

# **INTRODUCTION**

## INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

### 1. Introduction:

Aravind Adiga began his journalistic career as a financial journalist. He was also a former correspondent for Times Magazine in India. His articles appeared also in Financial Times, Independent and Sunday Times. Adiga is the fourth Indian author to win the Man Booker Prize. His debut novel, *The White Tiger* won the 2008 Booker Prize. Salmon Rushdie, Arundhati Roy and V. S. Naipaul are the writers who bagged the Man Booker Prize. Aravind Adiga wrote two novels and a book of short stories.

There are many writers who have written on the cultural aspects of India in their fiction. Aravind Adiga also throws light on the culture of India in his fiction.

#### a) Contemporary Indian English fiction: A Brief Survey

Indian writing in English holds the sway and continues to make waves on the international scene. In the age of globalization, fiction has got an upper hand. The most significant event in the history of Indian English fiction in the nineteen thirties was the appearance on the scene of its major trio: Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao. The Indian English novel of the period was deeply influenced by the epoch-making political-social and ideological ferment caused by the Gandhian movement. The tradition of social realism established earlier on a sound footing by Mulk Raj Anand is continued by novelists like Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar and Khushwant Singh who made their appearance during the 1950s, and the early 60s. A notable development is the emergence of an entire school of women novelists among whom the leading figures are Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy and Amitav Ghosh.

There is a galaxy of writers who have established themselves as significant writers. Among them are Salmon Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, Kiran Desai, Manju Kapur, Jhumpa Lahiri, Shashi Deshpande, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, and Amitav Ghosh. There are many writers who wrote on the various aspects and components of culture that show cultural identity in their fiction. Culture is seen through different behavior patterns of an individual and society. Family background, class, caste, national characteristics, racial background, locality, region, ethnic, religious linguistic affiliations etc. are the indicators of cultural identity. The following survey will show it in detail.

A fellow Tamil, Krishnaswamy Nagarajan (1893- ) wrote two novels. His *Athavar House* (1973) a Galsworthian family chronicle deals with an old Maharashtrian Vaishnava Brahmin family. Nagarajan points out the stresses and strains of complex family relationships and the inevitable clash between orthodoxy and new ideas.

Mulk Raj Anand's (1905- ) numerous novels formed a fictional chronicle in which his eclectic humanism and his humanitarian compassion for the underdog are persistent themes. Both these themes receive their best fictional treatment in his novels. Anand's first novel, *Untouchable* (1935) describes an eventful day in the life of *Bakha*, a young sweeper from the outcastes' colony of a north Indian cantonment town. *Bakha* is a victim of the Indian caste system that has given birth to untouchability. Our culture ensures that all members of the society should live happily with respect, love and harmony. But in the novel there recurs the vision of social disharmony and disrespect. Each culture carries some value either social or moral but in the novel the culture of the downtrodden is humiliated. In his two chronicles of coolies- *Coolie* (1936) and *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937) Anand turns to the lot of another class of the under-privileged. The novel is an indignant comment on the tragic denial to a simple peasant of the fundamental right to

happiness. Munoo and his fellow coolies are exploited by the forces of industrialism, capitalism communalism and colonialism. In the novel Anand shows class struggle. In *The Big Heart* (1945) he deals with the theme of modernity. *The Road* (1963) is a rehash of the untouchable theme. His stories *The Power of Darkness* and *The Tractor and the Corn Goddess* demonstrate the inevitable clash between tradition and modernity in our country today and feudalism and capitalism are pilloried in *A Kashmir Idyll* and *The Price of Bananas* respectively.

The art of Rashipuram Krishnaswamy Narayan (1906- ) offers an interesting contrast to that of Mulk Raj Anand. Narayan's little dramas of middle class life are enacted in Malgudi, an imaginary small town in South India which comes to be felt as a living ambience of his fiction. In *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), the protagonist of the story Chandran, is caught in conflict between the western ideas of love and marriage. The traditional social set up in which he lives shows conflict between East and West. He also deals with the traditional and modern culture. In *Dark Room* (1938) he deals with the themes like tradition, middle class life and patriarchy. *The Financial Expert* is a revealing study of the cash nexus in modern life. Through Margayya he shows religious attitude of Indian people. In *The Man Eater of Malgudi* (1962) he points out the ancient Hindu fable of Bhasmasura. In *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967) he shows the clash with generations and also deals with East- West confrontation.

Raja Rao (1908- ) the youngest of the trio, hails from an ancient South Indian Brahmin family. His *Kanthapura* (1938) is the story of a small south Indian village named Kanthapura. Kanthapura is a traditional caste ridden Indian village which is away from all modern ways of living. In the novel the nationalistic urge is penetrated, showing how even in the remote villages, the new upsurge is fused completely with traditional religious faith. In *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) he deals with the themes of true love, modernity and the concept of marriage. It is the

story of Ramaswamy, a young Hindu, who goes to France to do research in history, meets and marries Madeleine a lecturer in History, but they soon drift apart gradually as Ramaswamy comes to realize the gulf between the Indian and western conceptions of love, marriage and family particularly after he meets Savithri, a Cambridge – educated and militantly modern girl, who is yet Indian to the core. The novel also contrasts Oriental and Occidental world views in respect of basic issues such as sex and marriage, society, religion, learning, and death. The novel shows a successful blend of Indian and Western modes. Typical Indian elements are shown in the novel.

