondering what to write. Malgudi with its little railway station swam into view, all readymade, with a character called Swaminathan running down the platform peering into the faces of the passengers, and grimacing at a bearded face. This was a satisfactory beginning for me and I regularly wrote a few pages each day. (Narayan, 2006:86-87)
Narayan received in return the writing which was sent to the editors and publishers with discomforting remarks ‘stories lacked plot’ and ‘no appreciation of literary values.’ Despite all this he continued his stay at Madras for the pursuance of the editors of newspapers and magazines. As a result, his efforts bore fruits of reviewing a book and accepting a short story the same journal paid him ten rupees less money order charges. The writing from Narayan’s pen offered him ‘nine rupees and twelve annas’ (1986:103) in the first year and thirty rupees for children’s story in a respective year. With great confidence, Narayan soon achieved eminent success as a novelist and short story writer.

There was first-reading contest which means any story I write, must be sent to them first. But this is no longer in operation. They pay $1 award and usually $2000 to $3000 for a story. I’ve done six to seven stories so far. I can’t do more than that, because ‘New Yorker’ is difficult to get into. They rejected 10 stories before taking one. (Narayan, 1984:13)

The most momentous event of Narayan’s life took place in 1935, when he escorted his elder sister Janki from Mysore to Coimbore. The circumstances in which he met his future wife can best be compared with Chandran’s meeting with Malathi in ‘The Bachelor of Arts.’ Failing headlong in love, Narayan flung convention to the winds, went straight to Nageshwara Iyer and his wife and asked them for their girl’s hand. However, the horoscopes did not match. Nageshwara Iyer’s astrologer was adamant that Narayan would prove either polygamy or widower. But lovelorn young man got an astrologer of his own who “at the sight of rupees” could defeat the former one. It was supremely a happy marriage.

Rajam, soon after the marriage, suffered typhoid and the cruel hand of destiny took her away to the heavenly abode. A constant source of inspiration to Narayan Rajam before her death gave birth to a child Hemma, which was a prototype copy of Leela in ‘The English Teacher.’ The death of Rajam was rewarding as well because Narayan emerged as a complete novelist from the dark and gloomy valley of the tragedy.
The doyen of Indo-Anglian novelist, R.K. Narayan received the ‘Sahitya Akademy Award’ for ‘The Guide’ in 1960. He was awarded Padma Bhushan in 1964. Taking cognisance of the academic value of Narayan’s work the University of Leeds was the first to confer on him the honour of D. Litt. in 1967. Delhi University followed it in 1973. He visited U.S.A. in 1956, on an invitation from the Rockefeller Foundation. Many of his short stories and sketches have been broadcast by the B.B.C., a rare distinction. Teleserials were also made on his novels and short stories. Narayan was a visiting lecturer at Michigan State University in 1958, and lectured at many reputed Universities such as University of California, Kansas University, Yale University and Yassar College.

Narayan is the first Indian to have been included in the ‘Writers and their work’- a series of monographs on writers in English. ‘He writes with grace and humour, about a fictional town Malgudi and its inhabitants; and their little lives.’ (Jha, 2011:101) R.K. Narayan started his career as a novelist. His novels include- ‘Swami and Friends’ (1935), ‘The Bachelor of Arts’ (1937), ‘The Dark Room’ (1938) and ‘The English Teacher’ (1945) form his first phase i.e. The Early Experiment. The second constitutes- The Mature middle phase that includes ‘Mr. Sampath’ (1949), ‘The Financial Expert’ (1952), and ‘Waiting for the Mahatma’ (1955) and ‘The Guide’ (1958). The third phase of the Later Novels consists of ‘The Man Eater of Malgudi’ (1961), ‘The Vendor of Sweets’ (1967), ‘The Painter of Signs’ (1967) and ‘A Tiger for Malgudi’ (1983). These novels are marked with ‘maturity. Thereafter have published ‘Talkative Man’ (1986), ‘The World of Nataraj’ (1990), and his last novel was ‘The Grand Mother’s Tale’ (1992).

Narayan’s novels have Malgudi as their permanent Locale one is quite likely to ask the most obvious question: Where is Malgudi? Narayan himself narrates the genesis of the imaginary locale to Ved Mehta, thus:

I remember waking up with the name Malgudi on Vijayadasmi…I sat down and wrote the first sentence about my town: ‘The train had just arrived at Malgudi Station.’ (Mehta, 1971: 56)

There have been a number of attempts to identify Malgudi on the map of India and some scholars have even presented Malgudi map in their books on Narayan. Professor M.K.Naik has for the first time drawn up a really worth while tentative map of Malgudi in his book (Naik, 1983:152) indicates the prominent landmarks of the town and its environs recurring in Narayan novels. Narayan keeps mum over the identity of Malgudi accepting and admitting that it is a town in South India.

Ever since Narayan had written ‘Swami and Friends,’ he has been telescoping the Malgudi, title after title round the middle class milieu. Having the first hand acquaintance with his people and knowing their mental makeup as closely as the skin of his palm. In this connection Thomas Hardy observes:

It is better for a writer to know a little bit of the world remarkably well than to know a great part of the world remarkably little. (Hardy, 1955: 95)

Unlike Mulk Raj Anand, known for his social concerns, and Raja Rao, known for his metaphysical pre-occupations, Narayan stands alone as a non-committal writer refusing to jump on the bandwagon of an ideology or an ism. And, he seems to be hot favourite of the western readers. The reason perhaps lies in Narayan’s presentation of
the Indian cultural ethos sprinkled with the spices like the extra-sensory perception and the belief in the transmigration of the soul witnessed in his novels like ‘The English Teacher,’ ‘The Dark Room,’ ‘The Guide’ and ‘A Tiger for Malgudi.’ Narayan the story teller certainly belongs to the oral tradition. In Narayan's novels one may underline his attachment to the oral tradition in its content and form. The pattern of his themes seems to have moral undertones and an episodic structure. Narayan states:

The novelist seems to be so much obsessed by the spirit of oral tradition that he seems to have cast himself in the character of Nambi in the story. (Narayan, 1985: 187-92)

A close reading of Narayan’s novels reveals that Narayan has invariably employed the thematic pattern from the rich and inexhaustible storehouse of Indian mythologies, legends and puranas. ‘A Tiger for Malgudi’ for instance, is narrated on the structural pattern of the ‘Panchatantra’ Says Narayan,

During the Kumbh Mela festival, which recurs every twelve years at the confluence of the three rivers Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati in Allahabad, a vast crowd gathers for a holy bath in the rivers. A midst that ocean of humanity also arrives a hermit with his companion, a tiger. He does not hold the animal on a leash since he claims they were brothers in previous lives. The tiger freely moves about without hurting or scaring anyone. Such a combination seemed incredible when I read reports of it and saw the photographs. But as I got used to the idea, I began to speculate on its possibilities for a novel. Also I came across a few other instances of enduring friendship between tigers and human beings. (Narayan, 1986:7)

The most significant feature of Narayan's craft of fiction is the employment of comic wit and ironic point of view. The bifocal perception helps Narayan escape from being called a conscious moralist. This perception so fully merges with the moral tone in Narayan's novels that it is difficult to take them apart. The bifocal perception in the final analysis seems to become the novelist's strategy to underline the predicament of
the common man caught in the illusory web of life and his characteristic struggle to extricate from it.

1.2.2 Narayan- Salient Literary Features

The salient features of Narayan’s art and craft of writing, considered in their totality, seem to be significantly contributing to the 'aura' of Narayan's literary image. The real estimate of this image, as in the case of every art writer, may only be made when it is viewed and reviewed through critical prism. A general review of Narayan's novels shows that there seems to be a very favourable critical consensus. Barring certain stray and rather distracting critical tones, the novelist has met with the most encouraging and welcoming reception from the critical faculty. It may certainly be a fruitful and rewarding exercise to see the testimony of the 'critical reception' reflected in the reviews taken as sample tones of Narayan's craft of fiction. At a deeper level, however, ‘Malgudi’ seems to pervade the mere local boundaries. Iyengar comments:

Malgudi is Narayan’s ‘Casterbridge,’ but the inhabitants of Malgudi although they may have their recognizable local-trappings – are essentially human, and hence, have their kinship with all humanity. Malgudi is everywhere (Iyengar, 1983: 360)

Literature is a mirror of society in which one can watch human drama of life, so to say mirroring the intimate picture of Indian society; the personages staged by Narayan are the reflections of real life. Living absorbed in religion and family, Narayan is well acquainted with the developments within an Indian family. He has narrated the stories of his people through a deceptively simple frame of a family. ‘Family’ seems to constitute the bed-rock of Narayan’s fictional world. Narayan has great regards for family ties and pities of the home and human relationships. Walsh focuses on the novelist’s employment of the ‘family frame’ thus:

The family is the immediate context in which his sensibility operates and novels are remarkable for subtlety and conviction with family relationships are treated. (Walsh, 1965)
The deceptively simple, narrative of the Narayan novel reveals certain thematic patterns. Narayan establishes correlations between literary form and thematic content. Achieving homogeneity of theme and strategy, he has set all his novels on the themes of equilibrium and wholeness. The patterns may be labelled as tradition versus modernity, the return of the native and illusion versus reality. The narration of Narayan novels ends at a point of reference where it begins. Most of the leading characters follow this pattern as their fictional journey brings them back to the beginning.

1.3 SETTING: THE SPIRIT OF THE NOVEL
1.3.1 Definition of Setting
A novelist cannot imagine a novel without a setting real like Hardy’s Wessex or imaginary like Narayan’s Malgudi. There is an organic relationship between the novelist and the setting of his novel. The structure of the novel does not stand without a setting to support it, “Setting of a narrative or dramatic work is the ‘locale’ in which its action occurs.” (Abrams, 2000:284)

In the fictional writing of a writer the place is usually assumed to be the real one. Thus, Hardy’s Wessex is the Dorset and Wiltshire and Arnold Bennet’s five towns are the Potteries and Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha country is easily recognizable territories. Mishra rightly defines it as “In a novel certain events take place in a certain location at a particular point of time. The relationship between place, time and action is called setting.” (Mishra 1989:28)

Setting in the fiction includes the time location and everything in which a story takes place and initiates the main backdrop and mood for a story. When and where a story takes place is called ‘setting’ (Salunke, 2010:130) Place is understood as a geographic territory functioning basically as a ‘Locale’ of the fictional universe. In the case of accomplished writer the ‘Spirit of place’ goes beyond this meaning. Some features of the setting can be underlined.

