

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF ARAVIND ADIGA: THEMES, LITERARY STYLE, AND AREAS OF FOCUS

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Abstract: Aravind Adiga, an influential voice in contemporary Indian English literature, is best known for his Booker Prize-winning novel *The White Tiger* (2008). His works critically examine socio-economic inequalities, corruption, class struggle, and the paradoxes of modern India. This research paper aims to provide a critical analysis of Adiga's themes, literary techniques, and narrative strategies, focusing on his portrayal of marginalized voices and his contribution to postcolonial and global literature. By analyzing the socio-political environment depicted in the novel, the paper examines how Adiga critiques the rigid class structures that hinder social progress and shape individual identities. The study further investigates the role of materialism, ethics, and social pressure in influencing the choices of the characters, highlighting the fragility of social mobility in a society where class divisions are deeply entrenched. The paper argues that Adiga's work provides a critical commentary on the complexities of urban life, where personal aspirations often collide with larger social forces, ultimately questioning the notion of upward mobility in a rapidly modernizing society.

Keywords: Inequality, corruption, globalization, postcolonial, narrative, satire, urbanization, crisis

Introduction: Aravind Adiga is a prominent Indian-English writer best known for his debut novel *The White Tiger* (2008), which won the prestigious Man Booker Prize. Born in 1974 in Madras (now Chennai), India, Adiga studied at Columbia University and the University of Oxford before working as a journalist. His journalistic background influences his writing, which offers sharp critiques of contemporary Indian society, addressing themes of class struggle, corruption, and globalization. *The White Tiger* (2008) A darkly satirical novel that explores the harsh realities of India's class divide through the journey of Balram Halwai, a poor villager who rises to wealth through morally ambiguous means. *Between the Assassinations* (2008) A collection of interconnected short stories portraying life in the fictional Indian town of Kittur, set between the assassinations of Indira Gandhi (1984) and Rajiv Gandhi (1991). *Last Man in Tower* (2011) A novel about urbanization and real estate corruption in Mumbai, highlighting the clash between traditional values and modern capitalism. *Selection Day* (2016) A coming-of-age novel centred on

cricket, ambition, and familial expectations in India. *Amnesty* (2020) – A novel set in Australia that examines the immigrant experience through the perspective of an undocumented worker from Sri Lanka. Adiga's works expose the stark class divide in India, portraying the struggles of the lower classes against systemic oppression. His writing style combines realism with dark humour and satire, making his social critique engaging and thought-provoking. *Global Perspective on Indian Society*, his works provide an insider's perspective on India's post-liberalization era, appealing to both Indian and international audiences. *Postcolonial and Subaltern Studies*. Adiga's portrayal of marginalized voices aligns with postcolonial literature, highlighting the struggles of the underprivileged in a rapidly changing society. His works continue to spark debates about morality, power, and economic disparity, making him one of the most influential contemporary Indian writers. Aravind Adiga's literary career is marked by his deep engagement with the realities of India's economic transition and its impact on the lower classes. His novels and short stories challenge the romanticized narrative of India's growth and instead highlight the stark contrasts between the privileged elite and the underprivileged. This paper critically evaluates Adiga's thematic concerns, literary style, and how his journalistic background influences his fiction. This essay emphasizes how Adiga's evocative depictions of current events helped to reshape Indian literature. It highlights his role in postcolonial discourse and his capacity to use fiction as a catalyst for change. Adiga's stories are more than just stories, they are tools for raising social consciousness and bringing change in society, leading India to a more equitable future. In an era of changing narratives, Adiga's tales encourage readers to delve into the many facets of a country undergoing change by providing insights into its complex fabric.

