

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

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CONCLUSION

Aravind Adiga treats a number of general themes in his fiction. They are familial relationship, corruption, moral depravity, poverty, unemployment, urbanity and industrialization and their effects, woman question, sex and crime, power politics, pollution, casteism, superstition, class conflict, communalism especially of religious animosity between the two individuals. Besides these themes, the theme of cultural identity is also an important theme of his novels and short stories. Adiga's novels and short stories address various issues and cultures that are relevant in contemporary India. His novels and short-stories indicate different aspects of cultural identity through family background, characters, setting, class, caste, gender, national characteristic, racial background, locality, region, ethnic, religious, linguistic affiliation. He employs many aspects and factors as indicators of cultural identity in his novels and short stories. The theme of cultural identity gets vividly reflected in *The White Tiger*, *Last Man in Tower* and *Between the Assassinations*.

In the first novel *The White Tiger*, Aravind Adiga studies Indian culture with the focus on the category of class through different factors such as traditional family system (joint family culture), patriarchal culture, feudal culture, religion, rituals and customs, caste, different fields of occupation, culture of politicians, cultural clash between educated and uneducated, East-West culture clash, rural-urban culture, age and nature.

In *The White Tiger*, two families represent joint family culture. The first is Balram's family and the second is the Stork's family. Balram lives in a very big family. In his family everyone gives importance to their family relations. Balram's father, Vikram Halwai is the head of the family and everyone in his family respects him. But actual decisions are taken by his grandmother Kusum. She is the senior

person so everyone follows her orders. The whole family is in her control. Balram's father is a rickshaw-puller and he earns money so he takes the responsibility of his family. After his death his elder son takes the responsibility of the family. All the members of his family are sensitive and very much attached to each other. They care for their family.

The Storks family is also an example of traditional family. They also live in a joint family. The Stork is the head of the family and son Mukesh and Ashok respect him and accept his decisions. Ashok also respects his elder brother. He doesn't take any decision against him. They care for their name and fame in the village. They want to retain their reputation in the society. All these characteristics show that both the families stand for joint family culture.

Aravind Adiga throws light on Indian culture through joint family system. In India, joint family culture is rooted since long. Indians care for their family and familial relations.

Then Adiga has shown culture of India through patriarchy. Adiga focuses on patriarchy through Balram's family. Vikram Halwai is the head of the family He is the representative of the family. In patriarchal culture seniority is very important whether it is of man or of woman. Balram's grandmother is the senior person in his family. She controls the family so everyone accepts her decisions and orders. She is born and brought up in patriarchal culture. Balram is the hope of the family. Adiga throws light on dowry system which is also an example of patriarchal culture. It is a typical Indian custom that a girl's family has to give dowry to the boy's family. Through Balram's family Adiga shows it.

Adiga shows one more family the Stork's family, that also follows the patriarchal culture. In the stork's family women are neglected and are not given importance at the time of taking decisions on important family matter.

Through the feudal culture Adiga shows how poor people are under the control of feudal lords. Adiga tells how the feudal lords exploit the subaltern like the servants and slaves. In the novel the Stork's bothers are the feudal lords. The whole village is under their thumb and they possess all the rights. They exploit the villagers. They grab everything from the villagers. Adiga shows feudalism that has existed since long and traditionally it is followed by people from generation to generation.

Religion is an important part of Indian culture. India is a multi-cultural country because people of different religious communities live in India. Adiga shows cultural identity of different religious communities through their cultural practices. Mohammad is from minority culture as far as religion is concerned and he has to hide his identity in Hindu society. Just to get a job and feed his starving family, he claimed to be a Hindu and called himself Ramprasad. Balaram is from sweet maker's family so he takes advantage of his religious background and blackmails Ram Persad. There is another example that also reveals the culture of India. The Stork's family is the Hindu family. They care for the purity of race, religion, caste and family status. When Ashok marries a Christian girl, namely Pinky they refuse to accept her as a family member. In India people give significance to their castes. It is seen through the Stork's family. Since long it is observed that people of dominant culture think that people of minority culture are inferior. Adiga suggests that Hindus and Muslims try to maintain their own cultural identity.

