



Use Of City Dialect In Arvind Adiga's Last Man In Tower

Pratiksha Dansana

Lecturer in English

Panchayat Samiti College, Gaisilat, Bargarh, Odisha

This paper highlights the use of numerous Indian vernacular words and phrases including city dialects in Arvind Adiga's "Last Man in Tower", which is published in 2011. The setting of the novel is Mumbai where the future of the city is decided by big businessmen and progress is measured in terms of skyscrapers. When Mumbai is emerging as a commercial and financial hub, the use of urban vernacular is developed side by side. After all, the use of dialect identifies where a person hail from. It is observed that the form of language used in this novel shows the rude behaviour and control over others by real estate broker of Mumbai and also it throws light on social economic and political impact on the then society. The city dialects like Mafia, Pucca, Masterji, Kachdawali, Dhوتي, Banian, Biryani and a lot; the use of such words are very prominent in this novel. The phrase "the real estate mafia" signifies that the novel sheds the light on corruption in modern society like Mumbai. It is a dialectical form of language which displays the social superiority and status in the hierarchical set up in modern Mumbai. Here we can get a clear vision that how the city life and its dialects influence individual lives and behaviour connecting to the central motif and theme of its fiction.

Key words—city dialect, vernacular, dialectical, language

In Arvind Adiga's "Last Man in Tower", the peculiarities of city dialects are used in various ways for inter-communications between characters, mainly in the voice of Masterji, Ram khare, Mr. Pinto, Mrs. Puri, Dharmen Shah, Mary, Shanmugham and others. According to O Grady et al, "Dialect is a regional or social variety of a language characterised by its own phonological, syntactical and lexical properties." It is commonly said that when a certain variety of a language is used according to the users, it is called dialect. People develop new manners of words, pronunciation and use different accents in their speech to enhance their personalities. Today, we can find that new generations use phrases and vocabulary that were not in existence or use in the past. Furthermore, dialect represents a key feature of a speaker's voice, signature, as it can provide information about the speaker's origin, gender, age and health status. It is observed that the way of using urban vernacular in the novel "Last Man in Tower" shows the rude behaviour and control over others of real-estate brokers in Mumbai and also it throws light on social economic and political impact on the then society. The phrase "the real estate mafia" signifies that the novel sheds the light on corruption in modern society like Mumbai. It is a dialectical form of language which displays the social superiority and status in hierarchical set up in modern Mumbai. Division of our modern society into different

social groups leads the inescapable development of language differences. Here we can get a clear message that how the city life and its dialects influence individual life and behaviour connecting to the central motif and theme of this fiction.

City dialects of threatening, frightening and violence :-

Threatening, violence, frightening, etc are used in different context throughout the fiction. When Masterji asks the guard Ram Khare, “Are you threatening me?” he frightens with a metaphorical expression, “No sir. I am informing you that there is a snake in my mind. It is long and black”, (206-207) relates to the story of the fiction is that Ram Khare is the guard of Tower A, Vishram society where Masterji is also a resident. Ram Khare is temptingly standby the mafia, Dharmen Shah who badly needs to vacate Tower A in the name of property development to earn more profit. Ram Khare is a Hindu watchman and he is very much attached with Bhagavad Gita and reads mantras by using Rudrakha in opening chapters of this novel, but towards the end he is behaving as a criminal by discussing evil about Masterji with the guard of Tower B. The guard asks, “Does he give good Baksheesh? Khare snorted. In sixteen years, eight months and twenty nine days of knowing him, not a single tip.” (313) In reply the guard says, “Let him be thrown from his window, kicked senseless, shot death.” (314) Here all occupants of Tower A except Masterji have decided to leave the building. Masterji struggles and faces the snakes boldly till his last breath to stack to his long years of attachment to his roof- Tower A, Vishram society. When Masterji doesn't accept the proposal of 200 percent for vacating the Tower A, Shah, the real estate mafia exercises the helplessness of a servant called Mary, the Khachdawali who is living in a nearby slum, does cleaning work in Tower A and for her work she gets money from Vishram society. She has been forced by Mrs Puri and Mr Pinto to convey the message of Shah to Masterji. Finally Mary tries to influence Masterji by saying, “They're trying to throw me out of my home too. I live by nullah?” Masterji's miserable condition is presented here by the novelist. Again instead of getting support from his own son, Gourav, Masterji gets threaten, “Do you know what it is you're dealing with, Father? Construction. They're mafia.....Keep saying no to Mr Shah and we'll find you one morning in a gutter”(298-299). The money power and muscle power affect the father-son relationship too. He is that Yogesh Murthy who is well known as Masterji; commands respect from the residents on account of his noble profession and sound mannerism. But today because of the influence of real estate mafia, he becomes a central figure of mockery. Even his son can't understand the ideology of his father.

