



SOCIAL ISSUES RAISED IN THE WORKS OF ARUNDHATI ROY

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ABSTRACT

Arundhati Roy, a renowned Indian author and activist, is known for her compelling literary works that often delve into pressing social issues. This abstract focuses on conducting a comprehensive study of the social issues raised in Roy's literary works, with a particular emphasis on her novels, essays, and speeches. This paper begins by exploring the themes of inequality and social injustice that are recurrent in Roy's writings. It delves into her critiques of caste-based discrimination, class disparities, and the marginalization of vulnerable communities in India. This paper examines Roy's portrayal of gender issues and feminism in her works. It analyzes her depiction of strong female characters, as well as her exploration of patriarchy, gender roles, and women's agency. This paper also addresses Roy's activism and her engagement with environmental and indigenous rights issues. It explores her critique of corporate-driven development projects, displacement of indigenous communities, and the ecological consequences of unchecked industrialization. This paper investigates Roy's reflections on nationalism, communalism, and the impact of identity politics on social cohesion. It delves into her analysis of religious tensions, the rise of right-wing ideologies, and their implications for a pluralistic society. This paper highlights Roy's exploration of the complexities of globalization and its effects on local cultures, economies, and social structures. It delves into her examination of the consequences of neoliberal policies and the challenges faced by marginalized communities in the face of rapid economic changes. This abstract presents a comprehensive study of the diverse social issues raised in Arundhati Roy's literary works. By critically examining her writings, it sheds light on the intersectionality of social challenges and the need for meaningful engagement and activism to address them. Roy's works serve as a powerful medium to provoke dialogue and foster awareness about the pressing social issues of our time.

Keywords: Arundhati Roy, Social Issues, Inequality, Feminism, Environmental Activism, Nationalism, Globalization, Identity Politics.

INTRODUCTION

The Booker Prize has been awarded to Sujata Arundhati Roy, making her the first Indian woman to do so. She entered the world of literature at some point in. Her father worked as a



tea planter in Shilong, which is where she was born; however, she spent her early childhood in the hamlet of Ayemenem (Aymanam), which is located only a few kilometers from Kottayam in the central region of Kerala. This town is the focal point of the author's first book, which was awarded the Man Booker Prize and was titled "The God of Small Things." The life of Arundhati was fraught with adversity and anguish at every turn. Due to the fact that her father got a divorce from his wife a few years after by R. S. Sharma, Shashi Bala Talwar (1998) Arundhati's birth, the small girl and her mother were forced to relocate back to Ayemenem. Her mother, Mary Roy, was the first to break the norm when she wed a Bengali man and then divorced him. She also had a significant role in the development of history by advocating for the passage of the Christian Succession Act and even arguing her case before the Supreme Court. The favorable verdict gave her and her siblings each an equal part in the property that belonged to their father. Therefore, Arundhati was the result of a dysfunctional family environment. The traditional patriarchal clutches had a strong influence on the Ayemenem household. The men who lived there and were otherwise associated with the home had traditional worldviews.

This phenomena is shown in a strikingly beautiful way in the book by the character Ammu, who stands in for her mother, Mary, and who was forced to go through a lot of ordeals and struggles because of the oppressive patriarchal environment in which she lived. In Roy's work, we do not discover either dedication to the previous time or even amused recounting of the hardships of the middle class. Instead, Roy attempts by Indira Bhatt, Indira Nityanandam (1999) to write about the post-traditional viewpoint with fast-emerging realities of contemporary India, but we do not find either of these things. The English language has been stretched in every way as a result of Roy's work. The Booker committee has lauded her for the great linguistic ingenuity she demonstrates throughout her work. She is a writer who has provided the Indian writing in English with a new meaning thanks to her work. In addition to her book, she has published a large number of essays and articles on a variety of topics; nevertheless, one thing that connects all of her works is the fact that the issues that are brought up in each one are for the people of India, of the people of India, and to the people of India. The narrative, the plot, the theme, and the characters all unfold the web of Indian emotions, events, incidents, conflicts, psychological probing, societal laws, political perspectives, history, caste distinction, gender determination and manipulation of love laws (who should be loved and how and how much), suffering, and hypocrisy. The God of Small Things possesses instinctive qualities of the Indian ethos. In a nutshell, it is a three-dimensional picturization of Indian society, and Ms. Roy has the following to say about it: "By the means of her characters she has tried her best in bringing out the social conditions of man and woman of different strata and has aptly and beautifully portrayed class antagonism, class exploitation; exposure of the ostentation and hypocrisy, Marxism, patriarchal domination and callous police administration; the problem of love laws.



