

Original Article

SOCIAL MEDIA, COMMUNICATION AND YOUTH EDUCATION IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF ARAVIND ADIGA

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ABSTRACT

Aravind Adiga was born to Dr. Madhava Adiga and Usha Adiga on 23rd October 1974, in Chennai. Initially he studied in Mangalore. After migrating to Sydney, Australia, with his family, he studied at James Ruse Agricultural School. After a stint in USA, Adiga returned to India, joined Times and got himself used to the trends in Indian society. He has got a natural instant to become a writer. The things not necessary for the profession have turned out to be a novel. Thus he has got immediate success with his debut novel. *The White Tiger* winning for him the glory of some prestigious awards. A collection of short stories entitled *Between the Assassinations* was published in 2008 and *Last Man in Tower* (2011), *Selection Day* in 2016 and *Amnesty* has got published in 2020, a novel about an illegal Sri Lankan immigrant living in Australia. It was also short listed for the 2021 Miles Franklin Award. He writes articles on politics, business and arts that are published in international papers and magazines like *Time*, *The Financial Times*, and *The Sunday Times*.

Keywords: Social Media, Youth Education, Education Novels, Communication.

INTRODUCTION

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RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To analyze and emphasize the importance of the forms of social media of 20th century like letters, magazines and mobile phones and their influence on youth. Most importantly how the society with so many loopholes and attractions. Parental pressure on youth is one more point to be understood through the novels.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Aravind Adiga is not only the first one to deal with campus fiction and youth psychology. Maria Edgeworth, Kingsley Emis and Adiga's contemporary Chetan Bhagat also have dealt with youth and college issues. Kingsley Emis's Lucky Jim and Chetan Bhagat's Five Point Someone show the problems of youth and also the influence of circumstances on youth. Adiga has dealt with this concept in his own way.

METHODOLOGY AND DISCUSSIONS

The White Tiger and Selection Day of Aravind Adiga deal with youth goals and influence of society as a main communication media one finds the use of mobile phones as well as importance of social media. Balram is a school dropout and Manju is a boy of many goals and aims in life. As the novels progress, one finds the ups and downs they face having the influence of society and media. Also how they achieve the goals is discussed in the novels. Here is the brief description of both the novels.

The White Tiger¹ is the first novel of Aravind Adiga. The novel speaks of many social evils arising from poverty to lack of moral values in a clear and cool manner. Balram the central character of the work is from a poor family. He belongs to that structure of an ancient society, which discriminates rich and poor. The land lords exercise their power on poor in such a way that they even lose their self-respect. Caste politics play a dominant role and even in the changed identities the employers demand loyalty which suffocates the subject to such an extent that Balram rebels against the system.

People who speak of righteousness or often discouraged and discriminated and even treated as silly and innocent in the present society. Corruption or injustice in India is an outcome of the relationship between people in power and the criminals. Adiga speaks of these things through Balram. Who takes advantage of this situation to the most to come up in life. Ethics is a requirement for human life. It is a means of deciding a course of action. Without it, actions would be random and aimless. Complacency almost always comes from a sense of success and lives along after the success that created it has disappeared. Complacency is a feeling of contentment or self-satisfaction. It is dangerous, especially coupled with a lack of awareness and potential dangers. Though it is known one underestimates its power and its prevalence. Highly destructive complacency is, in fact, all around and this is to the advantage of Balram.

Balram speaks of social backwardness of his caste because in India, the caste system is a system of division of labour and power in human society. It is a system of social satisfaction, and a basis of affirmative action. He talks about his destiny after leaving the school and joining a tea stall to assist the family due to the poverty. All these things happened due to the financial commitments the family made for the cousin of Balram. For her sake, the family has to take loan from the land lord. This incident brings a lot of change in him.

The novel gives the basic information regarding the discrimination between poor and wealthy as well as the modern transition that is taking place which may harm the country. It has got many social and cultural issues starting from unemployment, dowry practice, financial instability to harassing farmers by making them inferior. The novel also speaks of rich people who do not pay taxes, disturbed owner and servant relationship and weak family conditions and entrepreneurs success and failure. These make the basic structure of Indian society which gives a wrong notion about India in the western world. Though things are changing many are yet to be mended.

