

Corruption a Canker : Critiquing Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*

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“Stories about rottenness and corruption are always the best stories, aren't they?” (WT 50)

Literature documents the zeitgeist of an age. what is happening in a society is reflected in the works of art produced in the respective age. There have been a plenty of books in the field of Indian English Literature sticking out Indian glorious culture and tradition. It is a ruth that a very few of them have given space to the dark and gloomy side of India.

Aravind Adiga has attempted to examine India with all its gloominess. It is visible fact that in India politics and corruption are two sides of a coin. Moreover, it is not an overstatement to say that politics is synonym for Corruption. At present, politics is so replete with corruption. In India all most all the political parties are dependent on Corporate sectors and business man for making money. When they come to power, they become a spoke person to the Businessmen and Corporate sectors. In order to fulfill their aim of power and business, they totally violate the moral and ethical values of the society. Politicians attempt to climb and abide in power by any means write or wrong. Most of the Corruption in politics has been done at the time of election.

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When politicians involve in the duty of police arm, police officers and other criminal administrations become dishonest, inefficient and finally corrupt. During the election time, the votes are purchased by the politicians and also they are pouring money and other gifts in to the election in all ways. People are very much terrified to see the booth capturing and compulsory voting , so that corrupt politicians to stay in power. India has been distressing from torments of corruption in all sides of society. It has become a sorrowful issue which vehemently affects its economic growth . Analysis of Adiga's novels could open the eyes of common people. Whom so ever in the ruling party there have been innumerable schem scandal occurred. It is known that politicians indulged in scheme scandals, but there is no tangible action taken by the official. Very rarely they entered to the court house. After a very few months, they will be acquitted for inadequate evidence. Interference has been seen at all levels from investigation to the end of Judgment level. It is witnessed that even most of the politicians are having three or four criminal cases registered against them, still they decorate the positions MPs and MLAs. It clearly says that rules and Judiciary are meant for poor people only; not for MPs, MLAs, Businessman, Government official and Industrialists. Adiga criticizes the corrupt politicians, though they are having many criminal cases on them, they can occupy the post which they posses. In India only, these kind of comedy is staged. Balram expresses his views about corruption:

You see, a total of ninety three criminal cases for murder, rape, grand larceny, gun- smuggling, pimping, and many other such minor offences - are in pending against the Great Socialist and his ministers at the present moment. It is not easy to get convictions when the judges are judging in Darkness, yet three convictions have been delivered, and three of the

ministers are currently in jail, but continue be ministers. The great Socialist himself is said to have embezzled one billion rupees from the Darkness, and transferred that money into a bank account in a small, beautiful country in Europe full of white people and black money. (97-98 TWT).

Here Adiga has a scathing attack on the corrupt politicians and ministers of India who have been maintaining their black money in Swiss Bank accounts. Adiga ironically criticizes the Europe full of white people and Indian politician's black money. Though we feel proud of this glorious democracy of India, even the elections are manipulated and power is transferred from one hand to another, but the common people's fate remains unchanged. There is a retirement age for people in every other Government departments. But people in politics do not have any retirement at all. They will be in position till their death and their children will inherit the position as if it is their birth right, nothing has been changed in the post-colonial times. King ruled and left his kingdom to his son during colonization period. India's post independence period has political parties instead of kings and politicians use election instead of war to occupy chief positions. Indian poor people are having may incurred diseases like tuberculoses and cancer, typhoid and cholera because of insufficient hospitals. Along with this they are having another diseases, like election fever. Adiga says that: "election fever is more terrifying diseases than other diseases and he says these are the three main diseases of this country, sir: typhoid, cholera, and election fever. This last one is the worst" (98 TWT). Adiga also mocks at the voting rights of poor Indian citizens whose votes are sold by village headman to some political parties there are proxy voting also. He brings the mentalities of the poor people in village and their discussion about political parties at the time of election very artificially:

At the tea shop, the gossip grew furious, People sipped their tea and discussed the same things again and again. Would they do it this time? Would they beat the Great Socialist and win the election? Had they raised enough money of their own, and bribed enough policemen, and bought enough fingerprints of their own, to win? Like eunuchs discussing the Kama Sutra, the voters discuss the elections in Laxmangarh.(98 TWT)

According to Indian village voters the elections are helpless, to bring about a better ambience. Indulging in election and discussing it is like a eunuch discussing the Kama Sutra. Balram's father gives an account of his experience with elections.

