

ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER

ISSN-2321-7065

IJELLH

**International Journal of English Language,
Literature in Humanities**

Indexed, Peer Reviewed (Refereed) Journal

UGC Approved Journal



Volume 6, Issue 11, November 2018

www.ijellh.com

Ujhala Devi

Ph.D Scholar, PG Dept of English

University of Jammu

J&k, India,

Ujhala.sharma@gmail.com

An Unjustified Justice – A Study of Arundhati Roy's Broken Republic

Abstract:

This paper is an attempt to critically analyze Roy's text *Broken Republic*. Roy has personally lived with the tribals, who are considered as fourth world citizens, of Dongria Kondh of Odisha, India. She has tried to make a comparative study between the real world and virtual world of these tribals who are also recognised as naxalites by the govt. of India. The diplomacy of Indian government over forest protection laws and rehabilitation of the displaced people is exposed in the book. The Indian government has been criticized by the Roy for their claiming of the war on the poorest people of the country. This paper is an analysis of all the four parts of the book which highlights various naxal issues and attacks the government on various grounds like government's attitude and approach towards the Maoist, Roy's personal encounters with the Naxals and insight to the functioning, motives and methodology of the Maoists, shows how the development of the country has not reached down to the tribals of the country and it is at the cost of debilitate the poor tribals without any compensation and lastly there is an attack on the practice of 'corporate Philanthropy' in India.

Key Words: Fourth World, Maoists, Naxals, Indian Government, Corporates, Forests, tribals.

The concept of the fourth world is introduced by George Manuel, the most significant, powerful and honored indigenous leader of Canada. He advocated the political unification of

indigenous people across the globe by the formation of the Fourth World Movement and gave importance to the concept of fourth world. As the president of World Council of indigenous people Manuel travelled Sweden, Nicaragua, Chile and Guatemala and realized that indigenous people have much in common. He has published a book named *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* in the year 1974 with the assistance of Michael Posluns so as to promote the perspective of the Fourth World. In this book he has included the shared experiences of the indigenous communities of the world which are struggling for self determination and are undergoing the identity crisis. The Fourth World people are the original indigenous inhabitants who existed before European or other colonizers invaded, occupied, or otherwise conquered and settled in their homelands. Aboriginals of Australia, Native people of America, Maoris of New Zealand, First Nations of Canada, Dalits / Tribes of India are considered as people of the Fourth World. These people are both economically and politically marginalized. Manuel said that once the Fourth World enters the historical consciousness of the globe, it arguably beacons the most dramatic history of transculturation ever witnessed, carrying within constitutive forces that shape the post-Columbian world in all its manifestations.

Lives of natives of the fourth world are affected by the socio, economical, literary and cultural circumstances which lead to the evolution of fourth world literature. Fourth world Literature is the result of constant efforts of aboriginal representatives who are marginalized economically and politically. One such non-fiction literary product is *Broken Republic* by Arundhati Roy written in 2007. She has shown the connections of the homelands of the tribal people and their struggle for survival and recognition along with a beautiful collection of photographs of the pathetic lives of the tribal people in their own land.

Arundhati Roy was born on 24 November 1959, her full name was Suzanna Arundhati Roy, an Indian author best known for her novel *The God of Small Things* (1997) for which she won the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 1997. She has also a keen interest in the environmental causes and human rights. She has written numerous essays on contemporary culture and politics. Her book *Broken Republic* is a mirror to the plight of the tribal people of the Orissa, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. The tribes of Dongria kondh, a place in the state of Orissa in India have been alleged to support the naxals. She has condemned the Indian Government's armed actions against the naxalites in India and called it "war on the poorest people in the country." These

naxalites are the people who are not anti-patriotic but they fight to implement the constitution and fight for their own rights. Another similar work by Roy is *We Are One: A Celebration of Tribal Peoples* published in 2009 which explores the culture of peoples around the world, portraying the diversity and the threats to their existence. Her other non-fiction writings are: *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* (2001), *An Ordinary's Person's Guide to Empire* (2005), and *Listening to Grasshoppers* (2009).

