

RESISTANCE FROM THE MARGIN IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S *THE GOD OF*  
*SMALL THINGS* AND *THE MINISTRY OF UTMOST HAPPINESS*



A Dissertation

Submitted by

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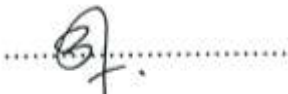
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The undersigned certifies that I have read and recommended to the Faculty of Social Sciences and Education, Nepal Open University, Nepal, for acceptance, a dissertation entitled "Resistance from the Margin in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*" by Surendra Prasad Ghimire in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree in Master of Philosophy in English.



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## LETTER OF APPROVAL

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how Arundhati Roy's novels, *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, have depicted subaltern women and the variations in their resistance to injustices against them as she has published her novels at twenty-year intervals, locating them in different historical, political, and cultural contexts in India. This dissertation explores how subaltern women are depicted, how they resist injustices, and how their methods of resistance differ in Roy's novels, which previous studies have largely overlooked. From a theoretical perspective, this study utilizes Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's concepts of subaltern and Antonio Gramsci's idea of counter-hegemony to analyze how subaltern women have been depicted and resisted injustices in Roy's novels. The findings have identified that Roy's novels have exhibited victimization of subaltern women's and their resistance to injustices; however, the nature of victimization and the ways of resistance against injustices have differed in both novels. *The God of Small Things* has exposed the victimization of subaltern women like Ammu and Rahel by domestic injustices and disparities related to education, marriage, divorce, gender, and caste. In contrast, Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* has shown subaltern women such as Anjum, Tilotama, and Revathy have been victimized more often by state-led injustices, political systems, transgender issues, and insurgencies apart from caste, religion, and class. The study has further reported that in Roy's *The God of Small Things*, the victimized women have resisted injustice by rejecting the gender disparity within the family members, questioning the caste system by keeping physical relationships with lower caste, refusing patriarchal norms by developing their agency to make their own decisions about their marriage and divorce. However, her *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* has uncovered the subaltern women's resistance to injustices in a broader

context by refusing all forms of injustice against humanity, establishing solidarity with marginalized people, and constructing an alternative world to overcome the injustices in the latest changing context of India. This study provides a better understanding of the variations in subaltern women's resistance in Roy's novels and in Indian society. It adds significant value to existing subaltern literature and society by revealing subaltern women's latest ways of resisting injustice.

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Thank you

Surendra Prasad Ghimire

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## CHAPTER I

### ARUNDHATI ROY AND SUBALTERN CONCERN IN HER NOVELS

This dissertation explores the variations in resistance from the margins, focusing mainly on the women characters in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Existing studies (Dingwaney Needham, 2005; Saeed, 2021) on *The God of Small Things* have depicted the victimization and marginalization of subaltern women by patriarchal social systems. These women are portrayed as being unsafe in their homes and public places, ignored, tortured, and subjugated, depriving them of their fundamental rights and reducing them to docile and subhuman beings. Focusing on the gender role in Roy's novel, Sheba (2021) and Shrivastwa (2024) have shown that the society depicted in the novel is patriarchal and males determine the roles of women at home and in society, and women are supposed to serve the males, particularly their brothers, fathers, and husbands. Further, some studies (Hariharasudan & Gnanamony, 2017; Lahiri, 2007) have reported that long-standing male-dominated society, religion, caste, and economic class, as depicted in the novel, have been some responsible factors for the victimization and marginalization of subaltern women.

Moreover, exploring Roy's *The God of Small Things*, Pandey and Vipin (2012) and Tickell (2007) have revealed the devastating condition of subaltern women because of social injustices against them and a male-dominated society in India, yet they have been aware of injustices and have attempted to reject injustices; however, they have failed as they have become vulnerable in such a social arena. In addition, studies (Casey, 2015; Dang, 2021) on Roy's novel have shown that subaltern women have been deprived of the basic requirements of their lives, such as education, property rights and freedom of speech. These existing studies have reported that Roy's

novel *The God of Small Things* has exhibited subaltern women's victimization and marginalization because of gender, caste, and religion, and they have been aware of such injustices against them.

On the other hand, recent studies by Anuar and Asl (2021) and Awasthi (2021) on Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* have revealed that subaltern women have developed their consciousness and awareness of injustices against them. Further, studies (Awasthi, 2022; Mendes & Lau, 2020) on Roy's novel have shown that subaltern people have been victimized and marginalized because of injustices such as the caste system, lack of security for minorities, and unfair distribution of services in modern India. In addition, Fatima and Saleem (2020) and Maerhofer (2015) have informed us that the people from the margins have been exploited and victimized by the capitalist economic system, religious fundamentalism, riots, and the problem of Kashmir. Likewise, studies (Gorman-Darif, 2018; Jahan, 2021; Suleman & Binti, 2020) on Roy's novel have depicted that transgender and subaltern women have been victimized and marginalized by gender, class, religions, state-led injustices, and the latest developed neo-liberal economic system of the new globalized world. However, recent studies (Kuiti, 2021; Suleman & Binti, 2020) have reflected that transgender women have questioned the heteronormative social system by breaching the established norms made by the male-dominated society of India. Thus, existing literature on Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* has shown that women have been marginalized by traditional gender roles, caste, religion, capitalism, Kashmir insurgency, and state-led injustices, and they have awareness about such injustices against them.

The existing studies on Roy's two novels, as discussed above, have shown that subaltern women have been victimized and marginalized because of the caste system

of Hindus, traditional roles of gender, politics of India, Kashmir insurgency, religions, economic systems, male-dominated ideology, and state-led injustices. Further, subaltern women are aware of injustices against them and have attempted to defy them. However, recent studies on Roy's novels have almost ignored how subaltern women have resisted injustices against them differently. Exploring the variations in the resistance of the subaltern women by comparing and contrasting Roy's novels has remained a prominent concern as Roy has published her novels over the gap of twenty years, and she has represented variations in the women's resistance to dismantling the injustices against them. In *The God of Small Things*, female characters such as Ammu and Rahel have been victimized in their own families and society by their society's established patriarchal norms and values; however, they have resisted the injustices by rejecting their society's cultural and social restrictions. For instance, Ammu married an inter-caste Brahmin, and she divorced without family consent. Later, she had a physical relationship with an untouchable man, Dalit Valutha. Rahel did not follow the expected social values that females should accomplish in a male-dominated society. Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* depicts subaltern women's victimization and struggle, incorporating events from the partition of India to almost the early 21st century. Most marginal female characters in the novel have resisted injustice by questioning and breaching social, political, and cultural norms and values to construct a world of happiness for all people in a broader social context. For instance, Anjum was not accepted in her home and society as she was born with both male and female genital organs; however, she rejected traditional gender roles and left her home to construct a world welcoming all the neglected and ignored people. Tilotama struggled for the betterment and freedom of Kashmiri women, and Revathy fought for the freedom of other exploited working-class women.

Roy's depictions of the victimization of subaltern women and their variations in resistance against injustice in both novels have motivated me to ask the following research questions for this dissertation: How are subaltern women depicted in her two novels? How do subaltern women resist the injustices in her two novels? And how do subaltern women's resistances against injustice differ in her two novels? As a proposed argument for my research problem, I have found Roy's novels *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* have depicted the devastating ground reality of marginalized, victimized, and exploited women from multiple layers of injustices constructed by established social, cultural, religious, and political systems of their contemporary time frameworks of India in the fictional form and these exploited and marginalized women have resisted against the injustices on them by questioning and revolting against such established social norms and values; however, their ways of resistance against such injustice have differed in her both novels, thereby Roy's novels have differently depicted marginal women's resistances against the injustice on them in their contemporary time frameworks of India. In addition, in exploring the answer to the research questions, I have utilized Guha's concepts of subaltern and historiography (Guha, 1987c), Spivak's idea of the gendered subaltern and subaltern consciousness (Spivak, 2010), and Antonio Gramsci's idea of counter-hegemony (Gramsci, 1992), as theoretical perspectives since my study has been interested in exploring the depiction of subaltern women and their variations in the resistance against injustice as depicted in Roy's novels.

In this context, I argue that Roy's novels have depicted various kinds of exploitation of subaltern women in Indian society and their resistance against the layers of injustice on them; however, their resistance against the layers of injustice on them has drastically differed in her two novels. She has depicted different ways of

women's resistance from the margins: resistance from domestic injustices to a broader context, individual to communal resistance to injustice, and resistance to injustices by providing alternative solutions to overcome the injustice. As Spivak (2010) argues, the subaltern is a dynamic, changeable, and contextual concept; therefore, the subaltern's representation and resistance are also transformed based on changing context. For instance, Roy's *The God of Small Things* shows women's victimization and marginalization, focusing on a Syrian Christian family, particularly domestic violence against women, and their resistance by breaking the laws of love established by the male-dominated society of India. Subaltern women such as Ammu and Rahel have individually resisted injustices, and they have not found better solutions to escape from such injustices; instead, they have been victimized and have become tragic figures; however, her second novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, reflects women's victimization from various layers of social, political, and cultural injustices and their resistance against such injustice in a broader social context. In addition, subaltern women have shown a sense of unity and harmony among the exploited and marginalized people and have fought for the betterment of all the exploited and ignored people. They have revolted against injustices to establish a harmonious world without any injustice or discrimination. Therefore, Roy's novels have exhibited variations in the resistance of marginalized women, which ultimately has resulted in solutions to the problems of broken families and hearts by establishing a shared world of marginal women.

The primary objective of this dissertation is to study the variations in resistance to injustices faced by subaltern women in Roy's *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. The secondary objective of this research is to study the depiction of marginal women in Roy's novels and their resistance to

injustice. Exploring the variations in the resistance of marginalized women in Roy's two novels has greater significance as she has published her novels at intervals of twenty years, incorporating the historical, social, religious, and political conditions of India, mainly focusing on the independence of India from British rule up to the early twenty-first century. In such a context, subaltern women's conditions and ways of resisting injustices have undergone many transformations, which this research has uncovered, adding value and novelty to the existing literature of subaltern studies. In addition, in contrast to previous literature, this research has compared and contrasted Roy's two novels to scrutinize variations in the resistance of subaltern women against injustice in the changing context of India. In doing so, this research utilizes the subaltern insights developed by Guha and Spivak and counter-hegemony, as discussed by Gramsci, to investigate how subaltern women have resisted the injustices against them differently, which previous studies have almost failed to explore. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the depiction of subaltern women and their resistance to injustices by comparing and contrasting Roy's two novels. Moreover, this research has exhibited subaltern women's struggle and atrocities and their revolt to overcome such situations in the changing context of India; therefore, it adds significant value to existing subaltern studies by depicting various ways of women's resistance as depicted in the novels.

This research is based on library research, exploring the depiction of exploited and marginalized women and their variations in resistance against injustice, as represented in Roy's two novels. Thus, this research has explored variations in the resistance of exploited and ignored women against injustice, focusing on female characters, particularly Ammu and Rahel in *The God of Small Things* and Anjum, Tilotama, and Revathy in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. I have selected these

female characters purposefully from Roy's two novels, as they are the major female characters, and the stories of the novels revolve around them. In addition, unlike other female characters in Roy's novels, they have resisted the injustices against them. Therefore, focusing on the marginalized women characters, this study has ignored other subaltern males and minor women characters from her novels, as these limited women characters from Roy's novels have provided ample space and information to explore the variations in the women's resistance. Subaltern women have resisted various kinds of injustices related to caste, class, gender, and other social and political injustices. While resisting the injustices, they have adopted various strategies in both novels, as they have not been limited to resisting the injustices within the domain of their families; instead, they have revolted against the established political system, gender roles, caste, religion, economic system of India, and state-led injustices. In doing so, I have utilized the subaltern concept developed by Guha and Spivak, as my study is interested in exploring subaltern women and their resistance to injustices against them in Roy's novels.

In addition, this dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first chapter sets the context of the study by providing the research gap, research questions, objectives, significance, and limitations. The second chapter explores the various existing scholarships related to Roy's novels to identify the research gap. In the same way, chapter three provides the research methodology and theoretical underpinnings to analyze Roy's novels. Moreover, chapter four analyzes Roy's novels to find answers to the research questions. In addition, this chapter explores Roy's novels to investigate how subaltern women have been depicted, how they have resisted the injustice against them, and how their resistances have differed in her two novels. Likewise, chapter five provides the conclusion and the implications of this study.

### **Arundhati Roy and her Novels**

Roy has published her debut novel, *The God of Small Things*, against the backdrop of post-colonial India. In her novel, she has depicted events from the late sixties to the early nineties, mainly focusing on Syrian Christians in Kerala, their caste system, and family tragedies in India's social and political changing context (Tickell, 2007). The younger women, particularly those of the second and third generations like Ammu and Rahel, recognize their victimization and limitations as women and attempt to resist by challenging traditional Syrian Christian norms. In addition, Indian society has not been as liberal as people had expected after its independence from British rule. Roy has claimed that "fifty years after independence, India is still struggling with the legacy of colonialism" (Roy, 2001, p. 13), and she has further stated that her novel *The God of Small Things* is "no less political than any of my essays" (Roy, 2001, p. 10). Roy's remarks indicate that her novel has depicted people from the margins, and like in her non-fiction, she has resisted injustices against marginalized people. Thus, in her fiction, she has revealed the stories of marginalized people in India, blurring the boundary between fiction and non-fiction (Ganapathy-Doré, 2007). She has questioned the existing social, political, and religious systems of Indian societies, which have restricted the freedom of marginalized people and exposed their atrocities and challenges in a fictional form.

Moreover, Roy published her second novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, in 2017, twenty years after her first novel, *The God of Small Things*. In her novel, she has incorporated the significant incidents from the partition of India to the almost early twenty-first century and has depicted the victimization of people from the margins in the broader context of India. Baul and Sansam (2014) have claimed that Roy has wanted to eliminate the chaotic situation in India, standing by

the side of marginalized and victimized people. She has been against the Narmada Dam Project, the program of nuclear weapons, globalization, neoliberalism, massive hydroelectric dams, and state terrorism. In addition, she has advocated for the independence of Kashmir from India (Baul & Sansam, 2014). In the same way, she has shown the marginalization and victimization of transgender people in her novel, as they have not fallen into the traditional gender categories.

Furthermore, Roy has fictionalized transgender people's social victimization and marginalization in the Indian social context. Her take on the justice of marginalized people has been reflected in her novel by uncovering the hidden stories of victimized people and their struggles to overcome from injustices. In addition, she has been against the caste system. She rejects the caste system in both novels by depicting the tremendous consequences of such a tradition in Indian society, which divides humanity into various categories. She has claimed that "Caste was implied in people's names, in the way people referred to each other, in the work they did, in the clothes they wore, in the marriages that were arranged, and in the language we spoke"(Roy, 2014, p. 17). Roy's remarks indicate how the caste system has been rampant in Indian society and has been reflected in every activity of their lives.

In addition, as an author and social activist, Roy, in her novel *The God of Small Things*, has questioned the political system of communism in Kerala by exposing its weakness and mistreatment of the people from the margins. However, Ahmad (1997) has argued that Roy's anti-communist sentiment is reflected in her novel, as she is against communist political ideology, which is common to the radical intelligence of cities in India and almost all over the world. In the same way, marginalized people, including women, have been victimized; however, the communist government in Kerala has been deaf enough to address their problem. The

communist government has promised to eradicate the injustices against marginalized people related to the caste system, religion, and gender. Conversely, they "replace God with Marx, Satan with the bourgeoisie, Heaven with a classless society, the Church with the party" (Roy, 1997, p. 66). Later, "Nehru dismissed the communist government and announced fresh elections. The Congress Party returned to power" (Roy, 1997, p. 68). However, the government of the communists, or Indian democracy, has failed to address the marginalized people's problems.

