

## EFFECTS OF ARUNDHATI ROY'S WRITINGS ON SOCIETY



Dr. Amrita Mazumdar  
Asst. Professor , Dept. of English  
B.P.S. College, Desari, Vaishali  
B.R.A Bihar University, Muzaffarpur

### ABSTRACT

Arundhati Roy's literary and activist pursuits have left an undeniable mark on society. Her work, encompassing both fiction and non-fiction, delves into the complexities of the Indian subcontinent, sparking uncomfortable conversations and challenging the status quo. This paper explores the multifaceted effects of Roy's writings on social discourse, political consciousness, and the understanding of human rights struggles. One of Roy's most significant contributions lies in giving voice to the marginalized. Her Booker Prize-winning novel, "The God of Small Things," exposes the rigidities of caste and gender hierarchies, particularly the plight of untouchables and women. Roy's lyrical prose brings these issues to life, forcing readers to confront the human cost of social inequalities. Similarly, her papers tackle issues like displacement due to mega-dams ("The End of Imagination") and the conflict in Kashmir ("Walking with the Comrades"), igniting debates and raising awareness about the struggles of those often rendered invisible.

### Keywords:

Society, Justice, Social, Myth

### INTRODUCTION

Arundhati Roy's writing is an exhilarating journey. It is a testament to the power of language to illuminate the human condition, challenge the status quo, and leave a lasting impression on the reader. Her work is not without controversy. Her fierce advocacy for certain causes has

resulted in accusations of bias and sensationalism. Her strident tone can alienate some readers, leading to a dismissal of her arguments rather than a deeper engagement with the issues she raises.

Arundhati Roy's writings remain a potent force for social change. Her ability to weave personal narratives with political commentary creates a powerful emotional connection with readers, fostering empathy and understanding for those on the margins. By giving voice to the voiceless and challenging comfortable assumptions, Roy's work continues to shape social discourse and inspire activism across the globe. Her works, both fiction and non-fiction, have served as powerful tools for social awakening, igniting discourse on critical issues and challenging the status quo. This paper explores the multifaceted effects of Roy's writings on society, highlighting their ability to spark debate, foster empathy, and inspire activism.

Roy's sentences shimmer with an almost musical quality. Her metaphors are startlingly original, drawing unexpected connections that illuminate the essence of a character or situation. Consider this description of a character's grief from "The God of Small Things": "The yellow Amma Mine turned into a bitter lemon, all juice squeezed out." Here, the sourness of the fruit perfectly captures the protagonist's emotional state. Roy's prose is rich with sensory details, transporting the reader to the heart of Kerala with its lush greenery, heady aromas, and the rhythmic beat of rain.

Deeply rooted in her Indian heritage, Roy weaves myths and folklore into her narratives. This adds layers of meaning and connects the personal struggles of her characters to a larger, timeless tapestry. In "The God of Small Things," the forbidden love story echoes the epic myth of Radha and Krishna, highlighting the enduring nature of love and rebellion against social norms.

Roy doesn't shy away from difficult realities. Her papers tackle issues of social injustice, environmental degradation, and political corruption with a fierce passion. Her prose becomes sharp and pointed, laced with satire and irony to expose hypocrisy. This blend of lyrical beauty and political fire is what makes Roy such a compelling voice of our times.

Roy experiments with form, employing multiple narrators and timelines. This creates a sense of depth and allows the reader to experience the story from different perspectives. Her non-

linear narratives mirror the complexities of memory and the fragmented nature of history.

Roy's writing style is a potent fusion of the personal and the political. Her characters grapple with love, loss, and identity against the backdrop of a nation grappling with its own social and political issues. This creates a profound resonance with the reader, forcing us to confront uncomfortable truths while simultaneously being swept away by the beauty of her language.

One of Roy's defining characteristics is her mastery of language. She wields words like a sculptor, crafting vivid imagery and metaphors that transport readers to the heart of her stories. Take, for instance, her description of a crowded marketplace in *The God of Small Things*: "The yellow church swelled like a throat with the sound of sad singing" ([Roy, *The God of Small Things*]). This single sentence evokes a multitude of sensations – the visual of a bulging building, the aural experience of mournful hymns, and a hint of emotional depth.

