Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is said to be a reflection of the society in which people live. This particular fact has existed on earth for many centuries. The relationship between literature and society was first discussed by Plato. Though Plato pointed it out in the beginning, it was given full expression in Madame de Staël’s paper published in 1800. Joseph Hermann Muller also mentioned fifteen years ago how art was the product of its age. The writings in literature are said to be a collection of works produced by writers about a particular language, country or age. These writings reflect upon the norms, values and various conflicts in culture. Literature is used as a tool to reveal class struggle and certain types of social facts. The good values or ills of a society get voice through the expression of writers in literature.

As literature is an imitation of human actions, it often presents a picture of what people think, say or do in society. There are stories designed to portray human life and their action for the purpose of education, information and entertainment. It is difficult to find any work of literature that excludes the happenings of society. The reason behind this is that writers will always be exposed to the world outside and they will be witnessing the incidents in front of their eyes through media and other network systems. The net article “Literature: Reflection on Society” reveals like this, “What the writers of literature do is transport the real life events of the society into fiction and present it to the society as a mirror with which people can look at themselves and make amends where necessary.” This mirror of life helps the members of the society to bring a positive change in their life whenever they are at the critical situations.
Nowadays, people can understand the importance of activism and how activist writers are the voices of dissent necessary to solve the problems across the globe and to bring a future that is protected from war, political struggles and exploitation. Protest is an area that activists concentrate upon to project real happenings and to exhibit the evils prevailing in the society. The activist who protests against the evils of society must appreciate the need for change and know how to achieve that and lead others from the forefront to create this change. Writing with a demand to the government does not determine a short term goal but a never ending process.

Anderson and Kathryn Herr point out how activism plays a major role in “... ending slavery, challenging dictatorships, protecting workers from exploitation, protecting the environment, promoting equality for women, opposing racism, and many other important issues” (19). It is an important part of literature as it portrays the struggles of past and present. Sometimes the issues presented by the activists bring a kind of social change. There are many groups related to activism like human rights group, feminist group, and political group. They deal with the problems related to their own representative groups.

The earliest recorded activist writing is Paul Hawken’s Blessed Unrest that presents the protest of one million people to bring about sustainability and social justice in the world. Many people who work against oppression do not consider themselves as activists, but their actions clearly represent a struggle against exploitation of the poor. The various methods adopted in activism are civil-disobedience, protest, campaigns, boycotts and demonstrations. The people from the literary field use protest as a major weapon to give vent to their feelings and emotions. Saul Alinsky’s book Rules for Radicals reveal the protest process as agitate, aggravate, educate and organize the unorganized society.
Slave narratives or the Blacks’ fighting for change is the beginning of activism. The well-known books are Frederick Douglass’ *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, Solomon Northup’s *Twelve Years a Slave*, and Linda Brent’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. The passionate, vehement argument for activating social change has been Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. There are western writers of importance such as Ralph Ellison, Mark Twain, Virginia Woolf, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Charles Dickens and so on. Martha Greene’s *Education and Disarmament* stands for peace education that needs to be innovative and informative about global issues.

In 1949, Arthur Miller came out with his work *The Death of a Salesman* that presents the victimization of workers by the employers in America. Another important work is Ms. Stowe's *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* which talks about the movement against slavery in literature and life in the U.S. Other famous writers who have projected the social problems are Maya Angelou, an African-American writer who has written a collection of poems, *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water ‘fore I Diiie* and James Baldwin whose *Giovanni’s Room* is about the passion and depth in the struggle of the black for freedom. Then comes W. E. B. DuBois’s *The Souls of Black Folk*, Alex Haley’s *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* on the struggle of African Americans and black history, Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes were Watching God*, Richard Wright’s *Black Boy* and so on.

In the Indian sub-continent, activism has begun with the colonial rule of the British. The Pre-Independence Indian Society is reflected in Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura*, and Rabindranath Tagore’s poetry and short stories. Even after independence, Dalits have been oppressed and writers have to protest for their survival. This struggle has been represented through fiction and non-fiction. The web article “P. Sivakami and 6
Other Dalit Women Writers” states how “Dalit women writers are like these diamonds, those who are born and brought up in misery, discrimination and adversity and come out stronger through their books and activism.” The famous Dalit writers and their works are Shantabai Kamble’s *Majya Jalmachi Chittarkatha*, Bama Faustina Susairaj’s *Karukku*, Urmila Pawar’s *The Weave of My Life: A Dalit Woman’s Memoir*, and Babytai Kamble’s *JinaAmacha or The Prisons we Broke*.

