iJRASET
International Journal For Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 12 **Issue:** III **Month of publication:** March 2024

DOI: https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2024.59244

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International Journal for Research in Applied Science & Engineering Technology (IJRASET)
ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
Volume 12 Issue III Mar 2024- Available at www.ijraset.com

Subaltern Issues in Aravind Adiga's Between the Assassinations

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Abstract: ***This research explores the manifestation of social realism and the reflection of globalization within the selected novels of Aravind Adiga, a prominent contemporary Indian author. Adiga's works, known for their incisive critique of societal issues, provide a lens through which the impact of globalization on individuals and communities can be analyzed. This study investigates how Adiga's novels capture the complexities of a rapidly changing world while depicting the challenges and inequalities brought about by globalization.***

The research employs a qualitative analysis of Adiga's selected novels, focusing on "The White Tiger" and "Last Man in Tower," as primary sources. Drawing from theories of social realism and globalization, the study explores how Adiga's narratives portray the lives of characters who navigate the intricacies of a globalized world.

Through in-depth character analyses and thematic exploration, the study reveals how Adiga's protagonists interact with the shifting socio-economic landscape, grapple with cultural clashes, and confront power dynamics resulting from globalization. The novels provide insights into the impact of modernization, urbanization, and technological advancements on different strata of society, often highlighting the plight of marginalized and vulnerable individuals.

Furthermore, the study examines how Adiga's narrative techniques, such as vivid description, authentic dialogue, and juxtaposition, effectively immerse readers into the realities of the characters' lives. It considers how these techniques contribute to the portrayal of a world both interconnected and fractured by the forces of globalization.

Keywords: Subaltern, Aravind, Adiga's, Between ,Assassinations

I. INTRODUCTION

Aravind Adiga born on 23rd October 1974, in Madras (now Chennai) India, is the author of four critically acclaimed works of fiction: The Man Booker Prize-winning Novel The White Tiger (2008), the short-story collection Between the Assassinations (2009), Last Man in Tower (2011) and the recently released novel Selection Day (2016). The White Tiger embarks on the irony that how the subaltern people are still being oppressed and exploited by the powerful class of the society despite India's consistent rise as a global superpower. This research explores the manifestation of social realism and the reflection of globalization within the selected novels of Aravind Adiga, a prominent contemporary Indian author. Adiga's works, known for their incisive critique of societal issues, provide a lens through which the impact of globalization on individuals and communities can be analyzed. This study investigates how Adiga's novels capture the complexities of a rapidly changing world while depicting the challenges and inequalities brought about by globalization.

The protagonist Balram in The White Tiger is a victim of the Indian system of racial segregation and oppression. From a "country mouse" to a "white tiger," the narrative follows the protagonist as he travels from Laxmangarh to Delhi and Bangalore, from the shadows into the light. Balram is having trouble finding himself. This is evidence that colonialism has not permeated society at large. Numerous Balrams and Ashoks are dispersed over the nation. Adiga draws attention to several contrasts, including those between bright and dark, yellow and brown, and large and little belly.

The villagers have slave mentalities, and the Indian village structure is founded on slavery. Balram's father is a rickshaw puller but is also a "man of plan" who values education. Despite his best efforts, Balram had to drop out of school and start working at a tea stand because of the family's financial difficulties. In an amusing aside, Balram says that his narrative describes how Indians create "half-backed" people. The reality of slavery in India is highlighted in his teashop works. Balram's understanding of the society's oppression, feudal system, and class structure develops as he does. He is marginalized economically, socially, and politically due to his wide range of negative life experiences, including poverty, joblessness, and prejudice. Distress, vulnerability, or prejudice in his personal and social life contribute to a sense of isolation.

