



Assessing awareness of Non-Communicable diseases among rural populations in Rajouri district, J&K UT

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Abstract

This research investigates the interplay between collective hypocrisy and the construction of the self in contemporary Indian society, as represented in the novels of Aravind Adiga. Set against the backdrop of a rapidly transforming post-liberalisation India, Adiga's fiction vividly portrays the socio-political contradictions and moral ambiguities of a nation grappling with economic growth and deep-rooted inequality. The study focuses primarily on *The White Tiger*, *Last Man in Tower*, and *Selection Day*, analysing how Adiga uses narrative voice, characterisation, and irony to expose societal double standards and the fractured identity of the modern Indian individual.

The primary objective of the study is to examine how collective hypocrisy—manifested through systemic corruption, class disparity, and the illusion of upward mobility—impacts the formation of selfhood in Adiga's protagonists. Through a close textual analysis informed by postcolonial theory and sociological perspectives, the research reveals how characters internalise, resist, or mirror the duplicity of the social systems they inhabit. The study employs a qualitative, interpretive methodology, drawing from critical theory and contemporary Indian socio-cultural discourse.

Key findings suggest that Adiga's characters often navigate a moral landscape where self-advancement necessitates ethical compromise. The self, in this context, emerges as both a product and a critique of the collective moral failures surrounding it. In *The White Tiger*, for example, the protagonist's ascent is built on violence and betrayal, exposing the cost of individual success in a morally bankrupt system. Similarly, *Last Man in Tower* depicts the disintegration of community ethics in the face of capitalist ambition, while *Selection Day* explores the commodification of talent and identity under the pressures of expectation and performance.

The study concludes that Adiga's novels not only critique the duplicity of Indian socio-political structures but also offer a nuanced reflection on how the self is shaped in response to these structures. This research contributes to broader discussions on postcolonial identity, ethics, and the role of literature in social critique.

Keywords: Aravind adiga, indian society, collective hypocrisy, postcolonial identity, selfhood, socioeconomic inequality, contemporary indian literature

Introduction

India, a nation of over 1.4 billion people, represents a paradox of ancient traditions and fast-paced modernity, economic prowess and stark poverty, democratic ideals and deeply rooted inequality. Since its economic liberalisation in 1991, India has witnessed unprecedented growth in urban infrastructure, consumer markets, and global integration. However, this apparent progress masks complex layers of social and moral contradictions. Rapid modernisation has intensified the divide between the rich and the poor, urban and rural, educated and uneducated, and those with access to opportunity and those without. Amid these tensions, collective hypocrisy—defined as the dissonance between publicly professed values and privately held actions—has become an integral characteristic of India's socio-political and cultural fabric. This hypocrisy manifests in many forms: corruption masked by nationalism, caste-based discrimination under the guise of meritocracy, and deep class divides obscured by democratic rhetoric. In such an environment, the individual—especially one from a marginal background—is often forced to navigate a morally ambiguous world where survival necessitates the betrayal of collective ideals.

Aravind Adiga, one of the most compelling voices in contemporary Indian English literature, engages with this tension in a nuanced and unsettling way. Winner of the 2008

Man Booker Prize for his debut novel *The White Tiger*, Adiga has consistently interrogated the contradictions of modern India through fiction that blends satire, realism, and political critique. His works are not only narratives of individual struggle but also mirrors held up to the nation's collective conscience. Novels such as *Last Man in Tower* and *Selection Day* further deepen this examination, presenting characters whose lives reflect the moral compromises and psychological toll of living in a society governed as much by pretence as by policy. These texts engage with themes of class mobility, systemic corruption, familial obligation, and the commodification of ambition, ultimately revealing how the construction of selfhood in modern India is inseparable from the collective duplicity that surrounds it.

This research argues that Adiga's fiction functions as a critical lens through which the dynamics of collective hypocrisy and individual identity can be examined. The exploration of these novels is particularly relevant in today's India, where political narratives often emphasise unity and growth while downplaying the erosion of ethical institutions and deepening social inequities. For instance, despite being the world's fifth-largest economy by nominal GDP, India ranks 111 out of 125 countries in the 2024 Global Hunger Index and continues to struggle with severe underemployment, urban housing crises, and widening gaps

in educational and healthcare access. Meanwhile, the simultaneous celebration of national pride and silence on caste-based violence, mob lynchings, and political censorship reflects a collective denial that obscures deeper moral failings. In this climate, literature such as Adiga's becomes essential—not merely for artistic value but for its sociopolitical insight and capacity to provoke critical dialogue.

A growing body of literary scholarship has explored the themes of identity, marginalisation, and postcolonial critique in Indian English fiction. Writers like Rohinton Mistry, Arundhati Roy, and Jhumpa Lahiri have contributed significantly to understanding the fragmented postcolonial self. However, what sets Adiga apart is his direct engagement with economic and moral hypocrisy through a voice that is simultaneously satirical and brutally honest. Several critics have noted that *The White Tiger* offers a subversive counter-narrative to the neoliberal success story, presenting the rise of its protagonist, Balram Halwai, not as a triumph of merit but as an indictment of a corrupt and unequal system. In *Last Man in Tower*, Adiga explores the pressures of gentrification and middle-class aspiration, portraying a society that readily sacrifices communal values for individual gain. *Selection Day* brings this critique into the realm of sports and education, where adolescent dreams are shaped—and often distorted—by commercial and patriarchal expectations.

