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IDEOLOGICAL CONCERN OF INDIRA GOSWAMI TOWARDS CIVIC SOCIETY IN PAGES STAINED WITH BLOOD

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to focus the on Indira Goswami and her ideology as a responsible citizen towards civic society through the novel *Pages stained With Blood* .It is a portrayal of 1984 Anti-Sikh riots occurred in Delhi after the assassination of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The Sikhs residing in Delhi were victimized, burnt alive, looted, stabbed, beheaded and raped In this novel, through her first hand record information, she narrated. all the incidents in the form of a novel. This novel strongly is a protest against Traumatic experiences of committing atrocities and behaving ruthlessly towards Sikh community with the support of Government Officials (The darkest faces of human beings)

KEYWORDS: Ideological Concern , Civic Society , volunteers and memberships of voluntary associations.

INTRODUCTION

Ideology is a set of shared beliefs of an individual or within a group, such as a nation or social class. These set of beliefs influence the way individuals think, act, and view the world. Civic Responsibility is defined as the "responsibility of a citizen" (Dictionary.com). It is comprised of actions and attitudes associated with democratic governance and social participation. Civic responsibility can include participation in government, church, volunteers and memberships of voluntary associations.

Indira Goswami's Assamese novel *Tej Aru Dhulire Dhusarita Prishtha* (*Pages Stained with Blood*) is a haunting tale with a huge focus on the horrendous anti-Sikh riots that cooured in Delhi after the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

In this novel a young Assamese woman who teaches at the University of Delhi and is an author. She is very curious about writing a book on Delhi and regularly jots down anything that comes into her mind. The Operation Blue Star at the Golden Temple in Amritsar brings sudden change to the novel and the protagonist jumps headlong into the crisis as she is very close to many Sikh people There is significant evidence that the riots were aided and negatively supported by members of Indian Government and the congress party. The Delhi police were ordered not to pay attention towards violent, cruel activities like murders and rapes done by rioters. They also somehow obtained voting records to identify and mark the houses of Sikhs with large X signs. The tactful game played by the higher authorities of the Government for a personal gain had left a deep ineffaceable wound to thousands of innocent Sikhs. At last, her book is drenched in Santokh Singh's blood and she loses all her recorded material. It also touches on the other forms of marginality like unemployment, prostitution, economic poverty etc. The paper aims to highlight Dr. Goswami 's ideological concern towards society.. The novel also calls for a moral thinking of society rather than dong



negative activities to do harm to the society.. The narrator assumes the role of the protagonist running through the blood stained streets, providing shelter to the attacked victims and attending their first aid.

The novel is a social document written with the writer's imaginative approach towards the world around her and in course of time the novelist works like a responsible civic in documenting the events and developments taking place in the society. The novel presents that a particular section of society, 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 noteworthy in the case of the novel. A social situation with its problems and issues is faithfully recorded in the novel. The male and female characters in a work of fiction become link between the reader and the period in which the writer has personally felt and experienced those actual trends that existed at the time. "I have attempted to present human perspective that is visible in the works of Indira Goswami's Pages Stained With Blood'.

The novel provide a strong-base on the political violence and social tumult in the city of Delhi, in the background of the communal riots that broke – out in the consequences of then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi's assassination. The novel is in the form of a diary of the woman protagonist and her witnessed information i.e. first hand records as a faculty member of the Delhi University. Indira Goswami's novel is not only a novel but a solemn effort at reorganizing painful experiences of Sikh minority population in an independent country. In portraying the Sikh –Riot she is more a responsible human than a historian or a novelist. If there is fiction, it has been merged with a intricacy that one can hardly describe a line between the factual and the fiction. In India. Especially since the protagonist possesses on her notebook and a large part of the novel is taken up by her running to get it, taking it out, carrying it, picking it up, dropping it, opening it and sometimes, even writing in it. . At last, her book is drenched in Santokh Singh's blood and she loses all her recorded material

Here in this work, like Indira Goswami his characters are portrayed against social customs and movements. She gives a detailed analysis of the psychology of Sikh – revolution in India.

"There were supposedly more than 8,000 deaths, including 3,000 in Delhi only .There were allegations that the acts of violence were organized with the support from the Delhi police officials and the central government headed by Indira Gandhi's son, Rajiv Gandhi who, was sworn in as Prime Minister after his mother's death and, when he was asked about the riots, said "when a big tree falls, the earth shakes."

It is conspicuously seen that the responsibility of the Indian government ruled by the Indian National Congress in the riots, has spread the "hatred" against Sikhs. The United States has refused to recognize the riots as genocide, but do admit that "grave human rights violations" took place'

One such pathetic scene told by Indira Goswami "After a while, I saw a man. A Sikh. He was sitting on a broken khatiya with his head resting on his hands. We went near him and he greeted us saying namaste. He told me that in every house in that colony one or more people had been killed. He suddenly went in and brought out three pagris and flung them across the khatiya. Two of them were his sons', the third one his own. Two of them were soaked in blood. That image still lingers on...

