

Exploring an Unparallel Evolution of Traditional Values and Modern Values in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*

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Abstract

*The process of changing the mindsets from tradition to modernity is not completely achieved. The article traces of adapting and adopting the values of modernity in Adiga's novel *The White Tiger*. This paper examines an individual transformation from being traditional into modernity and its effects in their life. The paper analyses the incomplete adaptation of modern values irrespective of their growing environment. However, people adapt and adopt the societal developments according to their needs. The values, culture and practice of tradition and modern ideas are not always parallel but people adapt unequally. The paper tells readers the complexities of transforming into new culture which ends up as an unsolved dilemma in few lives. As modernity includes the scientific development; the article explores the importance of social environment in evolution of tradition and modern cultures. Society consistently builds the in-built idea of technology and social development as modernity. It shows the necessity of getting into the modern world and its lifestyle changes.*

Keywords: Adapt, Adopt, Beliefs, Evolution, Ideology, Modern, Technology, Tradition, Unparalleled and Values.

Introduction

Aravind Adiga is an Indian author who is the author of novel, *The White Tiger*. *The White Tiger* is published in 2008. This novel won The Man Booker prize in the year 2008. Aravind Adiga's works greatly explored on the social issues as well as an individual issues mainly the problems of youngsters. The novel greatly concentrated on the social structure of India. The novel concentrated on the corruptive mindsets of few people. Indian Literature addressed many genres of literature. It never failed to show case the struggles and life styles of commoners. Indian writers brought fiction and non-fiction in their works.

Balram and Ashok were the two prominent characters in *The White Tiger*. The novel showcases the themes such as poverty, corruption and greedy. These themes dominated the novel and the psyche of each character. This work highlighted the effects of poverty and ill structure of politicians and their corruption. Corruption affects impoverished people. *The White Tiger* exhibited the struggle of Balram and how he became a successful business man from being a chauffeur. It also greatly shared about the relationship between

Balram and Mr. Ashok irrespective of class. Ashok played a crucial role in Balram Halwai's life. Balram killed Ashok as social barrier was one of the main reasons.

Tradition and modernity were two main concepts of society as well as they both play a major role in sociological theory. Since, society completely evolved around people and their evolution from being tradition to modernity made a whole society. Usually, tradition inhibited the old values and beliefs of people apart from the cultural habits. Modernity was something that bring new ideas and belief into different social group. Even development of technology and adapting to unusual ideologies of a community considered as an effect of modernity. Effect of social and political change were results of modernity.

There was no word from him until evening, and then he came down for the car. He made me go from one bank to another bank. Sitting in the driver's seat, I watched through the corner of my eye; he was collecting money from the automatic cash machines – four different ones. (Adiga 21)

In *The White Tiger*, Balram Halwai was the protagonist; he became rich and a successful business man though he had a poor family background. He became a prominent entrepreneur from being a chauffeur. Mr. Ashok was another prominent character whom Aravind Adiga brought to kindle up the essence of the novel. Mr. Ashok was born and brought up in rich family background. Though his father and brother were quiet cunning and greed about their social position and money in addition they both failed to respect and treat everyone equally. According to Mr. Ashok's father and brother; they could buy everything including people emotions, position and more. However, Mr. Ashok was a man full of respect but few uncertain incidents made him to choose wrong path. Mr. Ashok's wife called as Pinky was another character who was quiet crazy. Balram Halwai, Mr. Ashok and Pinky Madam were the main characters when it comes to tradition and modern mindsets.

Krishna Singh's "Politico- Socio and Cultural Consciousness in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* and Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*" exhibited the results of immigration, colonia neurosis, modernity, discrimination and more. "Chetan Bhagat and Aravind Adiga as Social Critics: Comparing *Revolution 2020* and *The White Tiger*" by M. Sreelatha explained the postmodern consciousness and self-discovery struggles; it also explained the political system and social disparity. Amlanjyoti Patra's "Holding the Mirror to the Middle- Class Indian Elite: A Study of *The White Tiger*" elucidated the community of business and politicians along with their effects in middle-class Indians. "Still in Search of the Nation: A Reading of Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*" was an article by Cielo G. Festino talked about tradition of Indo-English. It shared a various ideology of both nation, India and British. "Unselfing of the Self in Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*" written by Dr. T. Sasikanth Reddy who shared about class divisions in India and servants' loyalty. This paper mainly concentrated on the values of tradition and modernity were impossible to stand alone some way or the other they stand together though they evolve constantly. The concepts of evolution of tradition and modernity were analysed through the characters such as Balram Halwai, Mr. Ashok and Pinky Madam.