A description by Kagan and Burton,

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II. SUBALTERN ISSUES IN ARAVIND ADIGA'S BETWEEN THE ASSASSINATIONS

Subaltern is a phrase that was popularized by Italian Marxist political theorist Antonio Gramsci. The concept is fundamental to comprehending past events and the foundation of present-day societies. Without resorting to violence, hegemony holds a society together (Culture Studies). However, evidence suggests that the idea of the "Subaltern" was original in Gramsci's political theory, and this interpretation has been questioned in debates of the meaning of the "Subaltern" in Gramsci's works. Again, going against the grain, Gramsci favored "organic intellectuals," or those who publicly identified with an oppressed class and fought on behalf of that class because of their common interests and oppression (Culture Studies). The works of Mulk Raj Anand, Mahasweta Devi, Arundati Roy, G.N. Devy, and others show this trend.

Homi K. Bhabha, a prominent postcolonial critic, defined "Subaltern" social groups in several of his essays as "oppressed, racial minorities whose social presence was crucial to the self-definition of the majority group;" however, these groups are also in a position to subvert the authority of the social groups who hold hegemonic power. Women, peasants, outcaste, the working class, tribals, the downtrodden, and other marginalized people in Indian society have been able to make history and constitute politics as an autonomous realm (web), according to the research of historian Ranajit Guha.

Subaltern studies, as described by Dipesh Chakraborty, "intervene[s] in the discourse of history by employing the methods of poststructuralist study to effect a radical revision of the way peasantry inscribed itself through non-elite means such as rituals, rebellions, religion, and guerrilla-like boycott and resistance to colonial and vertical domination" (Agarval). Gayatri Spivak, however, stresses that not every victim is a subaltern. In her opinion.

Subaltern is not a classy word for oppressed for the other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie… in postcolonial terms everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern- a space of difference. Now, who would say that's just the oppressed? The working class is oppressed. It's not subaltern… many people want to claim subalternity. They are the least interesting and the most dangerous. I mean, just by being a discriminated against minority on the university campus; they don't' need the word subaltern. They should see what the mechanics of the discrimination are. They're within the hegemonic discourse, wanting a piece of the pie, and not being allowed, so let them speak, use the hegemonic discourse. They should not call themselves subaltern. (web)

During the seven years between the murders of Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and her son Rajiv Gandhi, Between the Assassinations tells twelve interconnected stories set in Kittur, a town on India's south-eastern coast between Goa and Calicut. Ziauddin, a young Muslim, works in a tea store close to the train station in the first tale. Adiga's focus in this narrative is less on the powerful elite and more on the common people. Ziauddin hails from a working-class family in the state's northern regions. He's working at a young age and has no plans to leave the Hindu-dominated area, so he stays there by himself. Because he is the odd man out, he is subjected to abuse and mockery. His young age and his family's dire financial situation drive him to the edge of despair.

Subalterns often had to rely on the generosity of feudal lords for their survival. The latter were often heartless and uncaring toward those living in poverty. Poor households sent their whole workforce to the fields. A week before the rains were expected to begin, the lad in Adiga's narrative gathered his bundle and prepared to return home to work in the fields. For a few rupees a day, he planned to help provide for his family by working in the fields of a wealthy landowner with his father, mother, and siblings.

Adiga has powerfully conveyed the daily struggles of agricultural laborers with the verses above. Due to their social status, they are forced to seek employment in the industries of the wealthy. They put in the time and effort year in and year out, but it's not enough to put them in the same league as the wealthy. The poor have always been able to oppress and exploit the poor, so this is not surprising.

Adiga has masterfully shown the suppression and destruction of the truth by the upper class in his following novel. Adiga has accurately depicted the way the media is controlled by the powerful. Big businessman once ran over and killed a guy with his automobile, Mr. Engineer. However, financial incentives distort the facts:

Engineer hit a man on his way back home, 'Left him for dead'. So that the next morning two constables go to his house. Hasn't even washed the blood off the front wheels of the car.' Then why- 'he is the richest man in this town. He cannot be arrested. He gets one of the employees in his factory to say he was driving the car when it happened. The guy gives police a sworn affidavit. I was driving under the influence of alcohol on the night of 12 May when I hit the victim (BTA)

Therefore, the ability to spend money may distort reality. To cover up the crime perpetrated by his wealthy employer, an innocent low-income employee is set up as a scapegoat. The terrible truth of today is further shown by this fact: "a man might have been sent to jail for no good reason; a guilty man might be walking free". This episode exemplifies a widespread and systemic problem in India and throughout the world: the abuse of power and wealth over those on the bottom. Poor people have no choice but to take the full force of the 'law' when they're subjected to it because of how difficult life is.

