

Subalterns' oppression in the Post Colonial Society of Aravind Adiga and Bina Shah

OPEN ACCESS

Manuscript ID:
ENG-2020-08033164

Volume: 8

Issue: 3

Month: June

Year: 2020

P-ISSN: 2320-2645

E-ISSN: 2582-3531

Received: 23.04.2020

Accepted: 21.05.2020

Published: 02.06.2020

Citation:

Lavanya, A., and M.R. Rashila. "Subalterns' Oppression in the Post Colonial Society of Aravind Adiga and Bina Shah." *Shanlax International Journal of English*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2020, pp. 71–73.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/english.v8i3.3164>




This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

A. Lavanya

Research Scholar, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India
Assistant Professor of English

Arumugham palaniguru Arts and Science College for Women, Sangampatti, Tamil Nadu, India

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9758-5337>

M.R. Rashila

Ph.D. Research Supervisor, Head and Associate Professor
Sourashtra College, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

The term 'subaltern' identifies and illustrates the man, the woman, and the public who is socially, politically, and purely outside of the hegemonic power organization. Nowadays, Subaltern concern has become so outstanding that it recurrently used in diverse disciplines such as history, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and literature. The notion of subaltern holds the groups that are marginalized, subjugated, and exploited based on social, cultural, spiritual, and biased grounds. The main purpose of this paper is to expose various themes such as oppression, marginalization, the subjugation of inferior people and working classes, gender discrimination, unnoticed women, deprived classes, racial and caste discrimination, etc. It is one of the subdivisions of post colonialism. In this paper, Aravind Adiga and Bina Shah illustrate subalterns through *The White Tiger* and *Slum Child*.

Keywords: Subjugated, Compassionate, Deprived and Immigrant.

Introduction

Indian English writers played a vital role in bringing India's complicated inner subaltern issues in front of the world, which once were unhurried local issues of the Indian sub-continent. But in contemporary times, they have a universal demand and are more complicated. The Indian English writers Aravind Adiga and Bina Shah in the post-colonial era have continued the in-depth perceptions of life of subalterns but in a different way to raise their voices. Both writers have elevated the issue of subalterns based on religion, caste, class, culture, ethnicity, and gender. And they have portrayed India in their works. Aravind Adiga and Bina Shah left their home land India and became immigrant writers. But their novels are the exact pictures of India in its social, political, and cultural sense.

Italian Marxist theoretician Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), for the first time, used it out of the non-military sense as a part of Marxist Theory during the 1920s. Gramsci is one of the founding members of the Italian Communist party, and he has contributed a lot to the betterment of the lower-class people. Some thinkers and scholars have an opinion that Gramsci has used the term as a synonym for the proletariat. He refers to any person or group of inferior status, whether of class, race, ethnicity, religion, and gender. Gramsci's rationalization of the oppression in Southern Italy depicts the persisted subjugation of the rural peasantry, the working class, and the untouchables in the post-Independent Indian society. Gramsci strained the implication of this oppression in terms of Gender, Class, Race, Caste, and culture.

Discussion

This present paper is intended to examine Adiga and Shah's subaltern characters such as Balram and Laila as well as focuses on problems of poor people who are living under crushing poverty. In the post-colonial scenario, the term 'subaltern' gets a wider perspective as it refers to the third world countries and the marginalized groups in society. Influenced by Antonio Gramsci, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak explains emotions of the subaltern in her essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' that the subaltern cannot speak until and unless their conditions may not be historically improved. For her, 'subaltern' is not a classy word for the oppressed. She argues, "everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern- a space of difference" (De Kock 1992: 23).

Adiga's *The White Tiger* mainly focuses on the tribulations of poor people who are living in poverty. In Adiga's novel, the protagonist is Balram Halwai, who is a servant who comes from Bihar. He narrates his complete journey, how he came from Laxmangarh, Bihar, to the IT city Bangalore. He is the narrator of this story, and he tells his act to the Chinese Premier. Though he is an intelligent boy, he discontinues his studies due to family conditions. Balram joins as a driver in a corrupted business man Ashok at Delhi. Balram is humiliated so many times by his master. So he adopts a horrible way to become an entrepreneur. His master shows only spurious sympathy to him. One day Pinky madam had an accident while driving. To rescue Pinky madam, Balram has forced to accept that he made an accident. These pressures only made him kill his master. And he runs away with his Master's money that had kept for bribing a politician. He has no other way to come up in life. So, he started a taxi company in Bangalore, and he became a successful entrepreneur. Though the protagonist of the novel, Balram represents the White Tiger, there are many symbolic implications to the White Tiger in the novel. Balram wants to lead an independent life like The White Tiger, and he too is dangerous.

