

Phone: 033-2441-1710



# NABA BALLYGUNGE MAHAVIDYALAYA

(Formerly CHARUCHANDRA EVENING COLLEGE)

27E, Bosepukur Road, Kolkata - 700042

Email: nbmv2005@yahoo.co.in, Website: nbmahavidyalaya.in

Departmental Seminar on “Commemorating the 117<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of R.K. Narayan: The Grand Old Man of Malgudi”

Date: 10.10.2023


Level: Departmental/ Department of English

Number of participants: 25

Links to the seminar on institutional YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JP98Yk0Fhg4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hmdL7IZyUU>

  
Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya  
27E, Bose Pukur Road, Kasba, Kolkata, West Bengal 700042  
*Department of English*  
**Commemorating the 117<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of  
R.K. Narayan: The Grand Old Man of Malgudi**

Date: 10th October (Tuesday), 2023  
Time: 12 noon onwards  
Venue: College Auditorium (Ground Floor)

**Chief Patron**  
Dr. Ayantika Ghosh, Principal, Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya

**Organizing Committee**  
Dr. Sayantina Dutta, Convener & Head  
Prof. Pritha Chatterjee  
Prof. Debojyoti Dawn  
Dr. Anwesha Sengupta

Flyer of the seminar

Principal

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Department of English

### Programme Schedule

Commemorating the 117<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of R.K. Narayan: The Grand Old Man of Malgudi

#### Inaugural Session

#### Technical Session – I:

Topic: **Discussion Regarding R.K. Narayan – His Life & Works**

- (i) Speech Delivered by Faculty
- (ii) Papers Presented by Students

#### Technical Session – II:

Displaying the Posters of Drawing Competition: Results to be declared by Dr. Ayantika Ghosh,  
Principal, Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya

**NOTE:** (a) A Drawing Competition to be conducted based on the topic:

**"Paintings & Sketches Related to the Life & Works of R.K. Narayan"**

- (b) Submit your painting/sketch (in K size of Chart Paper) to the Teachers of English

Department on **October 5 & 6, 2023 (Thursday & Friday)**.

#### Technical Session – III:

Screening of an episode of *Malgudi Days* (movie)

#### Organizing Committee

Dr. Sayantina Dutta, Convener & Head  
Prof. Pritha Chatterjee  
Prof. Debojyoti Dawn  
Dr. Anwesha Sengupta

\*\*For participation & further information, please contact Teachers of English Department.

**ALL ARE CORDIALLY INVITED**

Programme schedule

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The seminar began with the Principal of the college Dr. Ayantika Ghosh commemorating RK Narayan and his contributions to the world literature. The principal's speech set the tone for the seminar. Briefly and succinctly, she threw light on R.K. Narayan's nonpareil ability to transport us into the world of his characters through his stories in which he beautifully portrayed the essence of Indian society. Truly as Dr. Ghosh mentioned that R. K Narayan is a literary luminary who is meant to be commemorated as one of the literary icons whose timeless stories majestically portrayed the richness of Indian culture and heritage and therefore as a department of literature, it is our responsibility to commemorate it this master and his legacy is on.



The Principal of the college, Dr Ayantika Ghosh setting the tone of the seminar with her welcome speech

Sulagna Mondal, a 5th Semester student of 2023-2024 batch of English Honours, presented the biographical sketch of the author. The presentation touched upon Narayan's childhood, early education and the family in which he grew up. Sulagna's mentioning of RK Narayan's early readings of Dickens, Arthur Conan Doyle, PG Wodehouse, Thomas Hardy emphasise the fact that these readers left an impression on Narayan's writing's and thoughts. This paper on Narayan's life, his schooling, his pursuing of further studies and selection of disciplines, enriched the audience's knowledge about Narayan and how the intricacies of Indian society left an indelible impact on his mind and works. It was delightful to hear that a UG student focused her paper on Malgudi, and the ramifications it underwent as a colonial town and it being a microcosmic representation of the social political transformations that went on in greater India.

*Ghosh*  
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The people also mentioned about the friendship between Narayan and Graham Greene, which initially began on a professional level, but later on transcended to a personal and everlasting friendship. All it all, the paper was a detailed study of Narayan's life, various phases of his education, the circumstances that lead him to become an author and the passion with which he not only wrote, but also observed every nuance and idiosyncrasies of Indian society and included them in his works with a perfect balance of humour and pathos. Sulagna mentioned that as Wessex was the backdrop of Hardy's fiction, so was Malgudi, the fictional town of India, for Narayan. Sulagna ended her presentation presenting her argument with the fact why R.K. Narayan's works must be included in the canon and the curriculum of university syllabi across the globe. Undoubtedly, it was a creative and well-worked-out and a minutely studied paper considering it coming from a UG student.



