

**CHAPTER II**

**STUDY OF INDIAN CULTURE  
THROUGH ARAVIND ADIGA'S**

***THE WHITE TIGER***

**WITH THE FOCUS ON THE  
CATEGORY OF CLASS**

## **STUDY OF INDIAN CULTURE THROUGH ARAVIND ADIGA'S *THE WHITE TIGER* WITH THE FOCUS ON THE CATEGORY OF CLASS**

Aravind Adiga's novel *The White Tiger* is composed of a series of letters addressed to the Premier of China, Wen Jiabao. The writer of these letters, as it is known from the contents of the letters, is the protagonist Balram Halwai, the son of a rickshaw-puller who designates himself in the letter-pad as 'The White Tiger', a thinking man, an entrepreneur living in Electronics Phase 1, Bangalore. The protagonist intends to give the Premier an idea of "real" India beforehand, through details of his own life-his sufferings as a boy in the village tea shop, his humiliation as a driver in Dhanbad and then in Delhi and his success in collecting enough money for being an entrepreneur by murdering his employer.

Aravind Adiga deals with many themes in his novel. 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 are the important themes in this novel. But Adiga's main focus is on the class structure of India and with the class system he throws light on Indian culture. He focuses Indian culture through the protagonist's life and his suffering in Laxmangarh, Dhanbad and Delhi due to class structure. Culture means refinement. It is a study of perfection, an inward condition of the mind and spirit. Culture denotes the accumulated shared learning of a given group, covering behavioural, emotional and cognitive elements of the group and its total psychological functioning. Culture refers to civilization. It is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category from another. Culture is seen through different behaviour patterns of an

individual and society. Family background, class, caste, gender, national characteristic, racial background, locality, region, ethnic, religious, linguistic affiliations etc. are the indicators of cultural identity. *The White Tiger* addresses various issues and cultures that are relevant in contemporary India. Adiga studies Indian culture with the focus on the category of class through the following factors:-

### **1) Traditional Family System (Joint Family Culture):**

Family is a unique institution for Indian people. They respect the institution of family. Joint family culture is rooted in India. Two families represent joint family culture, in the novel. One is Balram's family and the other is the Stork's family. Balram lives in a very big family which symbolizes joint family culture. The members give importance to their family relations. In Balram's family there are grandmother, brother, uncles, aunts, cousin brothers and cousin sisters and all of them live together. In a joint family culture everyone is supposed to give respect to the head of the family. In Balram's family also everyone gives respect to the head of the family. Balram's father, Vikram Halwai is the head of the family but he is the head only in the name and actual decisions are taken by his grandmother Kusum. She is the senior person in his family. So everyone respects her. Everyone follows her orders. She controls the whole family. In Indian family culture, the one who is earning, the one who is strong is supposed to take the responsibility of the family. Balram's father, Vikram Halwai is a rickshaw puller. He earns money. So he is the strong person in the family. He takes the responsibility of the family. He is the bread winner. He sacrifices his whole life for his family. After his death, his elder son Kishan takes the responsibility of the family. He takes care of his family.

For example- Balram says, "After my father's death, it was Kishan who took care of me. I don't attempt to hide his role in making me who I am today."<sup>1</sup> Kishan

takes his younger brother's responsibility. It shows the culture of a joint family. When Balram becomes a driver, his family expects help from him. His grandmother is a traditional woman. She guides Balram and expects money from him to run the family. Balram gets a job of a driver and becomes economically strong in his family. He gets monthly wages so that his family sends his cousin brother to him to be a driver like him. He takes his cousin brother's responsibility on his. He helps him and admits him in the English school.

In Indian family, rules are very important and all the family members have to follow them.

For example- Balram's family takes a loan from the landlord for Rina's marriage. They spend a lot of money in the marriage. It is a lavish ceremony. The head wants everyone should work to repay the loan. But Balram's father thinks that his son should get education and his grandmother wants he should also have to work for the landlord. Grandmother's decision is the final decision in the family. So Balram has to quit his schooling and work for the landlord. She compels Balram to follow the rules of the family and his father is helpless before the dictates of the grandmother and her firm decision. So all the members of Balram's family started working for the landlord. Thus everyone has to respect the elder person in the joint family. See for example the case of Balram.

