
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES: DISCRIMINATION, INEQUALITY, AND VIOLATIONS OF CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS

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Abstract :

The God of Small Things, Arundhati Roy's debut novel, became a huge success. Roy protested against beliefs and opinions that were out of date, irrelevant, and superfluous for the modern social order by raising her voice in opposition to the current societal taboos. This book is a serious and realistic evaluation of how society treats various people differently depending on their power and social status. The objective of the article looks at the relationship between human rights and dignity and how one might affect the other by being violated. It examines the social, economic, and political effects of violations of human rights on individuals as well as society. Regardless of a person's ethnicity, gender, age, or any other trait, they all have inherent worth, known as human dignity. It is the acknowledgement that each and every individual has an inherent right to equal treatment, justice, and liberty from racism and that they need always to be treated with respect and consideration. In the novel, the hierarchy of castes in India, a system of government politics, and the effects of forbidden love are explored. The paper also highlights the significance of cultural and societal norms on the lives of young children, women and Dalit's.

Keywords: Human Rights, dignity, discrimination, civil rights, political rights, untouchability,

Introduction :

The 1997 Booker Prize winner "The God of Small Things" was warmly received both critically and commercially. It also sparked debate because of how it handled delicate subjects like child sexual assault and India's caste system. The frail universe of marginal people set against the oppressive burden of tradition in Ayemenem society serves as the novel's central topic. "The God of Small Things" illustrates how several marginality discourses, including feminism, caste segregation, and untouchability, connect. The battle between the powerful and the powerless, as well as Roy's intellectual stance on the societal and religious structures dictating gender and caste, are all topics covered in this book.

Understanding the function of Kerala's communism and the Syrian Christian Society is necessary to have a full comprehension of "The God of small things." Understanding the structure of castes in South India is also necessary. The entire focus of the book is on crimes against untouchables, women, children, young people, and older people.



Human Rights :

Human rights are fundamental rights and freedoms that are inherent to every individual, regardless of nationality, race, gender, religion, or any other status. These rights are recognized and protected by national and international laws and standards, and they are considered to be essential for people to live with dignity, equality, and freedom.

Human rights can be broadly categorized into civil and political rights, such as freedom of expression, assembly, and religion, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights, such as the right to education, healthcare, adequate housing and work. Other human rights include the right to a fair trial, freedom from torture and slavery, and the right to participate in cultural and political life.

Research Methodology :

The research question used in this study is: How does Roy depict elements of human rights issues such as discrimination, inequality, and violations of civil and political rights in the novel, *The God of Small Things*? The novel *The God of Small Things* is the primary source of study. A close reading of the book was done in order to identify the violation of human rights in the text. The secondary sources are research articles on *The God of Small Things*. Once the novel's text related to the elements of human rights was identified, it was presented and analyzed.

The God of Small Things :

Indian author Arundhati Roy's book "The God of Small Things" was released in 1997. Estha and Rahel, two fraternal twins, and their family members are the main characters of the novel, which is situated in the Indian state of Kerala. The work touches on issues including politics, the caste system, treachery, and love.

The work also depicts India's complicated social and political landscape. It draws attention to the obvious distinctions between society's rich and underprivileged groups as well as the effects of social, political, and other developments on certain people.

Gender Discrimination and inequality :

There are multiple reasons for gender discrimination and prejudices in India. There are several causes of gender disparity, including illiteracy, patriarchal structures, social practices, beliefs, and conventions, as well as women's misunderstanding of their rights. Despite the constitution's promise of equal privileges for men and women, gender inequality persists in India. Gender discrimination refers to the unpleasant and undesirable treatment of a person based on their gender. Typically, women are the ones who experience this form of prejudice based on gender.

In the novel, *The God of Small Things*, Ammu is the daughter and Chacko is the son of Pappachi and Mammachi. They are Syrian Christians living at Ayemenem, in Kerala.