Ahmed Ali in *Twilight in Delhi* (1940) shows the picture of the middle class Muslim family of Mir Nihal and its relationship between other Muslim families in early twentieth century. At the end Mir Nihal's death signifies the passing away of a whole culture. In the novel he deals with the theme of family backgrounds that indicates various cultural aspects. Iqbalunnisa Hussains's *Purdah and Polygamy: Life in an Indian Muslim Household* (1944) offers an equally intimate picture of a traditional Muslim mercantile household seen through sensitive feminine eyes. In Amir Ali's *Conflict* (1947) the entire action concerns a Hindu family picture of the rustic life and his hero's adjustment to urban surrounding.

K. A. Abba's *Tomorrow is Ours: A Novel of the India of Today* (1943) espouses several causes, including nationalism; denunciation of fascism and untouchability. The protagonist Parvati devotes her dancing talents for the Indian people's Theatre and her doctor husband goes off to China to tend the War-wounded. That shows their humanity. Dhan Gopal Mukherji (1890- ) wrote novels of jungle and rustic life. His novel *Ghond the Hunter* (1929) is the study of a village on the jungle border. It reflects village culture.

T. L. Natesan wrote under the penname Shankar Ram. His stories *The Children of Kaveri* (1926) and *Creatures All* (1933) deal mostly with rustic life in

Tamil Nadu. Some of his stories are sentimental. A. S. P. Ayyar, the novelist and playwright, wrote especially on the plight of women in traditional Hindu society. His women include young widows, who successfully re-marry in the teeth of opposition; young girls married by their parents to old men for money; abandoned or persecuted wives; victims of the dowry system or of the absence of birth control. His three collections of stories include: *Indian After-Dinner Stories* (1927) *Swans in Sex and Other Stories* (1929) and *The Finger of Destiny and other Stories* (1932).

Post-Independence Indian English fiction retains the momentum the novel had gained from the Gandhian age. The tradition of social realism established earlier on a sound footing by Mulk Raj Anand is continued by novelists like Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar and Khushwant Singh, who made their appearance during the nineteen fifties and the early sixties.

The earliest of the social realists of the period is Bhabani Bhattacharya (1906- ), a novelist strongly influenced by Tagore. Bhattacharya's first novel *So Many Hungers* (1947) published within a few months of Independence is one of his better efforts. The novel deals with the themes of exploitation - political, economic and social. 'So many hungers' of the title are those for political freedom (in the case of India); for imperial expansion (in the case of the axis powers); for money (in the case of the capitalists who create an artificial food scarcity by hoarding rice), for food (in the case of the starved Bengali poor); for sex (in the particular case of the sex starved soldier who rapes the destitute rustic girl Kajoli). In the novel he deals with many themes like capitalism, patriotism and modernity. The theme of cultural identity can be traced in this novel.

Bhattacharya's novel *Music for Mohini* (1952) is the story of Mohini, a 'city - bred, village -wed girl' and her adjustment to her new life- style. The novel presents an attempt to connect culture with culture. ...Our old eastern view of life

with the new semi western outlook'. Mohini's husband, Jayadev is the combination of the best of the Indian tradition and Western thought while Mohini is the representative of modernity. His novel *Who Rides a Tiger* (1952) tells the story of Kalo, a poor blacksmith who is jailed for stealing a bunch of bananas. The novel deals with haves and the have-nots, and religious hypocrisy. In *A Dream in Hawaii* (1978), Bhattacharya returns to the theme of East – West encounter.

Manohar Malgonkar's (1913- ) male dominated world in which women seem to be little more than instruments of masculine pleasure. Malgonkar began his novelistic career with *Distant Drum* (1960). Malgonkar's hero, Kiran, is a somewhat idealized picture of a young, pre-Independence army officer; he marries Bina, much against the wishes of her father. In the novel Kiran is a representative of modernity. *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964), one of the best novels by Manohar Malgonkar, depicts the value of love which transcends violence and non-violence – the real and the unreal – and brings about freedom and fulfillment to the individuals.

Khushwant Singh's first novel, *Train to Pakistan* (1956) is the impact of Partition on a small village on the Indo-Pakistan border. Khushwant Singh deals with many issues related to politics, religion, caste, culture and identity. His novel *Train to Pakistan* presents Mano Majra, a border village of Punjab, with its religious, cultural, and ethnic characteristics. In the pre-partition period, Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims in Mano Majra made a positive contribution to solidify a cultural mosaic in Punjab. They respected each other's religion and culture and encouraged the differences in terms of food habits, life style, beliefs and different cultural and religious practices. Unfortunately, partition along religious lines cracks the solidarity and integrity of the village. A culture of content turns to a culture of discontent, hatred and violence. In *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale*

(1959) his novel presents an ironic picture of a Sikh joint family illustrative of different Indian reactions to the freedom movement of the forties.

S. Menon Marath (1906- ) is securely rooted in the soil of his native Kerala. His *Wound of Spring* (1960) describes the disintegration of a traditional matriarchal Nayar family in Kerala during the second decade of the twentieth century. There is also an ironical picture of the Gandhian movement here. He deals with the themes of tradition and patriotism.

Balachandra Rajan (1920- ) illustrates both the strains prominent in Indian English fiction of the fifties and the sixties. His first novel *The Dark Dancer* (1959) illustrates the story of Krishnan, a South Indian youth who, on his return from England to post-partition India, finds himself torn between his love for the British Cynthia and his loyalty to Kamala his wife. The novelist's intention appears to pose the problem of East-West confrontation in terms of the protagonist's quest for identity. In his second novel, *Too Long in the West* (1961) the central figure is Nalini, a south Indian girl, who returns from an American University to face the problem of choosing a suitable husband. The novel throws light on Indian custom of 'swayamvar'.

