



The Portrayal Of Social Tribulations Of Indian Society In Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*

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Citation: Girish Thappeta, Dr. K. Suresh, (2024), The Portrayal Of Social Tribulations Of Indian Society In Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*, *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(3), 2256-2258

Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i3.3911

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Aravind Adiga's debut novel, *The White Tiger*, which won the Man Booker Prize, is a compelling work that confronts poverty and inequality head-on, devoid of sentimentality. Its groundbreaking nature lies in its unflinching portrayal of the harsh realities in India. The novel is narrated entirely from the perspective of a servant, offering a unique lens through which to explore the struggles of the impoverished as they navigate the challenges of survival. Through the metaphorical use of "the darkness," the narrator vividly captures the bleakness of the current Indian landscape, where individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds strive to make ends meet.

Key words: sentimentality, Social tribulations, Inequality, Harsh realities.

Introduction

In the novel, the narrator portrays the lives of impoverished individuals in India with a sense of realism and empathy. Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* stands out as a masterful work of fiction that delves beyond the structured narratives typically associated with native literature, aiming to illuminate the multifaceted and often brutal consequences of entrenched power dynamics in contemporary India. This paper endeavors to analyze Adiga's perspective on the current plight of India's impoverished population.

Discussion

The White Tiger emerges as a narrative that chronicles one man's pursuit of liberation. Balram, the central character, finds himself ensnared by the chains of poverty and injustice. Despite being a victim of his circumstances, Balram defies societal constraints associated with his low caste background. He navigates through the challenges imposed by a society that has historically marginalized his family, ultimately achieving his goals through drastic means: murdering his master, absconding with his wealth, and establishing himself as a successful entrepreneur.

Through Balram's journey, Adiga unveils a poignant and unflinching portrayal of modern India, one characterized by stark inequality and systemic injustice. The novel serves as a stark reminder of the harsh realities faced by millions living on the fringes of society. Adiga's depiction resonates with the painful truths underlying contemporary Indian society, shedding light on the complexities of poverty, power, and the human quest for autonomy.

The English novel in India is commonly divided into two periods: pre-independence and post-independence. Pre-independence novelists often focused on themes influenced by Gandhism and nationalism, addressing social evils, customs, poverty, and illiteracy. Some also explored the dynamics of east-west encounters and patriotism. Their primary aim was to contribute to the freedom struggle.

Post-independence literature, spanning from 1950 to 1980, shifted its focus from external to internal issues. Novels of this period frequently addressed socio-political concerns such as individual struggles, industrialization, urbanization, globalization, and modernization.

Renowned authors like Naipaul, Jhabvala, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Kamala Markandaya, and Aravind Adiga portrayed urban life in India, depicting its disorder, conflicts, and social disparities.

Aravind Adiga's novel, *The White Tiger*, addresses the paradox of India's economic growth coexisting with persistent poverty among its marginalized communities. The narrative focuses on the lives of impoverished individuals, particularly from Bihar, Nepal, and Bangladesh, who work in menial jobs like driving, cooking, and cleaning. Adiga vividly portrays their struggles and the stark inequalities they face.

The protagonist, Balram Halwai, hails from Bihar and rises from his humble origins to become an entrepreneur. His journey reflects the harsh realities of social stratification and exploitation in India's modern economy. Balram's transformation from a victim of circumstance to a self-made success underscores the resilience and tenacity of the human spirit.

Adiga critiques the failures of India's political system, particularly during election periods, highlighting the disenfranchisement and exploitation of the poor. He illustrates how promises of change remain unfulfilled, leaving the impoverished masses trapped in a cycle of poverty and powerlessness.

Through vivid imagery and compelling storytelling, Adiga exposes the dark underbelly of India's socio-economic landscape. He challenges the notion of progress coexisting with systemic injustice, urging readers to confront uncomfortable truths about their society. Adiga's depiction of "the darkness" symbolizes the struggles and aspirations of India's marginalized communities, highlighting the glaring disparities that persist despite the country's economic growth.

The White Tiger presents a stark portrayal of the deep-seated disparities inherent in contemporary Indian society, largely influenced by Western cultural norms. It challenges the notion of India's economic progress and bravely confronts social injustice without succumbing to sentimentality. The novel has sparked a robust dialogue about India's darker realities, countering assertions of economic prosperity.

Adiga's narrative does not romanticize or sensationalize the plight of the underprivileged but rather provides an unflinching account of their struggles. The book serves as a modern-day *Slumdog Millionaire*, generating genuine interest in understanding the lives of those marginalized by society.

The author maintains a detached perspective, portraying the love and misery of his characters without bias. Adiga's approach aligns with Shashi Deshpande's assertion that being ignored is more detrimental than hostility.

The White Tiger highlights democratic deficiencies and administrative shortcomings, perpetuating social inequality and hindering true independence and social equity. India's complex caste system has evolved into a binary division between the privileged and the impoverished, epitomized by the metaphor of "Men with Big Bellies" and "Men with Small Bellies."

The novel underscores the struggles of the underprivileged, who contend with poverty, lack of education, discriminatory practices, and systemic corruption. Balram Halwai's journey symbolizes the aspirations and frustrations of India's marginalized communities, desperate for a better life amidst adversity.

Adiga's candid portrayal of the realities faced by the underprivileged, including caste segregation, English mimicry, and bureaucratic ineptitude, reveals the pervasive darkness overshadowing India's progress. The dearth of resources exacerbates the challenges faced by rural and urban communities alike, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and despair.

The protagonist's ascent to entrepreneurship reflects the harsh realities of survival in modern India, where success often hinges on exploitation, corruption, and opportunism. The novel challenges prevailing notions of morality and justice, illustrating the stark divide between the haves and have-nots.

Adiga's narrative transcends mere storytelling, offering a searing critique of India's socio-economic landscape. Through Balram's lens, he exposes the harsh realities of a society rife with inequality, corruption, and injustice.

Conclusion

The White Tiger stands as a powerful indictment of India's socio-economic inequalities and administrative failures. Adiga's unflinching portrayal of the underprivileged resonates deeply, urging readers to confront uncomfortable truths about their society. As India grapples with the challenges of modernization and globalization, *The White Tiger* serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring struggle for social justice and equity.

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