



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Hindutva Doctrine, Communal Violence, and the Postcolonial  
Subalternization of Indian Muslims in Arundhati Roy's *The  
Ministry of Utmost Happiness***

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The paper studies Roy's fictive character of Anjum: an Indian Muslim 'Hijra' of Old Delhi (Shahjahanabad) as the literary sum total of Indian Muslim's social experience of communal violence and 'Othering' from the theoretical perspective of 'Postcolonial Subalternization' as explicated by Nayar (2008). The paper highlights various events of communal violence and 'Othering', since the inception of the postcolonial nation-state of India in 1947, especially in the lives of Indian Muslims as shown in Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (abbreviated as *TMUH*), to argue that these historical instances of brutality against them have actually been guided by the Hindutva doctrine that aims to vanquish all the Indian minority communities until they come under the fold of Hinduism either by converting or remaining socio-politically aloof and willing to celebrate the motherhood of Indian Nation State vis-à-vis Hinduness. The paper finds that these events of communal violence and 'Othering' against Indian Muslims, especially, have contributed to the Hindutvavadi vision of subalternizing Indian Muslims to social ciphers.

**Introduction**

Wombs of pregnant Muslim women were sliced open with knives and their foetuses tossed out. Women were raped by gangs of Hindu men and then killed. Muslim houses were splashed with kerosene and set on fire. Truckloads of corpses of Muslims were dumped in mass graves. All of this happened over the course of several days. India watched. No help was sent. How much of this was true? It almost didn't matter as long as some of it was. (Komireddi, 2019, pp. xxviii-xxix)

The above passage quoted from Komireddi's book *Malevolent Republic: A Short History of the New India* gives a horrific snapshot of 2002 Gujarat Pogrom and testifies what malevolent features a civic nation state can grow into if its majority population (Hindu) radicalizes under Hindutva doctrine. Hindutva doctrine has been linked to radical terrorism of the Hindu right (more often supervised by the State machinery), State terrorism, and communal violence right from the inception of Indian State. The first example being the point-blank shooting of none else than the father of their own postcolonial Indian nation: Mahatma Gandhi as early in Indian national history as 1948. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar the founder of Hindutva doctrine was briefly arrested in the first place under the charges of connivance with Nathuram Vinayak Godse- the murderer, for their alleged meeting on January 23 or 24 but later freed for lack of tangible "direct evidence" (Josh, 2018, p. 178). Savarkar founded the Hindu Mahasaba in 1916 and his book *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu* (1928) is in fact "the foundational text of the Hindu nationalist creed" (Tharoor, 2020, p. 166). Like the Hindu Mahasaba, all the later radically Hindu political organizations: Keshavn Baliram Hedgewar's 1925 founded the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS); Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar's 1951 founded Bharatiya Jana Sangh, 1964 founded Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), and 1980 founded the Bharatiya Janatha Party (BJP), rejected the 'territorial nationalism' and advocated instead a "nationalism based on [Hindu Aryan] race" (p. 170). Over the Indian post-independence years, these Hindutvavadi political organizations have undermined the minorities of India in general whereas the Hindutva doctrine has associated itself explicitly with "anti-Muslim agenda" in particular (p. 171).

Naqvi (2016) believes that the downing of Babri Mosque on December 6, 1992 was, however, "the first time that a systematic 'Othering' of Muslims started taking place" (Naqvi, 2016, p. x). The "soft saffron" mood of early post-independence days of India under the Congress Party (p. xii) was completely saffronized under the BJP governments by the first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> Century to date as "'Saffronization' [has become] a blanket concept for covering many forms of Internal [Indian State's] colonialism" (Frykenberg, 2008. P. 205). The 2002 Gujarat Pogrom is another event of communal violence entailing massive level genocide of some 10,000 Indian Muslims. Frykenberg clearly passes the verdict against the radicalized Hindus of India by saying that the "whole event was planned seems clear [because t]he pogrom began with a carefully engineered provocation" (p. 206). With the BJP's second term going the Hindutva doctrine based goals of Hindu supremacy across the Indian State seem to have been achieved. Stripping Jammu and Kashmir of its special status and introduction of anti-Muslim Citizenship Law are the examples of what Hindutva ideology can bring BJP to after its complete hold of State power (Roy, 2020, p. 4). Right after the Partition Indian Muslims were marginalized and ghettoized. Pandey (1999) and Naqvi (2016) note that Indian Muslims are continuously under scrutiny to prove their patriotism and nationalism. Hindu hardliners have gained ground in India resulting in shrinkage of Muslims' existence. After 9/11, BJP, the Indian right-wing ruling party, fully used the hostile environment against Muslims on international scene to chastise them indigenously. They materialized this hate

against Muslims for their own nefarious designs for making India a Hindu state. Planes hitting skyscrapers proved to be a “boon to many in India” (Roy, 2017, p. 41).

