

*Monthly Multidisciplinary  
Research Journal*

*Review Of  
Research Journal*

Chief Editors

---

**Ashok Yakkaldevi**  
A R Burla College, India

**Ecaterina Patrascu**  
Spiru Haret University, Bucharest

**Kamani Perera**  
Regional Centre For Strategic Studies,  
Sri Lanka

## Welcome to Review Of Research

RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2249-894X

Review Of Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

### Regional Editor

Dr. T. Manichander

### Advisory Board

Kamani Perera

Regional Centre For Strategic Studies, Sri Spiru Haret University, Bucharest, Romania  
Lanka

Ecaterina Patrascu

Spiru Haret University, Bucharest

Fabricio Moraes de Almeida  
Federal University of Rondonia, Brazil

Anna Maria Constantinovici  
AL. I. Cuza University, Romania

Romona Mihaela  
Spiru Haret University, Romania

Delia Serbescu

Spiru Haret University, Bucharest, Romania

Xiaohua Yang

University of San Francisco, San Francisco

Karina Xavier

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT),  
USA

May Hongmei Gao

Kennesaw State University, USA

Marc Fetscherin

Rollins College, USA

Liu Chen

Beijing Foreign Studies University, China

Mahdi Moharrampour

Islamic Azad University buinzahra  
Branch, Qazvin, Iran

Titus Pop

PhD, Partium Christian University,  
Oradea,  
Romania

J. K. VIJAYAKUMAR

King Abdullah University of Science &  
Technology,Saudi Arabia.

George - Calin SERITAN

Postdoctoral Researcher  
Faculty of Philosophy and Socio-Political  
Sciences  
Al. I. Cuza University, Iasi

REZA KAFIPOUR

Shiraz University of Medical Sciences  
Shiraz, Iran

Rajendra Shendge

Director, B.C.U.D. Solapur University,  
Solapur

Awadhesh Kumar Shirotriya

Nimita Khanna

Director, Isara Institute of Management, New  
Delhi

Salve R. N.

Department of Sociology, Shivaji University,  
Kolhapur

P. Malyadri

Government Degree College, Tandur, A.P.

S. D. Sindkhedkar

PSGVP Mandal's Arts, Science and  
Commerce College, Shahada [ M.S. ]

Anurag Misra

DBS College, Kanpur

C. D. Balaji

Panimalar Engineering College, Chennai

Bhavana vivek patole

PhD, Elphinstone college mumbai-32

Awadhesh Kumar Shirotriya

Secretary, Play India Play (Trust),Meerut  
(U.P.)

Mabel Miao

Center for China and Globalization, China

Ruth Wolf

University Walla, Israel

Jie Hao

University of Sydney, Australia

Pei-Shan Kao Andrea

University of Essex, United Kingdom

Loredana Bosca

Spiru Haret University, Romania

Ilie Pintea

Spiru Haret University, Romania

Govind P. Shinde

Bharati Vidyapeeth School of Distance  
Education Center, Navi Mumbai

Sonal Singh

Vikram University, Ujjain

Jayashree Patil-Dake

MBA Department of Badruka College  
Commerce and Arts Post Graduate Centre  
(BCCAPGC),Kachiguda, Hyderabad

Maj. Dr. S. Bakhtiar Choudhary

Director,Hyderabad AP India.

AR. SARAVANAKUMARALAGAPPA  
UNIVERSITY, KARAIKUDI,TN

V.MAHALAKSHMI

Dean, Panimalar Engineering College

S.KANNAN

Ph.D , Annamalai University

Kanwar Dinesh Singh

Dept.English, Government Postgraduate  
College , solan

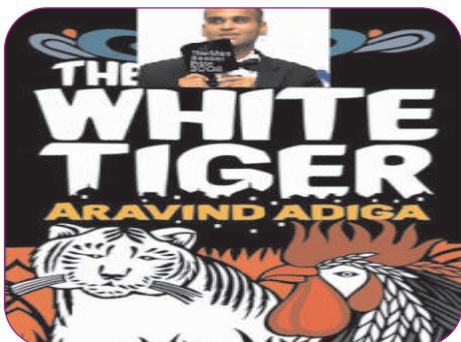
More.....