The novels by Sudhindra Nath Ghose (1899- ) are an exciting experiment in the expression of the Indian ethos in a form firmly grounded in the ancient native tradition of storytelling. His four novels *And Gazelles Leaping* (1949), *Cradle of the Clouds* (1951), *The Vermilion Boat* (1953), and *The Flame of the Forest* (1955) form a tetralogy knit together by the central figure of the protagonist narrator, about twenty years of whose life and career they cover. The nameless narrator is an orphan, though born in a rich family and is brought up by a village aunt. The central theme is the growth of the narrator's mind, which is shaped both by his boyhood years in traditional rural community and his youthful experiences in the city of Calcutta. The novelist focuses on the cultural aspects through the traditional



rural and the urban background. In *The Vermilion Boat*, Ghose deals with the theme of sexual awakening and corruption.

The most prominent novelists of the late sixties and seventies are Arun Joshi (1939-) and Chaman Nahal (1927-). Arun Joshi attempts to deal with three facets of the theme of the relations to the self, the society around and humanity at large, respectively in his novels.

Chaman Nahal in his novel *My True Faces* (1973) deals with Kamal Kant, whose wife Malati has left him. In the novel Nahal focuses on unsuccessful marital life. His another novel *Azadi* (1975) is about the migration of Lala Kanshi Ram, a Sialkot grain merchant and his family to India at the time of the dismemberment of colonial India into two nations in 1947. The novel deals with the themes of caste, class, family relationship, patriotism, love and inhumanity. Nahal turns to the Indian English novelist's favourite theme of East-West encounter in *Into Another Dawn* (1977). His hero, Ravi Sharma hails from an orthodox Brahmin family from holy Hardwar, goes to the United States for higher studies and duly falls in love with an American woman. In the novel there is commentary on two cultures.

Amitav Ghosh (1956) deals with cultural issues like east-west encounter, caste and class and the theme of nationalism etc. They become the main concerns of Amitav Ghosh in his novel *The Shadow Lines* (1988).

Ahmed Salman Rushdie (1947) is a British Indian novelist. His works are *Midnight's Children* (1981), *Shame* (1983), *The Satanic Verses* (1988), *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999), *Fury* (2001), and *Shalimar the Clown* (2005). His second novel, *Midnight's Children* won the Booker Prize in 1981. His work is concerned with the many connections, disruptions and migrations between Eastern and Western civilizations. He uses in his works tales from various genres – fantasy, mythology, religion, oral tradition. As a novelist Rushdie made his debut with *Grimus* (1975), a fantastical science fiction.

Many of the Rushdie's texts center on the interpretation and role of religion in society. In *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), Rushdie used a family's history to explore the activities of right-wing Hindu terrorists, and the cultural connections between India and the Iberian Peninsula. In *Midnight's Children*, the child Saleem watches as protestors attempt to divide the city of Bombay along linguistic lines. His power of telepathy allows him to transcend the barriers of language, while he himself—with his English blood, poor background, wealthy upbringing, and eclectic religious influences—reflect India's diversity and range. The Conference that he convenes is a model for pluralism and a testimony to the potential power inherent within coexisting diversity, which is a natural and definitive element of Indian culture. In *Midnight's Children*, the desire for singularity or purity—whether of religion or culture—breeds not only intolerance but also violence and repression. His novel *The Satanic Verses* is about identity, alienation, rootlessness, brutality, compromise, and conformity. These concepts confront all migrants, disillusioned with both cultures. They generally reflected failures of multicultural integration. His third novel *Shame* (1983) discusses heritage, authenticity, truth, and, of course, shame and shamelessness, as well as the impact of all these themes on an individual, the protagonist Omar Khayyám.

The women novelists too form a sizable and significant school. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, (1927 - ) was a German-born British and American Booker prize-winning novelist. She wrote a dozen novels, and eight collections of short stories. Her works including *In Search of Love and Beauty* (1983), *Three Continents* (1987), *Shards of Memory* (1995) and *East Into Upper East: Plain Tales From New York and New Delhi* (1998), portray the lives and predicaments of immigrants from post-Nazi and post-World War Europe. Jhabvala typically creates characters, both Indians and European, who have an uneasy relationship with their cultural heritage. Her eight novels which appeared in quick succession, deal with the

themes like, love and marriage in the bourgeois society, East–West encounter, pseudo-modernism in Indian society, the post-independence Indian ethos, affectation and hypocrisy in the Indian middle class society. Her novel, *The Householder* (1960), for example, concerns the comic adventures of Prem, a young, recently married man facing the second in the four traditional Hindu stages of human life: the householder stage. Through her characters she was able to touch almost all the important aspects of Indian Society. A clear clash between tradition and modernity can be understood with the close treatment of relationship between the characters of her novels. She closely connected her characters with all the customs in relation to marriages, child births and mundan ceremony. *A Backward Place* (1965) focuses on western responses to India. In *To Whom She Will* (1955) Jhabvala deals with patriarchal culture. The most distinctive feature of Jhabvala's novels is the subtlety and adroitness with which she unravels the gossamer threads of intricate human relationships-especially among the women in the Hindu joint family.

