
THEMES OF POVERTY, CORRUPTION, THE UNDERDOG STORY, AND THE RESILIENCE OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY, OFTEN WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY INDIA IN THE NOVELS OF VIKAS SWARUP

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Introduction:

Vikas Swarup, an Indian diplomat and author, has garnered international acclaim for his novels that intricately explore the socio-economic fabric of contemporary India. His works, notably "Q & A" (adapted into the film "Slumdog Millionaire") and "Six Suspects," delve into themes of poverty, corruption, the underdog narrative, and the resilience of the human spirit. This paper examines how these themes are interwoven in Swarup's narratives, reflecting the complexities of modern Indian society.

Poverty and Social Stratification :

In "Q & A," the protagonist, Ram Mohammad Thomas, is an uneducated waiter from the slums of Mumbai who unexpectedly wins a billion-rupee quiz show. His life story, revealed through his explanations of how he knew each answer, offers a poignant portrayal of India's underprivileged communities. The novel highlights the stark disparities between the affluent and the impoverished, emphasizing the systemic challenges faced by those in the lower echelons of society. Swarup's depiction of slum life underscores the daily struggles for survival and dignity amidst economic hardship.

Swarup's *Q&A* is the story of Ram. At the age of 18, a poor server, called Ram, does the unbelievable and wins a billion rupees at a game show. The central question that comes up is how important of this has to do with luck, and how important of this is fortune. In the morning, Ram himself says that he was lucky to have got the questions that he was suitable to answer grounded on his life stories. Still, all of these life stories are tragedies of some kind, outlining the harsh conditions he and his musketeers had to endure to reach the current state of happiness.

Since the story is set in India, naturally air comes to mind, and ever indeed the darkest hours of Ram's life have contributed to his current success, indeed if he didn't realize this at the time. Whatever he seems to lose at first, he latterly gains with interest. For illustration, he gives down 400,000 rupees to a father who wants to buy drug for his son to save his life. In the short run, this act of kindness saves him from the police (after all, he stole the plutocrat from his lessee), but in the long run it secured the grand prize in the game show because this father,



an English schoolteacher, helped him find the correct answer to the final question. Had he not given away the plutocrat, he'd be rotting in a captivity cell rather. Also, he loses the love of his life at first because he's not to pay for her freedom, but also eventually marries her after winning the billion rupees.

So is it purely karma? Throughout the novel, Ram meets people who are as kind as or even kinder than him, and they do not meet the same fate. In fact, they suffer and perish. For illustration, Father Timothy, who treats him like his own son, is boggled; Shankar, an autistic boy who deeply cares for Ram, dies of rabies; Nita, who discovers her love for Ram has to continue to work as a courtesan and is subordinated to abuse. Why are they-- or millions of others for that matter-- not winning a billion rupees?

Perhaps it's a little bit of luck also. After all, he flips his lucky coin whenever he has to make an important decision. Still, at the end of the novel, Ram reveals that the two sides of his lucky coin are the same face. He tosses the coin into the ocean, saying "I don't need it any more. Because luck comes from within, "which indicates that he believes courage, confidence, and determination, which are all factors that he can impact, are more important to reaching one's pretensions than relying on an external factor called luck.

Corruption and Moral Decay :

"*Six Suspects*" presents a multifaceted exploration of corruption permeating various strata of Indian society. The narrative revolves around the murder of Vicky Rai, a wealthy and unscrupulous industrialist, during a party celebrating his acquittal in a high-profile case. The six suspects, each representing different societal segments—including a corrupt bureaucrat, a Bollywood actress, and a tribal man—embody the pervasive moral decay and ethical ambiguities prevalent in contemporary India. Through their intertwined stories, Swarup critiques the normalization of corruption and its far-reaching consequences.

Six Suspects attempts to expose the contract payoff and fraud that bedevils Delhi. The plot is grounded on the murder of Jessica Lall, a model, in a bar in 1999. Then, the victim is Ruby Gill, a Gandhian scholar and bartender who's shot dead after she refuses to serve a notorious industrialist and movie patron.

Vivek "Vicky" Rai, the playboy son of the Home Minister of Uttar Pradesh, boggled bartender Ruby Gill at a trendy eatery in New Delhi, simply because she refused to serve him a drink. The opening murder committed by Vicky Rai is analogous to the Jessica Lal murder case in which the killer was Manu Sharma.

