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## **Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*: Voice of Downtrodden, their Struggle, Exploitation and Search for Social Justice**

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### **Abstract:**

The uproar of the economic boom in Twenty-first century grew a greater economic disparity in the society as the poor being invisible than ever before. Amidst uproar of the economic boom, the evidence of their involvement in crime is seen in the rise of armed rebellions in many parts of India. The White Tiger is the strong voice of underclass in which marginal farmers, landless labourers, jobless youths, poor, auto and taxi drivers, servants, prostitutes, beggars and unprivileged are figured out. The downtrodden are unmated and have given chance to raise their voice against oppression, injustice, social and economic deprivation done to them. They always try to break Rooster Coop to get their existence in the modern world and forced to choose alternative path like Balram Halwai. As there were one thousand caste and destinies in India but now there are just two castes; Men with big bellies and men with small bellies, and only two destinies; eat or get eaten up.

**Keywords:** *Downtrodden, Rooster Coop, oppression, social and economic deprivation, struggle for freedom.*

### **1. Introduction**

Twenty-first century which is the uproar of the economic boom grew a greater economic disparity in the society as the poor being invisible than ever before. Amidst uproar of the economic boom, the evidence of their involvement in crime is seen in the rise of armed rebellions in many parts of India. Postcolonial writings have call upon the notion of social Justice, freedom, resistance and egalitarianism in its attempt to counter dictatorial structures of racial discrimination, prejudice, exploitation, oppression, suppression and ill-treatment. They argue how the nation state inherited colonial systems of hierarchy, triggering new codes of oppression, exploitation and economic deprivation. The industrialists, the landowners, and the upper classes have always exercised power over downtrodden peasants, labours and the working classes. The exploitation and deprivation, subjugation and subordination, the resignation and silence, the resilience and neglect mark the lives of downtrodden, even when they resist and rise up, they feel bounded and defeated by their subject positions. These downtrodden people have neither representatives nor spokesperson in the society. They live in and so helplessly suffer and

occupy marginal or subordinate place or no place at all in the history and societies of which they are the essential part as human beings. These downtrodden people are actually oppressed and their oppression is even legitimized by the democratic system. This rigid and repressive system cannot be exterminated unless the world remains divided into two, the powerful and the powerless.

The paper attempts to explore the condition of downtrodden, their struggle for freedom, their aspiration from periphery to centre, their bitter insecurities, their ways of subjugation and exploitation, and their reactions against the structure of the society.

Adiga is a writer who demonstrates modern life with great aptitude and finely tuned to the various quirks of contemporary society and is alive to the eccentricities of the globalized world. He does not just deal with the mad chaos of modern living but also with the gaping absurdities of disparate distribution of wealth. Adiga speaks of suppression and exploitation of various sections of society in India. He argues class divide and disempowerment in India which makes poor poorer and rich richer. He has opinion that in old days there were one thousand caste and destinies in India but now there are just two castes; Men with big bellies and men with small bellies, and only two destinies; eat or get eaten up.

## **2. Discussion**

*The White Tiger* (2008), a debut novel, which won the Man Booker Prize for the year 2008, is a story of the central character Balram Halwai alias Munna narrated through a letter, addressed to the Chinese Premier, Mr. Jiabao. The novel runs in seven chapters that revolve around the story of protagonist Balram Halwai and his employer Mr. Ashok. Balram Halwai is not happy with conditions prevailing in India; he is deeply anguished at the luxurious way the rich of cities live their life at the sacrifice of interests of the downtrodden. He finds it difficult to keep his anguish hidden for long, and he seeps to unburden himself by revealing his pain through his letter to the Chinese premier prior to his arrival to Bangalore. The purpose of the Mr. Jiabao's visit to Bangalore is to know the truth about it and learn how to make a few Chinese entrepreneurs. The protagonist seizes upon the opportunity to reveal the plight of an Indian downtrodden to the high-profile politician so as to highlight the fact that how the downtrodden of India live their hard life due to the antipathy of riches towards them. While Balram Halwai a self-taught entrepreneur represents the downtrodden, his employer Mr. Ashok a rich cool merchant, represents the rich. Balram Halwai is a strong voice of unprivileged who struggles to get rid of – old-age slavery and constant exploitation. His protest, anger, indulgence in crime, and emergence of businessman alarm the world of oppressor that the voice of downtrodden cannot be suppressed for long. He destined to be a sweet maker, becomes a successful businessman Ashok Sharma. The novel symbolically indicates the subversion of oppressed and records the story of an oppressed, Balram Halwai, a son of lower caste, Rickshaw puller and his big fabricated events that make up the fabric structure of the novel in the small village of Laxmangarh situated in the

