

# CHAPTER - 3

## RANGA'S MARRIAGE

### QUESTIONS FROM TEXTBOOK SOLVED

#### A. Reading With Insight

**Question 1. Comment on the influence of English—the language and the way of life— on Indian life as reflected in the story. What is the narrator's attitude to English?**

**Answer:** The narrator says that during the last ten years English language has made inroads into Indian countryside. Now there are many who know English. During the holidays, one comes across them on every street, talking in English. They bring in English words even while talking in Kannada. The narrator considers it disgraceful. He illustrates his point of view by giving an example. A bundle of firewood was bought at Rama Rao's house. Rama Rao's son asked the woman how much he should give her. When she said, "Four pice", the boy told her that he did not have any "change" and asked her to come the next day. The poor woman did not understand the English word "change" and went away muttering to herself. Thus the use of English language before a native Kannada speaker caused confusion.

Ranga was influenced by the English way of life. Like them he wanted to marry a mature girl and not a young present-day bride. He told the narrator that he would marry when he grew a bit older. Secondly, he wanted to marry a girl he admired. He was not in favour of arranged marriages. This shows the influence of English way of life on modern young educated Indians. The narrator did not approve of it.

**Question 2. Astrologers' perceptions are based more on hearsay and conjecture than what they learn from the study of the stars. Comment with reference to the story.**

**Answer:** This story presents astrologers in an unfavourable light. The author seems to be having a dig at them through the words of the narrator. The story gives a graphic description of how the narrator employs the astrologer to trick an unwilling youngman to agree to marry a young girl. He tutors him in all that he wants him to say.

The narrator took Ranga to the astrologer. The Shastri took out his paraphernalia. These included two sheets of paper, some cowries and a book of palmyra leaves. He called astrology ancient science. He moved his lips fast as he counted on his fingers. He did some calculations before telling Ranga that he was thinking about a girl. She had the name of something found in the ocean. He assured them that their negotiations would definitely bear fruit. Ranga was

impressed by the science of astrology.

That evening the narrator congratulated Shastri for repeating everything he had taught without giving rise to any suspicion. He mocked astrology by saying, "What a marvellous shastra yours is!" The Shastri didn't like it and said that he could have found it out himself from his shastra. This shows that astrologers' perceptions are based more on hearsay and conjecture than what they learn from the study of the stars.

**Question 3. Indian society has moved a long way from the way the marriage is arranged in the story. Discuss.**

**Answer:** In the past, marriages in India were usually arranged by parents/relatives. The story 'Ranga's Marriage' shows how the narrator arranges Ranga's marriage with the help of the astrologer. After independence, certain changes have come in the economic and social set-up of the Indian society. Women empowerment has made women men's comrades and equals and not a mere prisoner confined within the four walls. Women education and access to jobs have changed the attitude of modern males towards them. A girl is now accepted as a partner in marriage for her worth or qualities rather than the dowry. Marriageable young boys and girls have now more say in the choice of partners. Early marriages have been banned legally. The minimum age for marriage for a girl is 18 and for a boy it is 21. By this time they attain physical, emotional and mental maturity. Indian society has certainly moved a long way from the time of arranged marriages when the formal consent of the bride/bridegroom was taken for granted and the elders fixed everything.

**Question 4. What kind of a person do you think the narrator is?**

**Answer:** The narrator, Shyama, is dark in colour. He calls himself 'a dark piece of oil-cake'. He is an elderly gentleman. He is keen observer of men and manners. He notices the influence of English—the language and the way of life on Indian society. He is a purist who is pained at the indiscriminate use of English words in Kannada conversation. He considers it disgraceful. He does not approve of the English custom of love-marriage either. He is a well-meaning gentleman who has the good of others in his heart. He learns of Ranga's views about marriage from Ranga himself. He is a good judge of human character. He thinks that Ranga would make a good husband. The narrator is a good strategist. He cleverly calls Ranga to his home when Ratna is singing a song. He notices Ranga's reaction and interest in her and arouses his curiosity by arranging a meeting with the astrologer. First he says that Ratna is married, but when he finds Ranga deeply interested in her, he confesses that he was wrongly informed. In short, the narrator tries his utmost to get the marriage settled.