A glimpse of modern India is seen in Rohinton Mistry’s *A Fine Balance* that focuses on the various characters in Mumbai during the time of turmoil and government emergencies. Diasporic experience occurs in the works of the authors like Jhumpa Lahiri, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and others. Some of the notable writers in India, who specially concentrate on their own society and age and their works are Vikram Seth’s *A Suitable Boy*, Amitav Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace*, Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss*, Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan*, Nayantara Sahgal’s *Rich Like Us*, Anita Desai’s *In Custody* and Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* along with her other activist writings. These are very good examples for the activist writings.

In the literary world, if an author engages in contemporary issues and advocates a certain point of view, for instance like Arundhati Roy, that literary figure is called an activist. However, it is not expected that such a writer should be an expert in all the fields in the contemporary period. Rather, it is the high visibility and public understanding that enables the established literary figure to project the ideas inherent in the cause of activism. When the author intervenes actively to bring a change in the society through his writing, that writing inevitably begins to look like literary activism.
Roy’s writing carries a kind of activism in it. According to Bandyopadhyay, “Yet, it is in the nature of literary world that the impact of their message or subject often has far-reading consequences for the author, and more significantly, for the gigantic audience of the ‘Public’ that, unlike the author, lives, out of the glare of ‘Public life’” (3). This is what exactly took place in the case of public figures like Arundhati Roy. Roy writes to instill knowledge and fear about the future in her audience. She tries to warn so that it creates a possibility of collective awareness and action that may help in the survival and sustenance of life.

Arundhati Roy is India's great critic and fearless activist. She turns out to be a surprise in the literary world. Roy was raised by her mother, Mary Roy who was a strong willed, temperamental woman. Mary Roy repeatedly violated the social conventions of her conservative Syrian Christian community in Kerala's Kottayam District. The return to the native village of Doty, in Kerala, took place when Roy was one and a half years old. Roy left home at the age of 16, and came to New Delhi to pursue her study of architecture, and decided to look after her without any moral support in the big city. Kazmin, in her net article “Arundhati Roy,” provides Roy’s words thus, “I used to have chai with all the beggars, and they thought that I was from some drug cartel . . . . And I didn't deny it because I thought, at least they'll think I have some protection, I'm not just on my own. From there, you learn to ask the question from the bottom, as opposed to the top.”

The training in architecture, like her elementary education, proved instrumental in shaping her as a writer. Roy left it after few years to work on the projects for the screen and wrote the script for a television serial, which failed due to lack of funding, and then two screenplays, neither of which brought her great success
or fulfilment. Roy then published a criticism of the film *Bandit Queen* that raised controversies and resulted in a lawsuit against her.

Roy is probably a globally accepted famous activist, both as a writer and speaker. Roy’s corridors open into the well-lighted non-fictional door and devote her creative energy to brilliant works, well-crafted and elaborately argued essays on the matters of public interest. This course of broad transition makes Roy to focus on the forbidden, the marginalized and the dispossessed. Like her novel, Roy's non-fiction has also obtained praise from the readers across the globe for its activist interests. The parallels between the issues voiced in her fiction and non-fiction demonstrate her essential ideological position. When she enters into the non-fictional world, she colours her concerns by dipping her brush into the global shades. At once, she widens her landscape and looks for new horizons so that she can take her activist concerns to a global plane.

Roy belongs to the bright category that includes the Nobel laureate Amartya Sen as an Indian Public Intellectual. Her essays are published across the world in *The Guardian* and she can set out a space for herself. Even in India, she is able to draw even bigger crowds and express her views to them both in English and Hindi. N.K. Mishra and Sabitha Tripathy feel that “the novelist makes a dig at the falling standard of social morality in modern Indian society” (121-22). This sort of saying has changed Roy’s fictional writing into political activism, and she starts travelling to remote corners of the country, attending political meetings and writing essays on the topics from India's dam-building to its judicial corruption and about the Muslim-majority state of Kashmir. In an interview with Amy Kazmin, Roy exposes like this, “You get drawn into a world where people realise, here is somebody who is not frightened of saying something. All of the last 11 years has been unplanned. It's been a process of
deepening your understanding.” She tours widely, and often to the small country towns and cities where her essays are celebrated.

