

Representation of Caste-System, Crime and Religion in Aravind Adiga's *Selection Day*

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Abstract— Aravind Adiga is one of the most popular writers among the readers through his writings, he has shed light on the contemporary issues related to the caste system, crime, gender, identity crisis, class conflict and religion. The prominent problems faced by modern generation have been highlighted throughout the fictional composition of the writer. The writer has elaborated the significant references of these aspects throughout his fiction *Selection Day*. In the same way, Mulk Raj Anand has also rightly stated about the partiality on the basis of caste and religion in his *Untouchability*, 'They think we are mere dirt because we clean their dirt' (*Iyengar*, 337). The same thing is happened with the people in slum areas of the metro cities in this 21st century of globalized India. Because it is considered that the most of lower caste people like to live in the slum area that's why the discriminative feeling has raised into the mind of upper class people of the metro cities. The same circumstances are happened with the family members of Mohan Kumar and Javed Ansari. The discriminative ideological assumptions have been taught by Mohan Kumar to his two children to keep difference between Hindu and Muslim community as well as between lower caste and upper caste to live peacefully.

Index Terms: system, religion, family, crime, hegemony.

INTRODUCTION

The novel *Selection Day* revolved around the themes like caste system, crime, religion, class conflict, etc. Aravind Adiga has disclosed the significance of human mentality as well as the burning issues in our Indian society throughout his fictions. The impact of religion is clearly seen throughout the story of the novel when he expressed,

"Mohan Kumar had his own way of reminding God. As he did each year, he rolled bare-chested over the hard granite floor of the temple, rolled from one side of the wall to the other, and then back again, until his

torso was lacerated, and the secret contract was renewed in his blood" (Adiga, *Selection Day*, 20).

Most of the religious people have their own way of praying to Gods. Mohan Kumar likes to roll down around the compound of the temple; whereas most of the people like to put their forehead on the statue of God. The modern generation of human has considered this kind of religious activity as a part of superstition. Most of the religious people thought it as a symbol of their devotion towards the almighty God to whom they have deeply attached as their God. According to the diversity based on the caste, religion, creed, gender, traditions and customs the ways of prayers have variations. The strategy of prayer has many differences. The main intention behind the prayer is nothing but the welfare of their family member. Likewise, Mohan Kumar has undertaken this religious activity just for his children. In this religious activity Mohan Kumar has undertaken a very hard task to roll around the temple over the granite floor of the temple. He thinks that this is the secret contract with God. Further Mohan Kumar has assigned a contract with upper class people again for his children. But this strange contract has given psychologically depressed feeling to the all Kumar family member. Because they have to pay a large amount of their income to Anand Mehta:

"One-third of all future earnings of my two sons Master Radha Krishna and Master Manjunath will be the legal property of Shri Mehta, in return for his commitment to sponsorship. May God fill our mouths with worms if either breaks this contract" (Adiga, *Selection Day*, 41).

Mohan Kumar and his two boys have unwittingly accepted the sponsorship of Anand Mehta. Anand Mehta has become successful to convince Kumar family to accept the contract proposed by Anand

Mehta in which they have assigned a contract that the one third of future earnings will be a legal property of Anand Mehta. Such kind of strange contract is signed by the family of Kumar. Further, Mohan Kumar's family has prayed God to break down this contract. It is in the nature of every religious people of poor, middle class and downtrodden background. These people think that the blessings of God as an ultimate solution for their problems. Mohan Kumar has also prayed to the God Subramanya for the blessings on his family member, so he is successful to break the contract. Such kind of life style is accepted by middle class poor family of lower caste and class. The term Hegemony by Antonio Gramsci has pointed out that the upper class people become successful to pursue the mind of lower class people because the upper class people make their philosophy very pervasive. Thus the lower class person unwittingly undertakes the advice of upper class and act according to the desire of upper class. Sometime, lower class people resist this oppressive ideology. Mohan Kumar has strictly restricted his children for many things such as driving vehicles, friendship with Muslims etc. It is reflected through the conversation of Javed Ansari and Manju. Javed Ansari has asked Manju: 'What about driving a motorbike? No. I can't. Manju' (Adiga, *Selection Day*, 83). It is an offence to allow teenagers to drive vehicles. Further, Mohan Kumar has become very strict to his children due to the friendship with Muslim community's boy Javed Ansari:

"Are you going to meet that Mohammedan cricketer at the morgue . . . Why do you see that Javed Ansari so often?" (Adiga, *Selection Day*, 179-80).

The contempt of Muslim community is seen throughout this remark of Mohan Kumar. The historical references have proved the rivalry among these two communities. The events like partition of India-Pakistan, the riots in Gujarat state between Hindu and Muslim have shaken the mentality of both the community members. Thus the contempt is still seen in this 21st century. Orthodox thinking has seen in this question uttered by Mohan Kumar. He has strictly prohibited his children to avoid friendship with Muslim.

The frustration of Manjunath Kumar is seen in his behavior. he decides to leave his house and join Javed Ansari's house. Manjunath has taken revolutionary step towards the destruction of this

contemptuous feeling between Hindu and Muslim community. Thus, Manju and Javed Ansari have developed friendship. In the course of time, Mohan Kumar has also taken a strange promise from his children to keep them away from the worldly problems. But, the thinking of Mohan Kumar has become more possessive to his children. Though they have promised to their father, their frustration has seen in their nature. The religious nature of Mohan Kumar has always tempted him to take promises from his children to avoid friendship with Muslims. While talking about this issue, the novelist says, "Just promise me one thing, son. Promise me and Lord Subramanya you won't learn to drive a car, but from now on will stay pure and think only of cricket.' Manju promised everything" (Adiga, *Selection Day*, 193).

There is no doubt that the remark points out the caring nature of father towards his children. But on the other hand, he has exploited the freedom of his children due to his possessive feeling. Though Mohan Kumar has thought about the welfare of his children. His possessive feeling have lead his sons toward the isolation in this globalized universe of 21st century. He has forgotten the principle of humanity which tried to penetrate a sense of hatred for other religion. He has penetrated a negative sense into the immature mind of his children. In this modern age of technology, everyone is caught in to the frustration which lead them to adopt the isolated life style.

To conclude in brief, the novel *Selection Day* deals with the story of Manju, Radha Krishna Kumar and Javed Ansari. The novel revolved around the themes like caste system, crime, religion, modernity, frustration, racism and conflict between Hindu-Muslim community. The modern people have just adopted the life style of contemporary globalized world. But, still the out dated philosophical aspect have been deeply rooted into the mind of human being that's why the communal anxiety for other religion is also seen in the story of *Selection Day*. Aravind Adiga has skillfully elaborated most tentative reasons behind the class conflicts and discrimination on the basis of lower caste and crime. One of the best examples of communal contempt is seen in this novel. Mohan Kumar has tried to keep his son Manjunath away from the friendship with Javed Ansari, a Muslim boy. But the

protagonist Manju has taken revolutionary decision to break down the contempt between Hindu- Muslim community. Thus, he has developed friendship with Javed Ansari. It is nothing but a sign of the implementation of multicultural assumptions in to the Indian society. It has helped a lot to bring out peace as well as pleasant atmosphere in our country. The novel has also evaluated the impact of western culture over Indian society. That's why people are rationally thinking about everything instead of scrutinizing the events traditionally. The decision of friendship with Muslim boy, Javed Ansari has proven this aspect.

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