The narrator loves fun and humour. He has the capacity to make others laugh at him. He employs a rambling style and gives many similes and metaphors to heighten the literary value of the story. The touches of local colour make the story full of ethnic colour and authentic.

## **MORE QUESTIONS SOLVED**

### **A. Short Answer Type Questions**

**Question 1. What does the narrator say about Hosahalli?**

**Answer:** Hosahalli village is the scene of action. There is no mention of it in geography books written by the sahibs in England or Indian writers. No cartographer has put it on the map. The narrator highlights its importance by comparing it to the filling of the karigadubu—a festival meal.

**Question 2. What are the two special produce of Hosahalli and in what respect ?**

**Answer:** First is the raw mango. The sourness of its bite is sure to get straight to the brahmarandhra, i.e. the soft part in child's head where skull bones join later. Second specialty is a creeper growing in the water of the village pond. Its flowers are a feast to behold. You can

serve afternoon meal to the whole family on its two leaves.

**Question 3. What exactly had happened ten years ago? How important was it then?**

**Answer:** Ten years ago, there were not many people in the village who knew English. The village accountant was the first one who sent his son Ranga to Bangalore to pursue his studies. It was quite an important event then. The narrator highlights it by saying that the village accountant was the first one who had enough courage to send his son to Bangalore to study.

**Question 4. What happened when Ranga returned to his village from the city of Bangalore?**

**Answer:** Ranga's homecoming was a great event. The crowds milled around his house to see whether he had changed or not. People were quite excited as the boy was returning home after studying English at Bangalore. Everyone was surprised to see that Ranga was the same as he had been six months ago, when he had first left the village.

**Question 5. How did the old lady satisfy herself about Ranga ?**

**Answer:** The old lady ran her hand over Ranga's chest. She looked into his eyes. She was satisfied to find the sacred thread on his body. She was happy that he had not lost his caste.

**Question 6. "What has happened is disgraceful, believe me" says the narrator. What does he refer to? How does he illustrate his point of view?**

**Answer:** The narrator refers to the practice of young persons who during the holidays in village, go on talking in English or bring in English words while talking in Kannada. He calls this mixing up of languages 'disgraceful'. He gives the example of the use of the English word 'change' to an illiterate person. The old lady, being asked to come the next day, went away disgruntled.

**Question 7. Why does the narrator refer to the Black Hole of Calcutta?**

**Answer:** During the British rule, hundreds of persons were kept inside a single room. The next morning most of them were found dead due to suffocation. The narrator uses the expression 'Black Hole of Calcutta' to suggest the large number of people who had turned out to see Ranga.

**Question 8. How did Ranga greet the narrator? In what respect did he differ from the present-day boys?**

**Answer:** Ranga greeted the narrator with full devotion. He not only folded his hands, but also bent low to touch his feet. A present-day boy would stand stiff like a pole without joints, keep head towards the sun and jerk his body as if it were either a hand or a walking stick. The narrator, being old fashioned did not approve it.

**Question 9. When did Ranga plan to marry and why?**

**Answer:** Ranga did not want to get married at an early age. He wanted to find the right girl. She should be mature enough to understand his love talk. Secondly, he wished to marry a girl he admired. He was against marrying quite young girls who had no manners or were not careful of their face or figure.

**Question 10. What examples did Ranga give to explain the importance of marrying late?**

**Answer:** Ranga gave two examples. An officer about thirty, married a girl about twenty- five. Ranga hoped they would be able to talk lovingly to each other. The second example is that of Dushyanta falling in love with Shakuntala, who was quite mature.

