Preface

V. S. Naipaul is an Indo-Trinidadian-British writer known for his novels focusing on the legacy of the British Empire’s colonialism. He has also written works of non-fiction, such as travel writing and essays. In 2001, Naipaul was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature. He has been awarded numerous other literary prizes, including the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize (1958), the Somerset Maugham Award (1960), The Hawthorne Prize (1964), the W H Smith Literary Award (1968), the Booker Prize (1971), The Jerusalem Prize (1983) and the David Cohen Prize for a lifetime’s Achievement in British Literature (1993).

Naipaul has earned a reputation as one of the most gifted prose stylists of the twentieth century as well as one of the most controversial critics of the effects of imperialism in the Third World. Employing a variety of literary forms, from short stories to essays to mixed-genre pieces that blend autobiography, fiction, and journalistic reporting, Naipaul describes the bitter legacy of colonialism on personal and societal levels and presents a subtle and sensitive account of the agonising experiences of colonised people in his fiction.

The present work is a post colonial study of the select novels of V S Naipaul that has been pursued with reference to the following five novels: The Mystic Masseur (1957), In a Free State (1971), A Bend in the River (1979), Half a Life (2001) and Magic seeds (2004).

Postcolonial Criticism is a set of theoretical and critical strategies used to examine the culture, literature, politics, and history, of former colonies. Post-colonial theory deals with the reading and writing of literature written in previously or currently colonised countries, or literature written in colonising countries which deals
with colonisation or colonised peoples. It enables the examination of the relationship between colonisers and colonised in literature; and also examines whether a work is pro colonist or anti colonialist and why. It also helps to find out if the text reinforces or resists colonialist ideology. The post-colonial criticism helps to explore the dynamics of colonisation through literary works. V S Naipaul’s novels have been analysed with reference to the theories of post colonialism. The present study has been divided into nine chapters.

The introductory chapter is a brief review of the research done. Chapter II is based on post colonialism, its theories and key concepts. Chapter III deals with the life, works and achievements of V S Naipaul.

Chapter IV is based on the novel *The Mystic Masseur* which is a comic satire set in the Indian community on Trinidad and shows the strife and struggle of Ganesh Ramsumair, a masseur to cope with the external colonial environment as he takes up various professions in the course of his life. The novel has been analysed through the perspective of ambivalence.

Chapter V is based on the novel *In a Free State* which is a story about two English expatriates who undertake a journey across the newly freed country of Africa. The novel has been analysed from the perspective of Eurocentrism.

Chapter VI is based on the novel *A Bend in the River*, set in an unnamed African country and narrated by Salim, a young man an ethnically Indian Muslim and a shopkeeper in a small, growing city in the country's remote interior. The novel has been analysed from the perspective of post colonial themes.
Chapter VII is based on the novel *Half a Life*, set in India, Africa and Europe, to be more specifically, in London, Berlin and Portugal about Willie Chandra, who feels alienated in all the three settings and is seen jumping from one place to another to find the coherence of identity. The novel has been analysed from the perspective of diaspora.

Chapter VIII is based on the novel *Magic Seeds* is a sequel to Naipaul's 2001 novel *Half a Life* and reflects a deepening understanding of Naipaul’s alienation from the three cultures of Indian, Caribbean and British. The novel has been analysed from the perspective of exile.

Chapter IX is the conclusion drawn after the interpretation of all the chapters. This chapter is a summary of both the creative genius of V S Naipaul as a great writer and the post colonial criticism of the select novels.