Broken Republic is a non-fiction work divided into four essays namely 'Mr Chidambaram's War', 'Walking with the comrades', 'Trickledown Revolution' and 'Capitalism: A Ghost Story'. This book is an undaunted attack on the Indian Government's policy which allows the corporations to take over the tribal land and resources. It highlights the worsening internal conflict between the government of the country and the local inhabitants. What is more pathetic is that the Govt. of India is not willing to do any compromise with these displaced people rather their situation is normalized by giving their action the name of 'economic progress' and any action on the part of these tribal people is considered as a terrorist activity. India's tribal people occupy a large area from West Bengal through Jharkhand, Orissa, Chhattisgarh and other parts of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra and this whole belt is called 'Red Corridor' or the 'Maoist Corridor'. Feyzi Ismail has commented over this situation in book review of this work that, "it is no wonder then why thousands of tribals have joined the Maoists' guerilla army. The Maoists have been fighting alongside the tribals in order to protect the last thing they have: their land".

People, who live in these forests, including the Maoists who see themselves as waging war against the Indian state, are tribal people, the poorest people in the country. They have lived on these lands for centuries with no schools, hospitals, roads or running water. They are made to pay for the fact that they live on the land which is rich with Iron-ore, Bauxite, Uranium and Tin, all of it desperately desired by major mining corporations like Vedanta, Tata, Essar and Sterlite. The Prime Minister has declared that his government is duty bound to exploit India's mineral wealth to fuel India's economic boom. The government and the profit-seeking identities like MNC's etc. work together against the local indigenous community. Huge mineral deposits have

compounded the situation of the local inhabitants. They are accused of being supporting the Maoists and getting help in turn.

First part of the book 'Mr Chidambaram's War' attacks on the government attitude and approach towards the Maoist. This part raises some fundamental questions regarding the real meaning of civilization. The government is focused on the development of the country and neglects the basic needs of the tribals. This negligence on the part of government is the reason behind rising naxalite problems. The flat topped hills rich in bauxite ore sold for their rich mineral quality are worshipped by the inhabitants of Dongria kondh, a village in south Orissa making them feel as if their God has been sold. A multinational company named Vedanta (the branch of Hindu philosophy that teaches the ultimate nature of knowledge), owned by Anil Agarwal, the Indian billionaire who lives in London has entered the hills and is responsible for the destruction of large forest covers, rivers, streams and the entire homelands of the tribal people who live in the forested heart of India. These tribals are made to pay the price of the progress of the country. "Hers is a liberated voice clamoring against the political colonization practiced by political parties, governments, socio-religious groups and the so called prophets of progress and development at the expense of the downtrodden masses. For a considerable chunk of the people of India, the governments that rule over them are no better than the foreign colonizers that once ruled over India". (1)

The tribes of the country who live intimately attached to their lands share with the author and with the world that they have a deep need for a sense of belonging to each other and to nature. They have the natural instinct of survival and they plunder their motherland hoping that an accumulating material surplus will make up for the profound, unfathomable thing that they have lost. These naxalites are shown up by the government as biggest threat to the country.

They are made homeless and deprived by the government itself and so as a sign of revolt they form a major part of People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA), a Maoist group. They are, "the landless, the homeless, Dalits, workers, weavers. They're pitted against a juggernaut of injustices, including policies that allow a wholesale corporate takeover of people's land and resources" (4). Maoists are basically the members of the banned Communist Party of India (CPI). They hold the view that the inequality of Indian society can only be redressed by the violent overthrow of the Indian state. In an interview with the one of the top leader of the

Maosits named Comrade Ganapathy it has come to the knowledge of Roy and the readers that they do not want to come to power rather they are equipped to properly address the insane diversity of India's caste-ridden society. This army is made up of, "almost entirely of desperately poor tribal people living in conditions of such chronic hunger that it verges on famine of the kind we only associate with sub-Saharan Africa. They are people who have been mercilessly exploited for decades, consistently cheated by small businessmen and moneylenders, the women raped as a matter of right by police and forest department personnel" (6).

