Chapter I

Introduction

Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul is a wordsmith, the critics love to hate. His name spells endless accolades along with even greater number of bitter critical attacks, directed against his treatment of fictional and non-fictional materials, ranging from the Caribbean to India. He has to his credit more than twenty-five critically acclaimed books – a mix of novels, some humorous, some painfully melancholic and many dealing with his pet themes of displacement and migration. His travel books, strongholds of his creativity, have been ever provocative and frequently open to racism and prejudice. Naipaul, till date, has been no stranger to controversy which he has actively and eagerly courted.

The very fact that he is the recipient of the much-coveted Nobel Prize in 2001 makes Naipaul a force to reckon with in the contemporary literary scenario. Any study about him gains importance in the present situation. One gets a chiselled integrity and sincerity about him. For him, the world is an obnoxious stretch that earns no kindness in perception and no reverence
in assessment. And his world or rather this world which is of a million alterations is very splendidly and absolutely seized in an oeuvre of twelve non-fiction books and fourteen novels. The experience has obviously contrived him wiser, though more isolated.

The first and foremost place of Naipaul in the realm of literature is that of a novelist. He begins his literary career by devoting to novel and still maintains to do it. Profusely artistic, he has a brand-new publication almost every year, securing a lot awards in the process. Unlike other present-day writers, Naipaul must build a culture for his novel and the evolution of this culture is in itself a gift. The instinctive and inherent Hindu outlooks within him are interweaved with his western lifestyle and accordingly his fiction become a fusion of a trinity - accelerating a new dimension to English fiction, broadening and enlarging its boundaries and bestowing a new outlook to novel writing. His interpretation of the world he has inherited and the world he has lost is in itself a text with no parallel in English novel.

Naipaul today, for the English reading people spread all over the globe, is a Caribbean novelist hailing from the clan of Hindu settlers living in
Trinidad, who later moved to Britain, which became a second native to him. An Indian in London, a European in India and a Brahmin-cum-English in Trinidad – it plainly is an appealing anguish for Naipaul, the romantic hermit, with the entire world at his distribution. He is a comprehensive prophet, untainted by nationalism, carrying the entire pressure of a reclusive search for truth.

The progress of Naipaul as a creator shows the varied stages of the evolution of regional novelist into an artist of entire humanity. The literary subtlety of Naipaul, overstepping all hurdles has developed into an all-compassing regard for humanity. His sarcastic approach of contemporary realities has never been lacking of humane outlooks.

Naipaul is a multi-layered international author and the issue of his identity materialises because of his immigrant upbringing and the dislocation it caused. This homelessness could be viewed as an issue that has annoyed him all his life but it is also his vigour, giving him with an isolated and merciless accuracy that shows his vision as well as his prose.

In an exploration that commenced more than seven decades ago in Chaguanas, from where at the age eighteen
he moved to Oxford, Naipaul has never ceased to reclaim his past, yet there is no longing for homecoming or trace of homesickness. There is no cheerful homecoming for Naipaul. And no emotional ancestral bonds either. Yet he has utilised the West Indian life as subject for his novels, for structural outcomes, his models are European and English. The childhood and teenage are spent in Trinidad, the relationship between son and father and the Hindu upbringing - these are the three strands of his personal life that chiefly mould the emotion of Naipaul. His diversified ancestry and the strange dislocation which admit him to relate to three societies, yet fitting to none, have not only been the inducing drive behind his works but also its very subject.

Naipaul fantasises of India as his original home but has been disappointed after his visits there and therefore stands as an exotic. His approach towards India can be learnt better if it is looked back that three sociological impacts drive on him and build a distinct mental status. Being survived in Trinidad as a settler with an alien, nostalgic Hindu upbringing, he moved to Britain as an exile and when he toured India, he realised that his exiled feeling is twice erased from the nation of his root. Therefore when he comes to
India he comes as a stranger inspired by western lifestyle.

Naipaul has roamed the entire world and has ultimately settled down as an exiled writer in Britain, scrutinizing the dilemmas and issues arising out of the Diasporic condition similar to his own. His manifold heritage positions him in a place that makes it feasible for him to give a detached detail of his personal experiences. Travelling has widened his outlook and has made it conceivable for him to see his personal barrenness and homelessness against the broader context of a larger world.

The heroes of Naipaul also move away from their inherent culture and their upbringing depends upon their going away. They might be different people but one can see a strand of continuity in their private lives and position. In Half a Life Chandran may be in many things different from Biswas of House for Mr. Biswas. Likewise, Ralph Singh in Mimic Men and Ganesh Ramsumair in Mystic Masseur are completely different from each other. But, basically, they are all one as they show different facets of the same cultural temperament.

Naipaul has began to understand that the fictional works of the early stage of his writing career, satisfied
only one side of the commitment of the writer — his commitment to art and drops the greater commitment to his community dissatisfied. Such works make insight only within the structure of an organized community where after a commotion there is peace, and all catastrophes retreat into that perfect elemental peace. His unwavering faith is that authors calling the anxious and chaotic people have a higher determination to handle than the sheer satisfaction of a creative responsibility. Not only that, for crowd surviving in a chaotic and rapidly unstable world, novels of merely creative essence, far detached from communal phenomenon, and have no sense.

