

## REFLECTION OF MARGINALITY IN INDIAN ENGLISH WRITING

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### Abstract:-

*Marginality is a term which reveals us the exact situation of the people in the society of particular era. It also furnishes the way to know more about the people who lives at the periphery. Marginalization means the act of treating someone or something as of lesser importance, influence or power. Marginalized people are those who are abandoned socially, politically and economically. They have no freedom to raise their voice in any sphere of the society. This despicable and un pitying concept of marginalization is present everywhere in the world. Indian social system is not exception to this. Generally we found that women are the more marginalized beings in a male dominated society. How women are being oppressed ages after ages has beautifully been presented by many Indian writers. Most interestingly, many female writers have graphically presented the plight of Indian women. The present paper speaks about the marginalized state of many characters as delineated in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* and Manju Kapur's *Dfficult Daughters*.*

### Keywords:-

Marginality, freedom, Oppressed, Dominated Society etc.

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### Introduction:-

Literature is the reflection of the society, and writer is a person who studies carefully and presents it in the literature in such a way that it influences readers to think of society. This power of a writer and literature is their best weapon to play with the human feelings, emotions, sufferings, joys and sorrows. There are several sections of people belonging to every group of society and marginalized people are existent. These marginalized people are void of socio-economic opportunities for their simple living. They are culturally, politically and socially victimized.

Indian writers project the society in such a way as if viewing the image of society. This is the artistic craftsmanship of Indian English writers. There are many schedule castes, schedule tribes in the society who are oppressed by rich people. But women are the worst sufferer. These women have got a position in many Indian writings and they have been shaped in different way. Shashi Deshpande deals with the inner world of the Indian women and her writings deal with the women belonging to Indian middle class. Anita Desai presents the social facts through psychological point of view. Kamala Das's writings deal with distinctly feminine world, 'the intensely domesticated but never tame or tepid world of man and woman'. Arundhati Roy writes about the poor condition of the downtrodden and the suppressed women



in the society. Manju Kapur portrays the New Indian woman's voice. A "New Women" in search of self-identity, seeks liberation in all walks of life and replaces the traditional image of Indian women. This research paper presents the marginalization of female characters of three generations. In Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* Mammachi, Ammu and Rahel and in Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* Kasturi, Virmati and Ida are the marginalized characters in male dominated society.

### **Marginalization in *The God of Small Things*:-**

In *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy has depicted the plight of women marginalized by society. The characters who became the subject of marginalization were- Ammu (female protagonist of the novel), Mammachi (Ammu's mother) and Rahel (Ammu's daughter). In the novel, Ammu, the tragic and lonely figure, was the most neglected and disgraced person. She was cruelly afflicted when she was in a mood to get up herself as an independent one in her own ownership. By birth, Ammu was not a member of a downtrodden family. Ammu was born in a rich family. Her father Pappachi was an ambitious entomologist and her mother was the founder of Paradise Pickles and Preserves. But Pappachi was an ill-natured man and his dominating mentality battered the mind of his wife Mammachi. So, Ammu was the offspring of troubled couple. Ammu, in spite of being the member of Syrian Christian family, faced many difficulties (family, education, marriage, social position, religion and justice) throughout her life. She was devoid of love, care and affection on the part of her parents. So to her parents, she was neglected. In patriarchal family structure, woman had no respect and girl child was considered to be a burden. To Pappachi, Ammu's position was same. 'With iron-topped riding crop' Ammu's father battered Ammu. This inhuman torture was the sample of father-daughter relationship in the novel. So to say, Ammu was marginalized in her own familiar place and by her own kith and kin. A kind of partiality was seen when Chako, Ammu's brother was sent to Oxford University for higher education and Ammu's academic career suddenly stopped. There was an excuse- "**Pappachi insisted that a college education was an unnecessary expense for a girl**". So, Ammu had no choice but to leave Delhi and moved to Ayemenem immersing her educative mind. This partial treatment was the result of marginalization. It also showed that she had the secondary place in the mind of her parents. Ammu's father was the main obstacle in Ammu's life of progression. So, one thing left for Ammu was to get ready for marriage. In Ayemenem, "there was very little for a young girl to do other than to wait for marriage proposals while she helped her mother with the housework." In her own family, her own place was the symbol of detachment, subjection, monotony and above all marginalization. She was desperately seeking to be rescued by marrying from this prisonlike house. One of her plans to leave Ayemenem worked when Pappachi agreed to let her spend the summer with a distant aunt who lived in Calcutta. There at someone else's wedding reception, Ammu met her dream-hero who would bring all fortune and fulfill all her desire that she didn't get from her parents. Her husband was working as an assistant engineer in a tea estate in Assam. His zamindar family migrated to Calcutta from East Bangal after partition. Ammu accepted the marriage proposal of her husband. Ammu wrote a letter to her parents informing her decision but no reply came. Nevertheless, she married him at an elaborate Calcutta wedding. But all her dream about her husband got disillusioned as "her husband turned out to be not just a heavy drunkard but full-blown alcoholic". Ammu gave birth to two twins- Estha and Rahel. Mr. Hollick (Ammu's husband boss) took the opportunity of his alcoholism