# Review Of Research



## WHEN SUBALTERN ACTS: A JOURNEY OF A SLAVE TO A MASTER IN ARVINDADIGA'S THE WHITE TIGER



Samimuddin Khan

Guest Lecturer of English Department in Vivekananda College, Burdwan.

### ABSTRACT :

**A**mong the various forms, novel is the most realistic form of literature. The novels which deal particularly with the problems of social, economic, and political life of a country are bound to reflect contemporary history. The chosen novel- *The White Tiger*, a Man Booker prize winning Indian novel by AravindAdiga realistically shows how India is divided into the world of light and the world of darkness, world of rich and world of poor, world of slave and the world of master, where a section is feasting and the other is fasting. Here what I have tried to project is a journey, the successful journey of a man from the world of darkness to the world of light.

**KEYWORDS :** Social, Economic, Political, World of Light, World of Darkness, World of Rich, World of Poor, World of Slave, The World of Master.

### INTRODUCTION

Literature, which is known as the mirror of society has its many forms like poetry, drama, essay, story, novel etc, reflects the reality of the society. Among the various forms, novel is the most realistic form of literature. The novels which deal particularly with the problems of social, economic, and political life of a country are bound to reflect contemporary history. The chosen novel on which I am going to make a critical study is *The White Tiger*, a Man Booker prize winning Indian novel, written by AravindAdiga. It shows realistically that how India is divided into the world of light and the world of darkness, world of rich and world of poor, world of slave and the world of master, where a section is feasting and the other is fasting. As a postcolonial nation recasts itself, rejecting colonial representations with hopes of an egalitarian future, there is the growing awareness that not everything is magically splendid in the postcolonial state. Every power structure creates its margins and certain segments of the population are relegated to such subordinate locations. Nationalism that had been an ally in the anti-colonial resistance, homogenizes into a monolithic mass, to the disadvantage of a new set of marginalized groups. During colonial rule, the indigene, pejoratively referred to as the 'native', was the subaltern. Postcoloniality created its own subalterns. Inferior castes, minority groups, women and dalits became 'others' within the postcolonial nation state. Same thing happens with India. Even in the 21st century subalternity is a sensitive issue in India. And many Indian writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Arundhuti Roy, Amitav Ghosh, Vikasswarup, Rameshwar Rao have used the theme of subaltern as the central theme and projected the miserable condition of the underprivileged. But there is a difference between the presentation of the deprived by the said authors, and the projection of the repressed by AravindAdiga in his *The White Tiger*. While the subaltern characters of the said authors only speaks of their suppressed condition and remained slave, balmahalwai, the white tiger of Adiga not only speaks but acts also and escapes from a world of slave to a world of master. And the topic of my paper is to show the very, journey of a slave boy, in the world of darkness to a master, in the world of light.

As my paper is going to make a critical study of a boy who is born and raised in the world of subaltern and successfully makes a trial to cross the boundary of subaltern, a brief introduction of the concept, origin, and history of subaltern is relevant. The very word "subaltern" has come from the latin word 'subalternus'-'sub' means under, and 'alternus' means every other. Earlier the word 'subaltern' was used as a military term which meant 'junior military officer' or more generally 'person of a inferior rank'. It simply means a section of society who are far from the mainstream of society, the deprived, oppressed and suppressed people. The very word is coined by Antonio Gramsci, one of the great Marxist critics, notably through his work on Cultural hegemony, while describing "history told from below". By the term 'subaltern' Gramsci identified the groups of society that are excluded from established institutions and thus denied the means of voice in their society. More clearly the term subaltern designates the population which is socially, politically, economically, and geographically outside of the hegemonic power structure of the colonial homeland. If we take a view in the history of India we can have a glimpse of the origin of subaltern in Indian society. Several hundred years before the composition of Rig Veda, the Aryans invaded India and implemented the new law of Varnas which resulted in four classes-Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudras. The basic explanation given that the section of people engaged in the field of education are Brahmin, the people engaged in the field of fighting are kshatriya, people related to the issues of business are called vaishya, and the other works are titled as Shudras. It is clear that the classification was made on the basis of the skill, ability, and capacity of the workers, but resulted in different castes as per their occupation. Years after the reality becomes tragic, the class and caste of the fathers has been given on their children without examining their skill, ability, and capacity to do the work. The fourth class Shudras are thrown out of the main stream of the society, and are called untouchable. They are now deprived of education, economy, politics and remain underprivileged, oppressed and suppressed slaves in darkness. Presently in the Postcolonial era, the term subaltern describes the lower classes and the social groups who are at the margin of society: "a subaltern is a person rendered without agency by social status". Nonetheless, a famous literary critic Gayatri Spivak spoke against an overly broad application of the term in 1992:

...subaltern is not just a classy word for "oppressed", for [the] Other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie.... In post-colonial terms, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern—a space of difference. Now, who would say that's just the oppressed? The working class is oppressed. It's not subaltern.... Many people want to claim subalternity. They are the least interesting and the most dangerous. I mean, just by being a discriminated-against minority on the university campus; they don't need the word 'subaltern'.... They should see what the mechanics of the discrimination are. They're within the hegemonic discourse, wanting a piece of the pie, and not being allowed, so let them speak, use the hegemonic discourse. They should not call themselves subaltern. (Spivak: Interview)

The novel adopts the epistolary tradition, the letters being written on seven nights to the Chinese Prime Minister, Mr. Wen Jiabao who plans to visit India for a week with the specific purpose of wanting to know the truth about Bangalore and a keen desire for interacting with some Indian entrepreneurs and hearing their story of success in an attempt to create some successful Chinese entrepreneurs. Balram Halwai, the protagonist is the very author of these letters. He informs the Chinese Premier that he may not get an accurate representation of India in the company of the Minister and the foreign Minister of India whereas a common man, who by his grit and skill has risen to be an accomplished businessman may be the right person to narrate the success story to the Chinese prime minister. And in the way of telling the truth of Bangalore, which serves as the microcosm of the whole India, reveals his own history of life. Better to say, while revealing his own history of life the truth of India comes to the front. Balram Halwai alias Munna is the son of Vikram Halwai, a rickshaw puller. He was born and raised in the darkness as he sees two Indias, India of darkness and India of light. (The world of darkness constitutes of the people who are the oppressed, suppressed, deprived and unprivileged, and live a life of slave. On the other hand, the world of light is lighted by adequate electricity, running waters, working telephone, proper education, and the children raised on a nutritious diet of meat, egg, vegetables, and lentils etc.) Both his parents were smitten by fatal diseases and died prematurely. Due to the lack of financial support he has to make an end of his schooling and join tea shop near the coal mines of Dhanbad. Vikram Halwai, though a rickshaw puller had higher plan for his son while his mother could also visualize that her son had adroitness and aptitude to

make a mark for himself. The school inspector had also invented the rarity in him. But the situation drives him to a teashop instead of his outmost dislike. As he was a man of higher aspiration, though he lives in the gutter he kept his look on the stars. He used to notice the customers of the teashop and kept an attentive concentration their conversation which gave him knowledge and ideas about the other better works. Balram resolves to become a car driver after listening to the conversation of other drivers at the tea shop and getting the information about the better salary of a car driver. Then he managed to get the driving training and began working in the house f a landlord from Laxmangarh, popularly known as the stork. Latter he moves to Delhi along with the landlord's son, Ashok and the daughter in law, Pinky where he gets ample opportunity to intermix with other drivers thereby learning myriad lessons and survival techniques. Consequently he wins the confidence of the couple as he cooks, cleans and drives for them. While driving Mr. Ashok around he discovers that his master keeps the family business going on by monetarily gratifying various officers and dignitaries of influence. Mr. Ashok so much believed him that balram was entrusted to carry the suitcase of currency. Latter he witnessed the separation of the couple. And one day while driving Mr. Ashok with a red bag containing seven lakh rupees to be given as bribe, the tiger in Balram awaken and used the opportunity. He killed Ashok on that rainy night by slitting his throat with a broken bottle of whiskey which he had hid in the glove case of the car. Then he escapes to Bangalore changing his identity to Ashok Sharma. Thus he move from the world of slave to the world of master.

