



## *My and Our: A Feminist Study*

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### **Abstract:**

The term 'MY' (proposed expansion: Man of Yaw) belongs to or associated with the speaker and it figures a centralized benefit. MY characteristic exposes a childish manner. The term 'OUR' (proposed expansion: Orchard of Unbreakable Relationship) belongs to or associated with the speaker and one or more other people previously mentioned or easily identified (dictionary meanings) and it figures decentralized-benefit/universal-benefit. OUR characteristic exposes a joint manner. The research paper aims to find out the effect of 'MY' and 'OUR' in regarding the feminist aspect. Feminism is a fight based on gender discrimination for which the human beings are divided in two parts. They are suffering for identity crisis, especially woman part. Basically, it is seen that the suffering depends on the gender inequality. The targets of the research paper are 'why gender discrimination comes' and 'how it comes in the novel' *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy, a Booker Prize winner.

**Keywords:** *My, Our, childish manner, joint manner, Arundhati Roy*

### **Introduction:**

*The God of Small Things* is necessarily a drama novel about women condition in the patriarchal family and totally designed in regard to women point of views. Most of the main characters in the novel are women. The novel pictured the gender discrimination and feminism through the male and female characters. Arundhati Roy shows in her novel the figure like 'centralized-benefit' and 'decentralized-benefit'. The researcher finding these two figures, he took help in the manner like 'childish manner' and 'joint manner'. Childish Manner is an approach which refers to the child attitude as a child thinks all the materials around it belong to it. Naturally the child demands those things as MY thing. The credit of the result of the work only goes the person who introduces the work before the audience. On the other hand, Joint Manner refers to the characteristic which indicates all things around a person are an outcome of all people's effort. Naturally, s/he could not precede the effort by only his/her name. Resulting of joint manner goes the same to the people involving into a work. The novel focuses the floating of changes from the generation to the generation. The novel set three generations remarkably portrayed in the characters like Baby Kochamma, Pappachi & Mammachi; Chacko & Ammu; and Estha & Rahel. Baby Kochamma, Pappachi & Mammachi are carrying the colonial ages and they want to preserve the old fashion of the British. Chacko & Ammu associates the era of postcolonial thinking. They can differentiate their choices. They are free from the colonial oppression. They both want to reunion the two polarizations as the both married different ethnic colonizers. Otherwise, Estha & Rahel denotes the modern era. They both break the tradition of their old culture. They show the tremendous animosity to the social system as it destroys their lives at the bud and develops the changes by having sibling adulteration with inherent pain previously at the age of seven as they thought that they were the same soul in different body.

Gender discrimination starts at the time when people used to fingering to the sharing an innate with another. This innate is wealth, property, thinking, power, self, like, dislike, love, and hate. By birth, a baby wishes to keep all at its fist. It has no will to share its innate. When it loses its innate from the fist, it starts crying. Gender discrimination is nothing but like a baby's wish.

The patriarchal society formulated such norms which cannot be vanished automatically or cannot be changed at a single night even. As the society is ruled by a man, the other creation woman is losing her control over the society. As the family is ruled by a man, a woman is losing her control over her family. As a man is decision maker, a woman loses her control over her thinking. Discrimination initiates in these senses.

'MY' is a possessive pronoun form of 'I'. 'OUR' is also a possessive pronoun form of 'WE'. 'MY' is a singular form, unlikely, 'OUR' is a plural form. The form comes from the similar source. 'MY' indicates the belonging either 'a man' or 'a woman'. But, 'OUR' indicates both 'a man & a woman' or 'a man & a man' or 'a woman or a woman'. Beneficiary the research paper the 'MY' is considered as 'a man' and 'OUR' is considered as 'a man & a woman' according to the Chacko's point of view 'my factory; my pineapples; my pickles' and almost all the novel relates these terms.

### Objectives:

The God of Small Things is a social novel and which has been listed in top ten by The Telegraph. The object of the paper is to find out how changes are needed in the society and evaluate the statement of: 'Though Ammu did as much work in the factory as Chacko, whenever he was dealing with food inspectors or sanitary engineers, he (Chacko) always referred to it (with the customers) as *my* factory, *my* pineapples, (and) *my* pickles (p: 57).

