

# Violence of Police and Army in Roy's The Ministry of Utmost Happiness: A Thematic Study

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**ABSTRACT--***The present research paper attempts to explore the violence of police and army in Arundhati Roy's second novel The Ministry of Utmost Happiness. Sheer ferocity of the police and army is indeed a very grave issue of misuse of power. It shatters the morale of the victims in such a manner that it becomes significantly complex for them to stand on their feet afterwards. It is not only a social but also a criminal matter, which should be dealt with iron fist. But due to its under-reporting, this problem is becoming exceptionally severe with every passing day. The novelist exposes the social perspective with the help of physical and psychological violence. She doesn't mince words when presents the police and army violence against men, women, children and even the transgender community. In order to draw a comprehensive picture she has very skillfully thrown light upon the multiple instances of violence against the underdogs. Indian society has turned up to be an evident platform of different types of brutalities. Arundhati Roy has shown various categories of violence against the poor, Dalits, women, children, unemployed and even transgenders, but this paper deals exclusively with the atrocities practiced by the police and army.*

**Keywords--** Arundhati Roy, violence, police, army, physical, psychological, ministry.

## I INTRODUCTION

Violence can be identified as a misuse of power upon a feeble person or a section of society. It is ingrained in human nature and relationships. Violence is highly prevalent in our political, economic, cultural and social structures. Our keen observation can visualise its occurrence in almost all the possible walks of life in different forms. It is a widespread problem, which is affecting every member of society. Arundhati Roy has candidly written about psychological, social, emotional, economic and physical violence in her second novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Unlike most of the writers, when she exposes violence, she doesn't limit her focus upon a particular target only, but paints a comprehensive picture, covering the underdogs from all the sections. *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is such a violent-exposing novel that Roy has set its beginning and ending in a graveyard. This paper presents a thematic study of the violence of police and army against men, women, children and even transgender community.

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World Health Organization in its maiden report entitled, “World Report on Violence and Health” in the year 2002 defines violence in its broader perspective as:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation. (13)

Violence has profoundly been overlooked due to the lack of understanding about the basic concept of violence in general. To define violence in fewest possible words is a hard nut to crack due to its wide-ranging approach from country to country and even culture to culture. Some of the moves that seem to be violent in one society are perfectly acceptable in other cultures. It is further suggested as a severe social as well as criminal problem. The comprehensive report focuses on the types of violence, its victims and the remedies to curb the menace of violence. It helps to understand violence as a big problem, which is required to be redressed at the earliest. It reminds that security and safety don't occur of its own, but comes up as a result of a systematic collective effort of the human beings. Violence has become a giant, which is claiming a lion's share of assets because all the countries are spending hugely in order to clutch this problem. Every year almost every country has been losing its manpower along with its useful resources for solving the issues related to violence. Numerous deaths, injuries and disabilities are taking place in different forms. It is not restricted to any gender or age group, rather perturbing one and all quite equally.

Arundhati Roy has deliberately or unintentionally sought help from various concepts of violence in order to weight her point. She has not only used Walter Benjamin's concept of 'Divine Violence' but also expanded it quite liberally in her second novel. Walter Benjamin proposed a different type of violence, i.e. 'Divine Violence' in his legendary “Critique of Violence”. Firstly, there is violence that threatens the established law and order, which he terms 'law-making violence'. Roy, on the other hand, presents many characters in this fashion including Musa and Anjum occupying the leading stage. Then there is a form of violence, which the state utilises and Benjamin names it 'law-preserving violence'. Roy throws light on the baton of police and army, who use it up to the level of exploitation. However, the most crucial form of violence happens to exist outside this legal sphere is 'mythic violence', which is the indication of the existence of God. In the open-ending of her novel, Roy keeps a significant place for it. Robin Truth Goodman on the other hand unfolds certain hidden layers of Benjamin's concept of violence in his article:

“A Critique of Violence” (1921) exhibits Benjamin's philosophical investigations into the role of violence in modern state sovereignty and inherent in its law, and the construction of an alternative understanding of violence—or revolutionary violence—outside of the framework of the modern state. (Goodman 219)

Divine Violence, Benjamin's prominent concept, is presented in contrast to mythico-legal violence. It is law-destroying and exists between legal and mythic violence. It defends the sacredness of humanity against lawlessness.

