

**Socio-Political Subjugation and Prevailing of Caste Dynamics in Arvind
Adiga's novel *The White Tiger***

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Abstract:

Winner of the coveted Booker Prize in 2008, Arvind Adiga in his debut novel *The White Tiger* undertakes to designate the themes of socio-political subjugation and caste dynamics in order to explicate the protagonist journey and the socio-economic ambience of modern India. Set against the backdrop of a rapidly evolving Indian socio-political landscape, the novel incisively exposes the entrenched socio-economic inequalities rooted in caste-based discrimination, widespread poverty, educational deprivation, joblessness, pervasive corruption, a morally compromised political apparatus, and coercive structures of power and control. Another attempts to illustrate a society whose the residents grapple with the issue of caste system that perpetuates deep-rooted inequalities and stringent hierarchical structures. Adiga beautifully showcases the intricate interplay between class, caste and power through the characters of Balram Halwai, a chauffeur who hails from lower-caste and endeavours to attain the upward mobility. Balram's story ironically brings to the fore the tyrannical forces that subvert his social upliftment and stifle the due opportunities for him in the stratified society where he bears the brunt of injustice and marginalization. Through this paper, a modest attempt has been made to reflect the entrenched power dynamics, the legacy of caste-based oppression and the question of the prevailing social order in a rapidly modernizing Indian society.

Keywords: Caste Dynamics, Hierarchy, Class, Power, Social order, Corruption

Introduction:

Despite being freed from the yoke of British imperial oppression in 1947, India is still grappling with multiple issues such as caste politics, corruption, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, suppression, to name a few. Notwithstanding India's burgeoning influence as a major political power on the world stage, millions of people are compelled to live under impoverished conditions in shabby households or hutments devoid of basic requirements of life viz. food, education and primary healthcare facilities. In this era of globalization and cosmopolitanism, India has underwent rapid urbanisation and economic progress in

multifarious fields, but, to the contrary, there is another grim and gruesome picture of myriads of people in tattered clothes and ram shackled houses mostly coming from remote rural areas who can barely make both ends meet, let alone wholesome food, quality education and better medical treatment. Although the government introduces numerous beneficial schemes for the underprivileged section of the society but unfortunately, they cannot provide the substantial leverage to them on account of the rampant corruption. Indian society is not only preoccupied with the above-mentioned problems but what exacerbates the situation even more is the prevailing caste system which poses a great threat to the lower caste people. Education empowers and enlightens the minds of the people and helps them shun the obsolete and redundant customs in the society. It provides them the necessary prowess to raise a voice of dissent against the unjust and inhuman treatment meted out to them by the so-called snobbish class of the society (the upper caste).

In the present novel *The White Tiger*, Arvind Adiga deftly introduces the realistic picture of India by portraying the lives of poor people. The novelist presents Balram as a protagonist who is the victim of poverty and injustice representing the class of poverty-stricken people who are forcibly sidelined from the mainstream society notwithstanding the fact that their hard work and perseverance emboldens the economy of their master as well as India. Adiga skilfully uses epistolary form of writing to lay bare the doleful picture of downtrodden people who undergoes unjust treatment by the upper caste in the society which mars the smooth progress of their lives. Epistolary novel is primarily “conveyed entirely by an exchange of letters” (Abrams and Harpham 197).

Born in a poor family, Balram confronts endless difficulties since his childhood. Even his family failed to give him a proper name out of ignorance as his father was a rickshaw puller who was always concerned about fulfilling the basic needs of his family. His father’s assiduous efforts came to an end when he took his last breath in a government hospital due to an assault of tuberculosis. As a boy, he was called Munna by the villagers; however, he received another name Balram from his school teacher. The conversation between the school teacher and Balram evocatively presents the dismal and dreary picture of India where parents do not even feel necessary to provide befitting names to children. Paradoxically, Balram had a bitter experience when his teacher asked his name. The teacher was a bit disgruntled to know that his name was Munna. To his amazement, the teacher says:

Munna? That’s not a real name

He was right; It just means ‘boy’

That’s all I have never been given a name.

