

Globalization and the Erosion of Community: A Critical Analysis of Aravind Adiga's *Last Man in Tower*

Dr. Nisha Rani

PGT English, GSSS, Alipur (Ambala)

Email Id- Bharti.nisha8621@gmail.com

Abstract

India witnesses myriads transformation in the age of globalization. The nation of diversity in every aspect has different shades of globalization. Indian Writing in English is one of the saplings which have bloomed in the globalized world. The British rule has sown English language in the land of India which has remarkable impact on the world literature. R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, and Raja Rao have set the milestone in Indian English Writing. The same trail of legacy is being carried by the modern authors in fictional writing. Aravind Adiga is one of those contemporary authors who have fetched accolades to Indian Writing in English He uses his experiences to illustrate the benefits and drawbacks of globalization in his work *Last Man in Tower*. Adiga creates a globalized environment in his writing, which centers on Mumbai, India's second capital.

Keywords: transformation, globalization, remarkable impact, environment.

Introduction: Adiga has attempted to show how globalization changed the lives of these people and the rise of capitalism changed relationships among the people of Vishram society.

The global development which was an impact of globalization influenced social and economic demands/ desire of Indian people by holding Indian society under its spells. These changes not only affected exteriority of social systems but it also extremely influenced the interiority of human psyche. The rise of consumerism and capitalism elaborated materialistic urgency and accelerated human desires to gain materialistic advancement at the pretext of moral and social declination. As Nidhi Gupta in her article *Globalization and Redevelopment: The Crux of Aravind Adiga's Last Man in Tower* says:

The novel *Last Man in Tower* raises the issues of globalization and redevelopment in Mumbai in the last few years. Further, Globalization has widely affected the morals of the social and cultural arena too. The novel also examines how English Literature is affected by the ever –evolving current trends in the postcolonial age by globalization, which is a sort of neo-colonialism.

Adiga writes about such changes which has dominantly taken place in the lives of the people and has brought changes in human relationship. Residents of Vishram society are the people who became the witness for the changes that took in the society with the new trend of globalization and rise of consumerism. These developments at one hand have brought cultural and civilization declination and on another hand because of these changes liberalism and democratic principles have taken strong hold in Vishram Society. Vishram society as society of middle class people was mainly people with families except for the one tenant who was woman journalist and is an example of changes by which society has to reassert its moral and social position. The presence

of this journalist shows the balance between culture of modernity and Postmodernity. These families were living together for ages and had very good relationship with each other.

In the new era of capitalism money played very important role. The Western dominance in the market and the higher standard of living which became an outcome of capitalism made people to worship money. Mr. Shah used higher sum of money as bait to the middle-class people who were always in need of money. And this money became the reason for the downfall of Vishram society Tower A. The change in human bond that Vishram society went through was a direct impact of Mr. Shah's offer. The divide among the people broke the bond of friendship, neighborhood and mutual understanding. In this context L. Sreevani and Dr. G. Gulam Tariq say in their article *Psychological attachment, a prime conflict in Adiga's Last Man in Tower*:

Materialism in Adiga's *Last man in Tower* tries to see the sights how the desire to become rich makes people dehumanized in the age of globalization. The present paper looks at the fact how Adiga reveals the crimes associated with real estate which is one of the booming industries in the age of globalization and finally Masterji fights against it in spite of vulnerable attitude of his neighbors and his own son. He becomes a victim to the over ambitious aspirations of vishram society dwellers. His psychological feelings make him enemy to his friends and take him towards death.

Yogesh A. Murty also known as Masterji was the man who refused to accept the offer till the end. And this refusal to money not only ended his life but also his relation with his son. It also severed the familial ties and the bond between father and son. His refusal to the proposal of builder made him isolated from his neighbors and finally it led him to his grave. In the age of capitalism and consumerism a person who wanted nothing was succumbed to death. The offer made by the builder made a great change in relationships among neighbors. The neighborhood

which was helpful and caring changed. People start to plot and cheat against each other in order to receive extra from builder. When the ones who were ready to accept the offer found out about the other who did not want the money, they start to persuade them. They began to manipulate their neighbors and tried to make them reason with their reason.

The corruption in the mind of an individual also took hold in Vishram society. The new age brought corruption along with it. There was hardly any individual who was selfless. Everyone was in process to get the benefit. And this self-interest became the downfall of Vishram society Tower A. Mr. Shah's carefully devise his plan and it became successful when people became more inclined towards the materialistic need. Mrs. Rego's comment upon people and people's thoughtless attempt to make money depicts the how capital dominated people. "Show people a little cash, and they'll jump, dance, run naked in the streets." (39) And this statement of her came to be true. Money became weakness for the people living in Vishram society that poisoned the mind of people and ended the age-old friendships. Money veiled the judgment of the people of Vishram society. Such changes among the people of Vishram society question the whole human existence. Money became evil in Vishram society and it corrupted people of Vishram society.

