



DIASPORA IDENTITY: CASE STUDY OF NAIPAUL'S FICTION 'IN A FREE STATE'

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ABSTRACT

The literature produced at global level by dispersed community that has common ancestral homeland is known as the literature of Indian diaspora. Indian communities are spread all over the major countries of the world. The total population of Indian diaspora in the world is near about twenty million. People from India settle abroad and maintain a strong bond with motherland. The diaspora literature have certain important features, that separate their writing from the mainstream of contemporary writers. The Indian writer have brought diaspora literature at world wide recognition. Nobel laureate V.S. Naipaul was famous writer of Indian origin had he has great contribution in diaspora literature.

KEYWORDS: *Diaspora, Homeland, Dispersed, Indentured, Expatriate, Exile, Migration.*

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A large number of the diaspora writers have been giving expression to their creative urge and brought credit to diaspora fiction at distinctive force. Some important creative writers have been accorded recognition for their efforts at home and abroad. V.S. Naipaul was a renowned novelist and one of the greatest expatriate writer. He has won Booker Prize and Nobel Prize in literature for his outstanding contribution in the field of literature. Diasporic Indian writing in English covers every continent and the part of the word. It is an interesting paradox that Indian writing in English is produced not only in India but in widely distributed geographical areas.

The Indian diaspora has emerged as one of the leading and largest diaspora of the world. The diaspora writings are the record of the experiences of the diasporic communities living in varied sociocultural settings. The immigrants, whatever their reason for migration is, economic, social, political. No matter whether they migrate for trade and commerce, as religious preachers, as guest worker or in search of better life and opportunities but they have shared common experiences. The experience of migration varies from person to person depending upon the levels of education, age, background and point of entry. But neither

dislocation nor absorption can total there has to be an ongoing involvement with reality.

Indian diaspora spread globally across 6 continents and 110 countries, the Indian diaspora is 20 million strong with an annual income averaging \$160 billion. They do not make a rigid body as they diverged from different parts of India, speaking more than 22 languages, left at different times under the different situation. The first group features the older diaspora in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Nepal, Myanmar and Singapore. The second group starting from 1835 to 1920, moving in successive waves of indentured laborers, 1.5 million poured in to plantation colonies of Mauritius, Trinidad, Guyana and South Africa. The labor diaspora was generally followed by free immigrants. Third group, after World War 2 mainly of individuals and families of professionals doctors, engineers and technocrats heading towards industrial countries like Britain, Canada, Australia, European Countries and USA, including the twice migrants from Mauritius, Trinidad, Tobago, Fiji, Guyana, Surinam and East Africa. The celebration of Bhartiya Pravasi Divas on every 9th January in India marks the confluence and the coming of age of new, resurgent India recognizing and embracing its children across the seas, all the people of Indian origin.



INTRODUCTION

I don't know Who I was

-V.S. Naipaul.

Among the writers of Indian origin, Naipaul stands out in very unique way. He is pioneer of diaspora writing. Naipaul began to write about immigrant psyche and diasporic experiences. As aware of deeply conscious burdens of being displaced immigrant, he produced the series of fiction and nonfiction and that carved the way for the succeeding generations. Naipaul's progressive vision and sensibility makes him world wide appreciated writer. Arthur W. Helweg mention about Indian diaspora:

"For non-residents, India is their cultural homeland, but the meaning of India as an ethnic home varies from different groups. For those in East Africa, India is the place of return as for retirement, the home of their kinsmen, the location of their ancestral land, the source of their culture and reason of their extensive. Present day networks for others, such as those of indentured origin in Trinidad, India evokes in them an emotional feeling and nothing more". (Helweg, pg 115)

V.S. Naipaul was a Caribbean writer of Indian ancestry. He has secured place for himself in world literature. He is crowned as international writer among the international writers. He was born on 17th August 1932 at Chaguanas in West Indian island of Trinidad. His grandfather belonged to Uttar Pradesh, India and he went to Trinidad as indentured labor in 80s of the 19th century to work on sugar plantation. He was a Brahmin and he went to teach among the Indian workers of Trinidad.

Being first generation of Indian Immigrants his grand father preserved the sociocultural ethos of his Indian nativity with devotion. Seeparsad, father of Naipaul, though born in alien land could also abide to his ancestral religiosity and culture. V.S. Naipaul, a third generation expatriate, spent his childhood and formative years of adolescence witnessing this painful process of disintegration and deracination of his community in Trinidad. The loss of Indianness in alien land to resist pressure of different cultural, religious and ethnic groups which created confusion in their minds and hearts.

V.S. Naipaul was highly innovative and mysteriously delightful delineator of the wounds and ailments on the Indian diaspora in the post colonial literature in the world over in any language. Present paper tends to analyse the Naipaul's one of the famous novel IN A FREE STATE with lens of diasporic sensibility and identity.

DISCUSSION

In a Free State represent the indigenous cultural history or the hard striving of the upcoming

countries which are free from colonialism. They try to attain national identity of their own. Novel designed with three stories and two supporting narratives. The story 'One Out of Many' relate the story of Santosh, a Hindu from Bombay and his experiences in the US. The second story 'Tell Me Who Kill' focus on the west Indians in England and third story 'In a Free State' is novella with two while protagonist Bobby and Linda, who enjoy a freedom that would not have been possible in their native country. Naipaul's aims to project the complex fate of individuals specially through the mode of alienation. The characters in the novel indulge in the quest for identity.