At the present scenario political corruption is one of the common phenomenon and has risen in its size. It is true that when democracy becomes corrupt, writers like Adiga, is seeking the voice is replaced by voices. There are much differences between poor and rich to make money. If poor indulge in corruption to satisfy the daily need, but rich politicians and Businessman to achieve their positions and power. Proletarian commits corruption due to his poverty and daily needs whereas government official and politicians wish to remain in power. Corrupt rulers will support policies that produce personalized gains even if they result in lower overall social wealth.

In an Interview Adiga says "money itself is amoral. It can liberate people as easily as it can destroy them" (Times of India). Adiga says that today's politics is degenerated and the proletarians are dominated and debased by the politicians and elite section. He has visited many northern places and come to know that problems of poor section. He says that:

In northern India politics is so corrupt that it makes a mockery of democracy. This is a country where the poor fear tuberculosis, which kills 1000 Indians a day, but people like me - middle class people with access to health services that are

probably better than England's - don't fear it at all.

It's an unglamorous disease, like so much of the things that the poor of India endure. (Stuart Jeffries, 2008).

It reflects in his works also. Adiga beautifully highlights the insufficient health care of remote villages like Laxmangrah where Balram is born. There is no hospital in Laxmangrah. But foundation stones were laid three times during election if election comes they will come and lay a foundation stone. So Laxmangrah's people have seen three foundation stones but no foundation stone is materialized. In India there have been innumerable Liquor shops and it is witnessed that Indian people do not have hospitals in their villages but each and every village there will be a liqueur shop. Pathetic condition is, there is a government hospital at neighboring village of Laxmangrah but it does not have proper facilities. In government hospital there is a medical superintendent post but it is auctioned by the politicians. In order to return the illegal bribes, the fake medical records have been maintained by the superintendant for doctors to get paid without visiting the hospital.

In that hospital Balram's father dies, waiting for the doctor, and also he is spitting his blood on the veranda of hospital. The condition of the government hospitals are very pathetic. It is meant for the poor people to get treatment but it is running for the doctors to earn more and more money. Mostly doctors wish to work in the village government hospitals the only reason is that they can earn more money without doing anything. They do not care about the poor patient. Poor has no other way to go because they do not have money to get treatment from private clinic, so they will have to wait until their death. Doctors bribe the government medical superintendent for in view of their absence from hospital duly. Most of the doctors who work in some private clinic during the working hours of government

hospitals to earn more money for which they maintain fake records of patients and medicines in government hospital. Balram expresses his feelings in the following words:

Kishan and I carried our father in, stamping on the goat turds which had spread like a constellation of black stars on the ground. There was no doctor in the hospital. The ward boy, after we bribed him ten rupees, said that a doctor might come in the evening. (48 TWT)

Balram asked about the doctors in the government hospital in order to admit his father but no one response for his inquires in the hospital. Another horrible condition is, that there is no doctor in the seat during the working hours of government hospital. Even the ward boy does not response his inquires, after giving ten rupees only he opens his mouth. He replays that the doctor may come in the evening. Adiga brings out the real picture of Indian government hospital, how it functions and how it is being maintained by the hospital staff and the sweepers and also it is not cleaned properly. When Balram waiting for the doctor, his father is spits blood floor then he says, "It's not safe in the rooms - that cat has tasted blood" (49 TWT).

At last Balram's father dies very terribly waiting for the doctors get treatment from the government hospital. Here the Muslim man explains the injustices of the government officials and politicians to the poor people in that hospital.

See, it's like this , the older Muslim man said There's a government medical superintendent who's meant to check that doctors visit village hospitals like this. Now, each time this post falls vacant, the Great Socialist lets all the big doctors know that he is having an open auction for that post.