Kamala Markandaya (1924- ) offers her quintessential themes such as the East-West encounter, and women's different life-roles. The East-West encounter takes two forms-first, a direct relationship between Indian and British characters; and secondly, the impact upon the modern urban culture brought in by the British rule for traditional Indian life. Her *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) deals with a rustic woman. *Some Inner Fury* (1955) and *Possession* (1963) concentrate on Indo-British personal relationships. The unhappy marriage of Kitsamy the England returned Civil servant and Premala, his traditional Hindu wife, shows another facet of the East-West relationship. In *A Silence of Desire* (1960), she deals with a traditional religious woman. There is clash between the Western-oriented rationalism of Dandekar and his traditional wife. *A Handful of Rice* (1966)

represents a typical long suffering Hindu wife. *Two Virgins (1973)* tells an unconvincing tale of Indian village life and contrasting relationship.

Nayantara Sahgal (1927- ) is preoccupied with the modern Indian woman's search for sexual freedom and self-realization in her novels. The main focus in the novels by Nayantara Sahgal, is on the plight and problems of educated women, mostly with an urban base. She speaks about the predicament of new Indian woman. Sahgal's first five novels, *A Time To Be Happy (1956)*, *This Time of Morning (1965)*, *Storm in Chandigarh (1969)*, *The Day in Shadow (1971)* and *A Situation in New Delhi (1977)*, are situational, while the latter three, *Rich Like Us (1985)*, *Plans for Departure (1987)* and *Mistaken Identity (1988)*, are mainly character-oriented. These characters present the emancipated woman, one who musters adequate courage to walk out of her suffocating and inhuman circumstances. She is the liberated woman who is virtuous, morally upright, and self-respecting, though she appears to deviate from age-old tradition. Maya in Sahgal's *A Time to be Happy* is a woman who tries to submerge her unhappiness and dissatisfaction in doing social work and getting involved in religious activities.

In most of her works, Anita Desai (1937- ) stressed on the lives of the Indian middle-class women. In her books, she has managed to deal with topics ranging from anti-Semitism to western quintessential ideologies of India and the death of Indian traditions and customs. The patriarchal culture, the personal conflict of identity of the anglicized women of the Indian society gains a dimension in the hands of Anita Desai. The novels by Anita Desai are noted for the profound probing into the inner life and feelings of the women, bounded by the shackles of the middle class. Some of her novels are concerned with the Western stereotypical views of India. *Cry, the peacock (1963)* throws light on unsuccessful man-woman relationship. Her novel, *Fire on the Mountain (1977)*, portrays the picture of the Indian life and stages of old ages. The intricacy of relationship is prominent in the

novel. In *Voices in the City* (1965), she shows the picture of two sisters, Monisha and Amla who rebel against the solid conventions of middle class life and long for creativity and self-expression. Her women are the representative of modern culture. In *Bye Bye Blackbird* (1971), there is continuous shift between the Oriental and Occidental culture. In the eyes of the Orientals, Occidental culture is more rational and superior which is characterized by logical thinking, tolerance, progress, modernism, independence and peace. However, Occidentals believe that Orientals are primitive, black, savage, violent, fanatic, underdeveloped, traditional and conservative. In the novel Adit is an Indian immigrant, married to Sarah, a British girl. Their inter-racial marriage invites clash between two different cultural forces. *Where Shall We Go This Summer* (1975) deals with urbanization. The cruelty and callousness of urban life stifle Maya.

Kiran Desai (1971) is an Indian author. Her first novel, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998), was published in 1998. Her second book, *The Inheritance of Loss*, (2006) won the 2006 Man Booker Prize, as well as the 2006 National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award. Her first novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* has presented different perspectives of life. Amidst the themes of lethargy and superstition, she handles the 'big-time dreams of a middle-class family in the novel. Her novel *The Inheritance of Loss* as a whole is a wonderful depiction of multicultural global society. She has analyzed several current issues of modern civilization. The novel depicts a group of "lost" people and the state of their lives, and how they lost themselves in the course of pursuing their cultural identity in the process of globalization. She has done a remarkable job of presenting the Indian culture in an appealing way. *The Inheritance of Loss* explores colonial neurosis, multiculturalism, insurgency gender-bias and racial discrimination. The novel is a brilliant study of Indian culture-the culture in its transitional phase. In fact, a craze for the western values, manners, language, and glamorous life-style; impact of

modernization is manifested in all walks of Indian life. Consequently, they can neither assimilate the new culture nor give up their original culture in totality.

Santha Rama Rau's *Remember the House* (1956) is a charming picture of the East-West encounter. *The Adventuress* (1970) is the story of a young Philippino girl stranded in post-war Japan. Nergis Dalal's experience of journalism has hardly proved a salutary influence on her fiction. Her *Minari* (1967) is an account of high class life with conventional characters. Her novel *The Inner Door* (1976) throws light on the theme of East-West encounter.

Among novels by women published during the nineteen seventies may be mentioned Raji Narasimhan's *The Heart of Standing is you cannot Fly* (1973) and *Forever Free* (1979) an absorbing tale of young woman's search for fulfillment. In these novels she deals with modern women.

