

## Themes in Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*

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### Abstract

This paper aims to analyze the themes in the novel '*The Ministry Of Utmost Happiness*'. The theme, according to M.H Abraham's '*Glossary Of Literary Terms*', is sometimes used interchangeably with "motif" but the term is more usefully applied to a general concept or doctrine, whether implicit or asserted, which an imaginative work is designed to involve and make persuasive to the reader. Arundhati Roy is widely known as a society critic writer. Her phenomena of writing is different quite different than any other Indian writer. She tried to cover many social evils in her novel '*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*'. The novel deals with the themes from social to political of India. It covers some serious inhuman incidents.

Arundhati Roy is best known for her novel '*The God Of Small Things*' which won the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 1997. Roy used plethora of themes in her novel '*The Ministry Of Utmost Happiness*', there are many types of themes. The themes have been taken from Indian incidents related to past happenings, and some are related to present time, for e.g., problem of third gender in Indian society, Emergency of 1975 by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Ayodhya Riot, Gujarat Massacre, Bhopal Gas tragedy, and unsettled problem of Jammu and Kashmir.

Jahanara Begum wants a boy child so she decides to name Aftab for her upcoming child but when she gives birth, the child she was very happy and she checked the private part of that child but it was neither a boy nor a girl, but it was a kinner or Hizra. Now, Begum was very agitated. She was unable to decide that she should tell her husband Abdul about Aftab's gender or not. Firstly, she decides to keep it secret because she believes in Allah and so she wants to Hazrat Dargah as God will help her. After passing many years, she informs her husband about Aftab's identity, he gets shocked by this news. He scolds his wife not to inform him earlier but later he decides to visit a doctor. Next day he visits to Dr. Mukhtar. But he could do nothing.

Now, people found Aftab as Hizra, she learned dance and other things. Hizra, who are less respected in the society and do not have happiness like us because they always celebrate others' happiness. They dance in marriage and on the birthday of a child while they don't have

such happiness in their life. As Nimmo Gorakhauri ,the friend of Aftab said “ *We are jackals who feed off other people’s happiness ,we’re Happiness Hunter’s*”(Penguin pub page 24).

The National Emergency declared by Prim Minister Indira Gandhi from 1975 to 1977 for 21 months, Roy describes the situation of the time in the novel “ *how the Civil Rights had been suspended ,news paper censored and in the name of population control thousands of men were herded into camps and forcibly sterilized. A new law to the maintenance of Internal Security act allowed the government to arrest anybody ,on a whim*” (page 34) so how much the brutality was in system which ate the people’s right and head of state did whatever they liked and at that time the constitution was nothing but only the whim of Politician.

Again past incident narrated as a theme in the novel ,it was the time of the February When a train ,Sabarmati Express coming from Ayodhya was burned near Godhra station. In this riot many people died ,injured and kidnaped. People divided as Hindu and Mouslims. The demolition of the Babri Mosque was the main cause of this incident. Roy wants to express her inner emotion that how failure of political system snatched the lives of people .when there is any unrest in the state ,the political leader make their voice only to gather the votes. Political leaders never learn from incidents and wait for another and they always communalize the matter.

There are some universal problems in India as Roy has mentioned in the novel. The problem of untouchability and caste system which is rooted very strongly and cannot uprooted from the mind of the peoples . To work in a butcher, cleaning gutters and many other works which mostly have been done by marginalised people. As in the novel, Saddam ,his real name is Dayachand ,who is Chamar by his caste. He is working as a butcher, he knows about his very well as Gandhi said “*The Caste system was Indian Salvation. Each Caste must do the work it has been born to do but all work must be respected*”. Saddam told Anjum ,(Aftab who changed to Anjum)that “ *when cow died ,upper –caste farmers would call us to collect the caresses because they couldn’t pollute themselves by touching them*” (page 86). Writer wants to hammer on the caste based society where dirty works are done by lower caste as Saddam is suffering from the situation.