Roy's novel, published in 2017 during the Hindutva doctrine guided Modi's Hindu supremacist rule, mainly focuses on historic 2002 Gujarat Pogrom of Indian Muslims and passingly refers to Indian Emergency and the Babri Mosque issue. She shows this event of engineered Indian Muslim genocide on the part of Modi's Gujarat administration as a turning point in the life of her novel's central character Anjum- a Muslim 'Hijra' of Shahjahanabad, who is so much jolted by her eye witnessing of the bloodbath that she leaves her social life for good by permanently shifting to a graveyard as according to one Hindutva led slogan: “*Mussalman ka ek hi sthan! Qabristan ya Pakistan!*” (Italics in original, Roy, 2017, p. 62). It is this revelation of Muslim 'Othering' in Hindutvavadi Nationalist Indian State that is the moot point of Roy's novel that though it is not possible for Indian Muslims to go to Pakistan they can have their alternative existence in Hinduized India which is equal to living in a 'Qabristan' (graveyard).

### **Literature Review**

Roy's novel *TMUH* has attracted a lot of critical attention in the form of reviews and academic research papers since its publication. Some very prominent critical observations, subjecting the novel to their particular gazes, are summarily brought forward in this section as to amplify the lacuna therefore providing the *raison d'être* for the individuality of the research at hand.

Gorman-DaArif (2018) reads Roy's *TMUH* from the perspective of Revathy (a fictive representation of female guerilla fighters participating in the People's Liberation Guerilla Army- the militant wing of the Communist Party of India known as Maoists) arguing that the current Maoist struggle has lost its earliest phase's sheen as a symbol of 'hope' and 'magic' when it was believable that the Naxalite Movement will definitely entail “the material[ization of] victory”. The literary fictive narratives like that of Roy's, maintains Gorman-DaArif, are “post-magic” as they demythologize the success chances of the movement by focusing on “its flaws” as well as subvert the iconicity of female “confrontation and redemption”- the hallmark of earlier literary fictive romantic narratives around the female revolutionary figures of the Naxalite Movement (pp. 298-310). Menozzi (2018) believes that Roy's *TMUH* cannot be looked at as a simple fictive manifestation of realism as she punctuates her fictive narrative with “authorial intrusions and digressions” toppling the consolatory aims of novelistic writing, therefore, establishing literature's incapacity to represent the fullness of suffering. This oscillation of Roy's narrative technique in *TMUH*, between the fictive and the real, has enabled Roy to project an “aesthetic of the inconsolable” rendering fiction the role of a “repository of experience at odds with hegemonic ways of living and understanding the contemporary world” (pp. 20-33). Tickell (2018) observes that Roy's *TMUH* is a “[w]riting in the Necropolis” since the novel is set in “the 'old' Mughal city of Shahjahanabad- more of a Muslim community's ghetto than a Metropolis- put to civic death by Hindutva driven

marginalization of Muslims at the hands of BJP led Indian State. Anjum's, the central character of the novel, shifting to this Necropolis in the midst of the dilapidating Shahjahanabad and establishing of the Jannat Guest House there right after his brush with Hindutva backed communal violence during his visit to Gujarat in 2002 metaphorically suggests "that the only place for India's Muslims is [either] Pakistan or the graveyard" (pp. 100-112). Mendes and Lau (2019) offer interesting observation with regard to Roy's depiction of Indian State's 'Othered' people, within the Indian socio-political set up, as they record these characters' valiant efforts, at dealing with their precarious lives, as a compromise on Roy's arraignment of India's social justice. The ensemble of these characters, "retain[ing] a toehold within the [Indian] system by defiant creativity, lateral thinking and alternative living", serve more as symbols of perseverance- a celebration of agency in the face of precarity- than focusing completely on busting the myth of 'India Shining' or 'New India' as the case might have been in the absence of agency granted by Roy to her downtrodden and wretched characters.

