

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Postcolonial Subaltern Agency in Arundhati Roy's  
*The God of Small Things*

A thesis submitted to the Central Department of English in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy in  
English

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**Letter of Recommendation**

Mr. Madan Kumar Lamichhane has completed his dissertation entitled “**Postcolonial Subaltern Agency in Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things***” under my supervision. He carried out his dissertation from August 2010 to July 2012. I hereby recommend his thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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**Approval Letter**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Postcolonial Subaltern Agency in Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things***” submitted to the Central Department of English , Tribhuvan University, by Madan Kumar Lamichhane in partial fulfillment for the requirement for the degree of Master of Philosophy (M. Phil.) in English has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Madan Kumar Lamichhane

## Abstract

Cultural plurality and heterogeneity have always been the main concerns in postcolonial studies. Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* examines India's cultural transformation from colonial, postcolonial period to contemporary era of globalization. Analyzed from this perspective, the novel communicates the most predominant issues of class, caste and the elements of oppression and marginality of lower class people in the socio-cultural context of India. The aim of this thesis is to critically consider Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* from a Marxist and postcolonial feminist perspective with a special focus on how the author creates different representations of women and the working class people. The examination of the text employs its reference from postcolonial feminism, subaltern and the concept of agency in cultural studies. The study compares three main female characters in the novel: Mammachi, Baby Kochamma and Ammu focused on their different ways of relating to the male hero of the novel, Velutha, an untouchable in the persistent caste system of India.

The study argues that Roy has come up with diverse representations of the subaltern and shows that despite their oppressed and marginalized status in the Indian society, they display agency and are portrayed as responsible for their own actions. I have attempted in the text to prove that "subaltern can speak" and to retrieve that subaltern can exude the power and act out to transgress the existing cultural positions.

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