1.3.2 Features of the setting
The place constitutes the real essence of the novel. The elements of a novel such as plot, theme and characterization are determined by the setting. ‘Place’ makes the novel
a convincing, authentic picture of life for the reader. It also makes the aesthetic experience presented in the book concrete by lending it a local name and habitation. A sense of place causes author’s concentration on the essential in character, episode or setting.

The events and characters in the novel are influenced by the setting and sometimes it becomes an active protagonist. To present unique customs and attitude of the people the place is employed and it explains the physical conditions of the characters against which they have to fight. Particular setting evokes particular emotions. Hardy broods over a painting by Salvator Rosa near his old house which suggests the nature of Hardy’s present mood.

‘Background’ in the novel is, like ‘Character’ (Allot, 1959) which contributes the writer to carry the things into the human world. Environment shapes a man’s life and helps him to find out what he is. The social implications of the portraits are emphasized by the interplay of ‘character and setting.’ The setting of the novel is the background against which the characters live out their lives. It can be concerned with the place in which characters live and also the time in which they live. In any work of art setting gives reader the feel of the people who move through it. Elizabeth Brown has said nothing can happen nowhere. “The locale of the happening always colours the happening and often, to a degree, shapes it.” (Bruto, 1977)

A background of the novel is also more than a backcloth for all novels and it has some sociological implications. The human beings do not exist independently of the society in which they live. A rebel is conditioned by the society in which he lives as a conformist or a compromiser. The place where we have our roots should become the setting. It is not simply to be used by the writer but it is to be discovered, as in each novel itself. In the act of writing the setting becomes a discovery.

1.3.3 Significance of setting
Setting indeed makes an aesthetic experience concrete and endows it with precise location. ‘Emma’ by Jane Austen is a faithful representation of the life of country gentlemen during the 19th century. Eudora Welty rightly observes:
A novel is essentially bound up in the locale with the real, the present and day today experience of life. (Welty, 1968: 254)

While writing a novel, a novelist sets his eye on the human beings, their life pattern, their relationships, their feelings, their faith etc. It is here that the novelist simply writes about “Human Life”, which Eudora Welty says, is a “fiction theme.” One may underline that location is the ground conductor of all the currents of emotion, belief and moral conviction. It is by its very nature that novel is all bound up in its setting and it does rely up on place for its life only because feelings are bound up in place.

The spirit of place symbolized in Hardy's Egdon Heath, is depicted in ‘The Return of The Native.’ Hardy’s place is primitively formidable and elemental force that does not seem to hesitate to take the life of the individual not confirming to its spirit. Eustacia Wye, for instance, pays a heavy penalty-death on account of such a trait. Hardy's Egdon Heath is a gloomy, stern, and vast background against which humanity seems to appear trivial.

Setting as a spirit of place is realized symbolically as “microcosm” (Mishra, 1989: 29) which represents certain nation or people or a little world in which the author confines his characters and their actions to a very limited place. William Golding for example in his novel, ‘Lord of the Flies’ isolates the school boys and transports them to a deserted Island where they divide themselves into two groups and fight to gain power. This setting illuminates the basic animality that lurks below the surface of our civilized behaviour. The microscopic world thus enables Golding to probe deeply into a particular facet of man's motivation, his thirst for power and domination.

Egdon Heath is ‘a face up on which time makes but little impression’….Wessex is a persistent and symbolic factor in Hardy's mentality. (Ward, 1956:155)

Hardy's Wessex posseses timeless and changeless spirit that endures in our consciousness and Egdon Health seems to be a living presence swaying the lives of the people. The Wessex, Hardy's Wordsworthian and notable country has poetic intensity of vision of varying mood of nature, which makes his fiction pictorial and
poetic. The Five Towns in Arnold Bennett’s fictions are generally known as Pottery-town of Tunstall, Burslem, Hanley Stroke-up-on Trent and Longton. No reader can fail to notice their presence in Bennett’s fiction as Turmhill, Bursley, Hanbridge, Knype and Longshaw and the setting of his novels is constituted by them.

A writer sets his story in a place which is familiar to his readers either from experience or by acquaintance. British writers write about events that take place either in London or in the cities of Britain. The British readers are familiar with these places. Dickens’s ‘Oliver Twist,’ Thackeray’s ‘Vanity fair,’ Hardy’s ‘Tess of the D’Urbervilles’, ‘Under the Green-Wood Tree’ and ‘The Mayor of Casterbridge’ are set in the rural areas of Southern Modern England. Writers also choose to set their novels in familiar places. In ‘Lucky Jim’, Kingsly Amis wrote about the humorous adventures of young man going through university.

A novelist may set novels in a place that is unfamiliar to the readers of his own nation. ‘The Heart of the Matter’ and ‘A Burnt out Case’ by Graham Greene, take place in West Africa, while ‘The Power and the Glory’ is set in South America. E. M. Forster’s ‘Passage to India’ is set in India when it was a part of the British Empire. An author sometimes frames his book in an entirely imaginary place which is not familiar to any one at all. The hero, Gulliver of Jonathan Swift visits all the imaginary places: Lilliput, the land of the little people; Brobdignag, the land of the giants, and Laputa, the floating island.

Critics have generally considered place in literature to be of great worth. D. H. Lawrence is the first to emphasize place in that is setting literature theoretically:

Every people is polarized in some particular locality, which is home, the homeland. Different places on the face of the earth have different vital effluence, different vibration, different chemical exhalation, different polarity, with different stars, call it what you like. But the spirit of place is a great reality. The Nile Valley produced not only the corn but the terrific religions of EGYPT. China produces the Chinese, and will go on doing so. The Chinese in San Francisco will in time
cease to be Chinese, for America is a great melting pot. (Beal, 1996: 301)

Then, the place, it is taken for granted, in a fictional work, is “an inclusive frame work, and hence it shapes and governs the writer’s art of characterization, his sense of direction, and his entire point of view, so to say they seem to be caged within the compass of place.” Mirriam Allott rightly says:

The artistic self-consciousness which compels the novelist to make ‘things of truth’ from ‘things of fact’ by adjusting them to their new context has gradually seen to it that the background and setting of his ‘scene’ shall be as integral to his design as his plot, his characters, his dialogue and his narrative technique. (Allott, 1965: 215)

Artistic drawing of setting, in the fiction, by the fiction writer, however, does not signify the painting of scenery as an appropriate background to the narrative but the portrait of the entire environ like the country, district, urban or rural location, climate, customs, economic level, occupations, buildings, diet, family patterns, religion, politics, moral values and ways, intellectual and cultural life, education and amusement. Whether the place sketched by the writer is large or small does not matter, it may be a city with its big crowds, buildings and means of transportation or a village only covering a narrow panorama of life.

Hardy's Wessex is the Dorset and Wiltshire very intimately known and dear to him. Arnold Bennett's five towns are the potteries which can be easily recognized by the readers, Trollope’s Carsetshire is the region round Salisbury, Mrs. Gaskell’s Cranford is Knutsford, Cheshire, William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha country is the north Mississippi area, and Mary Webb's Silop is Shropshire.

The close reading of the fiction of any writer enables the reader to say that the place a novelist depicts in his fiction is strange amalgamation of both the real and imaginary; so to say it is a partly actual and a partly dream-country. Thomas Hardy, rightly remarks:
The appellation which I had thought to reserve to the horizons a landscape of a partly real, partly dream country, has become more and more popular as a practical provincial definition; and the dream country has, by degrees, solidified into a utilitarian region which people can go to take a house in, and write to the papers from. (Hardy, 1989: x - xi)

The place, the novelist originates to shape the living background to his story, howsoever imaginary it may be, is very full of life, and he knows all about it and has a vivid picture of it. Concentrating on place with remarkable skill and artistry, Trollope writes over the region:

I became more closely acquainted than ever with the new shire which I had added to the English counties, I had it all in my mind, - its roads and railways, its towns and parishes, its members of parliament, and the different hunts which order over it. I knew all the great lords and their castles, the squires and their parks, the rectors and churches. This was the fourth novel of which I had placed the scene in Barsetshire, and as I wrote it I made a map of the dear county. Throughout these stories there has been no name given to a fictitious site which does not represent to me a spot of which I know all the accessories, as though I had lived and wandered there. (Anthony Trollope, Barchester Towers, Chapter viii)

1.3.4 SETTING AS USED BY MAJOR NOVELISTS

1.3.4.1 The Eighteenth Century English Novelists
The Eighteenth century English Novelists-known as the four charioteers of the English Novel have concentrated more on plot and character-Samuel Richardson’s novels are written in epistles and Henry Fielding uses the picaresque form presenting his protagonists in the City, on the Road and in the Country. Smollet deals with the adventures and Sterne uses the technique of “associations” in his experiments with the novel form. In the nineteenth century Jane Austen and Thomas Hardy have recognized the significance of setting as the ‘spirit of place’. In the twentieth century Conrad and D. H. Lawrence have accorded centrality to the setting in their novels. In
America, Mark Twain’s life on the Mississippi river and Faulkner “fictitious country” in the South America emphasize the role of setting in fiction. In India, Raja Rao’s ‘Kanthapura’ and Rama Mehta’s ‘Inside the Haveli’ have used the location as superbly as used by the creator of Malgudi-R. K. Narayan.

