



A Study Of Socio-Political Realities In Aravind Adiga's 'The White Tiger'

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Abstract: Socio-political issues are deeply embedded in the narrative of *The White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga, offering a critical examination of contemporary Indian society. The novel presents a grim yet realistic portrayal of class conflict, corruption, and social inequality, exposing the widening gap between the affluent elite and the marginalized poor. Through Balram Halwai's journey from a village boy to a successful entrepreneur, Adiga critiques the systemic injustices that hinder social mobility. The novel probes into the oppressive structures that shape individual lives, highlighting themes such as economic disparity, political corruption, and moral degradation. By portraying Balram as a product of these conditions, Adiga highlights the struggles of those seeking liberation from social constraints.

This article examines the socio-political issues presented in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*, focusing on themes of class division, corruption, and social inequality. The novel reflects the socio-economic realities of modern India, emphasizing the challenges faced by marginalized communities. Through Balram Halwai's journey, Adiga critiques systemic oppression, the corrupt political framework, and the exploitative nature of capitalism. The narrative highlights the moral dilemmas arising from social pressures and explores the impact of globalization on India's economic landscape. By blending satire with realism, Adiga effectively exposes the consequences of entrenched inequality and the complexities of socio-political struggles in contemporary society.

KEYWORDS: The White Tiger, socio-political issues, capitalism, marginalized, class divide, corruption, social inequality, globalization, contemporary, economic disparity, political critique, caste system etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008) is a powerful critique of socio-political realities in contemporary India. The novel follows Balram Halwai, a poor yet ambitious protagonist who experiences the oppressive structures of class, corruption, and exploitation to achieve success. Set against the backdrop of India's economic boom, Adiga contrasts rural poverty with urban wealth, illustrating the harsh divide between social classes. Through Balram's letters to the Chinese Premier, Adiga presents a satirical yet realistic account of India's socio-political landscape, exposing systemic corruption, caste-based discrimination, and the moral compromises demanded by ambition.

Critics such as Ulka Anjaria (2011) argue that *The White Tiger* "reconfigures the social realist novel by focusing on the voice of the subaltern and confronting India's emerging global identity" (155). Similarly, Tabish Khair (2010) emphasizes that Adiga's portrayal of Balram reflects the growing frustration of India's marginalized underclass, trapped in a cycle of poverty and powerlessness. Adiga's narrative technique, combining dark humour with stark realism, intensifies his critique of social inequality and moral decay.

Aravind Adiga, an Indian author and journalist, has consistently explored themes of inequality, corruption, and social injustice in his works. His writing is known for its unflinching portrayal of India's socio-economic disparities, addressing issues such as wealth inequality, exploitation of labour, and political manipulation. Adiga's background as a journalist significantly informs his narrative style, allowing him to weave real-life observations into his fiction.

In *The White Tiger*, Adiga presents a penetrating critique of India's economic transformation, illustrating how rapid globalization has deepened social inequalities. As Anjaria (2011) notes, Adiga "challenges the utopian narratives of economic liberalization, exposing how wealth accumulation thrives on social exploitation" (160). By employing Balram's voice, a self-proclaimed "entrepreneur" who defies social norms, Adiga highlights the desperation of India's lower classes, revealing their struggles for upward mobility.

Through *The White Tiger*, Aravind Adiga effectively critiques India's socio-political structure by exploring themes of social inequality, corruption, and class conflict. The novel exposes the exploitation of marginalized communities, critiques the country's deeply rooted caste system, and reveals how corruption permeates political and social frameworks. Adiga's narrative highlights the moral complexities that arise when individuals are forced to compromise their ethics in pursuit of success, ultimately presenting Balram's journey as both a personal triumph and a symbolic reflection of societal failure.