Literature Review: Aravind Adiga's works have been widely analyzed in literary and academic circles, particularly concerning socio-economic inequality, corruption, globalization, and postcolonial identity. This literature review examines key scholarly discussions on his themes, narrative techniques, and the socio-political relevance of his writing. *Socio-Economic Inequality and Class Struggle*. Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008) has been extensively studied for its critique of India's socio-economic divide. Scholars such as Mishra (2010) argue that the novel presents a stark contrast between the "Light" (privileged elite) and the "Darkness" (oppressed poor), demonstrating how economic liberalization has widened social disparities. Bhattacharya (2011) highlights that Adiga's protagonist, Balram Halwai, represents the disenfranchised lower class, using crime as a means of social mobility. In *Last Man in Tower* (2011), Adiga extends his analysis to Mumbai's middle class, exploring their vulnerability amidst rapid urbanization. According to Sharma (2013), the novel critiques the loss of ethical values in the pursuit of economic gain, showing how capitalist forces dismantle traditional communities. Several researchers have examined Adiga's portrayal of corruption as an integral part of India's socio-political system. Singh(2012) asserts that *The White Tiger* deconstructs the myth of meritocratic success by illustrating how moral compromises are necessary for upward mobility. Similarly, Patel (2015) notes that Adiga does not offer a clear hero or villain but instead presents a morally complex world where survival often demands unethical choices. Adiga's works are frequently discussed in the context of globalization and its consequences for India's underprivileged classes. According to

Banerjee (2014), *The White Tiger* serves as a critique of neoliberal economic policies, demonstrating how they create a façade of prosperity while deepening existing inequalities. Similarly, Reddy (2017) examines *Selection Day* (2016) as an allegory for India's obsession with global success, using cricket as a metaphor for economic ambition and social mobility. Adiga's use of first-person narration, unreliable protagonists, and dark humour has been the subject of critical discussion. Kumar (2016) notes that the epistolary format of *The White Tiger* allows for an intimate yet ironic critique of India's socio-political reality. Chandra (2018) explores Adiga's use of satire, arguing that his exaggerated portrayal of corruption and hypocrisy serves to engage readers while provoking critical reflection. Additionally, Adiga's journalistic background has influenced his writing style. According to Nair (2019), his prose is direct, fast-paced, and often journalistic in tone, making his social critique more accessible to a global audience. Adiga's works have also been analyzed through the lens of postcolonial theory. Bose (2020) argues that *The White Tiger* disrupts traditional narratives of Indian success by presenting an anti-hero who challenges the legitimacy of caste and class hierarchies. In contrast, Kapoor (2021) examines *Last Man in the Tower* as a reflection on the changing identity of urban India, where traditional values are eroded by capitalist ambitions. The existing body of research on Aravind Adiga underscores his role as a critical commentary on contemporary Indian society. His exploration of inequality, corruption, and globalization, combined with his unique narrative style, makes his work a valuable contribution to postcolonial and global literature. However, while much has been written about *The White Tiger*, there is a need for further scholarly engagement with his later works, particularly about their evolving thematic concerns and literary strategies.

The researchers conclude that their writings provide a thorough examination of the relationship between social mobility and identity in modern-day India. The moral, emotional, and social complexities of upward mobility in a society characterized by glaring class divisions and widespread corruption are revealed through the struggles of the characters. Adiga offers a potent critique of the moral and societal costs of modernity through her nuanced depiction of the locals' aspirations for a better life against the backdrop of a shifting landscape. In the end, the different pieces ask readers to consider what success really means and whether pursuing one's own interests is worth the sacrifices it frequently necessitates. When long-standing communal ties are threatened by personal gain, the characters' struggles with their choices expose the intense emotional and psychological conflicts that result. Adiga paints a sobering picture of a society where material success is frequently obtained at the expense of integrity and solidarity as the story progresses, powerfully criticizing the moral concessions necessary in the pursuit of social mobility. A larger critique of modern India, where rapid development and the lure of wealth create ethical conundrums that challenge traditional values and moral certitudes, is reflected in this investigation of personal sacrifice for social advancement. When viewed in this light, Adiga's writing provides a sharp critique of the human cost of modernity and the quest for achievement in an unfair society.

