

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 6. Issue.4. 2019 (Oct-Dec)

ISSN
INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA
2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

GENDER DISPARITY IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS

M.SIVAKUMAR

Guest Lecturer

Thiruvalluvar University College of Arts and Science, Arakkonam

doi: [10.33329/ijelr.64.105](https://doi.org/10.33329/ijelr.64.105)



M.SIVAKUMAR

ABSTRACT

The present research paper has been attempted to explore Gender disparity in Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things*. The paper seeks to study the text as Gender Bias. It throws light on some important things of life like how love is always associated with sadness, on the other side it brings out the constant struggle of women against their incessant exploitation, torture and struggle which they undergo because of male dominated conservative society.

Key words: Patriarchal Society, Struggle, Victim.

The history of Indian literature is the mental activity that has been on for a very long time. Hence it encompasses a very long legacy. India and Indian thoughts have influenced the mind of the world to some extent. India has been the forerunner of many of the global thinking. In the beginning religious writings formed the fore front of Indian literature, starting from our great epics, Vedas, Buddhist and many other religious sects have contributed plenty to the Indian literary works and thus to the well beings of man. They contributed plenty to the Indian literary works and thus to the well-being of man. The contributions of prominent writers for the enrichment of Indian English and the life and works of novelists are perceptively discussed. It has attained a rich growth, mounting extraordinary heights in the context of the contemporary Indian Literature scene.

Literatures in general and novel in particular seem to amalgamate in itself two main ingredients-the individuality of the novelist and literary milieu, Booker Award in Roy's case. One of the main duties of a great writer is to represent the society and its various influence in art. In other words, literature and society are the two facets of the same coin: they are interwoven both internally and externally. They form an integral part of the significant trend of blending realities and literature in the Indian novels. Her ideology is imbued with an acute social awareness and distinctive sense of responsibility towards life. She desires a radical transformation of the Indian society and depicts the multiple tensions existing at various levels. The novel encompasses the wide spectrum of class, caste and gender discrepancies.

Literature is a beautiful piece of art and life. *The God of Small Things* is a fiction roughly bounded up threads. But each thread has its own importance in the creative work. Hence the prime duty of the scholar lies in unknitting the whole bundle without breaching them. Roy has attempted to untangle a section of a society and tries to untangle the same idea from the fiction showing special interest in woman and caste. In any nation's history the second sex is always treated as second only. No woman in her novel stands out to be rebellious. They are all cheaply subjugated to someone whether young or old. They have been portrayed as loyal servants to men The phrase *The Heart of Darkness* is often being repeated in various context referring to different characters

but the point is that throughout the novel a genuine reader automatically gets reminded that something is missing or gone astray in all the characters and they in turn try to find the thing in the novel, especially among women.

Aruntadhi Roy, from India writing in English dialect expects to feature on the separation of women in India. Her women protagonist solidly decline to end up detainees of orthodoxies, fossilized conventions and characteristically glorified personalities. She cast a sharp take a gander at the crevices or separations of sexual orientation in the basic elements of society, working to the inconvenience of the female of the species. Dissent in women's anecdotal story verbalizes both the presence of the prevailing force structure and the female want to deny and resist that structure. We need to know where ladies are, the reason women need to compose the novel, the tale of their own family life, the account of their own segregation inside the home and the potential outcomes and difficulties given by that. Womenfolk write to commend their women: they sing females' fantasy and talk their bodies. For whatever length of time that females did not compose they were not heard females' composition at that point, resembles a nurturing cognizance. Their composition effects their exceptionally presence in the socio-social situation as it assists their day of work from a minimal place to a focal one.

Writing is affected by the real world, yet its conclusion, that the truth is formed by writing, is additionally valid. The Indian abstract scene, commanded by men as dynamic powers, dependably had a hole it recounted the account of half of humankind done the voice of the extra half. In a nation wherever even the administrative supremacy in the influences of rustic and urban illiterate females is utilized by their men, it turns out to be extremely critical to investigate the progressions realized in the scholarly section by female writers. The move from females as observed and anticipated by men, to females as existed and skilled by womenfolk was generally welcome. This essay advises to assess the manners by which the narrative scene is affected by the Indian woman authors of English.