Sulagna Mondal, a UG student of Semester V presenting her paper on R.K. Narayan's biographical sketch

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The next presenter was Dr Sayantina Dutta, Assistant Professor and Head, Department of English, Naba Ballygunge Mahavidyalaya. Her paper was titled *Swami and Friends: Portrayal of Narrative through Visuals*. She argued that it is through Malgudi, that Narayan expresses his worldview and interplays of various factors in Indian society. She rightly said that Malgudi is given a living presence in the words of the master. Through Narayan's sketches, illustrations and snippets from the film adaptations, Dr Dutta presented the wide array of Narayan's imagination and empathy. While we are aware of R.K. Laxman, the cartoonist and illustrator's majestic yet simplified portrayal through illustrations of his elder brother, R.K. Narayan's works, this paper threw light on a new finding that Graham Greene, a comrade of R.K. Narayan, preferred the Polish artist Feliks Topolski to Laxman because the Indianness of Laxman couldn't commensurate to the worldwide reachability of Narayan. In her words, the formlessness and lack of finish in Laxman's sketches cater to the peculiarity in Narayan's works. The people duly credits that Laxman's sketches add to the timelessness of Narayan's masterpieces and enliven the characters. As the paper was presented, it was also a visual treat to see the slides rolling on with the sketches of the fictional town Malgudi and its landscape, Lawley Road, Sarayu River, Albert Mission School and things that are associated with Narayan's imagination, all painstakingly and tenderly sketched by Laxman. As Dr. Dutta pointed out, Laxman's "graphic is minimalistic yet effective" with a "dash of humour" brilliantly bringing out "the ambience of Malgudi and its inhabitants". Referring to Laxman's self-life writing, this paper brought out Laxman's reminiscences of the mastership of his elder brother and the shared compatibility, which helped him manifest his brother's pen-creations on book through his brush-creations on canvas. It was nostalgic for the audience as she reminisced the serialized *Malgudi Days*, showed snippets on the slides...the audience were transported to the good old childhood days when Doordarshan was our only window to the world.



Dr Sayantina Dutta, Assistant Professor and Head, Department of English, presents paper on R.K. Narayan's narratives through visuals like sketches, illustrations and screen adaptations

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Ms Pritha Chatterjee's paper was on Malgudi and its colonial routes. Briefly dwelling on the trio of the Gandhian whirlwind, that is, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan, the three names, which are generally uttered in one breath, The paper mentioned that Narayan's writings have the most simplified language with an Indian twang to it, the style of this writing and graphic description of the characters being 'next-door'. The mundaneness of Malgudi life punctuated with sudden encounters with significant moments has been portrayed by the author with finesse. In the words of the presenter, the magic that Narayan weaves within the network of simplicity, embracing the Malgudi life makes him club with British writers like Thomas Hardy, Arnold Bennett and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Malgudi has no space, but it has time as the speaker quoted.; and this aligns Malgudi with the colonial structure of pre independent India, found in the graphic texture of the town which displays pan-Indian trope of British imperialism and colonial modernity. The liminal space that is occupied by Malgudi in the cartographic presentation of India generally and South India specifically in Narayan's fiction, as a geographical region that is struggling to cope up with the rapid Westernization yet with its simple Indian rusticity, clings on to the tradition has been argued by Ms Chatterjee. The urban space and the persistent colonial exploitation that the railway tracks represent not only corroded Malgudi geographically but also psycho-morally and that inevitably is a part of the colonial trajectory. She categorically mentioned two important tropes apart from the railway tracks that represent the palimpsest of the footprints of colonialism that is Albert Mission College and the Statue of Sir Frederick Lawley. In a nutshell, the paper subtly presented Malgudi as a microcosmic representation of pan-India struggling to keep pace with rapid urbanization brought about by colonial enterprises yet pathetically clinging to the last remnants of rural Indianness.



Ms Pritha Chatterjee presenting her paper on Malgudi as a colonial landscape

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The exciting part of the seminar was the prize distribution for the students who secured position in painting and sketching of the life and works of R.K. Narayan. Out of twelve participants, three were chosen as the toppers-- Bikraanta Gupta was declared the third position holder, the second position was held by Sayan Mondal and the first position was held by Deepika Karmakar. The principal of the college, Dr. Ayantika Ghosh, declared the names.

Finally, Shri Debojyoti Dan, Faculty, the Department of English of NBM, presented his paper on the Phenomenology of time in RK Narayan's works. He mentioned that phenomenological time is beyond the clock time-the time that changes with the change of space. In Narayan's works, the temporal structure is not linear but multifarious.

Shri Surajit Basu, Associate Professor, Department of Bengali, wrapped up the seminar with mentions of the brilliant effort put up by the faculties of Department of English.

Finally, certain moments from *Malgudi Days* were screened and the seminar ended with vote of thanks.



Shri Debojyoti Dan presenting his paper



Shri Surajit Basu shares a few words



Snippet from screening from *Malgudi Days*

## Outcomes of the seminar:

- ✓ Thrust on Indian Knowledge System in pedagogical focus on an Indian author in the curriculum of English literature.
- ✓ Enhance knowledge of the students in Narayan and his oeuvres.
- ✓ Gathering together for meaningful discussion on R.K. Narayan
- ✓ Providing the students with opportunities to showcase talents in painting and sketching

  
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