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Identity Crisis And Poverty In English Literature

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Abstract :

Indian writing in English, particularly the fictional works of 20th century noted writers like Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao reflect the contemporary society and are replete with authentic and bold depiction of the hypocrisy of the upper castes and miseries, humiliations and sufferings of Dalits and other lower castes of the Indian society. Among the modern Indian writers in English award winning writer Aravind Adiga has continued the stream of the realistic depiction of exploitation, miseries and humiliations of the marginalized classes and their struggle for identity in his fictional works.

Keywords : Crisis, Identity, Poverty, exploitation, Miseries, Humiliations

The present paper is an attempt to critically evaluate the issue of identity crisis and poverty in the writings of Aravind Adiga. Aravind Adiga is a realist. He takes it a challenge to write about India he knows and lives in, and always exposes her real face. Aravind Adiga has raised very vital issues such as religious fanaticism, social discrimination on the grounds of caste, religion, class and gender, poverty, oppression, injustices, occupation and preoccupation that were prevalent in pre-independent India and are so even in modern contemporary India. Through his writings he has tried to raise the banner of equality, freedom and justice by arousing the conscience of the marginalized against the degrading social practices, to change or break the shackles of so-called immoral and irreligious norms which their forefathers and fathers passively accepted as their lot and never opposed the oppression and injustice.

Adiga's 'The White Tiger' (2008), is Balram's confession of his murdering the master. "The novel tells the story of a bitter and disenchanted chauffeur in Delhi who slits his employer's throat."¹ Balram, a boy born in the poverty-stricken family of Vikram Halwai, a rickshaw-puller, belongs to a small village of Laxmangarh. Adiga depicts this place as dark India, where the landlords own all the good agricultural land and exploit poor, innocent downtrodden mercilessly. Balram always saw his father shirtless, standing behind the tea-shop drinking tea and thinking as the rickshaw-pullers were not allowed to sit on the plastic chairs put out for the customers.

Balram's father, a man of honour and courage, different from the rest of his family members, chooses to pull a rickshaw rather than to beg at landlords for some work. He wants to save Balram from the same desperate fate, and insists him to read and write. As he says, "How many times have I told you: Munna must read and write!" (P.28) and also that "My whole life, I have been treated like a donkey. All I want is that one son of mine – at least – should live like a man" (TWT P. 30). Balram has been endowed with certain qualities. He is sharp and quick at learning. As the school inspector remarks at his quick