A personal tale steadily grows into a larger fight in which the people's identities for the sake of dominance and societal demand are engaged. This occurs because the author treats the issue as a three-sided affair in his or her presentation of the subject matter. The author uses the personal tale as a springboard to investigate the societal by K. V. Surendran. (2000) shift that has taken place in India in all of its many expressions. The practice of untouchability, which is common in India, is alluded to in a subtle way. It is important to highlight that the tabooed relationship of Ammu with Velutha, an untouchable, may not seem surprising to a westernized urban sensibility; but, a traditional caste mindset, especially in India, is likely to be outraged by such a breach. This is because caste is a social construct that is deeply ingrained in Indian society. Ammu defies the 'love rules' and begins an unlawful relationship with Velutha, an untouchable, who is also a victim of the system. He is a skilled artisan and mechanic, and it is possible that Mammachi hires him at her factory to do the duties of a carpenter because of his expertise in these areas. He stands for the concept of "The God of Small Things." However, the people who are working at the factory are not pleased to learn that Velutha is a carpenter. In addition to this, Velutha is shown engaging in political activities and waging battle in support of the Marxist cause. The twins have a great deal of affection for him and are really taken aback by the quality of his work. It would seem that by Continuum International Publishing Group, (2002) he is intended to be a model of the unapproachable nobleman. In her dream, Ammu imagines him to be "The God of Loss," yet the tragedy that befalls him comes as he yearns to experience the new world of wonder:

When Velutha finally glanced up, he saw things that he had never seen before in that split second. Things that had been off limits up until this point, hidden from view by the blinkers of history. Just the little stuff. As an example, he recognized by Carole Froude-Durix, Jean-Pierre Durix. (2002) that Rahel's mother was a female. That when she smiled, she revealed deep dimples on her cheeks. In addition to this, he realized that he was not necessarily the only one who gave presents. that she had presents for him to give as well.

we can see that Velutha, also known as "The God of Loss," does not take into account the social traditions and limits that exist, and as a result, he engages in confrontations with history and custom, where he has no chance of winning. On the other hand, Ammu, who irritates her family by isolating herself socially, is maltreated by the governing body of the family when her nocturnal rendezvous with Velutha is discovered and the drowning of Sophie Mol was wrongly associated with her extramarital affair and she is asked to leave the house. Sophie Mol's death was wrongly associated with her affair, and Ammu is maltreated as a result. Even within the Christian community in India, the effects of the caste system are still very much present. Joining the Anglican Church is one by Sarup & Sons, (2004) way for Christians in India to protect themselves from the plague of untouchability. It is possible that the fact that they are promised to be provided food and money is the reason why others refer to them as "Rice Christians." However, as time goes on, they come to the realization that they



have leapt from one bad situation into an even worse one: "After Independence, they found no reservation or bank loans at low interest rates, because officially they are Christian and therefore casteless."3 In one of the interviews she's given, Arundhati Roy has said the following:

For as long as I can remember, reading fiction has been a method for me to attempt to make sense of the world as I have experienced it; this book is very near by. It is situated in the town where I spent much of my childhood in. If I were to express it in the simplest terms possible, it would be about trying to find connections between the tiniest of things and the largest of things and figuring out how they all fit together.

The conflict between 'The Big Man,' who represents the trees, and 'The Small Man,' who represents the shrubs, is thus the primary focus of *The God of Small Things*. In other words, the novel demonstrates a disconnect between 'The God of Big Things' (Pappachi, Baby Kochamma, Mammachi, Chacko, Comrade Pillai, and Inspector Thomas Methew) and 'The God of Small Things' (Ammu, Velutha, Rahela, and Estha Sophie Mol). It is important by Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, (2005) to keep in mind that the terms "tree" and "shrubs" are quite suggestive in this context. The shrubs and the trees each make a contribution to the natural environment. The trees are adequately cared after and get enough nourishment. The trees, on the other hand, need slightly more care to develop, and in addition, they can only grow in certain climates. Although they are able to boldly confront strong rains, the benefit of shrubs is that they grow readily and do not require a great deal of attention. Therefore, the author has been effective in their attempt to awaken our feeling of compassion and catharsis for the bushes via the employment of this exquisite metaphor. The story launches a blistering assault on the patriarchal idea of touchable society, as well as the upper caste Hindus and their deceit, ostentation, and violence.