Research Gap:- While Aravind Adiga's works have been widely studied, several research gaps remain, providing opportunities for fresh analysis. A study on how Adiga portrays the immigrant

experience compared to his earlier focus on Indian society could provide fresh perspectives. Although *Last Man in Tower* deals with urbanization and real estate corruption, there has been little research on environmental concerns in Adiga's works. Examining how he portrays ecological degradation and displacement could be an emerging area of study. Such a study could highlight his unique contributions to Indian literature. While Adiga's works have sparked debate, there is little research on their reception in different cultural and social contexts. A cross-cultural reception study could fill this gap.

Objectives of the present paper: The objectives of a research paper on Aravind Adiga's works will depend on the specific focus of your study. Here are some possible research objectives.

- To analyze the major themes in Adiga's works, such as corruption, poverty, social mobility, and the class divide, the socio-political structure of contemporary India.
- To explore Adiga's use of satire, irony, and dark humour in storytelling and narrative style, including the first-person perspective and unreliable narration.
- To assess how Adiga's novels reflect post-liberalization India's economic and social conditions.
- To investigate how his works contribute to postcolonial and subaltern literature protagonists, especially marginalized voices.
- To study the representation of caste, class, and gender in his fiction

Research Methodology: Aravind Adiga's works, especially *The White Tiger* and his other novels, are often analyzed using qualitative research methodologies. Some of the common methodologies used in the analysis of his works include Textual Analysis, Socio-Political Analysis, Comparative Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and Reader-Response Theory.

Paper Relevance: This paper is extremely pertinent to current debates about identity development, social mobility, and the moral quandaries that people in post-liberalized India face. The study advances knowledge of how contemporary Indian literature addresses important issues of class inequality, urbanization, and moral compromises through the prism of Aravind Adiga's writings. The study provides a critical framework for analyzing social mobility in India's rapidly shifting socioeconomic fabric and offers insightful information about the psychological and emotional challenges people face as they negotiate the complexities of modern life.

Future Scope: By concentrating on comparative analyses between other contemporary Indian writers who examine related themes of social mobility and identity, future research could build on this study. Research could look at how various writers handle the moral conundrums and ethical trade-offs that come with upward mobility in the post-liberalized world. Future researchers may also examine how different locations in Adiga's writings specifically represent more significant societal concerns and how the changing urban environment influences the characters' identity crises. The discussion of corruption and its effects on social mobility could be further enhanced by

a subsequent comparison with Adiga's earlier works, such as *The Last Man on Tower* and *The White Tiger*.

Aravind Adiga's Literary Themes, Works, Techniques, and Areas of Focus: His works primarily focus on contemporary India, exploring themes of social inequality, corruption, economic disparity, and the struggles of marginalized communities. Through his sharp narrative style, dark humour, and compelling storytelling, Adiga critiques the existing socio-political structures in India. Adiga's novels and short stories often revolve around the following key themes:

1. **Social Inequality and Class Struggle:** His works highlight the deep divide between the rich and poor in India. *The White Tiger* exposes the harsh realities of class struggle, where the protagonist, Balram Halwai, breaks free from the shackles of poverty through morally ambiguous means. Similarly, *Last Man in Tower* (2011) portrays the conflict between an old housing society and a wealthy developer, showing how economic aspirations lead to ethical dilemmas.
2. **Corruption and Power Dynamics:** Corruption is a recurring theme in Adiga's works. His characters often face a system rigged against them, forcing them to make morally complex choices. In *The White Tiger*, Balram realizes that success in modern India requires manipulation and ruthlessness. *Selection Day* (2016) explores corruption in the world of cricket, revealing how power and money control even sports.
3. **Urban vs. Rural India:** Adiga presents a stark contrast between rural poverty and urban affluence. His stories depict how rapid urbanization and economic growth have widened the gap between the privileged and the underprivileged. *Between the Assassinations* (2008), a collection of short stories, captures life in the fictional Indian town of Kittur, illustrating the struggles of small-town inhabitants against a backdrop of political and social changes.
4. **Ambition and Moral Ambiguity:** Adiga's protagonists are often ambitious individuals who challenge societal norms. Balram Halwai, in *The White Tiger*, aspires to escape the life of a servant and does so by committing murder, raising questions about morality and justice. *Selection Day* explores ambition in the field of cricket, where young players must navigate family expectations and ethical compromises.