Did not your mother name you?

She is very ill, sir, she lies in bed and spews, blood.

She got no time name me?

And your father?

He’ rickshaw puller, sir. He has got no time to name (Adiga 13).

He kept on struggling throughout his whole life against austere societal norms as he was forced to abandon his studies due to financial crisis even though he was a bright student

in the school. After dropping out of school, he takes up the work of crushing coal and cleaning tables at a tea shop to support his family and help repay the debt his father owes to the village landlord, incurred during his cousin Rina's wedding. He experiences the stark reality of life while working at the tea stall. He tells "The Autobiography of a Half Baked Indian." That's what I ought to call my life's story. Me, and thousands of others in this country like me, are halfbaked, because we were never allowed to complete our schooling" (Adiga 10). The novel has been narrated in the flashback mode where Balram is a successful entrepreneur who writes a letter to Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao as he pays a visit to Bangalore "to meet some Indian entrepreneurs and hear the story of their success from their own lips" (Adiga 4). Achieving tremendous success as an entrepreneur, Balram decides to look back on the days of excruciating struggle and starts sharing the harrowing story of a village boy who became an entrepreneur from driver. He adroitly uses the example of rooster coop to express the appalling story. He says:

The greatest thing to come out of this country in ten thousand years of its history is the Rooster Coop...

The roosters in the coop smell the blood from above. They see the organs of their brothers lying around them. They know they're next. Yet they do not rebel. They do not try to get out of the coop. The very same thing is done with human beings in this country (Adiga 173-174).

Adiga brings to the fore the struggle of the impecunious people who strive for their existence in a village Laxmangarh where their future prospects lie on the hands of rich landlords who leave no stone unturned to suck their blood in earning money. He employs the terms "darkness" and "light" as a metaphor to highlight the status quo of two contrary classes. In the novel, the downtrodden villagers represent darkness owing to their miserable and pathetic life whereas the rich landlords are referred to as light as they entertain affluent and sophisticated life. The people who are categorised under darkness make their utmost endeavour in fulfilling their family needs with the meagre amount of money whereas the people in light invest all their energy in amassing more and more wealth by hook and crook. "Adiga has tried to draw a distinct line between darkness and light. When Balram is in Laxmangarh he is residing in darkness, but in Bangalore and Delhi he comes to Light. Everything is supposed to be perfect just like 'mini-America'..." (Deswal 278)

In this novel, Adiga successfully unveils two different microcosms of India in Laxmangarh wherein the former (the marginalized class) suffers from the lack of basic requirements of life whereas the latter (the affluent people) are immersed in the thought of becoming richer. Even the poor students of this village become victim of corruption practised by their school teacher. The government arranges free food and clothing for all students, but due to corruption among the teachers, these provisions never reach the students. Balram's teacher is totally disinterested in taking classes regularly and avoids accomplishing his duties whole-heartedly. He expresses his plight "we never ever saw rotis, or yellow dall, or pickles, and everyone knew why; the school teacher had stolen our lunch money" (Adiga 33). They sell all these goods in the market under false pretences that they are not paid salaries by the government. In spite of clearly knowing the teacher's involvements in

