



Role of Power Dynamics in the novels of Ravi Subramanian with reference to *God is a Gamer*

M.Maria Helen Janoba^{1*}, Dr. M. Sri Vidhya @ Thangalakshmi²

¹Ph.D Research Scholar (Part Time) Department of English and Center for Research, St.John's College, Palayamkottai, Affiliated to Manomanian Sundaranar University, Abhishekapatti, Tirunelveli - 627012, Tamilnadu, India. helenjanoo794@gmail.com, Mob: 7598263845, ORCID ID - <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4092-3980>(Reg.No. 22221274012015).

²Assistant Professor, Department of English and Center for Research, St. John's College, Palayamkottai, Affiliated to Manomanian Sundaranar University, Abhishekapatti, Tirunelveli – 627012, Tamilnadu, India. sriselsui@gmail.com, Mob:7200023512, ORCID ID - <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6251-7732>

Citation: M.Maria Helen Janoba *et al.*, (2024). Role of Power Dynamics in the novels of Ravi Subramanian with reference to *God is a Gamer*, *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(9) 1178-1180
Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i9.10679

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Ravi Subramanian's novels often explore the intricate power dynamics within the banking and financial sectors. His stories typically involve complex characters navigating corporate politics, moral dilemmas, and power struggles that mirror real-life banking scenarios. His novels also examine how dominant ideologies shape our understanding of the world. It reveals the ideologies of capitalism, financial sectors, corruption and power struggles. The connections of these ideologies influence characters' actions and decisions. His novels explore the darker side of banking and financial sectors. By exploring these themes his novels could provide valuable insights into the social and economic system which the world and the life of the people are embedded.

Keywords: power dynamics, corporate politics, financial sectors, capitalism.

Power dynamics refer to the relationships and interactions between individuals or groups that involve the exercise of power, influence or control. The key aspects of power dynamics are: (i) Power imbalance: Power dynamics often involve an imbalance of power between individuals or groups, leading to unequal relationships and potential conflicts. (ii) Influence and Control: Power can be exercised through various means, including coercion, persuasion, or manipulation, to influence others' actions or decisions. (iii) Social and Cultural Context: Power dynamics are shaped by social and cultural norms, values, and institutions, which can perpetuate or challenge existing power structures. (iv) Agency and Resistance: Individuals or groups can resist or challenge dominant power structures, exercising agency and potentially transforming power dynamics.

Power dynamics can manifest in various contexts, including (i) Workplace: Power dynamics can influence relationships between colleagues, managers, and subordinates, affecting decision-making, communication, and collaboration. (ii) Social Relationships: Power dynamics can shape interactions between friends, family members, or romantic partners, influencing emotional intimacy, trust and conflict resolution. (iii) Politics and Governance: Power dynamics play a crucial role in shaping policy-making, governance, and social justice, often involving complex relationships between individuals, groups and institutions.

God is a Gamer by Ravi Subramanian is a thrilling novel that combines elements of gaming, banking, politics and terrorism. The story revolves around Aditya, a struggling gaming company owner and a banker who plunges to rise in his life with self confidence. The plot thickens with the involvement of the Finance Minister and LTTE unleashing terror in America prompting the FBI to chase leads in Mumbai.

The novels of Ravi Subramanian often explore the intricate power dynamics within the banking and financial sectors. In *God is a Gamer* power dynamic play a central role in shaping the narrative, influencing character behavior and driving the plot forward. The following insights support this argument as follows;

(i) Corporate Hierarchy and Authority:

The novel is set against the backdrop of multinational banking institutions, where corporate hierarchy plays a vital role. The characters navigate a world governed by organizational politics, senior management's control over career advancement, power-driven decision-making. The novel explores the cutthroat world of global banking.

Aditya and Sundeeep the two main protagonists experience rapid career progression but each takes a different path - Aditya with integrity and Sundeeep with manipulation. Their journeys reflect how individuals handle power differently.

Even though it was not obliged to, NYIB refunded its customers every penny they lost in the scam, much to Swami's displeasure. Peter Baron had made this decision. 'Your profits are just a rounding number for me. I don't want service issues arising out of this scam to sully the atmosphere at the annual general meeting.' There was no way the NYIB brand could be allowed to suffer in India (GG 41).

(ii) Gender and Power:

Women in the novel such as Swati, often find themselves subjected to patriarchal structures and gendered expectations in the workplace. Their position in the power structure is weaker, highlighting how gender intersects with professional hierarchies.

(iii) Ethical use of Power vs. Abuse:

Aditya uses his authority responsibly, encouraging mentorship and team growth. Whereas Sundeeep on the other hand engages in unethical practices – embezzlement, manipulation to climb the ladder. This contrast shows how power can corrupt when not guided by principles.

(iv) Power Struggles and Rivalries:

There is a continuous undercurrent of rivalry where characters compete for promotions, engage in backstabbing, form alliances to gain influence. These power struggles are not just affecting professional but personal relationships and moral choices.

