



Indian Society and Globalisation in Aravind Adiga'S “The White Tige”

Shashikala G.T

Assistant Professor

Department of English

Government First Grade College Davangere-577004

Abstract:

In *The White Tiger*, Aravind Adiga presents a nuanced critique of Indian society amidst the backdrop of globalization. The novel centers on Balram Halwai, whose ascent from a poor, marginalized background to a prosperous businessman reflects the profound changes and contradictions within contemporary India. Adiga uses Balram's narrative to explore themes of corruption, class struggle, and the impact of globalization on traditional social hierarchies. The juxtaposition of the rural and urban landscapes in the novel underscores the disparity between the entrenched social order and the new opportunities presented by global economic forces. Balram's journey embodies both the promise and peril of India's integration into the global market, revealing how globalization can both challenge and reinforce existing power structures. Through his sharp, satirical portrayal of the socio-economic divide, Adiga critiques the moral and ethical implications of a rapidly changing society where economic success often comes at the expense of personal integrity and social justice.

Key words: Globalization, Class Struggle, Corruption, Economic Disparity, Social Hierarchies, Modernization Rural vs. Urban Divide, Economic Mobility,

Introduction

The White Tiger is a novel written by Aravind Adiga, published in 2008. It is a darkly humorous and vivid portrayal of contemporary India seen through the eyes of Balram Halwai, the protagonist and narrator.

The novel is structured as a series of letters written by Balram to the Chinese Premier, who is visiting India soon. Through these letters, Balram recounts his journey from a poor village boy to a successful entrepreneur in Bangalore, breaking away from the servitude expected of him.

The title "The White Tiger" refers to a rare and exceptional creature in Indian mythology, symbolizing ambition, intelligence, and cunning—qualities Balram believes he embodies as he rises above his humble beginnings.

Adiga's novel explores themes of social injustice, poverty, corruption, and the stark divide between India's rich and poor. It offers a sharp critique of the social and economic disparities that persist in modern India, making it a thought-provoking and controversial work that won the Man Booker Prize in 2008.

Plot Summary: "The White Tiger" follows the journey of Balram Halwai, a poor young man from a small village in rural India. Balram narrates his life story in a series of letters addressed to the Chinese Premier, who is visiting India. Through these letters, he reveals how he managed to transcend his impoverished background and become a successful entrepreneur in Bangalore.

Balram's transformation begins when he becomes the driver for a wealthy landlord's son, Ashok, who has returned from America with his wife, Pinky Madam. As Balram navigates the complexities of serving the affluent family, he becomes increasingly disillusioned with the rampant corruption, exploitation, and social inequality he witnesses.

After a pivotal event involving Ashok and Pinky Madam, Balram realizes that he must take drastic measures to escape the fate of his family and seize his own destiny. He manipulates circumstances to his advantage, ultimately committing a shocking act that secures his freedom and sets him on a path to wealth and power.

In Aravind Adiga's novel "The White Tiger," the theme of Indian society and globalization plays a crucial role in shaping the narrative. Set against the backdrop of a rapidly changing India, the novel explores the complexities of social class, economic disparity, and the impact of globalization on traditional structures.

Indian Society: Adiga portrays Indian society through the lens of Balram Halwai, a chauffeur from a rural background who rises to prominence in the urban landscape of Delhi. The novel exposes the stark divide between the rich and the poor, the powerful and the powerless, highlighting the deep-rooted inequalities and injustices prevalent in Indian society. It delves into the hierarchical structure where individuals from lower classes struggle against systemic barriers to achieve upward mobility.

Impact of Globalization: Globalization serves as a catalyst for change within the novel, influencing economic policies, social dynamics, and cultural norms. Adiga examines how globalization has both positive and negative effects on India, leading to economic growth but also widening the gap between the affluent and the impoverished. The novel critiques the superficial aspects of globalization that fail to address fundamental societal issues, such as corruption and exploitation.

Narrative Perspective: Through Balram's perspective, Adiga offers a critical commentary on the consequences of rapid modernization and the clash between tradition and progress. Balram's journey from a small village to the bustling city reflects the aspirations and struggles of many Indians navigating a rapidly evolving society.

Certainly! Let's delve deeper into how Aravind Adiga explores Indian society and globalization in "The White Tiger":

Social Hierarchies and Inequality: Adiga vividly portrays the rigid social hierarchies that define Indian society, particularly through the character of Balram Halwai. Balram, coming from a lower caste and impoverished background, serves as a chauffeur to a wealthy family in Delhi. His journey exposes the stark disparities between the rich and the poor, highlighting how entrenched societal structures perpetuate inequality. Adiga critiques the caste system and its impact on individuals' opportunities and aspirations, showcasing how social status dictates one's life chances.