When Kishan came in the school to take Balram, he only asked Kishan about it and followed him mutely. He started working with his brother in the teashop without saying any word against him.

Indians are very much attached to the family. They are very much sensitive about family ties. They care for their family. They suffer for their family. They feel proud of their family. For example- Balram's father devotes his whole life for his family. He cares for his family. He suffers a lot for his family. He doesn't take any decision against injustice because he cares for his family. His son Balram

stands for modernity which teaches him to rebel against injustice. His other family members are traditional. They are very much attached to the family. Traditional man is very much attached to the family but modern man is not that much attached with the family. It is revealed through Balram. He is a modern man. He represents rebellious tendency. He wants to come out from injustice. So at the end of the novel he doesn't think about consequences of his violence and crime and slits his master's throat.

Another family, the Stork's family is also an example of a traditional family. The Storks live in a joint family. The Stork is the head of the family and his son Mukesh and Ashok respect him and accept his decisions. The Stork is the supreme of the family. The other members in the family are the Stork, his elder son Mukesh and his wife and son Roshan, Ashok and his wife Pinky Madam. In this family also the younger one respects the elder person. For example- Ashok gives respect to his elder brother and also his father and follows their orders. He doesn't go against them. Though he spends some years in America and is educated there, he follows family rules and tradition. He is attached to his family and becomes homesick. So he prefers to live in India instead of going back to America.

In the joint family, family members care for their name and fame in the society. They want to retain their reputation. For example- When Ashok married a Christian girl, his brothers didn't like it. They were not happy with Ashok's love marriage because it was against their caste and tradition. Ashok's family gives importance to their caste as his wife was from another caste. So they didn't approve of their marriage. Family reputation is very important for them. They want to show to the society that they stick to the rules of their caste and tradition. So when Pinky Madam leaves Ashok and returns to America, Mukesh asks Ashok to get married with a woman from their caste and religion.

For example- Mukesh asks Ashok, "If you stay a divorced man, people won't respect you. They won't respect us. It's the way our society works." (p. 239) The Stork's family is an extended family. Villagers are afraid of that family. They are the lords of the villagers. The hegemony of landlords prevails in the village.

## **2) Patriarchal Culture:**

There is male domination in patriarchal system. A male is supreme in the family and woman is considered as a secondary human being. The patriarchal culture is male dominated. The male is considered as the representative of the family. He stands for the family. He is the hope of the family and the head of the family.

In Balram's family his father, Vikram Halwai is the head of the family. After his death, his son Kishan becomes the head of the family. That means from generation to generation a male is the head of the family. Balram's grandmother, Kusum controls the family because she is the senior person in the family and in patriarchal culture seniority is very important whether it is a man or woman. She is under the influence of patriarchy. She is born and brought up in patriarchal tradition. Balram is the hope of the family so his father wants to teach him. He thinks he will change their condition for the better.

In patriarchy, the scope is given to the boys and not to the girls for development. That becomes true in Balram's family. When Balram was in Delhi, Kusum sent Dharam, her grandson at Balram to be a driver like him. She sent a boy and not a girl. It indicates that a male has scope in her family and a female is considered as inferior to man. Kusum is a traditional woman. She treats women badly. It is said that woman is the enemy of the woman in patriarchy. It is seen through Kusum's behaviour with her daughter-in-law. She treats Balram's mother very badly. She always blames her and never speaks well about her. Balram's mother suffers mutely. She never raises her voice against her mother-in-law. She

obeys her. It shows her traditional attitude. She gives respect to the elders. She follows joint family rules.

Dowry system 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. To raise the money for dowry the Hindu people borrow money from different sources like money lenders and landlords. Even the poor family also spends beyond its economic capacity on the marriage ceremony. In the marriage, the girl's side is screwed a lot. It has to fulfill all the demands of the boy's side.

Balram tells one incident of his cousin sister Reena's marriage.

