



Social Message in the novels of Aravind Adiga

Dr. Kulbhushan Rajak

Asst. Professor, English
Govt. Degree College, Nainpur
Dist. Mandla (M.P.)

Abstract: The writings of Aravind Adiga revolve around the social life of a simple and common man. Aravind Adiga has an enormous contribution offering various formulas for the complexities and concerns in the society. The pathetic condition of underdog is deeply represented by Adiga and what compels a common man to commit murder, to rob people and to force the people to go on off beam path. He explores the authenticity of life and presents extensive views of the social life of common people. Modern affairs like quest for identity, loneliness, alienation, sense of non-belonging and existential crisis are reflected on the pretext of his various novels.

Keywords: discrimination, skyscrapers, subaltern, stymied, ethnicities, embrasure.

Discussion: Social message is the message, shared within a society and also to give awareness to the people regarding the problems that different societies and communities face on a day to-day basis, to be conscious of difficulties and hardships of society. India has produced several great writers who have influenced a whole generation and continue to inspire the coming generations by their writings. Their works vividly portray the picture of Indian society and ingeniously bring out the evils in it. Indian writers have played a progressive part in the reform of Indian society. India's pioneer political activities right from Ranade, Naoroji, Gokhale, Tilak, Aurobindo, Gandhi and Nehru were conscious of the corresponding perils of socio-economic inequality, injustice and neglect. This predicament of the poor has remained in focus in the writings of several Indian English writers in general and the novelists in particular. Mulkraj Anand and Bhabani Bhattacharya before the 1950s and Arunhati Roy, Kiran Desai and Aravind Adiga in the present times are fine examples.

Aravind Adiga is a pioneer figure in the field of modern Indian English Literature. He was born at Madras in 1974 and was raised partly in Australia. He studied at Columbia and Oxford Universities. Aravind Adiga's fictions quickly expended covering almost every aspect of social life. In the age gone by, the social issues used to be dowry, unemployment, child labour, discrimination, poverty etc, are restored by the modern affairs like torture on women, terrorism, gambling, crime, corruption. Further, poverty and illiteracy are the main evils that still exist. Aravind Adiga highlighted mainly these current social taboos in his novels. The characters of Aravind Adiga are not too hypothetical and his characters, situations are also real. Adiga's books

would be just a loose collection of sketches of discrete lives. The main theme of his novels is the contrast between India's rise as a modern global economy and its working class people who live in severe poverty. Aravind Adiga is a creative artist who exposes the problems of postcolonial subaltern discourses and their resistance. His novels have been written in the epistolary form. In view of the above, the purpose of this research paper is to throw light on the social message as depicted in his novels.

The White Tiger, Aravind Adiga's debut novel won the 2008 Man Booker Prize and has received much critical acclaim. *The White Tiger* tells the story of a young entrepreneur in India whose childhood nickname was the White Tiger. This novel is an original and compelling story about modern India. One remarkable aspect of *The White Tiger* is how Adiga weaves such a broad spectrum of aspects of life in India. The novel contains multitude without being a sprawling epic or losing its tight focus. *The White Tiger* is a moving story and an eye-opening portrait of Indian society. Adiga's novel is hilarious and impolite, a fabulous counterpoint to some of the beautiful, lyrical Indian novels that have surfaced in the past decade.

Kathleen Waller in her article *Redefinitions of India and Individuality in Adiga's The White Tiger*, discusses Indian individualism as being supported by a democratic and secular society, but also stymied by traditions and socioeconomic realities which keep most of its people living in poverty. She also says that in *The White Tiger*, Adiga challenges Indian culture to create a society in which individuals are truly free. Waller argues that the relevance of Adiga's novel is that it is social structure and practices of hierarchy keep many people in the lower classes of Indian society and that this state of affairs is counterproductive. Instead, Adiga's novel suggests that the situation of India's social structure and its entrenched hierarchy would have to be looked at and that through the erasure of constraint by society's class hierarchy, Indian society could transform itself. Aravind Adiga's novel *The White Tiger* according to Waller, challenges definitions of Indian identity with a narrator who comes from a nameless and birthday less past with a written fate as a member of the lower caste. The servant rises in power by using the very nothingness he comes from as an advantage and addresses his agenda to China's premier. The narrator becomes something in not only Indian but also global society under the symbolic pseudonym of *The White Tiger* as he appeals to China and speaks with understanding of the United States and world economies. Despite a lack of formal education, he knows multiple religions and languages as well. The fact that the narrator is also a murderer is not excusable but shows the reader that the embrasure of nothingness in India is not fully possible at this time. Therefore, Adiga is both asking Indians to turn away from their fated paths while also changing economic, political and social policies. Waller asserts that there must be a way for individuals within society to seek redefinition through both lawful and ethically correct means.

