ABSTRACT

The novel is a social document written with the writer’s imaginative approach towards the world around him and in course of time the novelist works like a historian in documenting the events and developments taking place in the society. The novel presents that segment of life and society, in more or less approximate terms, which has been seen and experienced by actual men and women of a particular period. The concept of mirroring or reflecting the society at large is more significant in the case of the novel than in poetry or drama. A social situation with its problems and issues is faithfully recorded in the novel. The men and women in a work of fiction become link between the reader and the period in which the writer has lived and stand for those actual trends that existed at the time. ‘Allworthy’, Western Jones and Blifil in Tom Jones give us a close familiarity with the developments of the eighteenth century England. The actual circumstance and the society of a period become a necessary component of fiction. So fiction becomes significant portrayal of history. The line between the imagination and the real gets blurred and history intrudes inevitably in fiction. It can be said that around eighteenth century in England, history becomes a matter of vital interest for the common writer who sets out to do justice to it by focusing upon the behavior and problems of ordinary men and women. Trollope’s Palliser novels gives a wonderful sight into the mid- Victorian political world. Samuel Richardson’s Pamela illustrates the question of sexual exploitation as a symbol for class exploitation which is prevalent in the then society. So, it is seen that novelists took their subjects ostensibly from their society and at least approximately from their own day. These novelists undoubtedly worked as historians in depicting their society and these works acted as historical sources. Infact William Shakespeare understood the relationship between the individual and his historical context and commented:

‘There is history in all men’s lives

Figuring the natures of the times deceased. (Henry IV, Part-2, Act-1)

So in this thesis, I have attempted to present historical perspective that is discernible in the works of Indira Goswami’s Pages Stained With Blood and V.S. Naipaul’s India: A Million Mutinies Now and also wish to establish that novel reflects the society at large and it is history because both these writers coming from two different social contexts have portrayed the society around which are testimonies of two historical periods.
Pages Stained With Blood (2001) is the English translation of Assamese work Tez Aru Dhulire Dhusarita Pristha (1994) of Indira Goswami. The novel is based on the political violence and social unrest in the city of Delhi, in the backdrop of the communal riots that broke out in the aftermath of then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi’s assassination. The novel is in the form of a diary of the woman protagonist and the events she witnessed are the first hand records when she stayed in Delhi as a faculty member of the Delhi University. Indira Goswami’s novel is not merely a novel but a serious attempt at reconstructing traumatic experiences of a minority population in an independent country. In portraying the Sikh –Riot she is more a historian than a novelist. If there is fiction, it has been fused with a subtlety that one can hardly draw a line between the factual and the fiction. In India: A Million Mutinies Now (1990) also paints his characters with the pen of a novelist but with factual elements. The work strikes a wonderful balance between the interiority of Naipaul’s experience and the external experiences that he encounters and observes. The novel is basically a travelogue and it is a record of his findings in relation to his various encounters with different people. Divided into nine chapters, this novel deals with India with all its diversities and the complexity of Indian situation in the post colonial India. Here in this work, like Indira Goswami his characters are depicted against historical episodes and movements. He gives a detailed analysis of the psychology of Sikh – insurgency in India. The setting of the novel and the context is different but the novelists present their works as social documents chronicling their times.

Thus a comparative study has been made between the contents of the travelogue and the novel which unfolds many socio historical elements and anecdotes which have gone into making of the novels and it unravels the crisis of situations with which the authors were confronted. However, a novel is in itself a literary art- form with thematic structure, delineation of characters and its intrinsic fineness, and the novelist is free to move according to his or her intention. But in history or in depiction of historical episodes a historian needs inevitable truth and objectivity of the bare –facts. There is no scope of deviation. But a creative writer can intelligently create a novel without distorting the truth and reality of history with proper care and intensity. Infact, history has given enough scope for the creative writers to convert history into socio –historical novels. So, this comparative study is based on the methodology that the comparative study of arts or sciences constitutes a legitimate branch of comparative literature. Such is the notion when
Remak defines comparative literature as the study of literature as with other areas of knowledge such as sociology, politics, religion, psychology, history and so on.

Though both Naipaul and Goswami drew their inspiration as well as materials from dissimilar social and cultural contexts yet they come nearer in many respects. So informed by the above, and to elucidate the subject – matter, the thesis has been divided into six chapters.

Introduction

Chapter -1: The Novel as an Art- Form

Chapter -2: The History of Anti – Sikh Riot, Movement and Socio – Historical Political Conditions.

Chapter -3: Thematic Structure, Content and Style of both the works: A Comparative Assessment

Chapter -4: V.S.Naipaul’s *India: A Million Mutinies Now* and Indira Goswami’s *Pages Stained With Blood*: A Comparative Assessment with a discussion on historical aspect in both the works.

Chapter -5: Comparative Appraisal of both the Authors

Chapter-6: Conclusion

Bibliography

Annexures

The introductory chapter, that is Novel as an Art-Form discusses novel as an art-form and its salient features. The novel is the most powerful form that emerged in all literature. This chapter also brings into light the relationship between history, travelogue and diary. I also tried to give an overview of evolution of the novel. For conceptual knowledge, I have also tried to give a brief overview about growth of historical novels in Bengal and Assam.

The second chapter deals specifically with Anti –Sikh riot. In this section an attempt is made to discuss the bare- facts of history of the Anti – Sikh Riot, its movement and the impact that it had in context of socio- political conditions in India. A small
discussion on concept of Indian nation–state in the context of Punjab communal crisis is given. The idea is to how these bare-facts of history are delineated by these two authors of international fame.

The third chapter deals with comparative assessment of V.S.Naipaul’s *India: A Million Mutinies Now* and Indira Goswami’s *Pages Stained With Blood* where both reveal historical perspective. A comparative assessment of both the works in the context of contents, theme and style is also discussed. Their works are the fiery testimonies on two historical periods. A comparative view of Indian poetics on novella and history is also given in this chapter.

Following an analysis, I depict how both have portrayed the society around them in general and the Sikh history of a very crucial time in particular.

The fourth chapter mainly concentrates on similarities and dissimilarities in both the works with a discussion on historical consciousness in both the works.

Fifth chapter comprises of a comparative appraisal of both the authors. Through an analysis and illustration, it is seen that though both the authors are poles apart, yet there are striking similarities between the two creative artist and they are comparable and possesses similar perceptions.

In the sixth chapter i.e. conclusion, I refer to the various points of similarity and dissimilarity shared by both the authors and their works and show how despite various problems, they open up a new way of studying Indian society and history and novel. The chapter also illustrates that both these works are comparable and analogous as they share similar ideas, views, perceptions and critical outlook.