

Research Papers



**NEGATIVE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION AND CHANGING VALUES,  
MORALS IN ARVIND ADIGA'S THE WHITE TIGER SOME  
REFLECTIONS.**

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**Abstract**

*At the very outset of this article we will have to define the terms 'values' and 'morals' and 'Globalization' because the definitions may differ from person to person, countries, culture, and states. Its disputable to define and discuss values with respect to people and country. The difficulty increases largely when we think of India, a country with vast population diversity, and having numerous traditions. Values differ from one section to another, from one religion to another.*

Values vary on the basis of religion, cast, sect, language and ethnicity. There are certain differences between villagers and city dwellers. Values ought to be distinguished from norms governing actual behavior. For example, monogamy is a value for men and women in certain sections of Indian society. The relationship between husband and wife is based on traditional values. A husband is expected to provide the wife and children, while the wife has to cook and serve the food and perform other domestic duties.

Values and norms varied from group to group the locally dominant caste or other ethnic group provided a model for emulation for the non-dominants. Since the dominant caste were wealthy, powerful and enjoyed a high-status, lower groups were not permitted to take over their customs, manners and life-styles but over a long period of time some of the customs and manners of the dominants gradually percolated to the others. Since 1950's the power of dominants to enforce their will on the others has been eroded due to legislations, education, improved communications and other modernizing factors.

While considering the values, norms and behavior of people in a country such as India, one cannot ignore the influence of literature. The

influence of literature and scriptures also varies region to region, and group to group, and is therefore difficult to generalize. Advanced industrial societies are now changing their basic value systems in a number of related ways.

Growing material wealth reduces the basic existential constraints on human choice. The rise of a knowledge based economy makes people intellectually independent, widening the areas in which people have to rely on their own choices.

The values in the world are fast changing. Some people are speaking of a "new pattern of "behavior" which ought to replace the present pattern which is causing chaos; some speak of the moral code as being changeable, and say that if the great Teachers of humanity were to come again today they would give a different set of morals for us to follow. All this bewilders people.

As there is no universally agreed definition of values, they have been interpreted in a number of different ways. Louis E. Raths contends that "out of experience may come certain general guides to behavior. These guides tend to give direction to life and may be called values." 1

The major function of values is to provide the basic standards against which people can judge a given act, the direction which the political and

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religious leadership is taking, and other factors that determine the flow of society.

The definition of value is linked with the philosophical systems known as pragmatism and realism. These philosophical systems maintain that values have no organizational status and so are not found ready-made in the natural or supernatural order of things. They are dependent upon efforts, interests and the needs of people; in other words, values are created by people out of their experienced needs and desires. Values therefore are bio-social and spiritual creations, and are invented like any other social creations by individuals and societies to serve the purpose of guiding human choices and behavior. Such values are derived from experience and tested, verified and maintained by experience.

The major functions of values are, to serve as guides and judges for individual actions and to direct the choices and conduct of people in a culture. In respect of individuals and cultures, values are interdependent. They are first created by individuals out of their group experience, and then flow into and help to shape the culture. The culture in turn helps to maintain, diffuse and nurture those values created by individuals and accepted into the culture. In time all individuals habitually interject certain values from their respective cultures. Individuals who are more independent in their thinking, however, are able to rise above at least many of the culture's values that intrude upon them. It is therefore not enough to have teachers and teacher-surrogates who can pass on values from one generation and culture to another. We must have original individual teachers who can transform and adapt values and invent new ones to meet the need for modernization and progress.

Inglehart<sup>2</sup> argues that economic development, cultural change, and political change go together in coherent and, to some extent, predictable patterns. Industrialization leads to related changes such as mass mobilization and diminishing differences in gender roles. Changes in worldviews seem to reflect changes in the economic and political environment, but take place with a generational time lag. Following industrialization, advanced industrial society leads to a basic shift in values, de-emphasizing [instrumental rationality](#). Postmodern values then bring new societal changes, including democratic political institutions and the decline of state socialist regimes. The White Tiger<sup>3</sup> is the reflection of Inglehart's views.

Morality describes the principles that

govern our behavior. Without these principles in place, societies cannot survive for long. In today's world, morality is frequently thought of as belonging to a particular religious point of view, but by definition, we see that this is not the case. Everyone adheres to a moral doctrine of some kind.