and he badly wanted Ammu, ‘beautiful, glow and cheeky’ to thirst his lust. Another struggle for existence started. Ammu faced another ordeal-to win over male domination. Marriage didn’t sweeten her life as she expected. To her, marriage was nothing but a bitter experience and a medium of marginalization as well. She divorced her husband. She had no other option but to return to Ayemenem to her parents with her children. But her father refused to believe that, “an Englishman, any Englishman would covet another man’s wife”. Ammu had undergone physical and psychological suffering from her husband.

Ammu accepts her marginalize status but not ready to have a stigma of marginalization on her children. So she met Velutha and started building relationship with him. But this couple was not positively accepted by the society. Velutha was arrested and killed inhumanly on the false case of rape. When Ammu went to the police station, she was insulted by the police officer and remarked that, “Kottayam police does not take statement from Veshyas and their illegitimate children”. This kind of remark is the remark of colonization and Ammu became marginalized subject throughout the novel. Ammu’s family cut off the relationship with Ammu and they drove her away from house. Still she tried to be independent by seeking a job but all the efforts ended in vain. Instead of love, care and affection she got only suffering, despair, negligence, mental vexation and social harassment. Tired, exhausted, oppressed, depressed, alienated, marginalized Ammu was found dead in a filthy room of Bharat Lodge in Aleppy. Although Ammu’s soul left her body, marginalization clinged to her. Ammu’s marginalization reached climax when church disowned her body to perform her last rites. A virtual, social outcaste alienated from family, home and society, Ammu was cremated in an electric crematorium where “nobody except beggars, derelicts and police custody dead was cremated.” No one from the family was present except Chako and Rahel. “The door of the furnace dangled shut. There was no tears”.

Mammachi, the mother of Ammu and Chako, is another marginalized woman. She was marginalized by her own husband Pappachi. He used to beat her every night with a brass flower vase. Mammachi was really a talented woman who established her recognition by playing violin. Mammachi’s fame and recognition was one kind of insult for her husband. Male dominated society never thought of the success achieved by any female figure such was in case of Mammachi. Pappachi’s jealousy reached the climax when violin teacher told Mammachis’s expertise in playing violin to her husband. One night he broke the bow of the violin and threw it in the river. This brutal activity of Pappachi showed that Mammchi had no freedom to take any decision and to lead or advance her life according to her own will. This is one kind of marginalization. Pappachi was also envious of Mammachi’s decision of starting pickle making business. Pappachi gave no assistance to his wife because pickle making is not ‘a suitable job for high ranking ex-government official’. So, Pappachi was a bar to her free thinking. And their relationship was not dependent upon understanding, collaboration, love and care.