With these formidable observations made by the eminent scholars of Roy's *TMUH*, the present paper, focusing on Anjum's experience of Hindutva led 2002 communal violence in Gujarat, moves in the direction of establishing the connection of Hindutva doctrine with the subalternization of Indian Muslims. This being the kernel of the paper further sprouts to explain this phenomenon as a postcolonial issue by showing that the subalternization of Indian Muslims is actually Indian State's engineered policy that started working out, led by Hindutva doctrine, right from the Indian Independence in 1947.

### Material and Methods

The paper works out Nayar's (2008) concept of 'Postcolonial Subalternization' as the theoretic framework to closely read the Indian Muslim's social experience of communal violence at the hands of Hindutvavadi radicals in Roy's latest novel *TMUH*. Nayar maintains that the persistence of "crime, immorality, and corruption" link the postcolonial nation states with their colonial masters of bygone years (p. 99). He believes that postcolonial nation states, like their colonial masters, create their own subalterns ranging over "women, 'lower' castes, and classes, [and] ethnic minorities" (p. 100). Since this paper features the postcolonial subalternization of Indian Muslims as an end result of Hindutvavadi ideology of Hindu political leaders like Savarkar, Hedgewar, Golwalker, Thackeray, etc., it is imperative to reiterate Nayar's understanding that the postcolonial subalternization of Indian Muslims (religious minority) mainly results from the radical Hindutva doctrine that has strived to "discursive[ly] construct" the Indian Muslim identity on "anti-national" strains (p. 101). Therefore these discursive constructions of Indian Muslims help the Hindutvavadi Indian nation state continue colonizing, subalternizing, and 'Othering' them through various methods: communal violence and social disparity on top of all. Roy's *TMUH* is a fictive praxis in minority behalfism and 'postcolonial protest' as it "showcases [the Indian] nation-state's uneven relationship with its people"- the religious minority of Indian

Muslims (p. 112) when it allows the communal crimes perpetrated against them go scot-free.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Postcolonial India's Hindutva Ideology and the Subalternization of Indian Muslims**

Indian Muslims have faced 'Othering' since the inception of India and especially they had to bear worst kind of cruel treatment after the 9/11 attacks which were seen as an opportunity for Right-wing Hindutva nationalists for suppressing and crushing Indian Muslims. The process of subalternization has multiplied after the rise of Hindutva nationalists in the form of BJP. Nayar (2008) reflects these issues as a consequence of subalternization and says that nationalism has emerged as a "keyword" in maintaining the supremacy of native masters. After the inception of India, Hindutva nationalists have crushed and curbed the Muslim minority. This suppressing and marginalization of Muslims is the result of negation of Muslims as loyal Indians and sons of soil. This deliberate act of making Muslims subservient to the dictates of violent majority is the planned idea of Hindutva nationalists who in garb of Hindu nationalism want to snatch fundamental rights from Muslims. Hindutva nationalists want to deprive Muslims of every freedom. In this way they want to preserve the 'power and privileges'. After the exit of foreign masters, 'class of native masters' has revived that master-slave relationship of pre-partition. Therefore, 'Postcolonial Subalternization' is a process in which "new elites exploit the nation's poor" after partition. Nayar believes that "postcolonialism created its own subalterns" by casting out its "minorities" as the "others". This 'Othering' of minorities in India has become a rule rather than an exception. Muslims are the worst victims of this new elite class of masters who deprive them of every right to live in India. This process of subalternization in which 'Othering' of minorities takes place has multiplied since BJP's Hindutva nationalists came into power. The main issues which have segregated Muslims from the mainstream Indians and marginalized them into a ghettoized community are: they are not accepted as loyal Indians rather dubbed as outsiders and pro-Pakistanis because of their Muslim background; they are hated by right-wing Hindus because of their distinct religio-cultural identity. Some newly independent nations continued the tradition of the previous empire's oppression to their weaker sections of society and played the role of elites for them. In new countries new elites emerged with new faces for their vested interests. India is one such state where high caste Hindus dream of ruling India after the exit of the British. They have, in their hearts, burning the fire of hate for Muslims who had ruled India for centuries. They want to avenge Muslims for their past rule on India. These right wing Hindutva nationalists never accepted Muslims as sons of soil rather called them outsiders and children of outsiders. They are of the view that these strangers are supposed to either convert or exit India. So the actual issue relating to Muslims of India has been their non-acceptance by the high caste Hindus who always want India to be a Hindu state where there is no place for other communities on equal footing especially Indian Muslims. Under this

fascist and extremist mindset the Indian Muslims can never enjoy equal rights. Democracy and secularism have been only names for the Indian Muslims. For them on-ground situation is just like the same as has been reflected by Roy in *TMUH*.