The offer made by the builder made a great change in relationships among neighbors. The neighborhood which was helpful and caring changed. People start to plot and cheat against each other in order to receive extra from builder. When the ones who were ready to accept the offer found out about the other who did not want the money, they start to persuade them. They began to manipulate their neighbors and tried to make them reason with their reason. Mrs. Puri who did not have good relation with Mrs. Rego and who always used to argue with each other befriended Mrs. Rego. She tried to put sense in Mrs. Rego to accept the offer. Mrs. Rego was called 'communist' by Mrs. Puri. And the two women were always arguing with each other and

sometimes even yelling at each other. But that changed when Mrs. Puri extended her hand to help Mrs. Rego throw away the lizard from her kitchen. Though it was for the personal gain yet the two women made peace with each other. The necessity for money brought two women in the same ground and certain understanding between them emerged. Both of them had their own story and Mrs. Rego distrust with the builder was done over with when Mrs. Puri assured her. In the age of capitalism and consumerism, life for the single woman with two children was not easy. And she too had many issues related to money. The transition in whole world affected her as it affected everyone. She was woman who was left by her husband and she was raising two kids on her own. And it was not so easy for her to trust builder and his offer. Yet, she did not see any other choice, like every other people in Vishram society; she too had to bend her knee in front of money. When she compares herself with her sister Catherine, she finds herself as a looser. And the money that builder offered could make her life better. She too falls in the hand of necessity that made people bow before it. And she was finally made to accept the offer. Her agreement to accept the offer also means the victory of money over the principles. Money wins over the principles and human judgment. The manipulation of money over human mind is clear in the case of Mrs. Rego. Money played very important role in the life of middle-class people. The commercialization of self also means the end of human conscience and self-respect. Money ruled the individual thought. And this led to the chaos in society.

The alienation in society can become great danger in society. The individualization not only made human being selfish but also it made a human alien in his own society.

The alienation from society disrupted the concept of society. The detachment from society affected badly on the societal relationship. With the growth of market, business bloomed. The capitalism brought capital worshipping society and with the advent of consumerism everything

was commodified. Everything in the society was seen as commodity which could be bought and sold. And it became quite true in the society like Vishram society. Morals and values were given away. Money was able to buy dignity of people. To meet the high standard of living people lost their sense of brotherhood and love for each other. They started changing and their want rose to the zenith height that they forgot what it is likely to be human. In the middle-class society money does play an important role in shaping individual. Every individual is aware of the fact that money is an important factor that can change their lives. And all they even wanted was to change their way of living. Though they were living in the respectable society but they were not fully satisfied by the way they were living. And this dissatisfaction in their lives became the reason for the change. And it changed the relationships in the Vishram society tower A.

Masterji did every possible thing to save his home and his memories. The neighbors who were his friend started treating him like an enemy. His son Gaurav also turned against him with the manipulation of Mrs. Puri. The disruption of father son relationship because of few amounts of money is clearly visible in the materialistic society of the twenty first century. When Pintos were threatened, they too were coerced to accept the offer leaving Masterji only person fighting against the world. The concept of family and loyalty became secondary and necessity became the priority. The concept of family and the familial bond severed in new age of capitalism. The relation between father and son became more materialistic. The greed for money made son to abandon his father at old age. Money became reason for destruction of relationship in Vishram society. The offer made by the builder changed the people of Vishram society. It made them do horrible things to their own neighbors. The distancing among neighbors and the loss of values became an outcome of capitalism. With the capital as the main motif; values and judgment were side lined. There was only one thing that concerned was money. Money was worshipped by all.

He was the one who wanted ‘nothing’ in the city of Mumbai. He was holding on to his home and the memories of his deceased wife and daughter. Though the men and women around him dreamed of bigger homes and cars, his joys were those of the expanding square footage of his inner life. The more he looked at his daughter’s sketches, the more certain places with Vishram- the stairwell where she ran up. The garden that walked around, the gate she liked to swing on- became more beautiful and intimate. (150)

Masterji started living with the memories of his deceased wife and daughter. He was ‘boycotted’ by his neighbors for not accepting the offer “Boycott, Masterji” (210). He became outcaste and was betrayed by his own friends yet he managed to gather his courage. He was able to endure the pain of isolation and carry on with his fight for home with the builder. But in the age where money speaks louder than Masterji could not win. Laws and rules were manipulated by money. People who had money control the laws. And it became less helpful to Masterji. He was the man who fought till the end. He did not give up on his home. And that caused him his life. The development for some became destruction for other. And for Masterji it became his doom. He wanted nothing in the city that had offered so much to everyone. He underestimated the evil that money brought in his society. His neighbors plotted against him and threatened him. Police did not help him yet he did not lose hope. He went to lawyer but Mr. Shah bought the lawyer too with his money. And finally, when he had no one left, he asked help to his son but his son too betrayed him. And this betrayal from his son marked the end of familial bond in the capitalist society. The neighbors did not just stop at betrayal; they murdered Masterji in cold blood and later termed it as suicide.

Their self-interest turned them blind to everything else. Their judgment was veiled by their self-interest and all they wanted was to benefit them no matter what and how. Their greed for money

made them insane about their deed. They not only turned against their neighbor but also, they turned against themselves. Human nature changes according to the time and the situation. And it is necessary to accept the changes but these changes that came among the people of the Vishram society was dangerous as it turned them to do monstrous act. Vishram society also shows how the changes in the individual change the whole society.

Conclusion: In *Last Man in Tower*, Aravind Adiga approaches the issues from a distance and draws objective conclusions about them. Adiga is successful in defining Mumbai's globalized environment, highlighting important sectors and places where globalization is at its peak. Furthermore, Adiga succeeds in placing the reader in control. The reader applies his or her own interpretation to the situations. As a result, *Last Man in the Tower* captures the relevant texture of globalization by skillfully spinning several threads to create a disorganized portrait of it.

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