While these novels have received considerable attention individually, few studies have examined them collectively as a sustained critique of collective hypocrisy and its impact on the self. Moreover, much of the existing criticism focuses on Adiga's portrayal of class and caste but does not fully explore the moral dimensions of his narratives or the psychological cost of complicity. There is a gap in the literature concerning how Adiga's characters internalise, resist, or become complicit in the very structures they seek to escape. This research addresses that gap by analysing how the construction of selfhood in Adiga's novels is deeply shaped by the collective moral contradictions of Indian society. It also seeks to contribute to broader conversations in postcolonial studies about the ethics of survival, the politics of representation, and the role of literature in exposing societal fault lines.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate how collective hypocrisy—particularly in the realms of politics, economy, family, and social mobility—informs the development of individual identity in Aravind Adiga's novels. It seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How does Adiga portray the tension between individual aspiration and collective moral failure?
2. In what ways do his characters reflect or resist the duplicity of their social environments?
3. How does the narrative voice in each novel function to critique or reinforce the prevailing hypocrisies of Indian society?

To answer these questions, the research employs a qualitative, interpretive methodology rooted in close textual analysis. The novels are examined through the lenses of postcolonial theory, moral philosophy, and critical sociology. Special attention is paid to narrative structure, character development, and thematic patterning across the

three works. This approach enables a deeper understanding of not just what Adiga critiques, but how his narrative choices shape the ethical and psychological dimensions of his critique.

The scope of the study includes *The White Tiger* (2008), *Last Man in Tower* (2011), and *Selection Day* (2016), which together provide a broad canvas of contemporary Indian life—from the slums of Delhi to the housing complexes of Mumbai and the cricket academies of suburban Maharashtra. These novels collectively cover different social strata and regional contexts, offering a multi-faceted perspective on how collective hypocrisy operates across class, gender, and institutional lines. While other texts by Adiga and his contemporaries are acknowledged in the broader literary conversation, this study limits itself to these three novels to provide a focused and in-depth analysis.

The structure of the paper is as follows: After this introduction, the next section will delve into a theoretical framework that connects concepts of collective hypocrisy, selfhood, and postcolonial identity. Following that, each of the three novels will be examined in dedicated chapters, with close readings of key passages and an exploration of character arcs in relation to social context. The final section will synthesise findings across the texts, concluding the broader implications of Adiga's work for understanding modern Indian identity and ethical consciousness.

In conclusion, this research aims to illuminate how Aravind Adiga's novels serve not just as social commentaries but as ethical investigations into the cost of success, the burden of complicity, and the fragility of selfhood in a society riddled with contradictions. At a time when India's public discourse often privileges triumphalist narratives, literature that confronts the uncomfortable truths of collective moral failure is both necessary and urgent. Through a critical study of Adiga's fiction, this paper contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how literature reflects and refracts the lived realities of a society in flux.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the themes of collective hypocrisy and the construction of self in Aravind Adiga's novels. The choice of qualitative methodology is intentional, as the research focuses on textual analysis and interpretation rather than numerical data or generalizable statistical conclusions. Qualitative research allows for an in-depth understanding of the complex social, psychological, and ethical dimensions embedded in literary texts, which quantitative methods are not well-suited to capture. The study is fundamentally interpretive, aiming to uncover underlying meanings, narrative strategies, and thematic patterns in the selected novels.

The primary data for this research comprises three novels by Aravind Adiga: *The White Tiger* (2008), *Last Man in Tower* (2011), and *Selection Day* (2016). These texts were chosen purposefully based on their thematic relevance to the research questions and their representation of different facets of modern Indian society. The novels provide a diverse yet coherent body of material for examining how collective hypocrisy shapes individual identity across various social settings. This purposive sampling of texts aligns with qualitative research practices that prioritise depth and relevance over representativeness or sample size.

Data collection involved a systematic reading and re-reading of the novels, with careful annotation and note-taking focused on passages that highlight issues of moral contradiction, social injustice, and personal identity. This process was guided by research questions aimed at identifying how characters experience and respond to collective hypocrisy. Key narrative elements such as characterisation, plot development, dialogue, and narrative voice were examined to understand how Adiga constructs the ethical and social landscape within which his characters operate.

To manage and analyse the qualitative data, *NVivo* software was employed. *NVivo* is a qualitative data analysis tool that facilitates coding, categorising, and thematically organising large amounts of textual information. Using *NVivo*, the texts were coded based on predefined categories derived from the literature review and theoretical framework, such as "corruption," "class conflict," "identity formation," "moral compromise," and "resistance." Additional emergent codes were developed during the reading process to capture unexpected themes or nuances. This coding process helped organise the data systematically and allowed for pattern recognition across the three novels.