The predominant themes that evolve from a reading of the works of Naipaul are connected to the issues of the colonised society, their identity crisis, their feeling of estrangement from the landscapes, the absurdity of freedom and the dilemma of neo-colonialism in the former colonies. And being an Indian by origin, Trinidadian by birth and Englishman by intellectual background and dwelling, Naipaul could directly accustom himself with their issues and document about them with privileged style.

As a postcolonial fiction-writer, Naipaul places his works in both ex-colonial as well as colonial
communities and presents a contextual detail of the complications deep-rooted in such communities. In the first four of his novels, Naipaul exclusively examines Trinidad’s colonial communities, the island of his genesis and is engaged with the themes of mimicry, homelessness, alienation, dispossession and the quest for a legitimate identity. The characters in these works are constantly in quest of a home and identity.

It can be anticipated that most of Naipaul’s early writing matters from his private experience of being a dislocated member of a minority religion and race in Trinidad.

In Naipaul’s later works, nevertheless, he evolves as a writer of post-imperial dilemma. The characters in these works are even more uncertain than those presented in the early works. His acutely attentive mind and his determined responsibility to reality lay bare strong matters about the ex-colonial communities. Naipaul makes it evident that political liberation has not given about any development and the colonial states endure to maintain their hold on the ex-colonies through newer, more hidden ways of neo-colonialism.

Mainly regarded as the preeminent writer of the English-speaking Caribbean, Naipaul’s novels discuss
the cultural chaos of the Third World and the dilemmas of a newcomer. Naipaul has always enforced many arguments because of his outlooks on the half-made communities. He has denied ignoring obnoxious issues, distinguishing his role as a novelist to look and look again, to relook and rethink. He does not consider himself with making anybody satisfied or being politically perfect. And one should admit that as an expatriate whose only domain is that of “intuition,” and as a traveller waver by the geopolitics of national anguish, Naipaul can manage to be inaccurate and separate.

Naipaul’s unparalleled triumph is that, unlike some of his themes, he is not cornered by moral beliefs. Provoked by his own rootlessness, he scrutinises a number of nations, specifically Third World countries with astute judgements. Instinctively, his judgements have discomfort many.

For a novelist, whose life is part of the theme of departures, displacement, and arrivals, the world beyond is not a cheerful aloofness. Indeed, it is a natural calling. Graduated in Britain where he has been surviving for several years, Naipaul does rarely document anything on the western prosperity. His major consideration is the expelled category of community,
which drives him one of the most genuine and dynamic humanists of the worlds, who rejects to pretend others as well as himself. According to Naipaul, the only mean of sensing the plight of another man is through one’s own feelings and experience. It is challenging for a writer who craves universal reputation to choose the exceedingly marginal category of society as his subject matter.

To prompt as a novelist of issues, Naipaul should to reverse to the beginning - ignoring England and Oxford - to those early literary exposures; some of them are not revealed by anyone else. While from his early works, *House for Mr. Biswas* (1961), *Miguel Street* (1960) and *Mystic Masseur* (1957), Naipaul adopts the acquainted ambience of Trinidad, the soil of his early childhood, he changes the location of his future works to Latin America, Africa and India, both in non-fictional and fictional narratives.

Colonial settlement has made a great deal in making him as a writer. Though he commemorates the eminent nineteenth century writers and early twentieth century novelists of European literature for influence, Naipaul immediately recognized that the chaotic or haphazard people of the colonial structure such as his own
motherland could rarely give him the society or the world, which the major writers outlined.

The manifold ancestries of Naipaul, thus, give a troublesome for him when he first attempted his literary career as writer because his stuff is not amply revered by a culture. He realizes that his upbringing of Trinidad is quite limited, barbarous and simple. Life in the uncivilised Trinidad has educated him the useful lesson that yet he could stake a plea on the English language, though the English literary tradition with its exotic belief could never be his.

The inference Naipaul concludes through his comprehensive study of West Indian postcolonial world is presented in his novels as the final legitimacy about all postcolonial world. Colonial protocols are being more or less the similar to all the colonies, no matter who the colonizers are, the issues that have flared up in the post-independence period have much in common. The breakdown of economies and intellectual bankruptcy, neo-colonialism and fragmentation are major problems that all of them have to grapple with. As a postcolonial writer, Naipaul has been successful in conveying the effects of colonialism on the culture and psyche of the colonized.
For Naipaul, the passion to evolve into a writer is in the first place, something that inherited from his father to him, who has persuade the profession of a journalist, which is rare for a Trinidad Indian of his time. The tales of his father bring up an exhilarating world to Naipaul, who goes to them as to the headstones of a heroic era he has longed for. In a form the tales have made up for his paucity of culture.

