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Among The Believers as A Travelogue: Special Focus on (Iran & Indonesia)

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Abstract: -

Travel writing is new genre added to literature. In travel writing one can get nature writing, guidebooks, travel memories, etc. Main characteristics of travelogue are 1. Travelogue is truthful account of an individual, 2. Subjective experiences, 3. Commentary about the place, 4. Interactions with local people. By travelogue we get the perception of travel writer also both real and visionary. Here in this research paper we will see V.S. Naipaul's *Among The Believers* as a travelogue with special reference of Iran and Indonesia and how significantly Naipaul writes it by following all the characteristics of travelogue and he also gives us statement by their names with whom he interacted with, so we can say that how truthful his work is!

Keywords: - Travelogue, *Among The Believers*, Iran and Indonesia, Islamic Journey, V.S. Naipul, new genre, characteristics.

Introduction: -

In *Among the Believers* Naipaul takes us to Iran to Pakistan to Malaysia to Indonesia. This is an Islamic journey where writer do not choose to visit Arab countries, but he visited the



countries where there are converted Muslims to get social truth of different societies and nations. Naipaul writing is so impactful that nobody can deny those real factors which he represents in this travelogue. Islam in Iran and Pakistan is same. Same way Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia is same. Here I will focus mainly on Iran and Indonesia.

IRAN: -

After 6 months of revolution Naipaul visits Iran. Naipaul always visit place where some controversy happened recently. Naipaul in Iran visits Tehran and other cities with help of Behzad who is student working as a interpreter. Islam in Iran Shia Islam is more complicated. It was divergence from main belief and this divergence has its roots in political- racial dispute about the succession of the prophet. They believe the twelfth Imam had not died, he survived somewhere, waiting to return to earth. The Iranian revolution was an offering to him.

The movement was Khomeini vs. Shah. Local paper blaming the Shah for not giving modern road system to city, that's why 2000 people killed or injured by road accident in Tehran every month. The 8th Imam buried in Iran and his tomb in the city of Mashhad. People of Iran revolution was against the torture by Shah's secret police, about the "FASCISM" of Shah.

Naipaul shares some women's experience where one Iranian woman says that, "with her covered head that Islam protected women and gave them dignity. 1400 years ago in Arabia, girl children were buried alive, it was Islam that put a stop to that. Another incident he shares, an Iranian woman of 32 living in Boston married to American university teacher, works as a biologist in a research institute from there she came to Tehran for 2 weeks holiday when her husband came to take her back, her husband married to an Iranian his single unconventional act causes her and now for her is impossible to go back.

In 1979, six months after the overthrow of Shah, the news from Iran was still of executions only. Most executions had been of prostitutes and brothel managers. Islamic rule about women were being enforced again. Bahai says, "The revolution is terrible. They have destroyed the country, The Army, everything. Tehran was nice city now there is nothing. That's why I sent my son away." Facelessness had begun to seem like an Islamic motif.



When the Shah ruled people of Iran felt that they had lost their country. Iran always had anti Arab feeling but never of anti Islam.

When Naipaul visits Qom - the holy city. There after the rule of Ali Khomeini had made Qom his headquarters. Where he is always surrounded by ayatollahs. On every wall there was a slogan called WE WANT REPUBLIC; KHOMEINI IS OUR LEADER. The rule of Ali was more than getting women back into veil. In short for Naipaul Iran resembles a wonderland for him, and this is taken from his announcement: "I was taken to another level of wonder". This is manipulation of land and its belief system, culture, religion & individuals. In general, Naipaul's tone is exceptionally snide and here and there ventures a taunting impact.

Thus we can say that situation of Iran where Islam stands for brotherhood, honesty, the will to work, proper recompense for labour and that's why one Iranian says mullahs should go back into the mosques and Khomeini should stand down, politicians and administrators should come into their positions. A travel writer must not join his own perspective, thoughts and philosophy in the travelogue: however it is done deliberately and unwittingly now & then. Naipaul's clarification is impacted by his philosophy and way of life subsequently contrasts states of Iran and different spots and Islam with Christianity.