Bharati Mukherjee (1940- ) is an Indian-born American writer. Her novels are *The Tiger's Daughter* (1971), *Wife* (1975), *Jasmine* (1989), *The Holder of the World* (1993), *Leave It to Me* (1997), *Desirable Daughters* (2002), *The Tree Bride* (2004), *Miss New India* (2011). In Bharathi Mukherjee's first novel *The Tiger's Daughter*, the protagonist Tara Banerjee returns to India after seven years stay in America. In Indian tradition, one should marry to one's own caste. If anyone marries to another caste, he/she will be treated as an outcast or a sinner. But the protagonist Tara is violating these rules to marry a foreigner who is a Jew. She totally forgets her caste and religion through her marriages. In the novel Mukherjee deals with the theme of caste and religion. In her second novel *Wife*, the protagonist Dimple wants to shatter the traditional taboos. She is expected to play the role of an ideal Indian wife, stay at home and keep the house for the husband. Her frustration is built up gradually by the circumstances. In the third novel *Jasmine* (1989), Jasmine has broken away from the shackles of caste, gender and family. The protagonist not only breaks the older social taboos related to

women and society but also rebels against the old patriarchal values. Then she is also able to maintain a proper balance between the traditionalism and modernism. She has learnt to live not for her husband or for her children but for herself. In her next novel, *Leave It to Me*, Bharathi Mukherjee tells the story of a young woman Debby Dimartino. The novel also deals with the conflict between Eastern and Western worlds and mother-daughter relationship.

Rama Mehta's *Inside the Haveli* (1977) is an engaging story of Rajasthan Purdah life. In the novel she has shown clash between traditional culture and modern culture.

Jhumpa Lahiri (1967- ) is an Indian American author. Her characters are mostly Indian immigrants to America. They navigate between the cultural values of their homeland and their adopted home. They struggle to raise a family in a country very different from theirs. Her stories describe their efforts to keep their children acquainted with Indian culture and traditions and to keep them close even after they have grown up in order to hang on to the Indian tradition of a joint family in which the parents, their children and the children's families live under the same roof. In her novel *The Namesake* (2003), she deploys three items of the Bengali culture and imposes them on the American scene. She does so by drawing on Bengali habit/ costume, ritual/ ceremony and language to express her cultural identity. The Gangulis, parents and children, provide a sample family through which Lahiri explores these key issues.

Arundhati Roy (1961- ) in *The God of Small Things* (1997) makes an attempt to show the worst mentality of the upper caste/class people who are brutally unjust to those who are from the lower strata of society. The novel is essentially the story of men and women who have been neglected as the 'margins' of society and have to pay a heavy price for being born either as untouchables or as women. Ammu, the heroine of the novel, is a representative character of a typical patriarchal

society. She gets no chance to bloom and grow independently due to social, cultural and religious interferences. Ammu's reaction indicates her rebellious spirit against the hegemonic 'male' culture, which damages lives of innocent women. Her daughter, Rahel, a representative of the new generation has also broken the rules of 'Love Law's' and enjoys her woman's need. In the novel Roy deals with many themes like caste/class, modernity, patriarchal culture and religion.

Manju Kapur (1948- ) is an Indian novelist. In *Difficult Daughters* (1998), there are two kinds of women- traditional women like Kasturi, Ganga and Kishori Devi, the new women like Viramati, Shankutla, Swaranlata and Ida. The traditional women described in the book are covered with the clouds of ignorance, but the new women are enlightened, they are constantly engaged in a battle between ideological imposition and power oppressions of patriarchal system but finally come out with what they claim to achieve. The novel centers on the complex mother-daughter relationship. She mostly portrays middle class or upper middle class women. Her other works are *Married Woman* and *Home*. The idea that all women were meant to get married and be submissive to their husbands was given a second look when we read the novels of Manju Kapur. While Manju Kapur's first novel is a family saga against the historical backdrop of partition. Her second novel *A Married Woman* (2003) is a work of investigative reporting on the most controversial and political issue of the demolition of Babri Masjid and a woman's obsession with love and lesbianism. Her third novel *Home* (2006) explores the complex terrain of the Indian family and reveals many issues that are deep rooted within the family. The issues are the revolt against the age-old traditions, quest for identity, the problems of marriage; and lastly the women's struggle for her survival in the traditional family set up. Manju Kapur succeeds in presenting the real picture of women in a male-dominated society. Her female protagonists are mostly educated aspiring individuals caged within the confines of a conservative society. They



struggle between tradition and modernity. It is their individual struggle with a family and society through which they plunge into a dedicated effort to carve an identity for themselves as qualified women. *The Immigrant* (2008) and *Custody* (2011) are her most recent novels. Her women characters are under the patriarchal pressure and control. They are subjected to physical torture and social ostracism.

Shashi Deshpande (1938 - ) has written four children's books, a number of short stories, and nine novels. Her books include: *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, (1980), *If I Die Today* (1982), *Come Up and Be Dead* (1983), *That Long Silence* (1989), *The Intrusion and Other Stories* (1993), *The Binding Vine* (2002), *A Matter of Time* (2001), *Small Remedies* (2000) and *In the Country of Deceit* (2008). Shashi Deshpande's women protagonists are portrayed by her in her novels, with a view to understand and appreciate their trials and tribulations under the impact of the conflicting influence of tradition and modernity. Unable to defy social conventions or traditional morality, the middle-class women themselves are enmeshed by desires and despairs, fears and hopes, love and hates, withdrawal and alienation, suppression and oppression, marital discord. Shashi Deshpande's novels deal with tradition and modernity. In her first novel, Indu, the protagonist in *Roots and Shadows* (1973), emerges successfully as a woman of determination and does not yield to the dictates of the patriarchal society. She exemplifies a woman in the transitional period that is torn between age old traditions and individual views. It records how she defies the worn-out traditions, pushes aside all her fears of her imagined inadequacies and asserts herself as an individual. Saru of *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), seeks freedom without impinging on her obligations and responsibilities and achieves harmony in life. Sumi, a deserted wife in *A Matter of Time* is dauntless in her adversity —she evolves herself from utter desolation and bitterness linked up with invisible chains of patriarchal pressure and other family responsibilities. It records how with courage, dignity, responsibility and

