

# Impacts of Globalization on Indian Culture: A Study of Aravind Adiga's The White Tiger

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*Abstract -- Globalization is a peculiar scenario after post modernity. It shattered whole World and shrunk it to a village. The advantages of globalization are extreme that communication transportation and other avenues of life are made easier. It also resulted in radical changes over many of the walks of life like economy, social status and political scenario. The impact of globalization is not unique and fair. Hence this proposed paper is an attempt to prove the impact of globalization in Indian Culture. This paper delves deep into the different layers of globalized Indian life with special reference to Aravind Adiga's The White Tiger. Aravind Adiga is a successful writer who details different walks of Indian life. Aravind Adiga is one among the famous writers who writes about political, social, religious and cultural ideas. This paper depicts a kaleidoscopic view of India in its various dimensions with reference to Aravind Adiga's The White Tiger.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Aravind Adiga was born in Madras in 1974 and educated in Oxford University. Aravind Adiga's debut novel The White Tiger won the 2008 Booker Prize in the same year. Aravind Adiga's second book Between the Assassination that depicts twelve interlinked short stories was published in 2008. Aravind Adiga's contribution to literature not only includes novels but also short stories such as "The Sultans Battery," "Smack," "Last Christmas in Bandra" and "The Elephant." Aravind Adiga is one among the famous writers who dared to write about the major issues in Indian Society such as political, social, religious and cultural ideas.

Globalization has a pivotal role to play worldwide. It has left back the footprints upon every sphere of life. Our deep rooted tradition and culture have shattered with emergence of globalization. India has a rich cultural background and pride of its culture is famous throughout the world. Indian Culture is rich with respect to its heritage and resource and more importantly the welcoming approach of its citizen. Indian Culture has attracted many foreigners to stay back in India.

The modern devices used for entertainment are Internet, social media, movies, or television shows. Contrary to popular belief, literature also holds an important place in the flow of entertainment media that is coursing through the veins of public consumption in our globalized world. The technological advances that are connecting people worldwide through shared information are also serving as a medium to disseminate books across national and cultural boundaries. As the new ways emerge of delivering world literature to readers worldwide, many scholars are examining the implications of translations on literature, the impact that literature has on culture, and the ways that cultures can transform books. World literature can be an amazing tool for analyzing globalization because it provides a wonderful example of the ways that information is shared across languages and culture. India is rich in culture and it is well known to the whole world. Globalization has changed our current social condition, and it created a greater impact on Indian culture. The emergence of globalization in India has lost its age old traditions and customs.

Impacts of globalization can be seen in Indian Literature too. In the twenty first century it has come to mean everything including popular culture, means of communication, industry, media and English Language.

The White Tiger is an epistolary novel. The protagonist in the novel as portrayed by Aravind Adiga is a poor boy called Balram Halwai. He writes a letter to the President of China Mr. Wen Jaibo. He also explains how Balram became a successful entrepreneur. Balram is the son of poor rickshaw puller and he belonged to Halwai caste. He was good in studies but he was forced to work in the tea-shop in order to pay the family debt. While he was working in the tea-shop he listened to the conversation of many

customers and gained knowledge about the society. Somehow he wanted to become a successful entrepreneur. So he learned driving and became a chauffeur to the son of rich landlord Mr. Ashok in Delhi. The incidents and the people around him turned him into a corrupted man and he involved in illegal activities. One fine day he plans to kill his master and his success in activating the plan made him to become the entrepreneur in Bangalore. The novel clearly portrays how Indian Culture is affected by globalization by changing the marriage life of an individual and marriage values of two bonding souls, inequality between the rich and poor, people addicted towards modern technologies and changing a man to a murderer.

The White Tiger is the story of Balram Halwai's a rickshaw driver's son who skillfully climbs the social ladder to become a successful businessman. The novel clearly portrays the life of Indian Culture and how globalization affects the Indian Culture by various incidents.

In the novel The White Tiger Balram Halwai a poor Indian village boy turned Indian business culture and became a successful entrepreneur. When he writes a letter to Chinese Premier visiting Bangalore he states

You Chinese are far ahead of us in every respect, except that you don't have entrepreneurs. And our nation, though it has no drinking water, electricity, sewage system, public transportation, sense of hygiene, discipline, courtesy, or punctuality, does have entrepreneurs. Thousands and thousands of them especially in the field of technology (TWT 4)

These successful entrepreneurs have their own companies and run them successfully. In the globalized world, corruption plays a vital role, which automatically affects the Indian culture. The corruption is not only in city but also in village where landlords deeply involve themselves to earn more money. This is proved when Balram's father was affected with TB he was taken to the hospital where there was no Doctors, and he came to know by a Muslim man that

There's a government medical superintendent who's meant to check that doctors visit village hospital like this. Now, each time this post falls vacant, the Great

Socialist let all the big doctors know that he's having an open auction for that post. The going rate for this post is about four hundred thousand rupees these days" (TWT 49)

The novel clearly portrays how corruption plays an important role in the village in globalized world. In the same way people had no political representation but in this globalized world the poor are rigged. Life of poor people is miserable and Adiga clearly narrates the politicians and rich land lords take the power in their hand use poor people to support them by paying less money for their vote during election. Balram states