These deprived people do not support the development of the country which costs them their uprooting from their homelands. They do not believe in the developing of the forestlands into roads as wide as aircraft runways at the cost of their own annihilation as they are a bulk of malnourished people who have never seen a train or a bus. They are only fighting for their survival. Roy tells that in a report drafted by Planning Commission in 2008 named '*Development Challenges in Extremist Affected Areas*' it is said that the Maoist movement is originally a movement run by the poor and landless peasantry. According to the report this movement is a reaction to the social injustices, inequality, insecurity, and local development. It is their right to fight for their homelands and like any other citizen of India as they too deserve the justice. Denny Joseph has rightly commented on the situation as, "It is simplistic and unconvincing that a group of people (the Maoists for example) find pleasure in being a nuisance to the administrative machinery even at the cost of death, deprivation, poverty, and above all sheer neglect. People turn against government because it obstructs their right to life, dignity and Livelihood". (2)

The Government of the country has oppressed the voices of these tribal peoples without having any negotiations or talks with them. It is more ironical to see that government has deployed special police groups like Greyhounds, Cobras, and Scorpions with a license to kill in the forestlands rich in minerals. These Special Forces have killed, raped and burned the forests of Dantewada killing about 50,000 people and making over three lakh people homeless. Government has also planned to deploy more police and Para-military troops in these forests. They have also set up a brigade headquarter in Bilaspur and an airbase in Rajanandgaon. Moreover, the Air force has been given the right to fire any time in self-defense. But the self-defense is denied to these poor people of the state of Jharkhand. Such an activity on the part of government raises questions on the credibility of the democracy of country like India where the country is declaring war within its borders and calling these poor people as the 'single biggest

threat to the country'. Government of India attacks the naxalites offensively so as to aid the corporations with whom it has signed the 'Memoranda of Understanding' (MoU).

Roy has raised some questions to this decision of government as to "Fire at whom? How in god's name will the security forces be able to distinguish a Maoist from an ordinary person who is running terrified through the jungle? Will adivasis carrying the bows and arrows they have carried for centuries now count as Maoists too? Are non-combatant Maoist sympathizers valid targets?"(9). The answer is simple that government is least concerned with the tribals of the area. The Committees such as People's committee in Lalgarh has joined hands against the atrocities of police. People's committee is considered as the 'over ground wing' of the Maoists. The leader of this committee, Chahatradhar Mahatao is arrested and withheld without bail on the allegation of supporting the Maoists. Feyzi Ismail has truly understood the situation and commented in her book review in Counterfire that "The real question is not whether violence is good or bad, as the state media would have made us believe, but whether people have the right to defend themselves when they are under attack, and how. In a constant effort to appear reasonable, the government periodically offers peace talks. Yet there will be no resolution to the war when what the Maoists are after is justice; something they believe the present system cannot deliver".

In Dantewara district of Chhattisgarh which has some of the world's finest Iron-ore, 644 villages have been emptied. 50,000 people have been moved into wretched police camps, the young among them have been armed and trained to become a vicious peoples' militia called the Salwa Judum. The remaining 300,000 people are off the government's radar, no one really knows where they are, how they are surviving. The police has branded all those not in the camps as Maoists or Maoist sympathizers which makes them legitimate targets for India's law.

The government fails to resettle even one percent of the displaced people of the forest lands. Their lands have been given to the development projects to set up special economic zones. The Land Acquisition Act has not served its purpose in case of these deprived people where government is forcibly acquiring land in the name of 'public purpose' to give it to the private companies. These multinational companies have the power to "buy ministers and media barons and policy wonks, they can run their own NGO's, their own militias, they can buy whole governments. They'll even buy the Maoists" (15). These mineral-rich tribal lands are a dreamland to the corporation world. The tribals like the Ho, the Oraon, the Kols, the Santhals,

the Mundas and Gonds have always tried to save their lands from the Britishers, Zamindars, money-lenders and now from the corporation world. They are always prone to the threat of being crushed, killed and defeated by the foreigners.