George, the lowly mosquito worker whose job it is to distribute insecticides, works in a cathedral for the wealthy Mrs. Gomes in another of Adiga's tales. George makes an effort to win her favor and develop a friendship with her. George gradually earns her trust and, over time, takes on the role of gardener and chauffeur. George has his single sister Maria living with him at home. Their financial situation forces them to look for work.

They are able to make ends meet, but they are unable to acquire the respect and admiration of society's upper crust (as seen by Mrs. Gomes' continued dismissal of George as "just a gutter cleaner"). This makes them resentful, particularly after they've been used extensively and then abandoned for convenience: Oh, these wealthy folks are all the same, George said jadedly. To them, we're nothing but garbage. They'll use us up and then dump us. A wealthy lady will never be able to respect a guy who is impoverished. Simply like a slave' (BTA).

Those in the subaltern class, like George and Maria, seldom speak out for themselves because they fear retaliation from the master class, the governing authority. As victims of the elite throughout history, the subalterns have fostered perennial problems that have yet to be solved. It's true that the lower-class members of society made serious efforts to better themselves. However, the elite, who want to preserve the status quo at all costs, are not supportive of these initiatives. Adiga uses George, Maria, and Mrs. Gomes to illustrate this point.

Women in India were not given the chance to advance in society by becoming educated. Girls, on the other hand, were often taught early on how to be good wives and mothers. Women in subaltern groups have it the worst of all possible worlds. They were unable to pursue their dreams because of a lack of education, poverty, and social status.

Saiyeda Khatun discusses a cultural practice that devalues women by saying, "the system of dowry encompassing all classes very effectively sums up the different degree of subalternity devaluing all women." The wealth and possessions a bride bring from her birth family determine her social standing in her in-laws' household (kulsumandsteph.blogspot.com), yet no one uses the word "dowry" to describe this practice.

Adiga emphasizes the status of subaltern women in numerous of his works. The practice of dowry is a major threat to stability in Indian society, especially for lower- and middle-class households, whose members are forced to give up their hopes and dreams in exchange for financial security. There are still many dowry victims in Indian culture today. Adiga's characters are his mouthpieces on the subject of the dowry threat.

'Dowry,' Ratna, in a kind voice, gave the evil its rightful name. 'Fine. I've been saving up to impress this girl. He let out a sigh. "God alone knows where I'll get dowry for the next two," (BTA). Over the course of twelve years, Jayamma's mother gave birth to eleven children. The majority were females. The correct answer is 9. Oh no, here we go. The elderly Woman placed her hands on her daughter's head since her father had only accumulated enough money to marry off six daughters and the remaining three had to remain virgins for the rest of their lives (BTA). She has never been married, sir. All we're doing is asking for money to marry her off. (BTA)

Ratna is a regular guy who has three beautiful children named Aditi, Rukmini, and Ramnika. Ratna has saved enough money from his hard labor to pay for the wedding of his eldest daughter, but he has not done so for his other two children. Because of this, they can only dream of being married. Poor as a rock, Jayamma grew up with eight sisters.

Her father had put up enough money for her six sisters to get married, but Jayamma, who never got engaged, is now in her seventies and still works as a chef and does housework for a family she has never met. In a word, the dowry system. In yet another tale, a destitute elderly woman plays a crucial role. She tries in vain to marry off her daughter after the death of her husband. Many of Adiga's works depict the wreaking devastation the dowry system causes in Indian society. Giving a dowry may cause the impoverished to fall farther into poverty.

III. CONCLUSION

The book focuses on the disparity between the parts of India that have benefited from globalization and the expansion of the Indian economy and the other parts of India that have not. To the contrary of what many would have you believe, none of the social problems that have been happening in the nation have been removed; they have only been substituted. Rape of women, terrorism, political terrorism, corruption, and gambling have supplanted formerly dominant societal concerns such as child marriage, dowry, sati, excessive work, and the denial of women's education.