Nevertheless, Roy speaks from the side of marginalized people and supports them in resisting the injustices in her fictional and non-fictional writings. Prasad (2004) argues that Roy has been on the side of people from the margins of India and has rejected economic inequality, indigenous people's suppression by robbing their lands, testing nuclear weapons, corruption, and establishing bigger dams by exploiting the natural world. This shows that Roy has resisted the irrational and unjust activities of the government of India. In the same way, Peters (2007) has concluded that Roy has been not only a novelist but also a social critic of India, as she has unpacked social injustices such as the caste system and gender discrimination in her novels. This shows that Roy's novels are the microcosm of India, where she has reflected social injustices and victimization of the people from the margins. Thus, several scholars and researchers have critically evaluated her novels to investigate the condition of marginalized people in Indian society.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This dissertation investigates the variations in the resistance of subaltern women to injustices against them in Roy's *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. In addition, this research explores the depiction of subaltern women and their resistance to injustices in Roy's novels. Therefore, this section explores, evaluates, and discusses various scholarships in Roy's novels related to the objective of this study under three themes: the depiction of margins, the reflection of women's condition, and the depiction of subalterns in Roy's novels.

#### **The Depiction of Margins in Roy's Novels**

Studies on Roy's novels *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* have depicted the victimization of marginalized people because of caste, class, religion, gender, and the political system of India. For instance, adopting the Marxist perspective, Fatima and Saleem (2020) have found that Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* has exhibited the exploitation and victimization of working-class people by the economic system of capitalism, utilizing them for their economic growth without letting them practice their personal freedom and treating them as commodities. However, their study, by focusing on how marginalized people have been victimized because of the capitalist economic system, ignores the victimization of marginalized people based on gender, caste, and religion; thus, this study explores all kinds of victimization of marginalized people, adopting a subaltern perspective. Further, Kalita (2021) has disclosed that Roy has used allegorical form in her novel to depict the hidden oppression of marginalized people in contemporary India. Likewise, Kłaniecki (2023) has stated that Roy's novel critiques the neoliberal economic system in Indian society by depicting the devastating consequences of such systems in the

lives of marginalized people. His depiction of the victimization of marginalized people by the neoliberal economic system discloses a much-discussed issue in the exploitation of subaltern people in the latest changing context of India; however, in this study, I further discuss focusing on the marginalization of subaltern women by incorporating gender, caste, religion, and the political system of India.

Moreover, further studies on Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* have reported that religious fundamentalism victimized people from the margins, particularly those who belonged to religious minorities. For example, Iyer (2018) has shown that Roy's novel has revealed the marginalization and victimization of religious minorities, particularly in Gujarat riots and in Kashmir movement, because of Hindu religious fundamentalism in India. Likewise, Maerhofer (2015) has argued that Roy's novel has depicted the marginalization and victimization of Indian and Kashmiri Muslims by depriving them of obtaining their fundamental human rights by the Hindu-dominated society of India to establish India as a purely Hindu state. Nevertheless, these studies have revealed that the people from the margins have been exploited because of Hindu religious fundamentalism; albeit, these studies have ignored how such victimized people have responded to the injustices against them; conversely, this study focuses on the resistance of victimized women against all kinds of injustices.

Scholarships on Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* have further reported that unfair practices of the Indian political system have been responsible for the marginalization of working-class people. For instance, Manoj (2017) has claimed that Roy's novel subverts the claim of mainstream politics that India has been a democratic country by exposing the Indian society where minorities have been marginalized and have become the victims of undemocratic political practices in India. In the same

way, Menozzi (2019) claims that Roy's novel depicts an Indian political system against marginalized people by blurring fiction and non-fiction together. These studies have revealed how the Indian democratic system has been undemocratic, but how such victimized people have questioned such unfair rules of democratic government has been invisible in their studies.

Further, some studies reveal that Roy's unique use of language in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* reflects the undemocratic Indian governing system, which has ignored the people from the margins. For example, focusing on the stylistic analysis in the novel, Bhatti et al. (2021) have argued that Roy's use of various levels of stylistic devices such as phonology, morphology, syntax, coherence, cohesion, and several metaphorical languages such as simile, metaphor, symbol, parallelism, unusual capitalization, repetition, and unconventional sentence structures, has reflected her criticism of Indian leaders and their governing systems in India. Likewise, Ross (2022) has claimed that Roy's deliberate inclusion of several vernacular and local dialects, such as Kashmiri and Urdu, in her novel showed her political use of language to resist the injustices created by the Indian governing system by promoting monolingual sentiment in India. Although the above studies have, to some extent, shown how Roy has rejected the Indian undemocratic system of governance by using language as a medium for revolting against injustices, these studies have failed to show how subaltern people have resisted the undemocratic system of India.

On the other hand, studies on Roy's *The God of Small Things* have reported the victimization of marginal women in the post-colonial backdrop of India because of the male-dominated capitalist society of India. For instance, exploring Roy's novel from a postcolonial eco-feminist perspective, Chae (2015) has argued that the male-

dominated capitalist economic system equally exploited both women and the natural environment by focusing on mass construction, mass production, and mal-development practices in India. Moreover, how such victimization of women in India has transformed and how exploited women have responded to their victimization would be a prominent concern in understanding the existing reality of women in India. Further, Pal (2023) has identified that Roy's novel has depicted long-standing historical domination and exploitation of women because of gender by alluding to the mythical story of Kunti and her cruel treatment of Karna as she gave birth to him before her marriage. Pal's study has reported how gender roles victimize women and force women to make cruel decisions to save their social position.

Furthermore, Potter (2022) has found that Roy's *The God of Small Things* reveals the long standing of 'micro-fascism' in Indian society, which divides society by spreading horror and terror and restricts individual freedom, human rights, and the power to reject injustice. However, how victimized people in such a social system might develop their consciousness regarding their victimization remains a prominent concern in understanding the existing condition of people on the margins. In addition to highlighting the consequences of imperialism in Roy's novel, (Mullaney, 2002) has claimed that Roy's novel has depicted consequences related to imperialism such as exploitation, displacement of people from the margins, and identity crises in Indian society. The social and political systems assist in understanding power relations and how such a power relation victimized the subaltern people in society. However, how marginalized people have modified themselves in the latest context has remained a significant issue to be explored.

In addition, studies on Roy's *The God of Small Things* have critically investigated the role of communist leaders and their negligence to establish social

justice by addressing the social problems of marginalized people as they publicly promised. For example, Jani (2009) has reported that Roy's novel has depicted anti-communist sentiment, as communist leaders ignored the long-standing caste system and gender discrimination in India and did not address the problem created by capitalism. Communist leaders, particularly in Kerala, promised to address the problem of marginalized people (Tickell, 2007); therefore, the above studies have revealed the contradiction between the promise and reality of communist leaders as they ignored people's demands from the margins.

These studies have informed us how the government and leaders of the working class have overlooked the injustices against marginalized people. In addition, such irresponsible political systems and leaders helped to continue the victimization of the working class. For instance, Bibi et al. (2021) have reported that Roy's novel depicts the victimization of working-class people, restricting their fundamental rights to their lives by the capitalist social system, which considers working-class people commodities. Nevertheless, these studies have reflected how the people from the margins have been suppressed by the injustices related to the political system of their time; however, the consciousness of working-class people about the injustices against them and their resistance against injustice has not been reported.

### **The Reflection of Women's Condition in Roy's Novels**

Studies in Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* have explored the reasons behind the exploitation and marginalization of transgender women in the latest changing context of India. For example, Suleman and Binti (2020) have reported that the poor economic class of transgender women and the negative attitude of society towards them have been the most fundamental factors of transgender women's victimization in India. However, transgender women's responses to the public's

perspective on them also become significant in understanding them. Thus, Sarkar (2022) has identified that Roy's novel showed transgender women's solidarity to overcome all kinds of injustices against them in the backdrop of neoliberal India. In addition, Kumar (2023) has reflected that the novel's protagonist, Anjum, overcomes injustice by establishing unity with people from the margins and detaching from so-called civilized society. The unities of people from the margins and their rejection of injustices have projected new avenues in their awareness of injustices and rejecting all kinds of injustice against them. Therefore, Anuar and Asl (2021) have reported that Roy's novel questions the traditional gender role by depicting Anjum's struggles and revolt against the long-established heterosexual normativity in Indian society. Marginalized women's realizations of oppressive traditional gender roles and revolting against such practices have suggested that they have an awareness of injustice against them, yet how their awareness and resistance to injustice transformed in the changing context of India will be worth noting.

Furthermore, studies in Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* have reported that women have been victimized at home and in public spaces. For example, Gorman-Darif (2018) has depicted that Revethy was exploited at home and in public places as she was raped, became a mother, left her baby, and joined in the party; however, she did not have much hope of victory against injustice, yet she joined in the party as she did not have other options in her life. The depictions of the gloomy and vulnerable lives of women and their lack of hope of victory in Roy's novel have singled out the submissive nature of suppressed women in India. In addition, Lau and Mendes (2022) have argued that the unromantic romance of S. Tilotam and Musa has indicated the patriarchal social structure and ideology of India, which restricted the union of lovers by constructing barriers around them. Roy's depiction of how society

restricted women's freedom and their right to make decisions about their lives, and at the same time, women's attempts to cross the barrier made by a male-dominated society have reflected women's awareness of injustice against them; however, these studies have less focused on the resistance of women against injustice by focusing on their victimization of male-dominated society in India.

However, some studies have shown that victimized women in Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* have rejected the injustices against them. Gopinath (2019) has reported that Roy's novel exhibited the female characters as non-conformists who crossed the limitations made by a male-dominated society. Therefore, Islam Rama remarks that Roy's novel "starts and ends in the same graveyard, which becomes a heaven for human beings and animals that are connected together. There is no discrimination in graveyards, and people do not need to be recognized as having a space in the gender continuum" (Islam, 2020, p. 37). Roy's selection of the graveyard to terminate gender discrimination made by a male-dominated society has posed a serious question to patriarchal society. Further research has shown how women have crossed the boundaries set by male-dominated society. Further, Kuiti (2021) has reported that Roy's depiction of queer motherhood by adopting abandoned small children without legal and social consent indicated women's rejection of traditional motherhood established by a male-dominated society. Although the above studies on Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* have reported women's awareness of injustices against them, at the same time, these studies have remained silent on how women's exploitation and resistance have transformed with the changing context of India.

Moreover, Mitra (2022) has reported that Roy has shown the post-human condition in her novel, which has mirrored the actual situation of the global south,

where spaces have been captured to establish cities and multinational companies to receive extensive economic benefits instead of protecting human lives. Focusing on materialistic benefits and ignoring human values have mainly made the lives of women and working-class people more vulnerable in India, which has compelled them to revolt against the injustice prevailing in Indian society.

Studies in Roy's *The God of Small Things* have revealed women's victimization and marginalization in male-dominated society and their awareness of their victimization and injustices against them. For example, Islam (2022) has reported that Roy's novel has shown women's subjugation due to male-dominated society and their struggles to embark on their journey of independence, breaking the injustices imposed on them by patriarchal society. The above study has shown women's awareness of injustices against them and their rejection of the hierarchical power structure constructed by the male-dominated society of India; however, how women have resisted the injustice against them has become of little concern. In addition, Mandal (2023) has argued that women receive freedom from the hierarchy of the caste system and the exploitation of the male-dominated society of India by rejecting being part of such a power structure. Nevertheless, the above study has shown the marginalized women's ways of receiving freedom from the injustices of patriarchal society; however, how they have responded to the caste system and other layers of injustices against them has remained a prominent concern. Shrivastwa (2024) has found that Roy's novel has rejected the traditional notion of women as docile and submissive in nature by exposing women's awareness and their struggles to dismantle the injustice established by the caste system in India. However, women have been exploited by layers of injustice. Thus, the previous study by Comfort (2008) reported that the exploitation of women has been associated with several other

forms of operations, including class, caste, environmental destruction, and colonialism, which ultimately commodify women. In addition, Mardiyani and Tawami (2022) have claimed that Roy's novel has revealed several forms of women's exploitation, such as double burden, marginalization, subordination, gender inequality, and violence against them. Although women have awareness about the injustices against them, they have been exploited by the layers of injustice.

Further scholarships in Roy's *The God of Small Things* have reported that women's subjugation has been founded on culture and social norms, due to which women have also been victimized by their family members and relatives. For instance, Salah (2018) claims Roy's novel has revealed that operations and exploitation against women have been based on social and cultural constructions that place women in an inferior position to males and perpetuate such subjection and suppression of women with the support of culture and social norms that have been constructed in favor of males in India. Apart from this, Lutz (2009) argues that Roy's novel has depicted that male-dominated society, global capitalism, and mass consumption have been responsible for the domination of women in India. However, focusing on women's victimization, the above studies have paid little attention to women's resistance against their marginalization. In addition, Hariharasudan and Gnanamony (2017) have found that Roy's novel revealed women's atrocities by depicting three generational women, Mamachi, Ammu, and Rahel, and their perpetual victimization under the male-dominated society of India. Although women have rejected the injustices against them, their basic condition has remained almost similar. Yet marginalized women have resisted and challenged social injustices. For example, Casey (2015) has reported that Roy's novel reveals victimized women's attacks on the property law of India, which has deprived women of their property rights, and the

one-sided social justice system, which discriminates against women based on their gender. The above studies have highlighted that women have been victimized and, at the same time, they have rejected their victimization; however, these studies have not reported how they have rejected the injustices and how their victimization and resistance have been transformed based on the changing context of India.

### **The Depiction of Subalterns in Roy's Novels**

Subaltern studies in Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* have reported that subaltern people have been marginalized and victimized because of the social, political, cultural, and economic system of India. For instance, Ilyas (2019) argues that Roy's novel has uncovered the critical situation of subaltern people by exposing their atrocities and predicaments in the post-colonial context of India. India has gained independence from British rule, and people from the margins have expected their dignified lives; however, subaltern people have been marginalized and exploited and have experienced a similar situation even after the independence of India.

Furthermore, Prashant Jadhav, exploring Roy's *The God of Small Things*, remarks, "novel unfolds the tragic story of each subaltern in the context of national, political, and cultural issues, which appear to be bound in a ribbon of togetherness" (Jadhav, 2017, p. 454). Jadhav's remark clarifies how subaltern people have been dominated and victimized because of various responsible factors, such as political and cultural factors, provides foundational information to explore the ground reality of subaltern people in India; however, how subaltern people have resisted such layers of injustice has been ignored in his study as it has its limitations. Further, exploring Roy's novel, Sehkar remarks, "The working people were eternally subjugated and victimized, and their hard labor was exploited to torture themselves by this brutal system of social engineering . . . nothing but lifelong slavery and subhuman" (Sekher, 2003, p. 3446).

His study further added that social systems such as religion, caste system, and patriarchal social norms have been responsible for the subalternization of working-class people in India. Apart from this, Poyner (2018) has claimed that Roy's novel reveals that people from the margins have been affected more than the upper class by environmental decline and pollution because they have been directly connected to such an environment. Moreover, Dingwaney Needham (2005) has reported that Roy's novel uncovers mini-narratives of subaltern people and devastating conditions created by the operation of authority, upper caste, and male dominance in Indian society and reveals the hidden and ignored history of subaltern people. The above studies have heavily emphasized how people from the margins have been exploited and oppressed in the post-colonial context of India because of various layers of injustice; however, how subaltern women have been victimized and resisted injustice has almost been ignored, which this study focuses on.