"My cousin sister Reena got hitched off to a boy in the next village. Because we were the girl's family, we were screwed. We had to give the boy a new bicycle, and cash, and a silver bracelet, and arrange for a big wedding". (p. 36) The boy's family screwed a lot to the girl's family in the marriage. In contrast to that marriage he tells another example of his brother's marriage. At that time they were from boy's side. He said, "It was one of the good marriages. We had the boy, and we screwed the girl's family hard. I remember exactly what we got in dowry from the girl's side, and thinking about it even now makes my mouth fill up with water: Five thousand rupees cash, all crisp new unsoiled notes fresh from the bank, plus a Hero bicycle, plus a thick gold necklace for Kishan". (p. 51) In the marriage they got a lot of things because it was the boy's side. They screwed a lot to the girl's side. It shows the patriarchal culture. If the family is from boy's side, they get everything, but if the family is from girl's side, they have to spend a lot of money in the marriage ceremony.

The Stork's family also follows the patriarchal culture. The Stork is the head of the family and he takes all the decisions. That means all the decisions are taken by the male. It indicates patriarchy.

For example- in the Stork's family women are never shown to be involved in the conversation with male members. They are totally ignored. Though Pinky Madam is well educated and is from western culture, she is not allowed to get involved in the family matters. They try to suppress and oppress the women. The male dominated society often single handedly deals with the entire social, religious, cultural and family affairs without much feminine consideration. Due to this dominant patriarchal culture, women don't get scope enough to grow independently as self-reliant people. They are only custodians of cultural values and social norms imposed by the dominant patriarchal culture. For example- Pinky Madam wants to find out the family of the child whom she hit on the way while driving Honda city and give them due compensation. But the Stork and his son are not ready to help the family. Instead they call her crazy. They do not agree with her. She realizes the problem but being a woman she is unable to take any decision against them. She is an American woman. So she expects freedom in the family. She is a woman of conscience. But the Stork's family is a traditional, patriarchal family. So she doesn't adjust herself in her in-laws family and finally goes to America forever.

Mukesh is a traditional man while Ashok is a modern man. Ashok stands for modern culture. He gets married to a woman who is from another culture. A modern person believes in freedom, equality and love. Ashok and Pinky Madam are modern persons. But they are throttled in the patriarchal family of the Stork. Pinky is a new woman. The other Storks are traditional. So we notice the clash between two cultures here.

### **3) Feudal Culture:**

Feudal culture is associated with exploitation, injustice and power. The feudal lords wield power ruthlessly. In the novel the Stork's brothers are the feudal lords and others are like the servants and slaves. The whole village is under their



thumb. They rule over them. The villagers are under their power. The landlords possess real property and estate. They have all the rights. What other people have to do is to follow them, and their rules. They exploit the villagers. Villagers are not equal to the landlords. They have no choice. They have to follow only the feudal lords. The wealth and resources are owned by the landlords and the poor people are at their mercy. They take the major share of their earnings and sexually exploit their women. So villagers give them animal names which throw light on their greed and appetite. They grab everything from the villagers. The Storks owned the river that flowed outside the village, and they 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 to come to the village. The Wild Boar owned all the good agricultural land around Laxmangarh. If the villagers wanted to work on those lands, they had to bow down to his feet, and touch the dust under his slippers, and agree to swallow his day's wages. The Raven owned the worst land, which was the dry, rocky hillside around the fort, and took a cut from the goatherds who went up there to graze with their flocks. The Buffalo is the greediest of all the landlords. He had eaten up the rickshaws and the roads. So if the villagers ran a rickshaw, or used the road, they had to pay him his feed- one third of whatever they earned, no less. They feed on the village and everything that grows in it. The landlords enjoy more wealth and opportunities than the villagers. The feudal lords are self centered. They care for their own comforts and own pleasures.

Balram describes Mukesh who doesn't care about servants. He cares only for their comforts. Once he says to Balram, "The air conditioner should be turned off when you are on your own. Music should not be played when you are on your own. At the end of each day you must give us a reading of the meter to make sure you haven't been driving the car on your own". (p. 141) He doesn't have faith in

Balram. He doesn't care for servant's life. He thinks only about his own selfish interests.