The White Tiger presents a grim perspective on India's class conflict through the account of Balram Halwai, a rural youth. Adiga asserts that his work efforts to capture the perspectives of men encountered in every region of India, the voices of the oppressed. Adiga says that *The White Tiger* was necessary to capture the unvoiced perspectives of those from the Darkness. India's economic growth is consistently rising each day. However, the circumstances of impoverished individuals remain unchanged. The principal theme of Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*, which received the Man Booker Prize in 2008. Adiga asserts that the majority of impoverished individuals originate from Bihar, Bangladesh, and Nepal. They obtain low-paying employment as drivers, domestic aides, cooks, construction labourers, gardeners, and full-time maids, consistently attending to all the demands of their employers. *The White Tiger* primarily focuses on the challenges encountered by impoverished individuals enduring extreme poverty. As Adiga elucidated in *The White Tiger* (2008), "These individuals were constructing residences for the affluent, although they resided in tents draped with blue tarpaulin sheets, partitioned into alleys by streams of sewage." (46) It was even more deplorable than Laxmangarh. The slum concluded at an open sewer, where a slow stream of dark water flowed by, adorned with brilliant bubbles, and two children were frolicking in the murky water.

Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* offers a compelling critique of India's socio-political realities, focusing on class inequality, corruption, and exploitation. The novel underscores the widening gap between the rich and the poor, portraying a society where economic disparity is deeply entrenched. Balram Halwai's journey from a poor village boy to a successful entrepreneur reflects the struggle of individuals trapped in poverty. Adiga highlights this divide through the metaphor of "The Rooster Coop," where the poor remain confined to their social status despite being aware of their oppression. This concept reveals how the lower class is conditioned to accept exploitation, with social norms reinforcing their submission. As critics such as Ulka Anjaria (2011) observe, Adiga's portrayal of Balram exposes the "illusion of opportunity" that dominates India's economic narrative, where upward mobility is promised yet seldom achieved.

Corruption is another pervasive theme in the novel, depicted as a powerful force controlling social and political structures. Balram's employers, particularly Mr. Ashok, manipulate legal frameworks and bribe officials to sustain their dominance. The novel reflects how corruption infiltrates every aspect of Indian society, from law enforcement to political leadership. Balram's eventual murder of Mr. Ashok is not merely an act of personal rebellion but a reflection of the moral decay that emerges from systemic corruption. As Tabish Khair (2010) suggests, Balram's transformation symbolizes the moral compromises that individuals make to escape poverty and achieve success in an inherently unjust system.

The caste system plays a significant role in reinforcing social hierarchies throughout the novel. Despite India's economic progress, Adiga portrays caste as a persistent barrier to social mobility. Balram's background as a member of the Halwai caste, a class traditionally associated with serving sweets, limits his access to education and career opportunities. His eventual rise as an entrepreneur challenges these social norms, yet his path is fraught with violence and moral conflict. Critics like Madhurima Chakraborty (2012) argue that Adiga critiques the caste system's lingering influence, showing how marginalized individuals must navigate oppressive traditions to secure their place in society. Urbanization emerges as another key issue in *The White Tiger*, particularly in how it intensifies economic disparity. The novel contrasts rural poverty with the wealth and excess of metropolitan cities like Delhi. Balram's move to the city exposes him to both opportunity and exploitation. Migrant labourers, like Balram, face relentless pressure to survive in urban spaces where they are treated as disposable. The city's bright lights mask the struggles of the

working class, a theme that Adiga underscores to reveal the uneven distribution of wealth and resources in India's rapidly expanding economy.

Globalization and capitalist forces further shape the socio-political landscape in *The White Tiger*. Adiga critiques the global economic shift that benefits corporate elites while deepening social inequalities. Mr. Ashok's lifestyle reflects the influence of Western consumerism, while Balram's eventual success as a businessman embodies the harsh realities of competitive capitalism. As Santosh Gupta (2013) highlights, Adiga exposes how globalization amplifies the exploitation of marginalized groups, reinforcing the dominance of powerful elites. Aravind Adiga effectively critiques India's socio-political structure by blending satire with realism. Through Balram's voice, Adiga reveals the complexities of class conflict, corruption, and social inequality, illustrating how marginalized individuals are forced to compromise their ethics in their pursuit of survival and success.