In Indian English literature ArvindAdiga is not the first author to write about the underprivileged , it is true but there is something uniqueness in the treatment of his dalit character in his novel, *The White Tiger*. It is Mulk Raj Anand who is probably the first writer to write an English novel about an untouchable hero in his novel, *Untouchable*. It is a critical study of Bakha's mind and psyche, here Bakha speaks out his miserable condition but he is unable to take his own decision and accept the solution that is offered to him. Another character velutha by Arundhuti Roy in *The God of Small Thing* moves a step further-he loves an upper class woman and establishes an intimate relationship with her. But he too is unable to fight the system. About two decades back ShantaRameshwarRao had also made a similar statement that for some children of God there is no escape from the social structure, they born in the world of slave and die as a slave. The protagonist of *Slumdog Millionaire* is a loveable chap-both innocent and intelligent, he achieves success but his success depends on too many chances. Adiga's novel the *White Tiger* makes a breakthrough in this matter- his protagonist is a rare phenomenon like the white tiger in the jungle,a determinid person who plans out each and every move. He not only escapes the clutches of system but also weaves a successful story of himself.

BalramHalwaiwas born in a subeltern community, a community which is far from the access of socio-economic and political facilities. His father was a rickshaw puller who died of tuberculosis due to the lack of money, corrupted medical system and of their class. His mother also died earlier. He had a brother named Kishan who is also compelled to do some work to support the family. And in the process both his father and brother have lived a miserableslavish life. His house was situated in the down side of the middle road where they lived like cattle. There as no adequate electric supply, no running of portable water, no touch of education and there the children are raised in malnutrition. All of the members of the house worked to satisfy the desire of the water buffalo, a symbolic figure who eaten up everything they earn and his only focus was to fatten her body and made it attractive. It gives a glimpse of a pimp. A man used to circle around their teashop selling pornographic film ticket. A typical uncultured picture is found in the village of the protagonist, it clearly says that he is a man of a deprived and dark class. Still, his father dreams for the betterment of his son, Balram. Latter balram admits that -"I wouldn't be here, under the chandelier, if not for his guidance.(23)

Instead of utter poverty his father wanted to make his son learned and lead a life like a man. And his wish successfully inculcated in Balram the spirit of living a better life,escaping from the 'rooster zone'.

Balram begins his life in such a place where he did not even offered a name,he was called as Munna, which means a boy.his name BalramHalwai is not given by his family member but by his school teacher .Though Balram born in a poor family with sufficient insufficiency, he was certainly a distinguished student much above the others, something that was instantaneously perceived by the school inspector who asked Balram several questions ultimately concluding ,

You, young man, are an intelligent, honest, vivacious fellow in this crowd of thugs and idiots. In any

jungle what is the rarest of animal that comes along only once in a generation?

I thought about it and said:  
The White Tiger.  
That's what you are, in this jungle.(35)

The inspector was so delighted that he bestowed a scholarship upon Balram. However the death of his parents and instable financial condition compelled him to find work, and remain a half-baked man, incomplete fellow.Balram is aptly been referred to as a white tiger and it will be proved on the development of the story. Behind the development of his class from slave to master his urge for betterment was not enough, along with his strong will he had his enough capability to be a better human being ,f he is given the proper opportunities he could be a successful and capable gentleman without committing any criminal act.

To earn more money balram had been sent to Dhanbad, a city. In the city he saw buildings with sides made entirely of glass and men with gold in their teeth, ad all this glass and gold came from the coal pits,outside the town. The coal makes the city bright and the centre of coal remain dark forever, this the reality. Miners came to eat at the tea shop of Balram and he gave them best service only to acquire information about other works. It is worthy to be noted that a slave boy Balram is, but he is not content with his position and always remain conscious about the better opportunity to catch up and change his position. While he heard about the less profitable and hard working life of the miners he negated but when he heard the conversation about the better position of the drivers he tried instantly to lift to crack the position. He began to plead for the training of driving and after some days he became a trained driver, and consequently he became the private driver of a landlord's son, Mr. Ashok, and in this way he was able to escape from the world of darkness to the world of light.