The author has stated all these political difficulties by utilizing all of his books, and each story represents a distinct subject, and each novel sheds light on all the problems with equal relevance. The primary goal of Aravind Adiga's works is to get people to take action against the problems they see in the world.

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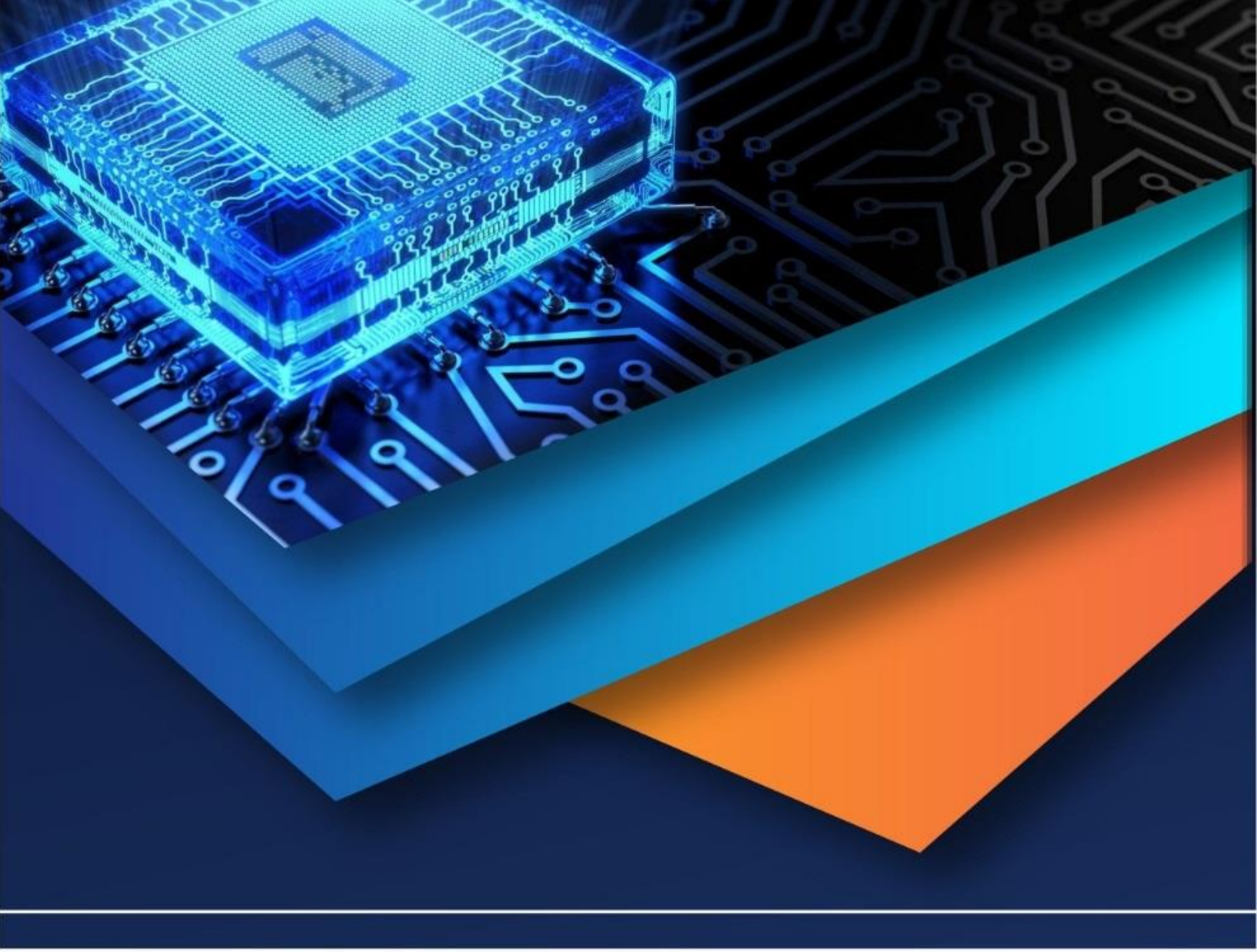
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