
BRODERLANDS OF SOCIETY AND POLITICS IN THE NOVEL THE MINISTRY OF UTMOST OF HAPPINES BY ARUNDHATI ROYS

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ABSTRACT

The current study explores the complicated portrayal of broderlands of society and politics conditions in post-partition India and the contested region of Kashmir in Arundhati Roy's novel. The analysis extends to the thematic exploration and representation of transgender identity within the complex Indian society and politics. The present study aims to answer two key questions: How does Arundhati Roy depict the socio-political conditions in post-partition India and Kashmir? What is the significance and impact of the representation of transgender identity in Indian society and politics within the novel? Employing a qualitative methodology, the study draws on expository, evaluative, and systematic approaches, utilizing both primary sources from the novel and secondary sources from scholarly articles. The theoretical framework is rooted in queer theory, emphasizing the uncertainty of identity categories and challenging binary distinctions, providing a comprehensive understanding of the socio-political landscape and transgender experiences in "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness."

Key Words: Arundhati Roy, post-partition India, Kashmir conflict, transgender identity, queer theory

Introduction

The concept of borders has a multifaceted importance in Roy's art. There are real physical boundaries that mirror the geographical variety of India (Abbas, & Jabeen, 2023). The tale travels around the nation, delving into its many landscapes and multicultural societies. Concurrently, Roy adeptly presents metaphorical borders - areas where people confront the intricacies of their identities and society norms. Arundhati Roy's book, 'The Ministry of Utmost Happiness,' delves into a riveting examination of the complex boundaries that exist between society and politics. Roy skillfully constructs a complex web of stories, captivating readers by blurring and intertwining the boundaries between personal and political, as well as individual and social experiences (Ahmad, 2019a). This introduction aims to explore the core of the work, providing insight into the deep topics of social structures, political environments, and the many identities that enrich Roy's story. Roy's portrayal of physical boundaries prompts readers to reflect on the consequences of geopolitical partitions, particularly the India-Pakistan border. The

inclusion of real-world events and political conflicts offers additional depth, encouraging readers to actively explore the subtle interplay between political forces and the characters' lives.

The novel 'The Ministry of Utmost Happiness' functions as a reflective medium that accurately portrays the political atmosphere of India. Roy's story is set against the context of significant historical events, political movements, and social disruptions (Ahmad, 2019b). The book serves as a medium for the author to depict the political conflicts that have influenced the formation of the country in a vibrant manner. Roy's technique of interweaving the intimate histories of her characters with larger political themes pushes readers to analyse the connection between human lives and the chaotic forces of national politics. Roy's examination of social frameworks is intricately connected to the encounters of marginalised persons. The plot revolves on characters who are marginalised in society, either because of their caste, gender, or other reasons. Ahmad, Ahmad, & Masood, (2020) investigated that Roy's narratives challenge established conventions and illuminate the systematic marginalisation experienced by certain social groupings. The book serves as a medium for interrogating entrenched power hierarchies and promoting the cause of social equity.

Roy's narrative is characterised by a significant presence of diverse identities. The characters in 'The Ministry of Utmost Happiness' embody a diverse range of identities, including various genders, sexual orientations, and religious and caste origins. Roy adeptly examines the points at which various identities overlap, highlighting the intricate and changeable nature of the human experience. The work serves as an homage to variety, questioning preconceived ideas and promoting a more profound understanding of the complexities of identity within the Indian environment.

According to Anjum, Jahangir, Alvi, Ramzan, & Watto, (2023) expressed that the story contains a detailed examination of activism and resistance. Players assume the role of activists, actively confronting oppressive institutions and calling for transformative change. Roy exhibits a diverse array of activity, including both grassroots groups and individual acts of rebellion. The tale invites readers to contemplate the effectiveness and constraints of action when confronted with deeply rooted power systems.

The narrative style used by Roy, known for its lyrical language and complex storytelling, significantly influences the reader's involvement with the marginalised areas of society and politics. The use of a non-linear narrative style enables a comprehensive comprehension of the characters and their travels, reflecting the intricacy of the real-world situations explored in the work. The juxtaposition of individual and governmental accounts forms a complex fabric that engrosses readers and encourages their active involvement in the examination of border regions (Ahmad, Ahmad, & Masood, 2020).