Gillian Tan's assassination reverberated in the corridors of Capitol Hill. The sophisticated attack shook the Obama administration. After all, Gillian had been handpicked by Barack Obama to drive American foreign policy in South Asia. Special Agent Adrian Scott was nervous as he paced up and down the hallway outside the meeting room on the third floor of the Edgar Hoover Building on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington DC (GG 21).

(v) Influence of American Banking Culture:

The novel critiques the imported American corporate culture in Indian banks, showing how the quest for profits and performance can lead to unethical shortcuts, power concentrated in the hands of the few, and loss of individual values.

A few of our customers have been victims of a phishing attack. They received an email from an unknown sender. Owing to its uncanny resemblance to mails normally sent by Vodafone, they fell for it. They were asked to log in to their NYIB accounts by clicking on the link provided in the mail. A Trojan virus in the email tracked their key strokes. Their account numbers and passwords were recorded and used to transfer the money into another account with a nationalized bank from which it has since been moved (GG 13).

(vi) Control over information:

Those who control information whether financial data, internal decisions or personal secrets often wield disproportionate power. This is especially relevant in the context of the novels of Ravi Subramanian, because the backdrops of his novels are based on financial crimes and insider power politics.

(vii) Ambition and Greed: Characters' pursuit of power and wealth drives the plot, often leading to moral dilemmas and conflicts.

The phishing scandal was giving Swami a migraine. By morning, over 3 crore rupees had been siphoned off from 150 customer accounts. When Charan rang him at 5 a.m., Swami made a judgement call and shut down the online fund transfer option on NYIB's (New York International Bank) Internet banking facility. He did not see any other way of stopping the carnage (GG 28).

(viii) Love and Relationships:

Power dynamics also influence personal relationships, as seen in Varun's romance with Tanya, which blossoms amidst the fast-paced banking world.

(ix) The Dark Web and Anonymity as Power:

Power in the digital world is the major theme of this novel. The use of Bitcoin, the Dark Web and online anonymity introduces a new kind of power – one that exists outside traditional systems. Whoever controls the code, the transaction or the flow of information holds power, even if they remain faceless. This new digital power challenges traditional authorities like police, existing governmental power structures which highlights a shift in where control lies in the modern age. The novel features like the FBI, CBI whose interactions often involve turf wars and conflicts over jurisdiction showing how power even within law enforcement is contested.

In fact, this blockade of WikiLeaks by Mastercard, Visa and PayPal served as the largest shot in the arm for Bitcoins. They were here to stay.

Founded in 2008 by one Satoshi Nakamoto, whose identity was a mystery, bitcoins had a rocky start. Satoshi, a libertarian, proclaimed a man's right to remain anonymous and decide what is good for him. He introduced bitcoins to give the world its first decentralized digital currency, which could be used over the Internet. The biggest benefit of Bitcoins was that they could be passed on from one person to the other via just the click of a mouse, without the intervention of any bank or financial institution. It was a currency that could not be controlled by any government and whose value was completely market-driven. The price of each bitcoin, like shares in a stock market, was determined only and totally by demand and supply.

Bitcoins were stored in digital wallets on users' computers. Each bitcoin wallet was unique. No names or addresses linked to it. Bitcoins provided the user with the much-needed anonymity which bank accounts and other forms of storing wealth didn't. every wallet was identified by two digital keys – a public key and a private key – both being combinations of twenty seven to thirty four alphanumeric characters, such as H334KKKKK33455555T55TRG3332131Rvsnijklk. The private key was known only to the owner of the wallet, whereas the public key could be shared with others.

If X wanted to transfer bitcoins to Y, he could easily do so by debiting his bitcoin wallet using his private key and crediting Y's wallet using Y's public key. As long as the private keys were kept safe and away from hackers on the Internet, no one could transfer or steal the bitcoins and the owners' wealth would remain safe. Until bitcoins appeared on the scene, a currency for an anonymous, borderless world, a virtual currency was a pipe dream. Satoshi Nakamoto succeeded in making this dream come true.

Well, almost (GG 4).

In *God is a Gamer*, Ravi Subramanian uses the setting of the high-stakes corporate banking world to explore the nuances of power – who holds it, how it's used or misused and its impact on the individuals and institutions. The novel suggests the true leadership lies not just in holding power but in wielding it with integrity and responsibility. Power is not limited to titles or positions because it is fluid, shifting between those who control information, technology and secrets. Ravi Subramanian portrays a world where traditional systems of power are being challenged by digital forces. It also identifies the where the misuse of power lies and deep dives into whether political, corporate or virtual which leads to deadly consequences. The lack of coordination and the desire for credit or control affect the progress of investigations revealing systematic flaws rooted in power struggles.

Reference:

1. Subramanian, Ravi. *God is a Gamer*. Penguin Books; India, 2014.