

Dynamics of Identity Politics in Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*

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ABSTRACT

The current study explores and investigates the dynamics of identity politics in Arundhati Roy's celebrated novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), by utilizing the lens of New Historicism. The study provides a multifarious understanding of the mainstream historization of political and social conditions with the help of an exhaustive study of the novel. The study investigates historical and social realities in the novel centering around the resurrection of identity politics and its spillover effects in the form of resilience and resistance by marginalized communities. This research establishes the fact that the suppressive regime led by Hindutva ideology excruciates the political, economic, and geographical freedom of people, spearheads suppression of marginalization, implements ubiquitous surveillance of the populace, attempts to debilitate the identity these tactics of identity politics, instead, give voice and agency to the targeted/marginalized community as shown through the character of Anjum in the novel. It also contends that the exploitation of marginalized communities is not solely done based on religion, caste hierarchies, or political differences but also based on identity. This study provides a viable understanding of the rise of identity politics in the Indian political system, where minorities, especially Muslims, have to face severe forms of ostracism in recent times. This research also helps in understanding the relationship between power and gender, as well as personal and political. The study is relevant to the contemporary predicament of Kashmir in particular and the Indian system in general, which makes this research efficacious and significant.

Keywords: Identity Politics, New Historicism, Marginalized Selves, Power Dynamics, Indian Politics, Hindutva Ideology

INTRODUCTION

The research was conducted in the wake of the rise of identity politics at the global level, especially after Trump's victory in the United States of America and Modi's coming to power in India. In the past, power was used to

eradicate the rights of the less powerful communities through force and agencies, but the dynamics have changed in contemporary times. The powerful regimes, especially Hindutva-led Indian authoritarianism, this

research argues, have gone beyond the naked use of power. It has seeped deep into the deeper layers of human identity, making the process of submerging and submitting to the powers a natural phenomenon. In the current study, the representation of historical events, from the Gujrat riots to the belligerency of the Indian government in Kashmir, has been studied and explored to understand the dynamics of identity politics. The challenge for the suppressed communities is not about the safety of their bodies or political empowerment, but there are other challenges related to gender differences. The dynamism of challenges is depicted through the character of Aftab, the novel's protagonist. It also highlights the fact that the issues of transgender and minorities are not restricted to one area or community. The protagonist, Aftab, who later on in the novel morphs into Anjum, the hermaphrodite, has to face multiple challenges. On the one hand, it is the regime that suppresses minorities, and on the other hand, it is the gender difference that creates hurdles in their lives. Aftab turned Anjum faces personal and private hurdles that not only disenfranchise his political freedom and right to live but also efface the core of his self. Arundhati Roy is quite vocal and daring to expose the dynamics of identity and power politics through her polyphonic and rhythmic prose. She is a robust critic of Indian politics and its related spheres in her prose and fictional worlds. In her novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, she has blended history with the fictional worlds, thus creating a relation between the objective and subjective realities. Her understanding of history through fiction provides multiple perspectives and helps raise questions on immutable realities that otherwise are difficult to comment upon, let alone expose. She uses the names of political figures to apprehend the political personalities better. She uses the name Mr Aggrawal for Arbindra Kejriwal and Gujarat

ka Lalla for Narendra Modi. The novel's title is ironic because there is no happiness in the world she creates. The sorrows and grief of the suppressed community embed the entire novel. Like Anjum, a fictional character in the book, who becomes the pawn during the 2002 Gujrat riots, all the marginalized communities are treated and exploited, and their lives are entangled and dehumanized. Blending history and artistic creation can be gauged from the fact that the social activists target Major Amrik Singh in the novel primarily signals towards the real persona of former Indian authoritarian president Ms Indra Gandhi.

Indian political system claims to be the symbol of diversity and secularism, but the reality is different. The myth of diversity in the nation-state of India is a broken promise made by the fathers of modern-day Indian polity. Nehru laid the foundation of India on constitutionalism, secularism, and liberalism. The republicanism of Indian polity based on equality and constitutionalism is merely a false promise. Not only in the occupied Jammu and Kashmir but also in Indian society, segregation and exploitation of the oppressed are carried out, and the worst example of this phenomenon can be seen in the premiership of Modi, who has tried to mutilate and erase the religious diversity of India in the wake of the growing influence of Hindutva ideology. Public lynchings of Muslims have almost become a norm in India. Individual acts would have been different, but the complicity of the state in appeasing the majoritarianism is very horrific for the minorities living in India. The situation in Kashmir, where the main protagonist of the novel under study grows, is even more horrific. Territorial expansionism and illegal occupation of Kashmir is a violation of the UN resolution on Kashmir in which the Kashmiris were given the right to get independence. Along with the colonization of