### **Indian State's anti-Muslim Fascism Post-9/11**

In 2001 the Twin Towers in New York were attacked by Al Qaeda which invited wrath of US and the then American President George W. Bush introduced the doctrine of Pre-emption. This aggressive US policy gave Indian fascist regime an opportunity to level its score with Indian Muslims. BJP's Hindutva nationalist government, however, opened a new era of terror on Muslims in the garb of pre-emption and state security. Common peaceful Muslims were being bracketed with terrorist factions like Al Qaeda. The Indian government targeted Muslim community for political point scoring and hardliner Hindu vote bank. Their politics had already thrived on hate mongering against the Indian Muslims. After 9/11 they secured a chance to materialize their heinous designs. Nayar (2008) cites Aijaz Ahmad drawing the reader's attention to "'nationalism of mourning' where postcolonial authors draw parallels and similarities between the colonial masters and the postcolonial nation-state's ability to oppress" (Nayar, 2008, p. 100). Anjum, around whom the story of *TMUH* revolves, watched news of wide spread bomb blasts and this new phase of terrorist attacks hit her ears. The sensationalized stories of the Muslim boys were essential part of the Urdu dailies reporting their killings in "encounters" or their red handed arrests while planning terrorist strikes. In those days novel laws of persecution were being passed which were meant to detain the so-called suspects without having any right to trial and this process went for months. Due to these draconian laws most of the jails were replete with Muslim men (Roy, 2017, p. 42). New laws were passed to curb and crush Muslims. Bomb blasts and terrorist attacks were mostly blamed on Indian Muslims to target them since the Hindu radical zealots considered them to be their legitimate targets. After demolishing Babri Mosque RSS vigilantes wanted to build Ram Mandir at that place in Ayodhya. Some pilgrims after visiting Ayodhya were coming back to Gujarat when their train coach was burned by "miscreants" (p. 44). Sixty pilgrims were burned alive in that incident. Right after the attack, Hindutva nationalists started a blame campaign against Muslims living in Gujarat. Indeed the repercussions of those Pilgrims' deaths were horrifying for Muslims of Gujarat.

The Gujarat Pogrom took place in 2002. Nirendra Modi, current Prime Minister of India and leader of BJP and then hardliner chief minister of Gujarat, played a vicious role in those killings. The BJP leadership put the blame on Pakistan. Hundreds of Indian Muslims were arrested by the police in suspicion. They were considered "auxiliary Pakistanis" (p. 44) by them. They were captured under new terrorism law and put into prison. Nirendra Modi asked for public displaying of those burned bodies of pilgrims in Ahmedabad to politicize the issue for political gains. In this way, he aroused the religious feelings of Indian Hindus and made them hate Indian Muslims more than ever before. BJP leaders threatened that there would be a brutal reaction for this act of terrorism against Indian Muslims but the