Moreover, further subaltern studies in Roy's *The God of Small Things* have depicted the marginalization of subaltern women and their awareness of their victimization and injustice against them. For example, Nandi (2010) reports that Roy's novel has shown subaltern people's victimization and marginalization, and at the same time, her novel reveals that subaltern people are morally better and more honest than their exploiters. Further study (Dang, 2021) has depicted that Roy's novel exhibits that subaltern women have been made other by the patriarchal society of India, depriving them of social mobility and controlling their voices. These studies reveal that patriarchal social norms of Indian society have been the fundamental responsible factor in women's victimization and marginalization; however, the above studies have ignored how the subaltern women have been exploited apart from the male-dominated society and how they have resisted injustice against them. Nevertheless, the above

studies in Roy's novel have shown the subaltern women's situation in India. However, Dhakal (2019) argues that the physical relationship between upper-caste Ammu and lower-caste Velutha in Roy's novel shows subaltern women's protest against the caste system of Indian society. Nevertheless, the above study has reported how subaltern people have awareness of their situations and have rejected the injustice against them; however, it has been on a domestic scale. In addition, these studies remain silent about how their rejection of injustice has transformed based on the changing context of India.

Several subaltern studies on Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* have shown the exploitation and victimization of subaltern people because of state-led injustice, riots, and insurgency. For example, Suleman et al. (2020) report that Roy's novel reveals the devastating and vulnerable lives of subaltern and minority people because of riots and insurgencies and the government's irrational activities, such as the Godhra train burning, land reform in 2002, Gujarat riots, and the Kashmir insurgency. Focusing on the victimization of minorities and subaltern people, the above study ignores the subaltern people's reaction to the injustice in the riots and insurgencies. Moreover, a study by Binod Aryal on Roy's novel reveals that "the novel deals with the mental ordeal of minorities and exposes how they come together under a single roof, indicating a new political movement that challenges mainstream politics. The celebration of the creative agency of the marginal people discloses the novelist's impeachment to the impartiality of Indian systems and institutions and their adverse consequences to the minorities" (Aryal, 2022, pp. 85-86). Aryal's remarks reveal how the Indian state promotes injustice against minorities instead of providing protection and justice to them. Nevertheless, his study signals the resistance of marginalized people against the incapability of government by forming their

solidarity. However, his study almost remains silent about how subaltern women are victimized by state-led injustice and how they resist such injustice against them. In addition, Ghimire (2020) has claimed that Roy's novel uncovers marginalized people's unheard stories and gives voices to those whose voices have been restricted and suppressed by state-led injustice in India. However, how subaltern women have been victimized and how their resistance has been transformed in the changing context of India have almost been ignored in the above subaltern studies.

Some subaltern studies in Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* have reported that subaltern people have been marginalized because of the neoliberal economic system of India. For instance, adopting the new subaltern perspective, Jahan (2021) reports that Roy's novel has uncovered marginalized and suppressed people because of the neo-liberal economic system that creates economic disparity in India. However, Mendes and Lau (2020) have reported that subaltern people have been victimized because of their precarious social position by creating an unfair social and political system in India. The above subaltern studies reveal how the unfair social and economic system of India has victimized subaltern people; however, focusing on the latest economic system and its impact on subaltern and minority people, as depicted in Roy's novel, has almost ignored subaltern women's consciousness of injustice against them.

Although subaltern studies in Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* have revealed that subaltern people have an awareness of injustices against them and have rejected their marginalization and victimization, they have been victimized and marginalized in India. For example, Das (2019) shows that Roy's novel depicts the marginalization and victimization of transgender people as they belong to transgender communities. Moreover, Awasthi (2022) argues that although many political parties

have struggled for the rights of subaltern people in post-colonial India, subaltern people such as Muslims, transgender people, and untouchables have still been excluded and suppressed. However, how subaltern people have been transformed and responded to injustices has remained a significant concern for making their lives dignified. Furthermore, exploring the reason for victimization of subaltern people in Roy's novel, Rashad et al. (2020) have reported that the perpetuation of colonial ideology by the rulers and upper-class people even after the independence of India from British rule has helped to justify the subjugation of subaltern people. However, Awasthi (2021), comparing Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* with Naharu's autobiography *Towards Freedom*, claims that subaltern people have developed their consciousness to fight against injustice in India. However, subaltern women's victimization and resistance have almost been ignored in the above subaltern studies.

The above studies in Roy's *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* have identified several responsible factors for the marginalization and victimization of subaltern people. For instance, the above studies in Roy's *The God of Small Things* have uncovered that people from the margins have been victimized by gender disparity, caste, class, religion, the political system, and the neoliberal economic system of India. However, subaltern people have questioned the injustices against them by breaching social norms and values and questioning social inequality. In addition, the above studies in Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* have revealed that subaltern people have been victimized because of state-led violence, Kashmir insurgency, riots, the political system of India and the neoliberal economic system, and rising religious conflict in India, besides gender, caste, class, and social norms and values. Moreover, the perpetuation of colonial ideology by the rulers and upper-class people, even after the independence of India from

British rule, has been responsible for the subalternization of working-class people in India. Nevertheless, subaltern people have rejected injustices by questioning the prevailing gender roles, class, and caste system, the more fundamentally democratic system, and the neoliberal economic system of India. However, the above literature has almost ignored subaltern women's depiction and the variations in their resistance in Roy's novels. Thus, this research aims to explore the depiction of subaltern women and their variations in resistance by comparing and contrasting Roy's two novels.

### **The Research Gap**

The existing studies on Roy's *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* have identified, on the one hand, that subaltern people have been victimized by social inequalities based on gender, class, religion, and caste; on the other hand, they have been oppressed by the governance and political system of India, corruption, neoliberal economic policy, riots, and insurgencies; however, Roy's two novels have rarely been compared and contrasted yet to explore the variations in the depiction of subaltern women and their resistance against injustice in the changing context of India. Even though previous studies on Roy's novels have focused on depicting of subaltern people and their awareness of injustices against them, these studies have almost overlooked variations in subaltern women's depictions and their resistance against injustice. Despite the textual evidence of variations in the depiction of subaltern women and their resistance to injustice in Roy's novels, previous studies have almost failed to explore this; therefore, this dissertation aims to explore how subaltern women have been depicted and how they have differently resisted injustice against them by comparing and contrasting Roy's two novels. Exploring such variations in the depiction of subaltern women and their variations in the resistance against injustices has great significance in the subaltern literature, as this study reveals

how subaltern women have been victimized and how they have modified their ways of resistance to injustice against them in the changing context of India. Roy published her first novel, *The God of Small Things*, in 1997, incorporating the events that happened from 1969 to 1993, and she published her second novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, in 2017, including the events from the partition of India to the almost early 21st century. Thus, Roy's two novels have been published over an interval of 20 years, and she has depicted tremendous gaps in subaltern women's depiction and their resistance against injustice in her novels. Moreover, as discussed above, many previous studies have focused on Roy's single novel; this thesis uniquely compares two of Roy's works, published twenty years apart. This comparative analysis of Roy's novels explores the depiction of subaltern resistance over time, a perspective that is less common in existing literature. Although many studies use subaltern or postcolonial theory, this thesis uniquely integrates Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Spivak's subaltern concepts with Antonio Gramsci's counter-hegemony. This interdisciplinary approach provides a more comprehensive framework for analyzing the resistance of subaltern women, enriching the theoretical discourse.

### CHAPTER III

#### RESEARCH METHOD AND THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

This dissertation explores the depiction of subaltern women and their variations in the resistance to injustices against them in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. The depiction of variations in the resistance of subaltern women has rarely been investigated in previous studies conducted in Roy's novels; thus, this study is required to explore how subaltern women have been depicted, how they have resisted injustices, and how their resistances to injustices have contrasted in Roy's two novels. Therefore, this chapter discusses the research methodology and theoretical underpinnings adopted to explore the variations in the resistance of subaltern women in Roy's two novels.

This dissertation is based on an interpretative research design. Roy's novels, *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, have been purposively selected as primary texts. The secondary data have been collected from several related sources, such as journal articles, books, theses, and archive documents. As Griffin (2013) discussed, this research uses textual analysis to examine the depiction of subaltern women and the variations in their resistance to injustices in Roy's novels. This research concentrates on female characters, mainly Ammu and Rahel from *The God of Small Things* and Anjum, Tilotama, and Revathy from *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. The rationale behind selecting these female characters for this study is that the stories of both Roy's novels revolve around them. As this study aims to explore the depiction and variations of resistance of subaltern women, these female characters have resisted the injustices against them and provide ample space to investigate the variations in resistance. Moreover, this research focuses on exploring the answer to the research questions: how subaltern women have been

depicted, how they have resisted injustices, and how their resistances to injustices have contrasted in Roy's two novels. In addition, I utilize the subaltern concept, as theoretical perspectives developed by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and the counter-hegemony, as discussed by Antonio Gramsci, since this study has been more interested in exploring the depiction of subaltern female characters and the variations in their resistance to injustice, as depicted in Roy's novels.

Further, in this research, I argue that Roy's novels depict the variations in the resistance of subaltern women. In order to support my argument, I have selected Spivak's gender subaltern, Guha's historiography, and Gramsci's counter-hegemony, as they are the critical perspectives developed to resist the injustices against marginalized and victimized people. Roy's novels uncover the stories of marginalized people and their resistance to injustices; however, their resistance to injustice has been contrasted in both novels. For instance, Roy's *The God of Small Things* reveals women's victimization and their resistance to injustices; however, in the domestic space, focusing on a Syrian Christian family and their resistance. In contrast, Roy's second novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, reflects women's victimization from various layers of social, political, and cultural injustices and their resistance against such injustice in a broader social context by exhibiting subaltern people's unity to reject the injustices against them. In addition, she reveals various mini-stories of subaltern women's atrocities and resistance in both novels. Therefore, Guha's concept of historiography, Spivak's idea of gender subalternity and Gramsci's idea of counter-hegemony are relevant in exploring the depiction of subaltern women and their variations in the resistance to injustices against them.

Initially, Gramsci uses the term subaltern to refer to working-class people, particularly lower-ranking soldiers (Hoare & Sperber, 2015). They are considered

insignificant and suppressed, depriving them of the basic requirements of their lives. They lack the agency to make their decisions; thus, they remain under others' control. Their activities and roles in their society have been considered irrelevant and ignored; therefore, "the history of subaltern social groups is necessarily fragmented and episodic"(Gramsci, 1992, p. 55). Furthermore, subaltern people are "the hegemonic group or of the other subaltern groups which undergo such hegemony" (Gramsci, 1992, p. 53). Gramsci clarifies hegemony as "the methods of organizing consent that involved both material and ideological elements" (Hoare & Sperber, 2015, p. 2). In doing so, the ruler or elite changes the basic ideology of the ordinary people, particularly by adopting two strategies, such as changing the belief system and utilizing their power. Finally, they successfully rule over them with their consent. In Prison Notebooks, Gramsci discussed the concepts of cultural leadership, ideological domination, and the struggle for an alternative order. Scholars and interpreters of his work later discussed these ideas as "hegemony" and "counter-hegemony."

In contrast to hegemony, Gramsci's idea of counter-hegemony focuses on the need for an alternative ideological order. Thus, his concept of counter-hegemony indicates the struggle of subaltern people to dismantle the hegemonic order constructed by the rulers or the states by breaking their ideological construction and questioning their political and economic system (Im, 1991). Likewise, Gramsci's counter-hegemony refers to "the way people develop ideas and discourse to challenge dominant assumptions, beliefs and established patterns of behavior"(Cox & Schilthuis, 2012, p. 1). Thus, counter-hegemony is a critical perspective of subaltern people to understand their situation and resist hegemonic bourgeois culture. In addition, subaltern people break the hegemonic situation after gaining consciousness; they resist their marginalization and victimization and deny their consent to rule over

them (Hoare & Sperber, 2015). In the same way, women characters in Roy's novels resist their domination and victimization instead of being ready to be ruled; thereby, Gramsci's concept of counter-hegemony provides an alternative perspective to analyze the women's resistance to injustices against them.

Moreover, Gramsci's concept of counter-hegemony shows a situation in which subaltern people question their society's status quo as they have already escaped from its hegemonic order (Zembylas, 2013). Further, subaltern people conceptualize an alternative system and order by understanding their victimization and marginalization; thus, they counter their society's hegemonic structure. In doing so, they interrogate their society's ideological, cultural, social, and political system and make other people aware of their hegemonic situation; therefore, in this stage, they do not consent to rule over them; they are just dominated without hegemony (Adamson, 1983). To bring such awareness, the role of organic intellectuals remains prominent, as they make people aware of injustices against them and transform society, even keeping their lives at risk (Adamson, 1983; Hoare & Sperber, 2015). Once subaltern people overcome the hegemonic society, they revolutionize against the hegemonic social system to establish a harmonious society by ending injustice against them. Further, in countering the hegemonic social order, marginalized people's "critical self-consciousness which will enable them to overthrow the existing order and develop a morally integrated society" (Femia, 1987, p. 56). Then, as Gramsci discussed, the subaltern people begin to challenge established social norms and values to counter the prevailing injustices of their society.

Furthermore, the basic concept of subaltern developed by Antonio Gramsci has been adopted by Ranajit Guha and his group of subaltern historians of South Asia to explore the history of marginalized and exploited people. In doing so, they form the

subaltern group under Guha and publish research-based articles reflecting how South Asians have been erased from history. In addition, Guha explores how people have been marginalized and victimized based on caste, gender, class, religion, and national policies in the context of Southern Asia, mainly in India. He defines subaltern as "the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society, whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender, office, or in any other way" (Guha, 1982, p. vii). Thus, subaltern indicates the lower rank of people who have been exploited because of layers of injustice.

Moreover, Guha (1996) claims that subaltern people have been neglected and erased from the pages of history; therefore, he begins rewriting the histories of marginalized and victimized people who have been historically removed from mainstream history. Thus, Guha's notion of historiography is rewriting marginalized people's histories by exploring the mini-narratives of victimized and working-class people (Guha, 1987b). In doing so, Guha questions official documented history and the traditional historians' ways of writing history, ignoring marginalized people's roles and contributions (Sathyamurthy, 1990). Guha's historiography formulates new insights into history writing by focusing on research on socio-economic aspects, culture, and political reality instead of focusing on the elite and ruling class people. His innovative history writing, adopting an interdisciplinary approach, influences several disciplines, including literature, as literature provides space for depicting subaltern people (Guha, 1996). Subaltern people have been victimized because of class, caste, religion, social norms, and statism and have been erased from the pages of history, albeit they have been depicted in literary texts (Guha, 1996). Further, subaltern studies begin as a resistance to the traditional representation of subalterns and their roles in the history of India, and they also question the bias and dominant

roles of colonialists, nationalists, and elitists in representing the subaltern in writing history (Ludden, 2002). Therefore, his notions of subaltern and historiography support exploring the voices of exploited and ignored women by analyzing their mini-narratives, as reflected in Roy's novels.

Later on, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak develops the concept of gendered subaltern, depicting women as subaltern, as she claims that patriarchal society makes women subaltern by limiting all social mobility and ignoring their voices (De Jong & Mascot, 2016). She explores the role of gender in the context of India and argues that patriarchal social norms and values have been responsible for the marginalization and victimization of women by controlling their social mobility and silencing their voices (Spivak, 2010). Therefore, after investigating the Indian historiography written by British colonizers and Indian elites, she concludes that women as subalterns cannot speak and represent themselves (Spivak, 2010). In addition, she argues that women's voices and subjectivity are controlled by the desires of males, making them sexual objects (Spivak, 1987). However, Byrd and Rothberg (2011) show that the subaltern people's fundamental problem is not in their expression. They can express their ideas and feelings, but their expression is not received and considered significant. This indicates that their voices have been ignored and considered insignificant, albeit they articulate their ideas and sentiments in their own ways. Although in Roy's novels, women have been exploited and victimized by traditional gender roles, some of the subaltern women develop awareness about the various layers of injustice against them. Thus, Spivak's idea of the gendered subaltern assists in exploring women's subalternity and their resistance against injustice, as this research is highly motivated by the changing situation of subaltern women and their resistance against injustice.