Kashmir, the Indian state used various sorts of other tactics to establish all-powerful authoritarianism. Like back home, mainstream Kashmiri leaders try the tactics of ostracism, exploitation, infringement of all sorts of rights, and beyond everything, the erasure of the cultural, political, religious, and ethnic identity of the inhabitants. Kashmiris are compelled to live in terrifying conditions with curfews, surveillance, and limitations of liberty and freedom, and at the same time, they also face existential crises. Indian state uses the tactics of identity politics-the mistreatment of a segment of the population based on religion, caste, ideology, or any other affiliation-to control and besiege the Kashmiris. This research exposes the dynamics of identity politics in Kashmir, where marginalized groups, especially Muslims, are subjected to severe torture under the pretext of terrorism and affiliation with liberating forces. The true face of a totalitarian regime is laid bare by Arundhati Roy, who has highlighted the Indian state's attempts to sabotage the personal lives of people like Anjum, who don't pose any threat to society. Anjum is Muslim and then a transgender person, which is her crime for which she is punished.

The plot of the novel revolves around the Kashmiri locale, symbolizing the debilitating conditions of Muslims in Kashmir and other parts of India where the Muslim population faces severe forms of segregation, exploitation, ostracism, and, most importantly, the mutilation of their identity and selves. It also directs the gaze towards political unpredictability, authoritarianism, chaos, and polarised society. In Gujarat and Indian-held Kashmir, Muslims are denied civil, political, and personal rights; they are viewed as foreigners in their place of birth. Although Indian polity claims to be a brainchild of Nehruvian ideals based on democracy and

secularism, the cases in modern-day Indian Kashmir and India are different. Modern-day Indian leaders, especially of Hindutva-dominated ideologues, believe in mere rhetoric. The way the life of Anjum is juxtaposed between different forms of violence, the lives of all marginalized in the novel face challenges of various kinds. The novel presents Indian history in a fictional manner. The past is interpreted through fiction, and the story is set in the past. Social realities are studied in connection with the fictional world. The bitter reality is exposed through fiction. When the police were pursuing Sanjay Gandhi and Anjum, things became problematic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), being an artistic piece of writing, has been discussed and interpreted through different angles and frames of reference. This study has tried to find out the research gap that needs attention. So far, the range of criticism available on the novel is multifarious and diverse. Starting from linguistic understanding, this novel has been called polyphonic and incorporates intertextuality, multi-layered plot, symbolism, and rhythm.

The Guardian declares it "is a curious beast: baggy, bewilderingly overpopulated with characters, frequently achronological, written in an often careless and haphazard style and yet capable of breathtakingly composed and powerful interludes". (Guardian, Review). It has also been discussed with nationalistic perspectives, creating binaries between Kashmiris' resistance efforts and the Indian state's hegemony. It has also been discussed through the Marxist perspective in which the poor in the novel, including the protagonist, have to face social segregation at the hands of the powerful and elite. Various academics

examined it from various angles, demonstrating the novel's primary significance. Michiko Kakutani opines that the novel depicts India's chaotic situation and turmoil in the Indian political system.

Lisa Lau and Ana Cristina Mendes interpreted the novel from different angles in their article *Romancing the Other: Arundhati Roy's The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. They believe that the novel orchestrates political romance. The 'others' in the novel, such as hijras, women, poor people and other marginalized communities, resist their being reduced to unchanging subjects; rather, they aspire to change and crave new possibilities, "defying conventions, trying possible new lives and testing new roles". They opine that the romance of this character not only exposes the hegemonic mindset of the Indian regime but also poses a sort of resistance to the regime. The novel is a melange of different testing and competing subjects.

Aisha Jadoon, in her article *Personal, is political: The Alchemy of Happiness in Arundhati Roy's The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* contends that Roy invokes invocations of blending of personal and political as "an imaginative alchemy of happiness". Unlike the other interpretations of the novel based on gendered criticism and political criticism, the novel brings in the most element of happiness that comes through in the words of Imam Ghazali that the "divine contemplations experienced at the personal level contribute to communal happiness at the broader scale". (Jadoon, Taylor, and Francis)

Pier Paolo Piciuccio has discussed the novel from the perspective of trauma studies in the article *Trauma and Storytelling in Arundhati Roy's The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. By using the symbol of the graveyard, Roy has depicted the impact of trauma on individual selves that fall victim to disassociated disorders and a death wish phenomenon found in the character of Anjum.