reaction was manifold. Nayar (2008) cites Soyinka's novel *The Interpreter* (1972) in which the main protagonist observes: "masses have become as barbaric as their former masters. A petty thief is lynched by the mob" (Nayar, 2008, p. 105). Same thing is observed and narrated by Roy in her novel *TMUH*. The killing of Muslim community continued for several weeks (p. 45) in Gujarat and this was not limited to cities only but spread out to the villages also. The radical Hindu perpetrators of this most brutal communal violence had employed sharp swords and tridents. These Hindu mobs, as to exert their Hinduness, wore saffron colour headbands and started operation against Muslims in full passion. They used to work in detail before incurring violence on Muslims. They had gathered all the details of "Muslim's homes, businesses and shops". Though the Muslims who got injured were shifted to hospitals, the mobs of extremist Hindus even attacked those hospitals (p. 45) too. The cases were not registered by the police because they were "to see the corpses". Most of the times "the police were often part of the mobs" (p. 45). This shows how shamelessly Gujarat government assisted those killings. 'Slaughterer of Gujarat', Nirendra Modi, allegedly played a dirty role in killing hundreds of Muslims. He is also called butcher of Gujarat. However, it is small wonder that Modi was, alternatively, raised by the radical Hindus to the similar esteem as bestowed upon Bal Thackeray, of being dubbed "the Hindu hriday samrat (king of Hindus' heart)" right after the anti-Muslim Gujarat Pogrom in 2002 (Christophe Jaffrelot, 2016, p. 196). The BJP run State of Gujarat helped and planned these killings of Muslims to gain political mileage in the eyes of right-wing Hindutva nationalists. Gujarat Pogrom points towards the postcolonial subalternization of Indian Muslims by using the coercive method of communal violence. The Hindutvavadi new elites with their exclusive ideologies made Indian Muslims' life a hell in India. Hindutva nationalists were the new masters of India oppressing and making the Indian Muslims the 'Others' in their own country.

### **TMUH: Busting the 'Mother India' Myth of Indian State**

India is the biggest democracy of the world because it has the single hugest population and it contains a constitution which is secular. Equal rights are guaranteed by the constitution to all Indians without any discrimination. Secular state plays the role of a mother for its subjects. It does not differentiate among its children. Such was the vision of Indian founders when they framed the constitution but by the time it had become ineffective and only turned into a tool to show the world the democratic and secular face of India. Oppressive policies of Indian State have undermined the democratic and secular face of India particularly through its oppressive treatment of Indian Muslims. Observation of European Court of Human Rights is very useful: "Freedom of expression protects not merely ideas that are accepted but those that offend, shock or disturb the state or any sector of the population. Such are the demands of pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness without which there is no democratic society" (quoted in Sorabjee, 2007, p. 161). In the light of above quote it is crystal clear that citizens of a democratic state can express any thought as free citizens; these might be the thoughts favouring the state policies or the views which offend the state to a great extent. A democratic state will

not persecute its citizens for their dissenting views. Citizens will have every right to say what they believe. In addition if any section of society is offended by the thoughts of some individual or community it will not be allowed to hurt that person or group having different opinions about anything.

Democracy is the name of pluralism which is a system in which different communities having different views and beliefs can live together amiably. Democracy demands tolerance from its upholders and most of all it requires them to be broad minded. Great democracies of the world uphold these values. A democracy that doesn't go with these values is not the true democracy. Great values make great democracies. There are many so-called democracies but they are not eligible to possess the title of democratic states because, in the name of democracy, they violate all the basic ingredients of democracy. In the garb of democracy, they act as fascist states having their intolerant agenda against their minorities. India is one such nation which has been violating the basic ingredients of democracy. Perry Anderson (2013) opines that national discourse in India avoids urgent internal issues when there is no foreign master to fight against. The main issues confronting the Indian ideology are obscured. In India nobody in power circles is bothered about the nation's internal strife (p. 3). Roy, in her essay, "Trickledown Revolution" in *Broken Republic* (2013), emphasizes that the Indian government denies constitutional protection to the underprivileged and minorities of the country. She believes that the struggles going against the Indian State are not demanding big things but only their legitimate rights, which are guaranteed by the Indian constitution. She further asserts that Indian Government no longer feels the need to go by the constitution which is the basic thing on which the democracy of India stands. She emphasizes that Indian constitution is a great legal document but it is being violated and neglected by the Indian State (p. 115). Moreover the Hindutva led BJP's wielding of State Power, since 2014 with Narendra Modi at the helms of affairs, has entailed nothing else but debates among the conscientious Indians over State oppression of the minorities; Muslim lynching with regard to "cow vigilantism"; rebuilding of Ram Mandir; and hounding after the intellectuals dissenting the Hindutva ideology as "anti-nationals" (Sen, 2019, pp. 149-150).

*TMUH* is an account of oppressive policies of Indian State after the exit of the British. Roy has narrated many incidents of state oppression against Indian Muslims. She shows that there has been both direct and indirect involvement of the Indian State in curbing the Indian Muslims throughout the Indian history. State sponsored terrorism is clearly highlighted in the novel. We have used here the concept of postcolonial subalternization, from the vast field of postcolonial studies, to analyze the oppression of Indian State against Muslims in India. Nayar (2008) says that natives were the subalterns in colonial era but postcolonial states made the subalterns out of their own nations. Minorities were, very quickly, subjected to 'Othering' in postcolonial states.