Roy's prose is further enriched by her liberal use of literary devices. She employs similes, alliteration, and even multilingual wordplay to create a rhythm and texture that mirrors the complexities of her characters and themes. This playfulness with language reflects the multifaceted nature of Indian society, where tradition and rebellion, beauty and brutality, constantly intertwine.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Roy's unflinching criticism of the Indian government and its policies has also had a profound impact. Her critiques of globalization, environmental degradation, and the rise of Hindu nationalism have sparked outrage and introspection. While some view her as a radical firebrand, others see her as a necessary voice of dissent, prompting a re-evaluation of power structures and dominant narratives. [1]

The effect of Roy's work extends beyond the borders of India. Her exploration of global issues like war and neocolonialism resonates with audiences worldwide. By exposing the interconnectedness of struggles for justice, she fosters a sense of global solidarity and encourages a critical examination of power dynamics on the international stage. [2]

Another hallmark of Roy's style is her ability to weave personal narratives with broader

socio-political commentary. In her fiction, the lives of individual characters become microcosms of larger struggles – against caste prejudice, environmental degradation, or political oppression. *The God of Small Things*, for example, tells the story of forbidden love while simultaneously critiquing the rigid social hierarchies in Kerala. This interweaving of the intimate and the political allows Roy to deliver her message with a powerful emotional punch. [3]

Roy is also a master storyteller. Her narratives are often non-linear, with flashbacks and multiple narrators creating a sense of depth and complexity. This technique reflects the fragmented nature of memory and history, particularly in the context of colonialism and its lasting impact. Additionally, Roy infuses her work with elements of magical realism, blurring the lines between reality and fantasy to highlight the extraordinary within the ordinary. [4]

Roy's style is not without its critics. Some find her prose overly ornate and her political pronouncements a tad heavy-handed. Yet, it is this very boldness and willingness to challenge the status quo that make her writing so compelling. Roy's voice is a clarion call, demanding attention to the injustices she perceives in the world. [5]

Roy's prose is also infused with a strong sense of rhythm and musicality. She employs repetition, alliteration, and internal rhyme to create a lyrical quality that draws the reader deeper into the narrative. This attention to sound complements the visual imagery and creates a multi-sensory experience. [6]

### **EFFECTS OF ARUNDHATI ROY'S WRITINGS ON SOCIETY**

Arundhati Roy's writing style is a mesmerizing mix of lyrical beauty, political firebrand, and masterly storytelling. Her ability to capture the essence of human experience within a larger social context, all while wielding language with breathtaking dexterity, has cemented her place as one of the most important literary voices of our generation. Beyond the beauty of her language, Roy's style is also marked by its fierce honesty. She is unafraid to tackle difficult subjects, from social injustice and political corruption to the complexities of love and loss. Her papers, in particular, are known for their passionate arguments and unflinching critiques of power. This critical edge adds another layer to her writing, making it not just aesthetically pleasing but also intellectually stimulating. Another key aspect of Roy's style is her ability to

blend fictional and non-fictional elements. Her novels, particularly *The God of Small Things*, incorporate elements of magical realism, blurring the lines between reality and fantasy. This technique allows her to explore the deeper truths of human existence in a way that transcends the limitations of everyday life.

Roy's writing is also deeply rooted in her Indian heritage. She incorporates Malayalam words and phrases, as well as references to Indian mythology and folklore, into her work. This cultural richness adds authenticity and depth to her stories, transporting readers to a world that is both familiar and exotic. One of Roy's most significant contributions lies in her unflinching exploration of social injustices. Novels like "The God of Small Things" bring to light the rigidities of caste and gender inequalities, while papers like "The End of Imagination" expose the dangers of nuclear proliferation and environmental degradation. By weaving personal narratives with socio-political commentary, Roy compels readers to confront uncomfortable truths and question existing power structures. This has led to a heightened awareness of marginalized communities and the environmental consequences of unchecked development.