Unlike the *God of Small Things*, Pier Paolo contends that this novel also brings survival instinct as the characters try to counter the fascist regime. In the survival instinct, storytelling plays a significant role and has medicinal effects in dealing with "psychic suffering and social reconnections."

Dr. Danish Suleman sheds light on the novel from the perspective of the transgender community's woes in society. Along with other researchers, in the article *Transgender Issues in Indian Society from the Viewpoint of Arundhati Roy's Novel, The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, Suleman argues that the transgender community has been the victim of submersion in mainstream society. They were never given a chance for self-actualization; they compromise on their individuality, but the case is different in the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, where transgender community, symbolized by the character of Anjum, poses resistance to the submerging of self, rather, the character of Anjum turns out to be a powerful character who develops and grows amidst gruesome conditions in the novel.

While reviewing *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* in Atlantic, Parul Sehgal declares the novel a "fascinating mess". He enunciates that the novel abounds in binaries. He explains, "The world (Roy writes) is often brutal, but never confusing or even very complex. Manichaen dualities prevail: innocence (embodied by puppies, kittens, little girls) versus evil nine torture, torturers, soldiers, shopping mall". (Atlantic) Inakali Assumi has analyzed the novel with the viewpoint of sexuality and love in her article *Sexuality and Love in Arundhati Roy's The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* by contending that the characters survive in social and political chaos. However, their urge to love has not diminished. On the other hand, sexuality as a distinct mark of identity remains the pressing issue throughout the

novel. Ms Neha Rana's article discusses the socio-political realities in the novel, where characters face exploitation, violence, and multiple other issues. She has used the lens of realism to discuss the socio-political orientation of the novel.

As seen from the literature review, the novel has rarely been discussed from the perspective of identity politics. An effort has been made on the part of researchers to fill that gap. One reason for the lack of study available in matters related to identity politics is that the issue of identity politics gained currency in the very recent past, especially after Modi's coming to power for the second time. Identity politics has become the signature style of governance for the Hindutva-led political system.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The issue of identity politics orchestrated by the Hindutva-led Indian political system has been discussed using the theoretical underpinnings of New Historicism, in which the fictional world is brought to comparison with real history. In the historicism of yore, an effort was made to understand the historical relevance of literature, especially Elizabethan literature, to understand the history of that particular era. Likewise, history was understood by reading the artistic creations that mapped a particular time. In the historicist study, it was necessary to go back in time to understand history or socio-political realities, but in the case of New Historicism, going back in time is not necessary; any work of art is the reflection of the prevailing socio-political realities. An artist's imagination is contextual and circumscribed by the external realities. Blending history with the fictional world provides a chance for the writer to comment on and discuss historical realities without any limitation of scientific or objective history writing, as the interpretations of historical realities in any fictional work are subjective in nature. Hence,

following the Nietzschean concept that there are no facts but only interpretations, it lends multifarious interpretations of historical and factual history. It also helps break the objectivity myth of the powerful elite who pen history according to their vantage point. In real and objective history, there is less chance for going against the grain, whereas, in fictionalized history, there is always a chance of different interpretations and relativity of opinions and views. In the case of Arundhati Roy's case, she used a novel in the form of the Ministry of Utmost Happiness to move forward with her political activism as well because literature, as Henry Hudson says, is not only a commentary on the historical time but also a great supplement.

Real history ignores many aspects of life, such as identity formation and its complexities, emotional streaks, and other psychological issues, whereas the artist gets the advantage of going into the deep recesses of individual selves and society at large. The purpose of selecting the main issue at hand, which is the dynamics of identity politics, has been done while keeping in view the reasons given above. Specifically, the theorization of Stephen Greenblatt has been utilized to discuss identity politics. According to John Brannigan: "New historicism is a mode of critical interpretation which privileges power relation as the most important context for the text of all kind" (Brannigan, 1993, p. 7). He explains that everything is infected with the influence of ideology and power. The mode of representation has the power to modify reality. It produces that version of reality that is a vehicle of someone else's vested interest. The reality is revealed using fictional discourse.