Roy has grown a lot as she moves from the fictional to the non-fictional world. Now she has started seeing the world through a global eye and has thus adopted a global stand while marking a shift from the fictional to the non-fictional arena. Her non-fictional works embrace all the global issues. Even in her political essays, she continues to speak for the people who creep around the edges of the society, but on a global scale. The political essays of Roy deal with the issues of national and international level such as, dams, feudal survival, state-sponsored terrorism, displacements, elitist development, neo-liberal globalization, asymmetrical world order, privatization, dispossession of the vulnerable masses and religious bigotry. All these themes combine together to lend expansive and clear substance to her non-fictional writing.

Though Roy turns fifty, she is an enthusiastic, high-profile critic who is still messing with power. In the past decade, India's establishment has been like an emerging superpower with vibrant democracy enjoying the rapid economic growth. Roy has her own special way with her words and her fame, and she challenges the narratives that serve only the middle-class by showing her interest on the poor section. Dr. Ruby Malhotra manifests a thing about Roy as follows: “The novelist has a unique gift of being able to see even the smallest, apparently meaningless details and create a complex, significant and aesthetically satisfying mosaic of life” (147-48). She has written numerous essays on contemporary politics and culture. They have been collected by Penguin India in a five volume set.

Roy, like a ferocious and wounded tiger flings her anguish reaction at the government in particular and the whole democratic system in general. Roy’s inner
mind is revealed through the net article “Arundhati Roy’s “The End of Imagination”: An Apocalyptic Vision of Nuclearisation” where she denounces “these nuclear tests as nationalist propaganda to raise popular support for the elites in power, risking peace and other social priorities (like education) in the name of political opportunism.” The style is so powerful that it cannot help without giving a jerk in the minds of many people.

Roy has turned into an activist to fight for many good causes. She has learnt a lot about the relationship between one’s writing and the society. Amitabh Roy talks of how Roy addresses the issues related to environment both in her fiction and non-fiction and K.V. Surendran claims that the “ecological problem is only one among the several issues dealt with in the novel The God of Small Things” (175), and Murari Prasad finds that Roy elaborates on this concern for “the environment in her nonfiction” (157). The word ‘activism’ incites an individual to bring about a high level awareness and a burning desire to fight for an issue of perceived injustice. Roy chooses to write both fiction and non-fiction to represent a specific point of view, but is burdened with the double representation of a writer-activist. She feels that the two cannot be easily separated. For her, the meaningful writing is synonymous with the social responsibility of activism.

The first work written by Roy is The God of Small Things which has attained worldwide fame and appreciation. The God of Small Things was published in 1997; Roy received £500,000 advance, and later her Booker Prize for this work. With her success, she has been accepted as a living symbol of India's arrival on the global stage. Bimaljit Saini writes that in “... The God of Small Things Roy implicitly presses for greater social reform in the rigid positioning of women and the intolerable plight of the deprived class” (96). Then following her strong disapproval of the
country's nuclear tests in 1998 with the publication of her activist essay, the attitude of people towards national joy and patriotism has begun to change as the nuclear test has taken its toll on the life of human beings.

In *The God of Small Things* also, Roy has the issues of subalterns which fully forecast her novel's firm achievement. The theme of subalternity enters into her non-fictional works as well. However, the subaltern strain in her non-fictional writings exhibit the growth of Roy as a subaltern writer and she takes a global stand while marking a shift from the fictional to the non-fictional world. She has become an international literary sensation with her Booker Prize-winning novel, *The God of Small Things* and after the remarkable success of her debut novel, Roy has changed her terrain.

The success of *The God of Small Things* brings much surprise to the millions of people all over the world. Rama Nair states that “In *The God of Small Things*, the real world of transgression and brutality is juxtaposed with the ideal world of love and commitment. Language by the sheer force of its symbolic power is the link between the two worlds” (250). The first novel has made her famous and rich, and none could imagine about the success of the novel in 40 languages. The book is semi-autobiographical and the major part captures her childhood experiences in Ayemenem. The book was also listed as one of the New York Times Notable Books of the Year for 1997. The book reached fourth position in the *New York Times* Bestsellers list for Independent Fiction. She received half-a-million pounds as an advance, and rights to the book were sold in 21 countries. *The God of Small Things* reminds its readers of the first novel published in Kerala, in 1989, entitled *Indulekha*. The writer of this novel, Cheidu Menon was quite conscious that the role of the novelist was like that of a social historian who had to record in his writings what he saw and felt.
Then follows *An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire*, a collection of non-fictional essays where Roy deconstructs the concepts of empire, neo-liberal capitalism, growing threat of corporate power and state terrorism. She also talks about the response of the nation to resistance-movements, caste and communal politics in India and the commercial mass media. This is also an inspirational and passionate collection of essays. Here, Roy discusses global justice and certain powerful agencies who are taking control of this world. Roy deconstructs the U.S. government’s reasons for carrying out the war in Iraq. Roy opens the eyes of her readers by giving the details of problems present in a divided world like India. She also highlights the disparity between the rich and the poor in the last ten years.

