

# The God of Small Things: Analysis on Feminism of Arundhati Roy's Fiction

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**Abstract –** This paper explores about the god of small things: analysis on feminism of Arundhati Roy's fiction. She has delightfully demonstrated the situation of women in Indian culture. Arundhati has taken up the issue of women's liberation to battle for their personality and financial and social opportunity. Her female characters in the novel *The God of Small Things* emerges as people and not as job players. Through this novel, she illuminates some significant things of life like how love is constantly connected with misery, how an individual's youth encounters influence his/her points of view and entire life.

**Keywords:** Feminism, Connections, Society

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of women's liberation in India has prompted the scrutinizing of the conspicuous old man centric control. The women of today won't be mannequins in the hands of men. Thus the picture of women has experienced a radical change. The Indian female essayists have made a progress from the conventional depictions of suffering benevolent women to delineation of their inward life and unobtrusive relational relationships. The clashing enthusiasm of man and woman in the general public because of self-affirming women, who are immersed in intense look for their personality, is the lobby characteristic of present day depiction of female characters. Arundhati Roy has her own supposition on society and has effectively made an imprint for herself in the scholarly field by her novel *The God of Small Things*. The tale uncovers her women's activist position and her hero speaks to woman reasonableness.

In the novel, the female characters will not give themselves a chance to be confined in the guidelines and laws set by an amazingly moderate society. Ammu, the hero of the novel, has a place with a presumed Syrian Christian family from Kerala and she weds a Bengali Brahmin in open insubordination of her family. At some point, her better half loses his employment yet his English manager says that he would work something out on the off chance that he gives him a chance to lay down with his significant other Ammu. He displays this disgusting proposition to Ammu and beats her when she can't. So she separates from him and comes back to his parents' home. Ammu's returning back to her folks' home deprives her of any social

position or renown, of any right. She is treated as an unwelcome visitor in her own one of a kind house where she was conceived and raised. In any case, the free idea of Ammu constrains her to insubordination. She is completely mindful of the traditionalist outlook of the individuals from her family and the general public of which she is a necessary part. Still she enters "the prohibited domain" to love and being adored by a distant Velutha. At this demonstration, she moves toward becoming unpardonable and makes herself powerless to the conscious mortification to which she is oppressed by the police Inspector just as her very own family.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Indian Feminism is said to be a lot of development which goes for building up, characterizing and guarding the equivalent monetary freedom, equivalent chances and political and social rights for the Indian women. This is a quest for the women rights in the Indian culture (Gupta, 2002).

Woman's rights in India look for sexual orientation equity which is straightforward in the works of various Indian women scholars or Feminists. Indian Feminists battled for the social or explicit issues like equivalent access to training or wellbeing and different rights that are noticeable in the Indian man centric culture. The agonizing and forgiving of the women, the nonstop skirmish of women rights and the battle for equivalent pay and work are the unmistakable indications of sexual orientation distinction for which the Indian Feminists and women journalists began to compose for them. Numerous Indian scholars like Kamla Markandaya,

Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Geetha Hariharan and Manju Kapur have understood that the worry of women intrusion should be decreased in India to the logical inconsistency among women and men (Myles, 2006).

They have comprehended and seen that the women need to educate themselves and engage to admit the different social and institutional practices to keep away from the male centric control.

They needed to build up a woman distinguished in the ruling society. For example, Rama Mehta's work "Inside the Haveli" (1977), Geetha Hariharan's well known story "The Thousand Faces of Night" (1992), and the books of Anita Desai and so forth present the topic from adolescence to the womanhood where mystic or physical liberation of women is recognizable (Wiemann, 2008).

Arundhati Roy is one of those Indian Feminist journalists who is a Booker prize victor for her presentation novellas that is "The God of Small Things" in 1997. She utilized the women characters in her novel through which their situation in the general public and home can be broke down. The focal point of the writer is on the foul play and madnnesses of the social and residential existence of women. The tale does not translate the truth, be that as it may, makes it alive before the per-users (Ghosh and Navarro-Tejero, 2009).

The author has rendered her changed encounters of the Indian reality through the quirky mental focal points by utilizing the story methods suitably in this novel. The accompanying paper has exhibited the sheer defenselessness of the Indian women in the societal talk. As inspected from different past archives and depicted in this audit paper, Roy has uncovered the difficulty of the Indian women in the settings of South India. This has stunned the per-users and helped them to perceive reality of the general public where women are not regarded and permitted to rise as the different element (Prasad, 2004).

The epic comprises of the narratives of broken relational unions, passing, retribution, viciousness, sexuality and nonsensical hatred. Roy has snidely exhibited the brutal incongruity of the male control of the women (Roy, 2005).