Aristotle is referred to as "man as a social animal," yet it is pertinent to consider man as a social and cultural being in the context of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Society is typically defined as a group of individuals living in a specific geographic area, marked by structured patterns of collaboration and a mutual embrace of a unique cultural framework. A society can be characterized as a group of individuals who engage with one another and establish social connections, while culture is identified as the collective system of beliefs, customs, and practices that are transmitted and maintained within a community. One could contend that society and culture are fundamentally linked, to the extent that the lack of one would lead to the non-existence of the other. Literature functions as a reflective medium that reveals the complexities of society and culture, providing a depiction of the dominant societal and cultural dynamics within a specific temporal and spatial context.

Literature serves as a reflection of societal dynamics, and in his novel *The White Tiger*, Arvind Adiga meticulously examines the social issues prevalent in India. This novel represents his inaugural work to win the Man-Booker Prize, crafted in an epistolary format. The narrative illustrates the complexities of postmodernism, situated in rural Bihar, New Delhi, and the suburban city of Gurgaon. It depicts the existence of an anti-hero named Balram, who embodies the marginalized segment of Indian society. Despite its assertions of being a thriving economy, India is not experiencing prosperity and remains in a state of obscurity. Moovendhan (2019) writes that the fiction *The White Tiger* illustrates the trajectory of Indian society, transitioning from aspirations to disillusionment. (330) It emphasizes critical socio-cultural issues of national significance, including poverty, hunger, corruption, violence, fanaticism, terrorism, and child labour, among others. It addresses the economic, political, and social exploitation and discrimination faced by weaker, marginalized groups, specifically focusing on the factors of caste, class, gender, and religion. (337)

Balram composed a sequence of letters addressed to the Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabao. He recounted the events of his life across seven evenings. He originated from a village in North India, being the offspring of a rickshaw puller. During his time in school, his parents arranged for him to gain work experience at a tea shop. Subsequently, he secured employment as a chauffeur for a landlord in the village. He then proceeded to Delhi, where he committed the act of murdering his employer, ultimately leading to his success as an entrepreneur in Bangalore. Vandana Pathak (2004) writes, "The novel delineates his journey from darkness to light, from Laxmangarh to Delhi and Bangalore, while simultaneously mapping his search for identity, transitioning from a 'country Mouse' to a 'White Tiger'" (61).

The novel highlights a significant disparity between India's emergence as a global economic power and the struggles faced by the marginalized segments of society enduring severe rural and urban poverty. Adiga examines the numerous issues plaguing our society and illustrates instances of misconduct occurring within Indian democracy. This work serves as a critique of society, highlighting the issues of poverty and suffering in India, along with its socio-political tensions. Democracy provides two significant advantages: liberty and equality. The interplay between these two crucial elements of human existence significantly impacts both development and enlightenment. However, numerous detrimental forces undermine human liberty and equality. Corruption represents a significant and detrimental issue within society.

This novel presents Laxmangarh as Adiga's conceptual village, characterized by the exploitation, torture, and torment inflicted upon its inhabitants by the village landlord. Balram commenced his primary education in his village. The teacher identified his potential and referred to him as Balram. His parents named him Muna, a term that signifies boy. The school inspector referred to him as 'White Tiger' in recognition of his intelligence and exceptional capabilities. Balram exhibited a natural ambition and sought to enhance his social standing. This prompted him to travel to Delhi to serve as the driver for Ashok, the landlord's westernized son. In Delhi, Balram observed the disparity between the affluent and the impoverished, as well as the distinctions between the two castes. Individuals with prominent midsections

and those with more modest ones, those who consume and those who are consumed. The various social, political, and economic disparities progressively cultivate in Balram a mindset characterized by revolt, resistance, and a desire for vengeance. The motives were repressed for an extended period within Balram's unconscious, driving him to challenge and enhance his subordinate status.