The novel 'The Ministry of Utmost Happiness' is firmly grounded in the particular socio-political circumstances of India. However, it also reflects and connects with broader international dialogues about border regions, political affairs, and social interactions. Roy's tale transcends regional limitations, presenting global themes that resonate with the human condition. This study aims to contextualise Roy's book within a wider framework and examine its global significance, extending its importance beyond the Indian subcontinent. Arundhati Roy's novel 'The Ministry of Utmost Happiness' is a remarkable work of literature that encourages readers to explore the complex intersections of society and politics (Assumi, 2018).. This study endeavours to analyse the intricate elements inherent in Roy's narrative by exploring the novel's depiction of physical and metaphorical boundaries, political environments, social frameworks, varied identities,

activism, and resistance. During this journey, we will examine the diverse range of people and tales in a work that not only portrays India but also provides deep insights into the human condition. In this exploration, we will reveal the intricate depths of meaning and profound relevance that make 'The Ministry of Utmost Happiness' a captivating and intellectually stimulating piece of literature (Azhar, 2015). This research work explores social and political transgender realities and expounds the idea that it is not only the individuals who are destined to be transgender and are considered abnormal but the society and the politics of this land have also become the monuments of transgender existence. Society and politics are transgendered in the sense that they are not practicing their real tendencies but are exploiting the rights of everyone.

Society has been spoiled in almost every perspective and demolishes the rights of everyone (Batra, 2017). This same society does not accept transgender and kicks them out from its premises. Moreover, this society that rejects these transgender is also practicing abnormalities all the time. In this society, there are broken relations, miseries, deceits, injustices, deforestation, environmental decay, violation, exploitation, rapes, murders, intolerance and bloodshed all around. And in this way, the normal beings of the society having binaries of genders are themselves involved in all of these vices (Bhusal, 2022). On the other hand, Indian politics is wholly involved in utmost corruption and it is not doing its job truthfully by exploiting the rights of the common man and in this way is labeled as real example of abnormality as that of transgender reality. Therefore, the research study aims to explore characters' crippled personalities in the world of fixed categories of male and female. It also intends to investigate that how do transgender behaviors reflect in social and political set ups as well.

This study will adopt queer theory to explore and understand the dilemma of transgendered individuals as well as transgendered society and politics and to explore that how does gender act as performative construction of society and politics. Queer theory negates the idea of the two rigid binaries of male and female gender. According to Queer theorists gender is constructed by this society. Gender is what one performs in the society with its regular and successive practices. Through the lens of this theory, it is considered that gender is not expressive but performative. Queer theory questions that reality which is defined by the society. It examines socio-cultural constraints of gender and how the oppressed ones are being marginalized by this suppression of gender and power (Piantato 6, 7, 10).

Hence, this research study explores that in India and Kashmir people are both socially and politically transgendered as they fall away from their natural attitudes and indulge in unnatural and abnormal social and political activities (Bilyk, & Gerner, 2020). In these lands, there are not only hijras which are labeled as transgender but the so-called society having stable binaries of gender is also considered as transgender due to its abnormalities. Moreover, the prevailing politics in this country is also playing its tactics and fallacies, is not behaving in normal and natural ways as all the politicians are only making their own benefits leaving behind the common man in all perspectives. In such time of political decay, only the common man is suffering and in this society everyone needs to be consoled due to his miserable conditions and circumstances (Binny, 2017).

Tillomata also faces humiliation and suffers from mental torture as Tilo marries to Musa, a militant in Kashmir. Due to her lover Musa, she observes political insurgency in this disputed land and sees that how Indian government converts Kashmir into the ministry of miseries and sorrows. In Kashmir every person has two stories of his life contradicting with each other. One which is shown to the world and the other which is not allowed to reveal. Others characters Arifa

and Miss Jabeen are also murdered during the violence in Kashmir (Brijnath, 2013). Through the cast of numerous characters, Roy criticizes all of these injustices and protests against the fraud political schemes of government which force innocent people to sacrifice their lives. In a book review, the critic Javeed Ahmad mentions “It is a story about our contemporary world delivered through the microcosm of individuals living through the never ending and harrowing conflict in Kashmir and the marginalized communities in Delhi” (Raina 46).