This novel also reveals how big builders of Mumbai city torture the poor and needy people through a pitiful appeal of a group of day-labourers who have worn banians and white dhotis and their bodies are filmed over with construction dust and are doing construction work under scorching sun that “We can't work in these conditions Sahib, please forgive us. We'll finish the day's work honestly and leave in the evening”(61). Shah replies to them in a very unkind manner. “I know it is hot. The coconut palms are turning brown. The cows don't want to stand even if you put food in front of them. I know it is hot.”(61-62). Adiga discloses the true face of contemporary India's real estate and property development business through the characters like Dharmen Shah who exploits the language of the psychological pressure as follows dialogue-“Don't I know what you'll do? Work your farms? No. You'll lie on a charpoy in the shade, smoke, play with a child. When the sun sets, you'll drink. You'll run out of money, comeback on June 15 when it's raining and beg me for work”(62-63). Shah is the owner of Confidence Group- a famous real estate development company in Mumbai. He forces the labourers to do hard physical work and he knows how to control the workers if they want to leave the job. He threatens them by saying he will send buses around Maharashtra to pick up the villagers to work for him and by taking the opportunity of their misery and to increase their greed for money he says, he is ready to give 300 rupees daily instead of 150 rupees. “I am tossing gold in the air. Who will grab it?” Simultaneously, he motivates them mentally to carry on the hard work by narrating his life story that he worked hard to get this position from poverty. Even his chappals (62) wore away and tied leaves around his feet. With such attractive talk and the money, he sustains the redevelopment field as a successful person.

City dialects of leadership and union :-

Leadership is something that everyone can agree is important, but at the same time struggle to define or identify a problem in a systematic way is good leadership like Masterji, a man of sixties, a retired teacher who is considered not only a typical representative of earlier generation, but also he becomes a dignified leader of Vishram society especially in the matter of children and spouses, been disrupted by fate. But the lust for money and to get material benefits the life-long friends can turn into rival. The offer of 200 percent for each tenant for vacating Tower A of Dharmen Shah makes the people greedy and blind. By getting attracted with this deal by the broker Mr Pinto, the retired old accountant attempts to manipulate Masterji by saying, “Come to our room and have a small peg, Masterji” (70). Actually the name of Biryani Emperor of Bombay is placed “the ten best kept secrets of Mumbai in one newspaper” (68) and this is that Biryani centre where big builders discuss the property matters. “Sunday night was always biryani night and they were trying out a new place each week for deal” (68). Initially the people of Vishram society consider the developers and builders as mafia. Dharmen Shah, a great figure among the real estate mafia of Bombay tries to convince every resident of Tower A to agree upon his proposal. He invites Mrs Rego, a social activist to a restaurant and she asks to Shah, “ Why have you brought me here, Mr Builder? What is the business? This is the business. We Gujratis don’t like to eat alone. Would you like some fresh lime soda, Mrs Rego?”(171). This is the way how he influences the people by giving bribe and he knows “a social worker needs a builder.”(171)

City dialects of Manner:-

Language reflects the social manner and the dialects of manner identify the kind of personality- educated, uneducated, poor, rich or modern. Behavioural patterns are marked by the use of language or use of the dialects of manner. In this fiction workers call Dharmen Shah- Sahib in the quote, “We’ll stay for you, Sahib.” Giri the servant of Dharmen Shah, very affectionately address Satish, the son of Shah as “Baba”. “Let’s wash up, Baba. We’ll go to your room and drink some warm milk.” On the other hand, when Yogesh Murthy, a distinguished retired teacher of St Catherine’s High School came to live in Vishram society, everyone with great respect calls him “Masterji”.

City food dialects :-

City dialects of food and food centres constitute some portion of schematization as Masterji calls the “Biryani Emperor of Bombay” a fraud escapade for mafias. The city food dialects Biryani, Bhelpuri, Panipuri, Masala egg, Chikki, Naan and many more are utilised vividly to make sense and scene in this fiction. The variety of food items of Vakola brings water to the mouth of the visitors and it feeds the huge crowd. We can get it from this quote- “Vakola at night : the red neon cross of St Antony’s church glows over the main road. Vendors of paani-puri, bhelpuri and gulab jamuns suspended in sugar syrup feed the tidal waves of tired humans coming in from the train station” (70). In addition to that at the time of Masterji’ retirement party he catered samosa and masala chai to the three generations of students. Some other instances of city food dialects are-when Gourav came to market for buying snack, “ He pointed at peanut chikkis and golden ladoos, at fried banana chips and spicy farsan packets”(190). Another example is-“Ram Khare sat on a bench next to the work, and ate with a plastic fork splashing a vivid green sauce and ketchup on the chow-mein”(392).

Conclusion :-

In the ending part of the fiction the doctor’s suggestion results in retribution of justice. He says to Shah, “Your immune system is weakening. Leave Bombay. The one thing money can’t buy here is clean air.” Shah, the antagonist of the novel, suffers from ‘Chronic bronchitis’. Doctor Nayak suggests Shah to leave the redevelopment construction at least for a part of each year. The buildings that Shah breaks up are made up of cheap materials and paint, which are banned now-a-days, again it has the adverse effect on environment. Sin meets with punishment. The alluring desire to develop the exploited Tower A smashed into ashes. ‘Last Man in Tower’ of Arvind Adiga bears a real picture of

modern living in Mumbai. His usage of language varieties discloses the mindset of all categories of people in this novel. Thus with the use of city dialect Adiga is able to reach his audience's heart.

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