Slovenian theorist Slavoz Zizek visualises Benjamin's concept of divine violence as a superstructure. Zizek in his book *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* (2008) shares six types of violence and in the sixth type he carries forward Benjamin's concept of divine violence. On the other hand, Jacques Derrida in his essay “First Name of Benjamin” agrees upon and develops Benjamin's notion of divine violence. Arundhati Roy brings forth the crux

of this unique concept of violence and showers it upon her novel by showing multiple situations that fall in this category. Roy has presented heartrending situations of police violence against women. The police that are expected to protect women from violence practice the same against them. The newspapers are overloaded with the news concerning to the torture, brutal rapes, insults and even deaths of women in police custody. The powerful policemen abuse women verbally, psychologically and even physically. The state authorities bear the responsibility to enforce law and detain the culprits, who break law in order to spread violence. It is disappointing to witness a law-enforcing agency as a law-breaker. There is no dearth of instances where the police have played a role against women. Indian women are scared of the police and deem it as a threatening task to visit a police station. Violence against women is not a new phenomenon in India, but the police have taken it to the next level by making them face discrimination and humiliation.

Arundhati Roy's canvas of violence is filled with the atrocities of multiple types, which she paints with full candidness. Inhumanities of Major Amrik Singh and ACP Pinky, Brutalities of SHO Sehrawat, gang rape of Revathy by six policemen, and tyrannies of Captain Jaanbaaz are some of the striking examples of violence penned by Roy in this novel. Killing an innocent man seems to be a regular part of duty for Major Amrik Singh and a simple remorse is adequate enough after the murder, "Major Amrik Singh in regret said to me that he did wrong, and that he should not have killed JalibQadri but he was helpless in this regard because other officers had entrusted that job to him" (*Ministry* 295). Roy has no dearth of such heartrending situations, which she presents fearlessly in her both novels.

In her debut novel *The God of Small Things*, Roy probably gives an inkling of violence of police against women, when she presents the undue advances of Inspector Mathew towards Ammu. "He tapped her breasts with his baton. Gently. *Tap, tap*. As though he was choosing mangoes from a basket. Pointing out the ones that he wanted packed and delivered" (*God* 8). Broadly it is termed as a sexual assault by a policeman, but Roy canvases it in such a unique way that it turns out to be a different kind itself. But in her second novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* she draws a comprehensive picture of torture, which shakes the reader to the core. The humiliation that is suffered by Ammu seems to be the tip of an iceberg in comparison to the narration of the alleged atrocities by Loveleen Kaur, wife of Major Amrik Singh.

After the brutal murder of JalibQadri the muslim lawyer, Major Amrik Singh finds it more convenient to leave India and seek asylum in the US. Loveleen Kaur, Amrik Singh's wife shares the cruelty of J K police in such a vivid manner that it seems either she has actually suffered it or her husband has narrated the whole stories of torture, which she clearly recalls and claims as her own. Roy indicates the authority of police against women without mincing words, "The leading police investigator said, 'If I want I can make you ladies burn alive here. I have that power'" (*Ministry* 200). The picture of police that has been shown is excessively gloomy and beyond humanity, but Roy's straightforwardness doesn't hold her pen. Loveleen Kaur narrates the whole story of her torture step by step:

After one year police units encircled Jawahar Nagar colony where I lived without my husband to do a cordon-and-search. Then they banged on my door and came inside. They grabbed me by my hair and dragged me from the second floor to the first floor. One policeman took my son. They stole all my jewelry. All the while they kicked and beat me and said, 'This is the family of Amrik Singh who killed our leader.' In the police

headquarters they tied me to a wood plank and kicked and slapped and beat me. They beat me on my head with a rubber plank. They told me, 'We will make you a mad vegetable for the rest of your life.' A man with metal shoes kicked and crushed my chest and stomach. Then they rolled wooden poles down my legs. Then they attached sticky things on my body and thumbs and gave me electric shocks again and again. They wanted me to give a false statement about my husband. (200)

Police violence against women has become a very grave issue; still it has conveniently been brushed under the carpet. The whole society is responsible at large including the victims, due to its under-reporting, under-investigation and finally under-prosecution. As there is no adequate check in this regard, therefore the incidents of police torture against women have been reaching to a new level.