On the other hand his brother Ashok, who is also a feudal lord treats servants as his family members. He has the affinity with the village people. He cares for his servants. Once when he was in Dhanbad, he came into a servant's room and said, "How awful, You and Ram Persad will both get a better room to sleep in. And separate beds. And some privacy". (p. 79) He has sympathy for his servants. He cares for them. When he was living in Delhi, one day he went to Drivers quarter, at that time he realized the condition in which Balram was living. He said Balram, "You live in such a hole, Balram I never knew. I'm sorry.' 'I'll give you some money, Balram. You go into some better housing tomorrow, okay?" (p. 237) Ashok is also a feudal lord, but he is a modern man. So he takes care of his servants. The feudal lords are affluent. They are wealthy. They collect money, wealth and property through exploitation and injustice. In the novel, all the landlords lived in high walled mansions in the landlord's quarters. They had their own temples inside the mansions, and their own wells and ponds and did not need to come out into the village except to feed. On the other hand the villagers lived quite opposite to them. The feudal lords eat up the share of the poor and the poor raise no voice against them. They have compromised with this ruler-ruled position, believing it to be natural and god given. They suffer a lot. As a result of exploitation by the feudal lords, poverty culture comes into being. For example- Balram's poor family suffers because of the feudal lords. All the members of his family were working for the feudal lords. Balram had to quit his education and work with his elder brother in a teashop. His father pulled a rickshaw all his whole life. He thinks that his son Balram should get education and change his identity. So once he said Balram, "My whole life, I have been treated as a donkey. All I want is that one son of mine at least one should live like a man." (p. 30) He has no

daring to come out of this slavery. But Balram being a modern man takes a cue from it and changes his identity by taking revenge on Ashok, the feudal lord and becomes an entrepreneur.

#### **4) Religion:**

India is a multi cultural country. People of different religious communities live in India. For example- Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsi etc. In this novel different characters represent different religious beliefs and they follow the cultural practices of their religions.

For example- Mohammad stands for minority culture. He is from the minority culture as far as religion is concerned. He has to hide his religious identity to get a job in Hindu society. Mohammad was a poor, honest and hardworking Muslim but he belongs to minority culture and the landlords give importance to their race and to their caste. So just to get a job and feed his starving family, he posed to be a Hindu and called himself Ram Persad. Though Balram is also a servant, he blackmails Ram Persad. It is because he is from majority community. He is from dominant culture. He is Halwai, a sweet maker's son. So he takes advantage of his religious background and blackmails Ram Persad and becomes servant number one. A man of majority culture compels Mohammad to quit his job. Thus religion plays a vital role in the cultural Matrix of India when jobs are given.

There is another example that also reveals the cultural identity of the Indians. The Stork's family is the Hindu family. They care for the purity of race, religion, caste and family. When Ashok marries a Christian girl namely Pinky they refuse to accept her as a family member. They do not approve of their union because she is not a Hindu. She is an American and not an Indian woman. She is a Christian woman. In India, people give preference to their castes. So the Stork doesn't like his son's marriage to a woman who is from another caste.

The Storks family is from majority community. They are from dominant culture. So they think minority culture as a lower culture. That becomes true from the game. For example- When Balram bowled full tosses to Mukesh's son Roshan, he said, "I'm Azharuddin, captain of India!" (p. 70) But the Stork doesn't like it. He gives importance to his caste. He said Roshan, "Call yourself Gavaskar. Azharuddin is a Muslim." (p. 70) That shows culture clash between majority culture and minority culture.

#### **5) Faith in Rituals and Customs:**

It is an ancient and venerated custom of people in our country to start a story by praying to a higher spiritual power. Balram takes advantage of the limited knowledge of rural beliefs of the upper classes by making up signs of respect for various objects or buildings like a sacred temple, statue or tree. Balram does not take his religion too seriously and often makes fun of it. He says Hindus have 36,000,000 gods. The minority communities like Muslims and Christians have their own gods but their number is very small. So the total gods in India go beyond 36,000,000. Balram sometime believes in God but sometimes pokes fun at it. In their return journey from Laxmangarh, when he drove past a temple, he just touched his fingers to his eyes, as a mark of respect. He again touched his fingers to his eyes, when he drove past a sacred tree to show that he is a very religious person.