Adiga presents a nuanced depiction of our nation and its social strata. Adiga states, "It is important to recognize, your Excellency, that India comprises two distinct entities, one characterized by Light, and the other by Darkness. The ocean illuminates my nation. Every location on India's coastal map exhibits prosperity."

However, the river introduces a sense of darkness to India – the black river (14).

He also depicts the reality of village life in India.

"Electricity poles – nonfunctional."

The water tap is malfunctioning. Children appear underdeveloped for their age, characterized by their slender frames and short stature, complemented by disproportionately large heads from which bright eyes emerge, reminiscent of the government's troubled conscience in India. (16)

This accurately represents a typical Indian village. Some electricity poles exist without an active supply of electricity. The water taps are non-functional and there is no water supply. Children are experiencing severe hunger and lack essential resources, leading to significant malnutrition issues. Thus, Balram illustrates the state of villages in India.

Balram's father works as a rickshaw puller and is characterized by his integrity. He states, "He is a man of honour and courage" (23). However, he did not receive recognition from the society. He states, "Throughout my entire life, I have been regarded as a donkey." (23) Adiga observes, "They (the rickshaw puller) were not permitted to occupy the plastic chairs designated for customers; instead, they were required to crouch at the back, adopting that hunched-over, squatting posture typical of servants throughout India" (24). However, he desired that his son be regarded as an adult.

Balram provides an in-depth examination of the lives of rickshaw pullers. Their physical condition deteriorated significantly due to the demands of pulling and pedalling the rickshaw. His father passed away due to tuberculosis. Adiga writes, "... thin, sticklike men, leaning forward from the seat of bicycle, as they pedal along a carriage bearing a pyramid of middle-class flesh -- some fat man with his fat wife and all their shopping bags and groceries" (27).

In this novel, Balram, as a subaltern, serves as a representative for many marginalized, impoverished Indians. Adiga illustrated the treatment of low caste individuals by those of higher caste status. This novel illustrates the unfortunate circumstances faced by the villagers. The upper class leveraged their status to exert control over the lower class. Balram brought out the experiences of his marginalized, mistreated, and exploited peers. Krishna Singh (2009) observes, "Adiga effectively emphasizes the subaltern issue in the novel, illustrating that the underclass plays a significant role in the narrative of India's progress. He presents a compelling argument for a classless society as outlined in the communist manifesto" (111)

The narrative commenced in Bihar and concluded in Bangalore, representing a transition from darkness to light, highlighting the contrasts between two distinct cultures, societies, and professions. Adiga presents a disturbing narrative that explores the actions of a young man who committed the brutal murder of his employer and evaded justice. Adiga clearly illustrated the significant roles that caste and religion play in influencing an individual's life within society. Before being employed as a driver, Balram was inquired about his caste. He promptly stated his caste as 'halwai' and asserted his ability to make sweets, which secured him the job. Adiga highlights the disparity in wealth distribution and the deficiencies in human rights within society.

Balram recounts an event involving the abduction of a landlord's son from his village by the Naxalite. The landlord expressed his frustration and anger towards the servant, who was responsible for the care of his son, due to the inability to locate the kidnappers. The servant endured torture before ultimately being shot dead. The entire family was systematically murdered, and the residence was subsequently engulfed in flames. These incidents motivated him to seek liberation from oppression and poverty. The experiences of humiliation and discrimination he endured culminated in his most shocking act, the murder of his master.

Balram was born into a lower class characterized by significant poverty. He endured a range of distressing experiences throughout his childhood and into adulthood. He recognized that the disparity between the affluent and the impoverished exists not only in rural areas but also in urban centers such as Delhi. The inhumane treatment inflicted by the affluent upon the impoverished deeply affects the emotional state of the less fortunate. In a particular scenario, he poses the inquiry:

“Am I not a human being as well?” (148).

Vinita Singh Chawdhry (2014) states,

The work presents a multifaceted depiction of contemporary India. The social novels illustrate the suffering, degradation, and economic hardship experienced by this community that has existed at the lowest tier of India's social hierarchy for millennia (234).