darkness of India(Bihar) and consequently moving to Delhi and Bangalore. Adiga in his novel *The White Tiger* portrays India into two different countries in one, “an India of light, and an India of Darkness” (Adiga 14). He throws light on the darkness of India articulating voice to the downtrodden and tries to stop the discrimination between the rich and poor, by creating a society in which the principles of equality and Justice should be governed.

Balram Halwai, born in small village named Laxmangarh in Gaya district, the son of poor rickshaw puller who died of tuberculosis and the grandson of a sweet maker whose shop was usurped by a rich man with the help of police is “half baked”. He has been experiencing the injustice and oppression since his childhood and he is witnessed the suppression of the villagers by the four devils of his village and politicians as they set the houses of poor people on fire to roast their egg. He is brought up in such a condition where no one cares or sympathize for any one because of crushing poverty. The suppression made them so much of feeling less that they never realize any kind of sense or emotion for anyone. He represents the *Dark India* which is constituted by servants, untouchables, marginal farmers, Jobless youths, poor drivers, destitute, prostitutes, beggars and other unprivileged groups. The *Dark India* is the creation of our democratic policies, bureaucratic set-up, illiteracy, poverty, unemployment, caste and culture conflict, dowry system and our social structure. As Krishna Singh says:

Balram is the strong voice of underclass in which marginal farmers, landless labourers, jobless youths, poor, auto and taxi drivers, servants, prostitutes, beggars and unprivileged figure. The underclass is the result of our polity, bureaucratic set-up, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, caste and culture conflict, superstitions, social taboos, dowry practice, economic disparity, Zamindari system, corrupt education system, poor health services, police and judicial working. These forces collectively operate to perpetuate the underclass. This underclass constitutes Dark India. (89-112)

Balram acknowledges to the Chinese premier that “The future of the world lies with the yellow man and the brown man now that our erstwhile master, the white skinned man has wasted himself through buggery, mobile phone usage and drug abuse” (Adiga 5-6) and also admires him that, “you Chinese are great lovers of freedom and individual liberty. The British tried to make you their servants, but you never let them do it” (Adiga 5). These words ironically show the aspiration of the downtrodden for their freedom and individuality from old- age slavery and presently from economic disparity. It is this novel through which Adiga comments upon the social disparities in India in which the fate of the downtrodden is shaped and controlled by the oppressors. People who live in so called the dark India are destined to serve their masters as Balram cleared that the people in Laxamangarh worship Hanuman because, “He is shining example of how to serve your master with absolute fidelity, love and devotion” (Adiga 19). In Spivak’s theory of silence is the most important trope and the positive replica to the question “Can the subaltern speak” deeply suggested in the novel *The White Tiger*. Subaltern to Spivak means those who are downtrodden and is the counterpart of the society whose voice and the

activities and other expression of power had been muted, whose voice had been snatched away and whose invulnerable force had been lost or swept away because in respect of the power of voice, representation and above all the question of identity play a vital part in their survival. Silence, oppression and pain are the fundamental parts of these downtrodden classes who always try to fight for their survival but their voicelessness became obstacle for their survival from day to day life. Hence, they cannot represent themselves in the society. As Randhawa stated in the following lines:

Since the marginalized have known only the language which has been handed down to them by their exploiters, they should, as Fanon would have probably suggested, use the language of violence at their disposal to give at back and at the same time to continue to deconstruct it from within. (33)

Balram's father crushed by poverty and tough manual work has been always treated as 'Donkey' and has no respectable place in his life. Being subjected to humiliation and torture by the affluent, he wishes that his son should live at least like a human being as he speaks out, "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" (Adiga 30). Balram is deeply conscious about crushing poverty as he reports that his father body tells the history of his life and sufferings like:

A rich man's body is like a premium cotton pillow, white and soft and blank. Ours are different. My father's spine was a knotted rope, the kind that women use in village to pull water from wells; the clavicle curved around his neck in high relief, like a dog's collar; cuts and nicks and scars, like little whip marks in his flesh, ran down his chest and waist, reaching down below his hipbones into his buttocks. The story of a poor man's life is written on his body, in a sharp pen. (Adiga 26-27)