Indian people give importance to their religion. It is revealed through Mohammad. When Ramjan starts, Ram Persad keeps fast. He avoids eating during day time. It shows his cultural practice. Indian people follow old traditions as a part of their life. They follow them from generation to generation. For example, Indian people start their day by bowing and praying their deity. Religion symbolizes tradition and honour. In the novel Ram Persad and Balram both start their day by bowing before their gods. When people start their work, their hands

immediately go towards their eyes. When Balram drove Honda City for the first time, he prayed God not to let him make a mistake. It shows his typical Indian attitude based on culture. There was a small statue of goddess Lakshmi in the Honda City car. Everyday Balram placed a stick of incense before the Goddess. It shows Indian culture practice. It is the tendency of Indian people that if they have any problem, they pray God. For example- When Balram was going into a Mall, he touched the stickers of Goddess Kali, with her long red tongue for his good luck. He prays God for his master's and mistress' union. When Pinky Madam left her husband, Balram went to a roadside temple in Gurgaon. He put a rupee before the two resident pairs of divine arses and prayed that Pinky Madam and Mr. Ashok should be reunited and be given a long and happy life together in Delhi.

#### **6) Caste:**

In India the person's caste is his identity. Lower caste people are treated badly by the people of higher caste. In India Muslims are treated like lower caste people by the higher caste Hindus. For example- Ram Persad hides his caste identity to get a job of a driver to feed his starving family. He was really a Muslim and his master, the Stork was a Hindu person. He gives importance to his caste. So Ram Persad hides his caste. But when they come to know his caste, Ram Persad left his job. When Balram comes to the Stork's family in search of a job, he is asked about his caste. They keep Balram as their servant, because he is from top caste, Halwai family, sweet making family. Caste is a major hurdle in maintaining social integrity, equality, harmony and peace. It divides people and places them in different strata of society. Balram, who is from majority caste, blackmails Ram Persad. He compels him to leave his job and he himself becomes a number one driver.

In marriage also Indian people give importance to their caste. They do not allow inter-caste marriage. For example- When Ashok marries a Christian girl, his

family does not approve of their marriage and their union because she belongs to minority culture. Women are treated like lower caste people. They do not have any right to take decision in the family. They have given secondary status in the family. For example – In the Stork’s family, women are ignored. They cannot involve in the conversation. Though Pinky is educated, she doesn’t have any right to take any decision in the family. In Balram’s family his grandmother, Kusum is a senior member of the family. So she has right to control the family. It shows the identity of Indian women.

#### **7) Field of Occupation:**

Every profession has its own ethics called professional ethics and its own culture. It has its own characteristics. Many characters of this novel stand for their professional culture.

For example - Balram’s teacher is a corrupt person. In Indian culture teachers are supposed to be highly cultured persons. Everyone respects them because they create ideal generations. They show appropriate way for the children. But Balram’s teacher is quite opposite to it. He violates all the norms laid down by the society. He violates some principles so we are shocked to see such a teacher because it is against our ideas of a good teacher in Indian culture. Balram says, “There was supposed to be free food at my school – a government programme gave every boy three roties, yellow daal, and pickles at lunchtime. But we never saw rotis, or yellow daal, or pickles, and everyone knew why: the schoolteacher had stolen our lunch money.” (p. 33) He sold the uniforms of the students, but no one blamed the school teacher for doing this. He violates all the norms and principles of an ideal teacher. He behaves totally against the expectation of the people born and brought up in the Indian culture.

Balram comes from sweet maker’s family namely the Halwai family. Making sweets and tea is their job. The Halwai’s are poor economically, but they

are hard working and honest people. This family is fallen on bad days and so their life style and standard of living come down. So they stand for simplicity at the level of culture. For example- Balram says, “My father’s father must have been a real Halwai, a sweet-maker, but when he inherited the shop, a member of some other caste must have stolen it from him with the help of the police. My father had not had the belly to fight back. That’s why he had fallen all the way to the mud, to the level of a rickshaw-puller.” (p. 64)