Having built a design for his fiction, Naipaul found formulating his home identity by ordering his ordeals through literature. This is most excellently attained in his fourth book, *House for Mr. Biswas*. The novel reveals the colonial disgrace and reverie clearly and competently. Indeed, all his creative novels are about how the defenceless deceit to themselves and about themselves, because it is their only source. He records poignantly about how the colonial men mimic the position of adulthood and how they have developed to doubt everything about themselves.

At the same time, Naipaul throws his concern to travelogues, which ends with *Middle Passage*, his first travel work on West Indies. This work has not initiated a positive reaction in the West Indies due to his sarcastic comment on the West Indian lifestyle. But
while documenting them he preferred to write without compassion. *Middle Passage* is succeeded by more travel writing founded on Naipaul’s visits to the Islamic states, South America, India and Africa. The non-fictional books are infused with novels which give a fictitious detail of his visits to Africa and other Caribbean Isles.

In the later works of Naipaul, *Bend in the River*, *Guerrillas* and *Mimic Men* likewise in his novellas included *In a Free State* and *Flag on the Island*, the themes of Naipaul gains a universality as he embarks on other mindsets and traditions to have character of the reality that disintegration and estrangement are the universal dilemma of humans in the modern world.

The search for identity or the Diasporic literature is going to be a notable recurring theme in world literature, for years to come. Diasporic literature highlighted the displacement of a race or an individual and their subsequent separation. According to Naipaul, alienation drives to a spirit of loss but life dwells not in losing but in the rediscovering the self. Therefore, Naipaul guides his readers not to a feel of loss but to the rediscovering the self which is his repeated theme.
At every phase of his literary career, for Naipaul writing has been an endeavour that has driven him to rediscovering the self. He has himself pronounced that the most artistic authors find themselves and their province, through their creations. The search for his own identity of Naipaul has been elegantly wrapped up that he does not realize who he is. It is writing that sets an arrangement in his experience and given it consistency and continuity. Through an artistic work of the past, he can accommodate himself to his present. Just as the house sets a touch of order on the lives of the Biswases, the course of documenting his heritage aids Naipaul to discover himself.

It has been pronounced about the early works of Naipaul that in creating them he has been writing off his commitments to his ancestries, before cutting his umbilical cord with them. Instead of writing off, the early novels of Naipaul are the result of his efforts to identify his identity and find his own position in the world. It is the complicated destiny of Naipaul that in spite his diversified origin, he is yet to discover his metaphysical home and his works emerge from his dream to report with his own homelessness and dislocation.
Naipaul appears to conceal displeasure of being tagged as a Third World writer, a Caribbean or a West Indian, sounded as it is in some of his descriptions. He believes that such statements have a nationalistic or racial or ethnic connotation that smacks of a political bias and as such are meaningless. He wants to concentrate only on his professional rank as a freelance writer, carrying his dogma only humanism.

The Nobel winner, *Half a Life*, is the tale of an ethnic group in hunt for a mooring. Through the biography of William Somerset Chandran, Naipaul shows the cynical life of the Naipauls’ of the world – rootless and homeless. He defends the problems of displacement and the subsequent loss of identity which is the recurring theme in all his fiction.

In *Mystic Masseur*, the hunt for origins of Ganesh Ramasumair draws him to different phases of metamorphoses and ultimately he finds himself as G. Ramsay Muir. In *House for Mr. Biswas*, Mohan Biswas’s search for a house is an allegory for his quest of his own identity just as Chandran’s in *Half a life*.

Naipaul is much cited as regretting that there is an emotion of loneliness at keeping nothing that one could genuinely claim one’s own – neither tradition,
nor culture, nor country. He has sojourned Trinidad for a short period but came back immediately to Britain because, for Naipaul, Trinidad still prevails as a black smudge in the world map. Britain also gives him no peace or mooring. Even though his first wife Patricia Anne Hale, an Englishwoman, Naipaul still assumes that he is a stranger in Britain. Uncertain of growing barrenness as an artist and fearing a possible mess in creativity, Naipaul often seems to be always in search of a new outlook.

For Naipaul, visits to India, Africa and Trinidad are an idealistic solution to the issues. Thus he visits West Indies for freshness, yet he travels not often as an inhabitant but as a Queen’s Royal College’s product. The result of this visit is his *Middle Passage*, a travel book.

Later Naipaul visits India but recognises himself as a westernised misfit there. He comes to India again in 1975, and once again in the 1980’s which drives him to publish the acclaimed trinity of Indian visits, *India: A Million Mutinies Now, India: A Wounded Civilization* and *Area of Darkness*. He has desired of settling down in India but is absolutely disappointed with the reality he faced in his favourite nation and comes back to
Britain, an impaired man in 1970, to settle down there. For the next ten years, Britain becomes his home from where he visits to remote soils regularly.

