

## The fiction of Arvind Adiga: A critical study

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### ABSTRACT

This paper entitled "The fiction of Arvind Adiga. A critical study." portrays subaltern issues in the Indian society such as caste, prostitution, culture conflict, dowry practice, economical status, zamindari system, poverty and corrupted educational system. This paper proves that how Arvind Adiga increases the voice against those corrupted people for oppressed people in India through the mouthpiece of the narrator Balram Halwai. It highlights how Balram tackles those social obstacles and become a successful entrepreneur. He is considering as the man of action and change. His deeds changed his life from darkness into light. He is depicted as the white tiger in this novel because a normal man cannot come out of the coop but a white tiger can.

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### 1. Introduction

The White Tiger is Arvind Adiga's debut novel. It has won the Booker prize award in 2008. In this novel, Arvind Adiga raises his voice for the poor people against the people who are needs to suppress them. The White Tiger highlights the definitions of Indian individuality with the protagonist Balram Halwai, who actually born in lower caste. He grows in power by using nothingness. The White Tiger narrates how subaltern issues expressed in the life of Balram. Throughout the life history of Balram, Adiga exposes the actual condition of dark and light India. In postcolonial India, the term subaltern mainly occupies vital role which incorporates the subordinate position of the people in terms of caste, class and gender. These people are powerless to rise their voice and helpless to resist their exploitation. He has a great lack in education but he has known multiple languages and religions. Balram is accused as a murderer of his master Ashok. But he has none punishment by Indian society. It shows that the embrasure of nothingness in India and everything possible at that time. So we can sort out that there must be a way of individuals within the society to seek recognition through both legally and morally. Adiga clearly captures in this novel that how the rich people, police man, politician are enjoying their lives with the help of deprived people.

The White Tiger is full of suspense and questionable morality. It has bursting wit told by the utterly incomparable narrator Balram Halwai. He is a highly complicated man, an entrepreneur, servant, philosopher, murderer rolled into one. Over the seven nights he narrates his story to Jiabao and how he came to be a successful winner of his life. Even though he has nothing but his intelligence makes him into something. This village Laxmangarh is referred as the darkness in which the inhabitants are very poor. They worship the lord Hanuman because, "He is the shining example of how to serve your master with absolute fidelity, love and devotion". Balram likes China because the Chinese are the great lovers of freedom and individual liberty. Balram comments thus: "Only three nations have never let themselves to be ruled by foreigners: China, Afghanistan, and Abyssinia. These are the only three nations I

admire" The White Tiger takes a grim vision of everything and really condemns every Indian social evil. It is self-reflective novel, which throws light on a man's journey from dark India to light India and quest for identity. The central theme of The White Tiger is the powerless peoples are crushed under the hands of powerful people ever. It always reminds that rich get richer and poor get poorer in their lives.

The White Tiger perfectly captures subaltern issues throughout Balram's letter. This novel is written in an epistolary style to Jiabao by Balram. From this character, Adiga reveals that not only the voice of him but also the voice of underclass. There are lots of cruel factors in Indian's society such as poverty, caste, deny to literate the people, political corruption and superstition are made the great participation to the sufferings of poor people. These factors may have chance to make their life as hell. In The White Tiger, the peoples of Laxmangarh want to change their life. So they decide to move the city in order to earn money, food for their routine life. Due to the population, the poverty becomes a common issue in India. The population deprived the basic needs of Indian life. An unemployment and population leads to poverty in India. It can makes a very pathetic situation throughout the nation so even the common people tries to commits in crimes for enrich their economic disparity in the country. Likewise Balram also commits in this sort of problem in this novel. Kiran Desai also points out the hard-hitting attack on the corrupt political system in India: "Not one truthful politician in the whole country. Yes, our parliament is made of thieves, each one answerable to Prime Minister, who is the biggest thief of them all" (Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard, 20). Lack of poverty an innocent guy change into murderer and selfish. He has ready to do whatever for the sake of himself. Due to the poverty he had no name until his teacher calls him as Balram Halwai. Before he calls Balram Halwai by his teacher, he simply called "Munna" which means a boy. By his economic status he pushed to work in a tea shop at his early age. These are all the consequences of poverty in The White Tiger. In an ancient India, the people are into many castes but in two classes. They are low and high classes. The rich people of the village are considering as the zamindhar in

