
THE NEW EMERGING ETHOS OF THE GLOBALIZED INDIA IN THE WHITE TIGER

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Abstract: Through globalization, India made a profound economic growth and it is 'shining'. However, in *The White Tiger*, eagle-eyed Adiga narrates some heart breaking realities about the New Bangalore, at large about New India along with its positive developments. It portrays Bangalore as a New Myth and New hope for India but it is also a 'red signal' which says that corruption, rootlessness, unequal developments, deviations from values, etc., should be treated at the earliest for the holistic growth of India. The paper analyzes *The White Tiger* from the perspective of the emerging trends of the globalized India.

Keywords: Globalization, socialism, corruption, values, gandhiji, imperialism

Globalization in India Globalization has been making a profound impact, which is unfathomable in all its nuances, on all fields such as personality, value, relationship, family life, shopping style, conveyance, tourism, economic and political, technology, military, etc of both the society and the individual. Even the functioning style and rationale of the state has undergone a metamorphosis and termed as 'neoliberal governmentality' (Gupta, 31). It means that state functions with competitive market logic and sets up different autonomous bodies to monitor various activities of the society. In democratic terms, it may be called decentralization but in the globalization glossary it is called entrepreneurialization in which the state entrusts non-governmental organizations to function on behalf of it. This u-turn affected the traditional functioning rhythm and ethos of the population. The Industrial Policy of 1980, which simplified the process of the industrial licensing, export-import regulations etc., set the race of initiation for liberalization (Nayak) in India, and it took the first major International Monetary Fund loan of \$ 3.5 billion in 1981 (Kothari). However, to overcome the economic crisis of 1990 India was compelled to take fund from International Monetary Fund and World Bank with the condition of liberalization of the economy and took the major step through the Industrial Licensing Policy of 1991. From then onwards, the economic and cultural influences of globalization have been a topic of debate from school level to scholarly seminars. Shashi Taroor says: "The most significant proof of India's maturity as an independent country is the willingness of its leadership to realize, at long last, that economic interdependence is not incompatible with political independence" (Taroor, 198). However, many others like Akhil negatively observed the globalization process.

" Liberalization in this sense is largely interpreted as a project by urban elites for urban elites. There is an ever more visible and growing gap between participants in global circuits of exchange and employment and those outside it who constitute a

majority of the population and who are unable to benefit from liberalization [...]" (Gupta).

In short, 'globalization deeply influenced the mind and perception of young Indians and is heralding new ways of looking at history and culture, science and technology, economics and management' (Singh, 148). Verbalization of the Effect of Globalization in *The White Tiger* *The White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga, is a successful story of a boy who emerged as an entrepreneur in the globalized India. Balram, the protagonist who belongs to Halwai caste, was born at Laxamangarh, a remote village, moved to Delhi and at last reached Bangalore at the time of globalization. Through his odyssey from the dark village to light Bangalore, the author effectively verbalized the impact of globalization on the Indian community in various facets of life. *The White Tiger* does not question the profound economic growth of India but it made an in-depth analysis on how the development affected the common people of India. It was so powerful that it aroused severe criticism along with long lasting insight.

"Just when we thought that the world was raving about the economic miracle of India, a brutal confession by *The White Tiger* protagonist exposes the rot in the three pillars of modern India— democracy, enterprise and justice—reducing them to the tired clichés of a faltering nation" (Chopra). The nationalists of freedom struggle envisaged to create a just society, in other terms a socialist nation but the economic system was a failure and welfare of the people remained a day-dream. *The White Tiger* is an expression of the frustration of common people and it goes through the darkness of village, dim light of Delhi and chandelier's light of Bangalore. It provides glimpses of gross malpractices in Indian democratic society. It is a social criticism directed against the poverty, landlessness, religio-socio-political conflicts, violation of rights etc., presented along with humor and irony. In addition to that, Adiga also sketches out the changing ethos of India due to globalization. So it is not only a novel for the present but also for the future. Failure of Socialism

The basic reason for the globalization of Indian economy is the consequence of the collapse of the economic policies based on socialism.

“Elitist growth pattern was justified in the name of a socialist pattern of society, which was declared the Congress’s policy aim at the Avadi Congress Conference in 1955” (Desai, 327).

