INTRODUCTION

Arundhati Roy is one of the best-known representatives of the contemporary generation of Indian writers who write in English. She has astonished the literary world by winning the Booker Award for her novel The God of Small Things. Roy’s maiden novel – The God of Small Things was greeted in 1997 by unprecedented attention from critics, pundits and the media alike. Published in 1997, The God of Small Things quickly skyrocketed Arundhati Roy to world wide critical and popular acclaim. The novel which Roy wrote between 1992 and 1996, has sold over 6 million copies and has been translated in 40 languages.

The works of Arundhati Roy are challenging and richly reward the critics who explore their depths. The relevance of the study lies in the fact how power operates and hegemonic forces always remain active through different agencies in order to contain the subversive forces when they suffer threat to their existences. Arundhati Roy in her novel - The God of Small Things as well as her collection of essays and speeches - The Algebra of Infinite Justice, An Ordinary Person’s Guide Empire, The Great Indian Rape Trick-I, The Great Indian Rape Trick-II, In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones and her interviews has effectively presented such prevailing practices in society. The study proposes to look into how these works (The God of Small Things, The Greater Common Good and The End of Imagination) create a world and succeed in articulating social oppression. All these works tell stories in a distinctive manner. Arundhati Roy’s fresh
perspectives on age old traditions created waves as rebellion against the social injustice meted out to the downtrodden and to the women. The God of Small Things will be read as a book, a book which becomes the voice of all those who are relegated to the margins of the society.

More than sixty years have passed since India gained its political autonomy, but the fact remains that the lower classes and women living in Indian society are yet to witness freedom in truer sense. Inspite of continuous representation, legislations and revolution, the weaker sections of the society continue to suffer and the powerful and the privileged, though hypocrites and law breakers are rewarded. The study proposes to explore the maltreatment meted out to the subalterns in Arundhati Roy’s The God of Small Things. It will highlight the various ways in which the rights and privileges of both these classes are generally ignored or cancelled out even in the present era of post-colonialism.

In the intervening years, Roy has used her celebrity status in India to write instead in defense of causes she believes in, to become “a write for the victims of modernity”. Almost unique among intellectuals, Roy publicly excoriated the Government for its decision to launch nuclear tests in 1998 in a long and passionate essay – The End of Imagination, simultaneously in India and Pakistan. Roy certainly becomes a feminist as she tries to end evil in this world. She is interested in keeping her readers well informed. She question the very legitimacy of conducting these nuclear
tests at a time when the millions of Indians suffer conditions of abject poverty and live in unhygienic shanty towns. She is calling out the leaders, not only of India, but also of the world, to reconsider the consequences of what they are doing to the earth and its peoples. All these actions, of course, in the names of progress and national defence. She is truly a feminist in real sense.

In 1999, Roy pointed her sharp pen against the Narmada dam, under construction in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat in another highly critical essay entitled The Greater Common Good. Roy wrote the book to express her solidarity with “the extraordinary people fighting an extraordinary war” as she puts it in her Dedication and to stir the innermost conscience of the intellectual world. She turns out to be a feminist when she undertook a lot of painstaking research to tell the sad tale of the people and the environment devastated by the project.

The significance of the study lies in the fact that Roy has strength and a passionate sense of justice. Roy’s works catch out attention on social issues and injustice. If Roy holds anything specifically, it is a social vision, a vision which has a little room for the suppression and exploitation of the individual by society, of woman by man, of untouchables by touchables, of children by elders and political pawns by political parties. She is wholly committed to the voiceless millions of her country and has became their voice at a huge risk to herself.