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A Marxist Approach to Arundhati Roy's 'The God of Small Things'

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Abstract:

Literature is an artistic reflection of socioeconomic, political and cultural circumstances of the society. The expressions caught by literature always have seen features of pains and pleasures of masses as well as classes in particular. Various approaches form tools to analyse and criticise the dimensions of literary works. Marxism offers one of the most controversial tools to study literature in multiple disciplines which actually remove covers on the educated and so-called well-mannered and sophisticated class of the society. Marxism attempts to clarify the relationship of literary piece to social reality. In this light, Arundhati Roy's Booker prize winning novel 'The God of Small things' can be called as a perfect blend of eastern Marxism and orthodox Hinduism with a golden wrapper of democracy. According to the theory proposed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, human actions and institutions are economically determined and class struggle is needed to create historical change so that capitalism will be replaced by communism. Roy presents three different manifestations of Marxist ideology rather than presenting biased reading for or against Marxism. The paper is a humble attempt of exploring Roy's treatment and criticism on the exploitation of lower caste working people in Marxist point of view.

Keywords: Marxism, Capitalism, Communism, religious dogmas etc.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), the first international award winning novel after the controversial Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children* is potent with number of interpretations. It can be viewed as severe attack on patriarchal Indian society. We can also look at it as the fractured image of the indivisible God into small gods. It questions the very existence of institutions of marriage, family, dogmatic philosophical groups and also the political parties. The novel can also be analyzed by applying economic and social principles put forward by Marx in the beginning of the twentieth century and practiced in the last decade of the same century. To critically demonstrate the vast gap between what is said and what is done in the Marxist ideology, *The God of Small Things* can be studied in that specific dimension.

Fighters for India's freedom got themselves divided into various political parties after Indian independence in 1947. Very few opted out of power mania to take up to bringing justice to socially and economically disadvantaged groups of Indian society. Though most of them joined the main political stream, congress party, some others formed groups Socialist and Marxists to change the conditions of poor and outcastes. Congress party believed that the socio-economic problems can be addressed through power politics alone. The congress party ruled the central and state governments for twenty long years without interruptions till 1967. But as it happened in many countries in Europe and Asia, the government became the priority and socio-economic changes got the secondary status. The devoted social and economic thinkers were disillusioned by the 'politics first' policy.



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