Some special Works: Arvind Adiga is discussed here as *The White Tiger* (2008), A darkly satirical novel about class struggle and ambition in modern India. *Between the Assassinations* (2008) A collection of interconnected short stories set in the fictional town of Kittur. *Last Man in Tower* (2011) A novel about real estate conflicts in Mumbai, depicting greed and resistance. *Selection Day* (2016) A coming-of-age novel centred around cricket and family expectations. *Amnesty* (2020) A novel about an illegal Sri Lankan immigrant in Australia dealing with ethical dilemmas. Adiga's works focus on exploring the impact of economic reforms on different social classes. *Amnesty* deals with the experiences of immigrants and their struggles for survival. His characters often face tough moral choices in a corrupt world.

Aravind Adiga is a significant voice in contemporary Indian literature, offering unfiltered insights into the realities of modern India. Through his sharp storytelling, dark humour, and socio-political critiques, he challenges readers to confront the inequalities and ethical dilemmas present in society.

His works remain relevant as they shed light on the ongoing struggles between ambition, morality, and systemic oppression.

- **Economic and Social Inequality:**The glaring disparity between India's rich and poor is depicted by Adiga in striking detail. *The White Tiger* juxtaposes the hardships of the rural poor with those of the urban elite. The impact of gentrification and real estate corruption on the middle class is examined in *Last Man in the Tower*.
 - **Moral ambiguity and corruption:**His characters frequently operate within a morally reprehensible system where achievement is associated with dishonesty and criminal activity. In *The White Tiger*, Balram reflects on moral quandaries in an unjust society by defending murder as a way out of poverty.
 - **The Impact of Globalization and Beyond:** Adiga criticizes the expansion of economic inequality brought about by globalization. The commercialization of sports in India is examined on Selection Day. *Amnesty* examines the experience of immigrants, demonstrating how identity and belonging are impacted by globalization.
 - **Class and Caste Conflicts:** *The White Tiger* challenges India's caste and class system by showing how difficult it is for members of lower castes to overcome structural oppression. The lives of lower-class workers and their everyday hardships in a society that is changing quickly are highlighted in *Between the Assassinations*.
 - **The Problems of Urbanization:**His books frequently show India's fast urbanization and its effects, including uprooting communities and the erosion of traditional values. The conflict between corporate greed and traditional communities in Mumbai's real estate market is depicted in *Last Man in Tower*.
 - **Strength and Opposition:** Many of Adiga's main characters fight against oppression by advancing in society through unusual or immoral means. His writings raise issues regarding the nature of power and how it is obtained, held, and contested.
 - **The "Indian Dream" is a myth:** Adiga challenges the misconception that success in India can be attained solely through hard work. His books demonstrate how structural obstacles frequently keep the impoverished from moving up the social ladder.
 - **Using Crime and Violence to Survive:** To get away from oppression and poverty, many of his characters turn to crime. Readers are forced to consider the morality of such acts due to the ethical ambiguity in *Amnesty* and *The White Tiger*.

Aravind Adiga's Literary Style: Aravind Adiga's writing style is distinctive for its sharp social critique, dark humour, and engaging narrative techniques. His works blend realism with satire, making them both entertaining and thought-provoking. Below are the key aspects of his literary style that make his storytelling unique: first-person narrative, realistic and vivid descriptions, non-linear storytelling and strong characterization.

1. **First-Person Narration and Unreliable Narrator:** Most of Adiga's novels use a first-person perspective, often with an unreliable narrator. In *The White Tiger*, Balram Halwai narrates his rise from a poor villager to a wealthy entrepreneur, justifying his morally questionable actions.

This technique allows readers to see the world through the protagonist's eyes while questioning their perspective.