The emotional temperature of the novels of Naipaul shows the reality of the lives of the destitute, the lost and the reclusive, like himself. Naipaul’s relentless devotion to his own pessimistic vision, along with his denial to be a showy optimist presents a fascinating influential power to his daunting fictional province. He has no soothing sense - only the dreary insight that in today’s swiftly uncertain nature, the longing for durability can never be more than an unfulfilled pain - everyone is far from home. The perceptions of Naipaul are not the outcome of self-righteousness, hidden in elitism. It is the dream of a traveller who is invariably affected by the notion of rootlessness.

It is pronounced that Naipaul has often been inhabited in the ‘No man’s land.’ The aforementioned remark is more or less genuine about him because Naipaul is not English, Caribbean or Indian. Indeed, he is a genius who feels no nationality. Naipaul asserts that, for him, a physical distance from the subject is more useful for an objective display of his material. Just as his first four novels have been drafted in England,
in order to record about Britain, he realises the urgency to revive himself by travel.

In fact, travel substantiates to be a vital provocation for the further progress of his creativity. For it not only aids Naipaul to overpower his hardships but also drives him to discover his vision. The importance of the fiction of Naipaul is that they are not only fiction of the contemporary period, but also forever. He has tried with various new techniques, chiefly the combination of genres in a post-modern trend.

As an astute onlooker of humanity, like Jane Austen and Charles Dickens, Naipaul captures the postcolonial Third World nations apparently with the lens of his responsive camera and develops a vision of it moving from the phase of colonial feudalism to capitalism. He is surely a twentieth century writer apprehending the momentous facts of a colonial, agricultural, pastoral world becoming decolonised and the struggles of a postcolonial Third-World. Rigidly talking, his works are the chronicle of a postcolonial impending to terms with reality.

The inability and insincerity of the colonial rulers have forced western culture and lifestyle on the colonised, without assuring first that reliable
educational methods have made these people to welcome the cultural adaptations that democracy demanded. When a novelist like Naipaul, who is totally validated in writing honestly and frankly, about the subjects he knows best, he is headed to appear pretentious and bad. One cannot find fault with Naipaul for foreseeing the postcolonial regime as collapsing. Although in the climax of *Mimic Men*, it is still viable for the story-teller to free the decks and head a new beginning. In *Bend in the River* and *Guerrillas*, Naipaul seems to be at the lowest point of his dreams. His apocalyptic vision drives it clear that no one will make a new beginning or do anything fresh.

Naipaul’s Hindu migrant environment and his upbringing in Trinidad are cramped for the progress of the novelist within him and his escape to Britain for grazing fresh is the history of many Third World authors, surviving as migrants in England. This regal metropolis becomes the domicile of Naipaul’s artistic endeavours and literary affairs, however for provocation he is pressured to go back either to Trinidad or his ancestral home India or retreat to explore new territories. Despite of all the tough confrontations, it is in Britain that Naipaul ultimately flourished as a notable novelist.
Naipaul’s religious vision is an atheist’s vision. Religion and atheism are contradictory terms. For an atheist cannot be supposed to have a religious vision at all Naipaul as a professed atheist cannot claim to have a vision characterized by religious experience. Nevertheless, he can claim a world vision in which religion occupies a prominent place. Obviously Naipaul’s world-vision is defined by existentialism which is concerned not with the ontological problems of human destiny and the psychological problems of human nature but mainly with the problems which deal with human condition. However, in Naipaul’s existential vision, religion does not suffer eclipse; rather it makes its presence felt in a big way, surfacing frequently as a defining principle of his mentality. As such religion cannot be dismissed as a peripheral element of his creative consciousness.

Indeed, Naipaul is a born atheist but with a pronounced Brahminic streak, a streak which defines his mind, determines his angle of vision, and shapes his ideas. This streak like a subterranean current energises most of his creative work. However, it does not have a free flow, since it is circumscribed by Naipaul’s
experiences as a colonial subject, British citizen and the traveller.

As a colonial subject as his books reveal, Naipaul shares the Trinidadian Hindu sensibility, the sensibility of the expatriates who came to Trinidad as indentured labourers and who are now stranded in the Island. Unable to return to their motherland, they feel frustrated. They have no option but to accept their present condition. Like most of the Indian expatriates, Naipaul also wants to settle in the land of his Indian ancestors but he changes his mind in view of dirt, abject poverty, and trying living conditions in India. Subsequently, he develops a feeling of anguish which leads him to brood over the causes of the backwardness of India that drove his predecessors to Trinidad and does not allow him to return to his mother country. He locates these causes in Hinduism and in Indian habit of sticking to the past. Naturally, Naipaul turns again Hinduism, holding it responsible not only for his hopeless condition but also of other expatriates. It is this anguish which becomes responsible for Naipaul’s antagonism to Hinduism.