Balram, a sweet maker’s son later on becomes an entrepreneur. The class of an entrepreneur stands for some kind of business culture. There is a lot of competition between entrepreneurs. Everybody tries to survive in this world of competition. Balram also follows the same path. He takes the help of the police department and tries to finish the rival company which is in his competition. He tells one incident, when he was going to start his taxi service, “One woman was kind enough to explain: ‘you’ are late. Every business in Bangalore already has a taxi service to pick up and drop off their employees at night. I’m sorry to tell you this”. (p. 299) Because of this incident he got depressed. He took the help of the police Department and finished the rival company. He got the shocking news from the woman that her taxi service had been disrupted. A police raid had discovered that most of the drivers did not have licenses. He bribed the Police Department and turned everything into good. He learned the policy of survival. Entrepreneurs follow any policy which is good for them, which help them to survive in the world of business. Balram says, “Once I was a driver to a master, but now I am a master of drivers”. (p. 302) He learns the business culture. He learns to overcome the barriers that come into his path. He turns from a social entrepreneur to a business entrepreneur. He learns the strategy of the entrepreneur.

It is the culture of the police Department to help the needy people and to protect them. But in the novel the police Department is away from morality. They

are violent. They are corrupt. It is the duty of the police Department to find out the truth. But in the novel they help the criminals. Instead of helping the good people, they help the bad people.

For example – Mohammad Asif, Balram’s driver hit a boy, who was on a bicycle. His brother wants to file a F.I.R. He wants this crime recorded, so he goes to the police station. But the assistant commissioner was a corrupt man. He said to the boy, “See, at the time of the accident, your brother’s bicycle had no working lights. That is illegal, you know. There are other things that will come out. I promise you, things will come out”. (p.309) By listening all this, the boy got angry and said, “My brother is dead. This man is a killer. I don’t understand what’s going on here.” To it the assistant commissioner replied, “Look here - go home. Have a bath. Pray to God- sleep. Come back in the morning. We’ll file the F.I.R. then, all right?” (p. 309) The assistant commissioner helps the criminal instead of helping the sufferer. He is bribed with a lot of money. So he neglects the reality and takes the side of the bad people. He doesn’t help the good people. It shows that they are not led by moral principles. They are corrupt. They are without culture. They violate the principles of the police Department. On the other hand the Inspector, who comes to investigate the school, is totally opposite to the police Department. He follows the rules of the Government. He finds very bad condition of the school. The class was without duster and chairs. There were no uniforms for the boys. He wrote some sentences on the board and asked students to read it but no one could read it properly except Balram. So he asked him some questions and rewarded him by giving a book. He inspires students to learn more and more. He follows the culture of a real guide.

Drivers, watchmen and labourers are the low class employees. They have their own culture. They follow the norms of their culture. They have to follow the orders of the upper class people. There are only low class jobs for them so they



find their work very tedious, boring and uninteresting. They take interest in making fun of each other. They make fun by gossiping and teasing each other. For example- In the novel the drivers tease Balram and make jokes. Balram says, "They kept teasing all evening long, and even in the night, when we all went to the dormitory to sleep. Something about my face, my nose, my teeth, I don't know, it got on their nerves. They even teased me about my uniform". (p. 130) The worst part of a driver is to spend hours while waiting for their employer. They spend leisure by chatting, reading Murder Weekly, key-chain swirling, paan chewing, ammonia-releasing circle, crouching and jabbering like monkeys. So they find their job tedious. They give expressions to their interests, habits and feelings which are deep rooted in their unconscious. They talk of murders, thefts, cheating, sex, horror etc. It appears that they belong to the low class and so they follow the norms of popular culture. So they talk about their interest in the trifle things. This is the identification of their low class culture. It is the culture of populous or the masses visa-vis the rich. Balram's father, who was a rickshaw puller, found his job tedious. He spent his whole life pulling a rickshaw. He didn't have any source to earn money. But he thinks his son should be educated. He wants to be a rich man. Low class people have very limited opportunities. So they have to work as a driver, a watchman, a rickshaw puller and a labourer.