Greenblatt also connects historicity with social structures, dynamics of power and politics, ideology, and socio-political realities. New Historicism is a method of examining literary and non-literary texts simultaneously in the light of surroundings and historical settings. It examines literature in a broader historical context by intermingling texts and cultures. Greenblatt has defined New Historicism in the way that it is “a method based on the parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts, usually of the same historical period” and while doing so in which “literary and non-literary texts are given equal weight and constantly inform or interrogate each other”. (Greenblatt, 2017)

The Viability of New Historicism in discussing the fictional world in parallel to the real world can be understood from the comment of John Brannigan, who said, “New historicism is a mode of critical interpretations which privileges power relation as the most important context for the text of all kinds”. (Brannigan, 1993) Criticism of injustice is eluded on the pretext of objectivity, but the New Historicist criticism provides a chance to break the chains of power-discourse nexus. In the same vein, Harold Aram Visser, in his book, *The New Historicism* (1989), has commented on some of the major conceptions of New Historicism by explaining that in it, “every expressive act is embedded in a network of material practices, that every act of unmasking, critique, and opposition uses the tool it condemns and risks falling prey to the practice it exposes “. (Visser, 1989) Following Stephen Greenblatt and other theorists in the field, Nota Bene has also commented on the efficacy and significance of New Historicism as a liberating theoretical paradigm that “changes the view of history as objective, monolithic, linear, causal, static and authentic” by going further that every text is a “product of socio-economic, political and cultural context”.(Bene, 2017)

Since Arundhati Roy is a writer and activist at the same time, using the theorization of New Historicism provides an enabling framework for understanding the murky and complex world of *the Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. The researchers dare to say that the dynamics of identity politics could not be understood better than the way it has been done in the current study. Identity politics is a real issue in the modern world. An independent-minded writer like Arundhati Roy is responsible for exposing the layers of identity-related issues through the popularising fictional world.

Analysis and Discussion

The interplay between identity and politics is a recurring phenomenon in the Ministry of Utmost Happiness, where characters, especially of marginalized groups, are led to take refuge in identity. On the one hand, power suppresses the individual selves in such a way that the streak or temptation to resist the panopticon state evaporates. On the other hand, the authoritarian regime wants to keep the competing groups fighting among themselves to eradicate the genuine concerns of liberty. This research has argued that instead of discussing the socio-political realities showcased in the novel, this research has argued that the novel discusses identity issues. Primarily, Hindutva ideology plays to the muse of identity politics in which Muslims and other marginalized communities are made victims to satiate the effacing majority that wants minorities to submerge distinctive culture and identity into the majority’s ideology and vision. In consequence, the minority also becomes conscious of its specific identity and then tries to subvert the hegemonic designs. Through the characters of Anjum and Tils, Roy has tried to show the resistant voice in the face of the fascist regime.

The complex issue of identity is presented through the character of Anjum, a transgender woman who struggles in an exclusive society and travels from place to place in pursuit of actualization. Marginalized characters, especially women, are victims of the larger identity politics who are "objectified to fulfill the sexual desire of males", and by doing this, Roy challenges dominant social norms and stereotyped identities. Incidents such as the separation of India from Pakistan, the emergency in India, and the role of politicians make up the novel's backdrop.

In Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, Revathy is represented as a member of the suppressed community that was used as a tool at the time of Emergency (1975-1977). The suppressed communities were robbed of all rights, even the right to food. Likewise, in Roy's novel, the character of Revathy, a young girl and low-caste from a rural area of India, always excels in school but lacks the resources to pay for her education. She is good at her education and says, "I wanted to be a lawyer" (TMUH 420). Owing to poverty and being a member of a low-caste community, she joined Government College, where Maoist communists radicalized her. Then, she dedicated her entire life to the communist cause. "After passing Intermediate, I sat for Medical entrance and got selected but had no money for fees. So, I joined Government College in Warangal. Their movement was very strong. Inside forest outside also" (TMUH 420). She was recruited into Maoist troops and devoted her whole life to orchestrating revolution and changing the hegemonic state. When she gets arrested by police, she is made to severe torture and is mercilessly raped. Pregnancy, followed by the rape, devastates her further. She remains oblivious, and her soul is injured, as depicted in her dialogue: "I was looking like a mad person. All the cigarette burns

were bubbles on my face, breast, nipples, and stomach. My whole bed was blood" (TMUH 423). There was gender discrimination, and she was also from a low caste. Roy is also conscious of the power politics played by Indira Gandhi, whose regime marginalized communities, which were badly treated by the state machinery, from the politicians to the bureaucrats.