Roy also stands and fights for the rights of transgender. The protagonist Anjum becomes a monument of strength, power and tolerance (Butalia, 1997). She remains as firm as a tree and in all her life and faces challenges of the real world due her reality of being a transgender. With her strength and firmness in her character she transforms the bleakness of graveyard into the peace of heaven not only for herself but for everyone who come here. She welcomes every broken creature in Jannat Guest House and gives them shelter from the shackles of the real world outside. In this way, Roy completely disagrees with this credence of the world that hijras are unacceptable and unable to be the part of this world (Butler, 1988).

Roy, through the underestimated character of a transgender exposes the realities of the so-called homophobic society and its politics. In *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) Roy stands with them and tries to console them through her mastery of using words. Apart of being a social reformer, she is also a political activist who questions the prevailing political conditions in the country (Calafell, & Nakayama, 2016). She mainly focuses on the Indian politics playing its traumatic role in Kashmir and the issue over the land of Kashmir remains unresolved. As the statement of this dissertation is “Social and Political Borderlands”, this research study aims to explore the dilemma of being transgender into the homophobic set up of the society where third gender is associated with a bizarre sense of otherness and is not socially accepted and how this physical transgender identity enlarges so much that it spreads out into the borderlands of society and politics in India (Canon, 1999).

The book "*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*" by Arundhati Roy explores the complex intersections of society and politics, offering a diverse range of stories that interweave personal experiences with larger political contexts. Nevertheless, the intricacy of the narrative presents opportunities for academic investigation. The study inquiry focuses on comprehending Roy's strategic selection of routes across the borders and the consequential impact of this navigation on both the characters inside the book and the readers. Furthermore, it is necessary to examine the wider socioeconomic and political backdrop of India as portrayed in the work, taking into account the socio-political transformations and difficulties experienced by the protagonists.

Research Objectives

To analyze the portrayal of metaphorical borderlands in "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" and their significance in the narrative. How does Arundhati Roy portray borders in "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness," and what is the symbolic significance of these borders in the narrative?

Literature Review

Literature review presents a benchmark for examining the canvas of various critical views constituted by eminent critics with respect to skillful writing powers of Arundhati Roy for she strongly holds a remarkable position among all the celebrated and competent writers of India (Davis, & Booker, 2018). She is labeled with various epithets by different critics such as MK Raghavendra in his review pronounces her as ‘political essayist’ and ‘a radical polemicist’

(Rahavendra). Dr. Binny in his article calls her ‘human rights campaigner’ (Dr. Mathew1). Manoj certifies Roy as “public intellectual and political philosopher of contemporary India” (Sreenivasan 111). Dr. Syed and Ms. Shaista compliment her with these different titles “a feminist, a literary activist and an ardent environmentalist” (Dr. Wahaj and Taskeen 256). In an article ‘Arundhati Roy and New Inscription on Autumn Leaves’ Nazia calls her “as a subconscious historian, a meticulous diarist, a journalist, a nature lover, an eco-feminist”, and an “environmentalist” (Hasaan 76).

According to Devers, (1999) pointed out that Arundhati Roy takes up revolutionist and vibrant issues which are not only Indian but they also acknowledge international affairs. Arundhati Roy’s works mainly focus upon the deteriorating and decaying issues of the country. She aims to challenge and reform these crumbled political situations in India through her art of writing. Her fictional and non-fictional works are criticized and praised on equal grounds by different editors and critics Dr. Binny comments her works in these words “Her writings can never be apolitical, and it truly makes the readers pained and provoked” (Dr. Mathew 2).