The thought and the truth meet together in the process of change in the behavior of Balram. He adopts new ethics and ways to achieve success. In that process he avoids morals and values. The process of elections are conducted is also mentioned in the text. In this crucial situation, death of his father due to tuberculosis indicates lack of right health care systems in the village hospitals. There are some important and dangerous diseases which the writer speaks of at this juncture. They are typhoid, cholera and eagerness for elections. These are the main things to be treated properly but one cannot easily find any solution or cure for these. Balram's father's death speaks of the behavior of health care professionals in many villages who are reckless towards poor.

The negative side of the country India which Balram has witnessed doesn't leave him even when he is exposed to the 'Bright and shining India'. It has got its own everyday problems to face or encounter. When Balram goes to have training as a driver, in the initial stage none of the taxi drivers accept to teach him as the society he lives in though poor is class conscious. It is only after he discloses his caste he becomes acceptable as a learner at the cost of humanity. When Balram makes any mistakes he beats him on his skull and says. "Why don't you stick to sweets and tea" (p.56). This is due to the rigid notions about caste linked professional notions and poverty that prevails in the villages.

When the novels shifts or moves from village to city the entire poor class also migrates. While when one comes across the senior driver in the landlord's house one can easily understand the need of job and money. Ram Prasad is a Muslim by birth, but his poor and unemployed conditions encourage him to hide his religion and earn money. Even with Balram the landlord in the village says "All our employees are of top caste. It won't hurt to have one or two from bottom caste working for us" (p.65).

Balram in the novel *The White Tiger* is a person who wishes to have a peaceful life with his family. He belongs to the group of drivers who have their own class but with an aim to live like his master or owner one day. The shift from the negative side of village to the light side of city speaks and views things in a different manner.

Balram has the conflicting thoughts to be a good son and an honest servant or to fulfill his dreams for his better life for himself. In this process he has his own thoughts of having new way of doing things with his own new morality in his mind. The loopholes in the system and society makes him take advantage of things. He doesn't care of anybody this kind of attitude is found in Balram after his entrance into the light side of the country with comforts and luxuries. Beyond the duty as drivers in the light of India they also have the work of a servant. In this process they have to do every household work starting from washing the utensils to giving bath to the pet animals like dogs and taking care of them. They even dare to sell drugs. They read a magazine murder weakly by name with great interest because many of the servants secretly have a dream to become superior like their bosses. One would not find poor or lower class people in the malls of light India. Here drivers and servants are even asked to accept the crimes their masters have committed. Another interesting thing is these drivers earn extra income by some notorious illegal ways. Even then they have to remain as servants. Balram is so frustrated with this kind of life that he never feels sorry for the murder of Ashok.

With these kind of things he puts himself out of the cage which he calls "Rooster Coop". Balram has a conscience just like that of Macbeth. He is very well aware of his transition from an innocent village boy into that someone who is full of cruel thoughts and shameless character. *The White Tiger* is an epistolary novel (though the author denies it, having a series of letters, written to Chinese Prime Minister, Mr. Jiabao, who is to visit the city of Bangalore, where Balram is living). Though it seems strange that an Indian entrepreneur writing such exhaustive letters to Chinese Premier would not have been more meaningful if he had written to the Indian Prime Minister. Adiga explains the reason for choosing such a unique genre as a vehicle for this particular story. "It is a story he can never tell anyone because it involves murder in real life, now he tells it when no one is around like all Indians who are obsessed (A colonial legacy, probably) with the outsider's gaze, he is stimulated to think about his country and society by the imminent arrival of a foreigner, and an important one.

Selection Day 2 (2016) is yet another work by Adiga which depicts the city of Mumbai. The city is filled with aspirations and deprivations of many who come there. It is also the place of dreams and confusions of its citizens.

The novel begins with an introduction of a young boy who has got many experiences in life. He even knows the sweat of his elder brother which speaks of fear of life. His brother has been practicing cricket to which his father accompanies. The plot then moves to three years before the selection day. It is the time where new talent will be chosen for the professional game of cricket. Manju and Radha are the Mohan brothers, who live with their father in single room in that metro city. Mohan Kumar gets fascinated with the game of cricket. He starts training his sons from an early age in his own strange manner. They are from a poor background. Their mother has left them soon after their arrival in the city from the village.

Mohan's belief is that his sons would succeed in the game and change the fate of the family. His confidence is in Radha Kumar and he prays for his success as the first best player and Manju as the second best. They succeed and join in Ali Weinberg International School with an aim to play for the school team. There they are able to gain the confidence of a talented cricket coach for Mumbai Cricket Association, Tommy Sir.