### Methodology:

The paper follows the qualitative approach in the research making the research one very unique. The book 'The God of Small Things' by Arundhati Roy (IndiaInk: 1997) is used to be the primary source. As the secondary sources, some related articles published in various journals are taken consideration to study.

### Discussion:

Feminism is a fight for equality where gender discrimination is deeply obeyed in the society because the society is patriarchy system. Many researchers proclaimed that patriarchy opposites to the feminism, although feminism refers to the 'equality between sexes'. It may be a question why and how patriarchy became a form of discussion. Patriarchy is a system where one is dominator and other being is dominated. These two beings may be considered man and women; big thing and small thing; power and powerless; freedom and seclusion.

Gender is socially created base on power distribution between male and female, biologically formed. Gender being socially constructed gives the name of male and female are man and woman. Always all people both male and female consider women are naive, affectionate, polite, weak, womb as well. They will not keep the lineage of her father's family. This idea comes upon the mind of parents after a girl's immediate birth. Once there was an age when baby girls were graved alive. This happening intensified the hatred of girls or women on those days. But it was not at all hatred rather it was a way to hate the society's norm that could not stop mental venture. This mental venture set up at the time of marrying a girl. The boy, who willed to marry a girl, would have slept together before marriage. If the boy gave his consent with full satisfaction, the marriage then might occurs. Otherwise, this norm would have been continued until the girl's marriage. The norm displeased the parents because the parents could not carry this kind of offence any more, and then they started digging a grave for their own girl child. This kind is not seen today as it has been abolished long years ago. But, this ancient deadly norm is carrying on today's by the alternative name of class differences which indicates caste system.

Gender defines the social construction as the features of women, men, girls and boys. It also denotes the norms, roles and manner associated with a woman, a man, a girl or a boy and their relationship. In regard of social construction, it varies from class to class; caste to caste; society to society; country to country and can be changed slowly or rapidly. Gender discrimination occurs when one gender faces political, social and domestic violence by the other gender. Gender being 'hierarchical and resulting inequalities' transects with another social as well as economic difference. 'Gender-based discrimination intersects with other factors of discrimination' produces intersectionality basically sexual orientation and gender identity.

Gender is not equal to sex, but identified by nature and by strength. So, gender is socially created and sex is the biological and physiological aspect of both sexes- male and female. Gender confines the nature of treatment to a person within the society. It depends on the behaviour and experience. Sex relies on the biological differences in regard to reproduction organs which allow a male/a man's or a female/a woman's nature and mental boldness. On the other hand, gender identity denotes an individual's deep feeling, experience, acceptance, rejection, leadership, and savagery which resemble to the individual's physiology, psychology or pre allotted sex at birth.

Gender discrimination comes in when a male or a female cannot get their proper respect in the society. The most researchers' observation is transforming to the female sex's point, so we see gender discrimination into women. As the society is dominated by male sex, the researchers observe that the male sex initiates gender discrimination. But in the novel, Arundhati Roy has displayed the oppression and gender discrimination by women character like Baby Kochamma who is the only sister of Paapachi, the owner of the pickle factory and the only aunt of Chacko, who later controls the pickle factory.

Baby Kochamma was a lady who lives at her brother's (Paapachi) family and once she felt in love with a priest of a church when she was in England. Later she converted her religion into Christianity. The author did not mention that she was unmarried till the novel has ended. She did not allow Ammu normally. Her motto was to cast Ammu and her children away from the house. In her thought, Ammu was a part of a massive fault by marrying an American Christian. Estha and Rahel are the fruit of that Hindu-Christian's high bride product. The author describes her as an antagonist of ill mentality. Baby Kochamma in the novel set her ability to preserve the changes as the oldest person in the family hold the power of decision. Author introduces Ammu as a hardworking lady among the factory people, but she could not claim proper authority in the factory. Her authority is denied because she has a female sex and the patriarchy society never confesses her hardship in the factory. This mentality proves the social tradition which is strictly obeyed by the old lady, Baby Kochamma. The researcher can evaluate this oppression as gender discrimination because gender discrimination comes from the power sharing, distributing the wealth and suppressing the free thinking rights as well. Gender discrimination develops within the sharing power that will be shown in the research paper.

