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## Social Consciousness in Aravind Adiga's *Selection Day*

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**Abstract:** The present research paper strives to study Aravind Adiga's *Selection Day* from social point of view. The selected novel tells a story of two brothers named Radha and Manju. The paper analyses realistic depiction of slum society, ghetto mindset and social life Mumbai. It also provides analysis of an image of a father who wants both of his sons to become good cricket players. The father stands for the society which is in a cut-throat competition. Adiga provides a distinct social picture of contemporary urban India especially Mumbai. The present research paper is an honest attempt to explore social inequality, indecent parental pressure, class struggle, gender discrimination, capitalism and its impact on youth through the world of cricket.

**Key words:** social, slum, capitalism, urban, contemporary, Manju, Radha.

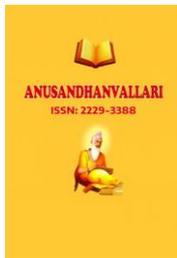
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### Social consciousness in Aravind Adiga's *Selection Day*

The novel realistically depicts the gap between two generations which at first one of the basic social issues. Father and his two sons symbolize a class in urban Indian society. The novel also describes gap between the rich and the poor class in the society. The protagonist Radha and Manju Kumar are brought up by a dominating father in poverty who intends to transform both of them into cricketers. According to Anita Kumari, "Adiga's novel wants not only to depict inequality but also to speak loudly for those who are silenced by modern capitalist mindset" At the same time, Life in old suit, lack of resources and social insecurity reflect the harsh reality faced by lower-class families in metropolitan city like Mumbai.

Aravind Adiga's *Selection Day* (2016) ridicules class division in contemporary urban India. He does it particularly through the world of cricket which is often imagined as a merit oriented way to get rid of poverty. Adiga highlights cricket which becomes a ladder of social strength for the poor while the wealthy class enjoys privilege very easily. The text presents Cricket as social metaphor. Adiga portrays the world of professional cricket in Mumbai to show broader social forces like money, class, exploitation, ambition and opportunity rule life of a player. Cricket is not just a game in the story but it is an exit for economically marginalized families to achieve name and fame. Aspiration to achieve social name and fame gives them experience of discrimination, corruption as well as commodification of talent. The present novel highlights the dark and negative side of an urban Indian society.

Nowadays pressure of Guardians' over children has become a very common thing in Indian society. The present research paper is trying to present the same reality. A major social concern in the novel is parental domination over children. Preeti Asati registers her observation on Adiga's *Selection Day*, "The text analyses these social expectations and guardian ambitions impact children's lives and development of teenage characters." It explains the close relationship between family expectations and personal improvement. The novel investigates the psychological impact of guardian's intense pressure on young children. The paper analyzes its effects on confidence, interpersonal relationships and overall wellbeing of two brothers. Mohan Kumar's extravagant ambition represents a social mindset where children are treated as investments rather than individuals. Freedom, education and emotional growth are sacrificed for satisfaction of a guardian whereas success and fame of an



individual are neglected due to parental pressure on kids. It can be stated that it is an example of wider Indian social realism where parents often impose their unfulfilled dreams on their children.

Cricket in *Selection Day* is not merely a sport but an industry as well as a business controlled by sponsors and coaches. Talent is manipulated and sometimes destroyed by money maker and politics. Aravind Adiga's "Selection Day presents cricket as more than just a sport; it becomes a capitalist spectacle where talent is commoditized, ambition is shaped by market forces, and human value is determined by economic success". Adiga also criticizes how capitalism corrupts sports and turns young players into a commodity and it fails to nurture them as good human beings.

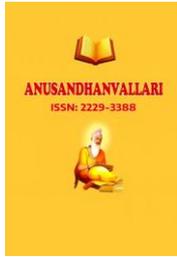
Conflict between formal education and professional games has been highlighted in the *Selection Day*. Manju's interest in science and learning is discouraged which shows how society often forces youth to choose success more than intellect. It can be observed that education in the story stands for safety, economic reliance and social acceptance. On the other hand, sport is an emblem of fame, dreams and escape from poverty. It reflects a social system that values fame and money more than knowledge and satiation. It can be observed that the controversy between education and sports stands for a larger social conflict of definition of success. The conflict whether success should be defined by security or passion comes at the center of the novel. The author suggests that when ambition, education or passion is imposed rather than chosen it leads an individual to frustration, loss of identity and psychological conflict.

It can be stated that women characters like Sofia suffer from marginalization in the novel. The novel reflects a male-dominated society where women's desires, careers and voices remain suppressed by the society. Even within sports culture, patriarchal superiority is aggressively promoted while sensitivity is ridiculed by the male dominated society.

The present novel portrays capitalism as a powerful force that shapes dreams, relationships and existence in urban world. The novel raises voice against market values that influence even personal aspirations like sports and education. Mumbai is portrayed as a society which is not run by emotion but driven by ambition and competition. Human relationships in this society are strained. Ethics in this society are compromised and emotional well-being is ignored. The game Cricket in the novel is presented not a sport but as a business plan. At the same time, commercialization of dreams can be seen through novel. The present novel highlights the struggle of two brothers to get selected in a Cricket team.

As a matter of fact, sexuality of Manu signifies today's society in which the concepts like LGBTQ and same sex attraction are commonly used by the people. Manju's sexuality is the crucial aspect in growth of his individuality. Charkhi Dadri observes, "Manju's confusion about his sexual identity shares a central theme of the novel. The emergence of relationship between Manju and Javed presents a deep, intimate picture of same-sex attraction and love. Adiga skillfully navigates the confusion of queerness within the traditional patriarchal world of cricket. It highlights the challenges of bodily existence in strictly defined by social system." Manju gets grappled with acceptance and denial about his attractions and desires throughout the novel. He is so much connected to his teammate Javed Ansari that he cannot even understand his own identity. As a result, it can be stated that such a blunt and open reaction to homosexuality shows crystal clear picture of the contemporary society as well as world. In the same way, attraction to same sex can be taken as his violation of social norms. It is also a challenge to the norms of their cricket world.

Competition is the central idea in the present where Adiga presents it as intense, ruthless and deeply tied emotion related to social ambition rather than pure talent. Relationship between Radha and Manju is marked by comparison in the society. It can be observed that Radha is brought up as the natural sportsperson on the other hand Manju is expected to be like him. Competition within family brings emotional distance and identity crisis in the story. It symbolizes destruction of intimacy in the society. The family system plays a crucial role in



nurturing lives, ambitions as well as confrontation of the characters in the text. Adiga does not present the family as a place that nurtures a thought but as a force that controls, pressurizes and fractured relationships, especially middle-class Indian society.

The family system is portrayed as an oppressive force which is shaped by poverty, patriarchy and unrealized guardians' ambition in the present novel. The author uses the Kumar family to criticize society in which domestic bonding gets destroyed due to economic crisis and authoritarian guardianship. Thus, the present paper also highlights Adiga's question whether success achieved through such a society is really meaningful.

#### **Conclusion:**

It can be concluded that *Selection Day* presents a realistic social picture of contemporary India where ambition, inequality and commercialization shape individual lives. The present paper proves that the novel provides a realistic picture of deeply rooted class division, bossy nature of guardians, gender bias and the impact of capitalist success. The paper also proves how dreams in the novel are often imposed and externally influenced rather than chosen and self-motivated. The present paper also proves how it turns children into instruments for social mobility rather than independent individuals. The paper also proves the way how does society exploits talent for sake of monetary advantage and prestige. As a result, the paper studies the society which is caught between social traditional control and ambition.

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