Felicelli, (2017) examined that a large number of pieces of criticism are also cultivated by different literary giants about Arundhati Roy’s second novel ‘*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*’ (2017). Here, some important literary fragments are imparted in order to substantiate the plight of Roy’s writing career. In an article ‘Historicizing Fiction: Critiquing Contemporary India in Arundhati Roy’s *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*’, the author Manoj asserts that Roy, in her second novel criticizes India for its political history by flashing light upon last few decades until now. She reinvents Indian political history from the mouthpiece of the oppressed ones. She portrays Indian democracy which has lost its real essence and according to her the true image of India has been politicized and it is completely opposite to its official one (Zahid, & Ahmed, 2022). According to him, Roy blends history with fiction in order to show the true colors of Indian Nationalism and its political turmoil. He concedes that “The fictional space of “*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*” transforms memory and personal histories to a critique of the obscured and repressed aspects of contemporary India, historicizing the novel, and presenting an egalitarian and anti-authoritative ideology” (Zafar & Inayat, 2014).

Apart from socio-political concerns, in her second novel, Roy also deeply acknowledges the never ending miseries and struggles on the part of Trans genders . She speaks loud for their possible spaces in the society of normal human beings having strict gender binaries of male and female as the bitter truth of their existence forcibly push them towards alienation. Roy talks and fights for their rights through her artistic skills of writing and drives the readers’ attention towards this sensitive and neglected issue of Indian society (Gedro, & Mizzi, 2014). In an article ““Transgender Marginalization and Exclusion””: A study of Arundhati Roy’s *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*’ Javeed Ahmad observes and evaluates ‘social exclusion’(Raina 829) and dehumanization of trans gender in the society in relation to different transgender characters of the novel such as Anjum, Kulsoom Bi, Bismillah, Bulbul, Razia and Nimmo (George, 2022,). He identifies that as these Trans genders do not get fit in the boundaries of male and female, they are shunned by the conventional status of the society and are victimized by identity crisis throughout their lives and are considered as ‘other’. These creatures are degraded in almost all aspects of life and they are “forced by the hostile world to surrender all the dreams and live a life of seclusion” (Raina 833). In the novel, all such characters are torn between two worlds and they do not dream of having any sort of happiness in their isolated and segregated world (Suleman, & Rehman,

2020). The author keenly discusses this notion of transgender marginalization and concludes “As a whole, the novel is a depiction of the constant belief towards self-assertion that this world could become really a Khwabgah, accepting all people from different shades and shapes of life” (Raina 837) (Ghosh, 2017).

In a research paper “Where Margins Intersect: A Study of Arundhati Roy’s *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*”, both the respective critics particularly deal with the dehumanizing prospect of marginalization with respect to Roy’s second novel. Arundhati Roy never hesitates in showing the bitter truths and shameful ground realities of Indian society and Indian politics including its fraud practicing democracy and marginalization of weaker ones. She lays bare facts of Indian society and politics without any biases (Smith, & Nizza, 2022). “Her version of reality is neither sugar-coated nor camouflaged by the power dynamics in India. Her writings are thoughtful, independent, factual, unbending and often uncensored” (Mohsin and Taskeen 258).

The writers of this paper scrutinize that how Roy deals with the emergence of marginalization and its aftermath consequences on those who are on grim margins of the society. Moreover, they argue that Roy also struggles to make connection among all of these segregated marginalized groups in order to compensate and reshape the spoiled structure of Indian society and politics (Jamil, 2023). And in this way, she possibly tries to make Indian land a ministry of utmost happiness among all the conditions of uncertainty and utter disappointment. They report “There is a reconfiguration of margins in the novel as they intersect with each other. In this fictional work of Roy the margins are not used to divide people but, on the contrary, they are employed to cement the bonds of solidarity” (Kiran, & Taj, 2022).

According to Kumar, (2023), explored that Arundhati Roy being a political activist portrays the fate of characters in such a manner that it collides with the politics of the country. The ‘personal fate’ of these characters is interlinked with the political world outside which traumatically influences the lives of these characters in one way or the other. Roy largely focuses upon the small minorities and different ethnic groups of people in the country which are badly affected by Indian Nationalism (Maseed, 2023). The political figures of the country victimize these small communities in order to fulfill their flawed purposes and to maintain their power. In the novel, Roy gives voice to all such neglected groups of people through the portrayal of different subjugated characters. Julia defends this notion in these words: “*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* focuses on the point of view of the subaltern, the marginalized, and on the transgressability of borders dividing communities, revealing the same strong anti-elitist, anti-establishment and anti-neocolonialist attitude as in her non-fictional works” Minhas & Anwar, 2022).