"The epic has been introduced as the interesting work of Arundhati Roy in the content of the female composition. The essayist has proficiently and flawlessly demonstrated the provocation of women in the Indian culture (Ghosh, 2006)

### 3. FEMINISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS

The novel deals with the state of daughters in patriarchal families in Southern India. It is a sort of

social forum, which clues at the creation of masculinity as power figures. Roy's feminist visualization can also be well understood from her non-fictional works, *The Great Indian Rape Trick I* and *The Great Indian Rape Trick II*. In both the works, she strongly makes her comment against Shekhar Kapur's famous film *Bandit Queen*. In this novel, Arundhati Roy depicts her feminist perspectives through the generations of women characters -- Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, Ammu and Rahel. These characters are executives of their own postmodern culture and through them Roy gives the gradual change in the position of woman in the society. Repeatedly a woman is shown as 'the other' and 'the marginalized'. Roy through her novel recollects a young woman's agonizing journey into her childhood and it centers on several themes and realities.

Mammachi, the wife of the Imperial Entomologist Pappachi, stands for the first-generation woman character. She productively twists her kitchen talents into a business. Her pickle business is a grand success and soon it is established into a cottage industry. Pappachi, who is green-eyed of his wife's victory, turns into more violent during night time and he bangs her pitilessly. Moreover, Pappachi is bothered about the age variation between himself and his wife. "Pappachi, for his part, was having trouble coping with the ignominy of retirement. He was seventeen years older than Mammachi and realized with a shock that he was an old man when his wife was still in her prime" (TGST, 47). When Pappachi knows that his wife is excellent at the violin, he discontinues her classes suddenly. Pappachi's annoyance turns him to beat his wife brutally. Worst of all were Pappachi's outbursts of physical violence inflicted on Mammachi from time to time. Ammu's mother, Soshamma, known to Rahel and Estha as Mammachi, is a victim of prolonged physical violence. Mammachi has weals and bumps on her head as evidence of beatings with a brass vase. We are told that the beatings she has regularly received at the hands of her husband increase directly in proportion to the degree of success she achieves in her entrepreneurial project, *Paradise Pickles and Preserves*. Even though the Syrian Christian Community at Kerala in India is basically a matriarchal one, Mammachi remains a silent victim for years. When Pappachi dies, she even mourns. She feels a definite sense of loss. She is a creature of habit, Ammu tells Rahel. It is her son Chacko who protects her. Chacko finally sets a dot to his father's behavior. One day he twists his father's hand and advises him not to repeat it. He comments, "I never want this to happen again," he told his father. 'Ever.'" (TGST 48). After this event, Pappachi never talks to his wife. Even at this time, it is the son who saves his mother and not the daughter. Mammachi's physical weakness and Pappachi's primacy are recognized in the patriarchal construction where man is the ultimate authority of sexual, economical, political and

physical power. Mammachi agrees all these submissively and obeys. Thus, she admits the female role forced on her by society. She is passive, submissive, ungrudging and unresisting. The similar thing persists with her son Chacko also. After his homecoming from England, he turns into the owner of the pickle factory. But it is Mammachi who puts together all her efforts to run the factory without being closed. Chacko's mixed up socialism and capitalist ideas make the factory run in the loss. Furthermore, when trouble emerges, it is informed only to Mammachi and not to Chacko. Mammachi is brave enough to employ Velutha, a low-caste paravan as the chief mechanic. Velutha is a downtrodden (Paravan), a Dalit. His ancestors have been serving for Chacko's for more than a generation. Velutha is tremendously talented in his work, a skillful dynamic worker. Not like other downtrodden people, Velutha holds unique manner. While his talents with renovating the equipment have created him vital at the pickle factory, there are many antagonisms about the reality that he is a downtrodden serving in a factory of upper castes who dislike him. Thus, she performs a tightrope walking between her twin roles of a business woman and a submissive housewife without infringing their prescribed limits. Even though Mammachi has many unique qualities, she is suppressed in the male subjugated society.

Ammu stands for the second generation. She may be viewed as the mouthpiece of the author. Ammu, the major leading role of the novel is not as subservient as her mother. Through the character of Ammu, Roy includes one more coating to her significant review of the Indian patriarchy when she comes with the place of separated women. Everyone in the family feels that Ammu is not a notable daughter for the reason that she transgresses the custom of arranged marriage and it ends in divorce. At the same time, her brother Chacko enjoys everything in his life. His marriage is also a love marriage which also ends in divorce. Even during their young age, Ammu is not permitted to pursue her higher studies. But Chacko, the male person of the Ayemenem House is sent to pursue his higher studies in Britain. According to Pappachi, the college educations corrupt a woman. Being denied a college education, marriage for her also became a difficult proposition as dowry could not be afforded. So, she had to wait at home and become domesticated. To escape from her father's violence, she marries a man of own choice. The only let off for Ammu, in the muggy atmosphere, is a bridal tie. While considering a break in proceedings at an Aunt's place in Calcutta, she encounters a gentle Hindu Bengali in Assam (India) from the tea-estates, and without further consideration consents to wed him. "She thought that anything, anyone at all, would be better than returning to Ayemenem" (TGST 39). But she jumps from a frying pan into the blaze. Finally, she decides to leave her husband, the charm of marital bliss soon vanishes and Ammu becomes a victim of