Adiga gives a satirical representation of Indian feudal system even though it was mostly abolished after independence in India by the 44 amendments but it is still prevalent in some parts of the country. The situation in Laxmangrah is extremely shocking in which the landlord lives in mansions, eat good food, have many servants and enjoying life at the sacrifice of poor. The landlord's workers lead a miserable life doing backbreaking work in the field with blackened sickles, begging one landlord or the other for some work. Balram, one of the members of the oppressed, out of his hatred towards the landlords, gives them metaphorical names as the Wild Boar, the Stork, the Buffalo and the Raven. The four landlords who got their names from the peculiarities of appetite that had been detected in them. Stork, a fat man with fat moustache owned the river that flowed outside the village, and he took, "a cut of every catch of fish caught by every fisherman in the river, and a toll from every boatman who crossed the river" (Adiga 24) to approach Laxamangarh. Second, Wild Boar his brother owned all the good agricultural land around Laxamangarh. Men who wanted to work on those agricultural lands around the village, "had to bow down to his feet, and touch the dust under his slippers, and agree to swallow his day wages" (Adiga 25). Third one, The Raven owned the worst land, which was dry, rocky hillside

around the fort, and “took a cut from the goatherds who went up there to graze with their flocks. If they didn’t have their money, he liked to dip his beak into their backsides” (Adiga 25). Fourth one, The Buffalo was the greediest of all. He had “eaten up the rickshaws and the roads. So, if you ran a rickshaw, or used the road, you had to pay him his feed—one-third of whatever you earned, no less” (Adiga 25). Because of their exploitative tendencies, Adiga calls them animals as Balram said that, “All four-animals lived in high-walled mansion just outside Laxamangarh... they had their own temples inside the mansions, and their own wells and ponds, and didn’t need to come out into the village except to feed” (Adiga 25). These landlords also have their approach with regional political parties for their selfish motives. With the emergence of Naxalism, these so-called animals have send their sons and daughters away, to Dhanbad or to Delhi. As Rooble Verma and Manoj Varma comments on, “The White Tiger is of a nearly feudal society disguised as democracy. It is a depiction of the social and economic inequalities of contemporary India” (6).

The practice of feudalism in democratic India is not only limited to rural India so called dark India but it stretched to urban jungle too with different colours. In modern urban India the ruling class means rich enjoys constant services of half-baked Indians or human spiders in the form of rickshaw-pullers, cooks, drivers-cum-servants, chauffeurs and other domestic help. The rich in the modern urban India so called an India of light treat their servants as domestic animals and keep them under humiliating surveillance as there are no space for poor in the malls of new India.

In fact, this novel describes the growing divide between the have and have’s not’s. Balram Halwai tells about his education. He is a village boy who faces all the grim realities of life along with his family. He is a son of rickshaw puller extremely underprivileged and incompetent to finish his schoolings. He said that there are many downtrodden like him who are incompetent to finish their schoolings because of crushing poverty and corruption in education system. Adiga presents first day conversations between Balram and his teacher in the school.

Munna? That’s not a real name.

He was right; It just means ‘boy’

That’s all I have never been given a name.

Did not your mother name you?

She is very ill, sir, she lies in bed and spews, blood.

She got no time name me?

And your father? He’s rickshaw puller, sir, He has got no time to name. (Adiga 13)

The life of downtrodden darkens when corrupt and defunct education system operates in the society. Balram writes to Jiabao in a sarcastic manner that, “If the Indian village is a paradise, then the school is a paradise within a paradise” (Adiga 32). In Laxamangarh, Balram exposes that how a typical school teacher called, “big Paan-and spit Man” (Adiga 29), goes to sleep by

noon and drinks toddy in the school, and how supply of free food to the school goes to the teacher as he claims "There was supposed to be free food at my school, a government program gave every boy three roti's ,yellow dhal and pickles a lunch time. But we never saw roti's or yellow dhal, or pickles and everyone knew why the school teacher had stolen our lunch money" (Adiga 33). But the teacher gives legitimate excuse for it, "he hadn't been paid his salary in six months" (Adiga 33). Even full of uniform truck that government had sent to school is not issued to the children but "a week later they turned up for sale in the neighboring village" (Adiga 33). The whole education system is operated by the "crowd of thugs and idiots" (Adiga 35), which Adiga calls "Jungle" ( 35). Regarding this Sudhir K. Arora says:

This corruption has entered even in the temple of education. The teacher steals the money of the government scheme for providing roti and dal to each student on the plea that he has not got his salary for a long time. Even the people know it but don't blame the teacher. (87).