Balam recognized the ongoing tension between the affluent and the impoverished. He recognizes that the likelihood of the poor surpassing the rich is minimal. Balam is depicted as a contemporary Indian hero. Ashok dedicated considerable time to visiting malls with his wife, Pinky Madam. Balam was tasked with transporting all the shopping bags. The episode involving the lost coin illustrates the frugal and uncharitable tendencies often associated with the wealthy. Mongoose criticized Balam for failing to recover a rupee coin he lost while exiting the car. He was significantly preoccupied with the lost one-rupee coin, despite having just bribed someone with a million rupees. Adiga articulates,

Lower yourself to your knees and search for it on the car floor.

I positioned myself on my knees.

I carefully examined the area between the mats, much like a dog, in pursuit of that elusive one rupee.

Could you clarify what you mean by it not being present?

Do not assume that you can take from us simply due to your presence in the city. I desire that rupee. ‘We have just disbursed half a million rupees in a bribe, and now we are exploiting this individual for a mere single rupee . . . The whereabouts of that rupee coin continues to elude my understanding, Mr. Premier. Ultimately, I retrieved a rupee coin from my shirt pocket, let it fall onto the car floor, picked it up again, and handed it to the Mongoose. (139)

Balam encountered a variety of experiences in Delhi. One day, an intoxicated person, while operating the vehicle, struck an individual on the road. He was convinced to admit that he had struck a man while driving recklessly at night. Consequently, he found himself in a position where he had to accept responsibility for an action he did not commit. This narrative extends beyond Balam, encompassing the experiences of numerous impoverished individuals. They devoted their lives to serve their affluent masters, receiving financial compensation for their families in exchange.

Ashok engaged in bribery with ministers to secure contracts for coal mines.

He instructed me to visit multiple banks . . . he was withdrawing cash from various automatic cash machines – a total of four distinct ones . . . (211).

Eventually, Balam leveraged Ashok's confidence and reliance on him. He caused his death using an empty whisky bottle. He ascended the hierarchy of success through the calculated act of murdering Mr. Ashok and appropriated his bag containing Rs. 700,000/-, driven by a rationale rooted in revenge, ambition, and corruption.

Balam made his way to Bangalore, accompanied by his cousin Dharam. In that moment, he adopted the name Ashok Sharma, established a taxi enterprise, and ascended to the status of a prosperous entrepreneur in India's most technologically sophisticated metropolitan area. He embodies the duality of an entrepreneur and a cunning criminal, adept at rationalizing his actions. The act of murder committed by Balam against Ashok stems from a profound frustration inherent within the underclass, reflecting the stark divide between the upper and lower echelons of society. Wankhede (2004) articulates, The voice of Balam appears to embody a transformed India . . . The protagonist rationalizes the murder of his employer as a manifestation of class conflict, rendering ‘The White Tiger’ a discerning work of social critique, attuned to the persistent inequalities that endure in the wake of India's newfound affluence (135).

Adiga incisively examines the complicated dynamics within political parties, including bribery, blackmail, and corruption. Mr. Ashok travelled to Delhi to address his taxation issues related to coal mines.

Affluent individuals frequently travel to Delhi with the intent of legitimizing their illicit financial gains. However, those who are impoverished and marginalized seek illumination for an improved existence. In this work, Adiga elucidates the circumstances faced by individuals residing in slums. The unfortunate souls had journeyed from ‘Darkness’ to Delhi in search of illumination, yet they remained enveloped in obscurity (138).

In these various instances, Adiga presents a sombre depiction of India. Balam's father succumbed to tuberculosis, unable to access the specialized medical care available in the city. Patients received insufficient attention from physicians in public healthcare facilities. Balam's father did not receive the respect and care he deserved. He coughed and expelled blood, stating,

“ . . my father was permanently cured of his tuberculosis. The attendants required us to tidy the area following Father's passing before we were permitted to proceed with the removal of the body. A goat entered and began to sniff while we were cleaning the blood from the floor” (51).