her husband's drunken rages. When they start to affect the two years old twins, Ammu thinks it proper to desert her husband. Mr. Hollick, the employer, has also come up with an unacceptable proposal for Ammu. Finding herself vulnerable to male debauchery, she returns reluctantly, to her parents' home. Here, she is more of a trespasser and less of an inmate of the house as she has been married. In the same condition, her brother Chacko gets pleasure from love and esteem among the family members and the social order whereas Ammu and her kids are agonized and abandoned. As there is no other goes, the protagonist Ammu becomes a total dependant on others. She is permitted to stay "on sufferance". As the text shows, "For herself— she knew that there would be no more chances, only Ayemenem. A front verandah and a back verandah, A hot river and pickle factory, and in the background of constant, high, whining mewl of local disapproval" (TGST 43). In the Indian society, a daughter has no claim to the assets. "Legally, this was the case because Ammu, as a daughter, had no claim to the property" (TGST 57). Ammu remarks, "Thanks to our wonderful male chauvinist society" (TGST 57) and Chacko's comments confirm this clearly, "What yours is mine and what's mine is also mine" (TGST 57). Thus, the individual space is ignored to Ammu which she deserves in her own right.

Not only man, women are also against women. Baby Kochamma confirms this. Her own Aunt abandons Ammu, Kochamma becomes Ammu's sworn enemy as in her she sees a possible warning to the secure position she has shaped for herself more than the years. Her panic of being abandoned increases in the midst of the increasing number of persons in the home and she makes no frames about her unhappiness. Ammu walks roughly without being noticed. The male despotism that is set free on her takes a nasty turn in her parents' home -- it is a bettering that does not demonstrate but oxidizes one from within. The influx of Sophie Mol seems but to set fire to the so far controlled and covered up conflicts. The privileged dealing exposed toward Chacko's widowed ex-wife and their daughter is frankly demonstrated, throwing Ammu and her twins into complete seclusion. Baby Kochamma also has the similar opinion as Chacko, "As for a divorced daughter -- according to Baby Kochamma, she had no position anywhere at all. And as for divorced daughter from a love marriage, well, words could not describe Baby Kochamma's outrage. As for a divorced daughter from an intercommunity love marriage -- Baby Kochamma chose to remain quiveringly silent on the subject" (TGST 45-46).

Baby Kochamma turns into Ammu's furthest foe as in Ammu she pictures a possible hazard to the harmless position she has shaped for herself over the years. Ammu is depicted as a tragic figure, a woman struggling against her family, her



motherhood and society. As Ranga Rao puts it, "In Ammu, the novelist has presented, with compassion, a woman, a feminist locked in a struggle with her family, its 'hidden morality', with society and tragically with herself" (Bhat 47). Her state develops into worse when her family comes to identify about her banned relationship with a low caste paravan. Velutha is harassed by the police on charges of rape lodged against him by the malicious Baby Kochamma and beat black and blue till he bled to death. His one sin appears to have been darker than Chacko's many sins of the similar nature. The actual facts of the scandal are camouflaged and never established even after Ammu's declaration of guilt to Inspector Thomas Mathew. As a result, Velutha, the Paravan is tortured and killed by the police. Ammu attempts her best to save Velutha. She has enough bravery to visit the police station to rescue Velutha from the police custody. But she is called as a 'veshya' in the police station. Barbarities on women mainly by police are increasing day by day in India. At times it turns into very hard to give substantiation and proofs of barbarity on women committed by police personnel. After very soon of Sophie Mol cremation, Ammu is beckoned to the police station with her children for a complete investigation and extra action. While investigating her in this case, Inspector Matthews beats Ammu's breast frequently with a stick and goes on criticizing her inside the police station. "He said the police [...] didn't take statements from veshyas or their illegitimate children" (TGST 8). The selfrespect of a woman charged with police supervision is resented. Her shaken quiet is taken as complicity.