It provides an accurate portrayal of dalit and abandoned people, as well as their ceaseless struggles to find an identity in a world that is both harsh and merciless. By using her work, Roy demonstrates yet another distinction between people living in Indian society: the difference between a man and a woman. This is the distinction she makes between the sexes. She had shown how women are subjugated by the males in their lives, even inside their own families. Through the narrative of Ammu, she shows by Alex Tickell. Published by Routledge, (2007) how the social position of an Indian woman is a roller coaster ride that is full of many ups and downs, as well as ifs and buts. A lady like Ammu, who only wants to be happy, doesn't have many options available to her in this life. The narrator paints a vivid picture of the protagonist's life from infancy to youth, through the experience of marriage, to a mother who is empathetic and caring, to a rebel wife who questions the time-honored hypocrisy of a patriarchal family's moral stance. The events that take place in the book are not all that unlike from the current situation that exists in India. Even in modern times, many



parents in some regions of India continue the age-old practice of praying to god for a son rather than a daughter. If a girl is born into the family, they fear that she will bring bad luck to the household and will behave cruelly and inhumanely toward her. They have no choice but to submit their lives to the dictates of a man. It might be their father, brother, or spouse, but it couldn't be somebody of their own choosing. If the lady rebels, her destiny will be identical to that of Ammu, the main character in Roy's story. The state of a woman is well described by lines written by Shashi Deshpande, which Arundhati Roy also conveys to the people who read her work:

When I was a kid, they always taught me that I had to be obedient and not question anything. They always taught me that since I was a female, I had to be mild-mannered and obedient. Why? I inquired, and they said that since you are a female, you are expected to take everything, even loss with grace. This is because you are a girl. They said that it was the only way for a woman to stay alive in this world.

In this way, the work allegorically paints a thorough picture of life and society within the context of its cultural pattern. It demonstrates the breaking of rules in the realms of tiny things, which makes the lives of the shrubs a living hell and causes them to commit more sins than they are punished for. It appears that the author has given Caste and The God of Small Things Emory University her facet support to Shrub's struggle against what Leela Dubey holds the view that "superior seed can fall on an inferior field but an inferior seed cannot fall on a superior field." The novelist has courageously exposed the dark side of the patriarchal domination of a traditional society, and it appears that she has given her facet support to Shrub's struggle.⁶ When Arundhati Roy recounts how the characters in her book attempt to acquire the language and send their children to excellent English universities in Chennai, she is also pointing out the Indian affinity towards the English culture, language, and people. This is something that Arundhati Roy does in her work.

They are, in this regard, the live evidence of the accomplishment of Macaulay's purpose with regard to the advancement of civilisation. Further Chacko, who not too long ago just managed to pass his test at Balliol College of Oxford, is celebrated by his family members because he has succeeded in marrying Margaret, an English lady. Despite the fact that his marriage was failed and the girl has abandoned him, his family members laud him for this accomplishment. In addition to her book, Arundhati Roy is the author of a large number of articles and essays on subjects such as militarism, ecology, and activism. These articles and essays have been published in a variety of media all over the globe. Her writings, the topics she writes about, the characters she creates, and most importantly, the modifications she makes to the English language, all unmistakably The God of Small Things reflect her heritage as an Indian woman. Ms. Roy investigates the power dynamics of literary politics as well as the human and environmental costs associated with the process of development. Roy



questions the notion that only an expert is qualified to comment on matters such as the privatization of India's electricity supply by Enron and the building of massive dams in India, which displaces millions of people. Both of these issues have been brought to public attention in recent years. She has been subjected to a number of legal issues as a consequence of her outspoken advocacy and criticism of the administration. Even Roy's non-fictional works are heavily influenced by the socio-political climate of India at the time they were written. In her works, she has shed light on contemporary issues facing India, such as those discussed in "War in Peace." She has expressed her concerns about the growth of terrorism across India and has made a plea to the political parties to avoid providing support to terrorists using the following phrases:

OBJECTIVE

1. The Study Social Issues Raised in The Works of Arundhati Roy.
2. The Study Arundhati Roy Is Not Just a Writer but Also An Activist.

Social Stratification:

The author cleverly fabricates an ancient system by infusing it with subjective experiences, which is the societal organization of human beings into classes. This arrangement is an archaic mechanism. Despite the fact that democratic India enshrined the fundamental ideas of 'Liberty,' 'Equality,' and 'Justice' for all citizens' regardless of the class, creed, color, sex...', the four-class structure is still in place. It would seem that Roy is taking a critical stance against the sociopolitical architecture that is currently in place. She expresses her surprise and the total sensitive state as well as the recent change in politics, which fails to stop the horrific confrontations between the classes, in order to gain maximum personal advantages. She also expresses her frustration with the recent movement in politics. The load of the Chatur Varna Pyramid is still being carried by the Indian community, and it has been doing so for centuries. Roy is of the opinion that protected discrimination is an extra kind of reservation, which makes the situation even more dire. There is a certain Ampuja, Marko (2012) degree of accuracy in uncovering this setting and then inventing it based on the presence and continued existence of the people in the book. Velutha transforms into Roy's spectrometer as a result of this procedure. Throughout the whole of the book, Velutha is the target of the standard derision of the individuals in higher castes.