INDONESIA: -

Islam in Indonesia is totally different than Iran. One main reason is because of its geographical aspect. Another reason is because in Indonesia Muslims are from India. It is country of past who have sense of India, history, geography. Why they have such sense because there they play wayang which means puppet show on story of Ramayana & Mahabharata. Biggest Ramayana played in Indonesia. I can say that they believe in Mohmmad still their heroes are Ram & Krishna.

Naipaul visited it 40 years ago he gives us brief -history of Indonesia – independence was not easy in Indonesia it came with series of little wars. Sukarno became the first president of Indonesia. Jakarta a city of statues and monuments which seemed unrelated to the life of city



but still they showed a respectable celebration of pride and freedom. Being in Jakarta one think of its past colonial times and freedom struggle when Dutch had ruled there for more than 100 years and Jakarta was known as Batavia. Instead of the use of Dutch language, Indonesia language did not lose its grip even in roman letters. Some of Indonesian words had roots from Sanskrit name, meaning “the city of victory”.

The pre-Islamic past in Malaysia seemed to be only a matter of village customs, while in Indonesia and Java it reflected a great civilization. Islam is their formal faith which came in the 15th century but Hindu-Buddhist past which lasted for 1400 years before that, survived in many ways, this gives them a feeling of uniqueness. There is detailed characterization presented in his travelogue. A character named Suryadi and Sitor are introduced. Naipaul describes Sitor who is poet he mentions a ceremony of Sitor’s village, for being reinitiated into the tribe. For this ceremony the skull of his grandfather was taken out of the stone sarcophagus with the lizard of good luck carved on the lid. Sitor held a plate with this skull and a lemon, the lemon an agent of cleansing.

Adi Sasono asks the Naipaul to see traditional Islamic village schools, pesentren (place where radical Islam taught.) to understand Indonesian Muslims better. It was claimed that these schools preserved harmony between community and school, village life and education. They were different from western style schools they were psychologically disruptive.

Indra’s city painted on a bus which was taken as a figure from the Javanese puppet drama and was no longer the Aryan god of Hindu pantheon. Prasojo told the story of the local Muslim legend of the five pandva brothers who represented the five disciplines of Islam and Naipaul believed that Prasojo didn’t have any idea of the legend and the story came from the ancient Hindu epic of the Mahabharata which had taken Javanese roots and had been adapted to Islam.

Dissyanake and Wickramagama gave three types of travel writing; experimental, information- oriented and intellectual- analytic. Whereas V.S Naipaul travelogue exists in third category called intellectual- analytic. Further it can be said that its observation and depth of analysis. During the course of travelogue “Among the Believers” Naipaul’s personal



point of views on observation and his analysis about different instances is prevalent. He has given every single detail starting from setting of locations to characterization, dialogues, imagery and history, social and political aspects of Indonesia in detail depending on his own observations.

Naipaul by journalizing justified his travelogue 'Among the Believers' through referring to articles, newspapers and documentaries. As at Pabelan he has been given by an article from an unnamed magazine. It was interview by a 'Christian lay person' with a Muslim Kiyai or Koum. By this he described details about Muslims specifically leaders living in villages.

CONCLUSION: -

To conclude this we can say that Naipaul follows all the characteristics of travelogue in his work "Among the Believers". All through his work Naipaul has been manipulative with respect to strict conflicts, uncivilized individuals, destitution, issue, mental distress and disappointment, and indiscipline. Therefore, researcher can say that travelogue composing is not a guiltless action, rather it depicts the craftiness systems of movement essayist. By composing, explorer not just make a division of predominant and second rate yet in addition forces power though physical and mental standard. As Naipaul gives us articles and name of who gives this statement researcher can say his work is based on truthful account. first characteristics of travelogue, Naipaul puts not only objective experiences but subjective too., he talk about different places and about their history, past, geography, and at last he also interacted with local people like women over there, poet, priest, teachers, etc.

Thus, we can say that Among the Believers is Travelogue.



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