In the situation the beginning stage, Indian English Fiction, had men scholars who concentrated on a man's reality where the nearness of womenfolk was just coincidental. Females show up in this fiction just as fundamental device to be utilized by men. There were couple of authors like R.K.Narayan or M.R. Anand who tried to yield up certain optional womanhood character, yet the delineation was not legitimate in light of the fact that: men did not approach the internal parts of a house which was the main space womenfolk moved in: just the wearer identifies where the shoe squeezes and proposals shoes were unquestionably not damaged by men: and, howsoever touchy these scholars may have been despite everything they didn't consider females' lives as energizing sufficient to end up adept material for fiction. Here were writers who picked female protagonist, however their depiction of them was excessively exaggerated, making it impossible to contrast and the genuine women. The misery wife, the sobbing dowager, or the giving up moms was the main pictures originate in fiction. In this novel picture of lady discovered acknowledgment, and accommodation was as yet thought about prudence. There was no space for a lady who was not temperate, women either maintained preservationist goals or they were named corrupt. Customary good style overwhelmed these stories.

Roy has picked Self-disclosure with in female heroes of her books as a response against sex segregation of ladies. Roy's *The God of Small Things* is a way infringement novel in as much as after Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* this is the main paperback that made many swells in the socio-moral and additionally artistic pond in India. And this for explanations more than one, *The God of Small Things*, brought up definite appropriate issues and stricken them on the conventional man centric culture to investigate their answers. Roy broke every one of the standards to suit the feminine rule; *The God of Small Things* turned into the delegate of the subaltern as far as its undeveloped and insubordinate worry for the distant and the underestimated in the individual of Velutha and Ammu.

Roy let one know of her questioners: "composing *The God of Small Things* was an anecdotal method for understanding the world I lived in." (26) Commentators like Dr.B.N. Singh have observed its dominatingly female example. The account in *The God of Small Things* isn't direct. Rahel and Estha's perusing the publications in reverse is the violation of male centric traditions. The novel itself convinces and peruses that it be perused in

reverse. Howell's examination of the women's activist method of composing may perhaps be connected to Roy's books: maybe the collective highlight of Women's protection from convention is their blending of class codes-like those of gothic, sentiment, history, talk and Christian tale... .. the distinction now is that those accounts are by and large after the womenfolk edge, enlisting a feminized of separation inside the plain custom in which they are writing.(27)

The novel is an account of contravention in numerous faculties. Velutha who set out to overlook his unapproachability: Ammu who crosses the standard of feminine excellences as additionally sets out to overlook the plain reality that she is a substantial who ought not permit a distant close her. 'Locusts Stand I' (Locus Standi) is overlooked and Ammu sets out to sense comfortable in the Ayemenem House – her sibling Chacko's home. The standards of male controlled society are ruined and this fetches fate. Just Chacko recognizes the standards: "what is mine will be mine. What is yours is also mine."(28) This, generally, is the act of man centric society that essentially be complied. Roy's character sets out to infringe upon this law yet not with exemption. The history house is the lawgiver: it rebuffs all contraventions that occur in the Ayemenem House. In logic Roy characterizes her female style. Ammu breaks the limits of how ample and who-she opposes all phallogocentric talk just to proclaim another time when women will settle on their own decisions, regardless of whether it involves demise in disengagement, in a soiled room. Roy's utilization of female style disruptions all standards of the phallogocentric framework, which marks women's body represent able.

Roy's protagonist rebel in contrast to the 'joined powers of religious conviction, convention and the social order in light of the fact that these powers don't work with abuse on account of the advantaged "Paravanidentity," says M.K. Naik, "is the gooney bird curved their distant necks,"(29) and I'm enticed to include the womanly personality is an additional gooney bird or to acquire from Ammu-grinder round the females' necks. Chacko's passionate experiences have Mammachi and Baby Kochamma as implementers of the wrongdoing while when Ammu chooses to fulfill the necessities of her body, crap hits the fan. Men have every one of the privileges to entertain themselves: women must not require any wants. Love laws and need laws are vibrant and men lead the perch. Ammu's fate is the disappointment of the feminize standard in light of the fact that she is the expression of disobedience of females' sexuality.