Indian people are very religious. So they have faith in rituals and customs. They follow ancient tradition from generation to generation. Indian people believe in God. When Indian people begin their work, immediately their hands go towards their eyes. When Balram drove Honda city for the first time, he prayed God not to let him make a mistake. It is an instance of Indian culture. When people are in

trouble, they turn to God. Balram prays God for the union of his master and mistress.

In India a person's caste is his identity. Adiga presents typical Indian attitude of Indian people through their caste consciousness. In India Hindu culture is the dominant culture. Adiga shows it through this novel. Mohammad hides his caste identity to get a job of a driver. He does this to feed his starving family. He is the representative of minority culture. Balram gets a job of a driver because he belongs to the high caste. Orthodox Indian people give importance to their caste in marriage. They oppose inter-caste marriage. Adiga shows this through the marriage of Ashok and Pinky. The Stork's family does not approve of their marriage because Pinky belongs to minority culture.

In India a profession has its own culture. Adiga observes professional culture through different characters from this novel. In Indian culture teachers are supposed to be highly cultured. The job of teacher is a noble profession. But Balram's teacher is quite opposite to this. He is a corrupt person. Instead of creating an ideal generation, he does bad things in the presence of students. Children imitate his actions. He violates cultural norms and our idea of a good teacher in Indian culture. Balram's family is a sweet maker's family. Making sweets is their job. The Halwai's are economically poor. In the novel Balram's family is very poor. Their life style and standards of living are simple. Adiga throws light on the culture of Halwai's in India.

The class of an entrepreneur stands for some kind of business culture. Balram, a sweet maker's son later on becomes an entrepreneur. Aravind Adiga presented the culture of an entrepreneur through Balram. There is a lot of competition between entrepreneurs. Everybody tries to survive in this world of competition. Balram follows the same path. To retain his status as an

entrepreneur, he bribes police Department. He learns to overcome the barriers that come in his path and becomes a successful entrepreneur.

It is the culture of the Police Department to help the needy and poor people and to protect them. But in this novel the Police Department does not care for the poor people. The police forget the culture of their profession and become corrupt. Instead of finding truth, they accept lies. They do not help good people. On the other hand, the school inspector follows professional ethics. He inspires students.

Drivers, watchmen, rickshaw-pullers and labourers have their own culture. They represent low class culture. So there are only low class jobs for them. They find their work boring and so take interest in making fun of each other. In the novel the drivers tease Balram and make jokes.

Adiga shows the culture of politicians. Politics means power and power can be in the hand of some people or class. In this novel the feudal lords were dominant once upon a time but there is decline in their power and new politicians wield power. Adiga throws light on Indian politicians through the character of Vijay. He is a typical Indian politician in new-democratic India. He is a selfish and hypocrite. He has prejudice against the feudal lords. He behaves well with the poor people.

In *The White Tiger* Adiga observes culture clash between educated and uneducated. Educated and uneducated people have their own identities. Educated people stand for literacy and uneducated for illiteracy. Balram is only a literate man. He understands the importance of education and thinks like a cultured human being. He wants to open a school for poor children. It shows the nobility of his cultured mind. But by murdering his master he goes against Indian culture. Indian culture doesn't allow bloodshed. Pinky is an American educated and cultured woman. She can't bear injustice. She doesn't like her in-laws' behaviour because they behave like uncultured people. There is a lot of difference between educated

and uneducated. Adiga shows the difference through their speech, thinking ability, food habits, clothes and life style. Ashok and Mukesh live in one house but they have a lot of difference in their life- style.

Through East-West culture, Adiga throws light on cultural identity. In the novel *Pinky Madam* and the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao represent western culture and all the Indian characters represent eastern culture. In this novel Adiga deals with the conflict between the values of the West and those of the East. Both Ashok and Pinky are western educated but they present contrasting values of the West and the East. Indians treat guests like God. They treat him with honour and respect. It throws light on culture of Indian people.

Rural and urban ways of life throw light on Indian culture. Adiga shows different type of life-style of the villagers and the urban people. Urban culture is a seat of modernism and village is a seat of tradition. Adiga describes village and city culture. In this novel Adiga shows how traditions and customs play important role in village life. Family relations are very important for them.