2. **Satire and Dark Humor:** Adiga employs satire to expose corruption, class oppression, and hypocrisy in Indian society. His humour is often dark, using irony to highlight the struggles of the poor. For example, in *The White Tiger*, Balram mocks the idea of India as the world's largest democracy while exposing the reality of class exploitation.
3. **Simple Yet Impactful Language:** Adiga's prose is direct, with short, punchy sentences that make his stories engaging and fast-paced. His language mirrors the speech patterns of his protagonists, making them feel authentic. He avoids overly poetic descriptions, instead using sharp, vivid imagery.
4. **Realism and Gritty Urban Settings:** His novels are deeply rooted in contemporary India, portraying its cities, slums, and villages with stark realism. He does not romanticize poverty but instead presents it in a brutally honest manner. *Last Man in Tower* vividly depicts Mumbai's real estate market and the impact of gentrification on the middle class.
5. **Social and Political Commentary:** Adiga's novels are not just stories; they serve as critiques of India's socio-economic and political structures. His works challenge ideas of democracy, capitalism, and the so-called "Indian Dream." *Selection Day* critiques the commercialization of sports and parental pressure on young athletes.
6. **Fragmented Narrative and Episodic Structure:** Some of his works, like *Between the Assassinations*, follow an episodic format, consisting of interconnected short stories set in a fictional town. This fragmented storytelling style helps him present multiple perspectives on Indian society.
7. **Symbolism and Metaphors:** Adiga frequently uses symbols to convey deeper meanings. The white tiger in *The White Tiger* symbolizes rarity and rebellion. Darkness and light represent social inequality, with the rich living in the "light" and the poor trapped in "darkness."
8. **The interplay of Indian and Western Influences:** While rooted in Indian themes, Adiga's style reflects global literary influences, such as Charles Dickens (social realism and critique of poverty), Ralph Ellison (*Invisible Man* themes of identity and oppression), and Salman Rushdie (sharp wit and political undertones).

Adiga's literary style is bold, direct, and socially conscious, making his works powerful commentaries on contemporary India. His mix of satire, realism, and engaging storytelling makes his novels both accessible and intellectually stimulating. Aravind Adiga's literature offers a stark, unfiltered view of contemporary India, making his works essential for understanding the country's socio-economic landscape. His themes of inequality, corruption, and identity resonate beyond India, making him a significant figure in global literature. His narrative style, combining satire, realism, and a journalistic eye, ensures that his work remains both engaging and thought-provoking.

Contribution through Literature: Aravind Adiga's novels reflect his role as a contemporary mirror to society. He joins a league of modern writers who use their narratives to shed light on

pressing social issues. In the company of authors like Chetan Bhagat, Amit Kumar, and Arundhati Roy, Adiga's exploration of contemporary themes resonates strongly with readers. Adiga's portrayal of characters like Balram Halwai, whose disillusionment with traditional values reflects the sentiments of the new generation, makes his works particularly pertinent in today's landscape. Aravind Adiga's Literary Exploration of Injustice, Poverty, and Postcolonial Realities in Modern India** Aravind Adiga, a prominent Indian novelist, has left an indelible mark on contemporary literature with his thought-provoking works that delve into the intricacies of social issues, economic disparities, and postcolonial complexities. His novels "The White Tiger" and "Between the Assassinations" offer a compelling analysis of contemporary Indian society, reflecting the stark realities of injustice, poverty, and the lingering effects of colonialism. This research paper aims to delve into Adiga's literary contributions, his portrayal of social issues, and his engagement with postcolonial themes, shedding light on his impact on modern Indian literature. Adiga's debut novel, "The White Tiger," stands out as a groundbreaking work that offers a sharp and unfiltered depiction of poverty and inequality in India. The novel's protagonist, Balram Halwai, emerges as a symbol of the marginalized and oppressed, narrating his journey from servitude to entrepreneurial success. Adiga's writing is characterized by its realistic and unsentimental portrayal of the lives of India's poor, effectively conveying their struggles and the harsh realities they face. The narrative underlines how the poor remain invisible in modern India despite the country's economic growth, presenting a poignant critique of the societal disparities that persist. In "Between the Assassinations," Adiga continues to explore themes of injustice and poverty within the backdrop of a changing India. This novel offers a snapshot of various characters' lives and aspirations during a period of societal transformation. Adiga's masterful storytelling skill allows him to intricately weave complex narratives and characters, enabling an in-depth exploration of the human psyche and the multifaceted challenges of society. By delving into corruption, child labour, discrimination, and cultural clashes, Adiga engages with the pressing issues that shape the nation's identity and future. A crucial facet of Adiga's works lies in his engagement with postcolonial themes. His novels reflect the enduring impact of colonialism on contemporary India, not only politically but also economically. While India gained political independence, economic exploitation by foreign powers continued to persist. Adiga's exploration of postcolonialism goes beyond mere political freedom, extending to the decolonization of the mind and the necessity for cultural and mental liberation from colonial influences. His works mirror the struggles faced by a nation trying to balance its past with the demands of the present. Aravind Adiga as a New Generation Novelist. Aravind Adiga stands out as a unique voice in the field of contemporary Indian literature, bringing with him a new generation of writers who daringly explore the changing social landscape. His books "The White Tiger" and "Last Man in the Tower" are classics that encapsulate the spirit of a society that is changing quickly. Through his characters and stories, Adiga skillfully captures the wave of change brought about by the decline of the traditional social order, urbanization, globalization, materialism, technological advancement, and a change in values.