Roy's central characters are women with guts and get up and go. They speak to the ease of convention along these lines testing its burden as a shut marvel. On one influence the account takes up a cross-rank love connection and its results and then again it likewise handles such concerns as the girl's entitlement to legacy in her parental property. Roy likewise dives into ladies scholars' most loved subject i.e., characterizing righteousness and respect in the light of humanism. Ammu was the girl of Pappachi and Mammachi. After the finishing of her school instruction, she wished to seek after higher investigations, yet this desire had been ruined for it was viewed as pointless speculation to teach a girl since she was just being prepped to end up an immaculate spouse. Ammu's dad resigned from administration and the family settled in Ayemenem. Her sibling Chacko was allowed and urged to seek after higher investigations at oxford. Ammu longed to get away from the baffling and mechanical life at Ayemenem and inevitably got her dad's agree to visit a removed close relative in Calcutta.

Ammu met her future husband in Calcutta, After a five day courtship, she accepted the proposal of the young Hindu, She was not really in love but the only factor that motivated her to marry was to escape from the boring life at Ayemenem. Little did Ammu Suspect about what was in store for her in marital life. Her husband turned out to be drunkard and began to beat her. She tolerated as long as possible, her husband even propositioned her for their manager Mr. Hillock, an Englishman. When her husband started beating their twin children, she left him for Ayemenem.

The shocking attitude of Pappachi revealed the image of the colonist which had been internalized by that generation of Indians. In this view an Englishman would never covet another man's wife. He showed his displeasure towards his own daughter and refused to believe the incident concerning the Englishman. Gradually Ammu learnt to accept the pretentious commiserations of her relative and to live with the fact that "there would

be no more chances. There was only Ayemenem”(43) Ammu was fiercely protective about her twins because she knew that children loved everyone in their innocence and rarely understood the apathetic treatment meted out to them. Ammu had become a victim of divorce hood and loneliness. At times she heard songs from a transistor and escaped into a much happier place but otherwise there was an ‘unsafe edge’ to her. Even her own mother Mammachi refused to sympathize with her miseries. The reaction of her aunt Baby Kochamma only served to project the view of a society which rejected intercaste marriage and looked down upon divorced women, further, Babu Kochamma was filled with resentment because Ammu had the courage to marry a Hindu whereas she had to live the life of a spinster. She hated Ammu and her twins.

Velutha, the son of Vellaya Paapen belonged to the Paravan Community. The untouchable Velutha had learnt skills of carpentry from a visiting German Carpenter in a workshop organized by Christian Mission Society, His innate skills and interest enabled him to master the German sensibility in designing things. He became an indispensable person at Mammachi’s pickle factory. Though he was a skillful carpenter, the curse of untouchability hung around him and stalled his progress. The attitude of a high caste community on these untouchables has been described in the novel with chilling clarity. The ingrained sense of class distinction was fundamental in bringing about the absolute rejection of Ammu’s and Velutha’s affair by the other characters in the novel. Ammu was a victim in a patriarchal society and she found solace in the fact that Velutha too nursed hatred against the imposed norms of the society. Ammu felt happy whenever she saw her children being at ease and enjoy the familiarity of Velutha, Ammu’s rebellious spirit encouraged her to take a daringly bold step and she committed transgression by having an illicit affair with the Paravan Velutha.

Later when Velutha was arrested on false charges of rape, Ammu rushed to the police station but her attempts to rescue him were in vain. Her pleas were brushed off and she was grossly insulted by the station House Officer. The inspector Thomas Mathew had no qualms in humiliating Ammu and treated her as a prostitute. He had no compunctions about his attitude, for her knew that he had the approval of the society. That very act revealed the indifferent and parochial view of society on a divorced woman, who had crossed the boundaries of ‘Love Laws’. Further she was deprived of her right to stay in the house and Chacko with all the patriarchal indignation ordered her out of the house. Ammu was forced out of her house and lived on her own. She took up the job of receptionist but slowly lost her health and died in a lonely hotel room. Ammu challenged the social order by divorcing her husband and then getting inextricably entangled in a forbidden love relationship. Velutha was testimony of the subaltern who resisted the process of minoritization. Together they demolished all orthodoxies and ideologies which had outlined their relevance.