Furthermore, the Trinidadian experience of Naipaul is crucial to his Brahminic sensibility in another way.
It sows the seeds of his Brahminism, which demands a pure and virtuous life of intellectual pursuits, devotion to truth and purity of rituals, scientific temperament etc. But at the same time, he also becomes critical of the Trinidadian Hinduism, its rites and rituals performed without understanding their meaning. He also loses his patience with the Hindus for their refusal to adapt themselves to the modern conditions. He likes only the Hindus who are ready to face the challenges of modernity and to assimilate the elements of other religions. Naipaul is keen to monitor the winds of change in Trinidad. His protagonists of the Trinidadian novels—Ganesh in *The Mystic Masseur*, Pandit Dhaniram in *The Suffrage of Elvira*, and Mr. Biswas in *A House for Mr. Biswas*—are eager to absorb the central values of other religions. Likewise he finds that the persons of old generation—Surjatpat Harbans, Baksh, Preacher, Lorkhoor, Mr. Cuffy—are quite prepared to attune themselves to modern democracy. Naipaul mentions that persons belonging to younger generation—Chittaranjan, Foam, Nelly, Iqbal, Zilla, Carol—do not hesitate to reject the old superstitious ways and to take the road to modernism. Evidently Naipaul wishes that if Brahminism or Hinduism is to survive, it has to modernize itself.
Naipaul’s Trinidadian experience is instrumental in shaping his attitude towards Muslims. In his very childhood, he comes to realize that the Muslims are different from the Hindus and that they cannot be trusted. Subsequently, he develops a prejudice against them and their religion. This prejudice influences his view of Islam which he considers a threat to the Western civilization. For the most part of his life, Naipaul remains suspicious of Muslims. However, late in his life he develops a feeling of empathy for the Muslims as a minority community. Naipaul becomes sympathetic to them, since he knows the predicaments of a minority community from his childhood experience. He remembers the difficulties faced by Hindus as a minority community in Trinidad.

Likewise Naipaul’s experience as a British subject or rather as an adherent of Christian values is crucial in many ways. Surprisingly, Naipaul equates Christianity with capitalism, the emerging order of the day and Hinduism with feudalism, the relic of the old world, which is in the process of dying. He is so dazzled with the civilization produced by Christianity that he cannot see even the nascent spirit of Hinduism. This prejudiced view produces a conflict which surfaces in
his works every now and then. It is said that Naipaul understands neither Hinduism nor Christianity. His journalistic approach does not allow him to penetrate into the deeper recesses of religious experience. He remains content only with the surfaces. This observation is not far from truth. Naipaul’s sense of religion can be realised in his reaction to the pilgrimage to the cave of Amarnath that he undertakes during his first Indian visit. He goes there not for some religious purpose but for understanding the mystery of lingam. To him it is a mystery like Delphi of the older world. At this time Naipaul goes on to state that he does not regard Hinduism even as a religion.

It may be the approach of Naipaul of superiority to mediocrity that has gained him the fame of an arrogant person who has desolated even from his intimate companions. His spontaneous remarks on certain nations and social and ethnic groups have not supported in enhancing his public image. Still, he manages to be always compassionate with destitute people in adverse conditions and in his voluminous writing; one can notice a respectful depiction of the individual in the streets, the farmer or the small entrepreneur. Most importantly, Naipaul is forever keen to criticise the
disrespect or offense of human rights. Naipaul is chiefly appropriate when discussing the topics such as universalism, mimicry and exile.

Naipaul has been honoured with most of the important literary awards in the English language. He is also knighted. His readership has broadened considerably and he is now approved in academic fraternity as a maestro of English prose. More than twenty-nine non-fiction and fiction works of Naipaul have earned him practically every credible literary prize including the Nobel Prize. His travel from the son of a humble Trinidadian journalist to a scholarship holder at Oxford and to exceptional literary reputation is a virtual crusade of postcolonial triumph. While his fictional works happen to secure him a categorical applause, the same cannot be stated about his non-fiction. His harsh dispatches on the Third world, have gained him the ambiguous title of the brown mouthpiece of white-man.

The deep-rooted commitment of Naipaul with literature has been a conflict with his own passion, which he could not admit openly, but which marks its indelible evidence in his works. It is his preoccupation with the memory of some lost, remote fictitious native land - India perhaps or even a distinct Trinidad - with
which he could fight, which he could denounce, but
could never leave behind. It is his memory of the story
of a suppressed people, the marginal men – quelled and
uprooted – that gives the unique aroma to his works.
His characters from Ganesh to Chandran are almost born
of Indian ancestry and bred in the British Caribbean
isles, who struggles a life-time striving against the
agony of identity crisis and cultural dislocation.

“A dot on the map of the world” states Naipaul of
the small Caribbean isle, Trinidad, off the coastline
of Venezuela, to which his great grandparents had shifted
as contracted workers around 1880. This recurring phrase
“a dot on the map of the world” reveals the unimportance
of a political and cultural backwater like Trinidad
that prevail in all his works about the land of his
birth. The same is also echoed in the destitute emotions
of his characters who sense that they are surviving in
the rim of the world while real existence is continue
elsewhere.