### **Marginalization of Indian Muslims during the 1975-1977 Emergency**

Indira Gandhi declared emergency for twenty one months in which civil rights were suspended and there was strict censure policy for newspapers (Roy, 2017, p. 34). It has been a scar on Indian democracy that a government deprived its citizens of their basic rights. Indian State campaigned a worst operation against men especially Muslims who were taken to camps for sterilization against their will. All this was done in the name of population control (p. 34). Roy narrates these acts of violence by Indian State against its own citizens to show the real face of Indian democracy which doesn't care for its minority population and treats them on the basis of different stereotypes and clichés. In those days a new law was introduced by which the government could arrest anybody in the name of maintenance of internal security act. Muslim community was subalternized then and they were made the 'Others' of the Indian society. Mostly Muslim men were sterilized. The prisons were full mostly with Muslim men (p. 35). Typical stereotypes and clichés about Muslims resulted in this inhuman act. The Indian Muslim subalterns faced this subalternization and 'Othering' at the hands of the Indian State. Such was the situation, on ground, during the emergency in 1977. Muslims had to bear these cruel times of state suppression. These measures were in utter violation of its own identity as a secular and democratic state. The 1977 Emergency is a blot on Indian democracy and secularism. Nayar (2008) emphasizes this sad state of affairs in India by observing that the new ruling elite was again like its predecessors equally exclusive and oppressive (p. 100).

### **Butchering of Indian Muslims during the Gujarat Pogrom 2002**

In the 1990's, Babri Mosque was demolished under the patronage of Indian state. Hindutva nationalists wanted to build Ram Mandir at its place in Ayodhya. Sixty Hindu pilgrims who were returning in a train from Ayodhya were burned alive in a terrorist attack by "miscreants" (Roy, 2017, p. 44). The then Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi, made arrangements for the burned bodies to be publicly displayed in Ahmedabad to arouse the feelings of hatred against Indian Muslims. Muslims were dubbed as "auxiliary Pakistanis" (p. 44).

Some BJP leaders made violent speeches against the role of Indian Muslims and warned that there would be equal and opposite reaction of Gujarat train attack on pilgrims. Then Indian Prime Minister ignited fire by his careless and politically motivated words while addressing a big audience that Indian Muslims could not be integrated in Indian society because it could not tolerate the 'Other'. In other words he asked Muslims to leave India. RSS vigilantes had always considered Indian Muslims the outsiders and India being a Hindu nation. They had been equating themselves with "Hitler" and Muslims with Jews. This was not only a belief upheld by the masses rather it was projected by the mainstream BJP leadership which always supported and assisted violence against Indian Muslims. Nayar (2008) explains postcolonial subalternization of Indian Muslims by saying that democratic perspectives could not work. Social and economic wellbeing of oppressed

postcolonials was hijacked by the new elites. In this way they were colonized again by the local elites. Muslims were utterly subalternized by the empowerment of Hindutva ideology. They became 'Others' under this wave of Hindutva nationalism. Nayar (2008) also cites Rohinton Mistry's fiction set in post-independence India showing that how "Hindutva marginalized [not only] the Muslims [but] made it clear to the [Indian] Parsis that they were an ethnic minority in Hindu India" (p. 100).

The marginalization of Indian Muslims which started right after the independence multiplied after the Hindutva nationalists like Modi came in power in the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. "The killing went on for weeks" during Gujarat Pogrom and "the police were often part of the mobs" (Roy, 2017, p. 45). FIR's were not registered by the police against the perpetrators. They put forward the lame excuses for their not taking action against the RSS force. This brutal state sponsoring of terrorism against Indian Muslims continued until the death toll reached to thousands and destruction of Indian Muslims' property reached new levels of vandalism. Anjum and Zakir Mian had gone to the shrine of Khawaja Ghareeb Nawaz. On their return, they were entangled in Gujrat riots in which Zakir Mian was brutally killed for his Muslim background. His son visited Ahmedabad thrice to find his father but he never found his father's remains. During his visit to Ahmedabad he, as a precautionary measure, cut off his beard and decorated his face with red threads used for puja in order to look like a Hindu (p. 46). He found Anjum in a refugee camp. Anjum had saved her own life from the hands of lynching vigilantes due to her transgender background because Hinduism forbids hurting transgender persons. To save her beloved adopted daughter Zainab from any future pogroms engineered by saffronized Indian State, she taught her the "Gayatri Mantra" that she herself had learnt by heart while at a refugee camp in Gujarat. Roy seems to have advised the Indian Muslims to learn it so that they could pretend themselves as Hindus to save their lives from "mobs situations" (p. 47). Anjum's prescient sense makes her believe that "Gujarat could come to Delhi any day (p. 48).