Research Methodology

This research is consisted of qualitative research methodology that is expository, evaluative and systematic. Qualitative approach is utilized for the purpose of analyzing certain information. It comprises of using and deciphering primary and secondary sources. In this type of research methodology primary source incorporates information taken from passages in the main text while secondary sources incorporate different scholarly articles and critical research papers (Mirza, 2023a). This research work examines the analysis of the second anecdotal novel composed by Arundhati Roy. The novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) unravels socio-political conditions in India after the separation of India and Pakistan in 1947. This novel additionally unmask the political disturbances in the contested place that is known for Kashmir.

This research study fundamentally assesses the issue of being transgender in the Indian culture as it principally centers upon the transgendered society and legislative issues of the transgender political set ups (Mirza, 2023b). This study is intended to elucidate the concept of transgender cultivated on the borderlands of society and politics with reference to the role of physical transgender encapsulation in the light of queer theory. Primary source alludes to the novel under study i.e., *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) and secondary sources involve different works composed by the writer and analysis given by different critics on Roy's works. This study will be partitioned into four chapters in totality (Moser, & Korstjens, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988), In examining the borderlands of society and politics in Arundhati Roy's novel "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness," the theoretical framework draws upon the insights of postcolonial feminism, as articulated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her seminal work "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988). This theoretical lens provides a perspective on the intersections of gender, power, and identity within the context of postcolonial societies (Murnen & Smolak, 2000). Spivak's concept of the "subaltern" refers to marginalized and silenced voices in society, often excluded from mainstream discourse. In the novel, this theory aids in analyzing how characters on the fringes of society navigate and resist oppressive structures. Postcolonial feminism emphasizes the intersectionality of identities, acknowledging the complex interplay of factors such as gender, class, caste, and ethnicity. This concept allows for a comprehensive exploration of the diverse identities depicted in the novel. Spivak's work delves into the lasting effects of colonialism, providing a lens to understand how historical power dynamics continue to shape the political and social landscapes presented in the narrative.

Application to the Novel:

By employing the postcolonial feminist framework, this research aims to illuminate how the characters in "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" negotiate their identities in the face of societal expectations and political challenges. The theory allows for a critical analysis of how gender, in conjunction with other intersecting factors, influences the characters' agency and positions within the broader socio-political context (Rajasinghe, 2020).. Additionally, Spivak's exploration of the subaltern provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the voices that are often silenced or overlooked in the novel. This framework facilitates an examination of how the narrative engages with the experiences of those on the margins, contributing to a deeper understanding of the novel's socio-political commentary. The postcolonial feminist theory by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak serves as a valuable theoretical framework for unraveling the complexities of societal and political borderlands within "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness."

Data Analysis

“The clear criterion was that Jannat funeral Services would only bury those whom the graveyards and imams of the Dunya has rejected (Roy 80)”.

Anjum deconstructs the standards of discrimination among the categories of human genders and she only permits the rejected ones either of her own community or of the real world. Through the character of Saddam Hussain, Arundhati Roy throws light on different social transgender roles. One of the Saddam's jobs was handling up the cadavers under the supervision of all the Hindus doctors. These doctors, whose duties include to conduct post-mortems and to handle the

cadavers, never performed their duties as they considered it disrespectful for themselves to touch the dead bodies and they assigned these duties to the caste of sweepers known as Chamars and also called as Untouchables by the upper caste. The caste system prevails overall the whole society. Upper castes look down upon the lower castes. The doctors are not fulfilling their duties and exploiting the rights of the weaker ones.

“all things, not just living things but all things-carpets, clothes, books, pens, musical instruments-had a gender. Everything was either masculine or feminine, man or woman. Everything except her baby” (Roy 8).