Moreover, focusing on the role of gender and women's subalternity, Spivak argues that "the subaltern has no history and cannot speak; the subaltern as female is even more deeply in the shadow" (Spivak, 2010, p. 45). The male-dominated society makes subaltern women invisible by limiting their social mobility and controlling their autonomy in making their own decisions. Therefore, Spivak claims that "the subaltern is a gendered subject" (Guha, 1987a, p. 139). She further argues that the best example of a subaltern is a woman who has been neglected and ignored by various social and cultural norms and values. In addition, Spivak resists traditional concepts of writing history that ignore women and erase them from the pages of history. Women's struggles have not been recorded in the history of India, as their voices and roles have been suppressed and controlled (Riach, 2017). However, Spivak argues that literary texts can provide alternative space for subaltern women to depict and resist the injustices against them (Spivak, 1987).

Furthermore, Spivak claims that after long suffering and victimization, subaltern people realize their actual situation in terms of their exclusion and injustices. Such realizations indicate the subaltern consciousness, which leads them to revolt against such injustices. Spivak defines subaltern consciousness as "consciousness here is not consciousness-in-general but a historicized political species; therefore, subaltern consciousness" (Guha, 1987c, p. 30). Additionally, subaltern consciousness enhances subaltern people's agency to make their own decisions, and such power will develop after realizing and understanding the various layers of injustice against them. Therefore, subalterns' consciousness means awareness of social and historical transformation, realization, and responses against the layers of injustice against them. Additionally, subaltern consciousness shows an individual's consciousness about their situation.

Further, Spivak questions the traditional way of studying the subaltern, which reflects the subaltern as having a stable nature; however, the concept of the subaltern is transformed with context, so she argues that "the subaltern has no stable meaning" (Spivak, 2010, p. 42). She claims that the subject of the subaltern is dynamic, changeable, and contextual; therefore, the represented reality of the subject of the subaltern is provisional and the subject of reevaluation and reinterpretation. Thus, the notion of the subaltern developed by Spivak gives a new turn to the subaltern by incorporating the issue of gender and stating that the subaltern is a changing concept. In addition, with the changing social and political context, the concept of the subaltern will be transformed (Spivak, 2001). Later, Spivak reconsiders the notion of the subaltern, as the neoliberal economic system makes people subaltern by restricting their voices and agency for making their own decisions (Bracke, 2016; Spivak, 2012). Therefore, subaltern is a relative, dynamic, and contextual concept (Spivak, 2010). Thus, Spivak claims that understanding the subaltern people as opposition to the elite by traditional subaltern historians fails to understand the subaltern in the true sense, as subalterns are autonomous groups and unstable categories (Spivak, 2010). The subaltern concept will change based on context instead of remaining static.

Moreover, subaltern consciousness is a prominent concern in literary texts, especially when analyzing characters' awareness of their situation. However, the subaltern consciousness depicted in literary texts is based on the author's imagination (Sabin, 2008); therefore, the representation of subaltern consciousness in literary texts always remains questionable. In reality, "every expression is a version of self-expression. The intellectual, the social investigator, the theorist, and the imaginative writer must all acknowledge confinement in their own privilege" (Sabin, 2008, p. 178). In addition, by exploring the debates among Michel Foucault, Karl Marx, Gilles

Deleuze, and Edward Said and illustrating the examples from Sati, Spivak argues that the consciousness of marginalized people depicted in the texts is the subjectivity of the authors (Spivak, 2010). Therefore, the subaltern consciousness and the resistance of subaltern women against injustices depicted in Roy's novels are based on Roy's understanding and observation of India. Roy has a critical perspective on society and raises her voice through her non-fiction writings about justice for marginalized people, which is also reflected in her novels. However, her depiction of subaltern women and their awareness of injustice against them become questionable and need to be cross-examined repeatedly, as subaltern is a dynamic, changeable, and contextual situation.

Furthermore, the subaltern is a form of resistance (Rivera-Aguilera & Jiménez-Díaz, 2020) to hegemonic force and other kinds of dominations imposed on working-class people; however, Chandra (2015) argues that subaltern resistance, unlike traditional resistance as autonomous resistance of the subaltern, is conceptualized as 'negotiation' instead of 'negation' of such injustices over them. In the same way, there have been connections among subalterns, their power to make decisions, and their resilience after their exploitation (Bracke, 2016). As Gramsci argues, subaltern culture is formulated in such a way that helps to exploit and suppress the subaltern people (Bracke, 2016). In addition, subaltern people are marginalized and victimized by their existing political system instead of maintaining equality among them. However, Foucault argues that "where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault, 1990, p. 126). Therefore, subaltern people, with their domination and exploitation, resist the injustices against them. Resistance supports marginalized people to understand, criticize, and liberate themselves from injustices (Chandra, 2015). Apart from this, based on the various case studies, Wagner (2012)

reports that silence is a form of resistance to injustices against subaltern people, as it is a discursive practice to indicate that an opponent's discourse is useless and unsuitable for a response. Therefore, subaltern people use various ways to resist the injustices against them, as discussed above.

In addition, Spivak focuses mainly on women's subalternity because of caste, class, religion, social norms and values of existing society and discusses how subaltern consciousness supports in resisting various layers of injustice against them. Further, she shows how literature provides alternative space for depicting subaltern and their resistance. In contrast to Spivak, Guha emphasizes historiography, which counters the traditional ways of history writing, incorporating mini-narratives of ignored and neglected people who have been invisible and deliberately erased from the pages of history. Further, Gramsci's notion of counter-hegemony shows how subaltern people counter the hegemonic order of their society after gaining consciousness, for which organic intellectuals play a pivotal role, even keeping their lives at risk. In addition, counter-hegemony shows the condition of society where subaltern people have not been ruled by their consent; thus, they counter the injustice against them. Therefore, theoretical perspectives, as discussed above, provide multiple perspectives to analyze subaltern people's depiction and their variations of resistance to injustice in Roy's novels.

Thus, the basic concept of subaltern developed by Guha and Spivak and Gramsci's counter-hegemony helps me examine the marginalization and victimization of subaltern women and their resistance to injustices against them. In addition, Spivak's notions of gendered subalterns, subaltern consciousness, and their resistance to injustices assist me in scrutinizing the condition of subaltern women and their awareness of injustices in Roy's novels. In the same way, subaltern as a form of

resistance to the injustices against the people from the margins and subaltern as a dynamic and contextual concept contribute to exploring the variations in women's resistance against the injustices in Roy's two novels, as she has published her two novels in the interval of twenty years. Moreover, Roy's novels narrate mini-stories of subaltern women, uncovering their suppression and exploitation by various layers of injustice and highlighting their resistance. Roy reports mini-narratives of subaltern women in both novels, which show how women have been suppressed and, simultaneously, have resisted injustice against them. The concept of subaltern indicates lower rank and exploited people from various social, cultural, and political systems, such as gender, caste, religion, governing system, and economic status. Therefore, as discussed above, the concept of subaltern helps to explore the depiction of subaltern women and the variations in their resistance to injustices in Roy's novels. In the following chapter, I utilize subaltern concepts to explore Roy's novels and investigate how subaltern women have been depicted and how they have resisted injustice differently.

**CHAPTER IV**

**MARGINALIZATION OF SUBALTERN WOMEN AND THE VARIATIONS  
IN THE RESISTANCE**

This chapter of the dissertation analyzes and discusses Roy's novels, *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, to explore the answers to the research questions: How are subaltern women depicted in her two novels? How do subaltern women resist the injustices in her two novels? And how do subaltern women's resistances against injustice differ in her two novels? At the onset, this chapter analyzes Roy's novels to investigate subaltern women's depiction and resistance to injustices, and, it explores the variations in the resistance of subaltern women by comparing and contrasting Roy's novels. In order to investigate the depiction of subaltern women and to figure out the variations in the subaltern women's resistance to injustices in Roy's novels, this study utilizes subaltern concepts developed by Guha, and Spivak, and Gramsci's notion of counter-hegemony.

**Subaltern Women's Resistance against Injustices in Roy's Novels**

The main objective of this dissertation is to explore the depiction and variations of subaltern women's resistance to injustices against them in Roy's novels. As I claim, Roy uncovers the stories of subaltern women and their resistance to injustices in both novels; however, her depiction of subaltern women's resistance in both novels differs from each other. Therefore, this sub-chapter analyzes and discusses Ammu and Rahel from *The God of Small Things* and Anjum, Tilotama, and Revathy from *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* to explore their depiction and resistance to injustices.

### *Ammu's Resistance in The God of Small Things*

Ammu is the daughter of Mamachi and Papachi and belongs to a wealthy Syrian Christian family in Kerala, India. Although she has been victimized by layers of injustice based on gender, caste, religion, and class, she resists them by raising a powerful voice against them and breaching the norms and values of her family and society. For instance, she is prevented from receiving a college education as her father, Pappachi, thinks that a "college education was an unnecessary expense for a girl" (Roy, 1997, pp. 38-39). Ammu's father, Pappachi's remarks reflect how male-dominated societies have been responsible for the exploitation and marginalization of women by restricting them from pursuing their passions and limiting them within their families. As Spivak claims, patriarchal social norms and values have been responsible for the marginalization and victimization of women by controlling their social mobility and preventing their voices (Spivak, 2010); Ammu's voice has been unheard, and her passion for receiving higher education has been restricted. However, her brother, Chacko, receives his education at Oxford University. This further suggests that subaltern women have been victimized in their homes because of gender disparity.

Moreover, Ammu has been neglected and ignored at home, as her father has not taken any responsibility for her marriage. In addition, Ammu's "father did not have enough money to raise a suitable dowry; no proposals came Ammu's way . . . all day she dreamed of escaping from Ayemenem" (Roy, 1997, pp. 38-39). As a result, she leaves her home and lives with her aunt in Kolkata, and she decides to marry someone to escape an unfair family situation. In a wedding party in Kolkata, "Ammu met her future husband . . . He proposed to Ammu five days after they first met . . . she thought that anything, anyone at all, would be better than returning to

Ayemenem. She wrote to her parents, informing them of her decision. They didn't reply" (Roy, 1997, p. 39). This indicates that by observing their own contexts and receiving bitter experiences in their lives, subaltern women remarkably develop their agency to make their own decisions without depending on their parents and relatives and to resist the injustices against them made by male-dominated society. Moreover, her decision to marry without family consent has challenged the long-standing religious and cultural norms and values of Syrian Christians. Further, as Gramsci's counter-hegemony dismantles the hegemonic social order constructed with the support of ideological norms (Im, 1991), Ammu counters the hegemonic social norms constructed by patriarchal society by grasping the right to make decisions about her life. In addition, Guha (1987c) have informed us that subaltern consciousness is understanding social and historical context and responding to injustices; Ammu also understands her situation and reacts to the injustices against her.

Further, Ammu has been physically and mentally victimized by domestic violence; however, she has resisted the injustices. For instance, after having two children, she finds that her husband is an alcoholic, and he also attempts to offer her to his boss, Mr. Hollick, to have a physical relationship to protect his job, as "Mr. Hollick proposed that Babà go away for a while. For a holiday . . . Mr. Hollick suggested that Ammu be sent to his bungalow to be looked after" (Roy, 1997, p. 41). At the same time, her husband "lunged at her, grabbed her hair, punched her, and then passed out from the effort" (Roy, 1997, p. 41). However, Ammu resists him by pulling "the heaviest book she could find in the bookshelf . . . and hit him with it as hard as she could . . . Ammu left her husband and returned, unwelcomed, to her parents in Ayemenem" (Roy, 1997, p. 41). These remarks reveal how male-dominated

societies have been responsible for the victimization of women by utilizing them for their own benefit. This finding aligns with the existing studies (Islam, 2022; Pal, 2023; Salah, 2018), which report women are victimized at home because of patriarchal society. However, subaltern women resist such injustices by rejecting and questioning the system. Although women have been physically and mentally tortured by domestic violence, they have resisted the injustice made by a male-dominated society against them. As Salah (2018) has claimed that operations and exploitation against women have been based on social and cultural constructions that place women in an inferior position in their society, Ammu has been victimized by domestic violence, which has been based on the patriarchal social system of India. As a protest, Ammu's divorce and her courage to tackle any adverse situation resulting from her resistance uncover the significant threat to a male-dominated society.

Moreover, Ammu is victimized at her parents' house in Ayemenan as she returns with her twin children after her divorce from her husband. She is ignored, and her children are neglected. She faces an adverse situation as she is the divorcee of an inter-caste, inter-religious married woman with children. Aunt of Ammu's twin children, "Baby Kochamma disliked the twins . . . they were Half-Hindu Hybrids whom no self-respecting Syrian Christian would ever marry" (Roy, 1997, pp. 45-46). Further, Baby Kochamma "subscribed wholeheartedly to the commonly held view that a married daughter had no position in her parents' home . . . divorced daughter from a love marriage . . . as for a divorced daughter from an intercommunity love marriage" (Roy, 1997, pp. 45-46). These remarks reflect how subaltern women have been simultaneously victimized by religion, caste, and gender, and subaltern women resist them by ignoring and breaching them. Spivak (1987) claims that women's voices have been restricted by the interests of men. In the same way, Ammu's voices

are controlled by the men; nevertheless, she does not stop to question and challenge gender roles, the caste system, and religion by refusing to assimilate in her life. However, subaltern women individually fight against the injustice as they lack solidarity among the suppressed women.

Moreover, Ammu has been victimized by economic inequality, particularly at home; however, she has an awareness of such disparity, and she continues questioning and rejecting the economic disparity against her. She demands her property rights by depicting the economic inequality at home. For instance, Ammu questions her brother Chacko's perspective about the factory, as "though Ammu did as much work in the factory as Chacko . . . he always referred to it as my factory, my pineapples, my pickles . . . "thanks to our wonderful male chauvinist society," Ammu said. Chacko said, "What's yours is mine, and what's mine is also mine" (Roy, 1997, p. 57). These remarks show Ammu is deprived of economic rights as she has not been regarded as significant in her brother's company. As Casey (2015) has discussed, this finding reveals that women have been deprived of economic rights. Further, as Gramsci claims, subaltern people break the hegemonic social order after gaining consciousness of their victimization (Hoare & Sperber, 2015); Ammu develops awareness, questions her property rights, and counters the previous hegemonic social order by rejecting the traditional gender-discriminatory social system. Moreover, Ammu has an understanding of how male-dominated society sets the legal and social system in their favor so that women have been victimized in their homes and restricted of their property rights. This further indicates that subaltern women have been deprived of their property rights; however, they have resisted such injustices by questioning the disparity.

Furthermore, Ammu resists the longstanding caste system of Indian society by questioning and rejecting its limitations. For instance, Ammu's husband, Baba, is a Brahmin; however, she is a Syrian Christian. Thus, her inter-caste marriage resists the caste system of Hindu and Syrian Christians in India. Likewise, she keeps physical relationships with lower-caste Velutha. Although Ammu is aware of the terrible consequences of her relationship with him, she "naked now, crouched over Velutha, her mouth on his. . . . She felt her wetness slipping on his skin. He took her nipple in his mouth and cradled her other breast in his callused palm" (Roy, 1997, p. 336). This clearly shows how Ammu ignores the caste system by keeping a physical relationship with Valutha, who belongs to the lowest hierarchy of the Indian rigid caste system. This further indicates that subaltern women have awareness of how the caste system victimizes them, and they attempt to dismantle such a system by ignoring and breaching the hierarchy made by the caste system. Guha (1996) suggests that the caste system has been one of the responsible factors for the victimization of subaltern people. Ammu firmly stands against the norms of Syrian Christians in Kerala, who adopt caste systems like those in Hinduism, restricting lower-class people's passions and social freedom.