**Question 11. "Ranga was just the boy for her and she the most suitable bride for him" says the narrator. Who is 'she'? What led narrator to this conclusion?**

**Answer:** 'She' here stands for Ratna, the niece of Rama Rao. She was a pretty girl of eleven. Both her parents having died, her uncle had brought her home. Being a girl from a big town, she knew how to play the veena and the harmonium. She also had a sweet voice. All these qualities made her a suitable bride for a young, educated man like Ranga.

**Question 12. How did the narrator let Ranga have a glimpse of Ratna?**

**Answer:** The narrator arranged the meeting very systematically. First he called Ratna on the pretext of sending buttermilk through her. Then he asked her to sing a song. Meanwhile Ranga, whom he had sent for, reached the door. He became curious to see the singer and peeped in. His presence at the door blocked the light and Ratna stopped singing abruptly. ~

**Question 13. How did Ranga and Ratna react at their unexpected encounter?**

**Answer:** Ratna stopped singing abruptly on seeing a stranger outside the room. Ranga felt disappointed when the singing stopped. Ratna stood at a distance with her head lowered. Ranga repeatedly glanced at her. He blamed himself for the singing to stop and offered to leave. Ratna was overcome by shyness and ran inside. Ranga enquired about her. .

**Question 14. How did the narrator handle Ranga's inquiries about Ratna?**

**Answer:** The narrator did not give him a straightforward reply. He said casually that it did not matter to either of them who she was. The narrator was already married and Ranga was not the marrying type. This aroused Ranga's interest and excitement. He expressed the hope that she was unmarried. His face showed signs of disappointment on learning that she was married a year ago.

**Question 15. Why did the narrator tell Ranga that the girl was married a year ago?**

**Answer:** The narrator had made up his mind that he would get Ranga married early. First he brought Ranga and Ratna face to face to arouse his interest in her. In order to test the strength of his emotions, he told Ranga that she was married a year ago. The shrivelled face of the young man betrayed his feelings.

**Question 16. Why did the narrator visit the village astrologer?**

**Answer:** The narrator wanted to exploit the common human weakness—eagerness to know the future. He went to the village astrologer and told him to keep ready to read the stars. He tutored him in all that he wanted the astrologer to say when he would revisit him with Ranga.

**Question 17. In what mental /emotional state did the narrator find Ranga? What solution did he offer? How did Ranga react to it?**

**Answer:** Ranga seemed to be lost in thought. Perhaps he was emotionally upset to learn that the girl he had seen that morning was already married one. The narrator offered to take him to Shastri to learn about the stars-whether Guru and Shani were favourable for him or not. Ranga accompanied him without any protest.

**Question 18. "What? Only this morning..." Why was this sentence cut off and by whom? What would have been the likely impact if the speaker had completed the sentence?**

**Answer:** The narrator got angry when the astrologer said with surprise that he had not seen the former for a long time. The narrator shouted these words. The astrologer cut this sentence off and completed it in his own way. If he had not done so, the narrator would have ruined their plan by blurring out everything.

**Question 19. What according to the astrologer was Ranga's cause of worry? How did the name Ratna ' crop up ?**

**Answer:** According to the astrologer the cause of Ranga's worry was a girl. She probably had

the name of something found in the ocean. When asked if it could be Kamla the astrologer did not rule out the possibility. When suggested if it could be Pacchi, moss, the astrologer put a counter question: "Why not pearl or ratna, the precious stone?" Thus the name Ratna cropped up.

**Question 20. "There was surprise on Ranga's face. And some happiness." What do you think had caused these feelings?**

**Answer:** When the narrator learnt from Shastri—the astrologer, that the name of the girl Ranga was worried about could be Ratna, he was at once reminded of Rama Rao's niece Ratna. He asked the astrologer if there was any chance of the marriage being fixed there, the astrologer gave a firm assurance. This caused happiness and surprise on Ranga's face.

**Question 21. How did the narrator test the sincerity of Ranga's feelings about Ratna?**

**Answer:** The narrator employed the age-old trick 'temptation for the unattainable'. He first mentioned that the girl had been married a year ago. He noticed Ranga's disappointment. Ranga's face fell when the narrator mentioned to the astrologer that Ratna was married. When he was sure of the sincerity of Ranga's feelings about Ratna, he disclosed that she wasn't married.

