



**Techno – Dystopian Society And Dimensions Of Adolescent Resilience: A Study Of
Suzanne Collin's *The Hunger Games***

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“Power is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of
tour own choosing.”

-George Orwell.

Abstract:

The Hunger Games is a dystopian novel written in the voice of Katniss Everden, a sixteen year old girl who belongs to the lower class district. Her determination to win the game besides all the troubles inspired the readers a lot. Technology and violence of the present era is depicted in the novel. Violence is used as a medium by the Capitol to control the society. Technology takes violence to the people. The significant problem of the novel is the loss of identity and humanity due to the emergence of different culture. This paper aims to portray how the female protagonist fights against violence and different cultural dystopian society for her own survival by rebelling against the systems. She actively fights harder for what she wants and finally achieves her own identity. She is undoubtedly an appealing character to the young people who are at the brink entering adult society.

Key words: dystopian, techno culture, pop culture, violence, identity crisis.

Suzanne Collins is an American novelist who was born on August 10, 1962, in Hartford, Connecticut. The first book of *The Hunger Games* series was published in 2008. Collins got idea to pen down the novel when she was surfing through a T.V channel she recognized a drastic difference between TV Channels. One channel telecasted the reality program where as the other channel telecasting Iraq war. With the result of his father's advice about the necessary and unnecessary wars and television programs, Collins wrote this novel. The novel *The Huger Games* is categorized as American Post-Apocalyptic Science Fiction. Apocalyptic event is an event that causes severe destruction. It can be nuclear warfare, last judgment, natural or manmade destruction, etc. Post-Apocalyptic period is a time period immediately after the occurrence of the great catastrophe. Post-Apocalyptic Science Fiction focuses on the psychological condition of the survivors.

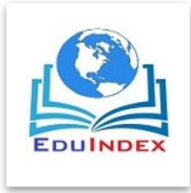
The rule of totalitarian government is beautifully portrayed in the novel. Rebel between two districts Panem and Capitol is explained. There are series of dystopian



characteristics features in the novel. Sir Thomas More Published his Utopia in 1516 where utopia means an imaginary land where violence and evils takes upper hand in every aspects of the society like technology, religion, education, etc. It enforces rules to greater extent and makes the poor starve by oppressing them and snatching their freedom. It manipulates the subjects through media. The dystopian novels cover a wide variety of themes such as politics, economics, social stratification, family, religion, violence, identity, nature, science and technology. Some of the example of dystopian novels are Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*, George Orwell's *1984*, H.G Well's *When the Speaker Wakes*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, Margret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* etc.

Suzanne Collins brings out the dystopian ideas gently with the help of young adults in the novel. It revolves around the young adults Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark. The novel brings out the dark and depth sides of what teenagers face. Most of the dystopian novel is set in Post-Apocalyptic future which indirectly means that the young adults must clean up the society and live a happy new life instead of adjusting. The similar things occur in the novel where the teens revolt against the Capitol and finally succeed. The power of young adults and the issues can even be compared with the Jallikattu protest in Tamil Nadu that grew massive on January 7, 2017 where the voice of the massive youths has been answered positively by the government. In the novel *The Hunger Games*, violence is handled as main theme among teens and there are no high sensuous incidents. There are minor portrayals like nakedness but no real sexual content is equal.

The Hunger Games is the adventure of Katniss Everdeen who was involved in the deadly hunger games in the place of her sister Prim. The novel is set in Panem, a dystopian country in the North America. The Capitol splits up the districts according to the work they do and even based on the class. Every year the hunger games were conducted by selecting a young girl and a young boy from all district and they were made to kill each other to survive and finally the winner's districts gets sufficient food for the year. The contestants were given training by their districts' previous winner and Haymitch from district 12 trained the contestants not only for the game but also for attracting sponsors. It is publicized through the words of Haymitch in the following lines: "But we're not star-crossed lovers! I say. Haymitch grabs my shoulder and pins me against the wall. Who cares? It's all a big show.



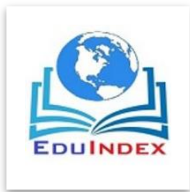
It's all how you're perceived. The most I could say about you after your interview was that you were nice enough, although that in itself was a small miracle. Now I can say you are a heartbreaker. Oh. Oh. Oh. How the boys back home fall longingly at your feet. Which do you think will get you more sponsors" (135)

The game is held in forested area. Every single incident is broadcasted in the television. The game maker change the rules of the game according to their own convince and audience's wish. Peeta joined the career district's contestants. At this point Katniss saw dead Rue who resembled her sister become more ferocious and decide to survive the game at least to take care of her family as well as Rue's family. The game makers announced about the new change in the game where two candidates from the same districts can win as victors.

Hearing this Katniss saves injured Peeta and the both have become closer in the cave. Finally Katniss and Peeta managed to kill the other tributes and wolf man creatures send by the gamers. They have won the game and again the gamers demanded for one victory were they decided attempt suicide. Finally, the dual victory was accepted. They both were asked to play the lovers role carefully by Haymitch to attract audience and the sponsors and they came back to their district and they were hooked up between their old identity as well as the new Katniss and Peeta as moulded by the game.

In this novel Suzanne Collins criticized the dystopian society, the emergency of pop culture. She further concentrated on the way how the entertainment exploits people and the traumatic condition faced by the participants.