In addition, Ammu is victimized by a police officer at the police station as she reaches there to resist the blame against Velutha. For example, police inspector Thomas Mathew said, "The police knew all they needed to know and that the Kottayam Police didn't take statements from veshyas . . . Inspector Thomas Mathew came around his desk and approached Ammu with his baton . . . he tapped her breasts with his baton. Gently. Tap tap. As though he was choosing mangoes from a basket" (Roy, 1997, p. 8). This extract reflects how women have not been secured by the police officers who have been appointed for the protection of the public. Thus,

women's victimization has not been limited only at home, as they have been insecure and neglected almost everywhere; therefore, Spivak argues that the "subaltern is a gendered subject" (Guha, 1987a, p. 139). However, Ammu rejects such injustices by remaining silent and expressing her anger through her facial expression. Roy writes: "Her face was set like stone, but the tears welled up in her eyes and ran down her rigid cheeks" (Roy, 1997, p. 8). This indicates that she has consciousness about the context; thus, she does not speak but rather expresses her anger through her facial expression. Her silence works as a form of resistance to the injustices against her.

Moreover, Ammu develops her critical perspectives about looking at human relations, and accordingly, she instructs her children by telling the story. For example, in the novel narrates:

Ammu had told them the story of Julius Caesar and how he was stabbed by Brutus, his best friend, in the Senate. And how he fell to the floor with knives in his back . . . Ammu said, "You can't trust anybody, mother, father, brother, husband, best friend and nobody. (Roy, 1997, p. 83)

These remarks indicate subaltern women develop their critical perspective about human relationships as they have encountered several challenges and have had experiences facing unexpected adverse situations in their lives. In the same way, Ammu questions the nearest relatives and relations, such as her father, mother, husband, brother, and friends, which she learns from her own experiences as she does not receive any support from them when she needs it. As Spivak (2010) argues that the subject of the subaltern is dynamic, changeable, and contextual, Ammu becomes skeptical of the changing situation in her life. In addition, this further indicates how victimized people become skeptical and help others become aware of the situation.

### *Rahel's Resistance in The God of Small Things*

Rahel, the daughter of Ammu and Baba, faces injustices based on caste, gender, class, and religion; however, she resists by ignoring and remaining silent about them. She has been marginalized as she was born into an inter-caste and inter-religious marriage. For instance, Chacko, Rahel's uncle, and Mamachi, her grandmother, do not show their emotional attachment to her as "they provided the care of food, clothes, fees but (food, clothes, fees), but withdrew the concern" (Roy, 1997, p. 15). She is ignored as she is a daughter and was born into a socially unaccepted marriage. Her family members and relatives have neglected her as she "grew up without a brief. Without anybody to arrange a marriage for her. Without anybody who would pay her a dowry and therefore without an obligatory husband coming on her horizon"(Roy, 1997, p. 17). This shows that women have been victimized because of the hierarchical power structure of Indian society. Likewise, Rahel is supposed to have been an inferior and insignificant member of the family and has no power to make decisions in the family. Spivak (2010) argues that a male-dominated society makes subaltern women invisible by limiting their social mobility and controlling their autonomy in making their own decisions. However, Rahel refuses the injustice against her by ignoring them and involving herself in her own world.

Rahel rejects the standard norms of social institutions and her school simply by ignoring them. As a result, Rahel "was expelled after repeated complaints from senior girls. She was accused of hiding behind doors and deliberately colliding with her seniors . . . she had done it to find out whether breasts hurt. In that Christian institution, breasts were not acknowledged" (Roy, 1997, p. 17). This reflects how subaltern women question the norms of social institutions and religion by simply

refusing to follow them. She rejects the traditional educational system by simply ignoring learning. For instance, in her architecture college, neither she shows her passion for learning nor she has any regrets about not adopting their standard; instead, she likes to be abnormal in the eyes of her friends and professors. For example, "the other students, particularly the boys, were intimidated by Rahel's waywardness and almost fierce lack of ambition. They left her alone" (Roy, 1997, p. 18). This clearly shows how Rahel rejects social and institutional systems by ignoring them. She does not pay attention to the traditional educational system, as Rahel's "professors were a little wary of her, her bizarre, impractical building plans, presented on cheap brown paper, and her indifference to their passionate critiques" (Roy, 1997, p. 18). Rahel's professors' attitude towards her shows how she rejects university education by being different than they have expected. These remarks further reflect how subaltern women refuse to follow traditional social and institutional practices and instead enjoy their alternative world.

Moreover, Rahel resists the injustices against her, developing her agency to make decisions about her own life. She decides about her marriage. For example, in the novel narrates:

She was at the college of architecture that she met Larry McCaslin, who was in Delhi collecting material for his doctoral thesis . . . he first noticed Rahel in the school library and then again, a few days later in Khan Market. ... Followed her into a bookshop, where neither of them looked at books. . . She returned with him to Boston. (Roy, 1997, pp. 18-19)

This extract indicates that subaltern women, after their victimization, develop the power to make decisions about their lives, which questions traditional Indian

culture, particularly that of Kerala Syrian Christians. Rahel takes her own decision about her marriage, as her mother does; later on, she divorces him and begins to work. As her mother, she also breaks social norms; more fundamentally, she rejects the socially established rules of love, which show who should love whom. Spivak argues that subalterns are marginalized people who are victimized by the ideology made by upper-class people (Riach, 2017); therefore, Rahel rejects such ideology that restricts her freedom by making her own decisions about her life. This reflects how subaltern women develop their agency to reject the social systems that limit their freedom.

In addition, Rahel resists social norms and values by breaching the expected standards of a society constructed by a male-dominated ideology in their favor. She does not assimilate the system of social and religious values that restricts her freedom of life. For instance, she is blamed: "as though she didn't know how to be a girl" (Roy, 1997, p. 17). Moreover, Rahel, her mother Ammu, and her brother Estha "were the worst transgressors. But it wasn't just them. It was the others too. They all broke the rules. They all crossed into forbidden territory. They all tampered with the laws that lay down who should be loved and how" (Roy, 1997, p. 31). Subaltern women's act of rejecting social norms by crossing accepted social boundaries is a form of resistance to male-dominated society. Moreover, Gramsci's counter-hegemony shows the resistance to hegemony established by social assumptions and practices (Cox & Schilthuis, 2012); Rahel counters the social norms and beliefs established by a male-dominated society by crossing the limitations made by them to restrict the women's freedom. However, such resistance of subaltern women has not been recorded in the history of the main stream, as such issues become insignificant to the main stream; therefore, women's voices have been controlled and ignored. Spivak says: "Global structures of power, whether academic, economic, or political, do not at present allow

the subaltern to speak" (Spivak, 2010, p. 38). However, after gaining consciousness of injustices, subaltern women resist the injustices by going against the limitations constructed by a male-dominated society. However, Rahel individually resists the injustices against her in the local space.

### ***Anjum's Resistance in The Ministry of Utmost Happiness***

Anjum is the protagonist of Roy's second novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, and she is a transgender woman, due to which she is marginalized and victimized by patriarchal society. However, he realizes that he has female desire and overcomes the heteronormative society of India. As a result, he leaves his house and becomes an inhabitant of the Khwabgah, where "he danced in the courtyard to everybody's favorite song from everybody's favorite film . . . The next night, at a small ceremony . . . Aftab became Anjum" (Roy, 2017, p. 25). This indicates Aftab's consciousness of injustices against him and his resistance against the obstacles that restrict his freedom. Thus, as Anuar and Asl (2021) claim, people from the margins question heterosexual normativity by exposing the struggles of transgender people. Likewise, Anjum revolts against the long-established traditional role of gender in the context of India. This shows subaltern women's changing area of resistance by raising the issues of transgender people and depicting their resistance to injustices to receive the right to equality and freedom.

Moreover, Anjum shows her courage to disclose her sexual identity in heterosexual normative Indian society, where Hijras have been taken as subjects of insults and disrespect. Her birth tortures her parents, particularly her mother, who expects to have a son. Conversely, Anjum leaves her home and lives a highly joyful life in Khwabgah as she finds her world. Later on, she has developed her vision of supporting people who are on the margins and exploited by various injustices

associated with gender, caste, religion, and the latest developed neoliberal economic system of India; therefore, after spending thirty years in Khwabgah, she leaves there as "she wanted to return to the Duniya" (Roy, 2017, p. 29). This reflects that in the latest changing context of India, subaltern women develop a sense of solidarity among marginalized people. Thus, Anjum wants to support people from the margins by becoming a part of their lives and creating solidarity among subaltern people, which have not been reported in the existing subaltern studies (Awasthi, 2022; Jahan, 2021; Suleman et al., 2020). This further indicates that subaltern women develop their awareness of injustice and collectively resist injustices to overcome all kinds of injustices against them.

Furthermore, Anjum decides to open a guest house to resist the injustices against the people from the margins by welcoming all the people who have been neglected like her; however, "every few months the municipal authorities stuck a notice on Anjum's front door that said squatters were strictly prohibited from living in the graveyard and that any unauthorized construction would be demolished within a week" (Roy, 2017, p. 67). Nevertheless, she resists responding to them as "she wasn't living in the graveyard; she was dying in it, and for this she didn't need permission from the municipality" (Roy, 2017, p. 67). This reflects that the state has been deaf enough to understand the problem of the margin, as they have been ignored and deprived of receiving the fundamental requirements of life, which force them to shelter in the graveyards. In addition, opening the guest house in the graveyard is a form of resistance to the democratic nation of India by showing how people have been exploited and neglected while receiving the fundamental requirements of their lives. Moreover, she extends its services, including the funerals of socially excluded people, which "bury those whom the graveyards and imams of the Duniya had rejected" (Roy,

2017, pp. 79-80). This shows how subaltern women are aware of the unity of marginalized people to resist injustice against them. In addition, as Gramsci's concept of counter-hegemony challenges the hegemonic situation by questioning social, political and cultural systems and making other people aware of their hegemonic situation (Adamson, 1983), Anjum counters injustice against her and other marginalized people by making them aware of injustice and providing services to people from the margins. Further, Anjum rejects the injustices by mending the broken hearts of marginalized people, welcoming them, and establishing solidarity with them. To some extent, this finding aligns with the study of Islam (2020), which reports that the depiction of graveyards in the novel indicates the rejection of all social systems.

In addition, Anjum wants to work for the people who have been falling and remained on the margins by focusing on unity and collaboration among the neglected people to resist injustices and manage the space for them. For example, Anjum states, "You will never stop falling. And as you fall, you will hold on to other falling people. The sooner you understand that the better. This place where we live, where we have made our home, is the place of falling people" (Roy, 2017, p. 84). This Anjum's remark clearly shows subaltern women's attempt to support marginalized people by establishing unity among them. This further reflects that subaltern women want to solve problems instead of just exposing the broken hearts of victimized people. In addition, by exploring South Asian historiography, mainly focusing on religion, caste system, and gender, Guha (1987b) argues that marginalized people's resistance has not been recorded in Indian mainstream history. This reflects that marginalized people's voices have been ignored and erased from the pages of Indian history. Although Anjum is a marginalized woman, she struggles for the betterment of ignored and neglected people whose voices have been unheard. She assimilates with

victimized people by welcoming, and supporting them. Therefore, she said, "I'm all of them, I'm Romi and Juli, and I'm Laila and Majnu. And Mujna, why not? Who says my name is Anjum? I'm not Anjum, I'm Anjuman. I'm a mehfil, I'm a gathering. . . everyone's invited (Roy, 2017, p. 4). This reflects how Anjum transforms herself from Anjum to Anjuman by developing her awareness and resisting injustices. In addition, her journey of transformation indicates the power of subaltern consciousness to establish unity and solidarity with the people from the margin and her ability to address the problems of the marginal people by being together with them. She sacrifices her life to remain together by welcoming all the ignored and neglected people from the margins. This further shows that in the latest changing context of India, subaltern women also transform themselves to tackle the latest challenges of subaltern women.

### ***S. Tilotama's Resistance in The Ministry of Utmost Happiness***

S. Tilotama is a marginalized and ignored woman; however, she resists the injustices against victimized people, mainly focusing on the problem of Kashmiri people who lost their family members and relatives. As Spivak (1987) claims, women, as subalterns, have been victimized more than men; Tilotama is suppressed by layers of injustices constructed by a male-dominated society. Additionally, Tilotama does not have a transparent past background or family history. In the novel, Biplab Das, one of her friends in her college, narrates:

There had been a scandal, a love affair in a small town. The man, who belonged to an 'untouchable' caste . . . Tilo's mother, was sent away until the baby was born and placed in a Christian orphanage. In a few months, she returned to the orphanage and adopted her own child. Her family disowned her. (Roy, 2017, p. 155)

This reflects that subaltern women have mini-stories of their victimization and suppression by several injustices based on the caste system and religion; however, their stories have been ignored, which Roy reveals in her novel.

In the same way, Tilotama has been marginalized as she belongs to a lower hierarchy of caste in India and does not have a clear, shareable family background. Biplab narrates: "I loved her without pride and without hope. Without hope, because I knew that even if by some remote chance she had reciprocated my feelings, my parents, my Brahmin parents, would never accept her the girl without a past, without a caste into the family" (Roy, 2017, p. 161). Biplab remarks reflect how subaltern women have been taken as a means of getting pleasure in a male-dominated society and how their previous family background hampers their present and future prospects. In addition, Biplab, Tilotama's boyfriend, does not plan to marry her; instead, he has just been enjoying with her, as she does not have a clear past and a caste. As Guha (1982) claims, this study reveals that the caste system and religion are deeply rooted in people's minds and determine their prospective relations. However, Tilotama does not care about all those and remains true to her purpose in life.

Moreover, Tilotama works for the betterment of people from the margins, mainly focusing on victimized people from Kashmir. As Iyer (2018) claims, the Kashmiri people have been victimized because of insurgency and state-led injustices; Tilotama devotes her life to resisting the injustices against the Kashmiri people by divorcing her husband, Naga. She further clarifies this when her husband, Naga, asks her the reasons behind her leaving him. Tilotama responds, "I got over all that long ago. I'm happy and well-adjusted now. Like the people of Kashmir. I've learned to love my country. I may even vote in the next election" (Roy, 2017, pp. 215-216). The above Tilotama's remark indicates her perspective on marriage and her love for the

nation. Her remark further shows that subaltern women focus on helping marginalized and victimized people instead of their happiness and betterment. For instance, Biplab narrates: "She said, 'I'm not marrying anybody.' When I asked her why she felt that way, she said she wanted to be free to die" (Roy, 2017, p. 159). This suggests that subaltern women want to escape from marriage, as they understand that marriage restricts their freedom. Moreover, rejecting marriage reflects subaltern women's revolt against the social system of a male-dominated society.

Further, Tilotama is an introvert who devotes her life to the nation's sake; however, she lacks economic resources to sustain her life. She is living an uncertain life as she is collecting information related to victimized Kashmiri people. For example, Biplab narrates, "Tilo, on the other hand, was like a paper boat on a boisterous sea. She was absolutely alone. Even the poor in our country, brutalized as they were, had families. How would she survive? How long would it be before her boat went down" (Roy, 2017, p. 160)? This shows how Tilotama takes risks in her personal life to fight against injustices. This further reflects that subaltern women have the courage to take risks for the support of other marginalized people.