Ammu protested against the male chauvinistic and hypocritical attitude of her brother Chacko and sympathized with her mother for idolizing him. Chacko’s love for Marxism was a part of his ideological pretensions. He exerted his male dominance by ordering Ammu out of the house and depriving her of equal rights. Ammu employed scathing and blasphemous language to deflate the vanity of her authoritarian father. Pappachi’s love for the English ways and manners was a camouflage for his inherent cruel and mean nature. Ammu’s daring deeds only led her to an early grave. Thus she faced the consequences of committing transgression.

Roy portrays the conflict between male and female to make male prevail over the females to sustain their supremacy. The novel graphically shows how women are helpless in the hands of men; to resolve their frictions among themselves by taking advantage of their weakness men take the corrective position to establish their manliness. The novel evinces the hard core exploitation of women. Since the arrival of women novelists to; the fore front, it has become a common factor of feminism not only India but also in the whole realm of literature.

Novelist like Roy always likes to express the fate of women in India. These feminine writings and feminine identity help women to achieve little liberation from patriarchy. Roles ordained by patriarchy reduce women to a subaltern status. Women’s quest is to cast aside patriarchal roles and gain freedom from the shackles of patriarchy. A novel must have a social purpose and it must be placed before the readers with sense

of enkindling some societal emotions among the readers. Art for art's sake does hold well at this juncture. Whatever is said or written for art's sake alone mostly loses its social relevance and gradually its readers.

Ammu's comment that "she had a choice was a great privilege (152) is sarcastic: a woman in a patriarchal society can have a choice only in her imagination. Ammu's life is like a long incorrect sentence written by fate, cannot be punctuated by her. The narrator comments: "Little Ammu. Who never completed her corrections?(151)" Arundhati Roy's life exemplifies her maverick as well as struggling attitude as she willfully left home on her own and sold empty beer bottles to pay for her studies. Ammu's plight out of her inferior status invokes her to protest against the prejudices, codes and rules that are hostile to women. Ammu's behavior is rebellious in order to undermine the authority of the dominant ideology. Moreover they have witnessed the severe punishment meted out to Ammu and other women were disproportionate to their faults.

The author depicts current social turmoil and problems, as well as a clash between the fractional modernization of Indian masses and its traditional mentalities. The novel is remarkable not only for highlighting the perpetuation of untouchability and women's marginalization but also for "Anto colonial resistance". Arundhati Roy dismantles the British cultural hegemony, an age old colonial device for intellectual colonization. Roy with a masterstroke of reversal draws a parallel between the murder of Velutha in police custody and the murder of Dushasana and Duryodhana at the hands of Bhima. "Another morning, another stage, another kind of frenzy." (235) with this parallelism between Bihima and Velutha, the novelist raises the latter to the status of an epic hero. As far as the theme of crisis of human values is concerned, the parallelism has great significance. In the Mahabharata, Dushasana and Duryodhana represent evil and Bhima represents good. Good is able to destroy evil. In the God of small Things, in the struggle between good and evil, evil turns out to be victorious. Velutha who represents good is defeated by the police who represent evil. In ancient India, human rights of week were always protected. But in modern India, human values are encroached upon.

The police who are servants of the state of democratic set up, the police who stand for politeness, obedience, loyalty, Intelligence, Courtesy and Efficiency, killed an innocent man without even probing the real facts only because he belonged to the downtrodden class. Velutha is, as his name signifies, as white as whiteness itself. Even when he knows that his end is imminent, he remains true apostle of non-violence. The story of Velutha can be interpreted as an extended allegory of Christ's life. Like Christ he is very good carpenter, like Christ he remains non-violent. And, again like Christ, he dies saving other people-saving the reputation of Ammu and her family. Like Christ, he knew that sacrificing his life was too high a cost for this purpose. But he embraces it willingly.