As far as the exploitation of women is concerned, army is no better than police. Soldiers and policemen have become so potent that they keep the right to do wrong with anyone. Tortures, beatings and killings have turned out to be a regular phenomenon in Kashmir. Tourists and honeymooners have flown from the so called paradise of lovers, whereas police, soldiers and journalists have outgrown in numbers. Innocent men are encountered and labeled as terrorists just to add more medals on the uniforms. There has been no difference between a corpse and a carcass. The dead bodies are being delivered in sacks and even in small polythene bags just like the parcels of animal flesh, "Notes pinned to them by the quartermasters of death said: *1 kg, 2.7 kg, 500 g*"(314). The valley is echoing with the miserable plight of the bereaved women. Most of them are totally unaware of the untimely death of their husbands, fathers, brothers and sons. They visit police stations and army camps time and again to seek any information about their relatives. The hunters of their male members don't cease their habit of hunting even in the case of these depressed women. They try to get whatever is possible from whomever and those women are left with no dignified option except to get exploited:

Women flocked around police stations and army camps holding up a forest of thumbed, dog-eared, passport-sized photographs grown soft with tears: *Please Sir, have you seen my boy anywhere? Have you seen my husband? Has my brother by any chance passed through your hands?* And the Sirs swelled their chests and bristled their moustaches and played with their medals and narrowed their eyes to assess them, to see which one's despair would be worth converting into corrosive hope (*I'll see what I can do*), and what that hope would be worth to whom. (*A fee? A feast? A fuck? A truckload of walnuts?*). (314-15)

Brutality of the forces is not restricted to the illiterate women alone, but an educated woman like Tilo is also not spared at all. After spending some quality time with her lover Musa in Kashmir, she goes to bed a bit early as she intends to catch a bus to Jammu the next day. All of her soothing dreams get a hammer blow along with a harsh bang at her delicate door. "She was already on her feet, braced for trouble, when the door of her carved, embroidered, filigreed bedroom was kicked down and the room was full of soldiers with guns" (375). Being a non-kashmiri, she is not well acquainted with this type of savage intrusion by the army. Throwing all the set rules and regulations in the air, they treat Tilo with their usual manner, which seems quite unusual to her.

Roy, the outstanding blender of violence and love, once again mixes the two highly charged emotions together. Tilo is in a very dangerous situation at the moment, but she thinks about the safety of her lover over her own. The soldiers are in a cordon-and-search for Musa, the most wanted terrorist, but their raid becomes a bit late as Musa has already left the place. There are Tilo and Gulrez to face their wrath and disappointment. "She

was gagged, her hands were tied, and the room was searched. They hustled her down the corridor into the dining room where she passed Gul-kak on the floor, being kicked and beaten by at least ten men” (375). Getting no desired answer from Gulrez about Musa, they kill him in no time and label him as “the dreaded militant Commander Gulrez” (378). As far as Tilo is concerned Major Amrik Singh passes his verdict like a judge, “Whoever you are, you are charged with being the accomplice of a terrorist” (379). She is absolutely unaware about the miseries that are stored for her in the near future.

Major Amrik Singh, the torturer-in-chief brings Tilo at the Interrogation Centre, where she comprehends the things in no time. Tilorealises that she has landed herself in a very pathetic situation. She is aware by now that, “In Kashmir, ‘interrogation’ was not a real category. There was ‘questioning’, which meant a few slaps and kicks, and ‘interrogation’, which meant torture” (380). Like a meek pigeon she is in the clutches of Major Amrik Singh and his colleague ACP Pinky. Both of them are exceptionally expert in performing the torturous activities upon the innocent and guilty people. ACP Pinky slams a pen and sheets of paper on the table for Tilo to write her statement in details. She leaves the room and Tilo opens her eyes to have a glimpse of the torture chamber:

At first glance it looked like a rudimentary tool shed, kitted out with a couple of carpenters’ worktables, hammers, screwdrivers, pliers, ropes, what seemed to be scaled-down stone or concrete pillars, pipes, a tub of filthy water, jerrycans of petrol, metal funnels, wires, electric extension boards, coils of wire, rods of all sizes, a couple of spades, crowbars. On the shelf there was a jar of red chilli powder. (380)

Tilo has learnt in the past few days that the usage of these ordinary looking commodities is absolutely extraordinary in a torture chamber. These things have been placed in the room in order to induce horror and despair in the hearts of victims. The dreadful scene of the torture room hints upon the ongoing violence against the sufferers. Mere the display of these articles instigates the prisoners to confess whatever is expected from them. It works like a psychological torture prior to the physical one. Tilo’s knowledge about these tools generates more fear in her heart:

She knew that the pillars were the instruments of the most favoured form of torture in Kashmir. They were used as ‘rollers’ on prisoners who were tied down while two men rolled the pillars over them, literally crushing their muscles. More often than not, ‘roller treatment’ resulted in acute renal failure. The tub was for waterboarding, the pliers for extracting fingernails, the wires for applying electric shocks to men’s genitals, the chilli powder was usually applied on rods that were inserted into prisoners’ anuses or mixed into water and poured down their throats. (381)

Luckily, Tilo gathers her courage and writes a coded message for Biplab Dasgupta, who is the Deputy Station Head India Bravo. The conversation between Biplab Dasgupta and Amrik Singh brings rescue for Tilo. In the meantime ACP Pinky extends the primordial punishment for her victim and “Her long hair was on the floor” (383) exposing “Tilo’s shaved scalp” (383). The torturers scarcely shoulder the responsibility of their brutal activities, as Major Amrik Singh also tries to escape from the situation by considering it a duty to be performed. In reality he along with his co-torturer ACP Pinky seeks sadistic pleasure out of it. Budi Hernawan has taken interviews of selected torturers and came up with shocking results:

Twenty-four interviews were conducted with predators from various organizations. ... The most common argument is termed “proceduralism”; they argued that they had been simply following orders. ... Finally, only a few interviews suggested that some torturers enjoy their actions. (Hernawan 88)

Biplab Dasgupta asks his journalist friend Naga to go to the Shiraz Cinema JIC and get Tilo released from there. Major Amrik Singh leaves the office and commands his deputy, Ashfaq Mir to make the necessary arrangements of Tilo’s discharge. Ashfaq Mir exhibits over-courtesy towards Naga and Tilo by ordering tea and snacks for them. Ashfaq Mir intends Naga to have a look at the whiteboard where the names of terrorists have been written. Naga doesn’t want to prolong this meeting so “He made a show of craning his neck to read the list of the ‘Most Wanted’ – about twenty-five names – written with Green Magic Marker on the whiteboard behind the desk. Next to more than half the names it said (killed) (killed) (killed)” (*Ministry222*). Naga doesn’t pay any heed to it. Then Ashfaq Mir desires to show them “a Milton” [Militant] (222) and immediately orders to bring him in front of them. He informs Naga that the average age of a milton is roughly between seventeen to twenty years only. He adds that the police treat them well and their parents are also allowed to meet them. Then Ashfaq Mir leaves the room for Naga to interview the milton named Aijaz. When Naga encourages the milton to speak anything on or off the record, he collects his courage and gives his statement:

If you write about me you must write the truth. It’s not true what he – Ashfaq Sahib – said. They tortured me, they gave me electric shocks and made me sign a blank sheet. This is what they do here with everybody. I don’t know what they wrote on it later. I don’t know what they have made me say in it. (227)

This clearly puts a big question mark on the working of police. They catch young boys and make them confess whatever they wish them to admit. It throws floodlights on the gloomy side of Kashmir police and armed forces.

