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LISTENING TO THE GRASSHOPPERS IN PLUTOCRATIC SOCIETY

AUTHTORED BY - KRITI MEHTA

INTRODUCTION -

Listening to Grasshoppers consists of 12 essays, written from 2006 to 2008 that exhibits imperfections of Indian democracy. The objective of the book is to portray the exhaustive picture of minorities and underscore legitimate suppression practised by the government. This book review consists of 4 parts which start with a summarisation of the pertinent incidents in the life of a nation-building exercise followed by a critical examination of the author's views on the Kashmir issue. A quick perusal of India being a fascist regime. In the end, we will analyse Operation Green Hunt through the capitalististic lens along with capitalistic philanthropic irony.

EVENTS IN THE BOOK-

Let's start the book review by listing the major events discussed in the articles, which include the attack on the Indian parliament and targeting the minorities during the investigation followed by the Godra riots of 2002 where the author brutally criticizes the PM (CM of Gujarat at that time) and alleges administrative authorities being hand in gloves with the Hindu nationalist. Then she goes on to explain genocides with minorities that happened all over the world where she underscores that the Jewish genocide is considered to be the most brutal genocide but others are under the veil of ignorance like the Armenian genocide by the Turkish government. To date, the government hasn't acceded to the catastrophe the people went through despite the evidence. In the end, the author paints a gruesome picture of Kashmiri civilians and their political-socio condition. These are the events delineated in the book. Now we will critically examine the author's stand on the issues along with the viewpoints of celebrated individuals in the field.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF KASHMIR ISSUE-

Let's examine the author's view on Kashmir in the article titled Azadi where she states that INDIA NEEDS AZADI FROM KASHMIR JUST AS MUCH IF NOT MORE THAN KASHMIR NEEDS AZADI FROM INDIA. Similar views are expressed in her book the utmost happiness

when one of the characters says Kashmir will make India self-destructive in the same way you are not destructing but you are constructing ones. She makes the statement keeping in mind the loss of human life of both the civilian and the military force. But the idea of giving the piece of land considering Kashmir's strategic location is not pragmatic as it will not dilute enmity but it lead to an upsurge in security issues, territory if given will lead to better connection between Pakistan and China resulting in attacks at both the fronts. The revenue generated from tourism, India's prominent geopolitical position within Central Asia which facilitates access to vital land trade routes endeavouring to establish a connection with Afghanistan which traverses Central Asia and extends into Russia and Europe, the close vicinity to Tajikistan diplomatic relations with Russia will all be sacrificed. It will be detrimental for the country in the epoch where India finds itself in a relatively less advantageous geographical position when considering China's recent investments in land transport infrastructure. It is a double-edged sword due to the strategic position the incumbent government tries to control the territory, abrogation of article 370 and increased military deployment which the author perceives the deployment of the military against its people is steep in the direction. The repercussions of all these steps are borne by none but the vulnerable like children and women. Law, Gender and Governance in Kashmir” by Seema Kazi adds significantly to it. She vetted how atrocities against women by security forces took place in an “institutionalised” manner. The Armed Forces Special Powers Act and the Public Safety Act have mutilated liberties. These are the instruments of government to tame the ‘non-obedient’ subjects. “Rape of Kashmiri women by security forces represents felonious nature of the Indian reprisal in Kashmir¹. The abrogation of Article 370 took place in the name of female empowerment by granting property rights but women themselves never supported this legislation as it exposed them to more vulnerabilities than ever. Objectionable and disparaging remarks are passed by state ministers on them. Witness of Poetry: Political Feeling in Kashmiri Poetry”, by Suvir Kaul perused how poetry was a medium for political expression and became a political juggernaut which is to say it was a means of resistance to decipher dispossession, dissent and a sense of loss of dignity to women. Therefore Kashmir issue can only be subdued through deliberations and compromises among the people and not by squandering military and resources which results in nothing but grave tensions and distrust between civilians and the government

¹Kazi , S. (2014). Rape, Impunity and Justice in Kashmir. *Scholarship Repository*, 10(1).
<https://doi.org/10.55496/ZCWJ8096>

INDIA AS A FASCIST STATE-

One of the articles states, India is becoming a fascist state. She also expressed similar concern in her lectures, stating, that people recognize fascism only when thousands of people are massacred, and sent to gas chambers in other words not when the process starts. She says that India has started the process and symbols are Hindu nationalism, authorisation of the Muslim community, demonization, Muslims blamed for spreading coronavirus in the same way Jews were blamed for spreading typhus, Nuremberg laws where legacy papers were to be shown to get the citizenship and Indian government enacted citizenship amendment act. Members of RSS, VHP and, BJP are all fascist as they consider the Hindu race supreme as axiomatic from their remarks and actions. But she added, efforts by the current government to transform the state will end up in failure due to resistance to Modi's fascism².

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF ISSUE OF TRIBES IN INDIA-

In the end, we will examine the plight of the Naxals due to the government and capitalist self-vested interest in the resources. She shed light on Operation Green Hunt, that's how the Indian media described the "undaunted operation by paramilitary and the state forces" against the Naxalites. In her book *Walking with the Comrades*, explained the unsuccessful endeavour for economic development despite being rich in resources owing to the heavily militarised area. She went on a nonviolent expedition with a guerrilla movement and explained the nuances profoundly. The building of dams followed by the destruction of the environment and displacement of tribal communities as witnessed in the Narmada dam project. In her novel *my seditious heart* she questioned all such practices in the name of progress. She blatantly asserts the new rulers of India are the Ambanis and the Tata's. Through news channels, they control the information that mushroomed in the society hence controlling the ideas and any possible dissent. A foundation like Martin Luther King who fought against capitalism and the free market is being funded by the capitalists themselves³. Philanthro-capitalism results in limited transparency erodes support for governmental spending on the public and can lead to tax revenue problems for the government⁴. Therefore such practices should be curbed and legal positive rights should be encouraged.

² Thappar , K. (2022, February 17). *Narendra Modi's Star Is Falling*: Arundhati Roy. *The Wire*. <https://thewire.in/politics/full-text-narendra-modis-star-is-falling-arundhati-roy>

³ Roy, A. (2022, October 10). Arundhati Roy flags signs of fascism in India, says it is aided by corporate funding. *The Hindu*. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/arundhati-roy-dissects-hindutva-fascism/article65988430.ece>

⁴ Dorschner, J. P. (2024, September 6). *Capitalism (A Ghost Story)*. AMERICAN DIPLOMACY.

CONCLUSION-

By this, we come to an end of this book review. The review started with a brief introduction of the events explained in the book furthermore we investigated the author's stance on the Kashmir issue and looked through Seema Kazi's work on women's vulnerabilities followed by the author's reasons for stating India is a fascist state's and at the end we vetted on the burden borne by the vulnerable communities due to self-interest of the capitalist and their control over the government.