The bleak history of slavery in Trinidad has raised
only self-hatred in the non-white people. Trinidad is
incomplete in any manner. Everything is imported. Every
ideology, every machine, every book, come from abroad.
This is the environment where Naipaul grows up and the
community he dismisses in decisive conditions. It is in every manner a rented culture - a community of mimic crowd. This dreary sense of having inherited nothing that he can duly plea his own infuses from the very starting point of his writings.

The days of childhood and the early adolescence that Naipaul spent in Trinidad end in his hatred and wind up in a fuzzy elimination of what he views around him. For him, the Trinidadians are the incidental crowd who cannot even have the modest self-respect of the poor, but are diminished to caricatures. Naipaul has always undergone his own weird crisis over home. It may seem that mentally, India has always been an integral attachment for him, which may widely detail for his desolation from the Trinidad version of India. This clarifies his unusual response to the Nobel Prize. On getting the message of the Nobel Prize, Naipaul responses with a fair and unNaipaul-like reaction of natural joy and reveal his heartfelt gratitude to India and Britain, but strangely Trinidad is not cited. The mystery goes on whether such epithets as ‘unusual’ or ‘unexpected’ or ‘surprising’ could be practiced to Naipaul who has stayed erratic, complicated and mysterious and seemingly relished being thus.
Naipaul’s resentment against the crowd of Trinidad is that as the colonial society on the rim of empires, Trinidadians survived in insensitivity of their own history and flourished a reverie of the world beyond the island. The idea of Trinidad as a savage, bashful place surely has a powerful influence on Naipaul. He has often supervised savages at his native land, inducing much of his notoriety among the post-colonialists. He cannot reunite himself to the reality that his nation does not have a history. Britain, where he survives, has an affluent history; India has a great history, although it stays an area of darkness for him. Compared to these nations, Trinidad is a cipher. The earliest occupants of the island, the Amerindians and the Caribbean have become obsolete during the invasion by France, Spain and England. This finding drives him to further embarrassment.

However, Naipaul is not a reckless ironist as a few critics believe. On the contradiction, it is his devotion to truth as well as his hope in the novel as a genre of social scrutiny that causes him reveals the drawbacks of his community as well as other colonial states. He may seem rude and callous but it is only because he is irritated by the embezzlement of West
Indians of Western cultural lifestyle, which definitely cannot be theirs. Naipaul’s specific objective as asserted in his works is to find his origins and identity from which he has been isolated emotionally, culturally and also by birth. From his childhood, he has romanticised India and on his travel, wants to reach the romanticised images of the land of his ancestors.

Naipaul is a part of the new version of Indians, an anglicised miniature of the migrant Hindus in the West Indies. He, thus, lives as a stranger in Britain, because he cannot be connected to the society socially and culturally, nor does he be a part of India because he is a ‘New World’ Hindu. He is isolated from India because of his dwell in Trinidad thousands of miles away in the New World in a more global setting.

Naipaul visits to India and discovers the Trinidadian corruption and poverty inflated in this glorious country. The impact on him is extremely embarrassing. His repulsion at many facets of Indian lifestyle, his suspicion, his almost Swiftian horror of excrement, his strong rejection of the Indian feel of non-reality - all these factors discover sufficient scope in his Indian works. He is renouncing not only
India but attempting to wash out part of his own character. Naipaul’s works are a sort of spiritual chronicle, an attempt to flash a western writer’s lantern into an internal area of darkness.

In spite of subcontinent media’s inappropriate tussle to deserved Naipaul as an Indian after the Nobel Prize, his substantial connections with Indian are dubious very much. Naipaul himself has no private links with subcontinent until he is thirty years old. The history of his family is part of a historical darkness to him. When he examines further into that darkness, on his first stay, the effort becomes a debacle because what he discovers is not what he comes expecting.

Naipaul documents his experience with another young West Indian traveller. Both appear to admit the Indians in the West Indies are much more progressive in various factors than those in the native land of theirs. So, India lasts as a intractable nation for him: India is a intractable nation. It is not his home and cannot be his home; and yet he cannot dismiss it or be detached to it. His travels to India persuaded him that his deeply cultivated fantasy of a home in his forefather’s land has been an absurdity.
Naipaul documents the disillusionment accordingly:
In India he realizes he is an outsider; but more he believes that his Indian memories of that India which lasted in his childhood days in Trinidad, are like trapdoors into an infinite past. In his post-Nobel jubilation, Naipaul has asserted that the changed Indian approach towards him is an outcome of his triumph in cultivating the Indian crowd. The views of Naipaul are not to be teased with, for despite his serious outlook, they are originated in affinity and perception.

Naipaul’s books on India should endure an expensive document of the land and his interest, the interest of a supporter of the India in transition. Naipaul’s power is his passion - the passion of a nomad who attempts to run to home but is not taken in.