independent spirit, even after desertion by her husband, she has reached a stage of self sufficiency and self-fulfillment. The novel shows her boldness. In her latest novel *Small Remedies*, writes the biography of Savitribai Indorekar, the aging doyenne of Hindustani music, who avoids marriage and a home to pursue her genius. She has led the most unconventional kind of life, and undergoes great mental trauma due to the opposition by a society that practices double standards — one for men and the other for women.

Jai Nimbkar (1932- ) is best known for her novels *Temporary Answers* (1974), *A Joint Venture* (1988) and *Come Rain* (1993). Major theme of her novels is the middle class married woman's identity crisis in the contemporary male-dominated Indian society. Gender equality is also a concern for her as her protagonists suffer due to the inequality between the sexes.

#### **b) Aravind Adiga's Life, Works and Relevant Literature**

Aravind Adiga was born in Madras (now Chennai) on 23 October 1974 to Dr. K. Madhava Adiga and Usha Adiga, Kannadigas both of whom hailed from Mangalore. His paternal grandfather was the late K. Suryanarayana Adiga, former chairman of Karnataka bank. He spent his childhood in Mangalore by the Malabar Coast; he studied at Canara High School, then at St. Aloysius High School, where he completed his SSLC in 1990. He secured first rank in the state in SSLC. After immigrating to Sydney, Australia, with his family, he studied at James Ruse Agricultural High School. For further education he went to the States and studied English literature at Columbia University in New York where he studied with Simon Schama and graduated as Salutatorian in 1997. He also studied at Magdalen College, Oxford, having secured a scholarship and had Hermione Lee as one of his tutors.

To begin with, Adiga chose to be a financial journalist, interning at *The Financial Times*. With pieces published in the magazine *Money* (Manhattan), *The*

*Financial Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, he covered the stock market and investment, interviewing, among others, Donald Trump. After a short period, however, he joined *Times* where he remained a South Asian correspondent for three years. His stay in New Delhi during this job offered him the opportunity to be acquainted with the trends in Indian society. The urge for original writing in him was so strong that he left the job in 2006 and became a freelance writer. He got immediate success with his debut novel *The White Tiger* winning for him the glory of some prestigious awards. The novel won the 2008 Booker Prize. He is the fourth Indian-born author to win the prize, after Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai. The novel studies the contrast between India's rise as a modern global economy and the lead character, Balram, who comes from crushing rural poverty.

The social evils that are projected, and often suggested, in these sketches are elaborated in the novel *The White Tiger*. Adiga comes out as the angry young man of India who shouts at the politicians for not taking basic steps to lift the 400 million Indians who live in extreme poverty. Adiga has to be credited for his sincere attempt to expose the loopholes in the democratic system in India which, he feels, may be removed through social awareness. He says, "At a time when India is going through great changes and with China likely to inherit the world from the West, it is important that writers like me try to highlight the brutal injustices of society. That's what I am trying to do-it is not an attack on the country, it's about the great process of self-examination."<sup>1</sup>

Adiga is a promising writer who tries to make his fellowmen understand the world we live in. In his interview with Elaine McCarty he said:

"I am an optimist on the future of India, I think young Indians want real change and are determined to reduce the corruption and mis-governance that are the root cause of poverty in parts of India that have good governance- in the

southern state of Kerala for instance and I think that if young Indians step up the pressure on the political system, poverty can be slashed in the coming decade-and action has to start now.”<sup>2</sup>

Adiga, born in ‘Mumbai, educated in New York and Oxford, schooled in India and Australia, lives in Mumbai but his preference is for Delhi because he lived in Nizamuddin for a few years. He says about *The White Tiger*:

“This book is a result of my secret, unconcerned articles. My job with Time Magazine made me travel throughout India, especially in UP and Bihar, where I got to see a lot of rural life.”<sup>3</sup>

Adiga’s lucid style, his keen observation of life around him and his intolerance of social evils- corruption, the growing difference between the rich and the poor and complacency of the educated masses- attract the readers who are disturbed by the reading and are, sometimes, prompted to react.

Adiga’s second book, *Between the Assassinations*, was released in India in November 2008 and in the US and UK in mid-2009. *Between the Assassinations* contains 12 interlinked short stories in the backdrop of Kittur- a town on India’s south –eastern coast, in between Goa and Calicut- describing some happenings during the seven-year period between the assassinations of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her son Rajiv Gandhi. The stories revolve around different classes, castes and religions in India. In each story, another set of characters are introduced, but places and names appear again in other stories.

His second novel and third published book, *Last Man in Tower*, was published in the UK in 2011. The novel contains a tale of one man who refuses to leave his home when the builders want to demolish the apartment for the sake of development of property.

**c) Review of Literature on Aravind Adiga's novel:**

In the paper, “ *The Theme of Poverty in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Indian English Novel with special reference to Kiran Desai, Kamala Markandaya and Aravind Adiga*”, Neeru Tandon shows how India's economic miracle has done little for millions still living in grinding poverty.