Instead of shifting the economic strategies, the government continued with the same policies and in 1976 the word ‘socialist’ was incorporated in the preamble of Indian Constitution by the forty-second amendment. “India failed to benefit from an enterprising native industrial class, as the Leftist bias in economic policy increased in the second half of the 1950s and even more so in the 1960s and 1970s. The failure of the plans to achieve targets did not lead to a questioning of planning strategy; it merely led to a further restriction of private sector” (Desai, 327). The economic growth was severely affected and ‘national income took nineteen years to double between 1950-51 and 1969 -70, and another nineteen to double in 1988 -89’ (Desai, 327). The socialism failed not because of the shortcomings in ideology but the socialist ‘fooled everyone’ (97) and the novelist paradoxically presents the practice of socialism in India. “The Great Socialist’ is used as an allegory to mean all the corrupted politicians who make great speeches about ‘Roads! Water! Hospitals’ (99) but take no action for implementation. The socialist is ‘the boss of the Darkness’ (97) and ‘the mud of Mother Ganga had sucked him in’ (97). Even the posting to government hospitals in villages was through ‘an open auction’ and it is quoted that the ‘rate for this post is about four hundred thousand rupees these days’ (49). The politicians who claimed to be socialists were frauds and the rich controlled the social parties. For example, the four landlords, ‘the four animals’ (98) formed ‘all india social progressive front (Leninist faction)’ (98) and the election is the ‘worst fever’ (98) in India. The elected members never look back to their constituency and their ‘friends can manage’ (213) the elections. The mismanagement, corruption, exploitation etc., together defeated socialism. Bangalore: The New Myth The failure of socialism compelled India to globalization and it was a new enforcement for the economy as well as to the young generation. Because of the policies of Rajiv Gandhi, ‘who was India’s first purely technocratic politician’ (Tharoor, 39) people are equipped to utilize the opportunities opened by the Information Technology and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO). The private engineering colleges were encouraged from 1980 onwards and the number of students increased from 59 per million to 405 per million between 1980 to 2004 (Arora). Bangalore has become the Silicon Valley of India, and is amongst

the top ten preferred entrepreneurial locations in the world. “The whole world will come to Bangalore tomorrow” (320).

Bangalore has been shaping the destiny of India and everyone is toiling ‘to make New Bangalore” (318). Bangalore is a new myth which forms ‘Indian entrepreneur and their success stories’ (4). There you know about ‘how entrepreneurship is born, nurtured, and developed in this, the glorious twenty-first century of man” (6). Bangalore is a morning star, which could lead India to a developed country and ‘it makes [the new generation] happy to see a chandelier’ (117). It is trying to find solution for one of the age old problems of India: unemployment. Opportunities are very few in the rural sides where, ‘every morning, tens of thousands of young men sit in the tea shops, reading the newspaper, or lie on a charpoy humming a tune, or sit in their rooms talking to a photo of a film actress” (54) but the cities are filled with opportunities and one can see ‘twenty, twenty-five pages of job advertisements in the newspaper every week.’ (54) Bangalore is a state of Being where people lead meaningful existence. There each one determines one’s fate but in darkness ‘you don’t have a choice’ (121). Only through the exercise of free will, human beings feel significance in life, so there is no question of success or failure but action is prime.

“That is the difference between this India and that India: the choice” (306).

The freedom is a state of being not merely external but an inner feeling. However, Bangalore is not completely a paradise but as anywhere in India injustice, poverty etc., are there.

“Half-baked cities, built for half-baked men” (53).

The poor and homeless are there too.

“When you come to Bangalore, and stop at a traffic light, some boy will run up to your car and knock on your window,”(6).

But the truth is distorted.

“One fact about India is that you can take almost anything you hear about the country from the prime minister and turn it upside down and then you will have the truth about that thing” (15).

Only after interacting with the villagers, slum dwellers, street people, orphans, and so on, one can determine which narration about India is the real: Adiga’s or the government’s. ‘If anyone knows the truth about Bangalore’ (4), at large about India it is Balram because he is the ‘self-taught entrepreneur’

“The entire city is masked in smoke, smog, powder, cement dust. It is under a veil. When the veil is lifted, what will Bangalore be like? May be it will be a disaster: slums, sewage, shopping malls, traffic jams, policemen. But you never know.” (317-318).