*The Algebra of Infinite Justice* is another collection of Roy’s political writings over the past five years. This collection addresses her anger over terrorism, globalization, nuclear disarmament, global capitalism and also includes her defense over the right to express her views. It comprises of most of her political works. The ideas present in the book are of radical activism and move the readers with the powerful words. Roy has the capacity to influence others through her strong notions against war and political struggles. The book also focuses on mass murders and the danger of nuclear war.

Roy’s *Listening to Grasshoppers: Field Notes on Democracy* is a book that combines political insight and sharp prose. She undertakes a journey in these essays based on Hindu nationalism and neo-liberal economic reforms that reveal itself in different ways. The collection combines the killings in Gujarat, the attack on the Indian parliament, the dangers of a powerful judiciary, clashes among the big corporations, 2008 revolts in Kashmir and the attacks in Mumbai.
The collection named as *The Cost of Living* is against the great illusions of Indian progress, that is massive dam projects and detonation of India’s nuclear bomb. In this collection, Roy’s compassionate eye has turned towards the future of humanity in India. Her voice with moral outrage removes the mask hidden beneath the costs of dam construction. The sketch she represents is of a topsy turvy society where the lives of many ordinary people are often sacrificed for the luxuries of bureaucrats and the rich millionaires.

*Broken Republic* is a collection that consists of three essays. The essays describe the things about war that spreads to the borders of India. The Maoist Guerilla Movement fights for justice and freedom in India. Roy’s book also highlights the struggles and battles of Maoists during the times of war and various issues that create troubles for developing nations. The collection *Broken Republic* further stresses upon the extremely bad treatment of higher authorities on India’s native people who live in the tribal areas filled with minerals and surrounded by Maoists.

The works of Roy including her fiction involve various themes such as importance of family, society and class, versions of reality, memory of the past, innocence, love, identity and fighting for the oppressed subalterns in the country. In addition to this, several themes related to global and local concerns like protection of environment, destruction and hegemony, power war in corporations, deceptions and exploitations, struggle for downtrodden, globalization, neo-liberalism, communal riots, subjugation, lack of free expression, nuclear war and renewal of lands are also given primary importance in her works.

The researcher has made use of the following books on Arundhati Roy. They are Arundhati Roy’s *The Shape of the Beast: Conversations with Arundhati Roy*, published by Penguin Books, 2008, Jai Vardhan Kumar’s *Listening to Grasshoppers*: 
A Dissection of Democracy in India, published by Sarup Book publishers, 2012, Debarati Bandyopadhyay’s Arundhati Roy: Environment and Literary Activism, published by Institute of Development Studies, 2011, Novy Kapadia’s Arundhati Roy: The Novelist Extraordinary, published by Prestige Books, 1999. These books foreground Roy’s struggle for the voiceless and her protest against injustice. Arundhati Roy’s The Shape of the Beast: Conversations with Arundhati Roy is a collection that covers fourteen interviews of the writer, Arundhati Roy, that were conducted between January 2001 and March 2008. Roy speaks about various things in the interviews which include Maoist Rebels, displacement by dams and American imperialism. Jai Vardhan Kumar’s Listening to Grasshoppers: A Dissection of Democracy in India is a collection of essays written between 2002 and 2008 and published in newspapers and magazines across India. This gives a look at the deep secrets hidden under the world’s largest democracy and unravels the above said through the political insight and sharp prose of Roy. Debarati Bandyopadhyay’s Arundhati Roy: Environment and Literary Activism discusses Roy’s involvement both in literary activism and environmental issues. Novy Kapadia’s Arundhati Roy: The Novelist Extraordinary provides details about the life of Roy and narrates in detail her style, subject matter and techniques involved in the non-fictional essays.