In Indian culture the youngsters don't go against their elders. They respect elderly people. Balram never says any word against his grandmother. All the members of Balram's family respect Kusum. In the Stork's family, Ashok respects his father and elder brother. Elder one helps and takes care of the youngsters. The Inspector inspires Balram. Through all these events Adiga shows Indian culture.

Indian people have respect for nature. They think all the creatures are the part of nature. When Balram sees a cart of the faces of dead buffaloes, he feels sympathy for them. Adiga shows cultural attitude of Indian people towards men and animal.

Balram thinks that the condition of his family is like that of the buffaloes in the cart. The buffaloes cannot do anything to save their lives. Balram's family also doesn't go against unjust practices. But Balram comes out from this 'Rooster

Coop'. He wants to change his identity. So he murders his master and becomes an entrepreneur and never feels guilty for his act. He is a rebel and a revolutionary. His bloodshed is for the cause of the downtrodden.

Adiga's second novel – *Last Man in Tower* is about urban ways of life. In the novel Adiga reflects metropolitan culture through Mumbai city. He focuses on the people living in towers and slums.

In the novel Adiga shows sophisticated life of urban culture. Some of the people in the city appear self centered. People of young generation live carefree life. They fail to maintain close relations with parents. Gaurav, Masterji's and Satish the builder's son don't maintain intimate relation with their parents. Some people take interest in immoral things. Shah takes interest in immorality. Some people don't hesitate to keep illicit-relationship before marriage. The journalist enjoys illicit-relationship before marriage with her boy friend. Adiga points out how some people violate ethics and moral values of Indian culture. Shah violates the cultural norms. He shows how the middle class and lower class people remain at the mercy of higher class people. All the residents of Vishram Society are middle class people. For becoming rich they forget their culture and also neighbourly relations. They don't hesitate to murder their friend. They kill Masterji for the sake of money. Masterji's son also becomes an enemy of his father for money.

Adiga shows rich people are self-centered and have lost feelings of humanity towards others. But Mary, a Christian woman from a slum has sympathy for Masterji. Adiga throws light on the humanity of slum dwellers.

In the novel Adiga focuses on the cosmopolitan culture. Vishram society is a cosmopolitan society, where people from various castes and religion, live together. Before Dharmen Shah's offer, they live in harmony. Though they belong to different castes and religion, they want to mix up with other communities.

Adiga throws light on tradition and modernity. Mr. and Mrs. Pinto and Masterji are traditional kind of persons. They don't like the so-called modern ways of life. They don't like the journalist's behavior. They stick to tradition. They do not like the journalist's love affair with her lover. They think it is against Indian culture. Catherine also represents modern culture. She disobeys her father's wish and marries to an American student, a half-Jew. Here Adiga shows culture clash between tradition and modernity in Indian culture.

Family is very important for Indian people. Adiga shows here cultural identity of Indian people through their sense of family responsibility and family relationship. Mrs. Puri wants to bring up her child properly. So she wants to avoid the company of journalist. She thinks that her behaviour will spoil her child. Adiga shows here responsibility of parents towards a child. Relations are very important in a family. Masterji has love for his son. He has some expectations from his son. He wants his son should learn French and also become a scientist or a lawyer. But Gaurav doesn't complete his father's wish. He behaves rudely with his father. He forgets humanity and also father-son relation. Masterji has love for his grandson but his daughter-in-law doesn't like that her son should live with Masterji. Sonal fails to maintain her good relation with her in-laws. Gaurav and his wife sonal live away from Masterji. There is no intimate relationship in Masterji's family. Adiga shows how Sonal breaks cultural norms of behaviour. She fails to follow her duties as a daughter-in-law.

In the novel Adiga portrays man-woman relationship with love. Mr. and Mrs. Pinto take care of each other. Mr. Pinto always helps his wife. There is intimate relationship between a husband and a wife. Adiga shows typical Indian attitude. They maintain man-woman relationship. Mr. Pinto is a typical Indian husband. On the other hand Dharmen Shah and his first wife Kalyani are totally different from this couple. The couple is devoid of love. Mr. Shah represents a

typical indifferent man as a husband. He has love only for construction. On the other hand his wife Kalyani is a typical Indian wife. She takes interest in household work. She doesn't like her husband's violent nature.

