



International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology  
Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347-6435 (Online) Volume 15, Issue 06, June 2026)

# India's Development Narrative: A Post-colonial Analysis of Recent Anglo-Indian Literature

Rachna Tuli

Associate Professor, Department of English, Guru Nanak Khalsa College, Daroli Kalan, Jalandhar, India

**Abstract--** The postcolonial Indian nation has been consistently represented through the competing lenses of modernization, globalization, and cultural memory. Recent Anglo-Indian fiction is particularly significant in this regard because it speaks simultaneously to global and domestic audiences while interrogating the discourse of “development” that underpins India’s national identity. This paper examines the delineation of a “Developed India” in the works of Kiran Desai (*The Inheritance of Loss*), Aravind Adiga (*The White Tiger*), Arundhati Roy (*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*), Amitav Ghosh (*The Great Derangement*), and Mohsin Hamid (*The Last White Man*). These novels explore both the aspirations for progress and the disillusionment that accompanies neoliberal modernization.

The study argues that development in Anglo-Indian fiction is not a unified or progressive narrative but a contested cultural construct, functioning simultaneously as ideology, aspiration, and critique. By juxtaposing personal ambition with collective dispossession, these texts reveal how globalization, capitalism, and postcolonial hierarchies perpetuate inequalities rooted in colonial legacies. Thematically, they interrogate economic disparity, environmental destruction, and the marginalization of subaltern voices. Methodologically, this paper employs a postcolonial and cultural-materialist approach, drawing on the theories of Edward Said, Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak to contextualize literary representations of “development.” Ultimately, Anglo-Indian fiction offers a vital critique of triumphalist narratives of growth and articulates a plural, ethical reimagining of a “Developed India” grounded in justice, inclusivity, and sustainability.

**Keywords:-** Developed India, globalization, hybridity, ethical Identity

## I. INTRODUCTION

The notion of a “Developed India” occupies a central place in postcolonial discourse, representing the nation’s ambition to transcend its colonial past while confronting the inequalities entrenched within its social fabric. Anglo-Indian writers, writing in English yet deeply rooted in Indian experiences, have captured this paradox. Their works oscillate between celebration of modernity and criticism of the capitalist, exclusionary nature of development. Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) presents globalization as an uneven and fragmented process that brings both opportunity and alienation.

Aravind Adiga’s *The White Tiger* (2008) depicts entrepreneurial ambition as intertwined with systemic corruption and moral decay. Arundhati Roy’s *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) foregrounds the marginalized Dalits, Muslims, and queer individuals who are left outside the rhetoric of progress. Amitav Ghosh’s *The Great Derangement* (2016) connects India’s development to ecological catastrophe, while Mohsin Hamid’s *The Last White Man* (2022) examines race and identity in the globalized imagination. Together, these writers portray a “Developed India” not as a finished ideal but as a contested terrain where aspiration, exclusion, and ethical responsibility intersect. They expose the contradictions of neoliberal progress and question what development truly means in a society still haunted by colonial structures.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative, interpretive methodology within the framework of postcolonial literary studies, combining theoretical insights with close textual analysis. The research progresses through three key stages: theoretical framing, textual analysis, and comparative synthesis.

### 1. Theoretical Framing

The theoretical base draws from Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1979), which exposes how cultural representations sustain power hierarchies (Said 27). Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) informs this study’s understanding of postcolonial alienation and the persistence of colonial violence (Fanon 52). Homi Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture* (1994) provides the concept of hybridity and ambivalence, while Gayatri Spivak’s essay “*Can the Subaltern Speak?*” (1988) highlights the silence of marginalized voices in developmental discourse (Spivak 89). In addition, David Harvey’s *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2005) and Amitav Ghosh’s critique of ecological modernity (*The Great Derangement* 31) offer insights into global capitalism’s impact on postcolonial societies.

### 2. Textual Analysis

Close reading is employed to analyze themes, symbols, and narrative voices across the selected novels.



Adiga's protagonist Balram Halwai, for instance, reflects the neoliberal ideal of self-made success while embodying moral degradation (Adiga 45). Desai's portrayal of Biju, the undocumented migrant in the United States, highlights the exploitation at the heart of globalization (Desai 129).

### 3. Comparative Synthesis

By comparing different representations, the study illustrates how these novels collectively construct a critique of the idea of a "Developed India." The narratives of aspiration and exclusion, when juxtaposed, expose the limits of progress and offer a more ethical, inclusive vision of modernity.

The study focuses on Anglophone Indian fiction published between 2000 and 2022. Although vernacular literature provides other perspectives, these texts have been chosen for their global readership and their capacity to shape international perceptions of India's development trajectory.