Moral values are the standards of good and evil, which govern an individual's behavior and choices. Individual's morals may derive from society and government, religion, or self. When moral values derive from society and government they, of necessity, may change as the laws and morals of the society change. An example of the impact of changing laws on moral values may be seen in the case of marriage vs. "living

Morality speaks of a system of behavior in regards to standards of right or wrong behavior. The word carries the concepts of: (1) moral standards, with regard to behavior; (2) moral responsibility, referring to our conscience; and (3) a moral identity, or one who is capable of right or wrong action. Common synonyms include ethics, principles, virtue, and goodness. Morality has become a complicated issue in the multi-cultural world we live in today.

The morality is an informal system means that it has no authoritative judges and no decision procedure that provides a unique guide to action in all moral situations. When it is important that disagreements be settled, societies use political and legal systems to supplement morality. These formal systems have the means to provide unique guides, but they do not provide the uniquely correct moral guide to the action that should be performed. That morality is a public system does not mean that everyone always agrees on all of their moral judgments. When disagreement is recognized, those who understand that morality is an informal public system admit that how one should act is morally irresolvable, and if some resolution is required, the political or legal system can be used to resolve it.

#### Globalization and literature

"To make term more clearly, Globalization has been defined as the process of rapid integration of countries and happening through greater foreign trade and foreign investment. In essence, it refers to increased possibilities for action between and among people in situations irrespective of geographical considerations as per the definition of social theorists. Developed countries have been trying to pursue developing countries to liberalize

the trade and allow more flexibility in business policies to provide equal opportunities to multinational firms in their domestic market. International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank helped them in this endeavor. Liberalization began to hold its foot on barren lands of developing countries like India by means of reduction in excise duties on electronic goods in a fixed time frame. Indian government did the same and liberalized the trade and investment due to the pressure from World Trade Organization. Import duties were cut down phase-wise to allow MNC's operate in India on equality basis. As a result globalization has brought to India new technologies, new products and also the economic opportunities.”<sup>4</sup>

Globalization offers clear economic opportunities and benefits, but comes with substantial social costs that often appear to affect people disproportionately, given their tenuous transitional status within an uncertain and rapidly evolving global context. Young people are growing up in a world of globalization and inequality, taking part in a development process that is simultaneously bringing people closer together and widening the divisions between them. The assets of the 200 richest people on earth are greater than the combined incomes of more than 2 billion of the poorest, and the gap between the two groups continues to grow.

Adiga typifies the Globalization through the yellow crane, and satirizes the insensible development and constructions in progress in urban areas. He describes :

“ it was a monster sitting at the top of the pit with huge metal jaws alternately gorging and disgorging immense quantities of mud. Like creatures that had to obey it, men with troughs of mud on their heads walked in circles around the machine, they did not look much bigger than mice. Even in the winter night the seat had made their shirts stick to their glistening black bodies”. (p. 158)<sup>5</sup>

The huge crane symbolizes the capitalization and globalization, which has created a great impact on Indian economy, it is positive for the elite class and negative for the poor and deprived classes, because the huge machines like the cranes have snatched out the jobs of peasants and labourers.

In its broadest sense, globalization refers to the extension of a whole range of economic, cultural and political activities across the world landscape. Globalization can be defined as the

intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. World statistics reflect the fact that globalization is a double-edged sword; it offers substantial economic benefits, but those benefits, perhaps inevitably, are accompanied by social costs. The people are affected by both the positive and negative aspects of globalization.

It is important to understand that globalization has a direct and powerful influence on the lives insofar as it actively extends the kinds of social division to which young people are all too often subjected. It is generally agreed, notwithstanding the various differences in perspective, that globalization is having a tremendous impact on society.

In the recent economical and political affairs the Globalization is one of the major issues and it is always at the centre of discussion almost in every field.

Let's assess the impact of Globalization and money market on literature. The issues of globalization have risen up rapidly and prominently in the present scenario. There is always a close relationship between literature and contemporary socio- eco-political situations. The most important era in Indian English literature is post—colonial writing back to the entire and affirming its own identity and its national and cultural individuality. The post—colonial literature reflected the migration, hybridity, loss of identity, multiculturalism, and disappearance of national identities. Globalization induced this process and merged some cultural practices and developed cultural marketing through the inflowing of Malls and big MNC's in almost all metropolitan cities and paved a new trend of celebrating day's like Valentine's Day, mother's day, father's day etc. The metropolitan cities suddenly reflected its changing form from metro to cosmopolitan and multicultural. It has never been felt through violent political strategies but the slow and quiet impounding of the culture and market, this process of Globalization is decentred. Through this of process of Globalization emerges the cultural regimes of domination and exploitation of multiple deracination, cultural changes and new approach to culture and literature, new methods of composing and writing, which gives birth to new cultural activities and theory. The Globalization scattered the need of English language throughout the world. The English languages become the important lingua

franca for Global community.