Balram Halwai became rich and prominent entrepreneur; he did not change his old good mindsets. One such good mindset was he treated his employees well which exhibited his traditional mindset though he caught to become modernist of running a chauffeur business. Chauffeur business was one of the developing business and cars were considered as a development of technology. As technology was considered as a part of modernity. Old ideologies considered as a traditional factor.

Mr. Ashok brought up in India culture and traditional acts of his father. However, Mr. Ashok had his own way of traditional ethics such as treating everyone equally and respecting people as they are. He fought for the good values against his own family members. These traditional beliefs

of Mr. Ashok were questioned when his wife Pinky killed a human being while drunk and drive. Where his family members tried to put the blame on an innocent man Balram Halwai. Mr. Ashok's traditional values like humbleness and equality of treating people irrespective of social classes were appreciable. When it came to modernity, Mr. Ashok adapted naturally to modernity of Pinky madam who was an epitome of western culture in the novel, *The White Tiger*. This showed that an individual could not completely adapt or adopt to one ideology as Mr. Ashok was balancing his life with traditional life of his parents and westernised culture of his wife.

“I am separated. Going through a divorce.’ ‘I’m sorry to hear that,’ the fat man said. ‘Marriage is a good institution. Everything’s coming apart in this country. Families, marriages – everything.’” (Adiga 214-215).

Pinky Madam, the wife of Mr. Ashok had traits of modernity. Pinky Madam's dress style, cultural background, brought up place, and certain lifestyles were quite different from Indian women. She had the habit having alcohol and she was not like typical Indian daughter-in-law. She drank and drove; it indicated the influence of modern values. When it came to the matter of marriage, she parted her ways from Mr. Ashok. But philosophical or traditional values of Pinky Madam were also to be noticed. She followed certain values such as respecting every one irrespective of their work also found guilty of killing someone in an accident. Other prominent decision of Pinky should be addressed as she left her marriage life when her husband and his family did not allow her to pay compensation to the child's family. These values of Pinky Madam should be taken into account as a traditional value. Traditional values were closely connected to philosophical values. In modern world, people thought that marriage was a cake walk and partners forgot about withstanding and understanding in marriage life.

A given institution (or) cultural system contains several aspects (or) dimensions. Each dimension does not function in the same way in response to new influences on society. Tradition and modernity are frequently mutually reinforcing, rather than systems in conflicts. (Gusfield 353)

The common evolution of tradition values were clothing style, language, and technology developments. All these evolutions were the effect of colonialism. Especially when it came to all these factors such as clothing, language especially English, technology as well as idea of love and marriage were greatly influenced from the Western world. In India, people could adapt or adopt either culture, values and beliefs completely. Thus, the evolution from tradition to modern ideology stood unparallel because traditional values and modernity were standing together as traditional notions were baseline of a society. In *The White Tiger*, characters like Balram Halwai, Mr. Ashok and Pinky Madam struggled to adapt and adopt to a single value in every genre of life as they stuck with both tradition and modern notions. This happens to every individual. Adapting to the world's development like adapting to technology and adapting to new ideologies were essential essence of modernity. Especially, in countries like India agriculture and business were prominent traditional practices later it inculcated the practice of technology developments which was a part of modernity. Here, Balram's native did not have proper sewage system but other parts of the country trying to develop with roads, proper sewage system, larger buildings and technology. These unparallel form of a nation exhibited the unparallel standings of tradition and modernity.

The conception of India as a non-industrial and agricultural society, only now opened to industrialism, also need revision. The decline of native Indian industries in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was a consequence of the protection of British textile manufacturers, then spearheading the Industrial Revolution in England. (Gusfield 353)

Traditional and Modern values existed together but they evolve in unparallel manner. In today's world, traditional traits and values were respected and practiced. Old ideologies highlighted and practiced at the same time people adapted and adopted to the technology developed world. Modern

world was exposed to certain uncertainty habits and beliefs like treating everyone equally. It also explained that development of technology was must as they give modern solution to modern problems. Traditional buildings were not maintained and this showed sometimes society failed to safe guard their tradition as they were moving forward to modern world which was filled with technologies. As a development of technology resulted Balram Halwai, a successful business man irrespective of literate or illiterate. Technology was the other reason to develop more automobiles which provided both educated and uneducated an occupation.

Conclusion

Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* majorly talked about social issues however, this paper exhibited how tradition and modernity coexist unparallelly in the novel. Tradition and modernity could not stand separately. Still, how the psyche of characters were involved in evolution of tradition and modern values. Balram Halwai, Mr. Ashok and Pinky Madam were interconnected to the unparallel evolution of tradition and modern values. They exhibited the ideology of various values and beliefs. Though the world filled with traditional values and modern technologies; it was a duty of a citizen to take care of an individual psyche and environment. With lots of improvement and evolutions world should take care of their society and environment along with the safety of ecosystem.

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