Very bad. Very bad it was. That place was so silent and it produced the atmosphere of graveyard. I met some more people inside, and their stories were so terrible that I could never write them and I don't want to remember them, too. Everyone had fled to the refugee camp. We went to the Sabji market. I had never seen so many widows together. All the riot victims were there and a lot of them were widows. I spoke to some of them and as I followed the papers in the following days, not much was written on the victims. A lot of facts and a lot of stories never reached the papers. People never got to know all the stories. You can't imagine how brutal they are..."

It was for the first time, she comes across with terrorism and brutality by people on fellow people which is quite inhuman.

Indira Goswami herself says, in an interview with Arun Kashyap, 'I had seen something more horrible than terrorism and rioting before the Sikh riots. I had seen terrible poverty with my naked eyes, how people die each day little by little, and how cruel people could be in everyday life. It's worse than death, its worse than dying in a riot, or in a bomb blast.'

This novel is written is first person. Pages Stained With Blood...because she wrote exactly what she had seen and most of it is true. It was so horrible and shocking that she couldn't exaggerate anything further. The novel is more of a documentation of what she saw.

A right is a freedom that is protected, such as the right to free speech and religion. A responsibility is a duty or something you should do, every citizen should be public spirited. He should not seek his self-interest and should always be ready to contribute his mite to the welfare of society

Every citizen is expected to be tolerant towards others. Their religions beliefs "Do unto others what you wish to be done by," should be the motto before every citizen. It is more or less a moral duty. It is the duty of a good citizen to resist injustice from any quarter. If the government is unjust, it may also be resisted.

While civil society provides an enabling framework for democracy, it contains at the same time an intrinsic tension, a fragile balance between private and public interests. Maintaining this balance is essential to finding solutions to vital challenges in modern democracies that demand public resolution, challenges such as environmental degradation, ethnic and religious strife, and deterioration of public decision-making processes. These are often described as issues of the commons, the resolution of which will determine the future of humankind.

Goswami's literature is, in fact, her attempt to stimulate social change. It is her means to address the socio-political violence directed against by the exploited and marginalized sections of society because humanity is her primary concern.

Civil society is the arena outside family, government, where people voluntarily associate to advance common interests based on civility. Indira Goswami as a responsible citizen

Of a civil society as well as a narrator she projects her entire focus on the quintessence of cruelty in human nature that takes shape into various forms of violence every day. In Goswami's view, this violence is "worse than death, it is worse than dying in a riot or in a bomb blast" ("Stained with Blood"). Through this novel she addressed the socio-political violence directed against by the exploited and marginalized sections of society and the need for responsible citizens to run the society smoothly.

This novel extremely influential and is based on the political violence perpetrated among the Sikhs after the assassination of Indira Gandhi in Delhi. We cannot say that it is only the novel which talks about the actual Delhi from the Roshanara Bagh, Ballimaran, Gantaghar and Mirza Ghalib's jilted house is forcefully captured and serves as the first half of the novel, even her previous works had a sensitive portrayal of the plights of the backward classes. In this novel the pages are not only soaked with blood depicting the state of the minorities but also the narrators emotional bonding with them is also one pre-dominant theme. This too shows her ideological concern towards civic society. She has a family bonding with the rickshaw-puller Santokh Singh, the kabariwala Balbir and Sikh Baba from the lower class which she has represented in her novel.

As soon as the riots started, the narrator also started worrying about these people and she searched for them rigorously roaming here and there. One day she noticed that the taxi stand near her house was empty and not even a single driver was seen, she was totally scared.

"A shrill cry comes from my heart Santokh Singh, Balbir Singh and Sikh Baba, Where are they?(p.132)." It indicates her sense of intense emotional attachment with these people. Though as an unnamed narrator character is mentioned in the novel, it is conspicuous that she is none other than Indira Goswami. Her relation with of common people, people from lower class also represents her ideological concern towards civic society.

There are innumerable examples for Indira Goswami caring society according to her ideology, as a responsible citizen.

"I went with two of my students who volunteered to accompany me. I carried ten thousand rupees with me, so that I could distribute among the people in need. I couldn't take more than that. That's all I had at that time and how much did a lecturer earn during those days? I wanted to help alone in my own small ways. There were no taxis. Most of the taxiwallahs in our area were Sikhs, then. And some taxiwallahs were around, but they were not ready to go. Finally, one driver who knew me well agreed to drive us to the riot sites. He was Hindu. We went to Jahangirpuri in Delhi.

Jahangirpuri was a ruin that day and it was like a place ravaged by a big war. All the houses were burnt. Broken window panes. Glasses and clothes and tyres and burning motorcycles were lay scattered around the place. We couldn't see a single soul. We walked in further and saw a broken, looted Gurudwara, on top of which a madman was sitting and speaking gibberish. That was the only human voice from that place: his meaningless laughter and gibberish. The only house that stood there without a single scratch was the house of the MLA. But I

wanted to talk to people, ask them what happened. And I was feeling very guilty, felt that I shouldn't have come there just because I was curious to know, to find out and tell others how brutal people could be to others."

