

GENDER BIASES IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S "THE GOD OF SMALL OF THINGS"

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ABSTRACT

The novel is a story about a helpless, lady Ammu who is abandoned by her family meets her sad fate. It shows her constant struggle to make both ends meet. She struggles, repels but in the end succumbs to the innumerable harms done to her. The God of Small Things truly brings about the position of the womenfolk in India. It presents before us the constant struggle of the women against their incessant exploitation, torture and struggle which they undergo because of the male dominated conservative framework. The set up of the society is such that it has title or nothing to offer to the unfortunate forsaken women like Ammu, who are literally forsaken everywhere they go and the greatest pain of it all comes when they are inflicted by ones who are so called your 'own people'. Arundhati Roy retorts against the notion that women are a weaker sex and are inferior to men. They are possibly there to look after the needs and satisfy his baser instincts. She mocks at their attitude and registers her poignant protest that woman is not an mere toy to be manipulated by a man as and when he likes.

Women in turned if observed in their authority are the God's most beautiful creation. She is most emotional, sensitive and soft to core, perhaps which is why God chose her to create and procreate and nurture little kids. She is the one who generates life, she became centrifugal force of the family whereby playing role of a mother, wife, daughter and daughter in laws sister in law, she attracts each member towards herself, and she is the core of the family. Great writers of their times have written highly about the highly potential female characters. Like G.B. Shaw has placed Candida on a very high pedestal of womanhood to be praised and followed.

Woman is the one who steers a man, as it is said behind every successful man there is a woman. She as a better half of a man, gives him the needed love, strength and support. She is one who shapes the destiny of her home and children. A contribution of a woman can be gauged from well brought up children to continue to become the worthy Ammu's life is ruined because of her tormented childhood and the negligence of her parents, same fate befalls her own twins Estha and Rahel who turn to be sorry figures because all their lives they have hankered for love, affection, care and attention.

It is indeed ironically placed that a daughter faces all sort of torture and torment in her parents' house, suffer their indifference and negligence. Chacko is seen the other hand being received by open arms by his parents after being estranged from his wife. His flirting with a low woman is encouraged by Mammachi as "Man's needs". Whereas Ammu's relationship is termed as illicit, untraditional and contemptuous. She is physically tormented for the sin she commits. Chacko, a typical, hypocritical male of the story presents this epitome of the double standards in a man. He was sent to the Oxford to study, on

the other hand his own real sister Ammu was not sent because she was a daughter and it was believed that a female would be corrupted if she goes to college.

A tragic lonely figure, Ammu is the central of the novel who is the most ignored and humiliated figure. She is humiliated at her own parents' place, faces all the biases and partial treatment before after her marriage. Her very own people, her dear ones deserted and misbehaved with her when she needed them the most. Their indifference and torturous attitude lead her to an emotional wreck and thereby resulting in her pathetic insignificant end.

Ammu's life had been a series of tormenting incidents. As a child she had face a lot of nightmarish experiences, full of sadness, disgust and frustration, which any child should not have been subjected to, for childhood is a world of innocence, simplicity and blissful ignorance, but instead she was witness to all abuses grownups see. As a little innocent child she saw the conditions where her father, Pappachi, used to inflict all the cruelty on her mother, Mammachi, he bashed her up with a brass vase. Her father in a fit of frenzy tore her new pair of shoes which she thousand other women in the country who due to gender bias are devoid of the very basics of the life. She too was devoid of higher education because her father thought that college corrupts a woman. On the other hand her brother is sent to Balliol college, Oxford. The schizophrenic behavior of her father is exhibited when not being content after beating up his wife and children, picked up the furniture and smashed a table lamp and tore down the curtains. Ammu was literally choking in the atmosphere of her house, where she constantly saw her mother suffer, the uncongenial atmosphere where she had to help her mother in the house work. The underlying frustration, whereby she could not pursue her higher studies, literally starts strangling Ammu. She wanted to break free from the shackles of the uncongenial atmosphere and the antipathy of her family members. She felt like a prisoner in the Ayemenem house. Ammu's moment of freedom came when Pappachi agreed to let her go to Calcutta to pay a visit to a distant aunt's wedding. There she met her future husband and assistant manager of tea estate at Assam, who was vocation at that time. She hastened to marry him because that was the only way of refuge, moreover she knew that people of Ayemenem would never agree to her plans.

But soon Ammu realized her gross blunder to marry her husband. He was an alcoholic and even forced her to smoke. At this time she gave birth to twins. Mr. Hollick, her husband's boss meanwhile nursed carnal intentions towards Ammu. He threatened Ammu's husband to throw him out of his job if he did not send his wife to his bungalow. He said to him "you are:

"you are very lucky man, you have wonderful family, beautiful children, such an attractive wife."(p.42)

He wanted Ammu to be sent to his bungalow to be "looked after". Her husband urged Ammu to do this. Notwithstanding this extreme humiliation Ammu hit her husband in a mad frenzy with a heavy book and left the place with her two kids. Ammu returned to Ayemenem with her kids, but to her horror, there too she found out her parents to be cold and indifferent toward her and her children. She had tears in her eyes when she saw miserable condition of her kids.

Through Ammu Roy has put forward the cause of the womenfolk of India through character rendition of Ammu. She has shown that right from the beginning women have been subject to all kind of atrocities biases and partial behavior. She has been viewed as a sex object and as a being to be suppressed and believed to be a part of the weaker gender, a belief nursed by majority of people. They do not view womenfolk to be equals but a mere toy and a dust to be shrugged off a doormat. Roy tries to defeat this notion by advocating the case of Ammu who is forever treated with bias and discrimination. She is forever under mental stress and strain and is tortured by the people most dear to her. Roy flings harsh irony on this

male domination and wants to prove that a woman is the pivotal character of a family and she forms the heart of the family and if we break the heart of a woman, the whole family can disintegrate, into nothingness. This is what happens to Ammu and then to her children who descent from broken families and in turn lead a disintegrated, disturbed, disturbed and stray life. Roy wants to propagate that what Ammu goes through both in her husband and father's house is not based on the principle of equality. She seems to say that women is not merely an object in a man's hand to be manipulated the way he likes but a woman is the most noble and beautiful creation of God.

Ammu's Ironic condition can be viewed from the fact that she as a daughter after separating from her husband is tyrannized and tormented in her own house whereas her brother Chakco after being estranged from his wife is given all the legacy, he is made the caretaker of the Ipe household and is seen asserting his position bluntly tells Ammu : "What is ours is mine and what is mine is also mine". He is regarded as the legal inheritor of the family wealth when he flirts with the low women, he is regarded as the legal inheritor of Pappachi in the name of "Man's needs" (p.268). Whereas When Ammu seeks her love outside the family her love is termed illicit, untraditional and sinful: She is locked up in a room and is beaten up mercilessly. Her distant relatives come to see her expresses their sympathy but Ammu knows that they are secretly mocking at her.

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