Santwana Haldar in the article “*Mirror to Reality? : A study of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* and Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss**” intends to show the controversial issues in the writings of these authors and to see how far they deserve rude criticism. In India, the differences between the rich and the poor are increasing day by day. All the three Booker winners are concerned with the differences among the people, not only economic differences but social and cultural also, and they try to broaden the reader's consciousness through the projection of such differences and to lessen thereby the evil all around.

Krishna Singh, in his paper endeavours to analyze “*The Politico-Social and Cultural Consciousness in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* and Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger**”. Desai's scope is broad looking at the consequences of large cultural and political forces for both people and individuals. Aravind Adiga's novel discusses the dark picture of India, political system and entrepreneurial success and modern city culture. The dark areas of our politics, culture and social milieu have been targeted by both the novelists.

Nanda Kishore Mishra's contention in his short paper “*Freedom and Corruption: A comparative study of Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger**” is to throw light on how both Ayel Armah and Aravind Adiga satirically portray the general wave of degeneration, decay of moral values, and corruption rampant in their respective post- Independence countries which are striving for economic development.

Tanushree Singh in her paper “*Class Structure in Arundhati Roy’s The God of Small Things and Aravind Adiga’s The White Tiger*” compares the two Booker – prizes winning Indian novels *The God of Small Things* and *The White Tiger* from the point of view of their treatment of the class structure of India. Arundhati Roy’s novel is famous for its attack on the class structure of Indian society; Adiga’s novel depicts the trials, sufferings, victories and defeats of the underprivileged.

*The White Tiger: A Realistic Portrayal of the “India of Darkness”* in the article Neera Tandon portrays a realistic picture of India. India has always been a land where extremes of wealth and poverty have existed side by side. In the novel she has shown the contrast between India’s rise as a modern global economy and the main character, who comes from rural poverty. He draws our attention towards the corruption in the judiciary, in the politics, in the police Department and even in the school. Adiga presents the oppressive social structure of the village with its feudal hegemony. He shows how the village is devoid of the basic amenities. *The White Tiger* is a fascinating portrayal of the divisions between the world of rich and the poor of new India.

Shilpi Saxena throws light on the naked reality of shining India through her paper “*The White Tiger: A Shocking Commentary on the Darkness of Shining India*” Adiga presents India as a place of brutal injustice and sordid corruption where the rich only “Feel Good” in “Shining India” and the poor are always dispossessed and victimized by their age-old enemies, the rich. He comments on a rising global power that has created a rift between the rich and the poor. In contrast of the image of the glamour of Delhi, the miserable condition of subalterns is well depicted using the imagery of the Rooster Coop where every hen or rooster gets killed by the butcher before the other rooster but no one dares to escape. The novel reflects the struggle, humiliations, atrocities and cruelties of the dominating class towards the poor, inferiors and servant class. *The White Tiger* is a shocking tale

that throws light on every dark aspect of modern India but even amid this darkness the writer seems to be very optimistic for a “New and Shining India.”

Sunita Agarwal in her paper presents “*A Realistic Picture of “New India” through The White Tiger*.” The novel presents the negative aspects of modern India through a narrator in a humorous way. It highlights the gulf between the nation’s new found economic power and its enduring poverty. The novel presents a class struggle in India with Halwai juxtaposing the rural, downtrodden sections of the Indian society as against the rich elite. The novel portrays a satirical picture of class struggle in India.

In “*Westward Ho! Half-Baked Realities and the Fully Formed Stereotypes in The White Tiger*” in this paper Amarjeet Nayak writes about the culture of the poor.

Beena Agarwal in her paper “*Delhi as a Metaphor of Post-Industrial India in The White Tiger*” shows all the features of the postmodern life in India. The entire plot of the novel moves in three geographical spaces. Laxmangarh, Bangalore and Delhi. Laxmangarh stands for native cultural practice while Bangalore and Delhi are the manifestation of the hybridity born out of consumerism, technological expansion, industrial advancement, collapse of family structure and development of crime and violence. Adiga has used Delhi not only as a background of human actions but as a metaphor of the transformational matrix.

Devika Khanna Narula in her paper presents “*A View from ‘Down-Under’: The ‘Discourse’ of The White Tiger*.” The novel by Aravind Adiga is a satirical discourse of the downtrodden who have the audacity to hit back and resurface from the ‘Darkness’.

“*The New Morality in The White Tiger*” in this paper Meenakshi Choubey attempts to highlight the traditional morality inherent in Balram’s character, the

conflict in his subconscious between 'to be or not to be' and his advocacy of new morality which becomes successful in redeeming him in his readers' estimation.

Prakash Bhadury in his paper "*India Relocated in The White Tiger*" explores the protagonist Munna's journey between 'an India of Light and an India of Darkness' while the country is rising as a modern global economy. Savitri

Tripathi in her paper presents "*The White Tiger: A Tale of Two India's.*" This novel is a tale of two India's; Balram's journey from the darkness of village to light of city life. Adiga highlights the ever widening gap between rich and poor, rural and urban, and the brutal reality of an economic system that allows a small minority to prosper at the expense of the silent majority.

Kaurna Kara Raul in this paper "*Class and Cultural Consciousness: A perspective on The White Tiger*" reflects class and cultural consciousness. Balram's condition in a remote village, his struggle for existence, his class consciousness, his description of urban and rural culture is noted in this paper.

