

A Post-Colonial Study In Examining Naipaul's India And Current India Based On Naipaul's India: A Wounded Civilization

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Abstract

This article, "A Post-Colonial Study in Examining Naipaul's India and Current India Based on Naipaul's India: A Wounded Civilization" brings out the major differences between Naipaul's India and that of existing India. V.S. Naipaul believes that his work India: A Wounded Civilization would rescue the Indian nation from being corrupted. He is one of the prominent writers in India, who discusses about the condition of India and how India is going to participate in the race with that of the developed countries. According to him, India is still an under developed country, while compared with other nations because the leaders in this country are fully corrupted. This article mainly concentrates to exemplify the difficulties that the Indians face because of corruption. He is a writer who tells about the country and the culture of the people as he lived between two cultures of England and India. As he had greater expectation on India, he has brought in several suggestions to help India to transform itself as a developed country. He felt that India is developed through the readings of Indian authors. But when he came to India he found it to be fake, and that the writings about India was not true. As his ancestors were from India he knew about the Indian culture and their various practices such as animal worship, rationalism, ideas beyond logical thinking, superstitious beliefs and dead customs. The Indian writers had to abide by the Government so wrote the positive side of India. Thus Naipaul compares his views about India and other countries with the knowledge he had about the eastern and western culture. This paper presents the post-colonial perspective of Naipaul's India and Present India.

Keywords: Indian culture, Indian government, Society, People's level, Religion, Caste, Politics.

INTRODUCTION

Indian writing in English started from the early period of British colonization in India. During the post-colonial era many writers began to write their works based on the subjects that are related to political, social and personal issues of Indians. The major themes of post-colonial period focuses mainly on identity, partition, culture, caste, animal realism, politics, and religion as these were the predominant issues that were prevailing in India soon after Indian independence. After the colonial period, India has been divided into two nations, namely: Pakistan and India. During this period, India faced religious problems which brought a massive outbreak between people and many were mercilessly killed. If these two nations hadn't separated after the colonization period, then there might not be any problems.

Later in post-colonial period there was a major development in Indian English literature. V.S. Naipaul's work shows that people are searching for the identity between western and eastern culture. Post-colonialism can be considered as a reformation period that changed many things in Indian language, culture, politics, etc., Post-colonialism shows the social and political power in India and the works that had been written during this period serves as a guide for an individual and for the country after independence.

The major function of post-colonial literature is to create awareness on the people's mind-set and to change government's attitude towards its citizens. These two things are the major causes in the Indian politics. Within India people faced lots of problem because of the difference between high and low caste. People believed this difference between each individual and so they treated the low caste people with disrespect and it led to lack of humanity in India. Mostly lower caste people were dominated by the

higher caste people and they had separate rules. Earlier, British tried to take out the discretion among people and they tried to bring the mind-set of treating them equal. But in post-colonial India, it was changed again without the knowledge of the government. Even though Indians claimed that India was better after independence they didn't know in detail about the Indian government and politics.

Partition also brought a huge death rate in India as there was a clash between Hindus and Muslims. It caused more death as Hindus in Pakistan were killed and in the same way as Muslims in India. It led to a massive migration between these two countries. Girish Karnad says that "Naipaul has no idea of how Muslims contributed to Indian history, he really doesn't pay much attention to the details of the texts he studied" (Karnad). According to the theme of Naipaul's India, it was still an underdeveloped country. V.S. Naipaul wrote this book in 1976 but India got freedom in the year 1947. Even after independence, the people of India have not bothered to rebuild this nation that the British have abruptly left. Government made politics among people by provoking fight in the name of religion, caste and other issues. Even after independence, Indians had the practice of black magic and animal worship as people believed they are gods. They are stuck with that mentality that many people were illiterate. They could not discriminate between the right and the wrong. They just followed what others taught them.

Moreover there were many political changes during this period but no one came forward to take any initiative to improve the country as they were already benefitted by the power. Post-colonial India is expected to have got freedom but is still ruled by the government with selfish motives. Post-colonial India has many black marks. The main is the EMERGENCY PERIOD. It shows that Indian government can go to any extent to sustain its power by dominating and dictatorship. More pathetic was when the whole world was looking forward to India it was underdeveloped. As per Naipaul, India was uncivilized as no one can share about the Indian condition to the outer world. The writers were dominated by the government as only the ruling party could decide what to write and publish about the country.