In the novel the journey becomes a symbol for the world in flux it portrays. The people in the novel are exiles, expatriates or tourists belonging from different nationalities. In prologue there are people belonging to nationalities as like Indian, African, Egyptian and Chinese. The Egyptian Greek are travelling to Egypt, but its no longer their home. They had been expelled from Egypt invaders, but finally the invaders had left Egypt; After many humiliations Egypt was free. The tramp in the prologue is yet another example of the rootlessness. Till the end, the nationality of tramp remain unfixed. The prologue anticipates the themes to be explored in three stories.

The first story 'One Out of Many' is the first narrative in which protagonist Santosh is an Indian domestic from Bombay gives an accounts of his life in Washington. When the story opens, he was already an American citizen, a free man and appears to have done well in his life, yet he is unhappy. He misses for his Bombay life where he had been respected and enjoyed a certain position. He mentioned that;

"I was happy in Bombay. I was respected, I had certain position. I worked for important man. The highest in the land came to our bachelor chambers and enjoyed my food and showered compliments on me. I had my friends". (Naipaul, pg.15)

Having migrated from his village he had very fast adapted himself to the city with compared to his life in Bombay. In Washington, Santosh becomes aware of himself as an individual. His involvement with Hubsy woman that initiates his self awareness which makes Santosh regards his employer and the relationship between in a new light. With the self awareness that comes to him in Washington his perspective changes altogether. The story 'One Out of Many' is the beautiful portray of conflict between the will to assert his identity before fate and unique touch of Hindu philosophy towards life. The protagonist, Santosh is free to follow his dreams but he crowded by harsh realities all around.

'Tell Me Who to Kill' is the second story in the boo which continues to highlight the same motif



that is identity crisis and alienation where emotional weight is carried by strangers to foreign land. In the story, there are two Indian brothers on the verge of fighting to maintain the old culture. The narrator's conscience ceaselessly flooded by varying emotions. The inner landscape keeps on changing quite rapidly. At the outset, narrator is found depressed by his own state but he hates to witness the recurrence of the same with his younger brother, Dayo. He wants to see him a professional. He is willing to sacrifice his own comforts for his happiness. Dayo is sent to England and the brother anxious about his progress in his engineering studies. The narrator is disheartened to note that all his ambitious and sacrifices have been useless by the casual attitude of Dayo towards studies. Because of this the narrator has hatred one and all and painfully enough are unable to locate and determine the real enemy. His confusion and frustration reflect in his words;

"Who hurt me Who spoil my life Tell me who to bear back...Tell me Who to Kill" (Naipaul, pg 98)

The story leaves us in gloomy mood. The story throws light on the fact that individual aspirations, no matter how genuine we are, matter little in the present superstructure of society and global order.

'In a Free State' is the longest as well as the title story of the novel. It is all about the newly independent African country where two of the local tribes that is Flemings and Waloons are at war against each other. The story describes the rapid deterioration that occurred in Africa after colonial rule who ended. Bobby and Linda are among the last Europeans in Africa who attempts to save themselves from prevailing danger and chaos while moving by road towards their compound located far away. Bobby is blind to anything negative about Africa and remarks that Africa has saved him given cause for life. On the other hand Linda gives the impression that Africa ruined her life and already sizes up the situation as dangerous and hopeless.

The story beautifully portrays the conflict between the human aspirations and failings, yearning for independence versus subjugating other. In a philosophical sense, the story is representative of inherent conflict faced by an individual, state and societies.

Epilogue from Journal: 'The Circus at Luxor' is the concluding section of the novel. The author declares in the opening of the epilogue that he was going to Egypt, this time by air and he broke his journey at Milan for certain business reasons.

The novel has surely served its purpose well as intended by the author. It raised certain basic issues concerning mankind. The plight of uprooted former colonial becomes a metaphor for modern restlessness and homelessness and exile are perceived

as a contemporary state of mind, affiliating all. To be in a free state is thus to be abroad and adrift in modern world. The struggle for identity against odds is symbolic of indomitable of human spirit. It is also The plight of Indian diaspora around the world. The tramp, the author, the Bobby are the representative of phenomenon.

CONCLUSION

Novel revolve around the existential absurdities and fear psychosis of migrated or uprooted people whose history and culture have been denigrated and human emotions dried up due to the inflections. He took cudgel to delineate these people and it is therefore that the protagonist of his novels are always apprehensive of their alienation, and marginality. They are also on alert lest the identity might be swallowed in such oppressive situations and it is the root cause of their anxiety.

Naipaul has structured his own observation in his fictions casting himself as an autobiographical writer. In his fiction there is a deep feeling of homelessness, sense of displacement, nostalgia, inability to adjust in alien land and cultural clashes are depicted. Diaspora literature basically deals with idea of homeland, a place from where migration occurs. Whenever we discuss about diaspora literature we should consider the importance of Naipaul's contribution in the field of diaspora literature.

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