Adiga conveyed the lives of India's poor in a realistic and compassionate manner through his writings. He wanted to write about the normal routine life of Indians who are not Kings and Gods. Adiga's

The White Tiger exposes the division between rich and poor. Moreover, even India is becoming one of the economically forward countries.

Bina Shah is one of the new generations of postmodern writers. **Slum Child** is the story of poor people's cruel reality against the wealth of the rich. It gives glimpses of miseries surrounding those poor creatures called Slums.

In this novel, the protagonist is a nine-year young Pakistani Christian girl Laila who lives in Slum called Issa Colony in Karachi. She is strong-minded, aspirated, and intelligent. Though she lives in an unpleasant circumstance, she tries hard to survive in the world. Though Laila lives in a slum, she feels happy and energetic. While her mother works as a maid for rich families across town, she only takes care of her sister Jumana. When Jumana affects TB, her mother cannot buy medicine because of her poverty. So she loses her elder daughter. After her death, her mother becomes mad. After that, only she knows about her step father's plan that he is going to sell her to Saudi Sheikh. So Laila decided to move away from there to save her respect and chastity. Thus she moves to Ansari's house where her mother worked. There she looks after little Sasha, who is a baby girl of Ansari's house. When the whole family of Ansari's turns against her, she decided to move from there. But she doesn't know where to go and how to face terrible violence and intimidation waiting for her outside the Ansari's house. Then she decides to go to a slum. At last, she married Najeeb, a Pathan boy, who always stand for her.

In this novel, the plot of the characters conveys the difference between the two classes. One class always works hard throughout their life like Zainab but cannot achieve. Next, one just enjoys countless luxuries.

The novels of these two writers deal with the Post-independence history of India. Both the writers raise some social issues like caste system, class system, Religious minorities, and cultural crisis. In both novels, the protagonists Balram, Laila marginalized as well as suppressed by their masters. They have presented an increasing gap between poor and rich, air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned people in India in particular and whole south Asia in general. They raise the voice of unvoiced groups

of society who are of inferior in rank and subject to the hegemony of the elite class as today's globalized world is witnessed that weaker section is becoming weaker day in and day out hence being pauperized by powerful.

Thus, this present paper is about the subaltern and their condition, especially downtrodden, religious minorities, women, Dalits (untouchables) who had marginalized, oppressed, and exploited since times immemorial. Now, even though uproar of the economic boom has changed the world and its perspectives but they still feel exploited and marginalized in one or another way, and their wish is to get a respectable place and freedom from the Rooster Coop.

Summation

This paper has discussed the controversial social issues like the class system, caste system, religious and cultural chauvinism under which the subalterns are oppressed, humiliated, suppressed, exploited, and subjugated. In literature, Subalternity has become a serious theme in works of many writers who have given the voice to those subalterns who had muted for decades in one aspect to others. This type of discrimination has got attention because of

the literature or literary figures. So, literature is the tool for the writer to unmute the voice of subalterns.

References

- Adiga, Aravind. *The White Tiger: A Novel*, Free Press, 2008.
- Das, Veena. "Subaltern as Perspective." *Subaltern Studies No. 6*, edited by Ranjit Guha, Oxford University Press, 1989.
- De Kock, Leon. "An Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak." *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature*, vol. 23, no. 3, 1992.
- Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, edited by Quintin Hoare, and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. Orient Longman, 2004.
- Michael Arokiasamy, P. and Mary Jayanthi, M. "Neo-Colonialism in India as Represented in Aravind Adiga's The Last Man in Tower." *Think India*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2019, pp. 836-842.
- Mukherjee, Dipanjoy. "Aravind Adiga's Last Man in Tower: a Postcolonial Reading of New India." *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science*, vol. 20, no. 12, 2015, pp. 56-60.

Author Details

A. Lavanya, Research Scholar, Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai
Assistant Professor of English, Arumugham Palaniguru Arts and Science College for Women, Sangampatti, Tamil Nadu, India, **Email ID:** lavanyaeng94@gmail.com.

Dr. M.R. Rashila, Research Supervisor, Head and Associate Professor, Sourashtra College, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India