MAJOR POST-COLONIAL INDIAN WRITERS

Khushwant Singhis a famous Indian writer, journalist, lawyer and politician. He, like V.S. Naipaul writes about the condition of India and has presented his study on political view. His work *Train To Pakistan*(1956) speaks about the partition of India. In this book he shares about how the country was divided and how the people were killed in the name of religion. How government twist and create the problem between Hindus and Muslims. TaslimaNazrin a writer from Bangladesh says that "Lajja can be seen as a symbol of protest. It is protest against violence, hatred and killing that are going on all over in the name of religion"(Nazrin).

Salman Rushdie's famous work *Midnight's Children* (1981) won booker prize the same year. He wrote one controversial book *The Satanic Verse* (1988). His work *Midnight's Children* created a huge problem in Indian government because he criticised about the Prime Minister of India. So many political leaders opposed his book as it contains details about the things done during the emergency period and how government ruled India during the emergency period. He dealt with the topic like religion, life, death, eastern and western culture. Salman Rushdie says that "but in the end it creates its own reality, its heterogeneous but usually coherent vision of events India, the new myth-a collective fiction in which anything was possible, a fable rivalled only by the two other mighty fantasies; money and god" (Rushdie 242).

AmitavGhosh is a well known writer in contemporary Indian literature. He wrote both fiction and non-fiction. His works are *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *The Glass Palace* (2000) and *The Hungry Tide*(2004). In his work he mentions about the climatic change and the ways to face it. Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008) won the booker prize. He wrote with the contemporary Indian view on fiction. This book is about the development of an individual entrepreneur turned into a millionaire. He clearly views the 21st century writing which speaks about the reality. Among these famous writers we find our writer V.S. Naipaul a person with Indian background born in Britain.

Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul who is most commonly known as V. S. Naipaul, a British, was born in 17 August 1932 Chaguanas, Caroni country, British Trinidad and Tobago (present day Trinidad and Tobago) . He died in 11 August 2018 London, England, United Kingdom. V.S. Naipaul was a fantastic writer better known as Novelist, Travel Writer and Essayist. He has done his studies in University College at Oxford. Mainly his genres are novel and essay. His parents are Seepersad Naipaul and Dorothea Capildeo. Naipaul was the second child and he had one younger brother Shiva. Naipaul tells about Trinidad in his book *The Middle Passage* "I knew Trinidad to be unimportant, uncreative, cynical... It was a place where the stories of failure" (Naipaul 43-44)

NAIPAUL AND HIS CONTRIBUTIONS FOR HIS NATIVE NATION

Naipaul is a writer and his main notable works are *A House For Mr. Biswas* and *In A Free State* where he describes the post-colonial period in Africa and the latter book received Booker Prize award in 1971. *A Bend In The River* was published in 1979 and it marks the beginning of his exploration of native historical tradition deviating from his usual new world examinations. *The Enigma of Arrival* novel contains five sections and was published in 1987. In 1974 Naipaul wrote the novel called *Guerrillas*, it follows a creative slump that lasted several years. In Britain in 1990 and in 2001, he got the Nobel Prize in Literature.

His breakthrough novel *A House For Mr. Biswas* was published in 1961. It was dedicated to his first wife Patricia Anne Hale on the fiftieth anniversary celebration of its publication. She is the one who had served as a first reader, an editor, and a critic of his writings. In a *Prologue To An Autobiography* (1983), V.S. Naipaul describes his father's reverence for writers and how he spawned his own dreams and aspirations to become a writer. In 1939 when V.S. Naipaul was six years old his entire family moved with him into a big house in Trinidad's capital, Port of Spain. There Naipaul was enrolled in government-run Queen's Royal College, a well regarded school, which was modeled after a British public school. Upon graduation Naipaul won a Trinidad Government scholarship that allowed him to study at any of the institutions of higher learning in the British commonwealth.