In Indian culture teaching profession is a noble profession. So everyone respects a teacher. In the novel Adiga portrays a man of principle in Masterji. Masterji is respected in Vishram society. He is a typical representative of the earlier generation. He is expected to give knowledge to the children. He considers all the students equally. Adiga shows here an ideal Indian teacher. Because of his nobility of mind and character, some of his neighbours remember him even after he is murdered.

In Indian culture people associate animals with God. So they protect some animals like cow, cat and dog. Indian people worship a cow like God. In the novel Dharmen Shah also touches a cow for good luck. Masterji tells his woes to a cow. Mrs. Puri likes to feed stray dogs. Adiga shows their typical Indian attitude.

In the novel Adiga focuses on religious customs and faith of people. People have faith in God. So they worship God. When all ways of a man come to an end, the person turns to God. Mrs. Puri also does the same. When medicine does not show any effect, Mrs. Puri turns to God for her son's recovery in mental illness. The builder has faith in God. So before starting his work, he goes to an astrologer. He also gives a donation of one lakh and one rupee to God to improve his son's behaviour and to start a new construction. Masterji performs the rites on the death anniversary of his wife for the purification of her soul. Adiga throws light on religious attitude of Indian people here.

Indian people try to maintain good neighbourly relations. They like to cooperate each other. In the novel Adiga shows typical attitude of Indian people through their neighbourly relation. In Vishram society people maintain neighbourly relations before Shah's so called generous offer. They take care of

each other. All the residents of Vishram respect Masterji. They take care of him. They care for Mr. and Mrs. Pinto. All the residents live in harmony. Mr. Puri becomes Gaurav's surrogate mother. But the neighbourly relations get disturbed when they get money from the builder. All the residents go against Masterji because he is not ready to sign the paper. So good neighbours turn into enemies. Some people, who once cared for Masterji kill him for money.

Adiga throws light on metropolitan culture through depiction of different professions. The culture of a broker is to deal with sellers and clients. The broker has to give accurate information to the clients. But in the novel Adiga shows that the broker is away from culture. He gets involved in immoral things. He violates the cultural norms of a good broker.

It is the culture of a good builder to make generous offers to people and to make good complexes with all kinds of facilities. But in the novel Mr. Dharmen Shah takes interest in immoral things. He is a selfish builder and he dreams only to be a rich person in Mumbai city. He has love only for his work. His principle is heat or no heat, humidity or no humidity only the work should be done at any cost. He deceives people. He violates the cultural norms of behaviour of a builder. It is the culture of a lawyer to help people and to find out truth. Adiga shows here how some lawyers become corrupt and selfish in urban culture. They have love only for money. They forget humanity. The secretary is a person who makes records and helps people. In the novel Kothari, the secretary of Vishram society remains faithful to the residents of Vishram. But finally he is also interested in money and forgets professional ethics.

Indian people believe in good and bad omens. They follow superstitious practices. Mrs. Puri is not free from such blind beliefs. She thinks that the evil eyes punished her son. Mr. Shah also seeks help from an astrologer.

In Indian culture a woman is treated with dignity. Adiga shows this through Ajwani. He can't put pressure on Mrs. Rego. Mr. Ajwani follows the cultural norms of behaviour. Indian people like to help the poor and needy. They feel sympathetic towards stray animals. Mrs. Puri thinks that she will open a clinic for injured dogs. Her husband wants to give alms to the beggars. Adiga shows their generous attitude.

In this way Adiga focuses on metropolitan culture through urban and rural ways of life, cosmopolitan culture, tradition and modernity, family, teacher's community, love for animals, religious customs and faith, neighbourly relation, occupation, superstitious practices, dignity for women life style and service through social work.