Arundhati Roy’s alter ego Rahel is one of the marginalized characters. Unlike her grandmother Mammachi and mother Ammu, she was less marginalized character. She had no attachment with the domestic violence. Her misfortune was that she was the child of a marginalized woman. She had to undergo insult and humiliation having no support of her father since her childhood. The divorce between her mother and father troubled her life. The persons from her mother’s side did not take care of her. Just as Ammu, in course of novel, developed



herself from a marginalized family girl to marginalized woman of the society; she also started her life journey as a marginalized girl. Through the marginalized characters like Ammu, Mammachi and Rahel, Roy has presented beautifully the struggle of Indian women against all odds of the society. She has also criticized the mentality of the male figures who have derogated the freedom of women. She has even lashed the social institutions like family, marriage, religion and police authorities for which women put up with all the sufferings, pains, frustrations, physical and sexual harassment.

### **Few Marginalized characters in *Difficult Daughters*:-**

In *Difficult Daughters* (1999), Commonwealth Prize winning novel, Manju Kapur has presented the story of three generations of women-Ida, the narrator; Virmati, her mother; and Kasturi, her grandmother of Punjab family. The novel sets in with the funeral of Virmati and this story is narrated by Ida, the narrator.

Virmati's mother Kasturi was brought up in a patriarchal society where marriage was the extreme fortune in the long journey of life of a girl. After marriage, responsible activities turned a free girl into a duty bound woman. Marriage means to be the source of taking care of in-laws. During schooling period, Kasturi knew very well that marriage would be her final fate. After completing graduation, she went on her involvement in household activities set up her destiny. Kasturi shared with Virmati not only about her fate but also the fate of a girl in patriarchal society.

Virmati, the protagonist of the novel, was a fighting figure. She fought against the family heritage, age long orthodoxy and the society. She wanted to be different from her mother. Whereas her mother Kasturi mutely carried out everything that was against her will, Virmati protested against them. She wanted parental love, care and affection. But she did not want to lead a marginal life. As she was eldest child of her parents, she silently obeyed everything for the sake of her siblings. This was nothing but marginalization in disguise. She played the role of a second mother for her sibling and was tired of performing all the responsibilities. She was without love and that's why she was longing for love throughout her life. Her longing for love made her involved in an illegal relationship with a married professor Harish Chandra. She had two desires to fulfill-having higher education and marrying Harish Chandra. She was a character who would step forward according to heart's command. She was really confused whether she would perform domestic activities or fulfill her personal desires. But she preferred to complete her personal desires. She kept on her education in Lahore and she was chased after by Harish Chandra. Harish's emotional attachment attitude engulfed the heart of Virmati. Their mental attachment developed into physical relationship. Finally, she married Harish but their married life was not the happy one. She became marginalized figure. While she was in charge of family responsibilities, she thought of freedom. But now when she was free from domestic responsibilities and she thought of freedom from Harish. Virmati wanted to establish her own identity. Virmati presented herself as a woman devoid of hackneyed ideas that were prevalent in any patriarchal society. She always tried to think differently. She always tried to be Manju Kapur's 'New Woman'.

Although Virmati was not deeply influenced by the conventional social norms, she followed them in the treatment of her daughter Ida. To Ida, she was not an understanding



mother. Ida suffered much because of Virmati's indifferent attitude for her daughter. To be the daughter of Virmati was a kind of sin for Ida. She was deprived of respect, self belief and identity. Ida threw away the patriarchal domestic belief and male authorized society. Ida became a typical daughter of a difficult daughter, Virmati. With the death of her mother she got the taste of freedom, no more troubled by Virmati. Thus, this novel has revealed the life of women, their struggle, their intention for identity and dignity through the portrayal of Kasturi, Virmati and Ida, women of three generations.

#### **Conclusion:-**

By analyzing the two novels and its female characters, it is clear that women would be led according to the will of man. They were surrounded by some traditional social norms. Still some other women would think to set up their identity breaking conventional rules and ideas, such as- Ammu and Virmati. Whereas the characters like Mammachi and Kasturi dreams nipped in the bud, but the characters like Ammu and Virmati tried to make their dreams bloomed. They have paved a way for the next generation women to fight against the social restrictions to establish their own identity. The female characters of these two novels have struggled against all biases and tried to establish feminism.

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