In addition, in the novel, people from the margins question the democratic system of India, as their banner says:

The Story of Kashmir . . . is this democracy or demon crazy? No TV camera pointed at that banner, not even by mistake. Most of those engaged in India's Second Freedom Struggle felt nothing less than outrage at the idea of freedom for Kashmir and the Kashmiri women's audacity. (Roy, 2017, p. 115)

This reflects that people from the margins have an awareness of the Indian democratic system, which cannot protect the lives of the public, particularly the

Kashmiri people. As Tickell (2007) argues, the public's expectations about social transformation have not been addressed by the federal government of India and the first elected communist government of Kerala, which has developed dissatisfaction among people against the democratic system of India. Thus, people from marginalized spaces unite to resist the injustices against them. These findings, to some extent, align with Maerhofer (2015), who argues that Roy's novel depicts the victimization of Indian and Kashmiri Muslims. In addition, Tilotama resists injustices alone and does not share the information for long with others; however, finally, she arrives at the Jannat Guest House and unites with all the people from the margins. For example, "Tilo and Miss Jebeen in a bear hug, kissing both of them several times. She had organized a Welcome Home party. Jannat Guest House was decorated with balloons and streamers" (Roy, 2017, p. 302). The above remarks reveal, as Zembylas (2013) has argued, Gramsci's notion of counter-hegemony shows that people from the margins unite and counter the political system to dismantle injustices and establish justice and a new system; likewise, marginalized people have been united and counter the national political system and injustice to form a new system with justice and harmony.

### ***Revathy's Resistance in The Ministry of Utmost Happiness***

Revathy is a Telugu indigenous woman from Andhra Pradesh, India, and she belongs to the lower caste. She is marginalized because of gender, class, ethnicity, and caste and victimized by state-led injustices as the government wants to utilize their land to establish "mining companies" (Roy, 2017, p. 416). Therefore, subaltern women have been victimized by state-led injustices apart from gender, caste, religion, and class, and they are aware of their situation; thus, they resist all the injustices against women and marginalized people without only focusing on individual

injustices. In a letter to Dr. Azad, Revathy writes: "Bastar, the Adivasi tribes that lived there, the mining companies that wanted their land, and the Maoist guerrillas who were waging a war against security forces that were trying to clear the land for the companies" (Roy, 2017, p. 416). Her remarks indicate that subaltern people have been victimized and suppressed by the state instead of protecting and providing them with the basic requirements of their lives. As Guha (1996) claims, subaltern people have been suppressed and marginalized by the various layers of injustice, particularly by the injustices related to the state. In the same way, indigenous people have been suppressed by using physical force; therefore, they do not have other alternatives, instead fighting back against such brutality.

Further, Revathy joins the Communist Party of India and resists the injustices against the victimization of indigenous people. She writes, addressing Dr. Azad: "I am Revathy, working as a full-timer with *the Communist Party of India (Maoist)*. When you will receive this letter, I will be already killed" (Roy, 2017, p. 417). Revathy chooses death instead of living a suppressed and docile life. This has been because of the power of subaltern consciousness, which helps subaltern people resist injustices against them and all marginalized people. Gramsci argues that subaltern people counter injustice and make other marginalized people aware of the hegemonic situation of society after overcoming the hegemonic social order (Hoare & Sperber, 2015); Revathy becomes aware of injustices against women and marginalized people and revolutionizes against them by joining the communist party to dismantle the existing political system of India.

Although subaltern women have consciousness and reject injustices, they have been victimized by several injustices. For instance, Revathy is raped by the six policemen and gives birth to her daughter; Udaya, however, leaves her daughter in

Jantarantar, nearby Delhi, India. Revathy narrates: "After I left my child there in Delhi, my conscience is very much bad. I cannot sleep or take rest. I don't want her. But I don't want her to suffer also. So in case if you know where she is, I want to tell you her frank story a little" (Roy, 2017, p. 418). Revathy's passion for resisting the injustices against marginalized people and her devotion to the communist party motivates her to reject traditional motherhood. She wants to be a warrior to end all kinds of injustices against women and indigenous people. This shows that she is aware of women's condition, determination, and courage to fight against injustices, which motivates her to be dedicated to dismantling all kinds of injustices. However, such a finding has not been reported in the study of Gorman-Darif (2018), which claims that Revathy does not have much hope of victory in joining the Maoist revolution.

Besides this, Revathy has been victimized by a male-dominated society, as women have been restricted from following their passions. In her letter, Revathy writes:

I wanted to be a lawyer and put my father behind bars forever. But soon I became influenced by communism and revolutionary thinking. I read communist literature. My grandfather taught me revolutionary songs, and we would sing together. (Roy, 2017, p. 420)

The above Revathy's remarks show how a male-dominated society has controlled women's passions and desires. Nevertheless, subaltern women are motivated by various sources to reject injustices. For example, Revathy understands how women have been suppressed by observing her mother's condition, whom her husband has severely victimized.

Moreover, Revathy realizes that people from the margins have been victimized by layers of injustice, particularly state-led injustices. This shows how subaltern women develop their awareness of injustices against people from the margins and reject such injustices. Revathy narrates: "No adivasi can stay in her house or their village. They sleep in the forest outside at night because at night police come, hundred, two hundred, sometimes five hundred police. They take everything, burn everything, steal everything" (Roy, 2017, p. 421). This shows that people from the margin have been exploited by state-led injustice; however, marginalized people have resisted such injustice by understanding how they have been exploited. As Guha (1997) argues that the autocratic political system has dominated colonized people without their consent. On the other hand, Roy (2001) claims that India has been following the legacy of colonialism even after its independence from colonial rule. In the same way, marginalized people have been victimized without their consent; thus, they have revolted against the injustices.

Moreover, Revathy develops an awareness of injustice and becomes critical even when looking at her political party. For example, Revathy further writes:

My party is my mother and father. Many times, it does many wrong things. Kills the wrong people. Women join because they are revolutionaries but also because they cannot bear their sufferings at home. The party says men and women are equal, but still they never understand. (Roy, 2017, p. 425)

The above extract reflects how women have been victimized at home and out of the home and how they develop their critical perspective towards their party and the ongoing situation. Moreover, Majumdar (2015) reports that all people, including women, minorities, tribal groups, peasants, and workers, are made citizens of India

after its independence. However, in the real sense, Roy's novel depicts the exploitation of marginalized people in the changing political context of decolonized India. Subaltern women have been marginalized because of caste, class, gender, religion, and state-led injustices; nevertheless, they have resisted. As Ludden (2002) claims, subaltern is a form of resistance to injustice; Revathy, as a subaltern indigenous woman, joins the communist party in resisting injustices in India. As Guha (1996) reports, Revathy's mini-narratives about her exploitation and her resistance against injustices uncover the hidden realities of marginalized people, and such atrocities and resistance have not been recorded in the documented history of India. This further suggests that women's exploitation and resistance have changed from a domestic to a broader social context.

Overall, the above discussions reveal that in *The God of Small Things*, subaltern women have been victimized by domestic injustices such as disparity in education between males and females, depriving them of property rights, and becoming invisible in their own families. However, they are aware of the injustices against them and have individually resisted in the domestic space. The discussion further clarifies that subaltern women have been limited in understanding the proper situation and lack solidarity among the victimized. On the other hand, Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* depicts subaltern women's victimization because of transgender issues, state-led injustice against minorities, establishing big companies, religious fundamentalism, and etcetera; however, subaltern women have resisted such injustices, creating their solidarity. Overall, the discussion shows that the depiction and resistance of subaltern women have differed in Roy's two novels. The above discussion further reveals that subaltern women's strategies of resistance have

modified as their ways of victimization and injustice against them have changed over time.

### **The Variations in the Resistance of the Marginalized Women in Roy's Novels**

Spivak (2010) argues that the subaltern is a contextual, dynamic, and changeable concept; therefore, the subaltern's representation and resistance have also been transformed based on the changing context. Roy has published her second novel at a twenty-year interval from the first, incorporating the events that happened in the different contexts of India. Thus, based on the information obtained from the primary texts and secondary resources, I have found the following variations in Roy's novels: resisting domestic injustices to a broader context; resisting by marrying with self-decision to rejecting marriage; resisting by breaching the love laws to love for humanity; resisting injustices from the local to the national political system; resisting injustices by accepting to rejecting traditional motherhood; individual to communal resistance to injustice; and resisting injustice to resisting by providing solutions to overcome injustice.

#### ***Resisting Domestic Injustices to a Broader Context***

Roy's *The God of Small Things* depicts subaltern women's resistance to gender disparity in the domestic space, particularly at home, by exhibiting their responses, comments, and revolts against gender discrimination. They refuse gender inequality as they realize that gender is a barrier to their freedom and equality, particularly among their family members. For instance, Ammu rejects her father's concept that "a college education was an unnecessary expense for a girl" (Roy, 1997, p. 38) by leaving her house and marrying without family consent. She resists her husband's misbehavior by hitting him with "the heaviest book she could find on the bookshelf" (Roy, 1997, p. 41), and she divorces him. This uncovers subaltern women's

aggression against gender discrimination and their attempts to dismantle the gender disparity by exposing their awareness of inequality and agency in making their own decisions. In addition, Ammu realizes how she is deprived of property rights as she is a woman; therefore, she questions her brother's male chauvinism by commenting, "Thanks to our wonderful male chauvinist society," Ammu said. Chacko said, "What's yours is mine, and what's mine is also mine" (Roy, 1997, p. 57). This reflects subaltern women's extensive understanding of how they have been deprived of their property rights and their resistance to gender inequality. Similarly, Ammu rejects her brother's habit of getting sexual benefits from his female employees, as "he would call pretty women who worked in the factory to his room, and on the pretext of lecturing them on labor rights and trade union law, flirt with them outrageously" (Roy, 1997, p. 65). This suggests that Roy depicts subaltern women who have a critical understanding of how women have been victimized in their workplace. However, Ammu's daughter Rahel resists gender discrimination by rejecting traditional patriarchal norms, such as "she didn't know how to be a girl" (Roy, 1997, p. 17), instead of directly responding to the injustices. This shows variations in the resistance to injustice between mother and daughter; nevertheless, their resistance against gender discrimination has been limited in the domestic space.

However, Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* discloses subaltern women's resistances against gender discrimination from a broader perspective without limiting them only to the domestic space. Subaltern women face gender discrimination as they belong to transgender women in a male-dominated society, and at the same time, they resist the injustice not only at home but also in a broader social context. For instance, Anjum, a transgender woman, resists heterosexual normativity by leaving her home and uniting with other transgender women in Khwabgah. For

instance, Aftab, "one night he stole some money and his sisters' nicer clothes and moved into the Khwabgah" (Roy, 2017, p. 24), and "Aftab became Anjum" (Roy, 2017, p. 25). Roy's depiction of the transgender subaltern women's community in Khwabgah and Aftab's courage to be Anjum reflect transgender subaltern women's mutual resistance against gender discrimination in a broader space. In addition, As Gramsci claims that subaltern people's critical self-awareness supports them in countering the hegemonic social order (Femia, 1987); Anjum counters hetero-sexual normativity by rejecting traditional gender roles and revealing her gender identity. Moreover, Anjum leaves Khwabgah and transforms from Anjum to Anjuman. Anjum states, "Who says my name is Anjum? I'm not Anjum; I'm Anjuman. I'm a mehfil; I'm a gathering" (Roy, 2017, p. 4). This shows subaltern women's changing in a way of resistance by rejecting all the gender categories and focusing on humanity and collaboration among marginalized people. In addition, Tilotama resists the gender disparity by terminating her marital relationship with her husband and questioning the injustice against women's exploitation in the Kashmir insurgency. Moreover, Revathy refuses gender discrimination, rejects traditional motherhood, and revolts by joining the communist party. Thus, subaltern women's resistance against gender discrimination, as Spivak (2010) reports, transforms based on changing situations in a broader context.

Moreover, Roy depicts subaltern women's resistance to the long-standing caste system in *The God of Small Things* by exposing subaltern women's crossing of the social barrier established by the caste system in India, however, in domestic space. The caste system has suppressed women by creating a hierarchy and limiting them to specific spaces; however, they develop an awareness of how the caste system restricts their freedom, and they resist such a system by breaching and ignoring its limitations.

For instance, Ammu rejects the hierarchy of the caste system of India by keeping repeated physical relationships with the man of lower caste, Valutha, "Even later, on the thirteen nights that followed this one, instinctively they stuck to the small things" (Roy, 1997, p. 338). Even though both of them have to face the bitter consequences of their relationships, Valutha is arrested and killed, and Ammu is traumatized as she is insulted at home and in society. However, it is their secret relationships; they are publicly victimized, as the caste system is deeply rooted in Indian society. This indicates that women's resistance to the caste system has been at the domestic level, limiting their love and physical relationships. Nevertheless, they have been aware of how the caste system victimized marginalized people. This finding further reflects that subaltern women in India have not been confident enough to resist the caste system openly as they have a fear of their society; however, they have an awareness of the evil of the caste system.

However, Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* exhibits subaltern women's rejection of the caste system in a broader context by revealing marginalized women's refusal to follow the caste system and their struggles to eliminate the caste system in India. Subaltern women resist the caste system in the broader sense, as they want to make people aware of the evils of the caste system so they can resist it publicly. For instance, Anjum shares with Saddam Hussain, "I don't care what you are . . . this caste, that caste, or a camel's arsehole" (Roy, 2017, p. 85). Husain belongs to a lower caste known as Chamar, and he has a job in the hospital "to handle the cadavers. The Hindu doctors who were required to conduct post-mortems thought of themselves as upper castes and would not touch dead bodies for fear of being polluted" (Roy, 2017, p. 72). The above remark shows the devastating condition of the caste system in India; however, female characters such as Anjum have a consciousness of such evil and

resist it publicly. She rejects the caste system by establishing her new world, which is free from any discrimination and welcomes all marginalized people without limiting them based on their castes. This further indicates that subaltern women develop their strategy of revolting against the caste system by promoting their level of consciousness, as Spivak (2010) suggests that subaltern consciousness indicates the individual's consciousness about their situation; subaltern women develop their understanding of the contexts and accordingly transform their ways of resistance. In the same way, Tilotama belongs to a lower caste and does not have a clear previous background. She resists the caste system by simply ignoring it and keeping it secret. Finally, she rejects the caste system by struggling to transform society. Moreover, Revathy also belongs to the lower caste and resists the caste system by joining the party to dismantle all the injustices. This reflects that subaltern women's ways of resisting the caste system have changed, as Roy has depicted in her prior novel, *The God of Small Things*, in the changing context of India. As Guha (1996) claims, subaltern women's social activities have been ignored in mainstream concerns, which Roy has uncovered in her novels.

### ***Resisting by Marrying with Self-Decision to Rejecting Marriage***

The subaltern women resist injustice made by male-dominated society against them by developing their agency to make their own decisions, particularly about their marriage and divorce, in Roy's *The God of Small Things*. For the long term, subaltern women have been restricted in making decisions about their lives; because of this, their freedom and agency are seized and become limited. Therefore, they resist the injustices against them by promoting their power to make decisions about their lives; however, their attempts remain only in the domestic space, just focusing on marriage and divorce. For instance, Ammu and Rahel's self-decision about their marriage and

divorce without obtaining their family's consent questions the male-dominated society of India, particularly the Syrian Christians of Kerala, as it is opposite to their tradition and culture. For instance, Ammu marries Baba, who belongs to the Hindu Brahmin community, and "at someone else's wedding reception, Ammu met her future husband . . . He proposed to Ammu . . . and accepted. She thought that anything, anyone at all, would be better than returning to Ayemenem" (Roy, 1997, p. 39). Later on, she divorces him based on her own decision. In the same way, her daughter Rahel marries "McCaslin . . . she returned with him to Boston" (Roy, 1997, pp. 18-19), and then she divorces him, taking her own decision as "they were divorced" (Roy, 1997, p. 20). Further, "Ammu knew that weddings were not something that could be avoided altogether . . . for the rest of her life, she advocated small weddings in ordinary clothes" (Roy, 1997, p. 44). She might have learned this from her own bitter experience with marriage. In addition, she believes "choosing between her husband's name and her father's name didn't give a woman much of a choice" (Roy, 1997, pp. 36-37). This indicates that subaltern women's perception of marriage is unavoidable; nevertheless, they question the traditional marital system by making their own decisions about their marriage and divorce and showing their desire to transform such a system to protect their identity and make it affordable to marginalized people. Moreover, this further reflects their refusal of a male-dominated society by rejecting their decisions about their lives and not becoming as docile and submissive women as they have expected of them.