1.3.4.2 Austen
The supreme practitioner of the novel of manners, Jane Austen (1775-1817) represents social experiences in her novels. She spent her youth in a country parish and had acquaintances with county families, clergymen, and naval officers. The attention to social duties was the main business of these people and interest in matrimony. This world is presented by Austen in her novels. The world of Jane Austen is neither urban nor industrial nor modern, it is generally a small world, a village or country town, in relatively isolated rural area. The books are usually populated with five or six families and a few people creating the drama:

“It was not the external world that gets depicted in Austen’s work but the placid village life in which men and women of five or six families come together and interact.” (Rajimwale, 2007: 286)

An ordinary daily life and the major events such as tea parties, ball dances and family visits have great help in forming the subjects in works of Austen. The most important tool irony is used in satirical portraiture and the effect is only humour and amusement, and not the serious harm. Follies and eccentricism are excused in an atmosphere of get together and all are happy. They attempt to seek the social harmony through mutual understanding.

The characters are organically related to their environment and to each other and they are ‘round’ as opposed to “flat” characters. The plot and characters are dominated by questions of money. Jane Austen is the only English novelist who was in sense a Marxists before Marx. She exposes the economic basis of social behaviour with an organic smile. The theme of marriage in ‘Pride and Prejudice’ is based on economics, such as that contracted by Mr. Collins and Charlotte Lucas. As a result of Charlottle’s need for financial security, she is willing to destroy her own life by liking herself to a pompous ass. The pressures of economic system are being exerted against a young
An unmarried woman was doomed to the unhappy life of caring for someone else’s children - as Jane Austen did herself. Otherwise there were no outlets for women in industry, commerce, business, or education system. Jane Austen in her novels especially in ‘Pride and Prejudice’ dramatizes the economic inequality of women, showing how women had to marry undesirable mates in order to gain some financial security.

Another type of marriage is based on superficial qualities as sex, appearance, good looks, and youthful vivacity. The example of this is the runaway marriage of Lydia and Wickham, which ends in a kind of mutual tolerance. Wickham usually leaves Lydia alone while he stays away in London, and both are dependent on Elizabeth and Jane for financial support. The sexual attraction between them has apparently disappeared.

1.3.4.3 Thomas Hardy
The novels and short stories of Thomas Hardy (1871-1896) are localised in Wessex, the old name of the territory in the South West of England, consisting of shires of Berkshire, Wills, Somerset, Hamshire, Dorset and Devon. Every variety of this diverse landscape is portrayed in Hardy’s novels: the rocky coast in ‘A Pair of Blue Eyes’ (1873), the farm land in ‘Far From the Madding Crowd’ (1874), the Wild heath in ‘The Return of the Native’ (1878), the woods and orchards in ‘The Woodlanders’ (1887), the rich fertile dairy vales in ‘Tess of D’Urbervilles.’ (1810)

Egdon Heath in ‘The Return of the Native’ is given a remarkable importance as the location where most of the events take place. The significance that Hardy grants to Egdon Heath comes very close to destroying the normal order of things. The incidents and the episodes are closely mingled with Wessex trades. The different activities of the characters such as sheep rearing, cider making, furze cutting, timber growing, stone working, milking, harvesting, the keeping at pigs are witnessed. The tragedy of ‘The Return of the Native’ springs from the inter-reaction of the character of Eustacia Vye and the quality of Egdon Heath. It is to escape from sombre Egdon Heath that Eustacia marries Clym Yeobright. The thought of disgusting Egdon finds her in frustration as Clym shows no intention of returning to Paris. The story cannot take place without this piece of Wessex. The living spirit Egdon Heath punishes the
deviators in Hardy’s novels. The ending of the novel reflects poetic justice and the deviators meet fatal end in ‘Return of the Native.’ Realizing unhappy marriage with Clym Yeobright, Eustacia revives association with Wildeve and leaves her husband after quarrel and attempts to escape from Egdon Heath. The pathetic end of the life of Eustacia is witnessed by drowning along with Wildeve who jumps into the water in an effort to rescue her.

The rustics who form the ‘chorus’ are part and parcel of Egdon Heath who serve the background of the main story and their comments on the major characters provide some information about them. They relieve by their comic behaviour the tensions and gravity of the main story and find playing a very occasional vital role in the plot. Egdon Heath is regarded as one of the characters in the novel. The Heath is the dark, immemorial environment whose influence controls the lives and destinies of the people. The born and brought up on Egdon Heath Clym Yeobright finds the hill congenial, friendly and its spirit in his blood. Leaving the post as a manager of a diamond business in Paris, he returns to his native Egdon which underlines that Clym cannot remain happy away from his native place. The characters in Hardy’s novels are the Wessex inhabitants and the main characters are intimately depended on the Wessex soil for their livelihood. He prefers shepherd to sergeant and farmer (Far from the Madding Crowds), farmer to doctor (Woodlanders), career to vicar (Under the Green wood Tree), Ruddlemen to innkeeper, and country girl to captain’s daughter (The Return of the Native). There are the persons of lower social ranks, and are fastened to the soil. They speak the racy Wessex dialect. (Tiwari, 2010:30)

For Hardy any landscape is valuable for human associations. Heath is the element which has conditioned the formation of characters, which is an agent to their ends. For better or worse they all pass their lives in the Heath; the Heath, for better or worse assists in shaping their lives. (Tiwari, 2010: 92) Clym is intended to stay for ever in his birth place to start a school for the education of the rustics. But the illiterate Egdon people would never have accepted his nobility or his attempt of educating them. In order to bring thoughts into action Clym studies hard late into the night. Resultantly, he grows semi blind and is obliged to take to the humble work of a furze cutter to support himself. Clym remains a representative example of the symbiosis on the Heath between man and nature. The themes in the novels of Hardy contain aspects of
life which presents a certain view of working of the universe as it affects humanity. He offers Wessex as an illustration of his comprehensive scheme of the cosmos. The Wessex farmer is deeply local in birth and is set against the background of the universe. (Tiwari, 2010:30-31)

1.3.4.4 Joseph Conrad
The life of Conrad (1857-1924) as a sailor and his wanderings are closely woven into his novels and the circumstances of his birth as a Pole and his early life as a sailor coloured his outlook on life. He saw life as a test where suffering-physical and moral suffering shapes his character and convictions. From 1874 when he was seventeen he sailed ceaselessly for the next twenty years. His greatest-works ‘Lord Jim’(1900), ‘The Heart of Darkness’(1902) ‘Nastromo’(1904) ‘The Secret Agent’ (1907) and ‘Under Western Eyes’ (1911) have the sea as the background. The novelist uses the sea as a symbolism for the uncertainties and chance encounter of life.

Most of his novels and short stories have the sea as the background for the action and as a symbolic parallel for their heroes’ inner turbulence and contradictions. (Conrad, 2004:2)

‘The ‘Heart of Darkness’ is more or less a record of his own travels through the Congo, and his own experiences in the dark continent. Symbolically ‘The Heart of Darkness’ means the inner depths of the human mind and consciousness. The impenetrable tropical forest suggests the powers of darkness, the mystery of the uncivilized and the world of irrationality. The ‘Heart of Darkness, ’is a deeply philosophical novel with suffering-physical and moral-as the substance of the novel. Marlow undertakes a journey from ‘civilized’ Europe through the river and continent of dark world and the conflict between the manager of the ivory company and Kurtz, the ivory merchant. That constitutes the plot of the novel.

The theme of the novel underlines that every soul has its own internal contradictions which are seen in shades of dark which symbolizes degradation and light that stands for nobility. Consequently, no man is all good or all bad and it is only circumstances that make him so. For instance the final portrait of Kurtz is the devil himself but he has been made so by manager’s cruelty and selfishness.
'The Heart of Darkness' is a magnificent example of atmosphere determining air of equatorial effect of the short story. The heavy tropical air of equatorial Africa broods like a miasma over the monstrous and uncouth works of nature, twisting humanity itself into similar forms of atrocious inhumanity. (Millett, 2008:38

1.3.4.5 D H Lawrence

David Herbert Lawrence (1835-1930) was born in September 1885 at Eastwood, “a mining village of some three thousand souls, about eight miles from Nottingham, and one mile from the small stream, the Eastwood, which divides Nottinghamshire from Derbyshire.” (Purohit, 1999:3-4) Lawrence ‘grew up amid coal mining people whom he observed and later portrayed in his fiction.’ (Rajimwale, 2007:433) Eastwood is hilly country and the Sherwood forest district, seems an extremely beautiful countryside. Lawrence says “It was an extremely beautiful countryside, first between the red sandstone, the oak tree of Nottingham and the cold limestone, the ash tree the stone fences of Derbyshire. It was still the old England of forest and agricultural past; there were no motor cars, the mines were, in a sense, an accident in the landscape and Robinhood, and his merry men were not very far away.” (John Keats, 261) The past fresh landscape of Estwood could be portrayed by Lawrence in his works even later when he shifted from there to “many goodly states and kingdoms.” He had complaints against the changes and has struggled against “Wasteland of Industrialization.” But nothing can save the place from the poor, grimy brick houses, with sand roots.’(Lawrence, 1962:817)

Lawrence was moved by the sense of hidden desert, thrill and adventure in stone fences of Derbyshire; a sense of beauty and cruelty in collier’s lives; but all this was years back. The First World War destroyed above all scenes. Even the characters in the novel began to make complaints. Lawrence, instead of becoming upset at the changes taking place because of industrialization, continued to be aware of the influence of native religion. This afflicted feeling is put into words all through his works. Due to industrialization the life of ordinary people was totally changed and it scared the country side and caused ugliness everywhere. The country was very pleasing for the people but manmade England so vile.
The concepts like man and his environment, character and situation give meaning to the complexity of constant interactions. These characters with their constant conflict are not active “they are acted up on by the situations and they defend rather than attack, a sense of despair pervades sometimes.” (Purohit, 1999:18) Lawrence’s keen interest is in his characters so he puts them in situations where they work out their own salvation and ruin. The characters of Lawrence are “life-like”. They are raised to the stature where intensity of feelings and emotions reach, inflicted upon them by the situations they are in. These characters are victimised by these situations.