Through Tommy Sir, Kumar coming in contact with a wealthy person, Anand Mehta. Mehta is confident that these guys will become stars in the game of cricket. So, he helps them financially with an agreement. The agreement is to give some percentage in the income when they become stars. From then onward Mohan Kumar comes in contact with Mehta very often through mobile phone. That financial help alters their life. They practice sincerely and save the money which they get from Mehta. With that amount they move from a small room to a big house in some corner of the city. In the school they meet a new boy in the school team, Javed Ansari. Javed first comes in contact with Radha and later when Radha is eliminated he becomes a best friend of Manju.

Radha brings a girl home whose name is Sophia. When Mohan comes to know this, he gets annoyed and beats the boys. The brothers being young resist the father. Their father gets admitted in hospital with a broken leg. Manju is passionate towards some other things other than cricket. He reveals this thing to Javed that he wants to become a scientist and he is not much interested in becoming an athlete by profession. So also Javed reveals his disinterest in cricket, and helps Manju to follow his dreams but not those of his father. Manju, however is very talented in the game and also has some fear towards his father. So he continues to perform well in the game and that results into making him better than his brother. Manju gets the offer of scholarship in the school for which Radha is jealous of.

After a long waiting, finally the day of selection arrives. All the players are very eager to perform, and they also have performed professionally to build their careers. Manju and Radha also try for the same; Manju, even though he is not interested in the game he performs well and gets selected. But Radha, who doesn't do anything but cricket performs poorly in the match. He is not selected, he shows all his anger and resentment on one of the co-players. He beats the player and leaves the city to escape the police. Radha goes

to the family's native village. Manju who gets confused makes calls to Javed very often through coin box. At one point of time. Manju gets disturbed and goes to meet Javed in his apartment. And in almost an oath-taking manner he says he will not play cricket anymore. Javed is also one reason for it. Javed consoles Manju and the boys become close to each other. Their relationship goes to an extent of kissing each other. But Manju gets panic and goes away from that place. On returning home he tells his father that he will continue his play.³

CONCLUSION

Manju gets selected for the Under19 League and performs well for some years. He is even selected to play in Mumbai Professional Team. There also he plays for many years. Meanwhile, Radha returns home but he is not interested in anything. Manju supports him by giving some amount. Now that they are grown up, they doesn't care their father anymore. Manju has good talent in playing but he is unable to give his heart to the game. In this process, he transferred to Novelty League and then after some time he is fired. Manju is just 27 years by then.

After some days the Cricket Association appoints him as a talent scout. Tommy sir is no more now and Javed makes his living by doing petty things and tries his luck in acting. In this way all the characters in the novel speak their heart now and then about how they are dragged into the present professions which they don't like. Unfortunately their anger and frustration have left them in low standard of living.

Social media is not a prominent theme or element in Aravind Adiga's novel *The White Tiger*. The novel, published in 2008, focuses on issues of social class, poverty, corruption, and the master-servant dynamic in modern India, predating the widespread global dominance of social media as a major cultural force.

The story is told through a series of letters written by the protagonist, Balam Halwai, to the Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabao. In these letters, Balam describes his journey from a rural village to becoming a successful entrepreneur in Bangalore, a narrative that predates the ubiquitous use of platforms like Instagram and modern social media.⁴

In Aravind Adiga's novel *Selection Day*, social media is not a prominent or direct reference in the main narrative or character development. The novel focuses on themes of family ambition, class, identity, and the commercialization of cricket through traditional social interactions and institutions, such as local cricket clubs, corporate sponsorship, and family dynamics.

The primary means of communication, social pressure, and news dissemination within the story are through: Word of mouth and gossip within the Mumbai slums and cricket circles.

Traditional media like newspaper articles and television commentary regarding cricket stars and the "Selection Day" event itself.

Direct interactions between characters, such as the controlling father Mohan Kumar and his sons Manju and Radha, or Manju's relationship with the wealthy Javed Ansari.

While the novel is set in post-liberalization urban India where social media use is prevalent in society, the story's core conflicts and the characters' struggles are explored through older, more personal and community-based forms of social interaction, rather than digital platforms. The social message in Adiga's novels generally revolves around the realities of the Indian social structure, class disparities, and corruption, using social realism in his narratives.⁵ This way Aravind Adiga mostly uses the forms of social media of 20th century and attracts the readers. This makes the readers aware of social problems and makes them to react and respond positively.

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