Though, a poor man devoid of any academic knowledge, Balram was equipped with a natural analytical mind, which helped him to fulfill his goal in life. Firstly, he succeed to leave the village and then he manages to escape from the clutches of family. He realized that in the way of his upliftment his own family was a great obstacle. He has seen his father kill himself trying to meet the demands of the family. He has also realized that his elder brother Kishan has now taken the place of their father. And he himself refuses to sacrifice his personal betterment for the needs of the family. The family to him is the all- devouring trap that's eats up alive the way it did to his father and his brother:

There was red, curried bone and flesh in front of me-and it seemed to me that they had served me flesh from Kishan's own body on that plate....They were eating him alivein there! They would do the same thing to him that they did to father – scoop him out from the inside and leave him weak and helpless....(85-86)

He himself decides not to step in the same way and get away from the trap of the family. He feels rightly that his family is like a old sow which eats its own furrow. And he then stops to send money. Now he declares clearly: 'I am never going back there' (89).

Balram was a man of aspiration, never wanted to live a life of donkey but like a man and a better one and that's why he was made himself free from the clutches one after another. Firstly he manages to leave the dark village. Then, his own family and then the 'rooster coop'.This is howBalram describes the world of rooster coop:

Never before have had so few owed s much to so many, Mr. Jiabao. A handful of men in this country have trained the remaining 99.9% - as strong, as talented, as intelligent in every way – to exist in perpetual servitude; servitude so strong that you can put the key of his emancipation in a man's hand and he will throw it back at you with a curse.(175-176)

They are all trapped like the chicken in the rooster coop: "hundreds of pale hens and brightly coloured roosters, stuffed tightly into wire- mesh cages, packed as tightly as worms in a belly, pecking each other and shitting on each other, jostling just for breathing space; the whole cage giving off a horrible stench – the stench of a terrified , feathered flesh. On the wooden desk above this coop sits a grinning young butcher, showing off the flesh and organs of a recently chopped up chicken, still oleaginous with a coating of dark blood. The roosters in the coop smell the blood from above. They see the organs of their brothers lying around them. They know they are next. Yet they do not rebel. They do not try to get out of off the coop.'The very same thing is done with human

beings in this country'. (173-174)

Here the terrible truth of the poor, dark India is portrayed beautifully. This is the real condition of the youth of India. They have no opportunity to do some job and income money. And without money they live a dead life. Still they are living passively as if they are hollow men, has no power of action. They never rebel against their condition. They do not even try to break out of their situation. For they know that if they try to do something they would be destroyed. So they have succumbed to their position. It needs a strong heart not a chicken heart, and it is the white tiger who is dare to do such thing.

There are many opportunities of jobs in the world of light but the opposite picture is seen in the world of darkness. Instead of having skill and aptitudes thousands young men are not able to get some job for survival. They are reduced to doing nothing and they spend their time sitting on the teashop, reading newspaper, or lying on the charpoy humming a tune or sit in their rooms talking with a photo of a film actress. They have no job as they know they wouldn't get any job. And they have given up their hope and stop fighting for it. Other stupid ones gather in a field in the centre of the town , truck comes from the company and everybody rushes to the truck ,somebody are taken and others are left to the ground. Such is the condition of the people of the darkness. Balram also gathered in a field but in vain .but the difference between him and the others is that he never gives up, he has a strong will power and enough intelligence. He fights continuously and success comes to him. He knows that: 'they remain slaves because they can't see what is beautiful in this world'. And he has the sense of beauty that's why he spat on the look of his village and moves toward the beauty of the world.

A white tiger can never be kept as a underdog. It will find its own way. One day when Balram is driving Ashok with a red bag of seven lakhs rupees he uses the opportunity to be rich with the night falls. He slits his throat with a broken whisky bottle and flights to Bangalore with a changing identity. He says proudly: 'the police searched me in the darkness, but I hid myself in light.'(118) and thus he escapes successfully from the world of servant. He is no more a servant but a master of his own destiny. His parents belong to the darkness for they were poor; moreover they lacked courage to fight for betterment. After killing his master he departs knowing the facts that his family could be destroyed. To him his personal success is far more important. Getting out of the clutches of the system is far more important than to the wellbeing of his kith and kin. He does not go back to his village. Instead he heads to Bangalore and after lying low some days he starts his own business, ' White Tiger Drivers', a taxi service for call centers. And he becomes a successful entrepreneur. Today he is the owner of twenty six Toyota Qualis, a macintosh laptop, and a flat with chandelier, which is the symbol of his success.