Arundhati Roy shows extraordinary skills while presenting violence of police and army against women. She canvases such a vivid and pathetic picture, which generates cathartic effect of a unique type. Tilo remains lucky enough to get a safe passage from the hands of police and army, but Comrade Revathy becomes a soft victim. Revathy writes a detailed letter to Dr. Azad Bhartiya, which brings tears not only in the eyes of the audiences of Dr. Azad, but also makes the readers’ eyes numb. Revathy works with Communist Party of India (Maoist) and desires a bright future for her, along with her community. She mentions the brutality of the police especially for women workers:

At the time situation was very dangerous. All police, Cobras, Greyhounds, Andhra Police would be everywhere. Hundreds of Party workers were killed like anything. Maximum hatred police had for women workers. Comrade Nirmalakka when she was killed they ripped her stomach and took out everything. Comrade Laxmi also they not simply killed, but cut, and removed eyes. (420-21)

Her description seems horrible, but she writes it in a casual manner as these types of instances are occurring on a regular basis in the Bastar forest. The police have been toiling hard to dislocate the Adivasi tribes from the Bastar forest, but the Maoist guerrillas are waging a never ending war against the security forces. Revathy being a major part of this union continues to explain the miserable plight of women. “One another Comrade Padmakka they captured and broken both her knees so she could not walk and beat her so she has kidney damage, liver

damage, so much damage” (421). This seems to be the tip of an iceberg, when she starts narrating her own torturous treatment at the hands of six policemen.

Comrade Revathy describes the brutal situation in the year 2008 when the police and para military were killing adivasis and mercilessly burning their villages. The natives formed PLGA – People’s Liberation Guerrilla Army and Revathy popularly known as Comrade Maase, which means a black girl, happens to be the star worker. She had been working for the union for the past six years. She had to visit various places for oration and growth of the union. Once she was caught by the police, but they didn’t kill her to her surprise. Revathy was raped not only physically but also mentally. Manpreet Kaur has summed up the gist of rape in a single sentence. “Rape is not the rape of the body only rather it wounds physically, psychologically, socially and culturally too and kills the inner consciousness of the victim” (Kaur 46). Later Revathy realised that her torturous rape by the policemen was more brutal than death itself:

That is how, one time when I was returning from outside, I was captured in Kudur village. At the time I was dressed in a sari and bangles and handbag and two string pearls. I could not fight. My arrest was not shown. I was tied up and given chloroform and taken to some place I don’t know. When I waked up it was dark. ... I was naked. There was six police around me. One was cutting my skin with a knife-blade. ‘So you think you are a heroine?’ he asked me. If I closed my eyes they slap me. Two are holding my hands and two are holding legs. ‘We want to give you a gift for your party.’ They are smoking and putting their cigarettes on me. ... They kept on burning me and cutting me. But I am not crying at all. ‘Why don’t you scream? ... You people don’t scream?’ Then one man forced open my mouth and one man put his penis in my mouth. I could not breathe. I thought I would die. They kept putting water on my face. Then all raped me many times. (*Ministry* 422-23)

Her wretched rape indicates that the prime motto of her rapists was not to seek pleasure, but to give pain. The forest is filled up with the shameless stories of rapes and tortures against the weak women at the hands of mighty policemen.

After the savage treatment they let her go and she claims that, “This is the experience of so many women in the forest” (423). The marks of police torture have been engraved on her body and soul. Her inner and outer parts have been bleeding like a fountain. It seems as if she has not been raped by men, rather bitten by wolves. “Bleeding. My face is like a pumpkin. Mouth is huge because they bit it many times” (423). This brutality can easily break the nervous system of the strongest possible woman, but Revathy gathers her courage along with her mutilated clothes. “All the cigarette burns were bubbles, on my face, breast, nipples, stomach” (423). This was an attack not only upon her body but also on her courage. The police have practiced physical as well as mental torture on a woman. This incident has started giving her hallucinations. “I felt that six police fellows cutting me with blades and burning me with cigarette” (425). Her letter is as eternal as her miseries. She concludes her subjective letter on a general note. “In the forest every day police is burning killing raping poor people” (426). Revathy’s letter indicates that the violence of Andhra police and paramilitary forces is not restricted to her; rather the whole adivasi community is at the verge of extinction. The armed forces are not only killing people but also setting their villages on fire. They are showcasing extreme examples of brutality. The ruling government has been announcing one after the other operations to eliminate the natives from their native land:

In 2008 the situation much worst inside the forest. Operation Green Hunt is announced by Government. War against People. Thousands of police and paramilitary are in the forest. Killing adivasis, burning villages. 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. Chickens, goats, money. They want adivasi people to vacate forest so they can make a steel township and mining. (421)

The politicians and industrialists use the police and paramilitary forces as a weapon against the poor adivasis. Many of them have either been put in the jails or killed mercilessly by the Andhra police. The ruling Governments misuse the police and armed forces for their own selfish motives. Susanne Karstedt exposes the same misdeeds of the governments by giving the examples of various other countries such as Turkey, Bangladesh and Greece. "Different groups are victims of massive out-bursts of physical violence, including mass killings, systematic sexual violence and enforced displacement, and mass atrocities oscillate between these different forms of violence" (Karstedt 6). Roy has put all the cruel shades of violence through the story of Adivasis in general and Revathy in particular on a single canvas.

After showing the barbarism of Andhra police, Roy moves towards Delhi police that prove to be no better than its counterpart. Revathy has forsaken her daughter at Jantar Mantar with an unambiguous written message, *"I cannot look after this child. So I am leaving her here"* (Ministry 118). The people, who have gathered there for their own motives, show their concern for the child. Some suggest handing her over to the police and others name for an orphanage. But Anjum is the one who intends to adopt the little girl. After a lot of hue and cry amongst people, Delhi police come forward to settle the dispute by reciting their peculiar abusive language and wagging batons. "The policemen on duty at the pavement snapped out of their sleep and swung their lathis at anybody who was within their reach" (124). The police have smashed and bled everyone irrespective to their gender.

From the savage temperament of Andhra and Delhi police, Roy points her finger at the armed forces deployed in Kashmir. "The screams of young men having their genitals prodded with electrodes and petrol poured into their anuses" (356-57) have become a common practice in Kashmir. To the contrary, the army has initiated an operation to spread good will and cordial atmosphere amongst the people of the area. They select some children to take them on a picnic. The army has intended to generate happiness for the children and their parents. Due to their carelessness the boat comprising young children gets drowned. Unfortunately all children die a miserable death. "As a part of 'Operation Good Will', the army took twenty-one children on a picnic in a navy boat. The boat overturned. All twenty-one children drowned. When the parents of the drowned children protested they were shot at. The luckier one died" (280). Leaving aside the legal accountability, they shrug the moral responsibility even. The miserable parents approach them to inquire about their children, but in return they are being silenced with bullets. The novelist puts forward a heart rendering yet thought-provoking remark that the lucky parents die, whereas who survive they face eternal torture by the forces.

Roy draws a comprehensive picture where children are being drowned, men are tortured and women are exploited. The STF (Special Task Force) randomly picks up any boy and label him as a militant. The same they do with Mudasser Nazir and take him to the camp. Realising well the consequences, his father rushes towards the

camp and requests, “He’s not a militant. He was injured in a protest last year” (283). But all his pleadings meet with the deaf ears of opportunist officers. They are less of an officer and more of a pimp. They offer a bargaining deal to the dejected father. “They’re saying if you want your son back, then send us your daughter” (283). In this one-sided bargain the father is at the losing end in both the options. If the STF is free to label his son as a militant, then his daughter can also be tagged as an ally of a terrorist. “They say she’s an OGW – an overground worker. That she helps a Hizb Man transport his things.’ Maybe she does, maybe she doesn’t. Either way, she’s a goner” (283). The conditions of women are more doleful because they are exploited, ill-treated and tortured.