The school inspector who once visits the school finds that all the students except Balram are dull and hardly know anything and he deeply observes the spark in him and says:

Your young man, are an intelligent, honest, vivacious fellow in this crowd of thugs and idiots. In any jungle, what is the rarest of animals—the creature that comes along only once in a generation? I thought about it and said, 'The White Tiger.' 'That's what you are, in this jungle'. (Adiga 35).

He suggests him to change the school, "You need to go to a real school—somewhere far away from here. You need a real uniform and a real education" (Adiga 35). But the process of real education for 'The White Tiger' starts when he is forced to work along with his brother in the village tea shop to pay off family debts. The family has taken a big loan from the stork so they could have a lavish wedding and a dowry for their cousin sister. He becomes a target for other boys when they repeat the inspector's words and laugh boisterously. Neither any insult nor humiliation could dampen the spirits of Balram who is determined to break the cages.

These downtrodden people are not only suppressed, oppressed, exploited, and deprived by the hands of rich but also the politicians in the flag so called democracy. Balram's description of the condition of the government hospitals is full of criminal remarks. Poor health services and non-implementation of government policies expose the unrestrained malpractices which collectively enhance the miseries of the poor. In Laxamangarh, different politicians before three different elections laid foundation stones for a hospital for only to meet their selfish ends. It is clearly witnessed when Balram's father died due to the lack of hospital and medical facilities. Medical services have shown as an object of political mockery. The Great Socialist inaugurated Lohia Universal Free Hospital in view of election result but not for the benefit of poor people as there is no doctor in the hospital, doctor infrequently visits the hospital; even though the rooms are not safe, Balram reports as:

Cat has tasted blood. A couple of Muslim men had spread a newspaper on the ground and were sitting on it. One of them had an open wound on his leg. He invited us to sit with him and his friend. Kishan and I lowered father onto the newspaper sheets. We waited there ...the Muslim men kept adding newspapers to the ground, and the line of the post of doctor is auctioned because there is good money in public service and doctor gets the job offering bribe and touching the feet of the great Socialist-the employer. Subsequently, “you can keep the rest of your government salary and go work in some private hospital for the rest of the week. Forget the village. Because according to this ledger you’ve been there. You’ve treated my wounded leg. You’ve healed that girl’s jaundice. (Adiga 50)

The politicians, the landlords and the rich people of the society not only corrupt the whole system but set one’s house on fire especially poor to roast their egg. The downtrodden class of the society becomes the victim of such corruption and politicians. Through Balram’s voice one can imagine that what kind of politician exist in India and how they do wrong promises for their own benefit and bags money for themselves. During the election time, politicians make their tricks by using wrong means to win the election, as he writes to premier of China:

Now that the date for the elections had been set, and ... on radio, election fever had started spreading again. These are the three main diseases of this country, sir: typhoid, cholera, and election fever. This last one is the worst: it makes people talk and talk about things that they have no say in. (Adiga 98)

Adiga condemns Indian social and political system and ironically writes to Chinese premier that “whatever you listen about this country is just appearance if you would like to know the reality of Indian social and political system just come once here and see the truth by your own eyes”(6). There is another bitter reality of India that during election time the political leaders buy votes of downtrodden people adopting wrong means. In fact, in India, election fever is the worst fever than any other. Balram is the keen observer and oppressor who write about the gossip which grows furious during elections:

Would they do it this time? Would they beat the great socialist and win the election? Had they raised enough money of their own, and bribed enough policemen, and bought enough fingerprints of their own, to win? Like eunuchs discussing the Kamasutra, the voters discuss the elections in Laxmangarh. (Adiga 98)

People know the bribery between politicians and policemen; still they do not raise their voice against the system. It has become the custom of so called Indian democracy which the novelist explores powerfully through the speech of the protagonist who is the voice downtrodden as:

I had to be eighteen. All of us in the tea shop had to be eighteen, the legal age to vote. There was an election coming up, and the tea shop owner had already sold us. He had sold our fingerprints the inky fingerprints which the illiterate person makes on the ballot paper to indicate his note. I had overheard this from a customer. This was supposed to be

a close election; he had got a good price for each one of us from the great socialist's party. (Adiga 97)

There is open dealing between the teashop owner, under whom Balram and other were working and the great socialist party for making vote bank. Balram and other members working in teashop are made eighteen to increase the number of votes to the great socialist's party.