The employees at the workplace who were considered touchable were of the opinion that an untouchable could not work as a carpenter and must be isolated. To make matters even worse, Mathew, the defender of justice, shakes hands with Comrade Pillai, who seems to be the "crusader of the oppressed," but who is in favor of the fake FIR filed by Baby Kochamma. This only serves to make the situation even more frustrating. Pillai deftly



sidesteps the issue by omitting to indicate that Velutha is a member of the Communist Party and is overheard having a conversation with Chacko, the proprietor of Paradise Pickles, in an effort to "send him off." Velutha's apparent 'touchableness' was not only frightening but also jealous; "But see, Comrade, any benefits that you give him, naturally other people are resenting it." They see it as a kind of favoritism. In the end, it doesn't matter what trade he works in; whether he's a carpenter, an electrician, or something else entirely, to them he's simply a Paravan. They are born with the disorder already present in their bodies." The situation of these Paravans was so dire that even converting to a different religion Conner, Tom, and Ikuko Torimoto (2004). was unable to improve their standing in society. As a result of the British colonization, many Paravans, Pulayas, and Pelayas, including Velutha's father, converted to Christianity and affiliated themselves with the Anglican Church in order to free themselves from the stigma of being untouchable; "As an extra incentive, they were given a little food and money. They were often referred to as the Rice Christians. Unfortunatously, this was not a life-enhancing experience; rather, it was a direct transition from the stovetop to the oven. They were given access to separate churches, pastors, and services that were held in those churches. After the Declaration of Independence, when they were recorded as Christians, they were excluded from receiving any benefits, employment, or loans from the government. This caused them to enter a parallel reality. They were not classified as members of "Low castes," but rather as "Casteless."

Politics and Power

It is important to bear testimony to the sociopolitical upheavals that have occurred throughout the postmodern period, as well as the current shift in the proportions of these changes. The treatment of contentious and sensitive topics is wreaking havoc on morality. The author of the work truly focuses on the function that power plays in society. Power almost always has the tendency to victimize and further impoverish those who are depressed. She demonstrates with diligence the existence of a connection between party politics and administration, in this Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. (2018). case between Pillai and the local police. Furthermore, the conversion to Christianity is humorous because to the persistent prejudice that exists between "original Syrian Christians" and those who were once considered untouchables but later converted to Christianity. Pillai, who utilizes Marxism as a subjective tool, is the vehicle through which Roy demonstrates her resistance to exposing a different facet of politics. Pillai lacks concern and attention for the people that work for his party. The character of Comrade Pillai is essentially a parody of a politician, and he exemplifies all of the dishonest and disagreeable practices that are common in politics. Pillai raises his own status at the expense of his employees, and then, as soon as he thinks it's required, he casts them off as his responsibility.



The weaving of the story and the selection of targets to demonstrate local power are both significantly impacted by politics. Not to be outdone by religion, politics also plays an ironic role in today's world. Pillai is a member of a party that fights for the rights and dignity of workers, as well as the workers' interests, and Pillai is a member of such party. To secure his own personal interests, Pillai acts in a way that undermines the beliefs of the party as well as the workers. Pillai's leadership is based on Frey, James W. (2019) chanting anti-caste chants and organizing demonstrations in an effort to do away with inequalities. The cunning politician uses his cunning against Velutha and Chacko to secure an easy victory against Paradise Pickles and Preserves; "-did Comrade Pillai realize that what he actually needed was the process of war more than the end of triumph? War had the potential to be the steed that carried him a portion of the way, if not the whole of the way, to the Legislative Assembly; yet, victory did not leave him in a better position than when he had begun. Pillai leaves no opportunity unexplored in his pursuit to establish himself in the realm of politics. Pillai was an oil smearer and a lecherous guy who went to the level of calling his kid Lenin in order to showcase his communism.

CONCLUSION

We have spoken about Indian topics, people, and scenarios, among other things. Regarding which Roy had stated, in addition, there is an Indian flavor to the manner that she writes, and we notice this. Therefore, we might argue that Arundhati Roy writes in the ink of her Indian heritage. Although, in her writings she has covered a wide variety of topics such as the American-Afghan war, the loneliness of Noam Chomsky, and the life work of Nelson Mandela, but primarily, she is an Indian writer, writing for and about the Indian problems, culture, society, climate, emotions, and its relation with the world. Her writings have been published in India, the United States of America, and other countries. Not only has Ms. Roy depicted the most important aspects of the social, political, and cultural life of the Indians via her works, but her works also validate the saying, "The place where you born lives in you."

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