A number of articles have been published on Arundhati Roy in many national and international journals. These articles concentrate upon the fictional world and the activist writings of Roy about the society. To mention a few, Chander Suta Dogra’s “Echoes in Hell” examines the problems related to Amarnath land transfer discussed by Roy. Nandita Haksar’s “Why Afzal Must Not Be Hanged” reflects the condition of Indian democracy in providing justice to its citizens. The web article “The Truth Behind the Muthanga Incident” presents the struggles of the tribal people and the lack
of respect shown to human life. Arun Kumar’s article “Indian Government to Launch Major Military Offensive against Maoist Insurgents” projects the facts regarding the civil war which is still going on between the Maoists and the government. “Mumbai Rocked by Deadly Attacks” is a web article based on the attacks carried out in Mumbai and their effect.

Writers like Roy have not only mirrored merely the various incidents and happenings but also the contemporary social and political, economic and religious upheavals in the country. It can be said that they are immensely influenced by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, who fought for the cause of the under-privileged classes, the have-nots and the downtrodden, the marginalized and the defenceless. The products of these contemporary writers are not simply the collection of historical facts or events but they are highly literary, saturated with poetic grandeur and artistic craftsmanship. Particularly, Roy seems to be a great follower of Mahatma Gandhi who believed in the theory of truth and non-violence. And her realistic portrayal of the problems that prevail in the society is to be admired forever. This only has forced the researcher to choose the social activist and writer, Arundhati Roy for her research. The attempt of this study on “Protest Voice: Activist Writings of Arundhati Roy” is to project the facts and figures behind some well-known happenings across the globe. The writer herself as an activist protests against subjugation and suppression of the poor class in the society. Her views are different from others and they have been thoroughly analysed and presented in this thesis. It also reveals Roy’s thirst for change in the society.

The number of essays chosen for this study is twenty two. Roy’s protest against cruelties and social problems can be clearly manifested through these essays. “The Algebra of Infinite Justice” is an essay that deals with the reasons behind
America’s war on Afghanistan. At first, she points out the American policies as the backdrop of September 11 2001 attacks. Then it goes on to discuss the destruction done to Pakistan and Afghanistan by America in the past. This haunting past comes out in the form of Soviet invasion and the help extended by the U.S. and the U.K. for poppy cultivation in Pakistan and Afghanistan. A rough picture is also given about the cruel Taliban regime that frightens the citizens in Afghanistan. Towards the end, Roy talks of terrorism which prevails everywhere and also she reveals that when there is a sign of danger, the terrorists can shift their place like the multinational companies that do not exist in one fixed place.

The essay “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire” exposes the war in Iraq as a result of the terrorist attacks in America. After the destruction of Afghanistan, Bush holds the weapons of mass destruction for moving the goal post towards Iraq. Roy goes deep into this issue and tries to find out what exactly took place as a result of this war. The real motive behind Iraqi war has been traced out, that is nothing but the oil reserves. The essay also conveys the revenge attitude and superpower status of America.

In “A War Too Far,” Roy proclaims how the American nation which has projected itself as the most peaceful nation on earth, has been at war for the last fifty years. From the beginning, there has been no evidence to connect Saddam Hussein with the September 11 attacks in the U.S. This Saddam Hussein was once an ally of America and committed many crimes against his own people with its support. Later, he destroyed Kuwait without the knowledge of the U.S. The important reason for America’s anger towards Saddam Hussein then was this and Bush wished to exterminate Saddam Hussein like a pet that outlived its owner’s affection.
“Come September” is about how nationalism of one kind or the other has become responsible for most of the genocides of the twentieth century. The people affected in September attacks are ready to fight and avenge the death of their loved ones. In order to satisfy them, America is waging a war against countries across the globe. Roy has a big list of countries that America has been in war with. Next, she gives an example of the cruel attitude of America and Britain with a reference to an incident in the Chile in the essay. The war in Israel and Palestine is also a result of America’s intervention. This war has been going on for 80 years with the funding of the U.S. government.

The essay “Peace of War” is about the condition of Kashmiri people. In Kashmir, the innocent people are killed by the security forces for which the government must take necessary efforts to protect them. The main focus in this essay is on the free press that has lost its importance and it is like business turn over searching for crisis reportage. As long as there is honey, the bee revolves around it and then it is forgotten forever. This is what happened in Afghanistan. In the essay, Roy also goes on to discuss how law and order in this world has become immoral. It comes to a conclusion that the peace that is based on the suppression of civilian voice will not last long.