However, subaltern women resist the injustices made by male-dominated society against them by escaping from marriage in Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* in a broader social context. Subaltern women reject marriage to discard the injustices against women as they realize how women have been suppressed because of

the marital system. For instance, Tilotama considers marriage just as a shelter for her as she wants freedom in her life, as she said, 'I'm not marrying anybody . . . she wanted to be free to die' (Roy, 2017, p. 159). Moreover, "Why did Tilo marry Naga? A generous person would say it was because she needed shelter. A less generous view would be that it was because she needed cover" (Roy, 2017, p. 217). This suggests that Tilotama prioritizes her responsibility towards the nation instead of marriage, as she might have thought that marriage would hinder her freedom. In the same way, Anjum and Revathy focus on their mission instead of marrying and making their own families. These remarks show that subaltern women have considered their marriage a hindrance to personal freedom and a source of exploitation for females; therefore, they resist such a system. This further indicates that with the changing context, subaltern women have enhanced their agency and autonomy to look at marriage and have developed their ways of resistance to male-dominated society by rejecting marriage.

***Resisting by Breaching the Love Laws to Love for Humanity***

Roy's *The God of Small Things* uncovers subaltern women's rejection of love laws by ignoring and questioning the limitations made by male-dominated society; however, they have rejected it in secret and domestic space. Although subaltern women have been prevented from expressing their love based on their desire and selection, they refuse the limitations and restrictions by following their passions and desires. For instance, Ammu and Rahel break the love laws as they "were the worst transgressors . . . they all broke the rules. They all crossed into forbidden territory. They all tampered with the laws that lay down who should be loved and how" (Roy, 1997, p. 31). The above remark reflects how subaltern women reject the social systems that are not in favor of them. In addition, Ammu marries Baba, who belongs

to the Hindu and Brahmin communities. Later on, she keeps her physical relationship with Velutha; however, he is not interested in it, as "his wetness wet her. She put her arms around him. He tried to be rational. What's the worst thing that can happen? I could lose everything" (Roy, 1997, p. 334). Likewise, Rahel and Estha, brother and sister, have a physical relationship, "what they shared that night was not happiness but hideous grief. Only that once again they broke the love laws" (Roy, 1997, p. 328). This indicates that subaltern women have broken the love laws, which have been against their freedom and happiness and confine them within a limited space.

However, Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* reveals subaltern women's love for humanity, marginal people, and justice to resist injustices instead of limiting them to breaching the love laws in personal and domestic spaces. In doing so, they develop their critical perspective to look at the social justice system and promote a sense of unity with people from the margins. For instance, Roy shows subaltern women's concern with the democratic system of India: "Is this democracy or demon crazy?" (Roy, 2017, p. 115). The above remark reveals how subaltern women develop their concern for India's politics and political system, which cannot maintain justice for subaltern women. As Guha (1997) claims, people from the margins have been exploited without their consent in the British colonization of India; however, in the same way, after decolonization, subaltern women have been victimized without their consent. Therefore, subaltern women resist injustices by showing their respect for justice and humanity instead of their individual love. In addition, they develop their love for the nation; as Tilotama says, "Like the people of Kashmir, I've learned to love my country" (Roy, 2017, pp. 215-216). In addition, Revathy is "working as a full-timer with the Communist Party of India (Maoist)" (Roy, 2017, p. 417). These remarks reflect that subaltern woman devoted their love to humanity, justice, and the

nation instead of breaking the love laws. This further shows they have a broader concept of resistance to injustice to establish justice and peace for all marginalized people.

***Resisting Injustices from the Local to the National Political System***

Roy's *The God of Small Things* reveals subaltern women's resistance to the local political system, political leaders, and police administration by uncovering their mistreatment of subaltern women and exposing the contradiction between their promises to the public and reality. Subaltern women have been exploited by local political leaders and the political system, and their voices have not been heard by the police administration and their justice system. For instance, Ammu visits the police station to correct the misinformation regarding Valutha. Police Inspector Thomas Mathew "stared at Ammu's breasts as he spoke. He said the police knew all they needed to know and that the Kottayam Police didn't take statements from Veshyas or their illegitimate children . . . then he tapped her breasts with his baton" (Roy, 1997, p. 8). After her victimization by the police inspector, Ammu resists through her facial expression, as her face "was set like stone, but the tears welled up in her eyes and ran down her rigid cheeks" (Roy, 1997, p. 8). She resists being silent, as she knows her situation. Wagner (2012) argues that silence is a form of resistance to injustice; therefore, Ammu remains silent to reject his mistreatment of her. Nevertheless, she rejects injustice through her facial expression and by showing her boldness. In the same way, Ammu resists her brother's political hypocrisy. Although Chacko is a self-proclaimed communist, he is unfair at home and in his factory. Ammu rejects his male-dominating and exploitative manner as "Comrade! Comrade! An Oxford avatar of the old zamindar mentality of a landlord forcing his attentions on women who depended on him for their livelihood" (Roy, 1997, p. 65). In addition, subaltern

women question the communist government of Kerala, as it has become deaf enough to address the problems of people from the margins. The above remarks further reflect that subaltern women have been critical of the political system, leaders, and public administration as they have not been secured and protected from them; however, they show their resistance in the small domestic space.

Conversely, Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* exhibits subaltern women's resistance to injustice made by the national political system, leaders, and the nation's justice system. Subaltern women have been deliberately victimized; therefore, they resist the injustices by questioning them, ignoring their system, and revolting by joining the political party. In addition, they question the election system of the democratic government of India by showing how unqualified people can be elected. For instance, Narendra Modi "won the election after the election in Gujarat. Some people believed he ought to be held responsible for mass murder, but his voters called him Gujarat ka Lalla. Gujarat's Beloved" (Roy, 2017, p. 63), and "we have seen your genocide. We have seen your ethnic cleansing" (Roy, 2017, p. 145). These remarks show subaltern women's broader consciousness level and resistance to injustices against marginalized people. In addition, the people from the margins criticize the democratic system of India by stating, "Is this democracy or demon crazy?" (Roy, 2017, p. 115). Although people from the margins have their expectations that the democratic system of India eliminates all kinds of injustices against marginalized people, subaltern people, mainly women, have been neglected and victimized in India. Moreover, Tilotama resists injustices against marginalized people, particularly focusing on Kashmiri people who have been victimized by government-led injustices and insurgencies. Likewise, Revathy questions the government of India, as indigenous people have been victimized. Thus, she resists the injustices by joining the political

party. This indicates that subaltern women resist injustices against them without limiting them to the local context; instead, they reject injustices in the national political system of India.

***Resisting Injustices by Accepting to Rejecting Traditional Motherhood***

Roy's *The God of Small Things* reveals that although subaltern women have been alone by divorcing their husbands and having poor economic conditions by depriving them of economic rights, they complete their responsibilities toward the children. They prove that they can properly look after their children without the support of their husbands, which questions the traditional role of the husband as the principal earner and protector of the family. For instance, Ammu marries and has twins, Rahel and Estha, and after all, she leaves her husband; nevertheless, she brings her children to her parents' house. She struggles to complete her responsibilities toward them without support from her husband. Later on, she leaves her parents' house because of her scandal with Valutha. She has a job; however, she "had lost the latest of her succession of jobs as a receptionist in a cheap hotel because she had been ill and had missed too many days of work" (Roy, 1997, p. 159). Later on, she "died in a grimy room in the Bharat Lodge in Alleppey, where she had gone for a job interview as someone's secretary" (Roy, 1997, p. 161). These remarks indicate that subaltern women struggle at the last stage of their lives to complete their responsibilities toward their children. This means subaltern women question the traditional belief that women are weaker and cannot complete their responsibilities towards their children.

However, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* uncovers the fact that subaltern women want to be mothers; however, they are reluctant to marry and give birth to their own children; instead, they want to seal others' children to be mothers. Subaltern

women's idea of rejecting being the biological mother and focusing on stealing other people's children to be the mothers questions the traditional structure of a male-dominated society, which prefers biological children after getting married. For instance, Tilotama does not like to be married; however, she wants to be a mother by stealing the child. Revathy leaves her daughter at Jantarmantar, whose "kidnapper, who went by the name of S. Tilottama, was awake and concentrating" (Roy, 2017, p. 214). Therefore, Tilottama steals Revathy's daughter from Jantarmantar. She refuses traditional motherhood as she observes in her home and society how a male-dominated society has victimized traditional mothers. In addition, Revathy said, "I don't want her. But I don't want her to suffer also" (Roy, 2017, p. 418). She rejects her biological daughter because she focuses on resisting injustices against people on the margins. Revathy's rejection of motherhood for revolting against injustice indicates her determination to overcome the injustices; thus, she becomes a full-timer in her party. On the other hand, Anjum wants to be a mother; however, she is a transgender woman. After all, she steals the child named Zainab, whom "Anjum had found her three years ago on one of those windy afternoons . . . she was alone and bawling on the steps of the Jama Masjid" (Roy, 2017, p. 31). Roy's depiction of such a kind of motherhood has challenged the traditional views on biological motherhood, which is to some extent parallel with the findings of Kuiti (2021), which report that queer motherhood is a form of resistance to mandatory heterosexual motherhood. Therefore, transgender women's motherhood rejects the injustices in a male-dominated society.

### ***Individual to Communal Resistance to Injustice***

Roy's *The God of Small Things* depicts subaltern women who lack communal trust while rejecting the injustices against them. They have been skeptical of almost

everyone, as they have been victimized and marginalized at home and in public spaces. Further, their family members and relatives have been reluctant to support them. For instance, Ammu, with the support of the story of Julius Caesar, has taught her children that "you can't trust anybody. mother, father, brother, husband, and best friend, nobody" (Roy, 1997, p. 83). The above Ammu's remark indicates how subaltern women become critical while looking at human relations. Moreover, Ammu's daughter, Rahel, lives alone at home, in school, and in college. For instance, in her school, she "had no friends" (Roy, 1997, p. 17). She likes "staying in the hostel, eating in the subsidized student mess, rarely going to class, working instead as a draftsman in gloomy architectural firms" (Roy, 1997, p. 17). In addition, her friends at the college "left her alone. She was never invited to their nice homes or noisy parties" (Roy, 1997, p. 18). Likewise, she rarely keeps in touch with family, as "she occasionally wrote to Chacko and Mammachi but never returned to Ayemenem. Not when Mammachi died. Not when Chacko immigrated to Canada" (Roy, 1997, p. 18). The above remarks reflect that subaltern women ignore establishing solidarity with other victimized women and do not trust in communal resistance. This further indicates they are reluctant to share their stories with other marginalized women, as they do not expect support in resisting injustices against them. Therefore, they individually resist the injustices against them, which makes them weaker in refusing and dismantling injustices.

On the other hand, Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* reveals subaltern women's trust in communal resistance while rejecting injustices against them and other marginalized people. They form unity among ignored and neglected people, listen to and share their atrocities, and welcome them all to resist injustice. For instance, Anjum loves to be together with marginalized people, as she said, "I'm all of

them; I'm Romi and Juli, and I'm Laila and Majnu. And Mujna, why not? Who says my name is Anjum? I'm not Anjum; I'm Anjuman. I'm a mehfil; I'm a gathering" (Roy, 2017, p. 4). Anjum's above remark uncovers subaltern women's focus on togetherness with people from the margins by ignoring their gender categories. Moreover, Anjum decides "to move back to the Duniya and help the poor" (Roy, 2017, p. 56) from Khwabgah. The above remarks reflect that subaltern women have a desire to help other marginalized people and have communal trust while resisting injustices. However, Tilotama loves her lonely and secret life. Nevertheless, at last she joins a community of marginalized people, as "Jannat Guest House was decorated with balloons and streamers" (Roy, 2017, p. 302) to welcome Tilotama. Similarly, Revathy is "working as a full-timer with the Communist Party of India" (Roy, 2017, p. 417). The above remarks show that Roy depicts subaltern women's communal effort to dismantle the injustices against them in the changing context of India. Further, as Gramsci's counter-hegemony questions the ideological, cultural, and political system and makes other marginalized people aware of the hegemonic situation (Adamson, 1983) subaltern women Anjum, Tilotama, and Revathy question injustices against marginalized people and make them aware of possible victimization. These variations in the resistance to injustices in her novels reflect the changing awareness of subaltern women to tackle the new challenges.

Furthermore, subaltern women, as depicted in Roy's *The God of Small Things*, have been concerned with their personal victimization instead of fighting against other people's marginalization and injustices. It might be because of their limited understanding of their society, as they have long been confined to the narrow domain of their family. As a result, they lack a sense of supporting and collaborating with others, which makes their resistance to injustices weaker to dismantle the injustices

against them. However, Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* uncovers subaltern women's collaboration and their support for other marginalized women. It has been because they have a sense of communal resistance as they have realized the values of unity and mutual understanding among the people from the margins. For instance, Khwabgab provided shelter for "special people, blessed people" (Roy, 2017, p. 53), and "in the Khwabgah, holy souls trapped in the wrong bodies were liberated" (Roy, 2017, p. 53). In addition, "tens of thousands of Gujarat's Muslims" (Roy, 2017, p. 45) secretly stayed in Khwabgab in the time of Gujarat's riots. These remarks indicate that subaltern women develop a sense of mutual protection and a communal effort to dismantle injustice. Similarly, Anjum opens a guest house in the graveyard and welcomes all the victimized and marginalized people, as she said, "I'm a gathering . . . everyone's invited" (Roy, 2017, p. 4). These remarks indicate that subaltern women resist the injustices associated with other subaltern people without limiting them to personal atrocities and challenges. Moreover, Revathy fights, mainly focusing on the injustices against the 'Adivasi' in central India, by joining the communist party. This shows that Roy's depiction of subaltern women's resistance against the injustices in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* becomes broader, incorporating all the victimized and marginalized people instead of resisting the injustices only related to their personal lives.

### ***Resisting Injustice to Resisting by Providing Solutions***

Roy's *The God of Small Things* reveals subaltern women's haphazard, unprepared ways of resisting injustices instead of searching for solutions to overcome them. Although subaltern women reject the injustice, they do not have any strategic plans to tackle the consequences of their resistance. For instance, Ammu keeps her physical relations with Velutha, "She put her arms around him. He tried to be rational.