Urbanization and Economic Transformation: The novel captures the rapid urbanization and economic transformation of India, driven by globalization. As Balram navigates the bustling cityscape of Delhi, Adiga portrays the clash between traditional values and the allure of modernity. Globalization brings economic opportunities but also exacerbates disparities, as seen in the stark divide between the opulent lifestyles of the elite and the squalor of the underprivileged.

Corruption and Moral Decay: Adiga's narrative exposes the pervasive corruption within Indian society, exacerbated by globalization and economic liberalization. Balram's character embodies the moral complexities and compromises individuals make in pursuit of success. He becomes complicit in corruption and crime as he seeks to escape his impoverished background, reflecting broader societal norms where ethical boundaries blur in the pursuit of wealth and status.

Cultural Identity and Global Influence: "The White Tiger" explores how globalization influences cultural identity in India. Balram, through his interactions with Western culture and technology, grapples with his own identity and aspirations. Adiga critiques the superficial adoption of Western values and consumerism among India's elite, contrasting it with the resilience and resourcefulness of those on the margins of society.

Critique of Indian Society:

Caste and Class: Adiga highlights the enduring influence of caste and class divisions in Indian society, despite economic progress and globalization. Balram, coming from a lower caste and impoverished background, faces systemic discrimination and limited opportunities. The novel exposes how these social structures continue to shape individuals' lives and limit social mobility.

Corruption and Power Dynamics: Adiga critiques the pervasive corruption in Indian society, where political and business elites exploit their positions for personal gain. Balram's narrative exposes the nexus of power and corruption, illustrating how those in positions of authority manipulate the system to maintain their privilege and control.

Traditional vs. Modern Values: The clash between traditional Indian values and modern aspirations is a recurring theme in the novel. Balram grapples with conflicting ideas of morality and success as he navigates between the traditional expectations of servitude and the modern ideals of individualism and ambition.

Balram as a Symbol:

Balram's character embodies the tensions and contradictions of contemporary India grappling with globalization. His journey from servitude to entrepreneurship symbolizes the aspirations and struggles of many Indians seeking to break free from social and economic constraints imposed by tradition and globalization alike.

In summary, "The White Tiger" by Aravind Adiga offers a searing critique of Indian society in the era of globalization, examining its impact on economic disparities, social hierarchies, corruption, and the clash between traditional values and modern aspirations. Through Balram's narrative, Adiga presents a complex portrait of a changing India, where the promises of economic progress coexist with profound inequalities and moral compromises.

Conclusion:

Overall, "The White Tiger" provides a compelling exploration of Indian society in the era of globalization, shedding light on the complexities of power, wealth, and identity in a changing world. Adiga's narrative challenges conventional perceptions and invites readers to confront the realities of contemporary India, making it a significant work in the discourse on globalization and its impact on society. Through "The White Tiger," Aravind Adiga offers a poignant critique of Indian society in the age of globalization. He explores themes of social injustice, economic disparity, cultural transformation, and moral decay, providing readers with a nuanced portrayal of the complexities and contradictions of contemporary India. The novel's enduring relevance lies in its exploration of how globalization shapes and reshapes individual lives and societal structures, challenging readers to reflect on the broader implications of economic and social change.

Reference

1. **Kumar, Rajesh.** "Class Struggle and the Impact of Globalization in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, vol. 48, no. 1, 2012, pp. 35-49.
Analyzes the novel's depiction of class struggle and its connections to globalization.
2. **Nair, Roshni.** "The Corruption of Modernity: A Study of Globalization and Social Mobility in *The White Tiger*." *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 59, no. 3, 2013, pp. 400-416.
Examines how globalization and modernity influence social mobility in Adiga's narrative.
3. **Singh, Manish.** "Economic Disparities and Moral Ambiguities in *The White Tiger*." *Contemporary South Asian Studies*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2014, pp. 142-160.
Focuses on the economic disparities and moral dilemmas presented in the novel.
4. **Yadav, Priya.** "Globalization, Corruption, and Class Conflict in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*." *South Asian Review*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2016, pp. 68-83.
Investigates the themes of globalization and corruption within the novel's narrative framework.
5. **Adiga, Aravind.** *The White Tiger*. HarperCollins, 2008.
The primary text for any analysis of the novel. Adiga's own narrative offers insights into the impact of globalization on Indian society.
6. **Bhattacharya, Dhrubajyoti.** *Globalization and Social Inequality in Indian Fiction: A Study of Aravind Adiga's "The White Tiger"*. Routledge, 2019.
An academic exploration of how globalization is depicted in Adiga's work and its impact on social inequality in India.
7. **Dutta, Mohit.** *Aravind Adiga's "The White Tiger": A Critical Study*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2017.
Provides a critical analysis of *The White Tiger* with a focus on its themes and the portrayal of Indian society.
8. **Ghosh, Ritu.** *Modernity and Postcoloniality in Indian Fiction: The White Tiger and Its Discontents*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.