However, Balram knows the reality since he was

'born and raised in darkness' and later came to the light. The search for the truth about India is the driving force of the novel.

Emerging New Class: Entrepreneurs. The White Tiger is a story of 'thousands and thousands of' (4) 'social entrepreneurs' (177) who see 'tomorrow' when others see 'today' (319) and teaches how to 'Become An Entrepreneur In Seven Easy Days!' (6). Sarcastically Adiga says:

"And our nation, though it has no drinking water, electricity, sewage system, public [...] or punctuality, does have entrepreneurs. [...]. And these entrepreneurs—we entrepreneurs—have set up all these outsourcing companies that virtually run America now" (4).

They are the new emerging 'brahminic group' to exploit the other. 'Globalization shapes a new class of people, named entrepreneur' (319). They seem to be 'men of action' (12) but lack uprightness. They know 'the time to smile' and 'sip the hot coffee' (310). At the same time they 'keep paying and paying the fucker' (310). For success 'the Indian entrepreneur has to be straight and crooked, mocking and believing, sly and sincere, at the same time' (9). They 'are made from half-baked clay' and the world is 'listening to the story of a social entrepreneur' (177) through The White Tiger. Entrepreneurs make attitudinal changes in the new generation and variation in the traditional ethos of India.

"This is a biography of most of the Indian entrepreneurs, a memoir of the narrator, Balram Halwai, the White Tiger, which attempts to depict the plight and predicament of most of the Indians who come from villages, the India of dark, to explore their fortune by earning bread in metropolitan cities, the India of light" (Chandra, 324).

The immoral success of modern entrepreneurs has an impact on new generation and the city experience turn the innocent to a culprit who has clean image before police.

"To break the law of his land—to turn bad news into good news—is the entrepreneur's prerogative" (58). The symbol of 'a pair of hands breaking through handcuffs' (97) is not symbolizing the poor shaking off the rich but the corrupted politicians and entrepreneurs escape from the law. Unequal Developments the White Tiger preciously says that development is taking place but unequally between India of light and India of dark.

"For example, let us look at the popular perception that Indianness is an insatiable desire for position and power. Mukesh Ambani has to live in the world's costliest house that is only 27 stories tall! Lakshmi Mittal had to organise his daughter's engagement in a place no less grand than the Palace of Versailles" (Admin).

Adiga throws light into this serious problem and sympathize with the poor. "Balram is the conscience of the lower class—their anger, frustration, protest and revenge and readiness to adopt a new moral code of conduct to succeed in life. Murder of Ashok by Balram is the reaction of deep-rooted frustration of lower class experiencing the polarities between the upper class and the lower class" (Chopra).

There are only two classes in India: 'men with big bellies and men with small bellies' (64). Ever widening distinction between them badly affects the social stability.

"Never before in human history have so few owed so much to so many" (176).

The common people do not benefit from the economic liberation and there is considerable difference in the salary of skilled labour and unskilled labour. So the novelist set a new moral rule of 'the secret of his success' to justify the means by the end because the poor have no other option but to kill the rich. "To hell with the Naxals and their guns shipped from China. If you taught every poor boy how to paint, that would be the end of the rich in India" (276). Around fifty three times the novelist uses the word 'nothing' in the novel and it has the significance in defining the poor who lost his/her meaningful existence in India. The rich have 'nothing to worry about' (167) because the poor 'will do what he is to do, no worries about that' (167).

The disparity between the rich and poor and the violation of the rights of the destitute may lead to the organization of various militant groups like Naxalism. The hegemonic government tries to suppress it brutally instead of democratic means. "As the Bihar case illustrates, the elites try to maintain their dominance through brute strength and the manipulation of popular symbols. While landless agricultural laborers have tried to emphasize Independence-era symbols legitimizing better conditions for Untouchables (Scheduled Castes), tribals (Scheduled Tribes) and laborers, local landed elites have countered by insisting they are all "Naxalites" who are trying to overthrow "democracy," and that the landlord armies and their political allies are the true "freedom fighters" defending "the nation" (Barbara). The The White Tiger narrates 'the truth' and Balram represents the rise of lower caste who are in rooster coop, through bloodshed. It is a dream of a rooster to escape from coop and live freely. But many hesitate to respond even if the cage is opened. In spite of that, Balram had killed the owner of the cage and celebrated life as free as a bird.