Sarika Bajpai in her paper "*Balram Halwai: An Anti-Hero*" shows Balram Halwai, as an anti-hero who is the central character of this black comedy. An unheroic character as he is, he shocks us with his activities and ideas. He has no respect for religion or Divine Power or religious symbols. He mocks at age – old human values as well as institutions like democracy.

Dashrath in his paper "*The White Tiger: A Voice of the Unheard*" throws light on the protagonist's journey from darkness to light. Adiga through Balram Halwai, the son of a sweet-maker Vikram Halwai, presents how the low caste people are treated by the high class people, belonging to the so-called top caste. Balram's whole life has been testimony to the fact that low caste people remain cornered and deprived of all that goes with plenty and high class.

Adiga's book *Between the Assassinations* contains 12 short stories in the backdrop of Kittur- a town on India's south –eastern coast, in between Goa and



Calicut. What Adiga offers is the map of Kittur- a moral map looming large over the physical map and Kittur stands for any Indian town during the period. The stories take place in the fictitious town of Kittur in Southwest India. The stories revolve around different classes, castes and religions in India. In each story, another set of characters are introduced, but places and names appear again in other stories.

His second novel and third book, *Last Man in Tower*, was published in the UK in 2011. The novel contains a tale of one man who refuses to leave his home for the sake of property development. It represents urban, cosmopolitan life.

## **2. Rationale and Significance of the Study:**

Aravind Adiga's fiction mostly deals with social issues. All the social aspects of Adiga's fiction are studied in detail. But cultural aspects of his fiction are hardly mentioned by the scholars. Hence, the present research work aims at studying Adiga's fiction in detail to consider the aspects and values of Indian culture.

## **3. Problem of the Study:**

Adiga's fiction can be studied from various points of view but the present study concentrates on cultural identity in his fiction.

## **4. Objectives of the Study:**

The proposed research work entitled, 'Cultural Identity in Aravind Adiga's Fiction' has the following objectives:

- 1) To throw light on the theme of cultural identity through caste, class different regions and religions.
- 2) To highlight cultural identity through race, ethnicity and gender.
- 3) To focus on the cultural aspects of India through characters, events and setting.
- 4) To study values in Indian culture.

### **5. Hypothesis of the Study:**

It is assumed that Aravind Adiga's novels and short stories throw light on the important aspects of cultural identity. Gender, caste, class, region and religion, race and ethnicity are the significant indicators of cultural identity in Adiga's fiction. He reflects the important issues of Indian culture through characters, setting, themes and events.

### **6. Research Methodology:**

The researcher has made use of analytical, interpretative and evaluative methods of study. Use of comparative method is also used wherever necessary. We have studied the theme of cultural identity first from novels and then from short stories.

### **7. Limitations of the Study:**

The present research work deals with only the three texts of Aravind Adiga. The work does not study the social aspects of Adiga's fiction. It only highlights the cultural aspects of Adiga's fiction which suggest cultural identity.

### **8. Chapter-Scheme**

The dissertation offers a detailed analysis of Aravind Adiga's two novels *The White Tiger* and *Last Man in Tower* and a short story book *Between the Assassinations* containing twelve stories in terms of the theme of cultural identity.

The dissertation is laid out in five chapters. Chapter I, gives explanation of the concept of culture and cultural identity so that it becomes possible to study Aravind Adiga's novels and short stories in their proper perspectives.

Chapter II studies Indian culture through Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* with the focus on the category of class. This novel reflects various aspects of Indian culture through different settings and characters. Joint family culture shows intimate relationship. Patriarchal culture shows male supremacy. Adiga points out Indian culture through feudal culture also. The novel throws light on different

religious communities and their faith in rituals and customs. Adiga points out importance of caste system in Indian culture through the novel. The field of occupation also influences Indian culture. Adiga discusses other aspects of cultural identity through East-West encounter, educated and uneducated people, rural – urban culture, age and attitude to nature. The category of class affects other categories like caste, religion, race etc.

Chapter III analyses metropolitan culture through Adiga's second novel *Last Man in Tower*. The novel focuses on the urban ways of life and cosmopolitan culture through Mumbai city. Adiga shows metropolitan culture through tradition, modernity, family relationship and responsibility, teachers' community, love for animals, religious customs and rituals, neighbourly relation, dignity for women and through social service.

Chapter IV also deals with the theme of cultural identity of a town through characters, events and setting in Aravind Adiga's *Between the Assassinations*. The book contains twelve short stories. The first story focuses on the cultural identity of the young Muslim boy through Ziauddin. In the second story the author throws light on the culture of a Muslim businessman. His third story shows how people are treated on the basis of language and caste system. His fourth story focuses on the cultural identity of a low class boy and his mother. In the fifth story Adiga throws light on religious attitude of Indian people and presents clash between traditional culture and modern culture. In the sixth story Adiga focuses on truth and the theme of marriage. In the seventh story Adiga throws light on the low class culture and their habits and relationship. In the eighth story Adiga focuses on the identity of unmarried women in the society, high caste and low caste culture, food habits and religious practices. In the ninth story Adiga deals with culture clash between popular culture and high class culture. Adiga's tenth story focuses mainly on the theme of sex and marriage and how Indian people look at them. In the

eleventh story Adiga focuses on the childless couple and their hospitality and humanity and importance of natural beauty. In the last story Adiga throws light on the political culture of leaders and also deals with the theme of generation gap.

Chapter V presents conclusions based on the earlier discussion in chapters I to IV. The conclusion part of this chapter shows how Aravind Adiga throws light on the various aspects of the theme of cultural identity in his fiction.

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