She becomes terrified of her baby’s existence. Suddenly the world becomes changed and unusual for her. She finds her way to different shrines of Sufi people in order to release her pain. She visits the shrine of Hazrat Sarmad Shaheed and prays to have enough courage to love her child. Both parents of Aftab try so many things to make their child a complete human being either male or female but having proper sex organs. They consult different doctors. Then they also consult surgeon to cure her female part. He prescribes Aftab different medicines but along with that he also suggests to them that hijra tendencies in Aftab cannot be healed. For tendencies he uses the word fitrat. Father of Aftab then tries to change his tendencies by telling different stories of courageous and brave warriors in order to wake up masculine tendencies in him. But in all stories nothing attracts him except the female part and he wants to be like beautiful Borte Khatun.

“He entered that ordinary, broken-down home as though he were walking through the gates of Paradise” (Roy 20).

The name of the haveli ‘Khwabgah’ indicates that it is a particular place where people can have dreams. In Khwabgah there are not only those people who are physically transgender but also people having transgender souls, behaviors and inclinations which are the ultimate consequences of social transgender realities. It highlights this aspect of the society it is not only the people who are transgender; it is the society also whose existence has been transformed into the realms of transgender entity. There are a number of elements which reflect social transgender representations.

“There was no reason to be ashamed of anything...because Hijras were chosen people, beloved of the Almighty.” (Roy 27)

Transgender (hijras) visit different doctors to be cured. These doctors also show transgender conduct in their dealings with the hijras and exploit their reality of existence. They are only making their money by imparting the impossible hopes in them. In the novel, eventually both the surgeries result into failure and for thirty years or more Anjum resides in Khwabgah “with her patched together body. Through the portrayal character of Anjum, Arundhati Roy depicts that the transgender reality of a single person i.e.in Aftab wide spreads throughout the whole society in different dimensions. The society is also transgender and leads towards abnormality. It is the

society which mistreats him in a very cruel way. Personal identity of transgender looms so largely in the entire society. All the normal people of normal society do not have enough potential to consider transgender even a living creature. Such creatures remain deprived of love and affection throughout their lives as their own parents and families abandon them.

“it’s safer like this... ‘Gujarat could come to Delhi any day. We’ll call him Mahdi” (Roy 48)

Anjum is threatened by all the cruelties happened in Gujarat. The brutal murdering of Muslims by Hindus has affected her the most. Anjum tries to run away from her memory and from herself and she decides to leave ‘Khwabgah’ and help the poor. When they share this idea with Dr. Bhagat, Mehar giggles and makes fun of it by saying ““Arre, Doctor Sahib, which poor would want to be helped by us?””(Roy 65)

Anjum has fully transformed now. She even though has left Zainab, left her accessories, burnt prescriptions of doctors and she is less respondent to everything. She faces utmost humiliation being a hijra but she luckily remains safe due to her identity as they say to each other “Don’t kill her, brother killing Hijras brings bad luck” (Roy 60) and they become scared of getting bad luck.

“Bullets you sow instead of love/Our homeland you wash with blood/You imagine you’re showing the way/But I believe you’ve gone astray” (Roy 221).

Arundhati Roy is an internationally acclaimed social as well as political activist who is fully engaged and concerned with all sorts of injustices both in the borderlands of society and politics. In her second novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) she raises her voice against different issues including dispossession, marginalization, oppression, prejudices, enslavement, mounting poverty and brutality. Through the cluster of different characters, Roy seems to exhibit her engagement with the prevailing fragilities of Indian politics both in India and Kashmir. She speaks about minorities, of the subjugated, dismissed and the subalterns. She sheds light on those political fragments which are unrevealed. She articulates the history of post-colonial Indian nation from the vision of the marginalized ones. She keenly observes and takes pain to pen down the happenings and hardships into the arena of contemporary politics in India and Kashmir.

“if they were recognizably Muslims they were buried in unmarked graves that disappeared over time and contribute to the richness of the soil...” (Roy 58).