Ammu, the female protagonist is denied freedom of expression. Even in matters of education, she is neglected. She is confined only to school education, Ammu is denied college education by her father, but Chacko is sent to the United Kingdom to take higher education at Oxford. Ammu is not allowed to study further as she is a woman and so has no right to go to college. It is assumed that college studies corrupt a woman. Ammu once spends a summer with a distant aunt in Calcutta to stay away from her parents. There she marries a Bengali man who works in a tea estate. Ammu gave birth to Estha and Rahel. But unfortunately, she returned back to her parent's home because her husband is a heavy alcoholic, and he physically abuses her. He even went to the extent of asking her to satisfy the lust of his boss to save his job. But at the Ayemenem house, Ammu is not welcomed as she has married an inter-caste and divorced. Her children are considered doomed, they were half-Hindu, Hybrids whom no self-respecting Syrian Christian would ever marry.

On the other hand, while her brother was a student at Oxford, Chacko, fell in love and wed Margaret Kochamma, an Englishwoman. Sophie Mol is the child she gave birth to. Margaret had dumped Chacko for his lazy, ineffective methods soon after Sophie Mol was born, and she had also been having an affair with another guy, Joe. As a result, Chacko goes back to India. He was hired to teach at Madras Christian College. Chacko returned to Ayemenem after Pappachi's passing and takes up his mother's company, Paradise Pickles & Preserves. This incident suggests that a lady loses her husband's protection when she becomes a widow. It's as if a widower lady couldn't operate a business on her own. Mammachi supports her son while tolerating Chacko's 'libertine relationships' with the stunning women working in the plant. Mammachi, however, ignores Ammu's requirements and the comforts of her kids as they grow. Arundhati Roy shows in the book how parents treat their son and daughter differently. Societal norms are different for a female and a male child. Because women are viewed as being dependent on their male counterparts, Chacko inherits his mother's company, Paradise Pickles and Preserves, after Pappachi's passing.

In practically every way, Chacko fails, including his marriage to Margaret, an English woman who left him. Everything that is yours is mine, while what is mine is likewise mine, he coldly reminds his sister Ammu. A daughter who is separated from her husband is subjected to torture and oppressed in her parents' home, which is a great irony. On the other side, a divorced son named Chacko is not only warmly welcomed but also continues to be the legal heir to the family's money and wealth. However, Ammu's actions are deemed to be illegal, wicked, and unconventional. She is confined to a room and beaten till she is bloody. Thus, the author of the novel criticizes society's hypocritical moral code for treating men and women so differently. Though it is only a fleeting phase, a woman's love for a man is at the core of who she is.

Amma is a Malayali woman, according to Felix Nayak's assertion in the article "Feminine Sensibility in God of Small Things," and Malayalis are the only group in India where matriarchy is the norm. However, even the women in these communities have separate expectations for men and women, giving the former priority. Smt. C. Neelima asserts that women's status in a patriarchal culture is never the same as men's. Women suffer throughout their lives, beginning with their families. Prasad (2006) asserts that Roy outlines the steps



Indian women should take to fight against both local and global injustices.

Caste and Religious Discrimination :

India is an immensely challenging society with many different cultural and religious customs and beliefs. Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, and Hindus all coexist in the same area. In addition to the rigid caste system, class consciousness also divides society. Kerala, where the novel is set, has an intricate social system with distinct lifestyles and traditions practiced by Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. Choudhry (2013) holds the opinion that although if the colonial era is now ended, it has had an impact on India, where the caste and creed systems are still prevalent. The Barhamans, Khashtri, Vaishyas, and Sudra castes are still present here. He contends that the class and creed systems were developed by the Aryans, whose arrival is when this class structure and its portrayal can be traced. They fostered a sense of being superior or inferior among the general populace of the day and provided a concept of touchable and untouchables, which is shown in Roy's work.

Pappachi's sister, Baby Kochamma, adored Father Mulligan. A young Irish priest, he is. Due to her love for a man who did not practice their religion, she was sent to America to pursue her education. Due to social pressure, Baby Kochamma decided to live a single life. Mammachi treats Ammu, Chacko, and their children differently. Chacko and Sophie Mol, the daughter of Chacko's ex-wife, receive preferential care from Ammu. The only reason Ammu and her twins are hated by Mammachi is because Ammu wedded a Bengali Hindu and her offspring are not Syrian Christians but rather half Hindu, Hybrid, and half. Despite the fact that they have a large family, Ammu, Rahel, and Estha live in isolation. Following the passing of his daughter Sophie Mol, Chacko forces Ammu and her twins out of the house. Estha is sent to live with Ammu's father, and Ammu is never seen again. At the age of 31, Ammu passes away alone. She cannot be buried by the church. Ammu is thus denied the dignity of a burial. As Chacko was wrapping her in a filthy bed sheet to conclude her funeral, Rahel joined them. Ammu was placed on a stretcher and burnt in the same electric crematorium as beggars, abandoned people, and prisoners of the police.

