



Social vices in Aravind Adiga's *Last Man in Tower*

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ABSTRACT

Literature gives access to a wide range of emotions and events which would take years, millennia and decade to experience directly. It plays significant role in shaping of a society and an individual. It is wide and vast as ocean. Concentrating to its geographical aspect of Indian, it is known as Indo- Anglian literature. As a contemporary writer of Indian writing in English, Aravind Adiga in *Last Man in Tower* draws the readers towards the awareness of serious effects caused by the impact of modernity and globalisation. The novel has shown how the raising power of corporate world which attempts to oppress the working class, being driven by love for money and greed leads to the emergences of social vices.

Keywords: Deceit, Deprivation of rights, Corruption, Patriarchy And Murder

Introduction

Aravind Adiga is a winner of man Booker prize for his novel, *The White Tiger* (2008). His novels are centralized on the lives of growing middle classes. He voices out for the rural and the middle class people exposing the injustices rendered to them. The life experience of Adiga in India had made him to come with novels having themes of poverty, globalisation, modernity, corruption which lead to social evils as he had stated in an interview,

“When I was a boy in India, we lived in a closed-off, socialisteconomy where just about everything was controlled by the government. It was stagnant, largely corrupt system and this defined life. And in 1991 everything changed and the economy was opened up and what is called the New India began”.

In his second novel, *Last Man in Tower* he reveals the lives of people belonging to different section of Indian society, their culture, socio economic and political status. He gives a bright vision of social issues spotting the reality of the contemporary society. As a result the readers can get awareness to societal issues around them and not loose their courage if they had to face such problems in their lives.

Mr. Yogesh Murthy, the protagonist of the novel who was also known as Masterji, was the last man in visharam society standing against Dharmen Shah's offer. His value as human keep falling in the society as he adheres to his old principles and customs being immovable by the modern and luxurious life. His respect among his neighbours becomes to fade away as his choice does not coincide with the choice of his neighbours who being self lovers chose money.

The materialistic society in this novel respects human greed than humanity. The love of rich life acts as a root cause of all evils in the novel. When Masterji stood as a threat to the dreams of prosperity of Shah and the dwellers of vishramsociety, they went to the extent of murdering him. Material needs plays a higher role than a human value and even more than life.

Adiga portrays that greed does not only degrade the worth of the fellow human but also of that very person. Dharmen Shah is least bothered about his health when it comes to the act of achieving his dreams. “That again. That city is going to kill you, Dharmen” (55). These are the words of Doctor Nayak as a piece of advice to Dharmen, pointing to his worsening of health due to Chronic bronchitis. Dharmen does not value his own health but continue to get on to his construction business not heeding to the doctor's advice.

The immigrant daily wages workers in the novel are the sufferers of lawless social system. They were treated not like humans but as animals. Dharmen as their boss wanted them to work for him even in unfavourable climatic conditions. In the parching heat he cunningly makes up their mind for work by promising them to pay high wages but does not keep up his words. Even a day of withdrawal from work is under a threat to their employment as Shah says, “No man who does not work for Shah when it is hot will not work for him when it is cool.” (63).

Adiga has manifested political system of democratic India as corrupted. His description of one of the animal in zoo through the words of

Masterji quotes, "Perhaps this mongrel beast looked like one of those, half politician and half criminal who ruled the city, vile and necessary." (45). Thus the rulers were equalized to monstrous creatures who act without humanity.

The treatment of citizens before law is seen unequal and biased in this novel. Numbers of letters to Newspapers and approaching of the higher authorities goes vain in the life of Masterji. All his efforts became unprofitable to save himself against the greedy society which make his right to his own property vulnerable by forcing him to move out of his house against his will and this issue takes him to the extent of losing his life. Right to life and right to dignity which constitutes the fundamental rights conferred upon citizens of India becomes dead and inactive in the life of the protagonist. In one of his letters to editor Adiga expresses how masterji is deprived of his human rights.

Some of the woman characters of this novel are suppressed figures. The author had portrayed how women are observed as weak and submissive before men. Rosie the model, plays the role of being assistant to Shah, serving and devoting her life to entertain him. She is one among many girls who were trapped by the comfortable and rich life offered by Shah. He had paid her with a luxurious life for being with him but gives no space for her to interfere into the matters of his personal life. It made her feel that she had been treated by him like one of his properties when her desires and opinions are not regarded. Rosie, realizing the lack of her importance and reputation, being hurt in her self reacts against Shah saying, "I am not your prostitute! I am not your property!" (91). though she was doing a job almost like that of a prostitute. Masterji's narration of one of the life incidents of his wife, Purnima:

Gaurav will remember when his grandfather died in 1991 and she went to Suratkal to perform the last rites with her brothers. When she came back to Mumbai, she said nothing for days. Then she confessed. "They lock me up in a room and made me sign a paper." Her own brothers! They threatened her until she signed over her father's property and gold to them". (44)

The scene depicts the domination of males over the females in the act of inheriting father's property in Indian family. It manifests Indian society as a system of patriarchy in which men controls female with an aim of becoming heirs to the properties of their family. It was carried out by handling violence upon the female character Purnima.

Conclusion

Adiga gives a view about the defects of his own country in *Last Man in Tower*. The overview of the Mumbai City with the slum settlements and apartment buildings in the reality of the current scenario acts as evidences to similarity of the places in the novel. The author had represented himself on the behalf of the oppressed and subjugated class empathizing for them and favouring them against the brutal injustices as he felt that it was the duty of the writer to bring a change to the society. Adiga has proved that a writer does not correct the society by involving into an social act but by bringing the vices hidden in dark to light so that the readers are enlightened by his words and can act as the medium to eradicate the wickedness prevalent in their surroundings.

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