Such a writer who had great regard for India identified the real state of India during his visit which he has penned in his work *India: A Wounded Civilization*. Naipaul felt that India is still in the underdeveloped country list so he is asking question to the Indian people Do You Think India Is Developed? A wounded civilization tells about India elaborately from the past to present. Corruption is one of the main problems in India which people are still actively involved. India is still looking exactly like as it was before independence there is no massive change among people and in the country. Government is pretending that the country is developing but the writers and the educated people know that there is no transformation in the country. Naipaul explains with evidence and starts to blame the people and the government. People do not involve in politics or do they care but are expecting some changes in the country without moving a step forward so how can we see a change in the country. Not only Naipaul many other Indian authors have also criticized about India. People need to start a reformation and clean India. Naipaul notifies that India is a wealthy country and has all the things within our country but our politicians do not allow anything new to happen or learn from our own idea. Naipaul expects some changes within India and he tries his best to make people understand what to do. Other writers like Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Nagarkar, Khushwant Singh, and many writers criticized about India commented on the fact which they have seen and experienced in India.

According to the Indian writers they try to bring some changes in India but people in India are still in the state of unacceptable mindset. Even after independence Naipaul sees that there is instability. India seems to be a wounded civilization according to the close analysis of Naipaul on India. Naipaul is very particular to identify the defects of Indian government and people so he clearly briefs about the negative side of the government. He gave an open criticism about people who are the central concept of Naipaul's book that focuses on the culture and the society of the people.

Almost he has traveled to many place in India and observed various things in each and every place so he is able to describe what he has witnessed. Even now many have not changed as people are following the old rituals and they justify it as right and good for them. No one is coming forward to correct them and make them to travel in the right path. While Naipaul's visit to India he found no change it was all exactly the same as he saw during his childhood which shocked him. Later he understood that the people were under the government control and there's no freedom for them.

NAIPAUL'S VIEW ON POST-COLONIAL INDIA

Naipaul shows the vivid picture about how the people are living their life in fully complicated India. It's all most a travel essay where he speaks about the current situation of Indian people and the culture in which they live. He also shares about the state of people who deny to follow certain culture which even the government has a blind eye. The government is concerned only about the life of the higher class people as their growth depends on them. He also unfolds the truth that the government ignores the need of the economically backward people. The economically privileged only take care of themselves and not others. The recent situation in India is very bad while compared to the early age. Now people are money minded and they do not have humanity. They have no time to interact with others and the main drawback for the Indians is their caste and religion. According to Naipaul India is still backward in their culture and race with other countries. But now in the recent century, India is little developed and they focus to develop the country. But people are not broad minded and they take the caste and religion as their identity. What is shocking is that these qualities are seen especially among the educated people and the main benefit of the disparities goes to the politicians. Politicians act behind the screen where people are blind folded. Naipaul knows that people in India will never value their culture and people. From *The Enigma Of Arrival* Naipaul says that "the only way we have of understanding another man's conditions is through ourselves, our experience and emotions..." (Naipaul 42). From early age to the current situation the only aim of the politicians is to corrupt and they get lots of profit through the people. People without awareness are working for the politicians and they know very well about the mindset of the people and adjust according to them.

From the beginning Naipaul sees that the leaders from India are not fit for the government as they are always money minded and do not care about the normal class people. He divides India as old India and new India. Naipaul always gives importance to the feelings and the tradition and culture of that time where he feels that there is an unhealable wound in the modern Indians in term of illiteracy, unhygienic, corruption and poverty. That is the reason he called India as a Wounded Civilization. He also mentioned about the culture and conveys about the Aryan's culture and their rituals which the people are still following. Naipaul's opinion about India is not accepted by Indians because he says badly about them and they reciprocate that *India: A wounded Civilization* is an imperfect book as it is his own idea and thought. They refuse to accept him as he seems to be alienated from India. In Chinua achebe book *A Man Of The People* "your accusation may be true but you have no right to make it. Leave it to us and don't contaminate our cause by exposing it" (achebe 60)

Area of Darkness (1964) is yet another book written by him where he gave some hope to people that identity crisis is good for people. Naipaul also says that Indian government will not be stable hereafter. He expresses that people are not feeling good about India. He expects the people to change inside as there are lots of difference between rich and poor. He tries to find the freedom within the people. They need to evolve and change to make themselves new. Indians in Naipaul's view is a civilization that faced defeat. Naipaul's interpretation was repeatedly seen in this book with full of casual conversations and discussions. But people don't know what the outsiders think about them. Caste is the main factor which always threatened people. Hence people try to come out from the caste and religion in order to escape from dead customs.