corruption “No one blamed the schoolteacher for doing this. You can’t expect a man in a dung heap to smell sweet. Everyone in the village knew that he would have done the same in his position. Some were even proud of him, for having got away with it so cleanly” (Adiga 33). The villagers keep silent on headmaster’s corruption because they undoubtedly know their inability of putting up a fight against the powerful person. They can only fight to earn money for their sustenance. The headmaster engages himself in corruption in the school because of ambience of corrupt system. The school inspector hurls abusive language which shows the operation of power politics because now he is superior to him. The school inspector disparages him by asking the question “There is no duster in this class; there are no chairs; there are no uniforms for the boys. How much money have you stolen from the school funds, you sinisterfucker?” (Adiga 34). The corruption of headmaster clearly brings to light the harsh reality of Indian schools where teachers, appointed with the intent of inculcating ethical values into the students, involve themselves in the nefarious act of looting students’ book, chalk, duster, dresses etc. Advocating the fulfilment of the educational needs of the weaker section and downtrodden people, the eminent thinker Karl Marx opines “The education of all children, from the moment that they can get along without a mother’s care, shall be in state institutions” (*Manifesto of the Communist Party* 2). The government establishes educational institutions with a view to provide quality education to all children but; unfortunately, the ubiquitous corruption dismantles the core objective of education system. Poor students like Balram and his brother Kishan are rendered incapacitated to complete their education due to all-pervasive corruption in the school. As a rickshaw puller, Balram’s father is incapable of giving formal education to them. Balram further explains his predicament, “My father was a poor man...” (Adiga 23). Not only is the headmaster a part of the corrupt system but the politicians, entrusted with the highest seat of authority, are also deeply engrossed in the various forms of corruption such as bribery, kickbacks, influence peddling, fraud, misuse of public funds etc.

India, being a multi-religious and democratic nation that guarantees equal rights to all its citizens, still sees the people of Laxmangarh deprived of fundamental necessities such as proper sewage systems, access to education, and clean water. Balram sarcastically describes Indian democracy “...we may not have sewage, drinking water, and Olympic Gold medals, but we do have democracy” (Adiga 96). Balram’s words candidly underscore the consternation of the villagers who live in the world’s largest democratic country where every Indian has been given the right to cast their vote and choose their representative but at Laxmangarh villagers do not avail voting rights since powerful political parties violate their rights to serve their vested interests. Balram expresses his father’s sorrow “I’ve seen twelve elections – five generals, five states, two locals – and someone else has voted for me twelve times. I’ve heard that people in the other India get to vote for themselves – isn’t that something?” (Adiga 100). Balram’s father’s suffering echoes the theory of renowned Marxist thinker Louis Althusser, who argues that dominant bourgeois societies enforce their ideology to oppress the masses, treating ordinary people as mere instruments of their control. He assumes that power symbolises the ideology which predominately captures the psyche of the oppressed people. “The shaping of people’s ideologies is, according to Gramsci, a kind of

deception whereby the majority of people forget about or abandon their own interests and desires and accept the dominant values and beliefs as their own" (Bressler 198). Such an ideology is easily discernible in Laxmangarh where the villagers have willingly forgotten their right to cast vote and have totally succumbed themselves to the will of bourgeois class for a small amount of monetary gain.

The protagonist Balram presents himself as the representative of the subdued people who have been discriminated on the basis of their class, colour and race in modern Indian atmosphere. Adiga says:

a When talking to many men whom I met in India, I found a sense of rage, often suppressed for years and years that would burst out when they finally met someone they could talk to. But their anger was not the anger of a liberal, middleclass man at corrupt system; it was something more complex- a blend of values both liberal and reactionary- and I wanted to be true to what I'd heard. Balram's anger is not an anger that the reader should participate in entirely- it can seem at times like the rage you might feel if you were in Balram's place- but at other times you should feel troubled by it, certainly. (Nick 1)