Through this novel, Adiga compels readers to acknowledge the profound suffering endured by the vast population of impoverished individuals in the country. Existence on this planet appears to be a burden for them. The affluent have been reaping the benefits of the nation's scientific and economic advancements. The plight of the impoverished has deteriorated across all facets of existence. Priyanka Pasari (2015) writes,

The White Tiger is a novel conceived in that minuscule instant of obscurity. As an inaugural work, it signifies the emergence of a narrative artist who adeptly experiences the intricate interplay between the social dynamics of the marginalized locale he has selected as his residence and the complex humanism inherent in the lives of the disenfranchised (.2).

The novelist expresses disdain for the substandard education that serves as the primary factor perpetuating the cycle of poverty. The quality of education pertains to the instruction provided with utmost dedication by knowledgeable educators who foster students' creativity, intellect, and discipline. This may only be feasible within an environment conducive to learning, where the fundamental requirements of a classroom are adequately met. A significant number of students in rural areas attend schools that are deficient in fundamental infrastructure and are staffed by teachers who exhibit a lack of commitment.

Adiga characterizes India as “Two countries in one, an India of Light, and an India of Darkness” (14). The India of Light embodies affluence, innovation, influence, and wisdom, as illustrated by Balram's journey to Delhi and subsequently to Bangalore. The India depicted in Dark is marked by corruption, divisions of class and caste, as well as widespread misery and illiteracy. Adiga employed 'darkness' as a symbol to represent the pervasive corruption in India. As they attempted to corrupt the government officials, Balram recounted his odyssey, stating that he was steering his distinctive dark egg (referring to his car) directly into the city's core.

To my left, I observed the elegant domes of the President's House . . . During instances of severe air pollution, the edifice becomes entirely obscured from view along the thoroughfare . . . The evening was descending as the two brothers emerged from the building, having engaged in a rather dubious exchange. Mr. Ashok entered with a demeanour that was both sombre and brooding. (134-136).

Arvind Adiga, as a writer of the post-colonial era, thus reveals to his readers the harsh truths of a world shaped by the forces of globalization. His novel reveals the authentic essence of Indian social ethos. Kumar and Surjit Singh (2014) state that the emergence of materialism, technological progress, the trend towards materialization, shifts in social mobility, an atmosphere of fierce competition, disloyalty, transformations in the norms of social institutions, feelings of alienation, the degree of urbanization, globalization, consumerism, and similar factors collectively define the essence of a new generation, instigating profound alterations in the psyche of individuals in this contemporary era. (220)

It is a narrative of an individual who ascends the hierarchy of achievement. It reveals a multitude of detrimental systems such as electoral riots, unemployment, poverty, corruption, and the misuse of welfare schemes. Adiga boldly ventures into the grim truths of India. The narrative unfolds against the backdrop of an economic surge in India, which has led to a significant disparity between the affluent and the impoverished. Archana Bhattacharjee (2016) in her *Preface to Contemplation of Societal Values In the selected Novels of Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai and Aravind Adiga* writes,

Globalization has accelerated the economic growth of the country but it has also widened the rich-poor gap. It presents a satirical depiction of the class struggle in India. It presents a remarkable and unwavering perspective on contemporary India (53).

The impressive representations of contemporary India depict it as an ascending force in the realms of economy, science, and politics on the global stage. However, in this context, the architects of the regulations overlooked the plight of the marginalized. Individuals from marginalized communities face discrimination, neglect, and frequently experience suppression due to factors such as race, gender, culture, religion, ethnicity, occupation, education, and economic status. Raymond Williams (1977) observes,

In a class-society there are primarily inequalities between classes. Gramsci presented the essential acknowledgment of dominance and subordination within what must still be understood as a comprehensive process” (108).