**Question 22. "There's greater truth in that shastra than we imagine," says Ranga. What truth does he refer to and how was he made to admit it?**

**Answer:** After their visit to Shastri, the narrator disclosed to Ranga that Ratna was not married. He observed that whatever Shastri told them had turned out to be true. Still he could not believe that Ranga had been thinking of her. He asked Ranga to confirm it. Ranga frankly admitted the truth that he was thinking of her.

**Question 23. What did the narrator tell Shastri about his performance? How did the Shastri react to it?**

**Answer:** The narrator told Shastri that he repeated everything he had told him without giving rise to any suspicion. He exclaimed "What a marvellous Shastra yours is!" Shastri did not like his berating astrology. He retorted that he could have found out himself from the Shastras.

**Question 24. Comment on the ending of the-story 'Ranga's Marriage'.**

**Answer:** The story has a happy ending. Ranga has been married to Ratna and they have a three year old golden boy named Shyama after their well-wisher, the narrator. Ratna is eight months pregnant and about to deliver another baby.

## **B. Long Answer Type Questions**

**Question 1. "The best way of getting to know a place is to visit it." Which place does Masti Venkatesha Iyengar refer to? What do you know learn about it?**

**Answer:** The author refers to Hosahalli, the village of Rangappa and the narrator. From the narrator's point of view it is an important village in the Mysore state. People may not have heard of it, as there is no mention of it in Geography books. The place has been ignored both by British and Indian authors. No cartographer has put it on the map.

The raw mangoes from the mango trees in the village are quite sour. The extreme potency of the sourness of these mangoes is amply illustrated by the comment: "Just take a bite. The sourness is sure to go straight to your brahmarandhra." The creeper growing in the village pond had beautiful flowers and broad leaves. The latter can serve as plates for serving afternoon meal. The village doctor Gundabhatta also speaks glowingly of Hosahalli.

**Question 2. What was special about Rangappa? How did the villagers react to it?**

**Answer:** Ten years ago, there were not many people in Hosahalli village who knew English. Rangappa, the accountant's son enjoyed a unique distinction. He was the first one to be sent to Bangalore to pursue his studies. This was considered an act of courage on the part of his father. It was an important event in the village—a sort of first of its type. Naturally, Ranga's homecoming was a great event. The crowds of villagers milled around his house to see whether he had changed or not. People were quite excited because Ranga had returned home after studying English at Bangalore. An old lady ran her hand over Ranga's chest. She looked into his eyes. She was satisfied to find the sacred thread on his body. She felt happy that he had not lost his caste. People disappeared from the scene, once they realised that Ranga had not undergone any material change.

**Question 3. Give a brief account of the narrator's two meetings with Ranga after the latter's return from Bangalore. What opinion did he form about the young man?**

**Answer:** When Ranga returned home after getting his education in Bangalore, crowds of people collected round his home to see him. The narrator was attracted by the crowd. He too went and stood in the courtyard. Ranga came out with a smile on his face. After every one had gone, the narrator asked Rangappa how he was. Ranga noticed him and came near him. He folded his hands and touched the narrator's feet. He said that he was all right, with the narrator's blessings. The narrator blessed him and wished that he might get married soon. They exchanged some polite friendly remarks. Then the narrator left. That afternoon, when the narrator was resting, Ranga came to his house with a couple of oranges in his hand. The narrator thought that Ranga was a generous, considerate fellow. He was of the opinion that it would be fine to have him marry, settle down and be of service to the society.