When he was taken to the police station, Rahel notices that the nail of his right thumb was painted red. This symbolizes the blood of Christ which was shed for others. In this extended moral allegory of struggle between good and evil, Baby Kochamma plays the role of Judas who betrayed Christ. According to this allegory, Velutha achieves the status of an epic hero. In god of small things incest is between the twins who meet after twenty-three years. "Only that once again they broke the Love Laws. That lay down who should be loved. And how much."(328) the child abuse near the beginning of the God of Small things in the Abilash talkies by a cold drinks vendor is disgusting. In the novel *The God of Small Things* we come across step by step sufferings of women. The character, Ammu was not given freedom for marrying a man whom he loved and she is suppressed for not obeying her parents and her brother abandoned her from the family to enjoy the property that belonged to Ammu. It is to be noted that male chauvinism keeps revolving the novel and beautifully exhibited. Male chauvinism probably in all countries of the world is being inculcated in the minds of the people as an inevitable one. Women are suppressed constantly in the name of 'inferiority of sex' and they considered as the secondary while men are said to be primary. This inequality of mankind between two sexes obviously shows the male chauvinism.

This condition of women has been brought out through many writings of the writers of the world in all periods. The analyzation of womenfolk considered as 'secondary' is recorded in the book *The Second Sex* by Simon de Beauvoir's which remains good example for male chauvinism or male domination. Even in this modern

age women undergo many sufferings especially, rural women are denied many rights than women live in urban. This condition of women is really to fight back against male chauvinism. They are not given proper education even if it is given they are not allowed to attain higher education whereas men are given affordable opportunities, the denial of equal rights in wealth which supposed to be only claimable by men etc... Human beings should first be treated as human beings. Moreover, women should be given due respect, education, and liberty as it is being given to men. There are no sources that suppress or oppress men folk thereby women must not be controlled anymore in the name of male domination or male chauvinism.

Ammu's life from early childhood to adulthood is very frustrated. Four members are in her family first, her father Pappachi, Mammachi her mother, Chacko her brother and herself. Ammu's father is ill-tempered and egoistic. Her father used to beat her mother with brass vase. Her father's extreme temper is witnessed when he tears up a pair of shoes that she has bought for herself. This marks male chauvinism which occurred in the family of the protagonist of this novel.

Love is the primary thing in this world which evidentially all the creatures being aware of. The human being is an exceptional who has the ability to discriminate it from all other feelings in a notable manner. Denial of love among blood relations is highlighted in this novel because of the intermarriage of Ammu and her love with untouchable Velutha. Two daughters Estha and Rachel were isolated because of the intermarriage of Ammu. Love among human beings can be divided into many aspects as possible. Such as the love between brother and sister, mother and children, father and children, children and parents, husband and wife and so on... But accepts all these the love between a boy and a girl is known as different. This kind of love in some societies is taken no care of. And the love between a married woman and a man is severely noted and considered as an illegitimate one.

The novel is made with family relationships, social customs and mores, politics and therefore the most universal of human emotions and behavior. At one and therefore the same time it's nail-biting and tragic, a story and an exposition of the paradoxes that exist in an ancient land whose history was forever altered by British colonizers. Hence, the plurality of its focus includes society, culture, politics, history, exploitation and faith. Naturally the novel required a multiple purpose of read to convincingly 'relate' the story. This also results in the manuscript narrative, shifting from one to the opposite, of course, during a rather disorderly leap from one to the opposite. Roy twists and reshapes the narrative to make an impressive, surprising style of exactitude.

The typical reader of main stream fiction could have a tricky time operating through Roy's narration however readers with a lot of literary bent to their usual fiction inclinations ought to notice the initial plow through the dense narrative a worthy value for this rather comprehensive lushly tragic tale. Precisely, 'it keeps all the guarantees it makes within the opening' with its fastidiously constructed, multifarious narrative. The book as a multiple recollections of the many a 'participant' of the story, leads to a fashionable vary of fictional discursive registers of the characters involved. Arundhati Roy skillfully manages this multi-faceted points of read and integrates the items along by attributing to the total novel a voice distinct and her own. She excels her peers during this regard by showcasing a particular voice, a voice meticulous and expansive with emotional punch, and goes straight to the readers' emotional jugular even whereas creating her case rational with statistics, facts and scrupulous attention to detail.