The story ‘Odour of Chrysanthemums,’ (1914) has an echo of Lawrence’s novel ‘Sons and Lovers.’ Elizabeth Bates lives and suffers the life as of Gertrude Morel and her children are her concern. The beginning of the story shows wife waiting anxiously for husband’s return from the mine, who comes home and drinks every day. “It is usual wait of a miner’s wife with anxiety and anger while children rally around, with a tension of expectancy.” The characters in ‘Daughter of the Vicar’ develop in the setting of Nottinghamshire who continually struggle to survive for keeping their social status and in turn each makes compromises with their lives, it suggests that they are victims of circumstances except Louisa who refuses to give herself to fate and fights to achieve her love till the last.

1.3.4.6 Mark Twain
Mark Twain (1835-1910) Wellknown for his novels ‘Adventures of Huckleberry Finn’ (1884), and ‘The Adventures of ‘Tom Sawyer’ (1876) was a remarkable “impressionist” (Mishra, 2010:169) His descriptions of things such as the picture of a summer storm, or the picture of dawn on the Mississippi, both from Huckleberry Finn are evocative and instantaneous photographs. “The pictures Mark Twain had seen and lived hundred times we see at once the striking superiority of the realistic impressionist over the imaginative artist.” (Ibid., p. 169-170)

‘Huckleberry Finn’ written in the vernacular, characterized by local colour regionalism is observed for a colourful description of people and places along the Mississippi River. It is also a severe search of encroached attitudes, especially racism of the Southerners in America. The travelling of Huck and his friend Jim, a runaway
slave, down the Mississippi River seems to offer permanent images of escape and freedom.

1.3.4.7 William Faulkner
William Faulkner, an American novelist is known for the series known as the Yoknapatawpha cycle, developed as a fable of the real Americcan South in history. He created an entire “imaginative landscape Yoknapatawpha county mentioned in numerous novels along with several families with interconnections extending back for generations.”(Shankar, 2011:75) Yoknapatwpha County is the North Missisipi area. In ‘As I Lay Dying’ the setting is not limited merely to physical background, but it consists of the psychological, religious, moral and social milieu in which characters exist. The novel is about a poor- white family and its journey through fire and flood to bury the mother in Jefferson, the county seat of Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha county, as, Welty thinks, ‘Feeling are bound up in place.’(Kumar, 2003:233)The action of ‘As I Lay Dying’ is related to the minds of the nineteen different characters. Faulkner simply renders the thoughts of each as he participates in the action. The feelings of all these people about the events and about each other help readers take interest in otherwise the tasteless account of a burial journey.

1.3.4.8 Raja Rao
The village life is strongly focused in the novels of Raja Rao (1908-2006) and he describes the movement of the village from solidarity to complete and utter destruction. There are three types of experiences; the political struggle for freedom, the religious life that highlights Indian life and the social concerns. ‘Kanthapura’ (1938) by Raja Rao is the story of a small South Indian Village which is the center of freedom movement of the nineteenth thirties. There is no main character other than the village, what happens to it, what it becomes.

The village Kanthapura is like any other village in India with its own culture and history. The early part of the book focuses on developing a sense of the village, and establishing its ambience. In the first para Achakka informs us of its geographical location:
Our village — I don’t think you have ever heard about it—Kanthapura is its name and it is in the province of Karka. (Rao, 1938: 1)

Kanthapura, like Hardy’s Edgon Heath, has remained in isolation for ages from the rest of the world, “far from the madding crowd’s ignoble strife.” (Bala, 2007:189-190) In spite of that, it has its own stable social structure, a culture and an unchanging pattern of life blessed by the life giving waters of the Himvathy and the goddess Kenchamma has protected them against natural calamity. A Folk song describes role of Kenchamma in the life of the villages:

Kenchamma, Kenchamma, Goddess benign and bounteous, mother of earth, blood of life. Harvest queen, rain crowned, Kenchamma, Kenchamma: Goddess benign and bounteous. (Rao, 1938:4)

Kanthapura has kept alive the flame of religion and spirituality through its rituals, poojas, Harikathas and cycles of festivals. The lighting of Kartik lamps is a symbolic act by which Kanthapura society reassures the presence of an eternal light which would save them from the darker powers. Moorthy underlines the arrival of Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian political scene not as a political event but as a religious experience in the tradition of the Hindu Avatars. In ‘The Renaissance in India’ (Aurbindo 1973:30) Sri Aurbindo rightly points out:

All movements in this country whether political or spiritual movement and as Narasimhaiah has argued out the point with reference to Raja Rao’s debt to Ignatio Silone’s Fontmara, “Religion becomes the nucleus of social regeneration in Kanthapura in the true tradition of India where social reformers have been profoundly religious men.(Narasimhaiah, 49)

1.3.4.9 Rama Mehta

Rama Mehta’s ‘Inside the Haveli’(1977) is a novel of the small Oswal community of Udaipur, an elite, endogamous group which, continued to segregate its women and kept them in ‘Purdah’ long after the rest of Hindu society rejected it as an outdated and unjust social custom. Gita, educated girl from Bombay, marries Ajay Singh the
only son of Mewar. The moment she reaches Udaipur, her women relatives hastily cover her face, bundle her into a curtained car - she is not even permitted to look out of the windows.

Gita's mother in law, however, is determined to mould her according to the traditions of the family, “Binniji”, she said gently but firmly, “keep your face covered; by now you should be able to move about without uncovering your face.” After a brief pause, as if to give emphasis to her words, she said, “Do not talk too much to your young cousins - in – law, its not becoming. You know, the women are critical because you are still clumsy.” As Gita finds no way out, she begins to accept the situation in which her parents have placed her. Nevertheless, Gita continues to remain at war with herself and, from time to time, reminds her husband about his promise to move to Delhi. Her husband procrastinates until Gita finally realizes that he is too deeply attached to his parents and rooted in his family tradition to leave the Haveli. Instead of feeling disappointed, Gita is surprised to find herself strangely relieved.

1.4 MALGUDI-THE LOCATION OF NARAYAN’S NOVELS

1.4.1 Malgudi as the spirit of place
The Lawrentian revelation of criticism of ‘the spirit of place’ (Beal, 1955:296) prompts one to take yet another and still another steady look at his Malgudi novels. In fact the reading of this entire corpus of Narayan comes as the most rewarding experience. It is here that the Malgudi locale offers newer perspective. Read thus, the spirit of place in Narayan's fiction does have all the connotations spelt out by D.H.Lawrence. Lawrence, however seems to be aware of the beginning of new awareness of the spirit of place as reflected in Narayan’s novels.

The study of the critical material available on Narayan, and especially the article ‘the Spirit of Place’ (Lodge, 1972 122 - 127) by D. H. Lawrence have inspired the researcher to take up the study of the place ‘Malgudi’, in Narayan's fiction. Compared with other aspects of the Narayan novel (plot, theme, language, characters, style, and philosophy) ‘place’ as an aspect though an integral and centrifugal of his fictional world has not been dealt with thoroughly. The lone exception is that of M.K. Naik who has discussed the topic in ‘Spirit of Place’ (Naik, 2004:57-88).
The Magudi novels are strongly imbued with what Lawrence has called ‘the spirit of place’. The action of all the novels is set in the imaginary small town of Malgudi in south India. A place ‘is not so much the back-cloth for his narratives as their very back-bone.’ (Naik, 2004:57) Situated between Madras and Tiruchirapalli, Malgudi is about three hundred and sixty miles by the road from Madras. James J. Malone the film producer in ‘The Guide’ “has picked up an interpreter at Madras and driven straight through three hundred and seventy five miles” (Narayan, 1958:217) to a village named Mangal, is ten miles from Malgudi. In ‘The Financial Expert’ Margayya catches “six o’clock train to Madras coming from Trichy” (Narayan, 1952:133), and arrives in Madras Egmore station “in the cold morning light” (Narayan, 1952:136) probably on the next day. It is very clear from Raju’s discussion that Malgudi is situated in Tamilnadu. He says “two whole trains each a day, the noon train from Madras, and evening one from Trichy” (Narayan, 1952:38).

R. K. Narayan's novels reveal that they have all the potentialities for such a study. In his novels the researcher finds a multidimensional expression of the spirit of place. The reality is that the place constitutes the real essence of novel. In his perceptive study, *The Rise of the Novel*, Professor Ian watt has pointed out that one of the important characteristics of the novel seems that it gives its personages, “a local habitation and name.”(Bland, 2003:213) Glorifying Yoknapatawpha, Faulkner, has shown his excellent mastery of place in fiction. It seems to be so with Narayan whose fictional setting is Malgudi: a town in South India. R.K. Narayan’s first novel-’Swami and Friends’ introduces the world of Malgudi to his readers. The world of Malgudi grows in size and maturity with his successive novels.

**1.4.2 Malgudi grows in size and maturity**

Narayan’s fictional locale, Malgudi is on the border of the states of Mysore and Madras, which has a municipality, a Town Hall, a club and two schools – The Albert Mission school and board highschool even in the early thirties. We hear of motor cars in which Swami rides to the club. Even in 1935 Malgudi had a Theatre – ‘The Palace Talkies.’

Malgudi in 1935 suddenly came into line with the modern age by building a well equipped - theatre - the palace talkies-which simply
brushed aside the old corrugated sheet-roofed variety hall, which form time immemorial had entertained the citizens of Malgudi with tattered silent film. (20)


The Malgudi in ‘Swami and Friends’ is not the same as the Malgudi of ‘The Vendor of Sweets.’ It has grown from a small sized agricultural town to semi industrial city. In ‘The Guide’ it passes through various phases of development. Speaking from the topographical point of view, the Albert Mission College, headed by Principal Brown, The Central Co-operative Land mortgage Bank with its imposing structure, the newly built bunglows in the Lawley Extension, Englandia Banking co-operation, The Sunrise Pictures, all speak emphatically of the story of the growth of the town.