Arundhati Roy makes the character of Anjum identity conscious, who wants to earn acceptance and a place in society. As earlier discussed, identity politics on the part of an authoritarian regime also compels the suppressed community to resist the power itself. Anjum believes that women have the courage and resilience to raise their voices and exert their agency in whatever murkier world they live in. The resilience of Anjum gives courage to other women as well. This speaks volumes about the tactics of Hindutva in Indian polity, especially in issues in Assam, where the attempt to play identity politics by playing to the fiddle of the majority Hindu community results in resistance and discursivity. One of the arguments of the current research is that identity politics gives courage to minority groups to reunite and resurge in a bid to get their voice heard.

As explained above, identity politics unites people based on ethnicity and religion. Any attempt to erase and deny basic humanity results in a revolution that ultimately leads to bloodshed and chaos. In the novel, religion also grants Muslims communal identity, as shown in "Musalmano ka ek hi sthan! Qabristhan ya Pakistan!" (Only one place for the Musalman! The graveyard or Pakistan!) (TMUH 62). The major character moves from one location to another, becoming aware of the local and regional history. Anjum's personal history can be equated with the national history. Anjum travels to Gujarat, where she becomes a victim of communal riots that shook India. She represents herself

as a sufferer of communal riots in Gujarat. Roy presents the cultural and spatial conflicts that constitute multiple facets of the new Indian society. The conflicts can be drawn from Gujarat's geopolitical space. In 2002, the Gujarat riot was led by the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi. So, Roy called him Gujarat Ka Laalla as he symbolized Gujarat's political leadership. In this novel, Roy portrays the violent scenario of Gujarat when Anjum goes there to hide because she has left Delhi. After all, it was the place where no right for women/ transgender was given, and they were mistreated by society. "The process of changing patterns in his life brings physical difficulty and psychological torture" (Zubair, 2021). She saw the massacre of ethnic cleansing, especially Muslims under restriction, and became witness to the cruel policies of the Indian polity on which Zubair comments that "Muslims have felt targeted because of their ethnic and religious identity thereby fuelling discussion on Arab/Muslim identity in this new light." (Zubair, 2018). Ahmadabad, the capital of Gujarat, where a lot of Muslims were made to sleep under the rail track. Modi was represented as god himself. "In faraway Gujarat, Gujarat Ka Lalla recognized the appearance of the old man-baby as a sign from the god. With a predator's unerring instinct, he accelerated his march to Delhi. By the fifth day of the old man's fast, Lalla was (metaphorically speaking) camped outside the city gates" (TMUH 81).

Common people are murdered, and transgressors like Major Amrik become the face of terror" Major Amrik Singh was a gambler, a daredevil officer, a deadly interrogator, and a cherry, cold-blooded killer. He greatly enjoyed his work and was constantly on the lookout for ways to up entertainment. (TMUH, 336). In the novel, Roy, the character of Major Amrik Singh, can

be compared with Indira Gandhi because of her cruel policies and demonizing policies, especially for Muslims. Muslims were ruthlessly killed during her tenure. She tried to impose many rules upon marginalized communities, especially on Muslims. Similarly, in the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, Amrik Singh shows cruel behaviour towards common people in Kashmir. Singh's behaviour turns the social environment into a nightmarish kind where Muslims are castigated and dehumanized owing to their separate identity. In the novel, he shoots people randomly and like a madman. The whole state of affairs renders it dystopic. Dystopia refers to an imagined state or society in which there is great suffering or injustice, typically one that is totalitarian or post-apocalyptic. Amrik Singh enjoys the pain and suffering of common people. Both Indira Gandhi and Major Amrik Singh have abducted the rights, security, and identity of civilians, and they are also the cold-blooded murderers of common people. Indian democracy looks like a myth in the prevailing circumstances.

Amrik Singh certainly had the full measure of the dystopia he operated in, one whose populace had no borders, no loyalties, and no limits to the depth to which it would fall. As for the Kashmir psyche, if there was indeed such a thing, Amrik Singh was seeking neither understanding nor insight. For him, it was game, a hunt, in which his quarry's pitted against his own. He saw himself more as a sportsman than a soldier, making him a sunny soul. Major Amrik Singh was a gambler, a daredevil officer, a deadly interrogator, and a cherry, cold-blooded killer. He greatly enjoyed his work and was constantly on the lookout for ways to up entertainment. (TMUH 336)

In the book *The History of Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, Prem Nath Bazaz discusses the freedom movement of the

people of Kashmir in the quest for rights and justice. The nexus of the history and the contemporary predicament of Kashmiri are interrelated. Roy has also picked up the same issue of the Kashmiri riots, where common people in the name of terrorism are brutally tortured and massacred. Validating the dynamics of identity politics stance, Perry Anderson's book, *The Indian Ideology*, also discusses that "the Indian Ideology, a nationalist discourse in a time when there is no longer a national liberation struggle against an external power, and oppression where it exists has become internal, obscure against an external power, or avoids such issues". (Anderson 2016: 3)

Anjum leaves behind her house, The Jantar Mantar Old Delhi, in the wake of riots and massacre and shifts to Gujrat but gets no comfort as the situation in her new lodging is not dissimilar from the one she left behind. This reality can be studied in contrast to the actual history discussed in the book *India After Gandhi* by Ramchandra Guha, which aligns people's revolution with the harsh treatment at the hands of the government.