"Now, the five-star hotels of Bangalore I know inside out, having spent thousands of rupees eating kebabs of chicken, mutton, and beef in their restaurants, and picking up sluts of all nationalities in their bars, but

the five-stars of Delhi are things of mystery to me.”

Although it is a contradictory to the ethos of non-violence, the means of bloodshed may be adopted to bring social justice. Government is also in dilemma and helpless towards the need of the poor. So it indirectly promotes revolution.

“that’s why the government of India publishes

[Murder Weekly] and sells it on the streets for just four and a half rupees so that even the poor can buy it” (125).

Corruption As in Delhi, corruption continues even in ‘New Bangalore’ too. Both politicians and bureaucrats, who are the leaders of the country and governors of the administration, are under the witchcraft of corruption. The novel elaborately depicts the corruption happening in schools, election procedures, political parties, bureaucrats, welfare policies, etc.

“Just as the British colonialists awed the natives with their power and position, today’s ministers and politicians awe their constituencies” (Admin).

Justice is denied to the poor and Balram who killed his own master is friendly with police. Ironically, he says,

“A man on a bicycle getting killed—the police don’t even have to register the case. A man on a motorbike getting killed—they would have to register that. A man in a car getting killed—they would have thrown me in jail” (309).

The police, the keepers of law and order, get the bribe with gratitude and entrepreneurs are ready to give money ‘for all the good they are going to do’ (300). The protagonist laughs at the police: “But to be called a murderer by the police!” (102). In the country which adopted Satyameva Jayate as the national motto corruption is deep rooted. Hollowness of government policies is yet another form of corruption in India. The ministers announced very attractive plans to fulfil the basic needs of the people, such as ‘to eliminate malaria in Bangalore by the end of the year,’ ‘to eliminate malnutrition in Bangalore in six months’ ‘special incentives to turn our villages into high-technology paradises’ (291) etc. Either these plans may not be implemented or take place ineffectively. The government’s love for the poor is sarcastically narrated through the inscription of “Government’s Work is God’s Work’ (297) in front of Vidhana Soudha, the seat of Karnataka’s Legislative Assembly located in Bengaluru (Bangalore) but it should be engraved as ‘we have this fucked-up system called parliamentary democracy’ (156). Through this, the author rejects the morality that all the authorities are from God and indirectly justify the act ‘of civil war’ (221) and ‘of blood on the streets’ (221).

Development and Values

The shifting of values due to globalization is

summarized as:

“The new generation, I tell you, is growing up with no morals at all” (316).

Endangering the long cherished values of India may affect its unity and integrity because these values help one to accept the diversities of the nation with tolerance. Adiga gives a ‘read’ signal that since IT revolution is not mere technological revolution but cultural one too, the social values, style of life, etc should be nourished in accordance with the true spirit of Indian ethos, which is based on noble values and God realization.

“In the present era of globalization and integration of markets, the lifestyle of people is changing dramatically. The recent phenomenon of unrestrained consumption and display of wealth by certain classes in India may create a counter image of ‘self-indulgent Indians’ (Singh, xxxiii). The success of an entrepreneur depends on his ability to murder, for corruption, ability to utilize opportunities at any cost, to build up unjust relationship with police etc.

Holistic growth is not limited to material progress i.e. ‘go from being a social entrepreneur to a business entrepreneur” (299)

but in keeping moral and ethical principles along with the economic development for self-realization. Balram is not an in born criminal. He does not want to be one but he is compelled to do it to get out of the rooster coop.

“I am not a politician or a parliamentarian. Not one of those extraordinary men who can kill and move on, as if nothing had happened. It took me four weeks in Bangalore to calm my nerves.” (295).

The society makes the criminals and to keep away such social deviations, society should establish social justice rather than building jails. Everyone should have ‘the chance to be a man’ (318) if not ‘for that, one murder’ (318) was enough. Balram agrees that ‘the matter of murder—which is a wrong thing to do, no question about it. It has darkened my soul. All the skin-whitening creams sold in the markets of India won’t clean my hands again. (318). But there was no other means to be a dignified person.