Gender discrimination further happens when Baby Kochamma forces Estha and Rahel to go against Velutha. This force seizes the life of Velutha in the cell. The head of the police, Pilli, severely tortured Velutha. Benefiting as a higher class family, Baby Kochamma does a conspiracy to inspire the police against Velutha subjecting he raped Ammu and killed Sophie Mol.

The folks say that women will bear with obedient. Women will be very obedient to her man. Women are subject to obey order and prohibited. This concept, the author portrayed, can be denied that Ammu did. When Baba forgot the value his family and respect for sustaining his job, he offered and forced Ammu to sleep with his bosses. Ammu did not give consent and she was divorced and separated. This situation comes out of power of a patriarchy society. Ammu's decision is the indicator of a change, although she fell into the trap of gender discrimination. If the gender is equal, the divorce and separation never be happened.

### **Result:**

The MY and the OUR senses conflict each other. The MY wants to preserve all. The OUR wants to share all. The MY centralizes; the OUR decentralizes. The MY brings proud; the OUR shares success. The MY opposes other's value; the OUR appreciates other's value. The MY depresses others; the OUR inspires others. The MY separates each and every one; the OUR closes every one. These are the psychological order by the researcher.

MY and OUR comes from the self-identification. If a human being cannot identify his/her self, never can identify the other's self. Md. Eftekhairul stated in his 'Self an Expedition of Women Education' like below.

“Self” comes from the competition among the races and started distinguishing after the ancient period. The race of “self” came to contact in Roman age when they ruled over England, the history of English Literature indicates the same. “Self” was silently worshiped in human mind at the time of progressing civilization on this earth since ancient era. But “self” had been broken out in the world after Anglo-Saxon and Norman period with the conquer of England by the Anglo, Saxon and Jute in competition of power, of wealth, of love to journey, of glory and some sophisticated activities which they thought it might enlighten the face of them. The English history said that all the success of English people comes from their “self” understanding and the willingness for spending the “self” glorification. Renaissance is the great example of “self” identification and its worshipping... The modern psychology forms “self” as I (the person itself) and Me (the person id known). According to psychology position the self as playing an integral part of human motivation, cognition, affect and social identity. The self can be redefined as a dynamic, responsive process that structures neural



pathways according to past and present environments including material, social and spiritual aspects. Self-concept is such a concept that an individual has of the person as an emotional, spiritual and social being e.g. the self-concept is anything you say about yourself. (73-74)

The MY has been displayed in *The God of Small Things* among the higher class of people. The researcher observes at the first generation of the novel and finds Paapachi is underlined into the MY. He preserved the social and colonial norm of torture. He did not consider the value of his people. He separated himself to make the decision as he declined the schooling of Ammu and spoke out that the girl's schooling is 'unnecessary expense' of money and wastage of time. When the moth fell into his tea and he took it to the office, the director did not allow it as a new species. But later the author exposes that the director has approved the same moth as a new species by his name. Here, the MY of the director worked strongly. If Paapachi has no obligation to the office, he could give its name by his name. Mainly the power belonging comes in the mind of the director utilizing the MY sense. If the OUR sense had come to the mind of Paapachi, all difficulties would have been solved. The fight between male and female never coined.

Similarly, Baby Kochamma became villain for her excessively MY sense. Her thinking was differently utilized in the novel. She brought the hatred to the lower class society. She preserves the colonial tradition telling Estha and Rahel to learn speaking English. She converted her religion for implementing the mental decision of asking for the priest of the church. The MY has worked fruitfully when she inspired Estha, Rahel, Thomas Mathew and Chacko to do the wrong deeds. The MY is glorified in the character of Baby Kochamma. If the OUR worked as liberal sense, all frustrations and downfalls could not come because OUR brings mental peace and socialization.

Regarding inspector Thomas Mathew, the head of police, the MY sense and the OUR sense come juxtapose. The MY sense influence him when he dreamt a promotion in the job sector or in the party, he tortured Velutha gathering impression from Baby Kochamma's conspiracy. When he tortured Velutha, his MY sense brutally followed. But, when he influenced, his OUR sense towards higher society's value as they belongs to worked. The sense MY says Mathew that the office, the chair, table, the cell, the government all are mine and I am the only order make to implement it. On the other hand, Thomas Mathew thought that Baby Kochamma was a renowned lady in the society and he occupied a higher authority in the office. Naturally the both belonged to the same class. So, he accepted Baby Kochamma's accuse against Velutha. The OUR sense is implemented psychologically in the mind of Mathew.