In 1930, Swami is a pupil, first in the Albert Mission and later in the Board High School. The Mission School is already Albert Mission College from which the hero of ‘The Bachelor of Arts’ graduates and in which the hero of ‘The English Teacher’ lectures on English Literature. Singaram the old peon in the Mission School serves to receive a tip from Krishnan the English teacher when he leaves the hostel for good to set up house with his young wife and child. In ‘The Dark Room’ we venture a little across the river and into Sukkur Village. In ‘Mr. Sampath’ we go to studio on the other bank of the Saryu. In ‘The Financial Expert’ there are references of tea estates on Mempi Hills. We hear of ruined temples and half a dozen jungle-tribes on the top of the Hills. In ‘The Guide’, there are the “Spacious bamboo jungles of Mempi” and we are privileged to trace Saryu’s source on Mempi Peak. Marco takes room in Mempi Peak House on the top most cliffs.” (Iyengar: 282)
The most prominent feature of Malgudi’s landscape, the Sarayu flows “cutting across the northern boundary of the town” glistening like a scimitar in moonlight.”(Narayan, 1958:161) It is the sacred river, “Believed by Malgudians to have been born of a scratch made by Rams’s arrow when he was on his way to Lanka.” (Singh, 1999:68) The holy river is the pride of the town; distinguished visitors are taken to the roof of the town-hall to have the glimpse of its silvery expanse. The Malgudi people take leisurely strolls on its sandbanks. Friendships are made here; old contracts are renewed and business transactions are finalized.

It is here that Mani, the big bully in ‘Swami and Friends’ waits for Rajam and plans to bundle him up and throw him into the river. Chandran in ‘The Bachelor of Arts’ steals a glance of beautiful Malthi that pushes him in love. Sampath, the printer of Malgudi relates the story of his failures to Shrinivasa....The Market Road, “Lifeline” of Malgudi, is crowded, noisy and dirty. A man like Krishnan would be very much out of place. But Margayya of “The Financial Expert” views that the more crowded the place, the better are prospects of his trade.

‘Swami and Friends’, the first novel of Narayan, is an entertaining story of a school boy. It is a cine-matograph of the psychology and misadventures of the young and innocent hero Swaminathan and his chums. An intimate reading of the novel, however, offers invaluable clues that focus on the totality of Narayan's fictional world. It is in this context that ‘Swami and Friends’ - the school boy's classic takes for granted a great significance as it convincingly and effortlessly establishes itself as the fore-runner of all other Narayan’s novels. One may also underline that the novel acknowledges a rich harvest of the fore-running features: the title, the locale, the people and the device of ‘the rite-de passage’.

‘Swami and Friends’ is a fore-runner (for the rest of the Narayan novels) in the context of the permanent locale Malgudi, Narayan’s magic-casement surfaces on one’s consciousness. R.K.Narayan is the creator of this permanent fictional territory. Malgudi remains forever for Narayan’s fictional world. He casts all his novels and most of his short and long stories against the exotic and vibrant background of his imaginary locale.
1.4.3 The origin of Malgudi

R. K. Narayan, the Malgudi novelist in an All India Radio Interview said that, his “Malgudi is a small temple town situated on the bank of a holy river, like Nanjangud. It is also a university town, like Mysore’” (Sundaram, 1974) The question has remained unresolved! Which Malgudi does Narayan have in mind? It is in this context that M. K. Naik’s pronouncement on the debate appears sensible as he points out that it is perhaps an exercise in futility to identify the origin of Malgudi, for Malgudi has a viable existence in the geography of Narayan’s imagination. Moreover, Naik’s view assumes greater significance when one understands that the identification of Malgudi with an existing Locale is bound to delimit the boundaries of his territory which is again likely to fall to the ravishes of time. The imaginary Malgudi, like the picturesque town engraved on the Grecian Urn of Keats, will always remain imperishable and forever eternal.

1.4.4 Depiction of Malgudi as a Living Presence

Since Narayan has been casting his novels, from ‘Swami and Friends’ (1935) to “The Tiger for Malgudi’ (1983) against the only setting Malgudi, a few contradictions appear in the depiction of his Malgudi. These discrepancies chiefly refer distance, location; Malgudi, and its environs, landmarks and citizens. Ved Mehta states that “its landmarks…all from book to book chaotically change position.”(Ved Mehta, 1974:123-124)

“Malgudi is situated between Madras and Tiruchirapalli (a geographical distance of 198 miles). It cannot be at a distance of nearly 360 miles from Madras as stated in ‘The Guide’. Malone had picked up an interpreter at Mardas and had driven straight through, three hundred and seventy five miles away from Malgudi. (Narayan, 1958:27) Talapur, a small village is mentioned in four novels. Chandran goes there for “bride seeing” (The Bachelor of Arts); it is the place of Savitri’s Father (Narayan, 1938: .125); Srinivas’s ancestral house is here (Narayan, 1949:11) and Nataraj possesses through it on his way back from mempi village to Malgudi” (Narayan, 1961: 53) (Naik, 2004 : 74) By a train, Chandran goes there. He leaves Malgudi in the early morning and reaches at Talpur at 4.p.m. But Vasu requires only three hours in a jeep from Malgudi to Mempi village! There is no railway track in that forest region at least in ‘The Man-Eater of Malgudi.’
Moreover, there are “tea or coffee” plantations on Mempi Hills mentioned in ‘Waiting for Mahatma’ and ‘Painter of Signs.’ In ‘The Guide’ it accounts that “people drank too much coffee and too little tea in these parts.” (Narayan, 1958: 214) The Propaganda Board declares free tea all day to big crowds. There are references to both tea and coffee in the same novel ‘The Man-Eater of Malgudi.’ Muthu works on tea-plantations on Mempi Hills, (Narayan, 1961:43) but Nataraj later refers to one “Achappa, a coffee planter on Mempi.” (Narayan, 1961: 105) Malgudi has not only a college but also the University as it is said that Raju in ‘The Guide’ attends a meeting “at the University” (Narayan, 1958:157) which indicates the development of Malgudi.

Malgudi remains for the reader “a living presence” (Naik, 2004:76) as the setting of Hardy and Faulkner. Wessex, Hardy’s locale in his novels consists of half a dozen counties, while area of Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha country is 2400 squire miles. These two novelists can record the developments in their respective regions on a large scale. The Wessex series of Hardy portrays the problems of a declining agricultural community and Faulkner’s Yoknapatwpha novels shows decay of aristocratic South in the United States.

1.4.5 Malgudi developing and changing
The Malgudi novels exhibit the town developing and changing over the years from 1930 the time of action in ‘Swami and friends’ to ‘The Painter of signs’ set in Nineteen seventies. It changes and yet remains essentially the same in spirit. Malgudi of the early novels from ‘Swami and Friends’ to ‘The English Teacher’ is actually unchanged it is a quiet, little, traditional Indian town. The change first begins in ‘Mr. Sampath’ ‘the district board and tank building and three or four cotton mills suddenly sprung up into existence. Overnight, as it were, Malgudi passed from a semi agricultural town to a semi industrial town, with a sudden influx of population of all sorts.” (Narayan, 1949:26)

The Muncipal Chairman informs the editor of ‘The Banner’ about “our Malgudi extension scheme which “visualized a garden city at the eastern end of the town, with its own market, business premises, cinema, schools and perfect houses.”(Narayan, 1949: 29) Mr.Sampath informs Srinivas that Mr. Soma Sundarm, the Dirstict Board
President, is ‘opening a bridge, five miles from here, across the Sarayu…It is going to transform our entire Malgudi district…This is going to be the busiest district in South India.”(Narayan, 1949: 70)

1.4.6 The impact of war on Malgudi

The impact of war is also easily recognizable in ‘The Financial Expert’, rice merchant suppliers to the army, contractors, drug- stockists, middle-men are seen involved in various activities and earn lot of money. Even Margayya an ordinary citizen of Malgudi, with his spectacular interest - scheme, makes himself a financial wizard, within a short span of efforts. Malgudi, a progressive, dynamic town with old parks, roads and colonies which undergo changes and are re-named, as “Lawley Road” in the honour of the “birth of independence.”

Coming of railway to Malgudi by the end of the ‘twenties’ and Albert Mission college began during the ‘thirties’ (Narayan, 1948:33-34, 43) and in ‘fifties prohibition was in force, ‘Permit holder became a social title in our land.”(Narayan, 1948:175) The “schooter riding boys” are seen in Malgudi and hotel is providing European food. (Narayan, 1967: 77-66) It is realized in ‘The Painter of sign’ Malgudi was changing in 1972. It was the base for a hydro-electric project some where on the Mempi Hills and jeeps and lorries passed through the Market Road all day.” Scientific progress is responsible for its topographical transformation. Malgudi, the town enjoys a flexible individuality. Down Market Road “little shops had developed in an abandoned alley…displaying all kinds of trinkets…most of them approved smuggler’s outlets for forbidden goods unloaded on deserted coasts” (Narayan, 1948: 41) Daisy’s “family planning centre” is an important sign of the changing time. The ‘hippie-like youth’ with ‘side burns’ who explains the stucco effect on the freshly painted signboard to his lawyer uncle. (Narayan, 1948: 10)

Malgudi changes with the advancement of time as it obtains a film studio, a road bridge on the river, a college and other amenities of modern civilization. The school boy Swami and his friends, the Bachelor of Arts, Krishnan who becomes an English Teacher, Mr. Sampath, the ‘go getter’, Margayya the financial expert. Raju the Railway porter, Jagan the petty vendor transformed into a sanyasi are all living personalities from the changing and complex milieu that is our India.
1.4.7 Malgudi remains unchanged

But Malgudi shows disinclination for gradual changes. The life which moves at slow pace is thoroughly not troubled by the outside world and its peculiarity remains the same. The people are strongly rooted in traditions and age-old customs. The editor of ‘The Banner’ and the script writer of the film speak about the never changing aspect of Malgudi ‘I might be in the twentieth century B. C. for all it matters or 4000 B. C.’ (Narayan, 1949:26)

Malgudi, inspite of changes and development remains essentially unchanged. Its traditional middle class values eventually remain supreme; the modern only touches the outskirts of the society and never gets into the innermost part. After the storm is over, characters return to what Chandran calls in ‘The Bachelor of Arts’, ‘a life freed from distracting illusions and hesterics.’(Narayan, 1938:123) Sarayu still goes on flowing. Raman’s Granny in ‘The Painter of signs’ must have been a young woman in the ‘thirties, but her thought process forty years later appear to be those which Swami’s Granny would have understood. Her final decision to leave the world and go to Banaras to die has relevance not only to the seventies but also to a whole living, ancient tradition. She seems to be more of a representative of Malgudi the “traditional town unused to modern life” than Daisy who is the ‘New Woman’ with her modern code of marriage and morals.