The essay “This Is Not a War on Terror: It is a Racist War on All Tamils” talks of the Sri Lankan war that had been going on for many months in Sri Lanka in the past. The number of death rate due to this war went up to two thousand. The argument of Roy is that it is actually a racially motivated war but gives the impression of fighting against terrorism. Sri Lankan war had fuelled passions then, which resulted in the death of ten people by immolating themselves. Even now, the Sri Lankan government wants to wipe out the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eezham from the earth.
The essay “Walking with the Comrades” describes the life of Maoists who are branded as terrorists by the Indian Government. The civil war in the name of Operation Green Hunt has been going on between the Maoists and the government. As the forests are being sold to the mining companies, the Maoists try to save them from their hands and make the tribals live peacefully in their homelands.

In the essay “Introduction: Democracy’s Failing Light,” words like ‘union’ and ‘progress’ are discussed. This discussion moves towards the commercial hatred between Hindus and Muslims promoted by the Bharatiya Janata Party. The result of this is that young people’s minds are filled with violence and genocide against Muslims in Gujarat. It is a fact that in India, democracy, the judiciary, the police, free press and elections never do anything what they are meant to do.

Roy’s “Democracy Who’s She When She’s at Home” is about the Godhra incident where fifty eight Hindu passengers were burnt alive. After this incident, both the religions are slaughtering each other and Bharatiya Janata Party is developing Hindu fascism all over the country. According to Roy, this plan of Modi government to spread fascism has been supported by the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh, the Bajrang Dal and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. The spread of Hindutva and Hindu Fascism cannot be wiped out until there is support and unity on the part of Indian people.

The essay “And His Life Should Become Extinct: The Very Strange Story of the Attack on the Indian Parliament” deals with the hanging of Mohammad Afzal, the accused in the parliament attack case. In the attack, eight security personnel and a gardener were killed. The main suspect here is Mohammad Afzal. Roy exposes that there are a number of contradictions in this case. The Supreme Court is of the view that Mohammad Afzal has to be hanged in order to satisfy the collective conscience of
the society. But, the author is sad at the thing that a fair trial is denied to Mohammad Afzal, an accused in the democratic nation, India.

The essay “How Deep Shall We Dig” is about a democratic nation which is caught between neo-liberalism and Hindu nationalism. Roy points out all the incidents like the burning of Sabarmati Express, the Parliament attack and the massacre of sikhs in chattisinghpura. Next, she comes to the issue of POTA act that has been introduced to harass and terrorize people. The history of the oppressed, tortured people remains unchronicled in India. In this essay, Roy stresses upon elections that hold an important role in bringing about a change in the society.

“A Perfect Day for Democracy” is a web essay that focuses on the death of Afzal Guru in Tihar jail. The confession of Afzal presented in the Supreme Court has many lapses and violation of procedures. Roy is not in favour of hanging a person to satisfy the conscience of society. She further wishes to find out whether it is a selective killing or not. The similar punishment has already been offered to many surrendered militants. Roy’s opinion is that the real conspiracy around Afzal’s case remains unidentified and uninvestigated like the other cases.

Roy’s view on Kashmir is seen in her essay “Azadi.” The Indian government has suppressed the voice of Kashmiri people for eighteen years. This has prompted the people to question about their freedom and peace to the government. The issue rose up during the transfer of lands to the Amarnath Shrine. Roy wonders how the people are badly in need of a separate state to prevent disappearances, killings and mass murders. She also stresses that the Indian government neglects the needs of people and refuses to serve their purpose.

Roy’s account of the Narmada conflict in “The Greater Common Good” presents the innocent, voiceless citizens’ suffering because of the development
projects carried out by the government. The displaced people with lack of proper rehabilitation shelters and compensation have been stressed here. The Narmada Bachao Andolan group and others require proper reasons for the loss of fifty million people. Roy finds out that in some areas, rehabilitation has taken place after a heavy struggle of the press and the Narmada Bachao Andolan group.

