

## EXPOSURE OF CORRUPTION IN POST-INDEPENDENCE INDIAN ENGLISH NOVEL

**Dr. Hitendra B. Dhote**

Assistant Professor of English  
Adarsh Arts and Commerce College,  
Desaiganj (Wadsa), Dist-Gadchiroli.

HHH

### Abstract

*Post-Independence Indian writers in English, like Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Tharoor, Vikas Swarup, Chetan Bhagat, Aravind Adiga, to mention the few, have boldly exposed the socio-politico-economic-religious issues like poverty, corruption, the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor, brutal caste system, religious intolerance, class conflicts, degradation of social-cultural values, etc., in their works. Their writings point out how irresponsible and self-centered attitude of the Indian citizens has been major reason behind these issues. Their writings bring home the moral that India would never be free of these problems unless and until the policy makers and implementing officers change their attitude and think in favor of growth of India as a country and welfare of Indian citizens.*

**Keywords:** exposure, corruption, post-independence, social-cultural values, welfare

The present paper is an attempt to highlight the exposure of corruption in post-independence Indian English novel, particularly the novels of Aravind Adiga, Vikas Swarup and Chetan Bhagat. The Indian English Literature has always tried to awaken the people against socio-political, cultural issues in India. One of the motives of the latest literary masterpieces like Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*, *Between the Assassinations*, Vikas Swarup's *Six Suspects*, And Chetan Bhagat's *What Young India Wants* is to expose the corruption, percolated deep into most of the segments of the society including politics, security forces, law and order, education, medical practices, judiciary, etc., on the one hand, and to make the Indians aware about the uncontrolled corruption and to raise the voice against the existing rottenness as well.

Corruption has been dominant trait of the administrators from time immemorial. This is an abuse of entrusted power for personal benefits and it has covered up the politicians, bureaucrats, police and army personal, and judiciary in its compass. The comprehensive definition of corruption given by Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations is referred by Chitra G. Lele in the book entitled *Corruption in India: Causes, Effects and Reforms* and it goes: "Corruption is an insidious plague that has a wide range of corrosive effects on societies. It undermines

democracy and the rule of law, leads to violations of human rights, distorts markets erodes the quality of life and allows organized crime, terrorism and other threats to human security to flourish" (8).

The truthful portrayal of socio-politico-economic-religious conditions in India has gained Aravind Adiga an identity of being a social realist. He has exposed corruption, spread widely in almost every field in India, both in *The White Tiger*, *Between the Assassinations*, and also how it has demolished the moral and humanitarian values. He has pointed out that the election time is most crucial time when corruption happens on large scale. During elections the political parties try to gain votes by pursuing the voters by offering them money, freebies, liquor and gifts. Actually elections should be utilized by the people as an opportunity to hand over the country to the honest, righteous, and a fearless Indians to lead the great nation. He laments that the Indian citizens have constantly failed to use this opportunity for the right cause. In *The White Tiger*, he expresses, ". . . The people of this country had a chance to put an efficient ruling party. . . in power, and instead they have voted in the most outrageous bunch of thugs" (280). He has exposed the other dirty aspects of the elections in India that pave the way for corruption. He shows that sometimes voters are threatened to vote for a particular candidate. In other trick politicians lure the voters with attractive promises which they never fulfill. The very fact is nicely portrayed by Adiga in *The White Tiger* with example from Balram's village. Balram explains that ". . . there is no hospital in Laxmangarh, although there are three different foundations stones for hospital, laid by three different politicians before three different elections (47).

In *Six Suspects* Vikas Swarup has disclosed the real picture of contemporary corrupt urban Indian society. He shows that politics is game of dirty people and honest people can't survive in it. There was a time when India was ruled by honest leaders, known for their sacrifices for nation. But, at present the situation has changed. There are such politicians who have tarnished the glory of Indian politics and made our nation the most corrupt. Through Jagannath Rai, the most corrupt Home Minister

of Uttar Pradesh, Swarup has exposed that today the political power is in the hands of the wrong, stupid, selfish, hedonist, hypocrite and after all upon the murderers. Such crooked politicians not only create immorality, crisis, anarchy but also the terrorism. Jagannath Rai embodies the denigration of Indian politics. His political career is a chronicle of horrifying crimes. He is involved in so many criminal activities. He has sexual affairs with various girls and Rukhsana Afsar is one of them. Jagannath dupes her with false promises. Vicky, Jagannath Rai's son, is criminal from his childhood. He has taken the lives of many innocent people at minor things. He has murdered the innocent bar-girl, Rubby gill, when she refused him to give the drink. Vicky's craze for the actress Sabnam Saxena is an open case to read longing for sexual satiation with a beautiful blonde who is most sought after in the world. The manipulation of the police stations, bribing the officials and witnesses save him from any sort of humiliation in the court trials and jail terms. Vicky spends a lot of money on corrupting government official to win the favour, contracts, and expansion of the industrial sweep. In *The White Tiger* Adiga shows Mr. Ashok, the rich master of Balram, also get the cash ready to offer as a bribe to ministers to get the contracts.

Adiga boldly exposes how the police force and judiciary, the most crucial pillars of Indian democracy are also deeply infected by the disease called corruption. The corrupt police officers more interested in the illegitimate dealings and law-breaking activities rather than the codes and ethics of conduct. Adiga's *The White Tiger* is replete with many of such events. In a miserable incident in Delhi Balram was caught as scapegoat by his master Ashok as accused to replace his wife, Pinky, who killed a man in a car accident and the hit-and-run case by Pinky, is shifted to Balram. This shows how corrupt police accepted the bribes to spare the real rich accused and arrest the poor innocent servants, just for personal gain. The brutality reaches the height when the police forcefully compel the poor to accept the crime.