Stories in *Between the Assassinations* also deal with the theme of cultural identity. Adiga shows it through different characters, events and setting. In the first story, we see people of Hindu and Muslim communities. Adiga shows culture clash between the two communities. When Ziauddin realizes that the stranger is interested and involved in terrorist activities, he leaves the job of counting trains. Ziauddin shows his real identity. Adiga shows that Ziauddin loves his country. Adiga further shows that the Muslims are patriots like the Hindus.

In the second story Adiga shows the religious attitude of Muslims. Through the practice of giving alms to the poor, Adiga shows the act of charity of Muslim culture. Abbasi, a Muslim businessman, cares for the welfare of the workers in his factory. Adiga shows in this story the cultural identity of Abbasi. Adiga says that Muslim businessmen like Abbasi are humanists.

In the third story Adiga shows that people in India are divided on the basis of language and caste. India is a multi-cultural and multi-lingual country where people from different castes live and speak different languages. The protagonist is

a lower caste man. He is treated badly by people of higher caste. It is a result of cultural practice.

In the fourth story Adiga shows the cultural identity of a low class boy and his mother. Shankara is neither a Brahmin nor a Hoyka but a low caste boy, he is a Brahmo-Hoykas, a bastard. His father belongs to a high caste and his mother belongs to a lower caste. So Shankara thinks that he has no identity. Both mother and son get ill-treatment from the society. He thinks that people are prejudiced against the lower caste people and people of mixed origin.

Adiga's fifth story focuses on religious attitude of Indian people and presents culture clash between tradition and modernity. The sixth story focuses on three principles of truth, goodness and beauty in Indian culture. Ideally Indian people are supposed to follow these principles.

In the seventh story Adiga throws light on the culture of low class people and their habits. Taking drugs by any person is a taboo in Indian culture. But in the story a worker can't work without the dose of smack. It is because of his bad habit his family suffers a lot. He fails to take care of his children. Adiga points out intimate man-woman relationship and brother and sister relationship. It is a pattern that is noticed in Indian culture. The principle of humanism in Indian culture is also referred in the story.

In the eighth story we have the cultural practice of considering a spinster or unmarried woman married to a god. Here Jayamma thinks she is Radha and she is married to god-Krishna. She is god fearing woman.

In the ninth story Adiga focuses on the culture clash between popular culture and high class culture. Mrs. Gomes stands for high class culture. She is a modern woman. Her standards of living are high, on the other hand George stands for popular culture. He indulges in bad things and talks about dishonest practices. He violates the norms of behavior. She cares for her character. Being a Christian, she

helps George but she dismisses George when he violates cultural norms of behavior. It shows culture clash between people of high class culture and those from low class culture.

In the tenth story Adiga shows how Indian people look at sex and marriage. In Indian culture sex before marriage is a taboo. Sex is considered sin. In the eleventh story Adiga focuses on the place of nature in man's life. He also tells about humanity, hospitality and importance of child in an Indian's life. Indian people treat guests like God. So Gridhir Rao and Kamini treat their guests with warm hospitality. They try to maintain perfect relationships with the guests. Generally children take care of their parents in their old age. But in the story old Shradha Bhatt lives alone because her only son lives in Bombay. He doesn't take his mother's responsibility and it is against Indian culture. All the creatures are part and parcel of nature. Human beings are one of them. People pray nature like God. So they share their happiness and sorrows with nature. Mr. Rao feels comfortable in the company of nature. He forgets his lack. But due to urbanization natural beauty is spoiled. Indian culture does not approve of destruction of nature. In the last story Adiga shows too much age difference is not acceptable to parents in marriage.

Thus, Aravind Adiga focuses on cultural factors like caste, class, religion, race, life-style, food habits, marriage, traditions and customs etc. by using different characters and setting.

Finally it can be said that Adiga criticises bad practices in Indian culture and highlights values in Indian culture directly or indirectly through his works of fiction. Caste, class, region and religion, race and ethnicity, life style, family, occupations, attitude to nature etc work as indicators of cultural identity in Adiga's works of fiction. Aravind Adiga's fiction leaves the impression on us about cultural identity that Indians in general are class conscious. Class also plays a vital

role in their life. Religion, patriarchy, racial and ethnic differences and rural and urban divide affect cultural life of Indians and these aspects became part and parcel of their cultural identity.