Adiga is a keen observer who updates us that the culture of politics and the class system do not permit the lower-class people even to sit on chair. Balram's father is a rickshaw puller was not only physically captured by servitude of poverty even though mentally also, and has been waiting for long time for passengers standing at a corner. Sense of servitude is clearly shown by Adiga as being many chairs setting in a line but Balram's father sits on the earth in "squatting posture common to servants in every part of India" (24).

While as the novel moves from an '*India of darkness*' to '*an India of light*', the whole world of underclass also migrates with their exploitation and sufferings like the labourers working in the industrial set-up, taxi and auto drivers, servants, prostitutes, beggars, poor slum-dwellers and unfriendly master-servant relationship underclass emerges. So, the big cities like Delhi and Bangalore witness both kinds of India. Adiga clearly shows through Balram's journey from Laxamangarh to Dhanbad then Delhi and finally to Bangalore that the socio-psychological condition of the underclass remains unchanged. Although the cities provide ample opportunities of job but still social behaviour and psyche of the upper class is identical everywhere whether it is a landlord or politician, bureaucrat, rich man, upper caste people, industrialist or entrepreneur. Everywhere these downtrodden are trapped in Rooster Coop struggling to come out of the cage. After the death of Balram's father, both Balram and his brother Kisan went to Dhanbad, the city of coal mines for seeking better job opportunities. He joins the tea shop and worked as a servant. He beautifully describes the wealth of Dhanbad as:

There was money in the air in Dhanbad. I saw building with sides made entirely of glass, and men with gold in their teeth. And all this glass and gold – all of it came from the coal pits. Outside the town, there was coal, more coal than you would find anywhere else in the darkness, may be more coals than anywhere else in the world. (Adiga 53)

Balram being ambitious and enterprising at the core of his heart wanted to switch his career from a tea-boy to a chauffeur. As he was determined to rise at the top of the society, he made it a reality with great planning and much sacrifice. He is destined for greater things and his grandmother came up with six hundred rupees so that he may learn driving. He searches door to door for the job as a driver and luckily he happened to be in the landlord's compound where his youngest son Ashok had returned from America, and needed a driver, found Balram just the person who would fulfill his needs. It turns out that besides driving he has to "to sweep the floor of the courtyard and make tea, clean Cobwebs with a long room or chase a cow out of the compound" (Adiga 69) Apart from doing all these things, he has to play cricket with any person

in the household who wants to play and entertain himself, and “ heat water on the stove carry into the Courtyard and then lift the old man’s feet up one after the other and immerse them in the hot water and then massage them both in gently” (Adiga 70). Although serving his master devotedly, Balram is not meted out Human treatment. How can he receive human treatment as treating servant’s inferior to dogs is the norm in the houses of rich people? Balram’s life in the service of his master as a driver is not an exception to this norm. He puts it as, “The rich expect there are dogs to be pampered, and worked, and petted and even washed! And guess who had to do the washing? I got down on my knees and began scrubbing the dogs and then leathering them and foaming them and then washing them down, and taking blow dryer and drying their skin” (Adiga 78).

It becomes a saga of resistance and oppression. Rich live like kings in a shiny new world where servants are expected to serve their masters every aspect like servitude. Balram’s stay and diverse experiences in the house of Mr. Thakur Ramdev, the local landlord, gave the readers an inside view of how the middle-class people dominate the downtrodden in India. Adiga gave an interview to Lee Thomas, regarded the novel as, “ultimately mild, middle-class critique...that question their right to rule India” (Lee 1). Although, he is to some extent happy in his job, kept dreaming to become one of the successful persons of the society. Mr. Thakur Ramdev takes him to live in Delhi and his joy knows no limits as he says, “I am in the light now, but I was born and raised in Darkness” (Adiga 14).