Now Vicky Rai has been killed at the party he was throwing to celebrate his vindication. The police recover six guests with ordnance in their possession a loose mandarin who claims to have come Mahatma Gandhi; an American sightseer infatuated with an Indian actress; a member of an ancient lineage on a hunt to recover a sacred gravestone; a Bollywood coitus symbol with a shamefaced secret; a mobile-phone pincher who dreams big; and an ambitious politician prepared to design low. Swarup unravels the lives and motives of the six suspects.

The Accidental Apprentice is a new about a shop adjunct, Sapna Sinha, who's invited



to come CEO of a business conglomerate if she can pass a series of seven tests. The story explores colorful forms of corruption in ultramodern India.

The premise of the plot is inspired by the reality TV show *The Apprentice*. Sapna Sinha works in an electronics store in town Delhi. She hates her job, but she's ambitious and determined to succeed, because she knows that her family's fate is dependent on the plutocrat she brings in. One day, as she leaves the shop for her lunchbreak, she's approached by a man, Vinay Mohan Acharya, who claims to be the CEO of one of India's biggest companies. He tells her he's looking for someone to take on his business conglomerate, and has decided it should be her. But in order to come the heir at law of his conglomerate, Sapna must pass seven tests from the "Textbook of Life".

The seven tests are seven unanticipated and life hanging situations with each test revealing a different quality of a leader. Sapna passes six of the seven tests with great difficulty. Though Vinay praises her for her character, Sapna is outraged at Vinay's incuriosity to the trouble which posed to life. Each situation explores a hand of corruption in India. So far, Sapna learns the rates of leadership, integrity, courage, foresight, resourcefulness and resoluteness, with Acharya keeping tabs on her and explaining the applicability of each quality.

As the story progresses, it's revealed that Acharya is facing bitter contest from his unpredictable and aggressive binary family, AK Acharya. His company is engaging in bigwig trading and Acharya himself is n't keeping well.

Acharya hints that the seventh and final test would be the hardest of all. Still, as Sapna proceeds against the final task, the seventh test horribly spirals out of control. Vinay is set up boggled mysteriously and Sapna is framed for the murder. Sapna escapes from jail and she discovers, to her horror that her history had come to hang her. Sapna uses all her head to escape from the raising situation and eventually each is well.

In the end, AK takes over Vinay's company and feels regretful for holding a grudge against his family. He speaks to Sapna and gives her a letter written by Vinay long ago

. The letter reveals the verity why Vinay had chosen Sapna as his successor and tells her the final assignment he intended to conduct Wisdom. AK explains Sapna his family's intentions, clearing her dubieties.

AK promises help to Sapna and asks her to take over as the CEO of Vinay's company. Sapna turns it down, saying that she intends to follow her heart, and AK agrees with her.

The Underdog Narrative :

Central to Swarup's storytelling is the underdog motif. In "Q & A," Ram's journey from a destitute orphan to a quiz show winner challenges societal perceptions of success and intelligence. His life experiences, rather than formal education, equip him with the knowledge that leads to his triumph. Similarly, in "Six Suspects," characters like Munna, a mobile phone thief aspiring to a better life, embody the struggles and aspirations of marginalized individuals striving against societal constraints. These narratives celebrate the tenacity and ingenuity of those who, despite systemic barriers, endeavor to change their destinies.



Resilience amidst Adversity :

Swarup's characters exemplify resilience in the face of adversity. They navigate a labyrinth of challenges, including poverty, corruption, and social injustice, yet persist in their quests for justice and self-betterment. This resilience reflects a broader commentary on the human spirit's capacity to endure and overcome, resonating with the experiences of many in contemporary India. The narratives underscore the idea that personal fortitude and hope can prevail even in the most daunting circumstances.

Conclusion :

Vikas Swarup's novels offer a microcosmic view of India's societal dynamics, artfully weaving themes of poverty, corruption, the underdog story, and human resilience. Through compelling narratives and multifaceted characters, Swarup not only entertains but also prompts reflection on the socio-economic challenges and moral complexities of contemporary Indian society. His works serve as both a mirror and a critique, illuminating the struggles and triumphs inherent in the human condition within the Indian context.

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