The MY sense influenced Rahel and so she chose a partner of white skin to fly to the others escaping her sibling Estha as 'they are the same soul in different body'. For a long separation around 23 years, working of OUR, Rahel felt alone except her brother who meanwhile lived with his father in Kolkata. She came to Rahel and had a sex for messaging the patriarchal society a big change. The researcher found that the sense of isolation and reunited characterized in the sense of the terms MY and OUR.

The conflict of the terms MY and OUR is clearly featured in the novel *The God of Small Things* the researcher's observing the characters of Chacko and Ammu. As the MY never offer the authorship, leadership, sharing property and wealth with others, Chacko did the same with his sister Ammu. The novel shows that the both Chacko and Ammu are siblings and divorced. So, normally they have no differences in the society except male and female. As the norms of the Hinduism penetratingly captured each and every corner of the society from the old ages, Chacko is not outside of the social circle. His mentality is an outcome of the social experiences. A human being learns either from the family or from the society. In this term, Chacko learnt from both of the sides. His father's torture and misbehave with the family members and cruel patriarchy in the society. Going through the novel, it could be realized that Ammu gave much labour than Chacko. Ammu made pickles, preserve it working like a labour. But, Chacko worked in the administration as he was a scholar of Oxford. He dealt with the customers and the labour belonging high administrative power. Problems arose when he talked self-centered as MY...MY...MY.... His pronouncing MY goes to hurt the other member of the factory especially Ammu because she is a shareholder of the factory. In the sense of subordination, Ammu could not demand the share of the factory. This sense also indicates the superiority and inferiority between sexes which uphold the gender discrimination. On the other hand, if we consider OUR sense in this circumstance we can see the share equality and mental equality that destines the peach in mind and soul. When Chacko introduced the products of the factory with customers and other of the factory, if he would utter OUR...OUR...OUR..., everybody working in the factory became

satisfied with the administration. Not only that, everybody could find out their identity in the factory or family or in the community/society.

### Conclusion:

The researcher tried to develop the sense of MY and OUR. From the discussion, it may be said that feminism is a conflict of MY and OUR sense. When a male thinks his around, he thinks about his benefit. When a female achieves an outstand success. She guesses that she achieved it by her hard labour. But both male and female totally forget the help source. They become busy with their own credit taking. It is true that there is a cause behind everything. Similarly, in the field of feminism both sexes are living together but each denies the freedom of other. Nobody confesses that one of them can satisfy the whole system by working in the respectable position. A male does possess some especial power to comprehend some especial work. Likewise, a female does enjoy some extraordinary quality to accomplish the work keen-fully. MY can make one party satisfied but OUR can make a bondage to proceed long distance. OUR can make a horizon and the parties can be in calm like Ammu and Velutha with the small thing. They will think the small and the hundred small thinks, one day, will make a big thing. The big thing will press a curve in the world of the history.

Henrik Ibsen, Norwegian playwright and theatre director, in his *A Doll's House* has shown the result of MY and OUR conflict between Nora Helmer and Torvald Helmer. As a husband, Torvald did not allow her wife's free thinking to contribute it in the family because of his self-ego. Later, the lovely family broke down by leaving Nora from the house. If OUR sense worked a little bit, the massive operation of family broken would not happen. *The God of Small Things* is a family broken tale of 'Ipe family' who lived in Kerala in between 1969-93. The conflict occurs in the Ipe family in the sense of superiority and inferiority that indicates MY and OUR. If the family had considered (the ability and disability; luxury and labour; strength and weakness; happiness and sorrow of) each member ('s effort) of the family, gender discrimination and feminist movement idea would have never approached in the novel. Implementation of the idea OUR (Orchard of Unbreakable Relationship) between male and female; man and woman; girl and boy; king and occupant; big and small, the gender discrimination may be declined from the society, even in the world.

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