The going rate for this post is about four hundred thousand rupees these days. (49 TWT)

Adiga examines why the doctor seeks extra money even though he is paid more money. Dr. Ram Pandey who has come to the post of doctor in an illegal way, has given some money to the corrupt politicians in order to get his post. The price of the goods may increase and decrease, according to the market level, but here Adiga portrays the amount of the super indent post in the market. In order to substitute the money which he bribes to the politicians the doctor works in some other private clinics. Again the problem goes to the hands of politicians and their inefficient ideology. Educational institutions are the holy places where the lesson that honesty is the best policy is taught to the pupils. Schools are supposed to be free from corruption and uniforms are also provided free of the cost to the students. But it has been stolen by the school teacher and also midday meal's money has been stolen by the school teacher which is allotted to the poor children and their uniforms are sold in neighboring villages. Balram has portrayed the condition of school and food:

If the Indian village is paradise, then the school is a paradise within a paradise. There was supposed to be free food at my school. A government program gave every boy three rotis, yellow daal, and pickles, and everyone knew why: the school teacher had stolen our lunch money (32 TWT). The teacher had a legitimate excuse to steal the money. He said he hadn't been paid his salary in six months. He was going to undertake a Gandhian protest to retrieve his missing wages- he was going to do nothing in class until his pay cheque arrived in the mail. (33 TWT)

Adiga focuses the reason of the corruption, what made him to indulge in corruption is the delay of his salary, no doubt it is from government official government official is controlled by politicians. They fail to allot the fund to the government school teachers. So how the politicians involve in the business of schools.

The result is that students are half baked both physically and mentally because of the politicians. Balram says that: “Me, and thousands of others in this country like me, are half-baked, because we were never allowed to complete our schooling. open our skulls, look in with a penlight, and you’ll find an odd museum of ideas” (10 TWT).

In Indian village schools many talented students are there but they cannot complete their schoolings because of the poverty. Article 45 says: “The state shall Endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of the constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years.” (DOESII 283). These articles of Indian constitution are only meant for wording, but are not materialized. In fact in India many of the government school student’s dream is to get proper school education from the government. Even they are not able to get the minimum level of their need but look at the elite class’s condition. They are free from all these issues. Even now that many child labor issues have been reported in India.

Politicians are good story tellers, especially the fake stories during the election. Adiga brings about the condition of poor people’s education in India. There are many law and order for poor but they not reach the poor. So many of them are self learned men. Adiga ironically criticizes the Indian educational system. Even though our constitution is having some articles for basic education, they do not reach the poor.

Recently Qs Intelligence unit announced the ranging of university in world. There is not even a single Indian university in world’s top 200. Regarding this ranging Dr. Karthick Sridhar, vice-chairman of Indian center for Assessment and Accreditation say that:

With the increasing globalization of higher education, Indian universities need to compete to attract the best students, as well as best qualified faculty, and most importantly best basic education for the students, from across the world. Students continue to use ranking as one of their decision-making tools to choose their destination, the prestige associated with higher ranks also drives universities to benchmark themselves globally.

(Times of India).

Dr. Sridhar stresses fundamental education is very essential for the Indian students. They have to choose their destination by themselves only then our educational system will be acknowledged in the global market. Adiga shows the real picture of the basic education in Indian government schools. It has been analyzed in the works of Adiga and pointed out at which level India stands. Adiga portrays the pathetic conditions of the poor who has lost his brother by an accident. The Indian police from high official to the low level of the police officers are corrupt. Instead of registering FIR against the culprit the case has been poured against of the innocent and looser and how the poor has been cheated by the police in all ways and the FIR has been registered based on the money. Balaram speaks about Indian police: "A man on a bicycle getting killed - the police don't even have to register the case. A man on a motorbike getting killed - they would have to register that. A man in a car getting killed-they would have thrown me in jail" (309 WT).

Politician cannot only corrupt the human beings but also his environment. Here the holy river Ganga is corrupt. Once mother Ganga was very pure and It symbolized to purify the sins of human beings. Apart from that, Ganga is a river which gives us rice, in the means of giving water to agriculture field. Once Ganga was a holy river but now it is corrupted by the politicians. Adiga describes about mother Ganga to Chinese

premier believe that is not the holy river where sins can be washed away, and where having a dip can offer him calm of mind.

In an interview Aravind Adiga has spoken with Stuart Jeffries:

Well, this is the reality for a lot of Indian people and it's important that it gets written about, rather than just hearing about the 5% of people in my country who are doing well..... At a time when India is going through great changes and, with, is likely to inherit the world from the west, It is important that writers like me try to highlight the brutal injustices of society, That's what I'm trying to do- -it is not an attack on the country, it's about the greater process of self-examination. (Stuart Jeffries The Guardian).

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