What's the worst thing that can happen? I could lose everything" (Roy, 1997, p. 334). However, she does not speculate on the consequences of her relations with him; nevertheless, her relations with him challenge the norms of Syrian Christians in Kerala. Indeed, due to their lack of preparedness to deal with possible consequences, both of them have to face tragic situations in their lives, as Valutha dies in police custody and Ammu has been tortured and victimized at home and in public. In addition, she "met her future husband . . . She thought that anything, anyone at all, would be better than returning to Ayemenem" (Roy, 1997, p. 39). This shows that she does not understand him properly before she marries him. Later on, after having two children, she has a conflict with her husband, and she leaves him and arrives in Ayemenem; however, it becomes unfavorable for her and her children as "Baby Kochamma disliked the twins, for she considered them doomed, fatherless waifs . . . she subscribed wholeheartedly to the commonly held view that a married daughter had no position in her parents' home. As for a divorced daughter, according to Baby Kochamma, she had no position anywhere at all. And as for a divorced daughter from a love marriage, well, words could not describe" (Roy, 1997, pp. 45-46). Moreover, Chacko, Ammu's brother, said, "Ammu, Estha, and Rahel were millstones around his neck" (Roy, 1997, p. 85). Ammu is aware of the unfavorable situation at her parents' home; however, before resisting the injustice of her husband, she should make mature decisions for alternatives; however, she arrives at her parents' home with her two children. She seems incapable of making the right decisions. This means subaltern women do not have any strategic plans and a mature understanding of the problem before resisting the injustices; therefore, after resisting the injustices, their situation becomes vulnerable and critical; however, these ways of resistance of subaltern women and their consequences in their lives have been almost ignored in the existing

subaltern studies (Dhakal, 2019; Ilyas, 2019) by primarily focusing on subaltern depiction.

However, Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* depicts subaltern women's resistance to injustice with a strategic way to eradicate the injustice by constructing an alternative world, as they have a critical understanding of their contexts and have experiences about how to deal with adverse situations. For example, Anjum strategically responds to the municipal officer, who notified her to remove her guest house from the graveyard. She told him, "She wasn't living in the graveyard; she was dying in it, and for this, she didn't need permission from the municipality because she had authorization from the Almighty Himself" (Roy, 2017, p. 67). Her remark indicates that she is mentally prepared to respond to municipal authorities. In addition, her guest house in the graveyard becomes the "place of falling people" (Roy, 2017, p. 84). Therefore, her guest house becomes the center for all the neglected and marginalized people while "everyone's invited" (Roy, 2017, p. 4). This reflects subaltern women's systematic and organized way of responding to injustices. Moreover, Tilotama works in Kashmir with strategic plans, as she does not reveal her purpose to others and collects the information of victimized Kashmiri people. After all, she arrives at Janat Guest House, which becomes "a home for the rest of her life" (Roy, 2017, p. 305), and begins to teach the children and make them aware of the injustices against them. These remarks show that subaltern women develop their preparedness and make specific strategies to resist injustice, focusing on removing the injustices by creating an alternative world instead of just problematizing.

Furthermore, Roy's *The God of Small Things* uncovers subaltern women's resistance to injustices without clearly understanding their actual situation and without anticipating the consequences of their response to injustices. For instance, Ammu and

Rahel break love laws; "they all crossed into forbidden territory. They all tampered with the laws that lay down who should be loved and how" (Roy, 1997, p. 31); however, this results in hopelessness and tragic situations in their lives as they do not understand their actual situation, resources, or the nature of the injustices. This does not mean they should be submissive and docile; nevertheless, they should speculate on the further consequences of their breaching social norms. In addition, Ammu leaves her parents' house, marries someone she likes, finally divorces, and returns to Ayemenem. Moreover, her daughter "Rahel drifted into marriage like a passenger drifts towards an unoccupied chair in an airport lounge" (Roy, 1997, p. 18). She marries; however, finally, she divorces and arrives in Ayemenem. These remarks reflect that both mother and daughter lack an understanding of patriarchal ideology. They resist male-dominated society by marrying someone without their family's consent; however, they fail to understand that they are reentering another patriarchal domain; therefore, they have to face an almost similar situation, which reflects that they lack a critical understanding of the contexts. This further shows that subaltern women's resistance without understanding the situation may lead them towards more vulnerable conditions.

However, Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* uncovers subaltern women's resistance to injustice by understanding the nature of injustices and their situation. They have explored myths, historical facts, and social dynamics to understand their condition. Anjum explores Hindu mythology and discovers that transgender people are honest, but they have been historically exploited and marginalized. For instance, Lord Ram, including his wife, Sita, and his brother Laxman, has been exiled for fourteen years. Ram informs his people, "I want all you men and women to go home and wait for me until I return . . . only the Hijras waited

faithfully for him at the edge of the forest for the whole fourteen years because he had forgotten to mention them" (Roy, 2017, p. 51). The above remark indicates that Anjum clearly understands how hijras are honest and historically have been ignored. As Spivak (Guha, 1987c) claims, such understanding of the historical situation and their real context reflects subaltern consciousness, and she adds that such consciousness supports resisting injustices. In addition, transgender women resist heteronormative social views by constructing an alternative world, which assists them in dismantling the injustices by standing them out from discriminatory society. In the same way, Tilotama, by understanding the unfavorable situation of Kashmir as "dead are free" (Roy, 2017, p. 326) in Kashmir and "every good morning was good mourning for them" (Roy, 2017, p. 273), works secretly without revealing her purpose. Likewise, Revathy understands the situation of women in her family as she observes her mother's victimization by her father and as the police raped her. She knows the condition of her Indigenous society as she reports in her letter: "Police come . . . they take everything, burn everything, and steal everything" (Roy, 2017, p. 421). Therefore, she becomes "a full-timer with the Communist Party of India (Maoist)" (Roy, 2017, p. 417). These remarks reflect that subaltern women have a clear understanding of their situations, and they resist injustice accordingly. In Gramsci's counter-hegemonic situation, subaltern people resist injustice against them instead of being ready to be ruled (Hoare & Sperber, 2015); subaltern women Anjum, Tilotama, and Revathy counter the injustice against them and other marginalized people instead of remaining under hegemonic situation. This further shows that subaltern women develop their awareness of injustices and ways of resistance by observing and understanding the actual context and nature of the injustices.

Subaltern women, as depicted in *The God of Small Things*, have been victimized by layers of injustices such as gender, class, caste, and religion; however, they have resisted focusing on a single injustice instead of rejecting the layers of injustices against them. This does not mean they may not resist it; nevertheless, they are aware of other possible injustices that might victimize them. For instance, Ammu questions the long-standing caste system of India by keeping her physical relationships with a lower caste, Valutha, as "they had made the unthinkable thinkable and the impossible really happen" (Roy, 1997, p. 256); however, she is victimized by class, gender, religion, and state-led injustices while resisting the caste system. She needs to find a job to sustain herself and her children; she is insulted by the police inspector in the police station and by the public in society; her parents' home is closed for her. Rejecting the caste system without speculating about other possible consequences leads her towards the tragic situation. After all, she dies early, and "the church refused to bury Ammu . . . so Chacko hires a van to transport the body to the electric crematorium" (Roy, 1997, p. 163). The above remarks show how caste, religion, gender, and class have worked together to victimize subaltern women; thus, just resisting a single injustice, others victimized them. In addition, Rahel, like her mother, Ammu, is victimized by several injustices; however, she seems to resist the injustice that only victimized her. This shows that, as Guha (1982) claims, subaltern women have been victimized by several injustices together.

On the other hand, Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* depicts subaltern women's resistance to dismantle all the injustices related to gender, caste, class, religion, and state-led injustices by establishing solidarity among the marginalized and victimized people from the margins. In addition, Anjum responds to all the injustices against humanity by rejecting social divisions in the name of caste, religion,

class, and gender. Further, in her communication with Saddam Hessian, she said, "I don't care what you are . . . Muslim, Hindu, man, woman, this caste, that caste" (Roy, 2017, p. 85). This indicates that she rejects all the systems that promote discrimination and divide humans into various categories. Moreover, she does not reject the injustices only related to marginalized women; instead, she resists the injustices against humanity, and she is a man, not only a woman or Hijra. As she said, "Who says my name is Anjum? I'm not Anjum; I'm Anjuman" (Roy, 2017, p. 4). This shows that subaltern women's resistance to injustices becomes broader, incorporating all the people from the margin and providing solutions to the problems by establishing a peaceful and harmonious society for marginalized people and dismantling all the discrimination that existed in human society, which has not been reported in the recent studies on Roy's novels (Awasthi, 2021, 2022; Dang, 2021). This study focuses on the variations in the resistance to injustices of subaltern women in Roy's novels. Subaltern women's resistance to injustices by providing an alternative solution to the problem in the latest changing context assists in solving the problems of people from the margins and uniting broken families and human hearts by establishing a shared world of marginal people, which, as Guha (1996) claims, have not been recorded in the documented history of India. Further, it shows that subaltern women transform their ways of resistance to dismantle injustices by providing hope and prospects and uniting people from the margins.

Overall, this study identifies instances of resistance and critically compares the resistance strategies in the two novels. It examines how these strategies are influenced by changing socio-political contexts, thereby providing a dynamic view of resistance that evolves. The research questions focus on unexplored aspects, such as the differences in resistance strategies between the novels. This approach uncovers new

insights into the character's development and the socio-political commentary embedded in Roy's works.

## CHAPTER V

### CHANGING STRATEGIES IN THE RESISTANCE OF SUBALTERN WOMEN

This dissertation explores the answers to the research questions of how subaltern women have been depicted, how they have resisted injustices, and how their resistances to injustices have contrasted in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. I argue that Roy's novels show marginalized and victimized subaltern women and their variations in the resistance to injustices against them, as she has published her novels at intervals of twenty years and focused on the various events in the different time frames of Indian history. In this study, the major women characters from her novels have been analyzed, and the overall discussion has identified that in both novels, subaltern women have rebelled against the injustices since they have developed their awareness of injustice against them; however, Roy's *The God of Small Things* depicts women's resistance to injustice in domestic space, whereas her *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, shows subaltern women's resistance in a broader context to dismantle the injustices by providing alternative solutions to overcome the injustices. From a theoretical perspective, this study utilizes the subaltern theories developed by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and counter-hegemony as discussed by Antonio Gramsci, which help me analyze the depiction of subaltern women and their variations in the resistance to injustices.

The findings have identified that subaltern women in Roy's *The God of Small Things* have been marginalized and physically and mentally victimized at home and in the public space because of social, cultural, religious, and male-dominated social practices in India. In addition, women have not been secured in the public sphere; however, subaltern women have been aware of their injustices, and they have resisted

such injustices by breaking social norms and values and refusing to follow social practices that limit the freedom of their lives. Moreover, they have been independent in making their own decisions about marriage, divorce, and love. They have become more critical and skeptical of others, even as they have questioned their family members and relatives. Furthermore, they have questioned the socially constructed system of love laws by breaking the system made by a male-dominated society; however, they have limited themselves to the domestic space in resisting the injustices against them. In the same way, analysis has depicted subaltern women's marginalization and victimization in *The God of Small Things*; however, they have differed in the ways of victimization and their strategies of resistance, as shown in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. The findings reveal that in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, women have been heavily ignored and neglected because of their transgender issues, state-led injustices, insurgences, political system, and neo-liberal economic system, apart from gender, caste, religion, and class. However, marginalized and ignored women have been united with the people from the margins and struggled together for the betterment of the neglected and ignored people of India. They have been aware of their historical silencing by established social norms and values and have wanted to work for marginalized and neglected people. These findings reflect how subaltern women change their strategies of resistance, focusing on solidarity and unity with the people from the margins to address their problems and end the injustice against them.

Further, this scholarship has identified that subaltern women have broadened their domain of resistance without limiting them to the domestic space, as shown in her *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. However, her depiction of subaltern women's resistance in *The God of Small Things* has been confined to the domestic space. They

have rejected the gender disparity within the family members and resisted the caste system; however, at the domestic level, by limiting them to inter-caste marriage and keeping physical relationships with lower castes. Moreover, subaltern women have resisted the injustice against them by the local political system, political leaders, and police administration, as they have not been secured and protected from them; however, they have shown their resistance in the small domestic space. In addition, subaltern women have resisted the patriarchal social system by developing their agency to make their own decisions about their marriage and divorce and by breaching the love laws, which have been constructed by male-dominated society; however, they do it in secret and domestic space. However, in Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, subaltern women have resisted the gender disparity and caste system from a broader perspective, incorporating private and public space instead of limiting it to the domestic context. In the same way, subaltern women have resisted male-dominated society by escaping from marriage, as they have understood marriage as a restriction to their freedom and a source of their exploitation. In addition, subaltern women have shown love for humanity, marginal people, and justice, which has become a form of resistance in the broader context by rejecting all forms of injustice against humanity. Subaltern women have a wider level of consciousness and resistance to injustices against marginalized people, and they have expressed their concern about the injustices created by the neoliberal economic system in India. These findings have reflected that subaltern women have modified their level of consciousness and expanded their areas of resistance to respond to the changing ways of victimization and marginalization.

The discussion has revealed that subaltern women's victimization and marginalization have made them realize the necessity of unity among the people from

the margins to dismantle the injustices against them. Subaltern women in Roy's *The God of Small* lack the communal trust to reject the injustices against them. They have been skeptical of almost everyone, as they have been victimized and marginalized at home and in public spaces. They do not establish solidarity among the victimized women to resist the gender disparity in a male-dominated society; instead, they have individually resisted the injustice related to gender disparity without seeking and receiving support from other marginalized and victimized women; consequently, their voices against injustices have become weaker to dismantle the gender disparity. Moreover, subaltern women have rejected injustices just related to their personal lives instead of broadening their concerns with other marginalized people, which has made them limited in resisting the injustices against marginalized people. On the other hand, Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* exhibits trust in communal resistance to injustices. In addition, subaltern women would like to address and resist the injustices associated with other subaltern people without limiting them to personal atrocities and challenges. These variations in the resistance to injustices in Roy's novels have reflected that subaltern women have begun to revolt against injustices by uniting with other victimized people, as they have understood the value of unity, solidarity, and mutual understanding by associating them with other marginalized people's victimization.

This study introduces a new scholarly debate by revealing the changing strategies of subaltern women and their solidarity to counter the hegemonic situation and injustice against them. The findings have highlighted that subaltern women have developed strategies for resisting injustices by focusing on their preparedness, clear strategic plans, and a mature understanding of injustices before resisting them in the latest context, which Roy's *The God of Small* has not depicted. However, in Roy's *The*

*Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, subaltern women have resisted the injustices with their preparedness and specific strategies to dismantle injustice by providing alternative solutions to overcome injustices. At the same time, they clearly understand the nature and historical development of injustices. In the same way, subaltern women have resisted dismantling all injustices related to gender, caste, and class, religion, state-led injustices by establishing solidarity among the marginalized and victimized people from the margins, and their resistance has become broader, incorporating all the people from the margin and providing solutions to the problems by establishing a peaceful and harmonious society for marginalized people and dismantling all the discrimination that existed in human society.

Moreover, this study analyses specific characters such as Ammu, Rahel, Anjum, Tilotama, and Revathy. Focusing on their unique experiences and resistance strategies offers a more granular view of subaltern women's lives, adding depth to the understanding of these characters beyond what is typically covered in broader thematic studies. In addition, by examining the intersectionality of gender, caste, religion, and socio-economic status, the thesis explores how these intersecting identities compound the experiences of subaltern women. This intersectional approach offers a more nuanced understanding of their resistance, distinguishing it from studies that may focus on a single axis of oppression.

In addition, this study provides a better understanding of the variations in resistance of subaltern women to injustices against them in Roy's novels in the two decades of the interval as well as in general in every society, particularly Indian society, and adds significant value to existing subaltern literature and society by revealing subaltern women's latest ways of resisting injustice. However, this study has limitations, due to which it has focused on the main female characters from Roy's two

novels. By focusing on the depiction and variations in subaltern women's resistance in Roy's novels, this study has not explored the significant reasons behind subaltern women's changing strategies in their resistance. Thus, future studies incorporating all female marginalized characters from Roy's two novels will reveal detailed depictions and variations in the resistance of subaltern women. In addition, another study is needed to explore what made subaltern women modify and transform their strategies of resistance and how male subalterns have been victimized and resisted injustices. Nevertheless, this study provides a clear direction for further exploration of variations in subaltern resistance in Roy's novels.

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