Indira writes in a manner which suggests that her direct experiences of social reality are woven closely into the narrative. This gives her works a touch of authenticity, even though it carries its hazards for a woman writing in an Indian language. Whenever an intimate experience is portrayed, there is a natural assumption on the part of the reader that it reflects the writer's personal experience - an inference which neglects the creative process that transforms lived experiences into literature.

Besides writer, Goswami was very affectionate and helps poor people when they are in need. She is a great human being at heart and social activist. Amitav Ghosh (2011: 01)

"She, as a writer protests against male domination, completely spoke about the problems of society. Ghosh also says that "Indira Goswami is one of those rare figures whose achievements as a writer are closely paralleled by their accomplishments as a social and political activist"

Initially her project was about writing a romantic book about the past of Delhi which remained uncompleted because the narrator has a humanistic approach towards society which forced her to write about the contemporary Delhi and practically occurred 1984 Anti-Sikh riots.

The transformation of the narrator's wish of writing a romantic historical fiction into a contemporary account of violence and bloodshed which made the *Pages Stained with Blood* a remarkable narrative of pain and suffering.

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As a good human being, she was so panic for the dreadful situation and felt bad for her fellow beings. This following statement shows how much concern Indira Goswami has towards the society at the time of Anti-Sikh Riots in 1984 of looting, killing people and devastation of Delhi.

"I have heard of Raman Raghav who pierced sleeping people on the road with his trident a long time ago and now I feel Raman Raghav's presence in my balcony and I feel all alone as he roams around me."

"When I wake up at night and look at the half-clad or completely naked children down there, they look like dead soldiers on the battle field. I sit up and stare at them always.

The dim light from the street lamps only partially lights up their naked bodies.

The rest is in darkness. It appears as if somebody has cut their bodies into bits and pieces with a swirl bats swirl overheads in the night sky, like mammon cannon bells."

Indira Goswami says "Nothing measures up to humanity. For my teacher, humanity alone was the prime consideration and nothing else".

In this novel of *Pages Stained With Blood*, We also can see Indira Goswami's acquaintance with people from all walks of life. "I knew a number of Sikhs, poets, writers, artists, big and small business people and students. Many were large hearted people, ready to give their lives for friendship....."

Mamoni Raisom always manages to rescue humanism from the clutches of the tediously long, complicated, the crush of daily life, misunderstandings and human failings.

"...But like a phoenix, Indira rose---writer fictionalizing the experiences of bliss and blessedness, her sorrow and bitterness. Literature was her refuge, writing was her new passion.

Indira comfortably weaves fascinating novels against the background of human deprivations, exploration of the weak and laces them with revolutionary ideology for sweeping away the decadent and ushering in the emancipated human being." *SundayHerald:May27,1990.*

"I try to write from the direct experiences of my life. I only mould these experiences with my imagination." Indira Goswami Indira Goswami herself in an Interview says the incidents of Delhi riots. Her novel *The Pages Stained With Blood* captures the brutality and the distrust in the cityscape where the fugitives from justice and the perpetrators of crime are difficult to distinguish.

"After a while, I saw a man. A Sikh. He was sitting on a broken khatiya with his head resting on his hands.

We went near him and he greeted us saying namaste. He told me that in every house in that colony one or more people had been killed. He suddenly went in and brought out three pagris and flung them across the khatiya. Two of them were his sons', the third one his own. Two of them were soaked in blood. That image still lingers on...

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After Indira Gandhi died, one of the political leaders came to that area and started shouting naras. Do you know what? Laash pari hain, tum log kyun so rahe hoon! Laash pari hain, tum log kyun so rahe hoon!

The catharsis made her mind so much disturbed and she says how a human can kill another human because human being means being human. She wrote exactly what she saw. There is almost no difference between fact and fiction in that book of Pages stained With Blood. She shares one of her experience. "I still remember I was standing in my balcony; a Sikh man was pulled down from his bicycle and burnt down immediately..."

Many of us who were either witnesses to what happened to friends and acquaintances from a community of people who had lived with us or the ones who even tried to protect them putting their own lives in danger during those scary days will understand and appreciate the humanitarian concern in Pages Stained with Blood

CONCLUSION:

Indira Goswami while depicting the Anti-Sikh riots of Delhi in 1984 found many people who were either witnesses to what happened to friends and acquaintances from a community of people who had lived with us or the ones who even tried to protect them putting their own lives in danger during those scary days. The novel alerts the reader to leave selfishness and become one to stop such massacres. She gives a message to people that as a human being we should love and think about wellbeing of our neighbours and friends. She also requests the readers to think on the sensitive issues of our society ethically according to the set of beliefs of social system rather than becoming a scape-goat in their clutches.. Choosing to Write about such a bold theme of committing atrocities and violence on a particular community of Delhi clearly indicates her ideological concern towards civic society as a responsible citizen.

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