Naipaul justifies the Indian cultural ideal "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" that without having 'home', he travels all around the world and records his experiences marvelously in his classic works

of art. Critics should be thankful that India is fortuitously connected with Naipaul. One cannot deny this fact that one who identifies your flaws is your guardian angel. Naipaul and his elite works of art can be graded as worthwhile example of it. He was taken by the two cultures and revolved around it. Culture stability in line with the Indians is high in his works.

In wounded civilization, Naipaul describes about the religious problems which was the major issue during those days. Hindus and Muslims fight for their holy place and lots of Muslims were killed in that riot. As Naipaul has brought the religious issue he was slashed by the Muslims all over India and they even conducted a protest against his book. In that book Naipaul speaks about two boys who struggle between two cultures. And shares how they face the problems in their place. This book also briefs about the emergency period and how men faced problems by the government. Through this book Naipaul said that India will not get away from the religion because it was the main source to the politicians to lead their life. They will make people to fight in the name of religion and watch over it so that the politicians would remain in the luxury of power. But this people are unaware and are fighting among themselves. This is the reason why the country is not able to develop and compete with other nations. Sunil Khilnani says that “in Nehru’s India, Indianness was not defined as a singular or exhaustive identity, but one which recognized linguistic and cultural markers” (Khilnani, 175).

Current India is worst while compared with Naipaul’s India because during those days population was less but now they are high in number so government is playing very well with them. India is the second most populated country in the world it contains lots of Hindus and Muslims and is a democratic country. No one can express their feelings and ideas but in current situation if anyone argues about religion they will be thrown behind bars. Now the Indian government is making India as a Hindu nation and asks all of them to convert to Hindus. In the beginning itself Naipaul said that religion will not get away from India. With the help of religion only government functions and for revealing this truth Naipaul was accused a lot. Nowadays world is moving towards technology but people are fighting for their religion and killing people in the name of religion.

His concentration in this book on *Indian Demeanor* is in view of Hindu way of thinking and the religion has decided country’s politics and social history. ‘VasudhaivaKutumbakam’ is a phrase taken from the Sanskrit text named *Maha Upanishad* that means ‘the whole world is our family’ and he considers that no one is higher and no one is lower in the world. He considers all human as same. Vasudhaivakutumbakam says that “one is a relative, the other stranger, say the small minded. The entire world is a family, live the magnanimous”(kutumbakam 6.71-73).

Next predominant issue is the caste system in India. Caste related problems are occurring everyday in India. It’s like a regular activity and people are facing many problems through this and till now government did not take any action over it. Not only India is historically useless but Indian government depend upon the caste and many writers rebuked that caste is useless and ask them to take away the caste in India but all their efforts are in vain. Caste is a big problem in India if an Indian need to opt for a government job he/she should abide by the rule and concessions given to specific caste. The applicants are forced to submit their caste certificate to qualify themselves for certain categories.

According to Naipaul Indians are always useless and they don’t know how to make their mind bright and to face the problems. If someone speaks against them, suddenly they will rise up and will not analyze the reason behind. India is still fighting for its caste system. Even now some of the lower caste people are killed. Naipaul took only Kakar’s theme and analyzed the whole Indian culture and the community. The book starts with a record of the despoiling of a Hindu sanctuary by British troopers, and for some time it appears that the annihilation seen by Naipaul is basically the consequence of numerous era of outside control, that of the British Raj as well as of the significant lot of Muslim principle. India has vanquished human advancement since it is a progress molded by Hinduism. In *Area of Darkness* Naipaul says that “I came of a family that abounded with pundits. But I had been born an unbeliever. I took no pleasure in religious ceremonies”(Naipaul 32). Ananthamurthy who criticizes his own upper caste

says that even in Brahmins they have sub caste. In his story "*Ghatashraddha*" he says about the story of a Brahmin boy and an untouchable girl wandering in the woods and when all of a sudden the boy touched the girl's hand the girl replies to that boy I am a lower class girl how can I touch you. In Arundhati Roy's *God Of Small Things* caste play a major role as the character named Ammu who fights her whole life for loving a man from low caste. The untouchables in the novel have inferiority complex. In this story the father is ready to kill his own son because of caste problem. Such is the severity of prevailing caste system in India.