Adiga has exceptionally manifested the saturnine reality of Delhi, a metropolis where numerous underprivileged and downtrodden people are victimised owing to their lower caste identity in the society. The legislators have framed a number of laws pertinent to the amelioration of the downtrodden people but ultimately they have borne little fruit. Article 16 of Indian constitution provides equal rights of employment irrespective of "caste, class, religion, race, sex, descent and place of residence, weaker class and caste people get little opportunity employment" (Laxmikanth 161). The marginalized class remains largely alienated from mainstream society and is relentlessly oppressed, discriminated, and tortured on the basis of class, caste, region, education, religion and money. Raymond Williams aptly remarks "In a class-society there are primarily inequalities between classes. Gramsci therefore introduced the necessary recognition of dominance and subordination in what has still, however, to be recognized as a whole process" (108). Balram faces gross injustice and unequal treatment as he is associated with lower class and economically weaker section. He forsakes his native land to create his own identity and opts to become a taxi driver but the repugnant caste system acts as an impediment in fulfilling his dream since he belongs to lower caste. He is somehow informed by his driving tutor that the driving job is not done by a Halwai. "It's like taming a wild stallion – only a boy from warrior caste can manage that.... Muslims, Rajputs, Shikhs – they're fighters, they can become drivers. You think sweet-makers can last long in fourth gear?" (Adiga 56). His tutor not only denounces his caste but also hurts him by mentioning that "All our employees are top caste. I won't hurt to have one or two bottom castes working for us" (Adiga 64).

Discriminating someone on the basis of caste and accordingly creating hiatus among them is always extremely harrowing for them who are subjected to such discrimination. Since time immemorial, caste system has caused irreparable loss to an underprivileged person like Balram. B.R Ambedkar has aptly given his view on prevailing caste system

in India, “caste has killed public spirit. Caste has destroyed the sense of public charity. Caste has made public opinion impossible.... Virtue has become caste ridden and morality has become caste bound. There is no sympathy to the deserving. There is no appreciation of the meritorious. There is no charity to the needy. There is no charity but it begins with the caste and ends with caste. There is sympathy but not for other caste” (37). Such predisposed attitude is discernible in higher class people and there are sundry instances in which the persons belonging to the lower caste are discriminated and disrespected and even after considerable effort, it is observed in Balram who becomes a victim of caste system that he engenders deep hatred for Napali and Ram Prasad because of his position as a second driver. He tries hard to show his skills and to justify himself to be the most eligible person for becoming a first driver. Kaharudin and Kurnia argue “The Nepali is Nepali race. Ram Prasad is Arabian race, while Balram himself is Indian. He feels that he is the origin one, therefore, he indirectly desires to be the highest worker in the house” (100). The stigma of caste obstructs the smooth progress and ultimately creates a lot of hindrance in nation’s development. Division among citizens on the basis of caste reminds Ngugi wa Thiongo’s words “There is no way we can survive as a nation in the world without finding unity” (1). Adiga has made an earnest effort in deftly portraying the class difference in the society through the character of George who is known as a mosquito man. George makes every effort to establish a relationship with the wealthy Mrs. Gomes but ultimately fails due to his lower-class status; as a result, he resigns himself to the role of distributing pesticides in the village. Class discrimination is not only a matter of routine for George but a Muslim boy Mohammad too confronts such a situation in which he is forced to change his Muslim name to Ram for the sake of getting a job in a Hindu family. Even the police, the guardian of law and order in the society, engage themselves in the act of discrimination against the poor to favour the rich because the latter offer bribery to them. If the poor try to lodge a complaint against the rich, the police show reluctance to register a case; on the contrary, they set them free for in exchange of money. Michel Foucault makes an apt critique against the discrimination towards poor people. He posits “all the laws against beggars, vagabonds and the idle, all the police organisational designed to catch them, forced them (*Power/Knowledge* 15). On the other hand, a poor person is usually arrested on false allegation imposed by the rich one. This idea is given a vent to in these succeeding lines “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 thrown me in jail” (Adiga 309). Every citizen is equal in the eyes of law; however, in most of the situation, it has been observed that law is enforced on uneducated poor people. In this regard, Michel Foucault expresses his anger by saying “It would be hypocritical or naive to believe that the law was made for all in the name of all; that it would be more prudent to recognise that it was made for the few and that it was brought to bear upon the others; that in principle it applies to all citizens, but that it is addressed principally to the most numerous and least enlightened classes (*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* 276). Everyone looks up to law as a weapon for providing justice but in this novel, the police themselves defies it by taking bribery from rich men. In his book *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, Althusser comments that “this is the illusion that since all subjects are declared equal and free before

the law, and since the law of freedom and equality, magistrates and jurists are the servants of freedom and equality, not of the capitalist society” (166-167). Adiga undertakes to emphasize that in some cases, the protector of law themselves stand as defender of bourgeois class.