Adiga's novel, *Between the Assassinations* is structured as a collection of connected short stories, with each story presenting a different set of characters and their experiences. These characters come from various backgrounds, ethnicities and social classes, offering a diverse range of perspectives on contemporary Indian society. Aravind Adiga used social realism in his novel *Between the Assassinations*. Adiga's stories are grounded in the reality, portraying the harsh truths of contemporary Indian society. The stories in the novel explore various themes of poverty, corruption, caste and religion including social issues, such as ethnic strife, corruption, poverty, caste discrimination and religious tensions. *Between the Assassinations* offers a vivid portrayal of contemporary India through its setting, timeframe, diverse characters and the use of social realism.

This narrative approach allows Aravind Adiga to explore and critique various aspects of Indian society, making the novel a compelling reflection of the challenges and complexities of life in modern India. *Between the Assassinations* provides multiple illustrations of caste discrimination through its interconnected stories. One example is the story of Shankara, a young boy who is part Brahmin and part Hoyka. His mixed-caste identity makes him an outsider in both castes and he resorts to violence (building and detonating a bomb) as a desperate attempt to gain some measure of control and revenge against the discrimination he faces. By portraying the impact of caste discrimination on characters and society, Adiga highlights the deeply entrenched social issues that continue to affect contemporary India. Throughout the novel, *Between the Assassinations*, the characters face numerous challenges and struggles as they strive for a better life. These struggles can encompass a range of issues including poverty, discrimination, corruption and societal pressures. The characters' struggles may be driven by their aspirations to improve their economic and social conditions. They often find themselves in difficult situations and must make choices that reflect their desires for a brighter future.

Last Man in Tower, another novel by Aravind Adiga can be summed up as the stubborn fight of one man against his times. It is set in the city of Mumbai, where the future is defined by big businessmen and progress is measured in terms of skyscrapers. Aravind Adiga depicts poverty, the social problem in his novel *Last Man in Tower*, through the life of people in slums and the condition of the people on the construction work site of builders in Bombay. The protagonist, Yogesh A. Murthy, alias "Masterji", a retired school teacher with more than the prescribed levels of idealism, finds himself out of touch with the increasingly practical and materialistic society around him. Even as all his neighbours gladly embrace the incredible offer of the ruthless builder Dharmen Shah to transform their ancient housing society into a glitzy township of skyscrapers, Masterji finds himself in the unenviable role of the sole rebel who refuses to sell his flat, the only obstruction to the demolition of the old Vishram society and the ushering in of a new era of prosperity and luxury for so many. Adiga's this novel delves into the causes underlying the moral ambivalence in Indian society while foregrounding the enormous pressure on an ordinary Indian to become rich. Further, Adiga tries to interconnect and investigate the class, value, gender and environmental conflicts. Mary, the cleaning lady at Vishram, concludes that estate broker Ajwani's evil looks "put a price on women." In a similar fashion, builder Shah's eyes always put a price on land. Shah's plan of demolishing Vishram Society poses a threat to the livelihoods of Mary and other servants. When Dharmen Shah enthalls people with his plush constructions, Masterji visualizes the brewing ecological catastrophe. Adiga's novel thus offers a three-dimensional view of contemporary urban India. The novel has universal implications. The conflict between Masterji and Dharmen Shah is like a conflict between individual and a collective power. Shah resembles the rich people in the society, whereas the sufferings of Masterji show the painful suffering of weak people in the society. "The issue here- individual right via collective well-being was so complicated that if a single resident of Vishram went to court". (*Last Man in Tower*, 144). The conflict ends with the death of Masterji. Shah makes the members of the society to murder Masterji and make it as a suicide. Adiga talks about how media, law and police are corrupted. Shah who is a powerful builder decides the truth and all the systems support his views. The systems such as the police, hospitals and doctors, media and politicians always go with the powerful. Shah gets the support of policemen and politicians. After many years in Bombay, he starts a

construction company and slowly acquires contracts one by one. Then he enters the business of redeveloping chawls and slums.