The hold of the Indian traditional values on Swami is as strong as the effect of modern civilization. Swami believes in the pebbles being converted into coins by the blessings of God. He as much as Malgudi itself, is conscious of the modern political activities. Malgudi is very much in the national mainstream. The demonstration by Swami and his chums to protest the arrest of Gauri Shankar, a prominent political leader of Bombay, shows Malgudi in these years is at the cross roads of Indian culture. Malgudi cricket club not merely coincides with the growth of Swami’s age and awareness, it suggests advancement in the life of a small town that learns to reconcile with the mood of modern living.

1.4.8 The timeless quality of Malgudi

The timeless quality of Malgudi is underlined by Narayan despite the changes inside and outside. The ancient legend shows Malgudi has a traditional history by
illustrating: Ram may have passed through this place on his journey to Lanka and the streets may have been touched by the feet of Lord Budha. The past is involved with the past of India. The historical activities of Rama, Sita, gods and goddesses, demons, gurus, and Sadhus, Shri Shankara and Budha, Sir Frederick Lawley and Mahatma Gandhi with its forests, temples, hills and printing presses are carried on. Hence, Malgudi is identified as an epitome of India.

Malgudi is used as setting by Narayan in his novels – Even after forty years, remains “a conservative town unused to modern life” (Narayan, 1976:146) as Raman describes it in ‘The Painter of Signs’ (set in 1972). Most of the prominent landmarks in the town which have a major relevance to the action remain admirably intact even though Malgudi necessarily develops and changes. The River Sarayu flows by its side. Fringing Malgudi or just beyond it are Nallappa’s Grove and the Mempi forest, reaches by the Grove Street and the forest Road respectively. There is a trunk Road to Trichinopoly. One can board the train for Madras at Malgudi Station. (Iyengar, 1973:361)

During the Thirties, Malgudi had only one cinema theatre – “The select picture House --- along roofed with corrugated iron sheets” (Narayan, 1937: 14) where Chandran sees English films. Citizens of Malgudi are entertained with “silent films”, Krishnan takes Sushila to see a Tarzan Film. In 1935, Malgudi “suddenly came into line with the modern age by building well-equipped theatre – the Palace Talkies” (Narayan, 1938: 28). Raman brings Savitri here to see Tamil film, the children to see Laurel-Hardy show and Shanta Bai to Ramayana. By 1942, one more theatre Regal Picture Palace has come up.

There are about a half dozen temples which serve the spiritual needs of Malgudians ceaselessly. The most notable is the Iswara Temple in North Extension, depicting episodes from Ramayana, ancient Krishnan Temple at Vinayak Street, Hanuman temple at the end of Vinayak (Mudali) Street and the small newly built Srinivasa Temple is at the New Extension. Malgudi is waking to the commotion of the new culture and yet engages its rigid caste divisions, uncountable social taboos and tyranny of astrology. As a result Chandran’s infatuation for Malathi can never accomplish fruition and is bound to be dismissed as adolescent. For, marriages,
horoscopes must be consulted and caste must be considered. Chandran, at the end forsaking his adolescent fancies, makes a conventional marriage.

Narayan as a complete insider, sharing Malgudian’s way of life and their mores, writes about Malgudi and views them ironically. Bennett, on the other hand, is an outsider insider, when he writes about Five Towns. Ben nett had lived in the Five Towns for the first twenty years of his life and knew them intimately, yet, he had later gone out into the wider world and seen life in big Metropolises on both sides of the English channel and returned for a brief visits, he looked at the Five Towns through eyes which had seen much. Hence Walter Allen points out:

For Bennett the Five Towns were provincial….steeped as he was in them, in their atmosphere, history, and traditions, as a writer he was completely outside them. His attitude towards them is always expository; he is explaining them, exhibiting them to an outside world that Bennett accepts as the norms.”(Walter Allen, 1954:305)

For Narayan there is no question of Malgudi being “provincial”. The place, Malgudi in Narayan's fiction, one rightly observes is given a new dimension and significance, so to say it has become an absolutely necessary aspect of of R.K.Narayan’s novel just as theme, plot, character, language or narrative technique are integral elements of his novels.

1.4.9 Malgudi: characteristically Indian features
The self-absorption of Narayan with place and mastery makes his novel a document of convincing, authentic picture of life and aesthetic experience concrete by lending a local name and habitation. With a authoritative sense of place, he is comfortably able to concentrate on the essentials in a character, episode or setting from meaningless elements of life. Accentuating place in literature, Eudora Welty argues the sense of place:

“The named, identified, concrete exact and exacting gathering spot of all that has been felt”-constitutes the real essence of the narrative. (Welty, 1968:254)
Narayan's Malgudi may or may not stand for a certain town, like Mysore or Lalgudi or Coimbatore in South India. The Malgudi district, coloured in all his novels is known to R. K. Narayan. Being a novelist he engages all his attention with the best efforts on each and every worth mentioning aspect of his known place. Its habitants have been recorded in his works. The reader, setting his eyes on place, may understand on his own the entire district town. Malgudi an imaginary town appears to the readers with its live character rather more real than any real town of South India:

“With each new novel we advance in time (a few years at a step) and Malgudi grows in importance and gains in definition. The major landmarks, however, remain. The river Sarayu flows by its side. Fringing Malgudi or just beyond it are Nallappa's grove and the Mempi Forest, reached by the grove street and the forest road respectively. There is a Trunk Road to Trichinopoly. One can board the train for at the Malgudi Station,” (Iyengar, 1979: 361).

Narayan achieves localization for his novels by setting his novels in a substantially built environment of Malgudi, so supremely, solely, as it is and entirely itself is everywhere else in India. Malgudi, more importantly, symbolizes basically protective and forgiving spirit of place. Narayan's Malgudi is more human, intimate and gains its contact with humanity.

Malgudi of Narayan is the microcosm of India, is a growing and developing town abounding with humanity, sketching its stance from the human drama that is enacted in it. William Walsh rightly says:

The physical geography of Malgudi is never dealt with as a set piece but allowed to reveal itself beneath for the place’s identity. The details, the special flavour of Malgudi, a blend of oriental and pre-1914 British, like an Edwardian mixture of sweet mangoes and malt vinegar. (Ramesh Mohan, 1978: 32)
1.4.10 Narayan the Creator of Malgudi

Narayan’s created imaginary town has a true state of affairs, a living and growing mental vigour, in the midst of which the action of whole fictional corpus takes place and is controlled by it. This developing and growing town, Robert Liddel, rightly observes is not utilization and functional “background untouched by emotion.” (Robert Liddel, 1965:115)

Narayan although is neither a painter of nature nor a keen observer of natural objects has an intimate sense of place where he grew up and lived. Controlling over characters and their interpersonal relationships Narayan’s fictional town Malgudi decides their courses of action and shows readers its lasting identity. The place and characters one may underline are one and indivisible. The growth and maturity of characters is paralleled in growth of Malgudi from a small agricultural town to a big industrial city. Malgudi in all Narayan’s novels does exist and shape his characters

P.P. Mehata observes:

All the novels of Narayan are set in the surroundings of Malgudi. (Mehta, 1968:199)

Readers of Narayan's fiction are not only acquainted with topography of Malgudi town but also with men and women, their ugliness and evil as part of the pattern of life, without which one feels so thread-bare to be interested in his writing. Minakshi Mukherjee promptly says:

Some of the best works in Indo - Anglian fiction deal with non-metropolitan situations. Nothing could be more provincial and localized than the life of Malgudi town, yet Narayan successfully achieves a universal vision through it. (Mukherjee, 1971)

“Malgudi”, Professor C. D. Narsimhaiah remarks, “is the microcosm of traditional Indian society.”(Narsimhaiah, 1969) Malgudi is said to be the microcosm of Hindu India reflecting the great world beyond. Albert Camus comments that the Hindus do not face the problem of revolt because for them “tradition is sancrosanct.”(Camus, 1951: 26) The unchanging and undeveloping protagonist (man\woman) in Narayan's
fiction, nourished in sancrosanct society not only remains conscious of the myths of his cultural world but also finds himself greatly influenced by them. Therefore, the Rama myth the Sita myth, the Satyavan myth and a number of myths seem to influence the lives of his characters.

Malgudi is never fragmented or shaken; it punishes one who breaks its hidden and imaginary laws. It is the soul, the central theme, Iyengar points out, the real hero of Narayan’s novel. The Narayan protagonists have been apprehended clearly through the cultural ethos, fundamentally, the characters belong to preordainedly an imaginary world of their creator, and the karma-conscious characters, finally remain changeless. The Narayan rebels, dissatisfied in life, go away from their rebellion and return to the common world of acceptance, they seem to lead towards peaceful and contented life. The rebel's rebellion is deviation from the tradition and acceptance - through withdrawl. The rebels seem to remain unchanged at the end.