Raymond Williams' idea highlights the presence of class inequalities in society, where one group holds power while others remain under control. He builds on Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, which explains that dominance is not maintained only through force but also through influencing people's thoughts and beliefs. The ruling class shapes ideas, values, and social norms in a way that makes their control seem normal and acceptable. As a result, the lower classes often accept their position because they believe there is no other way. This acceptance happens because they are conditioned to think that the system is natural and unchangeable. This idea connects closely to Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*. In the novel, Adiga shows India's strong class divisions through the life of Balram Halwai. The metaphor of The Rooster Coop illustrates Gramsci's idea, the poor remain trapped not only because of poverty but also because they have been taught to believe they cannot escape it. Balram's family accepts their difficult life and continues to serve the rich, showing how deeply this mindset is rooted.

Balram's decision to kill his employer, Mr. Ashok, and break free from his servant's life represents his attempt to challenge this control. His actions reflect Gramsci's view that resisting dominance requires awareness and the courage to reject the belief that inequality is unavoidable. By presenting Balram's journey as both empowering and morally troubling, Adiga criticizes the unfair social system that traps the poor and benefits the wealthy. To achieve emancipation across social, cultural, economic, and educational dimensions, it is imperative for India to ensure the provision of high-quality education and to enhance the living conditions of the majority of its impoverished population.

Aravind Adiga has emerged as a prominent literary figure with his profound work, *The White Tiger*. This analysis of the contemporary social issues presented in the novel seeks to explore, from a sociological standpoint, the profound concerns it raises regarding society. Sanjay Kumar and Surit Singh (2014) articulate, "The novelist (Adiga) seeks to communicate that it is the toxic influences of casteism, communalism, regionalism, and discrimination based on social and economic factors that impede progress" (231).

Adiga thus critiques regionalism and communalism as forces that fragment society, creating divisions that hinder collective progress. The rivalry between urban elites and rural labourers reflects this division, as does the exploitation of migrant workers who struggle to survive in overcrowded urban centers. Through Balram's narrative, Adiga reveals that these social and economic divides are not accidental but deliberately maintained to serve the interests of the privileged class. By weaving these themes into *The White Tiger*, Adiga emphasizes that meaningful progress requires dismantling oppressive social structures. His portrayal of Balram's transformation highlights the need for systemic change, particularly in education, employment, and social attitudes, to ensure equal opportunities for all.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study lies in its critical examination of the socio-political issues portrayed in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*. By focusing on themes such as class division, corruption, social inequality, and the impact of globalization, this study offers valuable insights into contemporary Indian society. It highlights how systemic oppression, political manipulation, and economic disparity affect marginalized communities and their struggle for social mobility.

1. **Exposes Social Injustice:** It critically analyzes how *The White Tiger* reveals the harsh realities of exploitation, inequality, and corruption prevalent in India.
2. **Contributes to Literary Criticism:** By exploring the socio-political themes in the novel, it enhances the understanding of how literature reflects societal issues.
3. **Raises Awareness:** It provides a voice to the marginalized and challenges the idealistic narratives of economic progress in the post-liberalization era.
4. **Encourages Societal Reflection:** The study calls for introspection on societal values and the need for systemic change to achieve social equity

CONCLUSION:

The White Tiger encapsulates Aravind Adiga's powerful critique of social inequality, corruption, and the pursuit of success in a deeply divided India. Balram Halwai's transformation from a humble, oppressed servant to a successful entrepreneur exemplifies both the possibility and the moral cost of breaking free from the "Rooster Coop." His decision to murder Mr. Ashok is not merely an act of personal rebellion but a desperate attempt to claim agency in a world that denies him dignity and opportunity.

Yet, while Balram achieves material success and a new identity as "Ashok Sharma," his journey leaves readers grappling with unsettling questions about the nature of freedom and morality. His triumph

is built on betrayal and violence, mirroring the corrupt system he once despised. In his quest to escape oppression, Balram ultimately perpetuates the same cycle of exploitation, suggesting that true liberation may be an illusion within such a morally compromised society.

Through Balram's journey, Adiga compels readers to confront the harsh realities of social injustice and the ethical compromises individuals make to survive and succeed. The novel's conclusion is not merely a personal victory but a profound commentary on the persistence of inequality and the complexity of human ambition.

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