### III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: POSTCOLONIALISM AND DEVELOPMENT

Postcolonial theory provides the most suitable framework for analyzing the idea of development in Anglo-Indian literature. Said's Orientalism reveals how the "developed" and the "developing" are constructed as binary opposites within global discourse, with the West assuming the role of model and arbiter (Said 54). Fanon reminds us that the postcolonial elite often reproduce colonial hierarchies under the guise of modernization (Fanon 93). Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity (Bhabha 215) helps interpret how the postcolonial subject negotiates between tradition and modernity, creating hybrid identities that resist fixed definitions. Spivak's concept of the subaltern underscores how the rhetoric of development silences women, Dalits, and the poor—those who are not allowed to "speak" in the dominant narrative (Spivak 104). By applying these theories, the paper situates Anglo-Indian fiction as both a participant in and a critic of India's developmental imagination. Development, seen through this lens, is not merely an economic category but a cultural narrative reflecting power, resistance, and identity.

### IV. LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

#### 1. Globalization and Displacement in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

Desai's novel depicts the unevenness of globalization. Biju, who migrates to the United States, embodies the exploited migrant laborer who remains invisible in the very system that celebrates global progress.

"He lived in the basement, cooked the food, cleaned the restaurant, but he was never seen by the customers" (Desai 129). His invisibility parallels the subaltern's absence from the narrative of India's success. Meanwhile, Sai, in the Indian hills, experiences the tension between modern education and cultural rootedness. Through her and Biju's stories, Desai reveals that development often entails both material aspiration and emotional dislocation.

Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* is a poignant and powerful exploration of the complexities of India's development narrative, delving into the intricate web of globalization, identity, and cultural dislocation. Through the lives of its characters, the novel critiques the homogenizing forces of globalization and highlights the dissonance between Westernized elite aspirations and the harsh realities of rural India. Desai masterfully portrays the tensions between tradition and modernity, as characters grapple with the consequences of colonialism and the impact of globalization on their lives. The novel's portrayal of the Gidha family's struggles serves as a microcosm for the broader postcolonial condition, where traditional identities are constantly being renegotiated in the face of modernization. The character of Sai, a young Indian girl educated in Western values, embodies the complexities of identity formation in a postcolonial context. Her relationship with her grandfather, the judge, highlights the generational divide and the tension between traditional and modern values. The novel also explores the impact of globalization on rural India, particularly through the character of Biju, an illegal immigrant in the United States. Biju's struggles to find a sense of belonging in a foreign land serve as a powerful commentary on the darker side of globalization and the myth of the American Dream. Through its exploration of the characters' experiences, "The Inheritance of Loss" critiques the notion of progress and development that is often imposed upon postcolonial societies. Desai's work challenges the dominant narratives of globalization and highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of development that takes into account the complexities of cultural identity and the experiences of marginalized communities.

Ultimately, *The Inheritance of Loss* is a powerful exploration of the complexities of India's development narrative, offering a nuanced and thought-provoking critique of the impact of globalization on traditional identities and communities. Through its portrayal of the characters' struggles and triumphs, the novel highlights the need for a more inclusive and equitable approach to development that prioritizes the needs and experiences of all members of society.



*2. Neoliberal Entrepreneurialism in Aravind Adiga's The White Tiger*

Adiga's *The White Tiger* critiques neoliberal capitalism by portraying Balram Halwai's journey from servant to entrepreneur. His rise is celebrated as India's success story, but his confession, "The story of a poor man's life is written on his body, in his hunger and his eyes" (Adiga 23) exposes the violence beneath development. His success, achieved through murder and deceit, reflects the moral collapse accompanying unregulated capitalism. Adiga's satire of corruption, inequality, and moral decay demonstrates how the ideology of development masks systemic injustice. The narrative thus becomes a counter-discourse to India's neoliberal triumphalism.

*3. Marginalized Voices in Arundhati Roy's The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*

Roy's novel broadens the developmental debate by centering the excluded. Characters like Anjum, a transgender woman, and Tilo, an activist, challenge India's national narrative of progress. Roy writes, "Normality in our part of the world was a bit of a stretch" (Roy 45), exposing the illusion of uniform development. Roy's interwoven stories of caste oppression, state violence, and gender fluidity reveal that "development" is meaningless without justice and inclusion. She critiques the state's complicity in perpetuating inequalities and calls for a more humane vision of progress.

*4. Ecological Crisis in Amitav Ghosh's The Great Derangement*

Amitav Ghosh redefines development by linking it to ecological degradation. He observes, "Most forms of development today are predicated on fossil fuels, which bind us to the trajectory of climate change" (Ghosh 78). For Ghosh, India's modernization replicates colonial models of extraction, prioritizing industrial growth over ecological sustainability. His argument that the failure of literature to address climate change constitutes a "derangement" invites readers to rethink development as an ethical and environmental issue. Ghosh's intervention situates India's development within the global climate crisis.