“Free people don’t know the value of freedom, that’s the problem” (117).

He committed the murder to establish his ‘Being’, the basis of human existence.

“I’ll say it was all worthwhile to know, just for a day, just for an hour, just for a minute, what it means not to be a servant” (321).

Balram is representative of the poor in India who are denied basic rights to live a decent life. To break the rooster coop, he who is ‘a man of action and change’ (5) took a phlegmatic oriented life philosophy and to become became ‘a successful entrepreneur by using his master’s money and joining the corrupt Indian

system.' The sustainable economic progress, social peace, etc., cannot be attained without values and the establishment of durable peace is not possible by neglecting a few. So Balram is a forewarning to all who follow the path of exploitation. He is a product of generations who were ignored human dignity and became 'small in bellies. "My whole life, I have been treated like a donkey. All I want is that one son of mine at least one should live like a man" (30). Ashok Sharma is not the result of his 'insatiable greed and vaulting ambition' (Chindhade, 162) but the expression of anger and desire to attain the rejected opportunities of generations. It is an attempt to re-establish the real spirit of India. The ultimate aim of a human being is not mere material achievements but self-realization which includes the spiritual values too. Adharma cannot last ultimately but Dharma should be established. Another value, which India upholds for a long time, is relationship within family and society. Indians are more collective than individualistic, in spite of this, the competitive world compels the people to work for a long time with stress and it endangers human interactions. In the cooperative world not the intimacy but competition is promoted which brings momentary prosperity.

"When the work is done I kick them out of the office: no chitchat, no cups of coffee. A White Tiger keeps no friends. It's too dangerous" (302).

The soul of corporate world is 'pragmatism'. It brings success in accumulating money and going up in hierarchy of position. 'I'm not a sentimental man' (12).

"His philosophy of individualism comes close to Mr Ashoke's Machiavellianism. Balram's individualism stresses independence and self-reliance disregarding any morality, while Ashok's Machiavellianism describes his tendency to deceive and manipulate others for personal gain. He prompts his drivers to imitate him if they wished to succeed in life, becoming White Tigers" (Sebastian).

Adiga acknowledges that relationships are important by saying:

"But without family, a man is nothing. Absolutely nothing" (189).

The relationship, which is based on mutual respect, is one of the core ethos of India. A different value, which is in jeopardy, is simplicity. The material achievement is one part of human life and Indian ethos gives due importance to artha for sustenance and not for accumulation of it. However, as the salaries shoot up, people may look for a luxurious life and pub-culture may increase. "Life in Bangalore is good—rich food, beer, nightclubs, so what can I say! "Thin" and "small"—ha!" (12-13). Comfort seeking life may become hindrance for goal achievement and inner self-satisfaction. In addition, it may create

imbalance in society. In addition to these values The White Tiger also mentions about the dignity of the woman.

"The girls would not be safe on buses or trains anyway. The men of this city, frankly speaking, are animals." (298).

This is the root cause to start travel agency named 'SUVs' by Ashok Sharma. Respect of woman is a basic value in any dignified society. In short, globalization should not erode the noble values of India. India without Gandhi The ethos of modern India is inseparably attached to Gandhian ideology. Regardless of this fact, India left Gandhiji out in cold for short-term goals. So the novelist has used 'Gandhi' as a powerful tool to convey how the country deserted him and in turn walked away from the poor. Gandhiji has become a beautiful piece of art.

"The prime minister and foreign minister of my country will meet you at the airport with garlands, small take-home sandalwood statues of Gandhi, [...]" (5).