Roy, illustrating the marginalization and mistreatment of Indian Muslims, narrates about vagrants and unclaimed dead too. If someone recognized the dead as Muslim "they were buried in unmarked graves that disappeared over time" (p. 58). Begum Zeenat Kausar wanted to live in Delhi in Shahjahanabad. She could not settle in Lahore somehow. Indian police tried to deport her to Pakistan but she resisted and successfully came out of these battles in which she was dubbed as Pakistani agent (p. 58). Here Roy has reflected the real scenario in India where Muslims are seen with suspicion by high caste Hindus- even those who love India like Begum Zeenat Kausar are treated cruelly. This is something which violates the spirit of democracy and secularism. Anjum tried to forget what she had seen in Gujarat; crowds of "saffron men" folding and unfolding the men and the women. And how they finally cut off their limbs and blew them in fire (pp. 61-62). Hindutva nationalists were ordered by the Hindu leadership to react violently against Muslims. These are the thousands of Hindutva ideology led zealots whom Roy calls the "saffron parakeets having steel talons". They were chanting: "Only one place for

the Musalmaan! The graveyard or Pakistan!" (p. 62). These saffron parakeets "with the fastidiousness and proficiency of bloodhounds" found that Anjum was a 'Hijra' so they didn't kill her because the killing of a 'Hijra' attracts bad fate for Hindus (p. 62). They forced her to "chant their slogans *Bharat Mata Ki Jai! Vande Mataram!*" and she complied in the greatest fear (Italics in original, p. 62-63). Anjum is just one character. Millions of Muslim minority people suffer at the hands of Hindu extremists. Roy has made the point that only high caste Hindus can live respectfully and they have state protection with them for any of their brutal communal acts. For them India is only their country. For this purpose they want others to chant their slogans. The greatest evidence that Roy presents for showing India as a Hindu nation is in the shape of the Chief Minister of Gujarat who despite having vicious role in Gujarat Pogrom was once again elected by the Hindu masses as the PM. A lot of people across India believe that he was involved in mass murder of Indian Muslims so he should not have been elected the PM of India but his electorate has a different view of Hindu Desh (nation) as they call him "Gujarat ka Lalla. Gujarat's beloved" (p. 63). He, for the ready purpose of pleasing his voters, called Indian Muslims bad names and pledged to avenge centuries-long rule of Muslims over India. While addressing the masses he had his own way of convincing his audience; he talked about his wide chest in every public speech (p. 81). In a nutshell: Muslims are the perfect example of subaltern 'Others' who are facing postcolonial subalternization by the Indian Hindutvavadi Fascist State.

## **Conclusion**

Since the inception of postcolonial Indian nation state, the Indian Muslims have been subalternized in all walks of their socio-political life. Apart from paced Saffronization of Indian Hindus, with Hindutva doctrine's backing, and their coercive methods of communal bigotry, 'Othering', and violence to belittle and ultimately snuffing out the Indian Muslims, there has been planned pushing to wall of Indian Muslims as a recent survey in 2010, highlighting the "social disparity" between Muslims and Hindu communities in India, records that just 4% of Indian Muslims reach to graduation level in their studies and only 5% of Indian Muslims are hired for jobs in public institutions whereas government loan schemes are depleted before they reach the Indian Muslims. Majority of them living in slums and ghettos are proof of Indian State's civic failure indeed with regard to Indian Muslims (Komireddi, 2019, p. xxvi) and the schemed subalternization of Indian Muslims. Roy's literary invoking of Anjum's experience of communal violence during Gujarat Pogrom of 2002 is one fictive example from the past that contemporary India, under the Hindutva doctrine, may suffer in a continuum running straight into future.

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