INTRODUCTION

Comparative Literature, today, has been an important branch of modern literary study and comparativism is increasingly getting expanded to many other disciplines of study including philosophy and religion. It is integral to literature written in English as it is very much related to Indo – British and Indo – American literary studies. Infact, comparative literature has offered the widest scope to know and understand the fast moving literary trends in world – literature as well as the internal world of international literary authors and comparative studies are undertaken both at inter and intra levels of regional as well as national literatures and authors. V.S.Naipaul, the West Indian author of Indian ancestry has earned worldwide fame by dint of his range of writing and creativity though known first as the writer of the Third World. Through his well earned recognition, he has established his firm-root as an international writer of novels, short stories, travelogues and other writings, not to speak of his winning of Nobel Prize in 2001.

Likewise Dr. Indira Goswami (Mamoni Raisom Goswami) though hailing from the corner most state of India i.e. Assam, by virtue of her wider canvas that she has drawn with her literary works has risen to high fame and recognition which also brought laurels to her in the country and abroad, including the highest Indian national literary Award, Jyanpith.

Both these two writers always writing with a passionate commitment to man and his world around, have some common appeal in them that have found expression in their creative works – in the exposure of their internal minds. They are very much sensitive to humanity and not unalienated from the common human beings. The social fraud, melancholy, pangs of suffering, oppression, social exploitation in all available forms against the suffering humanity, race and class find vivid expression in them through their unexpressed tears and sense of sorrow. But yet both of them are all different and separate in their making as they come of two different historically important social and cultural environments. The historical consciousness that has grown in them is also an inspiring source in them. It is also seen that many of recent fiction-writers have reflected keen interest in history and the line of difference
between the two disciplines—literature and history is continuously getting blurred by
the novelist’s pre-occupation with history.

Therefore this study of V.S.Naipaul and Indira Goswami under the title
‘Historical Perspective as reflected in Indira Goswami’s *Pages Stained With Blood
and India: A Million Mutinies Now*: A comparative study’ is an attempt to look at the
authors and their world-views as manifested in these works by them and to trace and
extend the ties and merits of comparative approach to post – colonial litterateurs
written in English by establishing analogical grounds in comparison. This work also
tries to validate their engagement with history in different ways and to understand the
connectivity between novel and history.

V.S.Naipaul came to India, his ancestral home, in 1964 and wrote his *An Area
of Darkness* (1964), the travel – narrative, his experience of India during his one year
stay in India. Contents were hard, penetrating, incisive and at times not palatable for
many Indiaphiles. Naipaul’s second visit in 1977 resulted in his narrative *India: A
Wounded Civilization* (1977) based on historical analysis, meeting people,
environment consequent to Indian emergency etc.

The third book on India is his *India : A Million Mutinies Now* (1990) after his
third visit in 1988 is a prose-narrative from the pen of a thoughtful incisive traveler,
but a historical novel in reality, containing episodes of India’s internal troubles of
class, creed, language, religion etc. and more particularly on 1984 Sikh and Anti –
Sikh riots, an aftermath of Indira Gandhi’s assassination. The critic, Neil Miller
commented on Naipaul’s book on the history of Trinidad, *The Loss of Eldorado*
(1969) that ‘it is history as fine art rather than history as an academic discipline’ is
applicable in this book also.

Indira Goswami’s *Pages Stained With Blood* (1994) also deals with
contemporary history of 1984 on Sikh and Anti – Sikh riots with such vividness and
reality, as she was the eye – witness of the violence in Delhi at that time. It is in the
form of a diary of a woman protagonist, living alone in Delhi, and recording her first
– hand experiences during the riots in 1984. It is also a history in novel or otherwise
rather than the historical account of a novelist.
Thus, works of both the writers have been identified on the commonality of Indian background with common materials and the authors’ inner perception of universal compassion, sympathy, sense of sadness and urge for restoration of human values.

Here a need for comparative approach has been strongly felt as it is striking to note that both these two works are based on historical facts written in English, with different nationality or creed, social set up, geography and cultural background but are confronted with problems, generally comparable and analogous.

The present study on Naipaul and Goswami has led us in the finding that both share some grounds of comparison on issues which are political, social, socio-cultural. It has also unfolded socio-historical elements and anecdotes which have gone into making of the novels and revealed the crisis of situations with which the authors have confronted. However, a novel being itself a literary art-form with a thematic structure, delineation of characters and its intrinsic fineness, the novelist is free to move according to his or her intention. But in history or in description of historical episodes a historian needs inevitable truth and objectivity of the bare facts. There is no scope of deviation from the facts of reality. In this respect, both these works as well as the writers, Naipaul and Goswami have been faithful to the portrayal of historical situations as well as to their imaginative sensibilities as they have intelligently created these works without digressing from or distorting the truth and reality with proper care and authencity. Infact, history has given enough scope for creative writers to convert history into socio-historical novels. It may be remembered that both Naipaul and Goswami drew their inspiration as well as material from different social contexts. But on the comparative account these dissimilarities and contrasts presenting two distinct social contexts come nearer in many respects in the understanding and analyzing the vicissitudes of their imagined worlds as well as the historical world of their backdrop. So these comparisons can illuminate the text and promote certain basic elements, where men everywhere conceive more or less in a similar manner.

Informed by the above and in order to elucidate the subject with matters and informations methodically the thesis has been divided into six chapters.
The first chapter being the introduction discusses novel as an art – form and its salient characteristics. It also charts out its relation with history, travelogue and diary.

The second chapter discusses the trail of historical events culminating in the anti – Sikh riots, and the impact that it had in context of socio- political conditions in India, as the backgrounder of the thematic contents of both the books for discussion in the thesis.

The third chapter draws a comparative assessment of both the works in the context of contents, themes and style of definition reflecting a historical perspective.

The fourth chapter deals with similarities and dissimilarities in both the works and their relationship with historical consciousness.

The fifth chapter comprises a comparative appraisal of both the authors, and sixth chapter is conclusion.

In presentation of the thesis a general methodology has been followed. More particularly Thesis and Assignment Writing (J. Anderson) have been frequently consulted.

In studying the texts, Naipaul’s India : A Million Mutinies Now (1990) Vintage Edition (1998) and Dr. Indira Goswami’s original Assamese book Tez Aru Dhusire Dhusarita Pristha (1994) more particularly its translated version, Pages Stained with Blood (2001) have been taken as basic texts.

The minimum requirement of a comparative study is the binary concern, which is however, hardly sufficient to meet the full demands of the study in the present context. Comparative Literature is a method of investigation and it is mainly concerned with relationships, resemblances and differences. As Amiya Deb rightly points out in “Towards Comparative Indian Literature” in K.A. Koshy ed. Towards Comparative Indian Literature (Aligarh: AMU, 1987, p-19):

“Comparison is the right reason for us because, one we are multilingual and two, we are Third World”.

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French Comparatists focused their attention on mutual affinities in subject—matter, thoughts in the texts or feelings between two or more literatures. To achieve the common ground of comparison, the basic laws of gathering, shifting and interpreting evidence governing literary research have been applied.

In short, these writers’ works are compared because of selective affinities in problems, issues and perceptions.