Money has been used in bribing the posts and systems to hide the crime. Balram bribes a police commissioner in Bangalore to close an accident case. His driver Mohammed Asif kills a poor boy in an accident. Police commissioner instead of arresting Mohammed Asif threatens the poor boy. In *Between the Assassinations*, Adiga describes the similar scene where a rich and powerful business-man, Mr. Engineer happens to kill a poor man in an accident. Then he manipulates the things by bribing the police and judiciary. He makes one of his factory worker a scapegoat in this case. The poor factory worker was forced to accept that he was driving when the

accident happened. As such the rich Mr. Engineer manages to turn the reports in his favour. In *Six Suspects* Jagannath Rai's telephone conversations reveal the same point. The police machinery, the underworld and the press is largely threatened and bribed or manipulated by him and his son.

Adiga boldly asserts that the power of currency forces everyone to change things. Mostly in the bureaucratic world, the truth is manipulated by capitalistic interest. Whatever may be the fact or truth, power of currency lures the police to protect the rich and suppress the poor. Through the murder of Yogesh Moorthy, the retired teacher, by his neighbours and friends for the bribe offered by Darmen Shah, Adiga exposes that the money minded people in real estate business also uses the same trick.

In *The White Tiger* Adiga exposes that corruption has spread its roots in educational system also. In ancient time, the education was considered as sacred profession. The educationists and the teachers were dedicated to achieve the highest ideals of complete human development that included physical, mental, spiritual development. Now a day, schools have become the shops of poor quality of education. The Emphasis is on moneymaking and materialism instead of concept of complete human development. Adiga's novel highlights the corruption practiced in education system, related to student scholarship, mid-day meal scheme, and teachers' slackness in government schools. The government school teacher in Laxamangarh sleeps in the afternoon and drinks toddy in the school. He is corrupt person as he illegally sells the uniforms and the mid-day meals, provided by the government to the poor students. Further, to add he grabs money from the school funds as well. As Balram comments, 'The whole educated system is governed by the crowd of thugs and idiots.' (33) In *Revolution 2020*, Chetan Bhagat presents the very practical scenario, exposes all the loop holes of our modern education system. If the same system continues longer, the huge number of youth will be unemployed.

Adiga has further exposed that media, the fourth pillar of Indian democracy, is curbed through the influence of corruption. Even the honest reporters are pressurized and threatened by their seniors and stopped from reporting the truth. It is quite evident in Gururaj's scene in *Between the Assassinations*. Gururaj, an honest journalist, wants to reveal all the hidden facts in the accident case of Mr. Engineer. However, his editor-in-chief manipulates him and suppresses the matter. Politicians are well trained in how to utilize and control media to save their ruling party by hiding its flaws. In such cases journalists are facilitated

with gifts like houses, medical assistance, etc. In *Six Suspects* Rukhsana commits suicide and Jagannath is responsible for her death. She leaves a suicide note and sent an audio tape to the editor of Daily News, named, Prem Kalra. However, he too is a corrupt person as he works as the agent of Home Minister. The greedy editor sells that obscene audio tape to Jagannath for twenty lakhs. As such, the Media works for the politicians, leaders and rich persons and writes nothing against them.

Adiga has also exposed the corruption prevailing in medical profession. He describes how doctors are appointed by the politicians in government hospitals and then they don't care whether the appointed doctor come to the hospital on duty or not. Adiga describes how these felonious doctors use their top officers and political connections to get away from their misdeeds. The corrupt minded doctors prepare fake records of their presence in the hospitals but actually they are engaged in and very much concerned only about their personal clinics.

Chetan Bhagat also has exposed the corruption in India and tried to encourage the Indians to accept conditions and mistakes and then, work to resolve the problems. In his book entitled as *What Young India Wants*, he says, 'To change, first, let us accept our short comings. We Indians lack some essential good values. Being part of a corrupt society has made us all somewhat corrupt . . . We have all done some wrong or accepted something wrong as part of life. We need to define a set of new values and propagate them in our social circles . . . . The new Indian quest has begun.' (10) In *What Young India Want* Bhagat

exposes the political backwardness in India: ' . . . the majority of Indian citizen doesn't care about corruption issues and will vote based on caste, religion or even dynasty over performance, the looting never stops.' (13)

As such, the scenario presented in the above selected novels of Aravind Adiga, Vikas Swarup and Chetan Bhagat has no other purpose than to realistically expose the widespread corruption in India and to awaken the Indian citizens and asking them to be aware and conscious. Their works further bring home the moral that Indian governing system would never be corruption free unless and until the policy makers and implementing officers change their attitude and think in favour of growth of India as a country and welfare of Indian citizens.

**Works Cited**

- 1 Adiga, Aravind, *The White Tiger*, Harper Collins Publishers, India, 2008. \_\_\_\_\_, *Between The Assassinations*, Free Press, New York, 2008.
- 2 Bhagat, Chetan. *Revolution 2020: Love, Corruption, Ambition*. New Delhi: Rupa Publication India Pvt. Ltd., 2011. Print.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_, *What Young India Wants*, Rupa Publication India Private Limited, 2012. Print.
- 4 *Britannica Student's Encyclopedia*. Pakistan: 2007. Print.
- 5 Barack Obama. Bio. A&E Television Networks, 2015. Web. 23 Apr. 2015. <http://www.biography.com/people/barack-obama-12782369>
- 6 Swarup, Vikas. *Six Suspects*, London: Tranworld, 2008.