In this novel, Balram represents proletariat class whereas his master Ashok Sharma plays the role of bourgeois who wields controls over economy to enslave all his servants. The term proletariat was first used by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels to define the status of the working class who put their utmost effort and make tremendous contribution in the upliftment of the society but never get due respect from bourgeois class. Engels defines bourgeois and proletariat in his words “By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labor. By proletariat, the class of modern wage laborers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labor power in order to live” (*Manifesto of the Communist Party* 3). Balram, being a servant, is treated with disrespect by his master because he works there as a wage labour to sustain in the society. In spite of performing the responsibilities as a driver, he has also been given all sorts of menial jobs like messaging, moongose, bringing liquor and women for the men and delivers money to the politicians. His employers try their best to take his services. After toiling day and night, he earns little money. According to Karl Marx the bourgeois enjoys the power and means of production and also gives rise to the ideas of the proletariat through superstructure in the society. Therefore “The ideas of ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e. the class, which is ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force” (67).

Like Balram there are numerous drivers in Delhi who are forced to perform each sort of heinous duty for the sake of earning money. They can't take sufficient rest from duty even after rendering service the whole day. The amount of salary that they get in exchange of their service is too decided by their master.

Consciously and unconsciously, this social elite inevitably forces its ideas on the working classes. Almost without their knowing it, the working classes have become trapped in an economic system that decrees how much money they will earn, when they will take vacations, how they will spend their leisure time, what entertainment they will enjoy, and even what they believe concerning the nature of humanity itself (Bressler 203).

The statement given above is quite true in the case of Balram who has been asked to cook, clean two dogs and dry their skin. He says “The rich expect their dogs to be treated like humans... I got down on my knees and began scrubbing the dogs, and then lathering them, and foaming them then washing them down” (Adiga 78). Karl Marx asserts “Capital is dead labor, that vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labor, and lives the more, the more labor it sucks. The time during which the labourer works, is the time during which the capitalist consumes the labour- power he has purchased of him” (*Capital: A critique of Political Economy* 257). Here Balram's master behaves like a vampire who is always prompt to suck his worker's blood by giving them extra work. The type of work that he will perform is decided by his employer and he has to obey it without any objection on account of being

a member of working class. He remains a silent spectator under these circumstances since he has to meet his family needs. Karl Marx disparages the above-mentioned torture and blames the capitalistic society as the perpetrator of the crimes against proletariat people. "Capital is a social system based on the exploitation of the majority by a minority for their private profit" (*Manifesto of the Communist Party* 3). Here Balram's master employs every evil design to exploit him so as to fulfil his private interests.

The elite class often uses English language to humiliate as well as to exert their influence on their servants. Such humiliative temperament is seen in Pinky who treats Balram contemptuously when he has been asked to make ginger tea for her "You're so filthy! Look at your shirt. It's disgusting! Get out clean up the mess you've made in the kitchen and get out" (Adiga 146). Pinky Madam's use of English language betokens her supremacy on Balram because she uses English as a tool to suppress him. In this regard, Ngugi wa Thiongo states "Language was the means of the spiritual subjugation" (9) for the colonizer to humiliate the colonized people. Similar attitude is noticed in Pinky who tries to repress her workers. Such exploitation is not brought to the cynosure of people since the workers accept it as their fate without making any objection. The owner class has undue advantage on the poor people in the form of jobs. Michel Foucault perfectly defines this act of torture "There are forms of oppression and domination which become invisible (*Vanguard* 1). Beyond all assigned duties servants are forced to acknowledge their master's crime. Balram is asked to accept the killing of a poor child by car driven by Pinky Madam only to save her. Behind this conspiracy, judicial system is also actively engaged and promotes such incidents.