Dystopia is a kind of society where everything is imperfect. In some of the works, the dystopian world brings out nightmarish image about the happenings of the society in the upcoming generation. The main characteristic feature of dystopian society is the oppression and rules put forth by the ruling class over the poor working class. They control the human mind. The authority exerts power over its subject in an unjust manner. Each and every country in the world is ruled by the government. The main role of the government is to take care of its citizens equally. It must provide peaceful environment for its subjects to live in but, most of the governments fail to fulfill its duties. The government is completely corrupt in this modern society. *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins brings out the similar kind of



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dystopian environment where the government is cruel and corrupt. The act of cruelty in the novel *The Hunger Games* is shown in the following lines: "Taking the kids from our districts, forcing them to kill one another while we watch – this is the Capitol's way of reminding us how totally we are at their mercy" (18)

Panem in *The Hunger Games* survives a great disaster and it is even more tarnished. The Capitol is the ruling authority which suppresses the other districts under it. There is a great chance of this dystopian society to undergo a change but it is very difficult. Panem is represented as dystopian society in the novel. The working districts are treated harshly by the Capitol and discriminated much by the Capitol. Capitol exerts power to control its subject. The cruelty of the Capitol is seen in the novel through the following lines: "What's and Avox? I ask stupidly someone who committed a crime. They cut her tongue so she can't speak, says Haymitch. She's probably a traitor of some sort. Not likely you'd know her. And even if you did you're not to speak to one of them unless it's to give an order, says Effie. Of course, you don't really know her". (78)

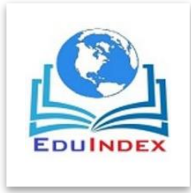
The deadly war is replaced by the deadly games. The remote districts keep the Capitol luxuries and rich by supplying abundance of goods. The people of the working districts have fixed thought that money makes differences between them and the Capitol. The hunger games are created by the Capitol to make its subject realize its power. There are no democratic rules followed by the government. The government manipulates even the thinking of the government. People of the working districts are very cautious about their words. Speaking negatively about their authority may lead them to a great disaster. This is clearly revealed through the statement of Katniss Everden in the following lines: "when I was younger, I scared my mother to death, the things I would blurt out about District 12, about the people who ruled our country, Panem from the far-off city called Capitol. Eventually I understood this would only lead us to more trouble. So I learned to hold my tongue and to change my features in to an indifferent mass so that no one could ever read my thoughts. Do my work quietly in school. Make only polite small talk in the public market. Discuss little more than trades in the Hob, which is the black market where I make most of my money. Even at home, where I am less pleasant, I avoid discussing tricky topics. Like the reaping, or food storages, or the hunger games". (6)



When Katniss was too young, she talks about the traumatic condition of the districts about the rule in their country. Slowly, she learned to hold her tongue by talking politely in the public. She avoids tricky topics too. This reveals readers that how the mind of public is tuned by the government where the fear for death. Individual ideas are never accepted. The government prevents the uprising of the common people. Literature is used as a medium for social criticism for centuries. Katniss *The Hunger Games* stands high in the minds of the reader her activities proved the novel as a real social criticism.

The country of the Panem is divided based on the class. The Capitol has sophisticated life whereas the people in the other working districts strive for a meal. They are the producers. But they are restricted to consume the products that they produce. The Capitol decides the consumers and it fixes everything. The producers from the districts are left unnoticed. The fight to survive and are forced to live under a controlled circumstances. Katniss is used as a symbol to induce fear among the people but later she rose up as a symbol of rebellion. She is put under varies trials right from her childhood. Being father less she takes up the responsibilities of leading her family. The difficulties she has undergone turned to make her the best survivor of the games. Poverty teaches her so much. The upper class has many advantages than the lower class. Different standards are set by the society by the different classes. Classism is interrelated with racism it refers to marginalization.

The excessive repression of the group of people results in protest. The Capitol suppressed the working class people violently to a great extent. Peeta and Katniss started a very small protest against the Capitol in the first part of the hunger game series. When one among them was to survive among the hunger games, they both tried to eat poisoned berries together leaving no winner for the Capitol. As a result, the Capitol announces both of them as winners to escape humiliation. This act of rebellion by Peeta and Katniss was watched by all the districts in the television. The rebellious attitude is brought out by the following lines: "I spread out my fingers, and the dark berries glisten in the sun. I gave Peeta's hand one last squeeze as a signal, as a good-bye, and we begin counting. One. May be I'm wrong. Two. May be they don't care if we both die. Three! It's too late to change my mind. I lift my hand to my mouth, to taking my last look at the world. The berries have just passed my lips when the trumpets began to blare". (344)



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Collins criticizes the society in all possible aspects where there is too much of discrepancies among the districts and the Capitol. She criticizes the current dystopian world and the events of the society that is going to lead us to horrific future as in the novel. The society we live in and the culture are interrelated. Culture is the tool for human survival that changes constantly. It depends on behavioral patterns. Therefore the Capitol is very aggressive and they lack humanity because of their excessive acquaintance with money and machine. The Capitol's culture was much destroyed by technology which is manifested through the live telecast of the violent hunger games in television. Further the novel aims at showing how media is used as an agent to control Panem's population.

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