**Question 4. What were Ranga's ideas about marriage? Do you find any change in them during the course of the story?**

**Answer:** Ranga was influenced by the English way of life in the matter of marriage. He was not in favour of arranged marriages of the time where the brides were quite young. He told the narrator that he was not getting married just then. He gave two reasons. First, he must find the right girl. She must be mature enough to understand his love-talk. A very young girl might take his words spoken in love as words spoken in anger. He gives examples of a thirty year old officer who married a twenty-five year old lady and that of king Dushyanta falling in love with Shakuntla. The second reason he gave was that one should marry a girl one loves. During the course of the story we find a change in Ranga's ideas about marriage. Not only is he fascinated by Rama Rao's eleven year old niece Ratna, he also marries her in the old traditional way of arranged marriages.

**Question 5. What steps did the narrator take to get Ranga married to Ratna?**

**Answer:** The narrator was intimate with Rama Rao's family. He knew that his niece Ratna would be a suitable wife for Ranga. He proceeded systematically. First he created an opportunity where Ranga might listen to Ratna's song and have a glimpse of her. He arranged this sudden encounter of two strangers at his home. The reaction of two youngsters was on expected lines. Ranga felt interested in her. Ratna felt shy, lowered her head and went to the other room.

In order to test the intensity of Ranga's feelings towards Ratna, the narrator said that she had been married a year ago. Ranga looked crestfallen. Then the narrator tutored an astrologer and took Ranga to him. Shastri, the astrologer, gave sufficient assurance that there was no hitch in his marriage to a girl whose name was that of something found in the ocean.

While returning from the Shastri's house, they saw Ratna standing alone in her uncle's house. The narrator went in for a moment and brought the news that Ratna was not married. After ascertaining Ranga's views, the marriage was settled.

**Question 6. What estimate do you form of Ranga?**

**Answer:** Ranga is a typical South Indian young man whose feet are firmly entrenched in the traditional Indian culture but head is swayed by the latest acquisition of English language and ways of life.

He seems to have attained marriageable age according to the norms prevalent in society at that time. The narrator finds him generous and considerate. The young man could rightly assess a person's worth and knew when it would be to his advantage to talk to someone. At first, Ranga seemed to be in favour of love marriage—marrying a girl of one's choice, whom one loved and who would be mature enough to understand love-talk and reciprocate it. The systematic steps taken by the narrator to rope in Ranga to marry Ratna shows that the young man has a sensitive heart. Ranga's act of naming his golden boy 'Shyama' after the dark coloured narrator Shyama shows his adherence to the English custom of naming the child after someone you like.

On the whole, Ranga appears as a smart but lovable fellow.

**Question 7. Comment on the title of the story 'Ranga's Marriage'.**

**Answer:** The title of the story is quite appropriate and suggestive. It at once sums up the theme of the story. The whole story has one central issue Ranga's marriage. It begins with Ranga's refusal to marry just then and ends with his blissful married life. All the incidents contribute to the central theme.

The writer has presented the working of a young educated Indian's mind and heart. He is easily influenced by the English way of life and customs. He wants to adopt them in his own life as well. The narrator, who is his well-wisher takes deep interest in him and takes active steps to wean Ranga away from the fantasy of love-marriage. By arousing his interest and fascination in a young girl, Ratna, he makes Ranga agree to marry her. Thus Ranga's one condition for marriage is fulfilled—he knows the girl and loves her. She does not fulfil the other condition of being a mature girl in twenties—she is just eleven at that time.

**Question 8. Write a brief note on the ending of the story 'Ranga's Marriage'.**

**Answer:** The ending of the story is superb. Like all the tales of romance where the hero and heroine are finally united, the caption "....and they lived happily ever after" is usually displayed. The writer goes here one step further. He presents Ranga as a happily married husband, a proud father and a good member of the joint family.

He has a three year old son, a golden child, whom he had named 'Shyam' after the narrator to express his love and gratitude to the elderly person. We also learn that Ratna is about to deliver another child and Ranga's sister has come there with his mother. They will not only look after household affairs but Ratna as well.

The scene of a toddler putting his arms round the legs of an elder and the latter kissing him on his cheek and placing a ring on his tiny little finger as a birthday gift presents a lovely emotional scene full of tender affection and love. What a happy ending!