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Corruption in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*

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Abstract

Corruption is a major crime that prevails all over the world. It can be seen in all fields such as education, medicine, politics, etc. The Oxford dictionary defined corruption as dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power typically involving bribery'. It is a form of unethical conduct by a person entrusted with a position of authority, to acquire some personal benefit. Corruption is one important part of Indian politics. When the drivers comes to know the connection between his master and the politician. The driver narrates about coal-business as a bad business. Coal mines are run with the help of politician.

Keywords

Bribery, Entrepreneur, Pasteurize, Discrimination, Hierarchy

Nikam writes about this novel, "A witty, exuberant realistic fable of India's Changing Society it captures mind and the soul of the readers" (90). Adiga brings the fact in his novel *The White Tiger* that how corruption has able to root so deeply in Indian culture. . Srinath writes that, "It is the story of the ordinary life of an ordinary driver. The rise of a rick-shaw-puller's son to a driver and a driver of drivers who could have even become minister theoretically is the message of the story. But then there is nothing to redeem this rottenness and corruption" (7). Balram, the protagonist is also corrupted by the city life. Balram's grandmother Kusum writes a letter to Balram, she writes "a total of eleven months and two days, sine you last sent us any money. The city has corrupted your

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soul and made you selfish, vain-glorious, and evil" (262). Balram works as a driver in the city and when he does not sent money for his family his grandmother thinks that he is corrupted by the city life.

Balram observes the politicians who receive bribe from Mr. Ashok to escape from the taxes of coal mines, which is actually the wealth of nation. Whenever he finds Ashok offering corruption and not paying taxes he becomes furious and it leads him to think about the story in 'The Murder weekly titled Rape, Murder and Money'. Balram comes to the conclusion that; "The history of the world is the history of a ten-thousand-year war of brains between the rich and the poor. Each side is eternally trying to hoodwink the other side"(254). Nikam quotes that "Poverty results in dishonesty, bribery, corruption and immoral behaviour" (88). This turns to be true in the case of Balram.

Corruption prevails even in the schools of India. Balram the protagonist of the novel explains how the teachers who are ought to be very responsible and teach the moral values involve in corruption. While Balram is studying in the village school in laxmangarh government announced free food scheme "a government programme gave even boy three rotis, yellow daal, and pickles at lunchtime" (33). But they do not provide those foods. The students never see rotis, yellow daal, or pickles. Balram says, "everyone knew why: the school teacher had stolen our lunch money" (33). The teacher steals the money which the government given for the food of the students. The teacher has the excuse for his corruption. He says that he has not paid for six months.

Teachers do forgery not only in providing mid-day meals of the students but also the uniforms which are sent by the government for the students that also misused by the teacher. When an inspector comes to the school for inspection he finds that there is no duster in the class, no chair and no uniform for the boys. He becomes angry and he asks the teachers "How much money have you stolen from the school funds, you sister fucker?"(34). But it is found that he is not looking into the matter again. He does not take any actions against them. In the village the people are uneducated and they are unaware of their rights to fight for the government concessions they remains silent. Using this weakness the dominant people in the society corrupts the poor village people. Adiga

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portrays the poverty in the village and which the rich people in the cities spending their money lavishly and also in corrupting others. Srinath while writing about the corruption in this novel writes that "Darkness of poverty, illiteracy, servility and rural impoverishment are contrasted with the light of cities where corruption is rampant" (6).

Adiga portrays that doctors are also a part of corrupt system. This is evidently proved in this novel he also beautifully pasteurize the incidents that happens in the government hospital. Nikam in his article stresses Adiga's point of corruption as:

> The writer lashes out at the existing educational and medical System prevalent in the Indian society. The exploitation, Injustice, inequality, deceit, and discrimination found in the Society is projected through the educational, medical, political, Commercial and social structure Adiga has portrayed a very Realistic picture of the government hospitals and the prevailing Corrupt system in life-saving areas as well. (87-88)

Balram and Kishan go to the government hospital with their father who seriously suffering from tuberculosis but there is no doctor in the hospital. When they bribe the ward boy with ten rupees then he says that the doctor may come in the evening. Balram explains his situation as, "There was no doctor in the hospital. The ward boy, after we bribed him ten rupees, said that a doctor might come in the evening" (48). This incident cleared that not only the doctor is corrupt but even the ward boy in the hospital is also involved in this mean activity, this proves that corruption prevails in all areas even from the lower positions to higher positions. The real fact is that corruption takes place mostly between political parties and upper class businessmen, the middle and lower classes suffer a lot. Moreover those same people have no choice so they involve in corruption in order to protect their financial prosperity.

When Balram and kishan are in the hospital with their father two Muslim men are also there is the hospital to get treatment. One of them says that the doctors pay four hundred thousand rupees for their post. The doctors get the job in the government hospitals only after corruption. Adiga in his novel *The White Tiger* brings the fact that the

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doctors, who work in the government hospital, get the government salary and they go to work in some private hospitals without caring about the patients in the government hospitals. This is realistic because this happens in many government hospitals of India. The Muslim man and Balram while talking in the hospital imagine that they are doctors.

Though it is an imaginary situation Adiga tries to reveal the real secret which is common in the hospitals. This also shows that corruption is even prevailing among the hierarchy of the doctors themselves. The novel portrays a very dark side of India where corruption is common and often necessary for career advancement or societal reputation.

Corruption is a disease which has its root in all areas of the society. Adiga portrays how the policemen are indulging in corruption in various occasions. He brings the pathetic condition of the village where there is not even a hospital. "But there is no hospital in laxmangarh, although there are three different foundation stones laid by three different politicians before three different election" (47).

Adiga compares the policeman with the servants. If a servant gets a million dollars from a taxi in Mumbai, he definitely gives it to the police. But he has no confidence on the part of the policemen. The servants are more loyal than the policemen. The policemen who are supposed to be honest and to protect the common people are actually involving in this cheap activity.

The policeman accepts the money without any guilty consciousness and he asks for more money. This shows that how the policemen are money minded rather than concentrating on eradicating the social evils in the society. They have given the power only to stop corruption. But actually they are promoting corruption in the society. Adiga also brings that corruption which grows day-by-day in the Indian society. Adiga gives a shocking insight about the Indian politicians, ministers and the election, Ironically he calls the politician as the Great socialist. Once Balram take Mr. Ashok and Pinky madam to his village Laxmangarh, where he meets his family members.

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Adiga exhibits the true picture of Indian society in this novel. He also tells the people about the criminals who are born due to inequality, corruption and injustice in the society like Balram. Adiga's important point seems to be that corruption necessarily breeds corruption, unless of a greater revolution remakes society.

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