NAIPAUL'S CRITICISM ON INDIAN POLITICS

In this book Naipaul criticizes a lot about the Indian politics because it was Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who brought emergency period in India to make her position strong. So she used her power and made the emergency period sturdy in India and during the emergency period lot of problems raised as it was the first time in India. Naipaul strongly condemned Indian leaders. Politics plays a major role in Naipaul's book. Naipaul is additionally condemning Mrs. Indira Gandhi's revelation of Emergency in India. Simultaneously, Shiv Sena's framing of Sena councils' is seen by Naipaul as an endeavor at running parallel government in Maharashtra. Naipaul tells that Indian leaders are not fit for ruling and they not even care about the common people. For his statement he was slashed a lot by the government and they made him to erase the statement what he had mentioned in his book about Indian leaders and emergency period.

Naipaul has delineated the control of government by people or gatherings from grass roots level to state or focus government by methods for absolutist strategies instead of prevalent command of the individuals. He depicts how dictators became a crisis in India. Darsan Singh Maini tells about the tragedy of Punjab on how people suffered. He clearly explains about the Punjab tragedy and how the government misused the power. Even in wounded civilization the government misused the power for their own purpose. Both the incident happened during the period of Indira Gandhi as a Prime Minister. Arundhati Roy in her book *God of Small Things* mentioned about the Indian history and politics in class as a major issue. Politics play a major role in the culture and she argues that people are fighting within country. Nazrin tells even now the political power will not allow the sub continent people to be free. She compares the religion and the politics and explains like Naipaul about India. Ruskin Bond had a strong passion towards literature he says that when there is no war in the world there will be a full of butterflies all over the world.

Indian people love their culture but now they are moving towards the western culture as they feel more comfortable. In *India: A Wounded Civilization* book Naipaul briefly explains their life style and what they expect according to the mind of the people. Naipaul feels that people are fond of western culture because people pretend to be luxurious when they follow western culture. In this book he denotes the characters of some Muslim boys and how they move towards the western culture through the British lifestyle. Naipaul went to all the places in India and observed what people are and how they follow their culture. According to Naipaul, culture is not taken serious by many people of India. Though people adapt to their culture they only love to move towards the western culture. Indian people lack ideology and logical reasoning in their present world.

In this book Naipaul explains elaborately about the way of approach and mindset towards British world. Naipaul calls India as a difficult country as he clearly knows the problem of facing people and the loss of their identity. Western temperament affected our people a lot through the British people. Some of them feel that Naipaul had already chosen the title about India and so came to just analyze it for his work. He started his work from Vijayanagar Empire which the Indians have forgotten. He laments that the politicians view of India as an ancient country that has been stuck in its past glory. He also calls India as a dark picture to other nations by the way how people live.

India failed to progress its society and to develop from its old tradition and culture. In *The Loss Of El Dorado* Naipaul tells that “in the last six years I have seen more of the infamy and turpitude of mankind than I have seen in the rest of my life” (Naipaul 283). Even if Indians were not colonized surely India would have developed and shown some progress through their work. They would have made it possible as Indians are always hard working people and they work for hours and finish the work. They were stopped only by their culture to do even good deeds to others and they do not analyze it with their own mindset. Indian society is too old to make the progress but blaming the country is not the only way to rescue. We need to examine how we are and what we had done in our past and what to do in our present day to make all possible. He knows about India very well and so Naipaul works on it to make people understand.

Naipaul himself suggests the solution for the problems in India. He invites the people to analyze each and every thing what they have in their mind. Indian people are ruled by the government even the media was under the control of government and political leaders. This should change as everyone has the freedom to express their own ideas. So they must take effort to express the truth. Naipaul requests the people to come out of their mindset of what they have followed over hundred years. Now it's time to change and bring new method to follow. Old age people always glorify their past but the present is still in a confused state.

CONCLUSION

Thus V.S. Naipaul has clearly described about the present state of India based on the post-colonial concepts of culture, religion, caste and lifestyle. He has opened the eyes of Indians towards the bare realities of India and has called for the rescue of Indian society. Finally the solution could be as follows. People need to learn and maintain their culture and tradition not for others but for their own. If one culture starts to forget their language then it is the end of their culture and for people. So both the people and the government need to make some changes for the next generation. Each and every citizen of India needs to be good for their nation and work hard to develop the nation. People need to come out from their unwanted rituals and they need to make the humanity proud and treat everyone equal. There should not be any gender discrimination among us. All are equal in our nation. People should move forward to create, innovate and develop our country. Not everyone are mindless everyone has their own conscience and that must show the need to do the work.

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