From the very beginning, he has brought a yearning for India within his soul, possibly a dreamy India which is believed to be distinct to the island lifestyle around him. When reality differs with illusion, he becomes resentful and the resentfulness prevails on his perspective of ‘mutinies,’ ‘wounds’ and ‘areas of darkness’ in the current India. But yet he cannot pull out from it.
West Indies’ rationalism has educated Naipaul to identify guilt only with the impairment of the government and people of India, in his travel writings. He is not much harsh with the Indians leading a marginal life. He is more interested about why their portion has not developed despite more than twenty-five years of independence. From the beginning, literary passions in Naipaul have been quite discernable and so, he has used the early chance to move to Britain.

The fate of Naipaul is akin to that of the other exiled European authors like Pound, Conrad, and Hemmingway, all of whom have quit their native and lived in some cities of their preference. Naipaul, too, has had his candid proportion of basic disillusionment with Britain. Survival in England to which he has intended, becomes a setback. Panorama of the psyche – whether inherited “areas of darkness” or creative “dream Utopias” – normally disappoint and shock when challenged in bleak reality. Living in England severs the past totally from Naipaul too. Like many others before and after him, it cuts his life into two. As the water plants separated from their anchorage, he appeared to be afloat in his new environment. But the same choking environments lead him to the pinnacle of his career.
because it is in Britain that his ambition of evolve into a novelist materialises into reality. It is in Britain that he finds himself and reevaluates and rejuvenates the substance of life through his works.

The longing for a private space has always prevailed at the soul of the fiction of Naipaul. Writing becomes his identification and protects him from infertility in spite of his being a stranger in England and aching of rootlessness, he has hit roots on a cultural and literary standard. Britain is his commercial and literary home. He has ultimately built his own new origins for himself.

The huge obstacle for Naipaul has been the lapse of relationship with the media in which the Americans regard him British and the British consider him as an outsider. An additional restraint is that he is an emigrant; he could not write like a French or English author.

In the career of Naipaul as an author, the major concern has been to discover a hub for his literary endeavours and for his artistic ventures in general. The search ultimately crystallised into his artistic sustaining and his landing on the English literary scenario appears to have determined the basic mystery
of his life. And he has triumphed in making a tradition in twentieth century English literature.

The exiled emigrants of his early works admire Britain as the home of hopes and getaway to Britain imply a breakout from all despairs. But in Mimic Men, England is revealed for what it is - a mirage - because for its protagonist, the Promised Land emerges to be equally deceitful. With all the affairs and experiences in London, Ralph Singh appears to be totally disappointed concerning the carrying powers of London, the major city of the world, in which fleeing disorder; it is dreamt to discover the beginning of order. One thinks at once that it is Naipaul talking through his character. The notion of constraint is meant almost explicitly by Singh.

While it is genuine that Naipaul has a passion for the productive elements of the Western tradition and culture, at the same time he is very insightful and assertive about his own space from it. He comes to Britain with a puzzle still picks up an alcove for his own creativity and shapes it to a form favourably. The mechanism has been very fruitful that today, not only he has become rewarding but also loaded with many awards for literature from Britain. He has earned an
international rank and has evolve into a part of the thriving internationalism in literature and life yet Naipaul has expressly said that he lives as a stranger despite his very long stay in Britain.

Naipaul has survived in Britain for more than five decades, and yet appears to encounter the cultural and social void of an outsider, despite getting citizenship in a foreign nation. His very long stay and his marriage with an Englishwoman, have assured him only an exile sense till date and the sense of rootlessness still prevails within him. In most of the works of Naipaul, he has revealed this sentiment. Detailing his life in Britain, he views that he does not sign petitions. He does not hesitate to sense that this lack of interest is all incorrect. He accepts that he stays there with Buddhist objectivity cannot to use his direct surroundings for the artistic aspirations.

London always remains as Naipaul’s source, the land of his physical stay but it is his travel to numerous nations and to Trinidad and Tobago, the place of his birth, which afford him source for creative activities. The visits may be imaginative or physical. An artist like Naipaul has a dual life, living as he does together in two worlds – the one to which he
cannot and does not like to turn back and the other, the land of his physical stay, which he cannot escape. The influence of the nation of his stay expends a tough drag and adhere him to it and the appeal of his home remains a far hope.

Naipaul visits Britain from Trinidad dreaming never to remember; still remote lands remain to enthrall him for different purposes. If he has retreated to escape from the artistically futile Trinidad, he is once again forced to escape from his strangeness in Britain for artistic novelty. The result of those reverse escapes from London to the Third World nations is the oeuvre of his travelogues.

Naipaul is now a well-established novelist of honour and has twenty-seven works to his credit, which include an extensive range – travelogue, criticism, novel, short-story, journalism, autobiography and that unique fusion of all, a rainbow of different streams, honestly post-modern. Today, as a veteran novelist of seventy-five years old, with half a century committed to literature, Naipaul has made that point when the focal point moves from the story to the story-teller.