While doing job of a driver in the house of Mr. Ashok, he begins new life and felt comfortable before his masters. Mr Ashok and his wife pinky Madam are very polite to him but Mr. Mukesh is always critical and enquiring about him. He now gets handsome amount of money from his masters and spends a comfortable life. But the servants are not allowed to stay in the apartment where their masters live. They live in servant’s quarters where all the drivers, cooks and maids rest and wait till they are called by their masters. At the same time the narrator comments on the unhealthy restlessness of the poor workers as, “The people were building home for the rich, but they lived in tents covered with blue tarpaulins sheets, and partitioned into lanes of faces was replaced by the stranger stench of industrial sewage.” (Adiga 260)

He has always been eager to acquire knowledge, and listens the conversation of his master and other people while at work as he is not an original thinker but definitely an original listener. In Delhi, he has to his shock and disbelief as he soon realizes that the people from ‘dark India’ cannot easily free themselves from the exploitation. They sleep on the footpath, roads, under flyover or in cramped rooms specially made for servants. They come to city in search of light but remain mostly in perpetual darkness.

Balram’s arrival in Delhi makes him to see the various facets of human life, people from the different status come here to brighten their future like politicians try their best to

accommodate themselves in grabbing the suitable opportunity and businessmen come here to see new hopes and aspirations of corporate world. But at the other side, face of the capital is also visible forty percent of the entire population of the capital still bound to live in slum areas. They spend hellish lives and live in miserable condition as Balram writes to premier:

Thousands of people live on the side of the road in Delhi. They have come from the Darkness too you can feel by their thin bodies, fifty faces, by the animal like way they live under the huge bridges and over possess. These homeless people are a particular problem for drivers. (Adiga 120)

A. S. Rao and Neelam says regarding intention of Adiga in the novel:

Adiga has shown that though India is one of the fastest growing economics in the world but its progress is not holistic. The condition of poor people is yet transform completely. He has attacked hardly on the political authorities and had tried to wake up the spirits of the common people'. (6)

In Delhi, Balram develops friendship with the vitiligo lipped driver who like Balram hails from rural area. The vitiligo lipped driver teaches Balram how to survive and enlightening him on the grim realities of life in Delhi as the lipped driver says, "the main thing about Delhi is that the roads are good, and the people are bad. the police are totally rotten. If they see you without seat belt, you'll have to bribe them hundred rupees" (Adiga 124).

Balram is unhappy with his life in Delhi for many reasons. During the night he has to grapple with Cockroaches and mosquitoes while during the day he faces harmful air and sound pollution. Delhi appears to him for worse than Dhanbad respect of living conditions. The city Malls of Delhi has added to his humiliation as his master, Mr. Ashok along with his wife spends hours on shopping in city Malls whereas Balram has to spend hours of Boredom restlessly waiting for their return. He feels humiliated as a human being and deprived of basic human rights to enter a shopping mall. As per the Mall culture, a poor driver couldn't enter a mall, he is not allowed into the mall as he has sandals on his feet whereas "everyone who was allowed into the mall had shoes on their feet" (Adiga 148). If he supposed to walk into the mall someone would say "Hey,that man is a paid driver! What's he doing in here? There were guards in grey uniforms on every floor - all of them seemed to be watching me. It was my first taste of the fugitive's life (Adiga 152). He reminisces one of the newspaper reports on the malls, in the early days entitled 'Is there No Space for the Poor in the Malls of new India?' (Adiga 148). This made a man in sandals burst out 'Am I not a human being too?' (Adiga 148).

In the programme "*You ask the question,*" Adiga replying to a query on poverty, internal unrest and terrorism in India as:

These problems have been brewing for a long time. The causes are complex, but one common theme I find is the heightened tension within the country that's caused by the

growing gap between the rich and the poor. The flare-ups can often take the form of ethnic or regional protests, but the underlying grievances are often economic: "those people who live over there are doing much better than we are." Fixing the economic disparities has to be part of any attempt to address India's growing unrest. The country's intelligence and police agencies need to be reformed and modernized; right now, they seem way behind the terrorists (The Independent)

It is clear through the lost coin episode when the mean and extremely stingy behaviour of the rich where Mongoose insults Balram for not having retrieved a rupee coin which he lost while getting out of the car. He is so much bothered about a rupee coin after bribing someone with a million rupees. Balram gets humiliated by the mean mentality of rich like Mongoose when he said him:

Get down on your knees. Look for it on the floor of the car.

I got down on my knees. I sniffed in between the mats like a dog, all in search of that one rupee. 'What do you mean, it's not there? Don't think you can steal from us just because you're in the city. I want that rupee.'