Roy believes that society or state has no business to interfere once the sexual relations area unit supported equality and consent. That's what she appears to hint at once she describes Rahel breaking the best taboo obligatory by society, namely, incest. In social relations, Roy has no regard for barriers like faith, language, grouping, caste or category. it's not while not some significance that Roy's girls ignore such barriers. Margaret marries Indian, whereas Rahel marries yank Larry McCaslin. Ammu marries a Bengali Hindu and later loves a socio-economic class Paravan. No one needs to be empty chance, education, job or property on such issues. Skills should be rewarded, compensated and appreciated with least respect to such variations. Each reader of the novel feels that it's resentful to notice the very fact that the skills of Velutha, even though recognized don't seem to be punctually appreciated by his employers and even his party pays no attention to them. Equality

cannot be achieved by active and perpetuating difference or by resorting to any or all the means that potential for protective one's mastery and privileges

The novel *The God of Small Things* takes place in a natural background and is constructed by Arundhati Roy using her real-life experiences. The experiences of her can be divided into two, her own-life experience. Her experience in life, in the part of her own- life experience she depicts her life through the character, Ammu who is deserted by her husband which in turn leads to the isolation of her twins, Estha and Rachel. And this portrayal is from Roy's real-life experience when she was deserted by her own mother Mary Roy, and her father. Mary Roy in this novel portrayed through the character Ammu, who married a Bengali after deserting her legitimate husband. Arundhati became isolated early in her childhood.

In the part of her experiences, she witnessed the discriminations committed out around her background in the name of outcaste. The people around her background are subjected by upper caste. The lower or poor people had to be submissive and forced to follow the inhuman regulations of society. The royal tradition people always dominated and humiliated low or poor people. They instructed them to do all the works without any hesitation and without asking questions. The people of low class objected to touch the properties of royal people or else if they had to touch they could do it only by enclosed hands by clothes. Or they had to bring their properties by using sticks. If they violated these regulations they would be beaten up severely or punished in other ways.

The people who do all works for upper classes only paid with a meager amount of money or else only given with everyday food but not even sufficient. The upper classes did not allow these people to enter into their house even beyond a particular area in their compounds. They had to be submissive and should not ask their own rights as a human. The lands and properties only claimed by these Royal people and the lands owned by lower classes seized by them. These became the reasons for the outcome of this novel. By seeing all these Roy had always an impression to write such novel. She noted out the reasonable aspects to write this novel from earlier. These were the root causes for making this creation by using two primary themes, social-Biases and Gender-Biases.

Works Consulted

- Bhatt, Indira and Indira Nityananandam. Ed. Explorations: Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. New Delhi: Creative Books, 1999. Print.
- Boumelha, Penny. *Thomas Hardy and Woman: Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form*. New Jersey: Barnes & Noble Books, 1982.
- De Beauvoir, Simon. *The Second Sex*. Trans, & Ed. H.N. Parshley, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1974. Print.
- Gilbert, Sandra and Susan Gubar. *The Mad Woman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979..
- Iyengar, Srinivasa, K.R. *Indian Writing in English*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishes Pvt. Lit, 18th. Rep. 2009.
- Lerner, Gerda *The creation of Patriarchy*, New York, OUP 1986 Print.
- Mouli, TS. Chandra, *Changing Faces of New Woman Indian Writing in English*. New Delhi: Prestige, 1990. Print.
- Naik, M.K. *Twentieth Century Indian English Fiction*, New Delhi: Pen craft International, 2004.
- Prasad, Amar Nath. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*: a critical appraisal New Delhi: Sarup& Sons, 2004
- Prasad, Murari. Arundhati Roy *Critical Perspectives*, Delhi: Pen craft International, n.d. 2006.Print.
- Rajimwale, Sharad. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*: a critical appraisal New Delhi: Rama Brothers India Pvt. Ltd., 2006.
- Roy, Arundhati. *The God of Small Things*, New Delhi: India Ink, 1997.

Sheshadri, Vijaylakshmi. *The New Woman in Indian-English Women Writers Since The 1970's*. Delhi: B.R.Publishing Corporation, 1995.