In the novel, the untouchables' plight and situation in India are also discussed. Dalit by ethnicity, Velutha is an expert mechanic and carpenter. Velutha has a charming demeanour. He engages in political activities and has grown to appreciate himself. He is really helpful to Mammachi and Chacko. Due to his untouchability, Mammachi underpays Velutha compared to other touchable workers in the workplace. Velutha is accused by Baby Kochamma of killing Sophie in an investigating station. She further alleges that Velutha threatened the family, attempted to rape Ammu, and took the kids. In order to get revenge on Velutha over his affair with Ammu, Baby Kochamma made up the untrue story.

Father of Velutha, Vellya Paapen, harbors an inferiority feeling and is extremely appreciative of the touchable class. He supports them and is prepared to execute his son for violating a crucial prohibition against interclass sexual connections. Velutha is a prime example of the terrible predicament of the lower class. The wealthy oppress and take advantage of the



lower class. Arundhati Roy presents the social class difficulties that exist in Indian society especially in Kerala.

Violation of Civil and Political rights:

The article 'Intermingling of History and Politics in The God of Small Things' by Sarker and Rahman claims that the novel addresses the social and political issues in Kerala. Additionally, it emphasizes the history of that societal framework and political upheavals in that region. It is important to notice that the narrative does not sequentially depict the political upheavals; rather, it highlights those historical and political events that are closely related to the characters' difficulties and daily lives.

Velutha is a symbol of extreme social injustice, destitution, and humiliation. The previously mentioned unlawful relationship has angered the police as well. In order to destroy Velutha, the forces of history, politics, and the state work together.

The twins see Velutha being brutally beaten by a bunch of police officers for violating caste lines. Velutha was ignored by the political party he associated with as well as the police. At the police station, Ammu told the officers about their relationship while Velutha was in detention and that he was innocent. However, Thomas Mathew, a police inspector, threatens to get her to leave the situation alone. The police chief is shocked when the twins tell him the truth about Sophie's death. He is concerned that Velutha's unlawful detention and beating may result in his demise because he is aware that Velutha is a Communist. Baby Kochamma manipulated the twins into making a false accusation regarding Velutha. Velutha eventually succumbs to his wounds.

The novel also hurls a highly scathing satire against the police department. According to Roy, the word police stands for kindness, intellect, obedience, loyalty, and politeness. However, Thomas Mathew, the police inspector, is devoid of all virtues. When around Ammu, he acts badly. He is a police officer who is influenced by politics and societal bigwigs.

Satire about politics is another important element in this book. Through the opportunistic Comrade Pillai, who does not assist Velutha in the custody of the police, the book satirizes Marxism and the current politics in Kerala. Being a member of the untouchable class, Velutha experiences humiliation at every turn. Nearly everyone turns against Ammu and Velutha, including the police and politicians, and makes their lives unpleasant.

Conclusion :

The caste system and the communist struggle are just two examples of how the novel depicts India's diverse social and political landscape. It draws attention to the obvious distinctions between society's rich and underprivileged groups as well as the effects of societal and political developments on certain people. The purpose of this research is to highlight several concerns, including discrimination, human exploitation, and the ongoing fight for gender equality, voices of the oppressed, and patriarchal machinery. Arundhati Roy weaves together all of these issues throughout the book and crafts a beautifully written literary story



that depicts society as it really is. The focus of the study is on those members of society who suffer from prejudice, inequality, atrocity, and injustice.

Arundhati Roy has thus given all of these voiceless people a voice in *The God of Small Things* in order to rebuild their social and cultural position. Women are not treated equally in the patriarchal society to men. In *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy's the main theme is the double standard that society has towards the weaker segment. Arundhati Roy is worried about the discrimination, inequality, widespread sexual and mental exploitation of children as well as the oppression and exploitation of untouchables and women. Overall, "The God of Small Things" is an engrossing and provocative book that examines difficult subjects via a poignant and exquisitely written tale.

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