The unprofessional and unaccountable attitude of the soldiers turns out to be the cause of untimely death of Miss Jebeen the first and her mother, Arifa along with many innocent people. The soldiers don’t feel like to indulge in any sort of debate; rather they prefer to settle all the matters with the help of bullets. The funeral procession of Usman Abdullah, a popular university lecturer is scheduled to pass a large bunker of the Border Security Force, situated quite near the residence of Arifa, wife of Musa. A sudden explosion of “An empty carton of Mango Frooti” (324) is being misunderstood as a bomb blast by the overenthusiastic soldiers and their abrupt reaction cease many lives:

The soldiers came out of the bunker, took position and fired their light machine guns straight into the unarmed crowd that was wedged into the narrow street. They shot to kill. Even after people turned to flee, the bullets pursued them, lodging themselves in receding backs and heads and legs. Some frightened soldiers turned their weapons on those watching from windows and balconies, and emptied their magazines into people and railings, walls and windowpanes. Into Miss Jebeen and her mother, Arifa. (323-24)

They keep on shooting till the crowded street becomes empty. The soldiers are nearly perfect in following the post-massacre formalities. Within no time the corpses have been shifted to the morgue and the injured people to the hospital. After killing innocent men, women and children the army happily declare normalcy.

The soldiers not only keep chain-less weapons but also leash-less dogs. A soldier known as Captain Jaanbaaz visits the village of Gulrez in order to scare and threaten the innocent villagers. It is a normal practice by the army to keep their terror in the hearts of villagers. “They weren’t there for a cordon-and-search or anything ... just to speak to the villagers, threaten them a little, mistreat them a bit ... the usual stuff” (364-65). This type of ill-treatment and insult by the armed forces are being considered as an ordinary event. Captain Jaanbaaz orders the villagers to lump together in the chowk and delivers his threatening lecture. Now there is the turn of his huge German shepherd dog to establish his terror. The captain commands, “Jimmy! Fetch!” Jimmy pounced on Sultan [Rooster of Gulrez], killed him, and the soldiers took him for their dinner” (365). Everything that is connected with the soldiers relishes privileges, whereas the poor villagers and their associates are at the receiving ends. The novelist has made her point convincingly clear that the violent behaviour of the police and army is absolutely similar irrespective to the areas they are deputed in.

Apart from the violence of police against men, women and children, Roy also presents noteworthy instances of police atrocities against the third-gender and liberally uses the word “Hijras” (35) for them. The transgender community is a very soft target for everyone to discharge one’s frustration upon them, but the police as usual take it to the next level. In “the Flyover Story” (35) Anjum, the transgender tries to cover the callousness of police upon her and her associates, but the reality comes out in the unedited version of the story. She brings forth

a historical incident that has taken place in the year 1976 at the time of “Emergency declared by Indira Gandhi” (34). She starts that, “On the night of the Flyover Story, the gathering – a wedding party – that Anjum and her colleagues had descended on was broken up by the police” (35). The Emergency has swelled the powers of police from all the possible angles. They arrest the host of the party along with some other guests. Now it is the number of “Anjum & Co.” (35) who try to flee from the site with the help of Arif the driver of their van:

His passengers were dragged out of the Matador, kicked on their backsides as though they were circus clowns and instructed to scam, to run all the way home if they did not want to be arrested for prostitution and obscenity. (35)

They get terrified and pass urine while running on the flyover. The policemen make fun of them, but this insult is not a new phenomenon for the Hijras. “True, it was only a routine bit of humiliation for Hijras” (35). The Hijras are ill-treated because they have no identity at all. Roy concludes the incident with a thought-provoking remark, “It was nothing, but still, it was something” (35).

Violence of police and army is indeed a very grave issue of misuse of power. It damages the morale of the victims in such a manner that it becomes significantly complex for them to stand on their feet afterwards. It is not only a social but also a criminal matter, which should be dealt with iron hand. But due to its under-reporting, this problem is becoming exceptionally severe with every passing day. As most of the police and army officers in India are men, therefore our male-dominated society has already approved their dominance over the women. The savagery of Major Amrik Singh and advances of Inspector Mathew are nothing but a rotten outcome of this tradition, which supports their masculinity. Violence by the police and army is a universal problem that is affecting the developed and developing nations equally. Although Arundhati Roy has taken up Indian settings, but her exceptional skills have provided it an international platform in a rightful manner.

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