



Caste, Class, Gender and Resistance: A Study of Arundhati Roy's *"The God of Small Things"*

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the intersection of caste, class, and gender within a framework of resistance in post-colonial contexts. In India, caste-based discrimination still persists, especially in rural regions. In rural areas, communities are often divided along caste lines, with upper and lower castes living in separate areas. Dalits, who belong to the lowest caste, having a creative mind, skilled and kind-hearted but still discriminate. In many parts of India, inter-caste marriages are not accepted, like upper caste women not marry with the lower caste men. Due to the untouchable concept, it affects the children's psychology; they may have a trauma. In our Indian society even now one woman exploits another woman, under the pressure of jealousy and evil society. This paper critically studies the post-colonial novel of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, which is related to untouchability, loss of innocence, and forbidden relationships. This novel is a non-sequential narrative style.

Key words: - Caste, Love, Loss, Trauma, and Forbidden Relationships.

INTRODUCTION

Arundhati Roy is an Indian author, essayist and prominent social and environmental activist. Born on Nov 24, 1961, in Meghalaya. Roy gained international fame with her debut novel *"The God of Small Things"* (1997) which won the prestigious Booker Prize. The setting of the novel is in Kerala, exploring themes of caste, forbidden love, and family dynamics. After publishing *"The God of Small Things"*, Roy spent most of her time on political activism and non-fiction. The book is semi-autobiographical, a major part capturing her childhood experiences in Ayemenem, Kerala. When she was only two years old, her parents divorced and she returned to Kerala with her mother and brother. Roy won the National Film Award also for the Best Screenplay in 1988, for the book in which Annie gives to those ones. Her political essays such as *The Algebra of Infinity Justice* (2002), *Field Notes on Democracy* (2009), and

Capitalism: A Ghost Story (2014), reflect her engagement with issues of global justice and the environment. She also supports Hindu Nationalism in India with her strong voice against military occupation in Kashmir.

In addition, her second novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* published in 2017. This novel deals with political unrest, marginalized communities and the human conflicts.

The caste system fertilizes patriarchal society and also takes sides on the bourgeois. In this novel, Arundhati Roy explores the social injustices, loss of innocence, childhood experiences and the impact of historical and cultural forces. The issues of caste and social discrimination are also included. The title itself highlights the novel's exploration of the Small Things of Life. The major events occur in the past (1969) and the present (1993) "*The God of Small Things*" tracks three generations of a family's history but it predominantly focuses on Ammu Rahel, Estha and is mainly set in Ayemenem, India.

The novel opens in 1993, when the thirty-one-year-old Rahel has just returned to Ayemenem after a long time. The story starts in 1963 when Rahel and Estha are seven years old and living with her mother in the house of Pappachi, he is an authoritarian father of Ammu, who lost his chance to become a famous Entomologist and always beats his wife Mammachi, who runs pickle factory. Ammu their daughter marries an estate manager from Assam to escape to her father's house, but her life is worsened by her husband Baba's abusive behavior and she returns to Ayemenem with her twins Rahel and Estha.

Chacko son of Pappachi and Mammachi goes to Oxford for higher education and there he marries an English woman named Margaret. They have a daughter Sophie mol, but some years ago they got divorced and separated, in between Chacko and his daughter Sophie mol returns to Ayemenem. They all get together and make a plan for the movie, they enjoy the movie and something unexpected happens to Estha from the theater. Estha is molested by a movie theater's snack vendor. After that incident Estha always wishes to escape from his current life.

So Estha and Rahel find silence in 'The History House' across the river. In Kerala Communist Party gains popularity. Velutha is an untouchable communist, lover of Ammu who works in the family of Pappachi. Ammu is attracted to Velutha and they continue to meet each other at night. Rahel and Estha decide to visit the History House again but this time Sophie mol accompanies them, but the boat tips over and Sophie mol drowns. The twins become terrified and they hide in the History House.

Baby Kochemma informs inspector Thomas Mathew that Velutha is responsible for the death of Sophie mol and he also kidnap the twins. Chacko throws Ammu out of the house as per his aunt's order, after the death of Sophie mol. Ammu force to send his son to her husband Baba. In between, Ammu dies at the age of 31. Velutha is arrested and dies in the police station. The twins become separated. Rahel goes to study Architecture. After completing her study she knows about Estha who is returning to Ayemenem, she also came there to meet her brother. Rahel sees Estha is depressed and wishes to escape from life. She tries to engage Estha to bring him back from silence. So she used to spend a lot of time with Estha and that leads to their sexual relationship. For the first time, they feel they are with someone they love. At last the story ends in 1993 when they reunited at the age of 31.

The novel explores how small things affect people's behavior and their lives. "*The God of Small Things*" represents Velutha, the man whom Ammu loves. Velutha is considered as small by everyone other than Ammu. Velutha, the twins and Ammu are small things in terms of position but big in terms of dignity, loyalty and kind love. Arundhati Roy aims to transform the humble men and women into heroic creatures. No interference of caste and class.

If you cannot do great things,

Do small things in a great way.

~ Arundhati Roy.

In the nutshell, it can be said that the story of Velutha ,Ammu and Twins are affected by the political laws. Velutha is referred to as. *The God of Small Things*, because of his self-sacrificing love and the small gifts he gave to Ammu as a child. Secondly the childhood experiences of fraternal twins whose lives are destroyed by the love laws.s

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