The literature is an important and easily available means through which one can take an overview of the whole world. The writer has the abilities to expose his readers to the stark realities of the world. Most of the writers indirectly or sometimes directly mention the effects of Globalization. Interestingly some writers considered Globalization as a God's gift to the country; others presented it as a pretentious. Some called it supernatural boon which has changed the face of the whole country. Balram the protagonist in *The White Tiger* explains in a very ironical manner the present situation of Indian corporate scenario :

“Sir, you Chinese far ahead of us in every respect, except that you don't have entrepreneurs. And our nation , though it has no drinking water , electricity , sewage system , public transportation ,sense of hygiene, discipline, courtesy, or punctuality, does have entrepreneurs- have set up all these outsourcing companies that virtually run America now”<sup>6</sup>

Arvind Adiga explores the reality of life in India and Bharat in his much discussed and criticized novel *The White Tiger*. The writer presents the Darkness of Bharat. The main theme of the novel is the contrast between India's rise as a modern global economy and its working class people who live in crushing poverty and to survive anyhow they neglect all the set up values and morals in the society . Poverty, its cause and effects which makes the man to fight and achieve the higher goals in one's life is the theme of the novel. Arvind Adiga is one of the unique writers who represented the unique and modifying pace of economical changes in the country. His novel *The White Tiger* shows his creative genius which derives the aesthetic pleasure and also heavily attacks the contemporary Indian society.

The title is very suggestive and symbolic. The white tiger is the symbol of serene strength and power in Japan and China. In far Eastern astrology the white tiger is the supernatural figure who presides over the western. The spirit of the white tiger combines the courage and fierceness of a soldier with an ethereal, magisterial dignity.

Globalization does not cross only the national boundaries but controls the wide flow of capital communications and manufactured goods from region to region .the *White Tiger* dramatises the modern phases of globalization . The novel studies the contrast between India's rise as a global economy and its utter poverty in the

rural India. Adiga observes that the third world is very much influenced by the first world. The Western countries are observing every aspects of the third world behaviour.

Arvind Adiga paints a very striking and flabbergasting picture of Indian society. The novel has been written in an epistolary form. The protagonist writes a series of letters to the prime –minister of China, Mr. Wen Jiabao. This seven part letter became a very fatal weapon and shocking instrument in Adiga's hands which digresses almost in every field. It attacks the changing morals values and ethics in the society. He has focused the positive and negative impact of globalization.

The novel opens with the stark realities of Indian economical situation which the prime minister of India will show the prime minister of China. The protagonist Balram Halwai alias Ashok Sharma is an unfortunate lad born in an extremely poor family of peasants in Bihar where the landlords exploits the poor people and controls the whole economy of the town .He predicts his life in future in the form of a weak , scrawny, skinny, shrunken and infected figure in the village men , but he is a white tiger who finds an opportunity to escape from this dungeon like village. He becomes a driver leaving behind his parents and relatives, goes to Delhi to serve his landlord.

As he reaches Delhi he becomes aware of stark realities of life at Delhi. His enlarged vision teaches him the new way of living. His attitude changes according to his interactions with the urbanites of Delhi. The people around him teach him a new way of life. his interactions with fellow drivers, his reading of books , and the experience with changing masters like Ashok and then Pinkie madam , their affairs , the corrupt practices played by his master of bribing the ministers, his experience of accepting responsibility of an accident which he himself has never committed, Ashok's extra marital affairs, changes Balram from an innocent, polite and obedient illiterate man from a mild person into a very hardcore criminal. He neglects all the set values and morals. Balram explains how the morals and values in the society are trampled down by citing the examples. He depicts a story how the father and sons come together and drink the whisky:

“As I was massaging, the two sons pulled up chairs and sat down by their father to talk. Ram Prasad would bring about a bottle full of a golden liquid, and pour it into three glasses, and drop ice cubes their glasses, and hand one glass to each of

them. The sons would wait the father to take the first sip, 'Ah....whisky. how would we survive this country without it ,' and then the talking would start.”<sup>7</sup>

He conspires against his master considering that there no way to success without crime and behind every success there is always a crime. He is always curious about the discussion between the co-travellers in the car. Through that discussion he collects the information which is first hand information. He begins to long for better life. He aspires to be the owner , an entrepreneur. Balram was frustrated and over-reactive for his master's corrupt practices. His going to the red light area in search of a prostitute is to satisfy his suppressed revenge. He searches for strands of golden hair of women who frequently travelled with Ashok in the car and had sex. He takes pleasure in collecting every strand of female hair. Their frequent visits to brothels, their immoral behaviour is against all set values and morals.

