

# GLOBALISATION AS A FOCAL POINT IN *THE WHITE TIGER* AND *THE HUNGRY TIDE*

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**Abstract:** India has diverse culture, customs and traditions. Even though it is diverse, it always seeks the atmosphere of West. This tendency is due to the effects of Globalisation. This effects can also be seen in the novels of Indian Literature. Aravind Adiga and Amitav Ghosh are such writers whose works have these impacts. Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* exquisitely portrays the globalisation, how it victimised the low key people and how they find the alternative life against the globalisation in the context of environment. Aravind's *The White Tiger* marks the extensive effects of neoliberal globalisation through the protagonist Balram Halwai. This paper brings out the impact of globalisation and the effective changes that it made in the different circles of the society through the selected new fiction Indian novels.

**Index Terms:** Globalisation, Neoliberalism, Cosmopolitanism, Consumerism, Culture.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Susan George says,

Let us first make clear that the word 'globalisation' on its own is virtually meaningless. Like its precursor, the word "development", it needs an adjective to escape from a convenient conceptual fuzziness. The adjective used here will be 'neoliberal'. This means that 'globalisation' is another name for late twentieth/twenty first century capitalism, qualitatively different from previous incarnation (12).

The term Globalisation is often understood that it indicates about more trade, foreign companies and economic crisis. But no one has anticipated that it also reflected upon literature and language. Everyone knows that literature is a reflection of life. So it also reflects the socio-political and economic pressures. These reflections are mostly seen in the post-colonial studies and works which actually depict the multi culturalism, hybridity, alienation, loss of nativity and so on. Globalisation further came into the game and increased its level of mingling or mingling with the native cultures and even to the extent of replacing it by the foreign invasion or the so called foreign trade. Such trade in India paved way for the West to enter and colonise the country. It not only colonised geographically but also psychologically in the minds of Indian people.

After the roaring of this colonisation, the era of globalisation has gradually peeped into the third world countries like India. This has also peeped and impacted several writers in India to transfer their thoughts and ideas in compact mode in the name of literature. Mostly the Indian novels marked the influence of globalisation in various fields and aspects like culture, tradition, thoughts, ideas, opinions, technologies, food so on and so forth. Particularly, to understand its influence on literature, it is very important to analyse the characteristics of some contemporary novels which are different from earlier post-colonial novels appeared during the middle of twentieth century. Kiran Desai's "The Inheritance of Loss", Vikram Chandra's *Red Earth and Pouring Rain*, Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*, Vikas Swarup's *Q&A*, Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* are some of the Indian novels which are embarked with

striking effects of globalisation on various aspects. Among these, this paper focuses on the globalisation that much reflected on the plot and its characters in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*.

## II. NEOLIBERAL GLOBALISATION IN *THE WHITE TIGER*

The contemporary Indian novels portray the impacts of neoliberal globalisation in the lives of poor and common people in various ways. Many Indian novels portray globalisation as a positive effect on the impoverished communities. Being epistolary in the form, *The White Tiger* has the backdrop of post-liberalised India. The novel begins with the protagonist Balram Halwai writing letter to the Chinese Premier. He suffers a lot due to his impoverished family condition and works as a chauffeur to Ashok. He ends up in looting the money and becomes the successful entrepreneur. In this novel, the protagonist Balram Halwai is portrayed as a man from socio-economically marginalised sections, who immensely rise to the higher level in life in the new India, having globalisation as his upliftment. Balram is born in a poor family, where his father is the only bread winner of the family and that too with very low wage. Fortunately, he is able to overcome his inherited impoverished conditions and climbs up the ladder to the better economic position through the open economy and mass arrival of the global capital in the post-liberalization India. So it shows that his economic success stands as the epitome of success of neoliberal globalisation, which actually depicted as growth force for the impoverished mass people of the Indian society. The most overarching effects of neoliberal globalisation is seen in the individual subject. The protagonist makes to the top because he acted according to the neoliberal capitalistic rules and characteristics of the neoliberal subject- the awareness of self-responsibility. He also plays like a model citizen of the country in the changing new economy. Balram is a self-made entrepreneur who has taken the responsibility of life on his own. Neither his schooling nor his family background helps him to come up in his life. He has achieved the financial success by making his own responsibility in life.

