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The Portrayal of Contemporary India in Shashi Tharoor's Select Works

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ABSTRACT: This project is a sum up of Shashi Tharoor's works and tells the style of his work. This project will tell us about how rebellious yet calm his writings are. We will also learn about how his writings have changed India politically and historically. This project will tell us how much Shashi Tharoor has given to Indian English Literature. This project will give us a brief of many of his works and how they are the portrayal of contemporary work and how his writings have shaped many minds. Not only historically he has a great depth of knowledge economically. This project will tell us more about him and his amazing works.

Shashi Tharoor is a great writer and a brilliant critic who has done some amazing work and questioned the lifestyle of people and gave them an ideology to follow and as well questioned others' ideology. He is an Indian politician, author, and former diplomat. He is known for his eloquent speeches and his amazing command of the English language. He was a member of the parliament of India and has done a great job in international organizations and global affairs. He was born on March 9, 1969, in London United States, and belongs to a Malayali family. At a very early stage of his life, he gained a lot of popularity because of his fluent communication in English and the powerful speeches he presented. He played an important role in establishing the UN's Department of Public Information and Non-governmental organizations. He has big and a reputable name in his political life and is honored for his political ideology. He had a keen interest in politics but this only doesn't make him great or interesting because he is a prolific writer and has numerous good books in literature, he has increased the name of Indian English literature. His main writings are on the politics, culture, history, and religion of India. Some of his notable and great works include "The Great Indian Novel," "India: From Midnight to the Millennium," "An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India," and "Why I Am a Hindu." These all novels contain the reshaping of India through different perspectives and ideologies. His writings are appreciated as his style of writing shows how great his English is and how unique it is. Shashi Tharoor's style of communication, often laced with wit and literary references, has earned him a substantial following. He is admired for his oratory skills and is considered one of the most influential and articulate politicians in India. He participates in much intellectual debate and discussion and sticks to his knowledge and argues with the opposition. He holds a very witty and sarcastic personality but has a very disciplined lifestyle which tells us about him boldly he holds up himself and presents himself.

We will know about his thinking and personality more after reading this book and understanding his perspective and motive behind writing this book. His witness is also shown in his writings. He is not only a great politician but also a great thinker and researcher. The book I choose is Why I Am a Hindu? published in 2018. In all the books I have mentioned before, I have seen how his writing has impacted modern India and society. These mentioned books talk about modernization is present in all of his books.

I. WHY HE CHOOSE TO WRITE

“WHY I AM A HINDU”

This book was written for two main purposes. The first was to make an effort to comprehend for myself and anyone else who was interested in the extraordinary wisdom and virtues of the faith I have been practicing for more than 60 years. This is a faith I have tried to absorb through the beliefs and customs passed down to me by my father and others, my observations, as well as a thorough reading of the scriptures in translation and numerous scholarly treatises. The second reason I wrote this book was to demonstrate how Hinduism, the most diverse, inclusive, eclectic, and expansive of religions, was at odds with the intolerant and frequently violent forms of Hindutva that started to infiltrate Indian society in the 1980s.

People say he wrote this book to show how great his knowledge is and to flaunt his wisdom and to compare Hinduism



with other religions. Whereas he says that I am just a layman who is writing his experience of Hindutva. He concludes that he has written this book by attentively reading of scriptures, many translated works, academic text, and most importantly his perspective. Instead of using the theoretical methods of historians, theologians, and social scientists, my approach is to describe both the classical scriptures of Hinduism and the contemporary Hindutva views in their own words. By doing this, I aim to arrive at what the reader will find to be a clear and thoughtful explanation of one of the world's oldest and most revered religions and its current state. He hopes to demonstrate through this book how politics and contemporary society have helped Hinduism reinvent itself. After reading this book, he wants to help young minds overcome their obstacles and address any questions that may have come up. He also wants to spread the truth about Hinduism.