#### **8) Culture of Politicians:**

Politics means power. 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 was decline in their power and new politician's wielded power. For example – Vijay a pig herd's son was a born politician. He was a typical Indian politician in new-democratic India. He was neo-rich. He was a hypocrite and a showy person. He had power in his hand. He had prejudice against the feudal lords. So he played with them. He treated feudal lords like servants. One day he came to meet the Stork and treated

them like servants. He chewed paan and needed the spittoon. So Balram took the spittoon but Vijay asked Mongoose, the Stork's son, "Son, won't you hold the spittoon for me". (p. 105) The Mongoose refused to move, so he took the spittoon from Balram's hands and held it out and gave to the Mongoose. Vijay treated the landlords like servants and the poor people. He behaved well with the poor people. He followed the culture of power. His party the Great Socialist took the symbol of a pair of hands breaking through handcuffs. But the poor people knew that they were in their ruler's hand. They knew that casting a vote was a just farce. The party workers voted in the name of the others so the poor had to follow only their orders. They didn't have any right to say anything against the politicians. They had to follow the culture of the politicians and obeyed their orders.

#### **9) Cultural Clash between Educated and Uneducated:**

Educated and uneducated people have their own identities. An uneducated person stands for illiteracy and the educated one stands for literacy. For example – Balram is not highly educated. He is only literate. He has completed only school education. But he understands the importance of education. He thinks like a cultured human being. He thinks about the next generation. So he wants to open a school for the poor children. Balram thinks, "I might start a school –an English language school – for poor children in Bangalore. A school where you won't be allowed to corrupt anyone's head with prayers and stories about God or Gandhi nothing but the facts of life for these kids." (p. 319) It shows the nobility of his cultured mind. Indian culture is against bloodshed. But Balram violates principle of non-violence in Indian culture. He slits his master's throat. So to get rid of the sin, he wants to open school for the poor children and for the orphan children to satisfy his guilty conscience. It shows his nobility. He might be feeling bad in his inner mind for killing his master Ashok. He suffers from guilty conscience for this act.

Pinky Madam is an American educated and cultured woman. She thinks like an educated and cultured woman. For example – When she hit a child, she had guilty conscience. So she wants to find the family of the child and give them compensation. But her father-in-law and brother-in-law are illiterate people. They do not like her behaviour. There is a lot of difference between Pinky and her in-laws. They call her crazy. They don't bother about the death in the accident. They are uncultured people. They prevent Pinky from helping the boy's family. Pinky Madam plays badminton with servants because no one plays with her from her family. They don't like it. There is a lot of difference between Pinky and her family members. Ashok and Mukesh both live in one house but they have a lot of difference in their speech, thinking ability, food habits, clothes and life style because Ashok is educated and Mukesh is uneducated.

In Balram's family, all his relatives are illiterate except Balram and his cousin Dharam. So they think and behave like uneducated people. Balram's grandmother, Kusum is also a traditional woman. So she never gives importance to education. She quits Balram's schooling and compels him to work in a teashop. All the members of his family live in simple manner. Their food, clothing are different from that of the rich people. Their language is also different from that of the rich. When Balram becomes a driver, he changes his lifestyle and behaves like a person from upper class culture.

#### **10) East-West Culture Clash:**

In the novel Pinky Madam and the Chinese premier Wen Jianao are the representative of western culture and all the Indians are representative of eastern culture. This novel deals with the conflict between the values of the West and those of the East. Both Ashok and Pinky are Western educated, sophisticated and both came from good families. And yet the two-husband and wife present contrasting values of the West and the East. Ashok and Pinky represent not only

the conflict between the two cultures but of the East itself. The Hindu-Christian conflict on the level of marriage between two highly educated individuals has this other ethnic and conflicting cultural dimension. Pinky Madam is a typical American woman. She is a product of American culture and Ashok is a product of Indian culture. Both enjoy life in Delhi. They spend hours together in hotels, shopping malls and driving car. But their views are different. Pinky thinks that India is a dirty place but Ashok thinks that India is good country. It is the result of culture clash. Ashok follows all the values of Indian culture while his wife Pinky is led by western values. She is an American civilized woman. So she follows western culture.

Indians treat a guest like a God. They respect and greet him. They treat him with honour. It throws light on culture of Indian people. For example- Balram says, "The Prime Minister and foreign Minister of my country will meet you (Jaibao) at the airport with garlands". (p. 5) It shows Indian culture. Indian people greet their guest with garlands and respect the guest. Indians are known for their hospitality towards their guest. It is a cultural trait.