However, the success of Balram not only comes from his sense of self-responsibility, but also comes from many other ways of ideal neoliberal subject. It is his ingenuity and exploiting adverse situations. Balram shows this manipulative tendency to overcome his poor backdrop begins from his childhood. He is denied in the schools, he uses his job in tea stalls to know people and empower himself even in an adverse situations. Rather spending all his concentration on his jobs, he eavesdrops to the conversations of people and widen his knowledge about the world. Therefore, even when he is denied in schools and thrown him as a child labourer, he makes all his situations best and also manipulates it to his advantage. For example, the greatest manipulation by him is deceiving his master through his submissiveness. Knowing the hierarchy his caste and the landlords, he exploits to act very loyal and subservient. Later Balram says: "You should have seen me that day- what a performance of wails and kisses and tears! You'd think I'd been born into a caste of performing actors! And all the time, while clutching the Stork's feet, I was staring at his huge, dirty, uncut toenails, and thinking...Why isn't he back home, screwing poor fishermen of their money and humping their daughters?" (51).

As an ideology, neoliberalism is an individualistic one. It avoids the fundamental ethics of communal identities, because every time the profit comes at the cost of denying the social responsibilities. Thus, the economic success of Balram projects that the marginalised people's antidote as the globalisation.

## III. VICTIMIZATION OF GLOBALISATION IN *THE HUNGRY TIDE*

Amitav Ghosh enumerates the difficulties of marginalised people controlled by vicious factors of globalisation in *The Hungry Tide*. They are cosmopolitanism and consumerism. Cosmopolitanism always avoids the sufferings of marginalised and the subaltern people. In the novel, Piya plays as an International research student, who has come to India to do her research on a particular variety of dolphin in the Ganges River. She is basically a Cetologist and also considered as a cosmopolitan environmentalist. She is so shocked at seeing the villagers killing a tiger. She thinks that all human beings should maintain a friendly relationship with nature and so she is shocked even after knowing that the tiger killed two people in the village. She says to Kanai that one cannot take revenge on an animal.

Then, Consumerism devalues the humanity and the values of human by making everything into commodity. For example, the subalterns are killed unfairly. The western and urban middle-class treasure the animals like penguin, dolphin, giraffe, etc., also term the Bengal tigers as the Cosmopolitan Tigers. So the Indian Government priorities the preservation of the Bengal Tigers. But the economic terms are used in the preservation of these tigers like making Sundarbans named, “a World Heritage Site” and “Prime Tiger Area”. Therefore the Government earns lot of money from their patrons. Finally for profit and for display the tigers are made into commodities. Everything is made to seen as materialistic terms through this giant consumerism. The middle class’ is on the money and not at their lives. Kanai says that these subaltern or village people are too poor to be considered and that many people choose not to confront this issue.

These two globalisation factors completely ignores the bonding between human beings and nature and even between the fellow human being. Nature is been continuously considered as a commodity and as an object of consumption. Therefore human exploitation of nature and not considering it as an organism coexisting with them, the peaceful relationship between them becomes impossible. But Ghosh also shows that the human values and the better relationship with nature is taught and valued by Bengali religious and cultural traditions. For example, Amitav Ghosh gives the myth of Bon Bibi in detail. Bon Bibi is considered as “the savior of the weak and a mother of mercy to the poor”. She very much values the dignity of a human. On one hand, through the myth of Bon Bibi, it is proved that the relationship between wild animals and human beings is possible. On the other hand, Bon Bibi knows that the two can be detrimental to each other. So, with empty hands and pure heart human being should enter the forests. If humans are not violent and greedy in the forest, so far the tigers are also not harmful to them. Thus, both should not cross their boundaries to live peacefully.

Thus, in *The Hungry Tide*, Amitav Ghosh has shown a life that is struggling in the waves of globalisation and somehow in the end it manages to cope up with the changing world. More appropriately, it swims back into the tides of globalisation and reaches the destination of its own culture.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

However, globalisation has become a part and parcel of our lives, it has its pros and cons. In the first story, the impact of globalisation on the protagonist, who is from impoverished condition, makes him economically successful. But in the second story, the same globalisation has affected the life and minds of the people in Sundarbans. It makes the bourgeois mind more money minded and proletariat lives in more chaos. Thus, both the stories has the globalisation as its focal point but in different context.

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