There are three parts to the book. 'My Hinduism', the first portion, examines every facet of the religion, including its main schools, doctrines, teachers, and teachings as well as some of its more dubious social practices. The second section, "Political Hinduism," it is explained how politicians, strategists, thinkers, and their racial and ideological allies have tried to use religion to further their own agendas. The third section, "Taking Back Hinduism," it is discussed how we could liberate Hinduism from the excesses and perversions to which it has been subjected and return it to its original state, which is oftentimes that of an almost ideal religion for the twenty-first century.

This book teaches us about Hinduism's theoretical and psychological aspects as well as its historical development. As the title of the book suggests, he challenges the concept of Hinduism in the modern world and challenges society to reflect on its own values. I'm a Hindu; why? He discussed the significance of murti puja and how people shouldn't criticize it because it is someone's belief. He discusses the truth, describing how it differs from God and how every major religion exalts it. It also provides us with insights into holy scriptures like the Quran, the Bible, the Geeta, and many more. Shashi Tharoor's personal, political, and countercultural relationship with modern Hindu and Hinduism projections is explored in the book. His primary intent is to steal the legacy of Hinduism and improve the aspect of Hinduism.

II. MORE BOOKS BY SHASHI THAROOR TO UNDERSTAND THE TOPIC

Some other books to understand the contemporary Indian through the writings of Shashi Tharoor basically what all his books portray;

Colonial Heritage and Postcolonial Identity:

In this book Shashi Tharoor compares the colonial past and its impact on today's India. He is comparing the past colonial era through present India and what changes it made positively and negatively. He talks about these in depth in his book, "THE GREAT INDIAN NOVEL". (1989) (In this book he reinvents the struggle of India for freedom and talks about how this colonization also helped India in many ways. He says that after reading about it a lot he can feel the difference after the colonisation. It has also reshaped India, but Tharoor examines the issues of nation-building and challenges faced for recoiling a country's diverse heritage and culture, identity, and individuality.

Globalization and Economic Change:

In this book, Tharoor talks about the worldly affairs of India politically and economically. He talks about the impact of globalization and economic liberation on modern India.

"THE ELEPHANT, THE TIGER, AND THE MOBILE PHONE: Reflections on India in the 21st Century". (2007) In this book he talks about India's rapid growth in the economy, the rise of the middle class, and challenges faced by each sector due to the inequality of economic value of India. In this book, Tharoor mentions the problem faced by people due to the economy how the rich are becoming richer and poor and becoming poorer, and how the general middle class stands nowhere as neither they are in the majority nor minority. He talks about how Indian society has altered itself from urbanization to consumer culture.

Social Diversity and Culture's Heritage:

Shashi Tharoor was always proud of India's culture and its heritage; he was also interested in it and was always inspired by it. Tharoor celebrates India's rich social diversity and cultural heritage, linguistic, diversity, religion, different backgrounds, and the challenges faced by people to run and maintain this multicultural country. He tells us



about how India has reshaped itself through times culturally, in every novel he always mentioned the heritage of India and glorified his perspective of India.

Historical Reflections and National Identities:

Tharoor ventures into the history of India to reflect on the country's national identity. In “An Era of Darkness: The British Empire” (2016). In India, he provides a critical assessment of British colonial rule and its impact on India's historical narrative. Tharoor underscores the need to restore and reinterpret Indian history from a post-colonial perspective, challenge traditional narratives, and amplify Indian voices. In this book, he sheds light on British colonial rule in India. He challenges the romantic view of the British Raj and pleads for British regimes and injustices. He highlights the significance of understanding India’s colonial past and presents India.

III. CONCLUSIONS

This project is a road map of Shashi Tharoor’s works and his thinking. I came to know about the difference between the new (modern) India and colonial India. I came to know about India geographically, historically, and culturally and politically. These books gave me a wider perspective and understanding of our motherland. It showed me the negative and positive perspectives on many topics such as the economy, colonial India, Hinduism, and many more. I came to know more about Shashi Tharoor not only as a political leader but more as an author more precisely as a writer. His books gave me a very depth knowledge of India

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I have summed up this project by reading some research articles, summaries, and novels by Shashi Tharoor.

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