At the time of Dushera the effigies of Ravan, the ten headed ‘demon’ king of Lanka and his brother Kumbhkaran and Meghnadh were burned. They killed by Lord Rama as victory of good on evil. People were returning from Ram Lila field ,Saddam who works in the butcher ,was carrying the dead bodies of cows with his father and other fellows. They are asked for money by police officer named Sherabat at police station to pass the Caracas of the cows. When they could not pay, the police officer Sherabat arrests them and put in the police lock-up but Saddam was out of police lock-up. The mob was gathering around and chanting the slogans “*Jai Shree Ram and Vande Matram*”(page 88). A few man went into police station and brought out three men. They begun to beat them with their fist and shoes .And some people are searching for sticks. Then a men came with an iron rod and gets start beating . Later , there was dead bodies of Saddam’s father and other fellow who were carrying the dead bodies of the cows. Here ,writer want portray the situation of mob lynching which is happening frequently nowadays, sometime mob killed others in the suspicion of meat.

Another instance is that of Bhopal Gas Tragedy, it was named as Union Carbide Gas, now its new name Dow chemical, this tragedy happened in Madhya Pradesh in 1984, where thousands of people died, many were injured and loosed their limbs and became handicapped in this tragedy. People who came from Bhopal to Delhi for their compensation, t.v channels were not interested to show these things, nobody is responsible for their compensation *“There is nobody to listen. No one listen. The police beats them the government ignores them”*(page 128) Dr. Azad Bhartiya is a committee as mentioned in the novel is against the all types of the corruptions. It help people in strike against government in Jantar Mantar in Delhi. It is helping people for eleven years. So the situation is that nobody is responsible for the condition of poor. In the hierarchy system, people who are in system only for makes hay while the Sun shine. The caste is very important in the political system of India. Political parties set their agenda to win. The happenings of these incidents as common things. *“These poor people who were destroyed by then, Can they by new lungs, new eyes? They have to manage with their organs which were poised so many year ago”*(129)

Corruption is a very dominant problem in India. Corruption is un-seen demon lives in the heart and mind of the people. Corruption means when we misuse of the post and power, it is everywhere in private or in in government sector. here, novelist mentioned some incidents that how corrupt people at others share, writer took an incident of Lature Earthquake. *“These are Lature earthquake victim whose cash compensation has been eaten up by corrupt collection and tehsildar. Out of three croor rupees only three lakh rupees reached the people”* Scams, the fashion in political system of India. writer mentions some scams, *“coal scams, iron-ore scams, housing scams, insurance scams, stamps-paper scams, phone-license scams, land scams, dam scams, petrol-pumps scams, polio-vaccine scams, electronics-bill scams, school-book scams, god men scams, drought-relief scams, business men –political and political business men scams.*

Final theme is the Kashmir issue, the unrest in Kashmir against the humanity. The terrorism is the Skelton of all problem. Kashmir is known as the heaven of the India. The beauty of Kashmir is dispelled by terrorist. The dispute between India and Pakistan is the main concern of Kashmir. Some local people also the part of this situation. Indian army is tackling the situation, the improvement slowly and gradually is coming but it is time taking. The stone palters are protestor. They create problem for many time, some time they got injured. Some areas are very disputed where terrorist attacks usually happens as in, Soppor, Barmula, and in Shree Nagar. Everybody knows that the technology is very helpful to module our life while in Jammu and Kashmir, Curfew is the common thing. This worst curfew make worse life of young generation or students, business also dismantle by these things. The Massacre of Kashmiri Brahmin's in 1990, when Muslims militants had turned of the tiny Hindus population. Several hundred Hindus had been killed in macabre ways and when the government announced that it could not ensure their safety, almos the entire population of Kashmiri Hindus had fled the Valley and moved into refuge campus in the plains of Jammu where many of them still lived.

### Work Cited

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