Now Gandhiji is a tool in the hands of the most corrupted rascals and without keeping the principles of Satyagraha many 'undertake Gandhian protest' (33). The photo of Gandhiji is showcased for popularity without practicing his ideology. The shopkeeper who encouraged bonded labour of children also sat 'under a huge portrait of Mahatma Gandhi' (37, 52,). The photoshoped Gandhiji is the silent witness for lot of injustice happening in India. For instance, Balram 'works in the tea shop under the [...] the big photo of Gandhi (61), Balram 'drives past Gandhi's bronze statue in Delhi 'after just having given a bribe to a minister' (137), the inspector receives the 'small offering' where Gandhi was in the corner (300); and 'a framed portrait of the god of gods, a grinning Mahatma Gandhi' was placed where justice was denied to the boy whose brother was killed in the accident, (310). Even Gandhiji indirectly witnesses the murder by Balram who 'passed the famous bronze statue of Gandhi' before doing the crime (281). These are clear instances of disrespect towards Gandhiji. Balram got a gift from the inspector - Lessons for Young Boys from the Life of Mahatma Gandhi and promise of a scholarship but soon 'good news becomes bad news' (36). But in real life he learned that India moved away from Gandhian ideology. "That is your fate if you do your job well—with honesty, dedication, and sincerity, the way Gandhi would have done it, no doubt" (51). So at the end he planned to start 'a school where you won't be allowed to corrupt anyone's head with prayers and stories about God or Gandhi—nothing but the facts of life for these kids. A school full of White Tigers' (319). The society moved away from Gandhiji so to get justice, the protagonist moved to the means of

‘Subhas Chandra Bose’.

Only those who are in rooster coop follow Gandhi:

“Why doesn't that servant take the suitcase full of diamonds? He's no Gandhi, he's human, he's you and me. But he's in the Rooster Coop. The trustworthiness of servants is the basis of the entire Indian economy.” (175)

But in India they are not going to attain freedom because after independence Gandhi was not in Delhi but in Kolkata. Delhi cannot carry a living Gandhi but only a bronze statue and colourfully decorated Raj Ghat. However, for the protagonist the Gandhian way is the sure way to the light:

“At the head is Mahatma Gandhi, with his walking stick, and behind him follow the people of India, being led from darkness to light.” (136).

Virtual Imperialism The IT sector and BPOs not only influence the economy but even the setting of ethos of the new generation in India. The cultural assimilation and accommodation are so deep, due to globalization. The nineteenth and early twentieth century imperialism was territorial, the colonizer physically ruled the geographical areas, but the late twentieth and twenty-first century imperialism controls the economy and manipulates the trade in favour of the colonizer. So the imperialism continues in new forms: the virtual-imperialism. Bangalore stands for new colonizers' capital because bangaloreans work depends on their masters' (298) convenience.

“It is almost three in the morning. This is when Bangalore comes to life. The American workday is coming to an end.” (58).

For Adiga ‘men and women in Bangalore live like the animals in a forest do’ (298). They act for the master of pets.

The White Tiger narrates the virtual-imperialism which exists in India today. “It is significant that Adiga unravels the pervading imperialism in a politically independent and post colonial country. Imperialism is the extension and expansion of trade and commerce under the protection of political, legal,

and military controls. It could, therefore, be evidently argued that while colonialism is virtually over today, imperialism continues apace as Western nations such as America are still engaged in imperial acts, securing wealth and power through the continuing exploitation of other nations” (Chandra, 334). Americans have colonized our brains through their money power and the virtual slaves in India work for them.

“Everything in the city, it seemed, came down to one thing. Outsourcing. Which meant doing things in India for Americans over the phone? Everything flowed from it—real estate, wealth, power, sex” (298). Globalization is an opening for the people to interact with the other cultures at same time it should not lead to mimicking others at the cost of one's national ethos. In the Virtual-imperialism, the life style and values are merged in accordance with the masters and it may affect the ethos of the country. One who is not sure about the spirit of one's culture may be moved away by the currents of the other cultures. Mr. Ashok and Pinky Madam tried to defy cross the culture but did not succeed and they became rootless. Pinky Madam, the modern American woman, married Mr. Ashok, the Indian who is educated abroad but failed to merge the cultures and at the end, she left India. Uprooted people lack attachment towards the house and place they live unlike the likeness, which the ancestors of India had.

Conclusion: Globalization is a powerful force, which influences the holistic outlook of Indians. If one is not aware of one's national ethos, it may lead to rootlessness. On the other hand it should help the Indians for the overall development of the country. Otherwise, ‘it may well turn out to be nothing’ (320) and it ends with a sorrowful ‘Ha!’ (321). the novel gives a New Hope.

“It may turn out to be a decent city, where humans can live like humans and animals can live like animals. A new Bangalore for a new India” (318). The novel calls for altruism to establish peace and justice based on the real ethos of India.

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