Power not only compels marginalized people to do anything but also hypnotises their mind. Balram knows very well that accepting Pinky madam's crime will lead him into the world of darkness and shatter his dream for what he came to Delhi. Yet he accepts the proposal of his master because of his ignorance. He experiences helpless situation of those poor prisoners in Indian judicial system. He explains "The jails of Delhi are full of drivers who are there behind bars because they are taking blame of their good, solid, middle-class masters. We have left the villages, but the masters still own us, body, soul, and arse" (Adiga 169). Foucault beautifully explains biased nature of justice: "it seems to me that the idea of justice in itself is an idea which in effect has been invented and put to work in different societies as an instrument of certain political and economic power" (*The Chomsky – Foucault Debate: On Human Nature* 54). Balram's master cunningly greases the palm of the judges who keep mum at their crimes and thus become a part of this racket. Judges wink at the crimes perpetrated by the rich people which reflect the failure of Indian judicial system. "Yes, that's right: we all live in the world's greatest democracy here. What a fucking joke. Doesn't the driver's family protest? Far from it. They would actually go about bragging. Their boy Balram had taken the fall, gone to Tihar Jail for his employer. He was loyal as a dog. He was the perfect servant" (Adiga 169).

Along with the involvement of the judges in this racket, there are some corrupt politicians who kneel down in front of the elite class for the sake of money. In the present

novel, we observe that judiciary system too is manipulated by the bourgeois society to suppress the underprivileged people like Balram. Foucault showcases the stark reality of the judiciary system “The court dragging along with it the ideology of bourgeois justice and.... played a very significant role in the domination of the bourgeoisie” (Power/Knowledge 27). Balram himself witnesses the corruption in the coal mines of Dhanband and an unfair dealing between a politician and Ashok. Witnessing the widespread use of bribery across all levels of society, Balram ultimately chooses a shortcut to escape his life of humiliation and poverty by murdering his master. Determined to break free from the shackles of deprivation and rise to wealth, he takes a drastic step. Having spent his entire childhood as part of the marginalized class, Balram feels deeply suffocated by his poverty. He eventually listens to his inner voice, urging him to liberate himself from the relentless oppression imposed by the rich throughout his life. Adiga here tries his best to pull out the unheard voice of all the tormented class through Balram:

A rich man’s body is like a premium cotton pillow, white and soft and blank. Ours are different. My father’s spine was a knotted rope, the kind that women use in village to pull water from wells; the clavicle curved around his neck in high relief, like a dog’s collar; cuts and nicks and scars, like little whip marks in his flesh, ran down his chest and waist, reaching down below his hipbones into his buttocks (Adiga 27).

Balram leaves Delhi for Bangalore- the model metropolis of India famous for its prosperity and development where he finds an altogether different picture of the city wherein the minister announces various schemes for the poor children who are suffering from malnutrition. In his letter to Jiabao, he mentions the bitter reality of Bangalore in these words “the chief minister of the state today announced a plan to eliminate malnutrition in Bangalore in six months. He declared that there would not be one hungry child in the city by the end of the year. All officials are to work single-mindedly towards this goal, he declared. Five hundred million rupees will be allocated for malnutrition eradication” (Adiga 291). Balram’s acute observation indicates the corruption of the politicians making false promise at the time of election to bring drastic change but after winning the election, they again engage themselves in the act of misuse of the funds allocated for poor people. The big city like Bangalore claims to be a role model for other backward cities but in reality, it conceals the appalling picture of the slums situated there. On the other hand, the Finance Minister announces high-sounding promise for the poor for whom “this year’s budget will include special incentives to turn our villages into high-technology paradises...(Adiga 291). The proletariat has become habitual of listening to such hollow announcements and are cognizant of the fact that it is their propaganda and that they would do nothing for them except fooling them by making false promises. Frantz Fanon supports the view of working people and says “this proletariat has read the party publication and understood its propaganda” (108).