the village. These people need to improve their wealth by treating the lower people for their every work. But they never ready to give enough wages for their actual work. Nevertheless they treat the poor people as animals for only their needy. In *The White Tiger* there are four landlords namely Buffalo, Stork, Wild Boar and Raven. They got their names from their peculiarities of hunger that they had seen in them. So Adiga calls them "Animals". The Stork, who owned a river in the outside of village and also he collect money from the people those who crossed the river and to reach the village Laxmangarh the stork who has agricultural lands and orders the people to touch his dust feet for working as labors in his lands.

Due to the poverty the people are agree to this pact and worked there like slaves. Raven and Buffalo also sucks the bloods of people like vampires in this novel. Dowry practice is a main social evil that mainly occupies in India even still today. If anyone in India has many daughters he is consider as a cursed creature among the people. In *The White Tiger* Balram also dropped out his schooling and went to a tea shop as a labor for the sake of borrow money for his cousin Reena's marriage from Stork .

Prostitution also takes a great part in India. The women are forced into sexual slavery for their routine life. Even now days also we can find red light areas in many cities in India such as Mumbai, Delhi and Bangalore. There one can borrow the price amount of those women. The person demands them in the basis of "high class or low class and virgin or non-virgin". The aristocratic peoples always need "golden haired women".

In *The White Tiger*, Balram too wish to sleep with golden haired woman. His main inspiration for this motive is his master Ashok, who enjoys his life with golden haired young girls. Due to the corrupt administration and corrupt law, the underclass people life becomes worst. The Police always want to save the rich people by getting bribe from them. They never ready to consider that according to the law, all the humans are an equal. Nevertheless they biases all the time to the rich people instead of punish them under the law. This novel is a great evidence for such things.

When Pinky, the wife of Ashok made an accident and tries to escape from this crime, the case is transferred to Balram. It exposes the corruption and laziness of police and magistrates. Caste discrimination is also one of the social evils in India. According to the people, who were born in their family, they

divided into many castes. Balram was born in Halwai family. The job of Halwai family is to make sweets. Balram's father was a rickshaw puller.

In *The White Tiger* when Balram works as a driver in Stork's family, one of co-driver asked him that "What caste you are?". Stork also asks this same question "Balram, what caste is that, top or bottom". In India the people are not judged by their quality and talents. Nevertheless they judged by the caste. This one is most occupying evil in the society of India even today. The marriage of Pinky and Ashok does not accepted by their parents and society due to the caste discrimination. It leads to the great disaster in their relationship.

*The White Tiger* is the symbol of individuality and freedom. It shows how a half-baked man becomes a successful entrepreneur by using his intellectual power. The same time *The White Tiger* means power. So Balram also identified as *The White Tiger*. He does not want to be a slave anymore Instead of he wants to be a free man. Among his cruel action he does not care about whether cheat or kill his master Ashok. He feels that everything in power for personal gain. These kinds of people never bother about their violent actions. But they only concentrate of their personal interests, needs and desire.

V. S. Naipul has highlighted the Darkness of India in his "Area of Darkness" (1964): "rigid caste distinction" "English mimicry", "Indian lavatory and kitchens-the visitors' nightmare" "clubs of Bombay and Delhi...poverty", "misfortunes of refugee family"(68), underclass denied of opportunities; lack of hygiene and sense of sanitation: "Indians defecate everywhere", "labor is a degradation", businessman: "all his duty is, by whatever means, to make money": "symbolic actions" irrational "reservation policy (which) places responsibility in the hands of the unqualified".

The close study of the novel, *The White Tiger* sorts out the society is separated into two groups such as rich and poor, exploitation and exploited, colonizer and colonized, man with big belly and man with small belly and haves and have-nots. In this novel Balram arises from the darkness to the light by killing his master. He supports voiceless people by his action and words. Balram wants to remove the trashes such as subaltern issues in Indian society. He decides to ignore the oppression from the society as depicts his stand "Let animals live like animals; Let human live like human; that's my whole philosophy in one sentence" .

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