These corporations have always won their battles against the local people and are successful in uprooting them from their habitats. The Gods of these adivasi people i.e. mineral rich hills are the sources of rich money and cheap stores for the multinational companies like the Mittals, the Jindals, Tata, Essar, Posco, Vedanta etc. What is more disturbing is that these displaced adivasis are not provided any desirable compensation in return. They are the worst sufferers in the name of development of the country.

In the second part of the book 'Walking with the Comrades' Roy narrates her personal encounters with the Naxals. She also provides the insight to the functioning, motives and methodology of the Maoists. Maoists who are mostly the tribals live in the forest to protect their lands. They are living the life of deprived ones. Their children are having no access to the basic need of education and are disease prone. 'Operation Green Hunt' has been run by the govt to clean the forest land of its inhabitants but it has been denied by the then Home Minister P. Chidambaram saying it to be mere creation of the media. Roy has also brought the fact into notice that from last decade or so govt has secretly signed hundreds of MoU with the corporations which are worth billions of rupees for the steel plants, aluminum refineries, power plants, dams and mines.

Roy while living with the Maoist finds that their main aim is not a war on the govt. but to fight for their own rights and justice. There are Ballarpur paper mills in the Dandkarnaya forests of Jharkahnd which is owned by the Thapars for forty-five as they have signed a contract with the govt. which extracts 150,000 tonnes of bamboo with a huge subsidy. The tribes of the area are exploited badly for they are paid 30 paise/bundle which is a negligible amount as compared to the profits earned by the Thapars. The tribals are not ready to accept this discrimination at the hands of govt and the corporations and that too in their own lands. Another obstacle for the tribals is the forest department. The forest officials prevent the local people from "ploughing their fields, grazing their cattle, collecting firewood, plucking leaves, picking fruit-from living." (48). The forest officials bring elephants to destroy the crops and the soil in the fields of the local people. They also beat, arrest and humiliate them. On one hand insurgency

claims to defend the land rights of the indigenous tribal people who inhabit the forested eastern part of India while on the other hand the authorities call them an obstacle in path of India's development. To clear the paths for the development of the county means clearing the tens of thousands of inhabitants, tribes and dissidents alike. This is a violation of the constitution which protects the rights of adivasi people. The democracy and the free market have fused into a single predatory organism with a thin, constricted imagination that revolves almost entirely around the idea of maximizing profit.

The third part of the book named 'Trickle Down Revolution' shows how the development of the country has not reached down to the tribals of the country. The growth made by the country is at the cost of debilitating the poor tribals without any compensation. Roy says that there is no relation between the growth and jobs. It is only a myth and in the last part of the book 'Capitalism: A Ghost Story' there is an attack on the practice of 'corporate Philanthropy' in India. It's only this corporate world which is responsible for the misfortunes of the tribal people. India and the corporation world have together exploited the natural resources under the guise of Corporate Social Responsibility.

Through this work of non-fiction Roy succeeds in giving international voice to the tribals of the country who are called as 'the biggest international security challenge ever faced' by the then Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. The global capitalism has given rise to the chaos of unexplained displacement, dispossession and deprivation of the poorest people of the country i.e. the tribals, the fourth world citizens.

Works Cited

Roy, Arundhati. *Broken Republic*. Penguin Books. 2011.

---, *We Are One: A Celebration of Tribal Peoples*. Quadrille Publishing Ltd. 2009.

Manuel, George. *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality*. Collier-Macmillan. 1974.

Ismail, Feyazi. "Broken Republic". Counterfire weekly, 18 Aug. 2011,

www.counterfire.org/articles/book-reviews/14499-broken-republic.

Bandyopadhyay, Debarati. "Arundhati Roy: Environment and Literary Criticism".

Occasional paper. vol 24. April 2011, pp.1-18. *Institute of Developmental Studies*.

Brotherston, Gordon. *Book of the Fourth World: Reading the Native Americas Through*

Their Literature. CUP Archive. 1992.

Mezu, Rose Ure. "The Fourth world Multiculturalism as Antidote to Global Violence". *Chicken bones: A Journal*. 4 April 2007.