Selection Day is a novel by Aravind Adiga, published in 2016. Adiga uses an approach to depicting the city of Mumbai that has been described as Dickensian in its embrace of the dark side of a crowded metropolis and the dreams and frustrations of its citizens. Adiga is fascinated by how the uneducated and the underprivileged, armed with grit and guile and driven by overwhelming aspiration, can come from the rural hinterland to the big city in search of all that is denied them; and how their collision with the city and all that it represents, shapes and irrevocably alters their lives. Like Balram Halwai in *The White Tiger* and Dharmen Shah in *Last Man in Tower*, Mohan Kumar in *Selection Day* is a dreamer and schemer, who leave his remote village to seek his fortune in the metropolis.

In *Amnesty*, Adiga portrays the life and dreams of the young Sri Lankan Tamil, Danny, who comes on a student visa to Australia, drops out to apply for the status of a refugee and is immediately rejected. The novel *Amnesty* is set in Australia, where Adiga spent a few of his high school years. The displaced people may be migrants or, at times, even refugees who enter a foreign country in search of a livelihood. People considered illegals might have arrived as legals and stayed back due to unavoidable situations. The protagonist, Danny himself, can be considered a refugee rather than an illegal, as his asylum application was rejected just because he had not been smuggled in from his war-scarred, tsunami ravaged Tamil homeland, Sri Lanka. Danny arrives in Sydney on a student visa and overstays for work and for his love. These are a few of the complex motives and impulses that make an individual illegal. *Amnesty* brings to light the contradictions and hypocritical minds of Australians. Adiga writes, “Easiest thing in the world is becoming invisible to white people, but the hardest thing is becoming invisible to brown people”. Adiga says the immigrants view each other very plainly. “There is a buzz, a reflexive retinal buzz, whenever a man or woman born in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, or Bangladesh sees another from his or her part of the world in Sydney—a tribunal pinprick, an instinct always reciprocal, like the instantaneous recognition of homosexuals in a repressive society. *Amnesty* can be termed “a migrant’s eye view of Australia, and he conveys how migrants and the displaced connect and adopt meaningful ideas about the country. The protagonist Danny, formerly known as Dhananjaya Rajarathnam, is an illegal immigrant who is denied refugee status after fleeing Sri Lanka on a student visa. He works as a cleaner and lives in a grocery store room in the sub-urban area of Sydney. His life is spent undertaking a series of subaltern tasks. Danny lives in the stockroom at the grocery store. When a regular customer says, “I’ve never seen you,” Danny thinks, “because I’m just the brown man working at the back of the store.” Danny has been trying to create an identity for himself for almost three years. He tries to stabilize and live a normal life by developing a relationship with his beloved vegan girlfriend Sonja, highlighting his hidden accent and highlighting the colour of his hair.

Conclusion

Aravind Adiga's novels are penetrating piece of social commentary, in tune to the inequalities that persist even with India's new prosperity. Adiga did not only explore the variance in the society but suggested that the proper treatment of such evil should be taken up seriously. The perception of his novels is to make people realize their misconception associated to the social evils. People grant significance to the social stigmas rather than solutions. Community issues and problems are not prominent but the right treatment for these kinds of issues is prominent. Awareness is the important remedy for such societal issues. It is an indisputable fact that Aravind Adiga has excelled among almost all other Indian English story writers. All his novels have a rounded perfection. Adiga shot into international limelight by winning the coveted Man Booker Prize for his debut novel *The White Tiger* in 2008. He is the fourth Indian born author to win the prize after Salman Rushdie, Arundati Roy and Kiran Desai. (V.S. Naipaul, another winner, is of Indian origin, but is not an Indian citizen. The social messages through his novels regarding corruption and inequality help in understanding the problems of the society, mainly the villages and the atrocities of the bureaucrats and various other issues of the society, from a refreshingly different view point.

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