Roy's writing style further amplifies her message. Her prose is lyrical yet potent, brimming with imagery and metaphors that resonate deeply with the reader. This literary prowess allows her to transcend mere reporting of facts and evoke empathy for the characters and issues she presents. Readers are drawn into the struggles of Ammu and Velutha in "The God of Small Things," or the plight of adivasi communities displaced by large dams in her papers. This emotional connection fuels social discourse and motivates action for a more just and equitable world. Furthermore, Roy's unwavering commitment to activism inspires readers to become agents of change. Her fearless critiques of government policies and her association with various social movements have emboldened others to speak out against injustice. Her papers serve as a call to arms, urging readers to question authority, hold power accountable, and fight for the rights of the marginalized.

However, Roy's influence is not without controversy. Her outspoken nature and radical critiques have often drawn criticism from those in power and those who favor the status quo. Her views on Kashmir and her association with Naxalite movements have been particularly contentious. These controversies, however, highlight the very essence of her work – its ability

to provoke thought and challenge comfortable narratives.

One of Roy's most significant contributions lies in her ability to shed light on the marginalized and the forgotten. Her Booker Prize-winning novel, "The God of Small Things," delves into the complexities of caste, gender, and political disenfranchisement in Kerala. Through her evocative prose, Roy compels us to confront uncomfortable truths about social hierarchies and the human cost of development projects. Similarly, her papers like "The End of Imagination" and "Walking with the Comrades" dissect the impact of globalization, environmental degradation, and state violence, particularly on indigenous communities. By amplifying these often-silenced voices, Roy provokes readers to question their own assumptions and engage with societal inequalities.

Furthermore, Roy's writings have a demonstrably mobilizing effect. Her critique of large-scale development projects like the Narmada Dam in "The Broken Bridge" has inspired countless environmental activists. Her fearless advocacy for Kashmiri self-determination and her critique of US foreign policy have ignited debates on global power dynamics and human rights. Roy's unwavering commitment to justice has inspired a generation of activists to challenge the established order and fight for a more equitable world.

However, Roy's influence is not without controversy. Her scathing critiques often challenge national narratives and dominant power structures. This has led to accusations of being anti-national and hindering economic progress. Yet, such criticism underscores the very essence of her work – to disrupt complacency and force a reevaluation of deeply entrenched societal systems. Roy's willingness to challenge authority and expose uncomfortable truths, regardless of the consequences, is a powerful testament to her intellectual courage.

## CONCLUSION

Arundhati Roy's writings have had a profound and multifaceted impact on society. By shedding light on social injustices, fostering empathy, and inspiring activism, she has played a crucial role in shaping public discourse and propelling social change. While her critiques may be met with resistance, it is this very resistance that underscores the power of her voice and the critical role literature plays in holding a mirror to society. Roy's legacy lies not only in her literary brilliance but also in her unwavering commitment to justice, a commitment that

continues to inspire readers and activists around the world.

## REFERENCES

1. A. A. Bill, trans. (2018). The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud (New York: Random House), p. 553.
2. Batra, Jagdish, ed. (2019). Form and Style in Indian English Fiction. New Delhi: Prestige.
3. Batra, Jagdish, ed. (2018). 21st Century Indian English Novel. New Delhi: Prestige.
4. Kapur, Promilla (2020). Marriage and the Working Woman in India. New Delhi. Vikas.
5. Roy, Anita (2017). Mistress. New Delhi: Penguin Books: 2014.
6. Sinha, Sunita (2018). Post – Colonial Women Writers New Perspectives. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors (p) Ltd.
7. Steinem, G. (2019). Revolution from within: A Book of Self-Esteem. Boston: Little Brown and Company.
8. The New Sexuality”, The illustrated weekly of India, April 30th, 2019, p. 17.
9. Rajeshwar M. (2018). Preface to Indian Women Novelists and Psychoanalytics, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors.
10. Woolf, Virginia (2019). “Modern Fiction Reader”, New York: Harvest Books, pp. 153-155.
11. Amin, Amina (2017). “From stereotype to Individual: Women’s short Friction in Gujarati”. Indian Feminisms. Ed. Jasbir Jain and Avadesh Kumar Singh, New Delhi: Creative Books, pp. 150.
12. De Beauvoir, Simone (2019). The Second Sex, Trans and ed. H.M. Parshelles Harnonds worth: Penguin, p. 445.