All these corruption and exploitation hurt Balram’s conscience so badly that he is not a bit hesitant of killing Ashok. He justifies his act of murder by claiming that, in a rapidly

changing world, only violence can pave the way to prosperity for a poor man. According to him, violence becomes a powerful tool for the oppressed to break free from the world of darkness and step into the world of light. “Why not? Am I not a part of all that is changing this country? Haven’t I succeeded in the struggle that every poor man here should be making—the struggle not to take the lashes your father took, not to end up in a mound of indistinguishable bodies that will rot in the black mud of Mother Ganga?” (Adiga 318). Balram’s act of killing Ashok reminds us the concept of Michel Foucault who in *The History of Sexuality* expresses that oppression not only encourages repression but also creates resistance. He argues that “Where there is power, there is resistance” (95).

Thus power helps Balram to resist against his master’s oppression. Nobody will support the act of killing Ashok mercilessly by Balram but it is also true that there must be resistance or protest by working people for their basic rights against the capitalist’s suppression. In this regard “Marxism addresses its rallying cry to the working classes. All working people can free themselves from the chains of social, economic, and political oppression if they will recognize that they are presently not free agents” (Bressler 203). Here the untoward circumstance propels Balram to fulfil his basic rights although he treads the wrong path but finally, he is able to release himself from the bondage of his owner. Similarly, Adiga seeks to proliferate his advice to all working classes to raise their voice of dissent through instance of Balram’s resistance against Ashok. Frantz also supports violence in *The Wretched of the Earth* where he mentions “violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect (94). Here Adiga too champions the view of Michel Foucault who propagates an individual’s power of resistance by portraying the character of Balram who brutally killed Ashok. Balram garners strength to resist against the dominant position held by Ashok. Foucault argues that power does not emanate from outside source but it gets evolved from where the power relation exists. In an interview, Foucault argues “That there are no relations of power without resistances; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised” (142).

Balram’s act of killing Ashok makes him intrepid and helps him to get rid of the thoughts of despair and inferiority complex. As an established entrepreneur, Balram becomes more valiant and courageous man and starts making closeness with policemen and bribes them covertly which clearly exhibits the picture of corrupt society. He aims to maintain a firm hold over the police to protect himself from potential troubles. He effectively manages a critical situation when his driver, Asif, accidentally hits a boy with his vehicle. The victim’s family demand justice for him but Balram very tactfully consoles them by using his money power. He offers them a large sum of money along with a driver’s job, using his influence to resolve a matter that rightfully belongs in court. Although he initially arrived in Delhi as an innocent young man, the harsh realities of city life gradually transformed him into someone driven by money and power, abandoning moral scruples along the way. He had arrived here as an honest man but Delhi’s sinful atmosphere finally changed him into a corrupt man. Balram tells to Premier Jiaboo:

.... I was corrupted from a sweet, innocent village fool into citified fellow full of debauchery, depravity, and wickedness.

All these changes happened in me because they happened first in Mr Ashok. He returned from America an innocent man, but life in Delhi corrupted him- and once the master of the Honda city becomes corrupted, how can the driver stay innocent? (Adiga 197).

Conclusion

Adiga's novel *The White Tiger* serves as a compelling exploration of Indian society bound by the rigid confines of social hierarchies, caste dynamics, power structure and injustices embedded within the caste system. Adiga's portrayal of Balram's metamorphosis from a downtrodden lower-caste chauffeur into an influential entrepreneur mirrors the inherent contradictions and injustices found within the periphery of caste system. *The White Tiger* serves as a poignant narrative of the stringent conflict against socio political subjugation and the dismantling of caste-based discrimination to make the earth a safe haven for every community irrespective of caste and creed. Through its nail-biting narrative and incursive sarcasm, the novel continues to charm the readers with its sparking conversations, dark humour, and satirical undertone augmenting the understanding of the complexities of caste dynamics in contemporary India.

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