1.5 NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM
Setting is one of the important aspects in a work of fiction. As a result of this, it is necessary to look deeper into it from various angles and to study the novels of R. K. Narayan to search out in what way Malgudi locale plays a role not only as a geographical territory but also ‘a living character’ in R. K. Narayan’s fiction. R. K. Narayan is an internationally reputed novelist who has created an imaginary locale Malgudi for all his novels published so far. Consequently, he is known as the Malgudi novelist. The present study is an attempt to comprehend Malgudi locale as the ‘Spirit of Place’ and also to assess its significance with regard to the other elements of fiction structure, theme, characterization, and world view. The spirit of place stands for a study of Malgudi which is depicted in a novel after novel ceaselessly and makes the readers aware that it is not distinct from the other elements of the novel but is totally integrated with them. Most of the critics have approved that the fictional corpus of Narayan has its roots in the locale, Malgudi. Narayan, no doubt, has been accepted as a Malgudi novelist who selects his material from Malgudi setting, and writes with grace and humour, about ‘a fictional town Malgudi and its inhabitants; and their little lives.’(Jha, 2011:101)
Narayan’s writing ceaselessly continued during the second half of the twentieth century which is considered as the most happening phase of human history. Both the world at large and the world at small witnessed upheavals; technology leaped, politics changed, and morals mutated. Yet all this is alien to Malgudi denizens. Life there might have stood still, or may have been always moving in a cosmic continent, from primal past to fathomless future. The Malgudi men and the women and children, go on about their lives as they have always done, and always will. The Lawrentian revelation of criticism of ‘the spirit of place’ (Beal, 1955:296) prompts the researcher to take yet another and still another steady look at his Malgudi novels. In fact the reading of this entire corpus of Narayan comes as the most rewarding experience. It is here that the Malgudi locale offers newer perspectives. The spirit of place in Narayan’s fiction does have all the connotations spelt out by D.H.Lawrence. Lawrence’s criticism, however seems to be the beginning of new awareness of the spirit of place as reflected in Narayan’s novels.

The study of the critical material available on Narayan, and especially the article ‘the spirit of place’ (Beal, 1955:296) D. H. Lawrence enables the researcher to think over the study of place ‘Malgudi’ in Narayan’s fiction. Compared with other aspects of the Narayan’s novel (plot, theme, language, characters, style and philosophy), ‘place’ is an integral and centrifugal aspect of his fictional world. R.K.Narayan’s novels reveal that they have all the potentialities for such a study. In his novels the researcher finds a multidimensional expression of the spirit of place. The reality is that the place constitutes the real essence of novels. In his perceptive study, ‘Rise of the Novel,’ Professor Ian Watt has pointed out that one of the important characteristics of the novel seems that it gives its personages, ‘a local habitation and name.’ (Bland, 2003:213)Glorifying Yoknapatawpha, Faulkner, has shown his excellent mastery of place in fiction, the same seems to be the case with Narayan whose fictional setting is Malgudi: a town in South India. ‘Swami and Friends’ offers the initial point and the introduction by R.K.Narayan to the world of Malgudi to his readers and the world of Malgudi, grows in size and maturity with his successive novels.

It is essential to study the novels of R. K. Narayan critically, emphasizing locale. The researcher has taken into the consideration the views of the eminent scholars and critics in relation to works of R. K. Narayan. Therefore, it is essential to focus on Malgudi as a living spirit. The plot construction of Narayan’s novels is steered by the particular
mieux and background of a South Indian community, which is firmly established in a cultural tradition. The return to the normal, means traditional pattern of life reaffirms his comic vision. This lays stress on the cyclical pattern of Narayan’s plot construction. The growth and maturity of characters is paralleled in growth of Malgudi from a small agricultural town to a big industrial city. Malgudi in all Narayan's novels does exist and shape his characters. Beneath the veneer of rebellion, in all the novels runs the theme of illusion versus reality. Myth as the most important influence makes the rebels to withdraw from the deviation and accept sane normalcy in life.

1.6 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

1. Has every continent its own great spirit of place?
2. Are people polarized in some particular locality, which is home, the homeland?
3. Do different places on the face of the earth have different vital effluence, different vibration, different chemical exhalation and different polarity with different starts?
4. Is the spirit of place a great reality?
5. Is Malgudi a microcosm of India?
6. How does Malgudi govern the structuring of Narayan’s plot?
7. In what way does Narayan elaborate themes under the influence of Malgudi?
8. Are the moral deviators returning to the accepted social norms?
9. How does recurring pattern get reflected in the strategy ‘rite de passage’?
10. Is Narayan’s world view rooted in Indian culture?

In order to find answers to these questions the researcher will require to state what is meant by the spirit of place and how can it be discovered? On the basis of the questions raised and with the intention of finding answers to them, the topic of the present research work is stated below:

The Spirit of Place as Discovery: A Study of the Setting in the Novels of R.K.Narayan.
The spirit of place as a discovery with reference to R.K. Narayan’s novels may certainly be read as an approach which extensively deals with in the context of his Malgudi novels. The spirit of place, thus, seems to reveal itself not merely as the locale, setting, background or socio-geographical features but also as the living presence embedded in the structure, themes, characters and the world view of the novelist. Malgudi setting has been employed as a fixed or permanent locale depicted in the twelve selected novels from ‘Swami and Friends’ to ‘A Tiger for Malgudi.’ It becomes a character that D. H. Lawrence calls the spirit of place.

For the search of useful framework for discovering Malgudi as the spirit of place a number of Western as well as Indian critics like Anthony Beal, Lionel Trilling, David Lodge, D.H.Lawrence, Eudora Welty, Robert Liddell, E.M. Forster, William Walsh, Srinivas Iyengar, M.K. Naik, Rajeev Taranath, Minakshi Mukherji, Verghese, and others have been referred to. The parameters provided by them remain valuable pointers and useful points of reference to deal with Narayan’s Malgudi as the spirit of place and an influential force over the structure, theme, characterization and world-view.

The Lawrentian revelation critical perspective of ‘the spirit of place’ and M.K. Naik’s discussion on the same issue in an article ‘The Spirit of Place’ (Naik,2004:57-83) reveal that novels of Narayan have all the potentialities for such a study and offer a wider perspective on Narayan’s novels. Hence, it becomes a common need to study Malgudi locale which is realized through the structure, theme, characterization and the world-view. Thus, the present study deals with ‘cyclical structure,’ (Dwivedi, 1987:124) presentation of the characters with their traditional trappings and the world-view of Narayan as a novelist realized through the thematic development.

1.7 OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY
1.7.1 Objectives
* To present setting as the spirit of place reflecting the customs and attitudes of the community.
* To present setting in the context of psychological, religious, moral, social and emotional milieu.
* To present setting symbolically as microcosm of a macrocosm.
* To present setting as an active force influencing the course of the events and
destiny of the characters.

1.7.2 Hypotheses
An in depth study of Narayan’s novels, done on thematic, structural and
philosophical level should reveal interesting finding as posited in the following four
Hypotheses:

H.1 The structure of Narayan’s plot is governed by the particular setting that he
has used.

H.2 The thematic work of Narayan’s novels is integrated with the element of
setting in his novels.

H.3 The characters presented by R.K.Narayan in his novels are products of the
setting of his novels.

H.4 Narayan’s world view is deeply steeped in Indian culture.

1.8 RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY:
1.8.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:
Malgudi, a South Indian town is projected by Narayan in novel after novel for more
than six decades. The study of research is carried through library method. The articles
‘the spirit of place’ by D.H. Lawrence and ‘the Spirit of Place and Malgudi’ by M.K.
Naik and elaboration of modern literary critical approaches have been put together by
placing setting at the centre. The researcher has examined plot, theme,
characterization and point of view in their relation to the significance of location i.e.
Malgudi.

1.8.2 RESEARCH DESIGN:
In any research design the overall plan of research is given. It is a blue print for
carrying out research and taking various steps for undertaking a search study.
Research design aims to develop the set of methods and procedures which help to test
the research hypothesis with the high degree of confidence. The research design used
in the present study is descriptive. The Descriptive Research Design involves
collection of data in order to test the hypothesis. It is also treated as a survey design.
1.8.3 AREA OF RESEARCH: SCOPE AND LIMITATION
The present research study is to be carried out in the context of locale, Malgudi in Narayan’s novels. Being a student of literature the researcher has collected information, views, critical analysis, of Narayan’s novels from the original texts, articles, review journals and news papers. The area of study is limited to the novels of Narayan. The main thrust of research is to study and analyze structure, themes, characterization and world view of Narayan novels in the light of Malgudi locale.

1.9 Data Collection and Data Analysis:
The present study involves the data collected from the primary as well as secondary sources. To test the hypotheses and for making the coverage of the present study different aspects of the twelve selected novels plot, theme, characterization and world view are devised. The study is based on primary and secondary data.

1.9.1 PRIMARY DATA:
The primary data has been collected primarily from novels ‘Swami and Friends’ to ‘A Tigers for Malgudi’, which constitutes the major source of data for the study. For this purpose novels of R.K. Narayan have been studied critically by the researcher. This has helped in keeping the frame of the study intact and achieving uniformity in the interpretation of data.

1.9.2 SECONDARY DATA:
Secondary data relating to the study has been collected from reviews, Journals, leading critical papers, critical books, and various views by the critics, discussions with experts and related papers. Besides these the secondary data about Narayan’s fiction has been taken from published and unpublished literature.

1.9.3 ANALYSIS OF DATA:
Once the collection of data is over, the next step is to arrange the processing and analysis of the data so that inferences can be made resulting in formulation of conclusions. The critical material on plot, theme, characterization and world view in relation to Malgudi locale is studied so as to discuss it profoundly. The data is studied from various angles to search out in what way Malgudi locale plays a role not only as a geographical territory but also as a ‘living character’. The present study
comprehends Malgudi locale as the ‘Spirit of Place’ and assesses its importance with regard to other aspects of fiction structure, theme, characterization and worldview.

1.10 CHAPTER SCHEME OF THE STUDY

1 - First Chapter, an introduction to the research undertaken, spells out the overall theme of the research. Since setting is the centrifugal aspect of the study, the term has been thoroughly discussed focusing on its major realizations. The chapter outlines the nature and methodology of the study of the setting in Narayan’s novels. The explanation and description of the descriptive method used for research is offered.