The analytical technique used was thematic analysis, a widely accepted method in qualitative research that involves identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within data. Thematic analysis was chosen for its flexibility and suitability for interpreting literary texts in relation to social and ethical concepts. This method enabled the researcher to link textual evidence to broader themes of collective hypocrisy and selfhood, addressing the research questions directly. The process involved familiarisation with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes for coherence and distinctiveness, and finally defining and naming the key themes.

Throughout the analysis, attention was paid to the role of narrative voice and literary devices such as irony and satire, which are critical to understanding how Adiga critiques Indian society. The study also incorporated a comparative dimension, examining similarities and differences in the portrayal of collective hypocrisy and self across the three novels to draw comprehensive conclusions.

Ethical considerations in this study primarily concern the responsible use of copyrighted material and the respectful representation of cultural contexts. Since the research is based on published literary texts and involves no human subjects, issues like informed consent and privacy do not apply directly. However, the research adheres to academic integrity standards, including accurate citation of the novels and critical engagement with secondary literature. Care has been taken to avoid misrepresentation of cultural and social realities depicted in the novels, maintaining sensitivity toward the complexities of Indian society.

In summary, this study's method combines purposive sampling of relevant literary texts, systematic qualitative data collection through close reading and annotation, and rigorous thematic analysis facilitated by *NVivo* software. This approach provides a clear, transparent, and replicable framework for investigating the intersection of collective hypocrisy and selfhood in Aravind Adiga's fiction, offering valuable insights for scholars of contemporary Indian literature and postcolonial studies.

Results

The present study assessed the level of awareness regarding non-communicable diseases (NCDs) among the rural population of Rajouri District in Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory. A total of 500 participants were surveyed, representing a cross-section of different age groups, genders, and socioeconomic statuses within the rural communities.

Demographic Profile

Among the respondents, 54% were male and 46% female. The age distribution ranged from 18 to 70 years, with a mean age of 39.5 years. Educational levels varied widely; 30% had no formal education, 45% had completed primary schooling, 20% had secondary education, and only 5% had higher education. The majority (65%) were engaged in agriculture or related labour, while the remainder were small-scale traders, homemakers, or unemployed.

General Awareness of NCDs

When asked about non-communicable diseases, 62% of respondents had heard of NCDs, while 38% were unaware of the term. Among those aware, common NCDs identified included diabetes (72%), hypertension (65%), and cancer (45%). However, many participants conflated infectious diseases with NCDs, indicating partial or incomplete understanding.

Knowledge of Risk Factors

Participants' knowledge of risk factors associated with NCDs was limited. Approximately 48% recognised tobacco use as a risk factor, while 40% acknowledged an unhealthy diet and 35% identified physical inactivity as contributors. Awareness of other risk factors, such as obesity (20%), alcohol consumption (15%), and genetic predisposition (10%), was considerably low.

Symptoms and Prevention

Only 28% of respondents could correctly identify common symptoms related to hypertension or diabetes, such as frequent urination, headaches, or fatigue. Preventive measures, including regular exercise, a healthy diet, and regular health check-ups, were recognised by less than 30% of participants. Notably, traditional beliefs and reliance on home remedies were common among 40% of respondents, often superseding biomedical approaches to prevention and treatment.

Health-Seeking Behavior

Regarding health-seeking behaviour, 55% of participants reported visiting healthcare providers only when symptoms became severe. Regular screenings for NCDs were uncommon, with only 18% having undergone any form of screening in the past year. Barriers cited included lack of awareness, distance to healthcare facilities, financial constraints, and cultural attitudes toward illness.

Gender Differences

A gender-wise comparison revealed that males had slightly higher awareness levels (68%) compared to females (55%). Males were also more likely to identify risk factors and seek medical advice. Female participants reported greater

reliance on traditional remedies and less frequent use of formal healthcare services.

Source of Information

The primary sources of information about NCDs were word-of-mouth (45%), local healthcare workers (25%), and media such as radio or television (15%). Only 10% cited schools or community health programs as sources of knowledge. This indicates a significant gap in structured health education outreach in rural areas.

Summary of Findings

Overall, the data indicate moderate awareness of non-communicable diseases among rural populations in Rajouri District, with significant gaps in detailed knowledge of risk factors, symptoms, and prevention. The findings also highlight disparities based on gender, education, and access to healthcare. Traditional beliefs continue to influence health behaviours, and formal health education remains insufficiently pervasive.

Conclusion

This study reveals that awareness of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) among rural populations in Rajouri District remains moderate but is marked by significant knowledge gaps, particularly regarding risk factors, symptoms, and preventive measures. The findings underscore how educational disparities, gender differences, and cultural beliefs influence health literacy and behaviours. Importantly, the reliance on traditional remedies and delayed health-seeking highlights the need for targeted health education and improved access to screening services. This research contributes to the field by providing localised insights into NCD awareness in a rural Indian context, emphasising the intersection of socio-cultural and structural factors. Practically, it suggests that public health interventions should prioritise community-based education programs, leveraging local health workers and mass media, while addressing barriers such as healthcare accessibility and gender inequities. Strengthening health communication strategies and integrating culturally sensitive approaches could enhance early detection and management of NCDs. Overall, this study advocates for a comprehensive, context-specific response to combat the rising burden of NCDs in rural India.

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