'We've just paid half a million rupees in a bribe, Mukesh, and now we're screwing this man over for a single rupee. Let's go up and have a scotch.'

'That's how you corrupt servants. It starts with one rupee. Don't bring your American ways here.'

Where that rupee coin went remains a mystery to me to this day, Mr. Premier. Finally, I took a rupee coin out of my shirt pocket, dropped it on the floor of the car, picked it up, and gave it to the Mongoose" (Adiga 139).

Master's mean behaviour continue when they instruct their servants about does and don'ts like Balram is told never to switch on the AC or play music when he is alone.

The novelist has given a delicate hint of the deteriorated condition of the law and justice as well as the servants in Delhi in the depiction of the hit-and-run accident of Pinky Madam. After a heavy drinking at a late-night party, she adventured to drive herself and inadvertently killed a homeless child sleeping in the road side. This accident exposes the hypocrisies and corruptions of the upper-class people and the government agencies. As being honest and feeling guilty, she wished to reach out to the child's parents for emotional support and granting compensation but the hypocritical members of her in-laws prohibited her to reach out to the family. They are determined to protect themselves from any judicial punishment and financial losses. they contacted an advocate Mr. Chamandas Varma of Delhi High Court to manage the whole affair. The advocate convinced them, "The judge has been taken care of. If your man (Balram) does what he is to do, we'll have nothing to worry about" (Adiga 99). Mr. Ashok's family has forced Balram to take upon himself the blame of the murder committed by Pinky Madam.

Balram sign an affidavit written by the advocate taking all the blame on himself as they do not inform him that signing the legal paper means he would be put into jail.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

I, Balram Hawai, son of Vikram Halwai, of Laxmangarh village in the district of Gaya, do make

the following statement of my own free will and intention:

That I drove the car that hit an unidentified person, or persons, or person and objects, on the night of January 23rd of this year..... That I was alone in the car, and alone responsible for all that happened.

I swear by almighty God that I make this statement under no duress and under instruction from no one. (Adiga 168)

He is going to be imprisoned for no fault of his own. His imprisonment presents the misfortune to which a majority of the servants of Delhi are generally subjected due to their master's unquestioned control over their body and Soul. Balram puts it as, "the jails of Delhi are full of drivers who are there behind bars because they are taking the blame for their good, solid middle-class masters. We have left the villages, but the masters still own us, body, soul and arse" (Adiga 170).

Balram never holds himself responsible for his plight but blames his family and the traditions to which his family is subscribed. He finds that the seeds of servitude are sown in him during his childhood by which he cannot help being a submissive servant who is ready to suffer for the fault of his master. He unhesitatingly confesses to the Chinese Prime Minister that, "once a servant, always a servant; the Instinct is always there, inside you, somewhere near the base of your spine. (if you ever come to my office, Mr. premier, I would probably try to press your feet at once)" (Adiga 299). He further tells about his inborn Instinct to serve his master to Mr. Jiaboa, "the way I had rushed to press Mr. Ashok's feet, the moment I saw them, even though he had not asked me to! why did I feel that I had to go close to his feet, touch them and press them and make them feel good why? Because the desire to be a servant had been bred into me: Hammered into my skull, nail afternoon nail and poured into my blood, the way sewage and industrial poison are poured into mother Ganga" (Adiga 193).

Balram is paranoid about his family support during the coming days of his Imprisonment and apprehend that instead of standing by his side in his difficulty, his family members would actually feel proud that their son has gone to jail for his employer to prove his dog like loyalty. He holds the Roaster Coop- like system of Indian society responsible for his miseries and predicament. Here Adiga frequently mentions the metaphor "the rooster coop" (Adiga 257) as describing the situation or characteristics of the servant class in India. Balram also defends himself for murdering his master with it. Balram experiences the two kinds of India with those who are eaten and those who eat. He wants to be an eater, someone with a big belly. The key