The rape of Revathy symbolizes the violence against women. Mainly, different characters Revathy, S.Tilottama, Saddam Hussain, and Musa have joined the Naxalites that led to terrorism inside the country. Revathy believes in bringing justice to the poor and eradicating political, social, and economic inequality. Roy presents in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* the sarcasm of the society. Revathy, a victim of rape, presents the whole chaotic condition of women all over the country. She wanted to be as free as other girls and society to be liberal. Revathy figures out the situation in her fort but decides to secure freedom. She joined the Maos to get freedom. The party is everything to her. "My party is my mother and father; many times it does many wrong things. Kills wrong people. Women join because they are

revolutionaries but because they cannot bear their sufferings at home" (*TMUH*, p.425). She describes the cruel, pathetic situation of the people in Kashmir and how the others become the sufferers of the revolution. The revolution led by soldiers turned into the massacre of several people.

Findings and Conclusion

The ongoing study has discussed and explored that authoritarian and all-powerful regimes' attempts to play identity politics to please the majority populace or dominant ideology results in severe backlash and resistance from the suppressed community. Identity politics based on religion, caste, and nationality helps unite the marginalized groups together. Efforts to deface and eradicate the identity of the suppressed miserably fail as they give a new lease of life to the sufferers. This resurgence of audacity and resilience is portrayed through the character of Anjum, whose personal struggle becomes a role model for all the downtrodden in *the Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Roy has raised concerns regarding humanity's suffering, social stratification, and classism. She lays bare the mechanics of capitalistic and hegemonic statism. She initiates a political discourse in her novel and highlights the atrocities of the Indian Army in Indian-held Jammu and Kashmir. Hindutva morphs into religious radicalism. The hegemony of politics, religion, and caste is there in the novel. The loss of humanity in the novel is portrayed as emblematic of the contemporary reality. In the novel, Musa Yewsi needs help from S. Tillotama to get freedom from grief. S. Tillotama had an affair with Musa to take her revenge because she was a sufferer of tribalism. " Roy, through the exploitation of the marginalized, shows what freedom means to Kashmiris while questioning India's liberal democracy.

Arundhati Roy brings to the fore the sufferings of the marginalized and suppressed, especially women. She paints a painful picture of females and transgender people. The rape of Revathy symbolizes violence against women. Mainly, different characters, Revathy, S. Tilottama, Saddam Hussain, and Musa, have joined the Naxalites, which is the worst condition in the country, which led to terrorism inside the country. This diversion towards ethnocentrism is a direct consequence of identity politics. Revathy believes in bringing justice to the poor and eradicating political, social, and economic inequality. Roy presents the sarcasm of a polarised and suppressed society in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Revathy, a victim of rape, presents the whole chaotic condition of women in the country. It is concluded that different dynamics used by the proprietors of identity politics in the form of marginalization, exploitation, brutal killing, rape, and torture and attempt to rob individuals of their individuality and identity grants voice to the voiceless, inculcate resilience among the seemingly weak people and finally gets impetus to resist and subvert the power citadels of state polity and hegemonic/demonic ideology. Moreover, the maltreatment, exploitation, and extrajudicial killing of the marginalized community, especially Muslims, validates the two-nation theory that became the prime cause of the partition of the subcontinent. The current state of Muslims in India in general and Kashmir in particular speaks volumes about the reality of distinct identity. However, this research has argued and investigated that the attempts to marginalize groups based on their identity, ethnicity, caste, or religion result in backlash. Therefore, the characters in the novel, despite being ostracised and terrified, become the symbol of resilience and courage. The protagonist's story, Anjum, becomes the emblem of the audacity of hope and

determination in the face of an oppressive and cruel regime. Furthermore, the exclusion of Muslims, despite being the majority in Kashmir, based on their identity and ideology is not a new phenomenon. Hindu's biasedness towards Muslims is a perennial reality.

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