There was an election coming up, and the tea shop owner had already sold us. He had sold our fingerprints – the inky fingers, which the illiterate person makes on the ballot paper to indicate his vote. I had overheard this from a customer. This was supposed to be a close election; he had got a good price for each one of us from the Great Socialist's party (TWT 97)

Poor people are affected by corruption and to the core they are ready to sell even their vote for money. Unemployment is another major problem due to globalization Marsida T. Najdeni in his article In what ways has globalization effected unemployment? Comments: "Globalization has affected unemployment by moving the job patterns wages almost everywhere have gone up and down, immigration labor from developing countries to developed countries is much easier and imports and exports have increased tremendously" (5) Balram when talks about his village people he states "When buses came, they got on – packing the inside, hanging from the railings, climbing onto the roofs –and went to Gaya; there they went to the station and rushed into the trains- packing the inside, hanging from the railings, climbing onto the roofs- and went to Delhi, Calcutta and Dhanbad to find work" (TWT 26). People in the village leave their families and move to cities to work in a better place. This clearly show how globalization affects people in the form of unemployment.

In the novel The White Tiger Delhi is adulated as Young America in India. Balram reaches Delhi as a driver and adapt himself in the city and its life style. He used to take his master and his wife to various shopping malls and he becomes aware of immense wealth, corruption and opportunity around him.

In novel *The White Tiger* Ashok's wife Pinky Madam is an American and she is portrayed as a cruel mistress to Balram. After killing a young child in an accident, she wants to fly back to America, which in turn affects the marriage life of Indian Culture, which ends in separation of souls. The major reason is the impact of Globalization; she is rich and able to evade any legal proceedings.

After Pinky Madam has left for America Ashok goes out to bars and clubs, hiring a prostitute one night and reconnecting with a former lover on another. All these incidents make Ashok to involve in illegal activities, which affect the marriage value of Indian Culture.

The impacts of globalization are deeply rooted in Indian Culture it increases opportunities for the wealthy more rapidly than for the poor. The author divides India into two parts an India of Light and India of Darkness. Poor people like Balram always belong to India of Darkness. The treatment of landlords towards their servants makes them depressed and finally they involve in criminal activities. Though India is a democratic Country the people do not follow proper rules. The lower class people are always asked to clean the shoes of their masters. M.Sreelatha in her article Existential struggle in *The White Tiger* comments: "The poor are treated like caged animals, bounded labor and slaves. *The White Tiger* not only present to humiliations, atrocities and cruelties perpetuated by one class over another but also comments on the rising global power and neo-liberalism which have created a rift between the rich and poor" (7). They are forced to do wrong works by politicians and other rich people. One such incident in the novel can be given as an example when Ashok and the political minister with a fat man inside the Car asked poor Balram to serve drinks for them.

Not only in the city but also in villages poor people are always suppressed by the rich and landlords. The land lords always dominate the poor and grab whatever they have such as house, money and lands etc. Poor people suffer for their rights and they do not have physical, mental and economic strength to fight against the rich. This shows the inequality between the rich and poor in our globalised world. Kibin in his article *The Effects of Globalization on*

Indian Culture in the novel *The White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga comments: "Balram's motivation can be seen as prime examples of the changes occurring I India due to globalization and his actions also reflect the changing cultural values and attitudes in globalizing India". Adiga describes the problems of people addicted to modern technologies and impacts of globalization, which affect Indian Culture by giving an example of usage of Cell Phones.

The protagonist Balram says "There is no water in our taps and what you people in Delhi give us? You give us Cell Phones. The Cell Phone is fascinating because it has always held up in India as a sign of progress" (256). The protagonist Balram epitomizes the transition of globalization. In the globalized world commodification is another aspect that is spreading very fast. Joseph Lison in his article *Conceptualizing a Globalized Space: Aravind Adiga's The White Tiger* Comments: "Women are treated her like items of exchange, a form of currency and also a type of commodity" (2) The protagonist in the novel states "I don't know. My master's daughter works in one of those buildings too. I drop her off at eight o' clock and she comes back at two in the morning. I know she makes pots and pots of money in that building, because she spends it all day in the malls.

He leaned in close – the pink lips were just centimeters from mine. Between the two of us, I think it's rather odd –girls going into buildings late at night and coming out with so much cash in the morning (TWT 128)

It is clear that in some places women are portrayed as a commodity in working place. Globalization has spread its wings all over the world. It has created both positive and negative impacts in our country. The major negative impacts are quite alarming our country. Amartya Sen in her article sharing the world comments: "By converting the world into a global market, globalization can and does bring increased prosperity and wealth. But it cannot distribute the gains justly" (4). Balram watches Indian people in Delhi wearing ethnic costumes and cultural codes mixed with American styles. People spending their time in mall and enjoying having westernized food, talking in nokia cell phones, the nightclubs open where men and women go together for party. All these

incidents in the novel can be viewed as how globalization has affected Indian Culture. Globalization can bring prosperity and wealth and it depends upon how one uses it to shape the society. Hence one needs to be more careful with the globalization process preserving nation's pride and maintain our cultural prestige. Thus, the writer discusses the issues of globalization in the work *The White Tiger*. It is a testimony of Indian Culture in the globalized era.

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