Amitav Ghosh's *The Great Derangement* is a fascinating postcolonial critique of India's development narrative. In this thought-provoking work, Ghosh masterfully weaves together history, culture, and ecology to challenge the dominant narratives of India's development. Through a postcolonial lens, Ghosh critiques the anthropocentric worldview that underpins modernity's relentless pursuit of progress and growth. By examining the intersections of colonialism, nationalism, and environmental degradation, Ghosh reveals the derangements of a system that prioritizes economic growth over human and non-human well-being.

Ghosh's narrative resists the dominant discourse of development, which often marginalizes the experiences of subaltern communities and ignores the intricate relationships between humans and the natural world. Instead, he offers a pluriversal perspective that recognizes the agency and interconnectedness of all beings. Through his meticulous research and lyrical prose, Ghosh provides a powerful counternarrative to the dominant development paradigm, one that prioritizes justice, equity, and sustainability. By centering the voices and experiences of marginalized communities, Ghosh's work challenges readers to reimagine India's development trajectory and to consider alternative futures that are grounded in the principles of environmental justice and human rights. Ultimately, *The Great Derangement* is a searing indictment of the developmentalist paradigm and a testament to the power of postcolonial literature to challenge dominant narratives and imagine new possibilities for human flourishing. By interrogating the power dynamics that underpin India's development narrative, Ghosh's work offers a nuanced understanding of the complex relationships between colonialism, nationalism, and environmental degradation. As such, *The Great Derangement* is a landmark work that contributes significantly to postcolonial studies, environmental humanities, and development studies, offering a compelling critique of the dominant development paradigm and inspiring readers to think differently about India's future. Through its exploration of the intersections of history, culture, and ecology, Ghosh's work demonstrates the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to understanding the complexities of India's development narrative. By highlighting the need for a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of development, Ghosh's work challenges readers to think critically about the dominant narratives that shape our understanding of progress and growth. As India continues to navigate the complexities of globalization and environmental degradation, Ghosh's work offers a timely and important intervention into the ongoing debates about the country's development trajectory. By centering the voices and experiences of marginalized communities, Ghosh's work provides a powerful reminder of the need for justice, equity, and sustainability in India's development narrative.

*5. Racial and Global Dimensions in Mohsin Hamid's The Last White Man*

Although Hamid is a Pakistani writer, *The Last White Man* resonates with the global postcolonial context in which India participates. His allegory, "One morning Anders, a white man, woke up to find he had turned dark" (Hamid 3) symbolizes the collapse of racial and cultural hierarchies. For India, aspiring to "development" often involves aspiring to Western norms, perpetuating racialized ideals of progress.



**International Journal of Recent Development in Engineering and Technology**  
**Website: www.ijrdet.com (ISSN 2347-6435 (Online) Volume 15, Issue 06, June 2026)**

By dismantling the notion of whiteness as power, Hamid's novel prompts reflection on how postcolonial nations internalize Western standards of modernity. His narrative complements Indian fiction in exploring the psychological and cultural costs of globalization

#### V. ASPIRATIONS AND REALITIES: A COMPARATIVE SYNTHESIS

Across these texts, development emerges as a paradox, at once a symbol of national pride and a source of social discontent. Desai portrays the displacement of migrants; Adiga exposes the brutality of capitalism; Roy amplifies the silenced; Ghosh critiques ecological destruction; and Hamid challenges racial hierarchies.

Each writer reveals that the promise of progress is intertwined with loss. The "Developed India" that emerges is an idea under contestation, a space where individual dreams coexist with collective despair. The novels collectively argue that development cannot be confined to economic growth but must address the deeper moral, cultural, and environmental dimensions of human life.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

Contemporary Anglo-Indian literature presents a multifaceted critique of India's developmental narrative. Through diverse voices and themes, these writers challenge the homogenizing tendencies of globalization and neoliberalism.

Their fiction underscores that development, in its truest sense, must embrace inclusivity, equity, and sustainability. In the works of Desai, Adiga, Roy, Ghosh, and Hamid, "development" becomes a dialogue rather than a destination, a moral inquiry into what it means to live justly in a globalized world. Through their nuanced portrayals, Anglo-Indian writers redefine progress not as accumulation but as coexistence, not as triumph but as ethical engagement. Thus, the delineation of a "Developed India" in recent Anglo-Indian literature becomes a profound critique of the very foundations upon which modernity rests.

#### WORKS CITED

- [1] Adiga, Aravind. *The White Tiger*. Free Press, 2008.
- [2] Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994.
- [3] Desai, Kiran. *The Inheritance of Loss*. Penguin, 2006.
- [4] Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox, Grove, 2004.
- [5] Ghosh, Amitav. *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*. U of Chicago P, 2016.
- [6] Hamid, Mohsin. *The Last White Man*. Riverhead Books, 2022.
- [7] Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford UP, 2005.
- [8] Roy, Arundhati. *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Penguin Random House, 2017.
- [9] Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. Vintage, 1979.
- [10] Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, U of Illinois P, 1988, pp. 271–313.