2 - Chapter Second, the Planting, considers the early Narayan novels, the pace-setters in terms of Narayan’s recurrent themes, characterization and worldview, and study them in the context of the setting used by the novelist.

3 - Chapter three, the Growth, considers the middle novels, as they reflect the craft of the mature and established novelist. The chapter studies these novels for the different realizations of the setting in the works of Narayan in particular in his middle novels.

4 - Chapter fourth, the Harvest, considers the later novels of Narayan as they reflect the culmination of the novelist’s image and vision as a comic ironist. It studies the different realizations of the setting in the Narayan novels in the context of growth and development in the setting.

5 - Chapter fifth, the Conclusion, offers an overview of the thesis. It sums up the ongoing research study and underlines the emerging findings about of the setting as discovery in the novels of R. K. Narayan. In the final analysis the study projects a dual realization. The use of the setting becomes a technique for the novelist to project his fictional universe and this study becomes a discovery for the reader to understand the essentials of Narayan’s craft of fiction. The approach regarding the setting establishes the view that Malgudi is the only ‘character’ that grows, changes, reacts to time and circumstances and constitutes the real essence of Narayan’s novels. The place, Malgudi in Narayan’s fiction, is given a new dimension and significance.
and it has become a necessary integrated aspect of novel. The spirit of place, thus, seems to reveal itself not merely as the locale, setting, background or socio-geographical feature but also as the living presence embedded in the milieu, structure, themes, characters and the world-view of the novelist. The structure of Narayan’s novels is governed by the particular milieu and background of South Indian community. His middle class characters withdraw their rebellion and return to the world of sanity. The thematic development is characterized by R.K.Narayan’s humanitarian vision coloured by the the values of the ancient Indian culture. The world-view emphasizes that creative vision of Narayan has its roots in culture, tradition and values of life.

1.11 REVIEW OF LITERATURE:
1.11.1 M.K.Naik in his book *The Ironic Vision: A Study of the Fiction of R.K.Narayan*, focused on the close examination of the regional element in Narayan’s fiction and relationship with his ironic vision.1

1.11.2 Veena Mohod’s *Social Realism in R.K. Narayan's Novels*, shows that his realism is an expression of his essential humanism and that Narayan’s success as a social realist is epitomized in his creation of Malgudi where man realizes the wholeness of existence, his place in the infinite.2

1.11.3 Jayant K. Biswal’s *A Critical Study of the Novels of R. K. Narayan: The Malgudi Comedy* has explored the immense possibilities of the comic in the common place, Malgudi.3

1.11.4 Sharan Nagendranath’s book *A critical study of novels of R. K. Narayan* is quite helpful to the readers to study and understand R. K. Narayan’s novels in detail from ‘Swami and Friends’ to ‘The Talkative Man’ as it discusses Narayan’s technique, themes, form and meaning.4

1.11.5 The book *The Child in R. K. Narayan’s Fiction* by Uday C. Gor is a good attempt of understanding the child in R. K. Narayan’s novels with its focus on his psychological insight in presenting the characters of children in particular.5
1.11.6 *Ironical comedy of R. K. Narayan* by Bal Ram Mishra is an exhaustive study of Narayan’s irony, its ironical curvature and irony in portraiture.\(^6\)

1.11.7 The book by Kanak Lata Tiwari, *The Novels of Thomas Hardy and R. K. Narayan* deals with the comparison of elements of locale, custom, people and languages in the novels by Hardy and Narayan.\(^7\)

1.11.8 Dr. R.N.Panda in his book *R. K. Narayan: A Critical Study* brings out all essential reading materials where the locale is dominating. The article ‘A *Novelist of All Humanity*’ draws the best possible picture of contemporary Indian middle class families.\(^8\)

1.11.9 *Studies in Classic American Literature* is a valuable book by D. H. Lawrence as the article ‘The Spirit of Place’ by D.H.Lawrence enables the readers to think over the study of the place ‘Malgudi’, in Narayan’s fiction.\(^9\)

1.11.10 K.R.S. Iyngar, in his book ‘*Indian Writing in English*’ focuses on traditional characters in Narayan’s novels.\(^10\)

1.11.11 In ‘*R.K.Narayan: Critical Appreciation*’, William Walsh emphasizes locale, Malgudi. He underlines influence of Malgudi milieu on plot, theme, and characters.\(^11\)

1.11.12 David Lodge describes in, ‘*The Modes of Modern Writings.*’ Narayan’s protagonists, which are comparable to humours, but in Narayan, this approach elevates his comedies into myth.\(^12\)

1.11.13 Shirwadkar in his work ‘*The Indian Novel in English and Social Change*’ studies social reality, its reflection in novels, attitudes and ideologies arising out of it and has divided the Indian novels in English into two ideological groups: one group earnestly desire social changes and novelists of the other group like R.K. Narayan who defend the traditional structure of society.\(^13\)

1.11.15 ‘*R.K. Narayan: Breaking the Borderline,*’ by R. Ramchandra occurs in part four of the book ‘*Aspect of World Literature*’, edited by P. Bayapa Reddy in which the theme of renunciation, seeking “retirement” from life as an escape and fulfillment and other themes are referred to. in passing.\(^{15}\)

1.11.16 The book, ‘*The Financial Expert R.K. Narayan*’ by Panigrahi elaborates myth, reality, characterization and humour in the fiction of R.K. Narayan. It comments that Narayan does not start with a generalization or with a theory but he lets his characters demonstrate to us, through their ordinary thoughts and actions, what is to be human.\(^{16}\)

1.11.17 Pramila Garg’s ‘*The Freedom Movement in Indian Fiction in English*’ is an extensive study of the novels from 1857 till India achieved independence highlighting that the novel affects and gets affected by the political upheavals as much as any other social change.\(^{17}\)

1.11.18 The book ‘*Major Novels of R.K. Narayan: A Critical Study*’ is on R.K. Narayan by J.M. Purohit which reveals that the real charm of Narayan’s Novels lies in his psychological exploration of human implications.\(^{18}\)

1.11.19 C. N.Srinath in ‘*Myth in Contemporary Indian Fiction in English*’ states that from ‘*Swami and Friends*’ to ‘*The Vendor of Sweets*’ it is the same background, the same heat and breeze of Malgudi where Malgudi and its inmates acquire a mythical aura.\(^{19}\)

1.11.20 R.K.Narayan’s works of life time-novels, short stories, essays, travel pieces are included in one volume in *Malgudi Landscapes* skillfully the main focus of the editor on the locale Malgudi, the enchanting little South Indian town that R.K.Narayan created over half a century, to glorious and colourful life.\(^{20}\)
1.11.21 The article ‘Remembering the Founding Fathers of Indian English fiction’ is by Bijay kumar Das views Narayan the novelist simply as novelist.  

1.11.22 Goyal Bhagwat has edited ‘R. K. Narayan’s ‘India, Myth and Reality’ in which the articles, are devoted to R.K.Narayan.  

1.11.23 The article by K Chellappan ‘The Apocalypse of the Ordinary- the Comic Myths of R. K. Narayan’ conveys to the readers that, the comic epic poems in prose of R. K. Narayan, capture the essentials of life with reference to a few small men in the little world of Malgudi which is symbolic of all of us.  

1.11.24 The article ‘R. K. Narayan and the Spirit of Place’ authored by M. K. Naik, highlights pivotal role of locale in R. K. Narayan’s fiction stating that the action of all of them is set in the imaginary town of Malgudi in South India.  


1.11.26 The anthology ‘Indian English Literature’ contains articles on R. K. Narayan in details from different perspectives. 

1.11.27 The Literary Endeavour, edited by Dr. L. Adinarayan highlights the significance of the regional literature through transcreation focusing on myth, irony, love, non-violence, time and language, consciousness and narrative strategy in Narayan’s novels.  

1.11.28 ‘Post- modern Indian English Literature’ by Agrawal K.A. is a collection of research papers on various post modern fictionist of Indian origin. Malgudi becomes a microcosm of macrocosm that is India. This growing and changing Malgudi essentially reflects the changes occurring in the Indian social fabric.
1.11.29 The twenty six insightful essays in a volume ‘Indian Legendary Writers in English’: Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao edited by Jagadeep Sarangi sheds a new light on the three legendary writers.29

1.11.30 ‘Critical Approaches to Fiction’ by Shiv K. Kumar is a comprehensive cross-section of some of the best critical material available on the theory and practice of fiction.30

1.11.31 Wit and Humour in Indian English literature is edited by Ramesh K. Srivastava in which his introductory essay explicates the purpose of comic elements which is mainly “to provoke or evoke laughter.” Narayan’s humour from different angles has been discussed by Hariprasanna and Ramesh K. Srivastava.31

1.11.32 An Anthology of Recent Criticism by C.N.Srinath is a collection of delightful essays on R. K. Narayan which concentrates on Narayan’s ‘barely sufficient resource’ and ‘restrained art’, his ‘entangled irony’ and an ‘irregular humour.’32

1.11.33 R.A.Singh’s Critical Essays on R. K. Narayan’s Novels discusses Narayan’s rich literary achievements.33

1.12 CONCLUSION
The setting, Malgudi is the only ‘character’ that plays significant role in the novels of R.K.Narayan from ‘Swami and Friends’ to ‘A Tiger for Malgudi’ Hence it becomes a living character. The spirit of place, thus, seems to shape and govern structure, themes, characters and the world view of the novelist. The structure of Narayan’s novel is influenced by the particular milieu of Malgudi. It does not merely mean as the background or socio-geographical area. The growth and maturity of characters is paralleled in the growth of Malgudi from a small town to a big city. They remain unchanged in their nature because they are deeply rooted in their culture and do not show development in their personality. The characters seem to be growing on spiritual level and are realized through the cultural ethos. The themes such as illusion versus reality, tradition and modernity, order–disorder-order reflect Indianness. The violation of traditional norms and morality causes disorder in the life of the protagonist which is temporary. Narayan’s world-view underlines his traditional view with regard to human existence, life and the universe.