In “V.S. Naipaul: An Introduction,” Yasodha Bhat rightly observes,
In his exposition on the role played by history, his awareness of pluralism and crumbling of barriers of the world; in voicing a note of existential nihilism and the nature of absurd in life, Naipaul fully voices the present-day scenario. (100)

Naipaul’s unsentimental rejection of this unimportant, uncreative island stands in sharp contrast to the other intellectuals from the erstwhile Third World countries who took the first opportunity to migrate to the lands of milk and honey, but once there, never ceased to be nostalgic about the lost country. Raghubir Singh, Bombay: Gateway of India, in the profile of Naipaul writes:

Not only the western view but also the Indian view is incorrect about Naipaul. He is not the sad rootless man Indians make him out to be. The truth is that Naipaul’s roots are dug deep into the terra firma of English literature. That is his universe. That is his country. He walks like a king along the Avon in Wiltshire. He is treated with great respect and deference by the English... He has a deep commitment to India; and to truth.
He is the Gangetic plain’s Conradian gift to the World. (78)

In The Location of Culture, Homi Bhabha illustrates his assessment of Naipaul’s negative, sterile attitude to the formerly colonised world:

The values that such a perspective generates for his own work, and for the one colonised world it chooses to represent and evaluate, are visible in the hideous panorama that some of his titles provide: The Loss of El Dorado, The Mimic Men, An Area of Darkness, A Wounded Civilisation, The Overcrowded Barracocon. (107)

In “The Ironic Approach - The Novels of V.S. Naipaul,” Gordon Rohlehr, the young West Indian critic remarks:

Naipaul is a Trinidadian East Indian who has not come to terms with the Negro-Creole world in Trinidad or with the East Indian world in Trinidad, or with the greyness of English life in London, or with life in India itself, where he went in search of roots. (189)

Today, V. S. Naipaul stands as a master of the novel, a creative craftsman of such surpassing talent
that V. S. Pritchett, Britain’s leading critic calls him “the greatest living writer in the English language” (9) quoted by Shashi Kamra The Novels of V.S. Naipaul.

Philip Langran, another critic of Naipaul, does not condemn him for leaving the country because his literary works take the themes from that country. The country has never gone out of his mind. In “Earl Lovelace and V.S. Naipaul: Representations of Trinidad,” Langran writes:

However, later works confirm that, in terms of subject matter, Naipaul would by no means escape the island. These include a fictionalised account of Trinididian politics, (The Mimic Men, 1967), a history of the island (The Loss Of Eldorado, 1969), autobiographical writing (Finding the Centre, 1984) and recent fiction that revisits his place of birth (The Enigma of Arrival, 1987), and (A way in the World, 1994). Furthermore, Naipaul’s distinctive voicing of personal involvement and detached observation characterises his work as a whole; the tension between the isolated individual and
the potentially engulfing, imperfect community is a recurring theme. (1-2)

In *Macmillan Modern Novelist: V.S. Naipaul*, Bruce King, while tracing his conflicting attitude, goes on to state,

Naipaul satirizes Indian notions of fate, but his novels are usually structured around such Indian notions as the four stages of an ordered life - student, marriage and house owner, retreat into study as a preparation for total withdrawal from worldliness. There is a continuing conflict in his writings between the chaotic freedom of the world and the fulfilment of Brahmin ideals. (15)

In *V.S. Naipaul: A Study in Expatriate Sensibility*, Sudha Rai says, “The writing of his story becomes the very means to endure the terror, shipwreck, abandonment and loneliness of his situation” (126).

Literary critic Manjit Inder Singh in *Writers of the India Diaspora: V.S. Naipaul* has drawn attention to the fact that,

None of the [Novelist’s] figures are allowed authenticity or a place in the landscape he
inhabits. Indeed, Naipaul sees a necessarily fleeting and absurd wish in them to cross barriers erected by the limitations of colonized culture that in the end can only lead to a falsity of purpose, supplemented or aggravated by a consciousness of unimportance. (236)

As Patrick French says in The World is What it is the Authorised Biography of V.S. Naipaul, Naipaul’s dismissal became a part of his persona, a persona he invented in order to realise his early ambition to escape the periphery for the centre, to leave the powerless for the powerful, and to make himself a great writer. (15)

Ling Mei Lim in V.S. Naipaul’s Later Fiction: The Creative Constraints of Exile, argues that while Naipaul cultivates an ‘outsider’s’ perspective, the authenticity of his work comes from those experiences of living inside the Third World. By maintaining a hold on both the ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ perspectives, he transforms the ‘fragmented consciousnesses’ into an artistic advantage, rather than a crippling factor. (269)
The present study is an attempt to trace the development of Naipaul’s social vision. The study is based on the analysis of fiction of Naipaul, dealing with his societal experiences. It also takes into account the views of the critics. The work is only exploratory in nature. Nevertheless, it is a genuine attempt to deal with almost an obscure area of Naipaul’s experience. The study is a close examination of the novels, *The Mystic Masseur*, *Mr. Stone and the Knight’s Companion*, *The Suffrage of Elvira*, *A House for Mr. Biswas*, *The Mimic Man*, *A Bend in the River* and *Miguel Street* of Naipaul.