

ARUNDHATI ROY'S "THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS" – A FEMINISTIC PRESPECTIVE

S. Alphonsa mary* and V. Peruvalluthi,

¹*Department of English, Sacred Heart College (Autonomous), Tirupattur – 635 601, Tamil Nadu, India.*

²*Department of English, Thiruvalluvar University, Serkadu, Vellore – 632 115, Tamil Nadu, India.*

Abstract

Feminism is a movement to gain for women equal rights with men in social, political and Economic fields. It grew in the west as a sequel to the industrial revolution and against the tradition in Western democracies of denying voting rights to women. The basic concept has found favour among women the world over following the realization that women in all societies have been historically exploited because of their gender. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* won Booker prize for literature in 1997. This is an autobiographical novel reflecting her personal life.

Key words: Novel, The God of Small Things, Arundhati Roy and Feminism.

1. Arundhati Roy's "The God of Small Things" – A Feministic Perspective

The novel brings out the contract between the God of small things are Ammu, Velutha and Rahel and God of big things like Pappachi, Baby Kochamma, Chacko, Thomas Matthen and Comrade pillai. This novel is the plight of women called Ammu divorced by her husband and neglected by her own family members. The awareness of the women which has been risen to greater proportion in the modern context.

The term feminism is one of the most well-known of the various-ism of today. It gained currency in the nineteenth century Victorian England with the emancipation of women. It was a sequel to the industrial revolution and to the denial of voting rights to women in western democracies. *The God of Small Things* is a plight of women called Ammu divorced her husband and neglected by her own family members. Ammu is the daughter of Pappachi and Mammachi. Her brother is Chacko. As a child, she had witnessed the cruelty of her father towards her mother. During

her stay in Calcutta, she met her future husband. She fell in love with him and decided to marry him. She just informed her parents and got married. After the marriage, she understood her husband was not a good man. He was willing to send his wife to his boss, Mr. Hollick in order to safeguard his job. Ammu left her husband with her twins – Rahel and Estha. But in Ayemenem her family members treated her and children indifference. Though, she was denied an education, her brother Chacko was sent to Oxford for higher education. He married Margaret and bygot Sophic Mol. When Margaret divorced him, he came to Ayemenem to live with her parents. Meanwhile, Ammu had an affair with Velutha, an untouchable when things became known.

Ammu was locked up in a room and Velutha was taken to police station. He was charged with the murder of Sophic Mol, who had died accidentally by getting drowned in the river. Velutha died in police custody. The twins who knew the truth were forced to conceal it while discussing the character of Ammu. Arundhati Roy says, "She stands for those women who are



aspiring for freedom and equality. This section of women is challenging traditional ideas and conventions. The hopes for the future live with this section only”.

Rahel is a girl of rebellion like her mother. This is to be seen in three of her activities.

- 1) She dashes against the convent girls to find out if her breasts hurt.
- 2) She decorate a ball of dung with flowers.
- 3) She burns the hair bun of her housemistress as a protest against vanity and artificiality.

Rahel was eleven year old when her mother died. Estha also had traumatic experiences in life. Baby Kochamma was her own story. She loved her father Mulligan whom she tried to vain to seduce. She become a Roman Catholic so as to be near him for every.

Arundhati Roy's concern for women and the environment is to be found in her first novel itself. According to certain western feministic critics, nature is equated with women to show how both have been exploited by man in more than one way. Nature, in its comprehensive sense means not only the physical environment but also man's social relationships, his artistic aspirations, his religious persuasions and even his recreations. *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy proves the law rescan contention that all creative art must arise out of specific soil and flicker with the spirit of place.

Women belong to one of the categories of small things portrayed by Arundhati Roy. Despite socio-economic development, women have not achieved an enviable position in the society. They were kept in subordination and relegated to the status of the second sex. The Indian society is based on male predominance and female subordinations. Though, women is praised for her

wife-mother role. She is treated as the legal economic and sexual property of her husband. Even parents did not treat male and female children equally.

Feminism today, has become one of the most popular movement. The awareness of the women which has risen to greater proportion in the modern context is the main reason for the momentum gained by this movement. The women is one more shackled by manmade rules and regulations. She has come out in glory claiming and achieving equality with the male world. Writers, especially women, have done much in propelling this movement to great heights. As far as Indo-Anglicans fiction is concerned, novelists like Anti Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Bharati Mukherjee have taken up the cause of the woman as subject-matter for their fiction.

2. Conclusion

Feminism has now developed in eco-feminism, associating the predicament of women with natural environment. Feministic ideas have found support in certain region of India like West Bengal and Kerala. Hence, is no wonder that Arundhati Roy has become the sole champion of eco-feministic ideas.

The God of Small Things is a pioneering effort and it is certain to be taken up by other writers in India.

3. References

- 1) Bhatt, Indira. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*(ed..) Creative Books, New Delhi-1999
- 2) Dawn R.K. *The Novelist Extraordinary*(ed..) Arundhati Roy, New Delhi-1999
- 3) Roy, Arudhati. *The God of Small Things* Penguin Books India Pvt.Ltd.,2002.

