



PORTRAYAL OF INDIA IN THE WORKS OF V.S. NAIPAUL

Alka Dhariwal

Research Scholar, Department of English

Desh Bhagat University Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab, India

Abstract:

A travelogue is a type of literature that gives one the chance to share their ideas and give a description of the location they have visited. Additionally, it aids others in gaining genuine insights while they are there. They are especially useful when some of them relate to history rather than literature because traveler's journals can be used to gather information about history. The exploration of the explorer's emotions, imagination, insights, and tiny turn of events that leads to new adventures are what distinguish this as an artistic work. The travelogues of Nobel Prize winner V. S. Naipaul have received widespread praise, while Indian critics have launched harsh attacks on him. The present research paper aims to examine his three travelogues, *An Area of Darkness*, *India: A Wounded Civilization*, and *India: A Million Mutinies Now*, and explores how the author portrays Indian history.

Keywords: Travelogues, Travel Literature, Indian Portrayal

Introduction:

The Indus Valley Civilisation, the first developed and flourishing culture in South Asia, existed between 2500 and 1900 BCE. Indian civilizations are among the oldest in the world. Ancient Indian civilization included a well-structured and well-managed way of life. Indian peoples possessed vast amounts of knowledge and lived in societies that were much superior than any other civilization on the planet. The Vedas form the foundation of Hindu society, allowing people to live together in harmony and with love. Kings like Ashoka, Magadha, and Maurya ruled over the kingdom and contributed to preserve Indian culture and way of life.

Muslims from Central Asia's nomadic clans successfully formed the Islamic Delhi Sultanate in 1206. The Mughal Empire did so many things to become a part of Indian culture. When the Mughal Empire fell after a long period of rule, many elites were allowed to seek and govern their

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:	RESEARCH ARTICLE
Alka Dhariwal Research Scholar, Dept. of English Desh Bhagat University Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab, India Email: alkatoor@gmail.com	

own affairs. When the East India Company moved to India for trade in the early 18th century, it brought with it new trends and a broad means to become a member of the global market. British started hurting Indians with their insufferable regulations and ruling tactics, therefore a revolution against the British began, and the sacrifice of freedom warriors helped Indians gain their freedom after nearly two centuries of British dominion.

Indians made sacrifices and fought for their freedom, and India began its road to become a worldwide leader. It attracts many researchers due to its cultural old civilisation and easy demeanour. The teaching of the Vedas "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" earned Indians the reputation of being the most kind-hearted people, welcoming anyone into their homes and treating them as gods. Following independence, India acknowledged the importance of maintaining their previous reputation. Many intellectuals visit to India in order to find spiritual serenity and to discover inner peace. The present research paper shows us how the picture of India and Indian people shown by V.S. Naipal in his writings.

Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, also known as 'V.S. Naipaul' or simply 'Vidia Naipaul,' was a Trinidad and Tobago-born British writer. Naipaul depicts Indian characters in historical and religious contexts. He describes Indian culture and lifestyle. He wrote the Trilogy on India. 1. *An Area of Darkness* This is his semi-autobiographical tale, which combines anguish and happiness while skillfully demonstrating his connection to India. 2. *India: A Wounded Civilization* (1977) in this work he demonstrates his analytical view with criticizing India during the Emergency 1975, 3. *India: A Million Mutinies Now* he shared his journey experience across metropolises cities like Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, and Delhi. "The mystic masseur," "Half a life," and so forth. Such works of Naipaul present a portrait of India and the Indian people.

An Area of Darkness

V. S. Naipaul's semi-personal account of his first trip to India, the country of his forefathers, *An Area of Darkness*, is immediately agonising and stupid but continuously wise and deliberate. He stayed here for a year and was then 29 years old. He was socially alienated from the subcontinent from the moment of his menacing debut in Prohibition-dry Bombay, carrying minor amounts of cognac and alcohol. It became into a setting for his fantasies for him, an area of gloom that closed everything off to him as he travelled. The book recounts the author's confusion or disappointed expectations during his first visit to his family's ancestral home. Unexpectedly, he criticizes Nehru by asserting that because of his romantic tendencies towards India, his writings are difficult for foreigners to understand. India is seen by Naipaul as a harsh, unsuccessful, and pitifully divided country that is weakening to foreign principles. In three parts—Part I as a Resting place for the imagination, Part II as a Doll's House on the Dal Lake, and Part III as Fantasy and Ruins—Naipaul has written about his experiences. According to Naipaul, who agrees with Mohan das Karamchand Gandhi "India is a country of nonsense." (*Area of Darkness*, p.68)

He begins by criticizing the East before revealing the real people who, in his opinion, one has read about in novels. In a similar manner, Naipaul depicts the circumstances in the Eastern world, India, and Africa. The author, who once described London as wonderful, finds the situation

in India insufferable. Naipaul examines Red-Tapism, a fundamental problem in India. Moving from customs officers to the clerk to the agent, etc., for the purpose of obtaining the alcohol licence, the author experiences disappointment. The author seems to only consider the negative perspectives. No other author has perhaps provided such a horrifying portrait of any nation and its people in the same way that Naipaul has. It appears that he had a predetermined attitude of criticising India and its people when he wrote the book *An Area of Darkness*. It's quite difficult to find even one encouraging thing to say about India in his book. The passage paints a meaningless, unkempt picture of India: "More than in people, India lay about us in things: in a string bed or two, grimy, tattered, no longer serving any function, never repaired because there was no one with this caste skill in Trinidad." (Naipaul, p 24). In his own words, "I was constrained to a smaller universe than I had ever known. I evolved into my house, workstation, and name (Naipaul, 38). The predicament of India's poverty terrifies Naipaul. In order to criticise the Indian mindset and archaic methods, Naipaul cites a few cases of Indians. He looks into Jivan's life, a young man of thirteen who left his hometown and relocated to Mumbai in search of employment. He used to sleep on the asphalt when he earned fifty rupees per month, and he continued to doze there even after he bought a taxi and started earning twenty rupees per day. At that time, Naipaul refers to Vasant, who grew up in the Bombay ghetto. He never ate throughout the day, and even when he became wealthy, this habit persisted. Naipaul also talks about two Brahmin siblings who lived in the South and started off producing envelopes before becoming wealthy by assembling cowhide goods. The author finds it strange that they continued to make envelopes despite having 70,000 pounds. Naipaul concludes that Indians cannot be torn from their roots in this way. Beggary, in Naipaul's opinion, has degraded India and promoted sloth, crime, and other vices.

