INTRODUCTION

The proposed project is aimed at making a comparative study of themes of selected works of V.S.Naipaul and Salman Rushdie. It maps out the main themes such as diasporic sense, ethnicity, identity, racism, culture, class, power, relations etc. The proposed work will focus on these themes with special reference to:

1. The Mystic Masseur (1957)
3. The Mimic Men (1967)
5. A House for Mr. Biswas (1961)
6. The Moor’s Last Sigh (1995)

The theme of diasporic ambivalence is one of the major themes of both the above said writers. The term ‘diaspora’ comes from the ancient Greek meaning ‘scattering, sowing seeds or to spread’. Many ethnic groups had been forced or induced to leave their native land for a variety of social, political and economic reasons. This term also referred to the dispersion of Jews, cannoting the pain of exile and nostalgia for the ‘lost land.’ They were forced to leave their land and emigrate with their own culture and embody it in their new settlements. In the present time, diaspora refers to the study of ethnic and racial communities living far away from their native places or homelands. Now we hear and read about the Asian, the African, the Indian, the Pakistani, the British and the American diaspora. The Indian diaspora is used by many writers in the context of ethnicity of Indians who migrated to foreign lands. No doubt that they have been living in a foreign country for so many years but still there is a notion in their mind about India and they treat India as their homeland, because of their religious faith that they have, and the cultural heritage that they possess. Rootless though they are, they still feel deep attachment and sympathy towards their home land, even after taking the citizenship of another country. They always talk about their homeland and compare that country with their motherland. This is a psychological attachment. The literature of Indian diaspora is produced by many writers who permanent overseas residents are popularly known as non-resident Indians. These writers are Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul, Jhumpa Lahri, Geeta Mehta, Vikram Seth, Rohinton Mistry,
In their writings diaspora achieves the unintended purpose of celebrating marginality and embracing virtually multiculturalism and diversity. Most of these writers belong to Indian cultural heritage but are settled in London, America, United Kingdom, Canada and African countries. They treat India as their homeland but have adopted overseas lifestyle, they feel alienated. The sense of flight from the homeland, give them a psychological pain when they think of uncivilized surroundings, religious fundamentalism, absolute rituals and outdated modes of living in their homeland. The expatriate writers present authentic picture of diasporic depression and alienation. Most of the expatriate writers share the cross cultural existence, the cultural shock and the cultural encounter. It may be cross religious, cross lingual, cross racial or cross ethnic. The sense of diaspora arises out of various factors: the cultural clash between tradition and modernity and between an individual’s aspirations and environment. The intermixing of religion, colonial imperialism and the myth of the land has had a disintegrating influence and resulted in rootlessness, alienation, displacement, humiliation, dissatisfaction and chaos.

The theme of search for identity and expatriate sensibility are also the major themes of both the writers. Migration—losing one country, language, and culture and finding oneself forced to come to terms with another place, another way of speaking and thinking, another view of reality—is Salman Rushdie’s great theme. Metamorphosis is its metaphor. And reflection on migration and metamorphosis permeate these essays as thoroughly as embodiments of them populate his novels, making many of these pieces essential statements about contemporary urban society’s conflicts and just as Naipaul’s fictions are those of a journalist and Ondaatje’s those of a lyric poet, Rushdie’s fictions are narrated by an “I.”

V. S. Naipaul’s journey to Trinidad, England, Iran, Pakistan and India may be physical but they have mental and intellectual reflections of his moods and sensibility. He escaped to London, from the dirt and dust of Trinidad. He traveled to the West Indies, Africa and America but finally settled in England. His visits to these countries refer to his quest for order, creativity and homeland. His travel writings have established him as a critic of India and an anti Indian expatriate. He criticizes Indian customs, insignificant religious practices, hypocritical notions and meaningless spiritual ideas. In the beginning Naipaul possessed a romantic view of India in his consciousness. The India of his childhood of Hindu culture of beautiful temples and colourful
festivals helped him to build up a dream homeland. He was aware of his ancestral root. He had great notions about India. He once remarked: “the particular Diaspora where my works begin, if I can use this word for the migration of my ancestors which took place just over a hundred years ago.” (The Times of India, June 21, 1994). He allows India to appear on the canvas of his memory and imagination. But he was separated from India by two generations. Nevertheless, India had been the background of his childhood. The trinity of Indian travels received aggressive notes from Indian scholars and critics for his anti Indian projection. In this context Naipaul remarks I am profoundly Indian in my feeling, profoundly in my sensibility-but not in my observation.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY**

The project that is proposed to be undertaken become significant, as it represents many themes from psychological perspective in the works of Naipaul and Rushdie. The significance of the project lies in the fact that it shall deal with the psychological, political, physical and geographical dislocation i.e. environments hostile to proper growth and development of an individual. As the South-Asian warmth compared to coldness of the East, has been reflected in different works. The study shall reflect how the physical migration affects the mental and emotional condition of an individual being, how they suffer changes, swift and fundamental, shaking events of the most basic human condition; the complexity, diversity and rapid pace of changes make them appear a stranger in their own eyes. It will also reflect how the notion of diaspora becomes problematic and nostalgic. The fragmented memory, interspersed with imagined past and nostalgia, impulse to recreate the lost world; existential angst felt by transplanted individuals in flashes; myriad emotions and complex feelings; will be captured, explored and investigated. It also intends to examine the psychological layers in the novels to uncover the universal and individual traits in the stories. This research points out, that a singular loyalty to a nation, state or single collectivity becomes problematic. The immigrant experience is not only about identity, important though that fraught subject is. This research brings out various cultural, social and economical aspects of the various themes. It will touch several interesting
areas of diasporic communities such as ethnicity, identity, transnationalism, religion, politics, gender, sexualities and hybridity among others and the emotional and mental level of diaspora.