In the essay “On Citizens’ Rights to Express Dissent,” Roy argues about the rights of writers to condemn actions related to injustice. The rights given to free speech in India has been snatched away by the influential persons in the Indian Government. The need to preserve such rights has been given importance by the activists like Roy. Their bold speech and support for the suffering section are condemned by the Supreme Court. Regarding this, Roy carries her own question, i.e. what is the fate of writers in the future?

The brutal action of police against the Adivasis in the forests of Wayanad in Kerala is presented by Roy in her net essay “You Have Blood on Your Hands, Sir.” In this essay, the Muthanga incident and the people injured due to their struggle for homelands have been given importance. This incident can be compared to the famous Jallian Wallah Bagh massacre. Here, in the essay, there is a request made by Roy to the Chief Minister that there is blood in his hands and that must be washed away.

“Operation Green Hunt’s Urban Avatar” is an essay that manifests the feelings of Roy over the Maoist organization. She is in favour of the voiceless victims and stands firm on this decision. Roy has had a previous experience with the Maoists due to her travel to the Dandakaranya forests. That journey has helped her to solve the mystery behind the Maoists’ actions. The Maoist group fights for the rights of people in the villages and struggles hard to regain their lost lands.
The web essay “9 Is Not 11” talks about the Mumbai blasts that took place on November 9, 2008. It exposes also the attack in Taj Mahal Hotel, which went on for three days and three nights. This was telecast by the reporters with an excited commentary. The terrorists behind this made no demand but their only wish was to inflict damage on others. In this essay, Roy points out how it is difficult to put an end to terrorism as the terrorists are heartless people.

The essay “Mr. Chidambaram’s War” is about the fight of Dongria Kondh people regarding the sale of their homeland or low, flat, bauxite hills to a company by name, Vedanta. This Vedanta is a multinational company destroying the entire forests that cover South Odisha. The people living in these areas are forced to give up their land through violence and persecution. Roy explains how the Maoists have taken up arms against the government to prevent this. She also manifests that the struggle of these poor people will go on until the government accepts to leave the bauxite in the mountains.

The essay “When the Saints Go Marching Out” is about Gandhi, Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr. who fought against injustice and discrimination in their countries. In the present scenario, all these great icons of the past are commodified and put for sale. Roy focuses on the point of how the 21st century world breeds money-minded dragons that suppress the voice of innocent victims across the globe.

Roy’s another essay “War Talk – Summer Games with Nuclear Bombs” is about the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan. The effect of the atom bombs was already felt in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Bombs violate everything that is humane and Roy wishes to convey the truth behind the nuclear tests. In the essay “The End of Imagination,” she talks about the effects of nuclear tests conducted by India in Pokhran. Her feeling is that the government of India is cheating the people without
making them aware of the harmful consequences of nuclear tests. Here, she stresses the thing that the Indian government is not worried about millions of people who lack basic necessities in life but it spends crores of money to make nuclear weapons.

This thesis consists of five chapters. The introductory chapter gives an account of the author, Arundhati Roy and her works. It also focuses on the three major themes of Roy’s essays like war, democracy and protest for voiceless society. The essay collections prove her interest in taking up the cause of suffering humanity. The second chapter “Atrocities in War” expresses the various problems in Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, and at the place of Maoists in India. It also explicates the reasons for struggle and the superior attitude of dictators as well as the people with power. These features are analysed through Arundhati Roy’s reports based on truth and not supposition.

The third chapter titled “Death of Democracy” largely depends on the failure of democracy or justice in India. This is analysed through the hanging of Afzal, Godhra incident, and the incident related to Amarnath Shrine Board. This chapter manifests the reality of the political side of India that is filled with cultural, religious and caste clashes. The fourth Chapter titled “Voice of the Voiceless,” deals with the cruelties and injustice inflicted upon the poor class people. The chapter attempts to study the condition of the poor society and Roy’s protest against the lack of rights denied to this section. The last chapter “Summation” sums up the findings of the research and acknowledges the limitations of the study. It also suggests fresh avenues for further research.

War is caused by simple disagreements among those in powerful positions. People are always fighting for the territory or political ideologies and caste clashes. The future generation are also growing up with an idea that the best way to resolve
problems in this world is through war. War and violence are crumbling the societal norms and it can also destroy the entire world. Writers across the globe are discussing through their works about the destructive nature of war and the importance of peace. Roy also takes up this issue and deals with the reasons and measures to solve the problems due to war which is analysed in detail in the next chapter “Atrocities in War”.

The researcher has followed the seventh edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 2009.