Chacko has illegitimate relations with the women working in the pickle factory. Chacko is young and crucial enough to hope for another possibility of love. Where Chacko is concerned, his "Men's Needs" (TGST 238) are well recognized by his generous mother. A separate door is made in the rear so that Chacko's fancy of the moment can come and go unremarkably. No such 'understanding' is extended to Ammu. There is no concept of a 'woman's needs'. In fact, Mammachi thinks of Ammu as "Like a dog with a bitch on heat" (TGST 257-258). She is "locked away like the family lunatic in a medieval household" (TGST 252). The thing is overlooked by the Ayemenen House women, especially Mammachi as 'Men's needs'. But when she thinks of Ammu's relation with Velutha she vomits:

She thought of her naked, coupling in the mud with a man who was nothing but a filthy coolie. She imagined it in vivid detail: a Paravan's coarse Black Hand on her daughter's breast. His mouth on hers, His black hips jerking between her parted legs. The sound of their breathing, His particular Paravan smell. Like animals, Mammachi thought and nearly vomited (TGST 257). The novelist has depicted the double set of rules for the brother and the sister both of whom are separated. Roy hints at the discrimination to Ammu from the same mother who sanctions and facilitates Chacko's illicit relationship

with the poor women of the factory. This too is offered through description; Mammachi had a separate entrance built for Chacko's room, which was at the eastern end of the house so that the objects of his 'Needs' wouldn't have to go traipsing through the house. She secretly slipped money to keep them happy. [...]The arrangement suited Mammachi because in her mind, a fee clarified things, disjunct sex kind love.

The idiosyncratic handling between sons and daughters appears to be extended to their children. Roy constructs most of the scenes of her novel upon the difference in treatment between Ammu (daughter) and Chacko (son). The dissimilarity is vividly represented from the first chapter itself. At Sophie Mol's funeral, the whole family gathered in the church. Even if Rahel, Estha and Ammu permit to go to the funeral, they are restricted to place disjointedly, not with their rest of the family members.

In Ammu's character, Roy commemorates the Supreme selfhood that a woman gets back by fighting against the centuries-old domination that society has imposed upon her kin. Due to her free spirit, Ammu believes no shame in pleasing her emotional and bodily desires. She carries tragedy in her life by breaking the eventual taboo, by loving a man below her caste. She is a woman who outrages Society by her eccentric behaviour and pays the penalty of loss and suffering but remains to the last unapologetic and unbeatable. By often describing Ammu's nature with the metaphors of madness and animality, Roy demonstrates how a woman with high passion and strong will who creates a threat to the despotic order of society is quickly branded as dangerous. Growing up in an atmosphere of horror and brutality, Ammu developed the stubborn, wild streak that would later bring her in a quarrel with the world. Ammu's wrecked marriage, her unwillingness in her parental family, her care for her children and her female needs, led her to the premature death of Ammu, "Ammu died in a grimy room in the Bharat Lodge in Alleppey, where she had gone for a job interview as someone's secretary. She died alone. With a noisy ceiling fan for the company and no Estha to lie at the back of her and talk to her. She was thirty-one. Not old, not young, but a viable, die-able age" (TGST 161).

In the third generation, Rahel stands for the female character. Mammachi or Ammu is seen as complicit or as an antagonistic to the Male Other. But for Rahel, there is no disparity stuck between the feminine self and the male other. Rahel and Estha are not only brother and sister but they are identified as dizygotic "two-egg twins" (TGST 2). Like her mother Ammu, Rahel moves in and moves out of a rushed marriage. But the only distinction is there is no trauma of physical abuse. She even breaks the Love Laws again by committing incest with her brother. But she is not worried by fault or

fear. Rahel neither worries nor accepts man-made laws or establishments. She echoes the author's deepest passions about a woman and her position in the patriarchal society. Rahel is the representation of the postmodern era, a postmodern woman. Through the character of Rahel, Roy attempts to break the chains of the old customs. A sense of antagonism and division also infuses the different senses of identity among the different generation of women. It also generates a line of the clash between the older and younger generation. The older generation women, Baby Kochamma and Mammachi accept to function by the rules of the established social custom. But Rahel and Ammu, the younger generation, become inspirational figures to think about the processes of liberation and social alteration.

## CONCLUSION

Roy's *The God of Small Things* is woman formation of extraordinary nature. The novel unmistakably demonstrates the untold agonies and the undeserved sufferings of women who need to tolerate the brunt of male control quietly and submissively. She rises above the customary idea of women's liberation. The tale looks at the women's activist envy between the women, the situation of woman in male ruled system. Roy indicates how a woman in male centric set up longs for joy and joy and a real existence a long way from the shackles and limitations. She resembles a free flying creature that needs to fly unreservedly in the open skies. Be that as it may, out of the blue, her wings are chopped somewhere near the hard society and accordingly she is destroyed down to this world where she needs to 'cower in the modest residue.'

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