Naipaul paints Srinagar, a paradise on earth, as hell. He portrayed Sankaracharya Hill as the most disgusting location while neglecting the Dal Lake, which is Srinagar's most outstanding location. He mocks the Indian mentality of those who use the lower slants for urinating without shame. He criticises the Madras bus station, which is next to the High Court, for having what is arguably the most well-known bathrooms.

India: A Wounded Civilization

His perspective has changed (or perhaps broadened) somewhat since his second book, *India: A Wounded Civilization*; at the moment, Hinduism appears primarily as a withdrawal to oneself, a focusing on what is known and one's own, and the prohibition of all external influences where they don't engage directly in minutiae. It seems to have been written by a writer whose brain is made up and who is only trying to make his own, disparaging point. This brief book describes Indian human development as a "Wounded Civilization" that is rotting and decaying. The book, which was written in 1975–1976 against the backdrop of Indira Gandhi's declaration of an Indian Emergency, makes the case that India's civilisation has been damaged by prolonged periods of time. His primary goal in writing this book is to expose the flaws in the Indian vote-based system. By using methods for autocratic approaches, Naipaul has illustrated how people or a mob can rule government on a local

level, in contrast to the popular will of the populace. He shows how communism and authoritarianism pose real threats to India's popularly supported commonwealth.

Although the political pioneers give the impression of working for the government's support of the majority, they actually have their own hidden agendas to maintain excess in power. Naipaul is denouncing the misguided authority that these individuals or groups value in this passage. In this book, he criticises the unbridled power that persons like Mr. Patel, the landowner, who are valued primarily for their financial stability, enjoy. The declaration of emergency in India by Mrs. Indira Gandhi is also condemned by Naipaul.

Naipaul sees the Shiv Sena's creation of "Sena councils" as an attempt to establish a parallel administration in Maharashtra. Naipaul then shifts his attention to industrialization. According to him, India is currently the fourth-largest producer of grains in the world due to rapid industrialization, advances in research and innovation, and actions done in accordance with the Five Year Plans. He explores the concept of "Dharma" by the end of this part. In the end, he misinterprets the meaning of the Dharma and advises people to respect and be committed to their obligations. Until something is actually important, one should not interfere with another man's obligations. Naipaul doesn't, however, ever use this concept.

Gandhi's self-centeredness contributed to his power. Naipaul observes that Gandhi never spoke about his journeys overseas, which is surprising given that Gandhi, who was from rural India, ought to have had something to say about just the shift in atmosphere in a foreign nation.

The author states in the book's final paragraph that "the crisis in India is not political: this is merely the view from Delhi. Nothing will change under a dictatorship or under military administration. The crisis isn't only financial either. These are just a few parts of the greater crisis, which is the collapse of a civilisation, and the only hope is for it to collapse even faster. In his writing, he assumes that India will cease to exist in a short period of time.

India: A Million Mutinies Now

The third book of Naipaul's Indian sojourns was written in light of his earlier works on India and is, in this way, yet another re-seeing of what had previously been mistakenly decided. He searched for a tradition here in his previous trips to India in 1962 and 1975, but all he saw was decay and chaos. Naipaul's viewpoint and demeanor had altered during his third trip to India to reflect his recognition that changes are a necessary part of life.

India: A Million Mutinies Now, is the most comprehensive travelogue by Naipaul is densely crowded with people from a variety of backgrounds, with every one of their opinions, viewpoints, and thinking as represented in their interactions with the author. The writer specifically reveals in the structure of the book that in the late 1980s, he returned in a different soul to the places he expanded on long term previously in his controversial essay, *An Area of Darkness*, and after that again in the 1970s, in *India: A Wounded Civilization*. The meddling dominating self- image present in the 1964 narrative softens when Naipaul appears as a harmless and liberal witness of the reality in *India: A Million Mutinies Now*. Naturally, the idea of independence is heard in Naipaul's voice. Furthermore, he stresses that the sociopolitical aggravations and blasted transformational efforts are

wholly of India's development. The "million rebellions" erupting in various parts of the country are not examples of its failures. These are few examples of how the soul of opportunity and reluctance has gradually inundated the comrades. "What was hidden in 1962, or not easy to see, what perhaps was only in the process of becoming, has become clearer," Naipaul admits (Naipaul, *India: A Million Mutinies Now* p. 517).

Conclusion:

As a result, we might draw the conclusion that the trilogy of his travel essays shows how one's observations and viewpoints can change over time. The second book lessens the overwhelming pessimism from the first, and by the third time the author visits India, either the setting has changed or the author's point of view has evolved to reflect how things have changed with age. Mother India has endured a lot from her own progeny, but in the end, the richness of Indian culture and legacy cannot be denied or denied. Not even by the works of a Nobel Prize winner who also happened to have Indian DNA.

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