metaphor in the novel is of the Rooster Coop through which Adiga enables to describe the downtrodden and their miserable situation and aspiration to get freedom from this system. Balram feel caged like the chickens in the rooster coop, and being a White Tiger, has to break out of the cage for his freedom. He first describes how the rooster coop looks like in the market in Old Delhi, in order to give the visualization as, “Go to Old Delhi ...and look at the way they keep chickens there in the market. Hundreds of pale hens and brightly coloured roosters, stuffed tightly into wire-mesh cages...They see the organs of their brothers lying around them. They know they're next. Yet they do not rebel. They do not try to get out of the coop. The very same thing is done with human beings in this country (Adiga 173-4). However, the chickens are not trying to escape from the poor-constructed cage. Balram compares those chickens living in a miserable condition with the downtrodden class in India. With the structure of the inequality in the country, Balram comes to believe that liability for the suffering of the servant also lies with the mentality of the servant class, which he refers as ‘perpetual servitude’ (Narasiman 1-10). As per his philosophy, individual action is the key to break out of the rooster coop and the servants are self-trapping. He renders to validate his actions by saying, “I think the Rooster Coop needs people like me to break out of it. It needs masters like Mr. Ashok – who, for all his numerous virtues, was not much of a master – to be weeded out, and exceptional servants like me to replace them”. (Adiga 257)

Balram, a voice of downtrodden confirms that the trustworthiness of servants is the basis of the entire Indian economy. He uses a paradoxical statement and a mystery of India as he refers that the prime minister’s booklet will inform you, “Indians are the world’s most honest people... No. It’s because 99.9 per cent of us are caught in the Rooster coop just like those poor guys in the poultry market. The Rooster Coop doesn’t always work with miniscule sums of money.... Masters trust their servants with diamonds in this country! (Adiga 174-5) .... handful of men in this country have trained the remaining 99.9 percent – as strong, as talented, as intelligent in every way – to exist in perpetual servitude... can a man break out of the coop? ...the Indian family, is the reason we are trapped and tied to the coop.... only a man who is prepared to see his family destroyed – hunted, beaten, and burned alive by masters – can break out of the coop. That would take no normal human being, but a freak, a pervert of nature (Adiga 175-6).

The ‘rooster coop’ symbolizes Balram’s conscious expression to describe the oppressed, confined, suppressed and helpless condition of the average Indian citizen. His dream is to break of his coop, to shed his feathers and become what for him is a symbol of individualism, freedom and power. Balram having been a witness to all of Ashok’s corrupt practices and gambling with money to buy politicians, he decides to steal and kill his master. Adiga penetrates deeply into Balram’s subconscious as he plans to loot Rs. 700,000.

Go on, just look at the red bag, Balram – that’s not stealing, is it? I shook my head. And even you were to steal it, Balram, it wouldn’t be stealing. How so? I looked at the creature in the mirror. See- Mr. Ashok is giving money to all these politicians in Delhi so

that they will excuse him from the tax he has to pay. And who owns that tax, in the end?  
Who but the ordinary people of this country – you! (Adiga 244)

Consequently, Balram fall into a state of frenzy and cut the throat of Mr. Ashok. He kills him in “the way Muslims kill their chickens” (Adiga 286). Balram is not a mindless murderer but it appears that murder is the only means to break the shackles of bondage in which he has been trapped. He has no other alternative to realize his dream and to break social economic disparity. After killing his employer Balram hurriedly leaves Delhi for Bangalore so as to avoid his arrest. The murder of his employer haunts him relentlessly for more than four weeks.

At the end Balram remembers his past just opposite to his present status from a sweet maker to a business tycoon. As he said, “Once I was a driver to a master, but now I am a master of drivers, I do not slap, or bully mock anyone I do not insult any of them by calling them my family either, There my employees. I am their boss (Adiga 302).

### 3. Conclusion

We find that corrupt politician, feudal system, faulty education System, poor health service economic depravity, attitude of rich not only enhances the problems of underclass but also victimize them. Directly or indirectly this is part of our today's developing India. Aravind Adiga draws humanistic approach towards a dismal picture of modern Indian society. He comes to the conclusion that major difference is not of color, caste or any other thing but economic disparity. Adiga argues that in the olden days, there were one thousand caste and destinies in India but now there are just two castes; Men with big bellies and men with small bellies, and only two destinies; eat or get eaten up. The novel symbolically indicates the subversion of oppressed and records the story of an oppressed. Adiga in his novel *The White Tiger* portrays India into two different countries in one, ‘an India of light’ and ‘an India of Darkness’. He throws light on the darkness of India articulating voice to the downtrodden and tries to stop the discrimination between the rich and poor, by creating a society in which the principles of equality and Justice should be governed. Even today's globalized world we find that weaker section is becoming weaker day in and day out hence being pauperized by powerful.

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