Balram's success can be attributed to his ability to harbor high aspiration. He sees the subjugated life style of his class and never succumbed to that kind of living. In other words, he abhors to live a slave's life. He wants to live like a man with money, power and dignity. So, even in the darkness he can dream of light, opportunity, freedom and everything. He never feels satisfied with his position in life. He always thinks for ways to move further. Firstly he was a teashop boy, then moves to a taxi driver, then driver of a better rank, and then master of driver. He proudly declares:

Once I was a driver to a master, but now I am a master , but now I am master of driver. I don't treat them like servants – I don't slap, or bully, or mock anyone. I don't insult any of them by calling them my 'family' either. They are my employees, I'm their boss, that's all. (302).

His statement states that now he is a true businessman, practical and prudent enough to maintain his status. He is the white tiger which is stronger than the golden variety, and is intelligent and rare to find. He has the capacity, the strong will power and the aspiration to rise above his class, so none can stop him. He is unstoppable. If we think about his moral temperament, we will find that he is not out and out a devil. As a child he was a weak hearted fellow, fainted even for a lizard. Now he kills a man, and a master. It is not that after killing his master he feels relaxed and starts a fresh life without any prick of conscience. Several weak he cannot remain normal, he killed but so he is a sinner no doubt about that but somewhere he is 'more sinned against than sinning'. The history of the world is actually a chronicle of an eternal conflict between the rich and the poor, a global process in which each side attempts to hoodwink other. It is the situation in which to achieve one's right one has to adopt a wrong way.

In the conclusion it can be said that the novel, *The White Tiger* delineates the life of Balram Halwai's life as

a progression from the subaltern to a successful entrepreneur, from a slave to a master. Here the subaltern hero is not a dumb spectator of the injustice doing on him falling on the ground and lament for his miserable condition. He sees, he learns, he dreams, he plans, he acts and successfully touch his goal. Though his life began in darkness of poverty, his determination, his capacity and skill make him able to reach in the world of light. And thus a driver becomes a master of drivers. The author of the novel, ArvindAdiga portrays the picture of a dalit's life very realistically. Though he himself belongs to an upper class he has successfully written about the condition of subaltern. In his maiden attempt at fiction writing it seems that he is inclined and sympathetic towards the neglected class of India. The narrative throws ample light to the plight of the poor India, who are considered as 'subaltern'. Economically exploited, socially condemned, medically neglected and educationally ignored these vanquished son of the soil struggle to keep body and soul together while people in power make merry at their expense. Most villagers are like bonded labourers of the landlords who take undue advantage of their poverty and ignorance. They are subalterns in the true sense and such condition makes the white tiger to move from the world of slave to a world of master.

#### WORK CITED

1. Adiga, Arvind. *The White Tiger*. India: Harper Collins, 2008. Print.
2. Anand, Mulk Raj. *Untouchable*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1939. Print.
3. K. Singh Prabhat. *The Indian English Novel of the New Millennium*, ed.
4. Prabhat K Singh. *Chapman Street*: Cambridge Scholar Press, 2013. Print.
5. Rao, ShantaRameshwar. *Children of God*. Calcutta: Disha Books, 1978. Print.
6. SunitaSinha. *Indian Booker Prize Winners, A Critical Study of Their Works*, ed SunitaSinha . New Delhi: Atlantic Press, 2010. Print.
7. <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/subaltern>.
8. de cock, leon . " interview with GayatriChakravortySpivak: New Nation Writers Conference in South Africa . " *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* .



**Samimuddin Khan**

Guest Lecturer of English Department in Vivekananda College, Burdwan.

# Publish Research Article

## International Level Multidisciplinary Research Journal

### For All Subjects

Dear Sir/Mam,

We invite unpublished Research Paper,Summary of Research Project,Theses,Books and Books Review for publication,you will be pleased to know that our journals are

Associated and Indexed,India

- \* Directory Of Research Journal Indexing
- \* International Scientific Journal Consortium Scientific
- \* OPEN J-GATE

Associated and Indexed,USA

- DOAJ
- EBSCO
- Crossref DOI
- Index Copernicus
- Publication Index
- Academic Journal Database
- Contemporary Research Index
- Academic Paper Databse
- Digital Journals Database
- Current Index to Scholarly Journals
- Elite Scientific Journal Archive
- Directory Of Academic Resources
- Scholar Journal Index
- Recent Science Index
- Scientific Resources Database