It is the time of re-electing Gujarat ka Lalla and there are a number of political upheavals all around. Every single thing or reality has been politicized now and there is no truth at all. The authorized people in India are manipulating the facts and spreading hatred in Indian nation against Muslim men and women in order to hide the realities behind it. They are instigating them to kill Muslims wherever they are found in India. They have captured the minds of Indian youth and are using them for their own political purposes. “In a country ruled by Hindu nationalists, says Roy, “it’s safer to be a cow than a woman or Muslim”” (qtd. in Davis). Everywhere, the government is making unutilized schemes and giving people a light of hope for their better

future ahead. They are making so many agreements and promises with their nation as the previous governments used to make before getting elected but all is merely fakery and nothing else. When they come into power they forget all these promises in the intoxication of their power and neglect their nation violating their rights.

“a bit like a boiled egg: its humdrum surface conceals at its heart a yolk of egregious violence” (Roy 150).

Aftermath of partition between two nuclear states of Pakistan and India, Kashmir’s conflict was aroused and still it exists without any possible ending. Since partition both countries are quarreling over the land of Kashmir. Roy encapsulates the fragments of fraud Indian politics in Kashmir and its practicing democracy from the perspective of subaltern. Both the countries claiming to possess Kashmir and in this struggle, the innocent Kashmiris are being pitilessly victimized. In *The Story of Kashmir*, Tariq Ali portraying the reality of Kashmir reports that “Only graveyard breezes blow in the valley of Kashmir. Murder tours the region in different guises, garbed sometimes in the uniform of Indian army or in the bearded men, armed and infiltrated by Pakistan, speaking the language of jihad-Allah...” (Ali 12). He further elaborates the conditions of these Kashmiris in these words: “Depressed and exhausted by the decades of violence, many Kashmiris have become passive: the beauties of spring and summer pass unnoticed by listless eyes (12).

“three variables in their cases are Death, Disappearance and Familial Love” (Roy 300).

The mothers of the disappeared sons tell their shattered stories to different people at different places. They weep publically and pass through the terror and fear every time. On the banners it is written as: The story of Kashmir DEAD=68,000 DISAPPEARED=10,000 Is this Democracy or Demon Crazy? (Roy 115). The irony of the time is that the news channels are not pointing out what is written on the banners. They are only telecasting the helplessness of these people and hiding the facts and reasons behind it. In Kashmir, there are running Jihadi movements against the violation of their rights. Apart of these, there are also rapidly growing resistance movements against the Indian army and government.

Discussion

The novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) begins from the scattered and bleak picture of graveyard and also ends in the graveyard showing it an emblem having liminal space between decay and rehabilitation (Sarkar, 2023). Miss Jabeen and Anjum see hope in the child as a symbol of consolation and regeneration in future (Schneider & Gutek, 1986). At the end, Roy portrays Jannat Guest House with the picture of rebirth and rejuvenation. Now there is a vegetable garden blooming behind Jannat Guest House having soil which is "a compost pit of ancient provenance". They grow "brinjals, beans, chillies, tomatoes and several kinds of gourds, all of which despite the smoke and fumes from the heavy traffic on the roads that a butted the graveyard, attracted several varieties of butterflies" (Roy 399). It shows that the hope still remains that one day might be the conditions would be better; people in Kashmir would get their freedom for which they have sacrificed their lives and everything in its way. There is also hope

for the oppressed and marginalized in the transgender political Borderlands of India and Kashmir. The novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) transforms personal and social transgender experiences to a critique of transgender borderlands of the politics from the point of view of the marginalized.

Conclusion

In the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), through the character of Anjum, a trans woman, Roy expounds this notion that in an extremely barbarous manner gender politics largely plays its role in the most inflexible social set up of India as it gives no margins to the individuals who do not get fit in the rigorous binaries of gender. Roy demonstrates the struggle of a transgender who tries hard courageously so as to handle the hardships from the outer world. She is depicted as a solid character that battles against her identity and creates a different world where she discovers extreme rest, harmony and contentment from the shackles of the cruel world outside. *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) investigates a real society for which Roy depicts her constant worry and concerns. Overall, the novel deals with the neglected masses victimized by the brutal society and the barbaric politics of the country. In this way, Roy offers words to the predicament of the individuals who experience the curse of gender identities as well as revile of sexual orientation and whose lives are undermined and guided by outcast, war, racial threatening vibe, treacheries, unjust and precariousness of political circumstances in just as political insurrection in Kashmir.

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