#### **11) Rural-Urban Culture:**

Village is a seat of tradition while urban setting is a seat of modernism. In big cities like Delhi and Bangalore we see a variety of people. They are broad minded people. Their life style is different from that of the villagers. People don't have time to maintain their relations. There is a lot of competition among the rich people. There is clash between the poor and the rich people. The roads are always full. So people face problems like traffic jam and pollution. People don't care for jobs and money. They have a lot of job opportunities. It is the urban culture.

In village, people give importance to traditions and customs. Family relations are very important for them. They get happiness from small things. They live simple life. They don't have competition among them. Their eating habits

indicate simplicity. But urban people enjoy hotelling. They spend many hours in hotels, shopping malls and driving cars. In cities people work in big company but in village people work hard in the field. Villagers are away from sophisticated lifestyle. For example – Balram doesn't know how to pronounce words like 'mall' and 'Pizza'. He doesn't know how to drink coffee. He is a village boy so everything is new to him in Delhi. But he acquires urban culture. He finds differences between urban and village life style.

### **12) Relation between the Young and the Elderly People in Indian Culture:**

It is the custom of Indian people that the younger should respect the elderly people. They have faith in their elder people. Youngsters don't go against their elders. It indicates Indian culture. For example- Balram never says any word against his grandmother Kusum. In his family everyone respects her. His whole family was in her control. No one goes against her decision. Balram's father obeys her orders and his mother also never says anything against her mother-in-law even though she is tortured a lot by her mother-in-law. Balram has to quit his education for the sake of his grandmother. All these incidents throw light on Indian culture.

In the Stork's family Ashok respects his elder brother Mukesh. He never says anything against his brother and father. For example – Pinky Madam wanted to give compensation for the family of the child whom she hit on the road. But the Stork and his son Mukesh refused to take the responsibility. On the other hand the Stork said Ashok, "You need to control that wife of yours better, son. The way we do it in the village". (p. 180) Ashok doesn't say anything against his father because he respects his father. Elder one helps younger one. They take care of them. They care for their welfare. They give inspiration to the youngsters.

For example – In the novel the officer understands the child's psychology and inspires him for showing brightness. It is the culture of the education officer to inspire the students. The inspector saw Balram's talent so he promised Balram,

“I’ll write to Patna asking them to send you a scholarship”. (p. 35) He gave Balram a parting gift a book. The inspector inspires Balram for his further education.

### **13) Attitude of Indians toward Nature:**

Indian people are very religious. They see God in nature. So they have respect Nature. They think all the creatures are the part of nature. It shows eco-cultural insight of Indian people.

For example - Balram saw a buffalo pulling a large cart behind it. There was no human being sitting in this cart with a whip; the buffalo knew on its own where to go. This cart was full of the faces of dead buffaloes. In Indian culture, people think animals as God. So it is against Indian culture to massacre animals. Balram thinks that the condition of his family is like that of the buffaloes in the cart. He visualized and imagined the faces of his own family members at that moment. The buffaloes cannot do anything to save their life. Balram’s family also doesn’t go against unjust practices. They sacrifice themselves in such a condition. But Balram wants to rebel against injustice. He wants to come out from this ‘Rooster Coop’. He wants to change his identity. Seeing the skulls of the buffaloes, he is reminded of his aunt, brother, grandmother and uncle who fell victim to the harassment and wrath of the landlord. They were beaten to death. Balram thought that they were urging him pitifully to take revenge on the landlord and sons. He sees the faces of his own family in the faces or skulls of the butchered buffaloes. He compares their condition with the animals. Ultimately he takes revenge on the people of the rich class by killing his master and he never feels guilty about his violent act. His conscience, it appears, is clear. He murdered the rich man for the great cause of the suffering poor.

In brief, we can say that traditional family system (joint family culture), patriarchal culture, feudal culture, religion, faith in rituals and customs, caste, field of occupation, culture of politicians, different attitudes of educated and uneducated,

East-West culture clash, rural-urban ways of life, age difference, and importance of nature in the life of Indian people are the factors which throw light on Indian culture.

**References :**

1. Adiga, Aravind. *The White Tiger*, India: Harper Collins publishers. 2008. p. 53

All other references in the parenthesis are from this text.