Conclusion- Aravind Adiga is a master storyteller who has illuminated the essence of modern India through the power of words in a world where literature acts as a link between the past and present. His transformation from a young journalist to an author who won the Man Booker Prize reflects the development of a country attempting to navigate its own complicated past and present issues. Adiga's novels, particularly "The White Tiger" and "Between the Assassinations," vividly depict the glaring inequalities of a society on the verge of transformation. In his first book, "The White Tiger," Adiga immerses readers in a world where oppression and servitude are pervasive, as seen through the eyes of a protagonist negotiating a complex web of oppression and poverty. His writing provides an unvarnished glimpse of the underbelly of a country striving for international renown, and it is unreserved in its depiction of the harsh realities faced by the marginalized. The breadth of Adiga's narratives expanded along with his literary skill. He expands his canvas with "Between the Assassinations," capturing the vast transformations brought about by urbanization and globalization. Adiga skillfully crafts stories that reflect the hardships of people torn between tradition and modernity, providing a perceptive examination of how the forces of change affect everyday existence. More than just depictions of modern India, Adiga's books are potent tools for social change, exposing historical injustices and offering a forum for discussion of societal change. The author is a literary provocateur who aims to stimulate readers' minds and provoke introspection because of his unreserved examination of subjects like neocolonialism, economic inequality, and the conflict between tradition and progress. Adiga's writings are lights in a postcolonial world, showing the way to mental decolonization and upending the former colonial powers' economic hegemony. His stories are used as a tool for social reflection, challenging readers to face the injustice and inequality that still exist in contemporary India. It becomes clear as we follow Adiga's literary journey that his work goes beyond simple fiction. It chronicles India's unrelenting fight for justice, identity, and advancement, serving as a mirror reflecting the hopes, difficulties, and triumphs of a country at a turning point in its history. Adiga's eloquent words serve as a reminder that literature is a tool for change as well as a means of telling stories. It has the power to influence the course of a society that aspires to a more fair and just future. Aravind Adiga's voice is a resonant chord in the vast tapestry of Indian literature, piercing the core of social injustices and pushing boundaries to elicit discussion and contemplation. His path from the inception of "The White Tiger" to the complex layers of "Between the Assassinations" is proof of the novel's timeless appeal, the human spirit's audacity, and the ability of narrative to plant the seeds of change. Adiga's stories will continue to serve as a compass as India develops, illuminating the intricacies of the past and paving the way for a more equitable and inclusive future.

Suggestion: If you have already studied Aravind Adiga's writings, might want to broaden your investigation in a few different ways. Here are some ideas for additional study. Adiga's novels feature women from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. Adiga's Fiction Addresses Caste and Economic Inequality. Is caste specifically addressed in Adiga, or is it overshadowed by class

conflicts? His illustration shows how Indian workers and business owners are impacted by global capitalism.

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