Balram is set to in the backdrop of the economic boom in India that has created a great gap between haves and have -nots. Balram has been presented by Adiga as a modern hero in the midst of the economic prosperity of India in the recent past. Balram is able to achieve the success by murdering Ashok, his master, and steals his bag full of currency notes. Balram's act is according to the teachings of his master. Balram observes the immoral activities of Ashok of offering bribe to the ministers, keeping illegal relations, the constant ill treatment given to him, all this kind of questionable acts promotes Balram to take revenge against Ashok by killing him and snatching away the amount he has. Balram being a poor driver cannot fulfil his wishes he cannot even enter into the mall.

Balram explains “The rest of today's narrative will deal mainly with the sorrowful tale of how I was corrupted from a sweet, innocent village fool into a citified fellow full of debauchery, depravity, and wickedness.”<sup>8</sup>

“Balram feels degraded as a human being, deprived of basic human rights to enter a shopping mall. A poor driver couldn't enter a mall as he belonged to the poor class. If he walked into the mall someone would say "Hey, That man is a paid driver! What's he doing in here? There were guards in grey uniforms on every floor - all of them seemed to be watching me. It was my first taste of the fugitive's life (152). Balram reminisces one of the newspaper reports on the malls, in the early days entitled 'Is there No Space for the Poor in the

Malls of new India?'(148). The security guards at these shopping malls identified the poor wearing sandals let in only those wearing shoes, while a poor man in sandals was driven out. This made a man in sandals explode 'Am I not a human being too?'"(148).<sup>9</sup>

Adiga portrays the picture of booming economy of India and with it he points out the degradation of ethics , morals and values in the globalized India.

Adiga has expressed an idea through this novel that a day will come when the poor people in the world will come together, would be free from the tyranny and injustice thrust upon them by rich people. The poor people will come together and will take revenge upon them without taking into account the set values and morals in the society. They won't think about what kind of means are being used by them whether crime or corruption. Ashok Sharma alias Balram is also behaving in the similar way. He bribes the assistant commissioner of police and does not permit the brother of a victim to lodge even a FIR against him. The commissioner under the pretext that the victim's bicycle had no working lights. The protagonist becomes an exploiter. The exploited becomes rich by killing his master and becomes an exploiter. Ashok alias Balram treats poor people as insects . adiga through his novel depicts the changing morals and values and increasing crime and corruption, increasing and the widening gap between rich and poor.

Ashok says “We sipped cup of after cup of steaming coffee under the calendar that had the face of the goddess Laxmi on it – she was showing gold coins from a pot into the river of prosperity. Above her was a framed portrait of the god of gods , a grinning Mahatma Gandhi.” (P 310)<sup>10</sup>

Ashok meets the bereaved family and explains them that “The police have let me off. That is the way of this jungle we live in”(p 312)<sup>11</sup>

The negative effects of Globalization are obviously the end of family institution, increasing divorces, immigration of rural poor folks to urban area which has invited so many problems like increasing population, the scarcity of all natural resources, unemployment, poverty, slums, illegal acquisition by landlords, the dislodging of farmers, growing corruption, corrupt leaders and the soaring ambition of the greedy capitalists ,terrorism , and the threat to the national security, these are the negative effects of globalization becomes very obvious in the novel .

Ashok narrates “ When I drive

down Hosur Main Road , when I turn into Electronics City Phase 1 and see the companies go past , I can't tell you how exciting it is to me . General Electric, Dell, Siemens--- they are all here in Bangalore . And so many more are on their way. There is construction everywhere. Piles of stones . Piles of bricks. The entire city is masked in smoke , smog , powder, cement dust. It is under a veil. When the veil is lifted , what will Bangalore be like?" (p 317) 12

In these words protagonist visualizes the future of India .

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