
DEPICTION OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION IN “THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS” AND “THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS”

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Abstract :

Gender equality is a critical aspect of human rights because gender inequality often leads to discrimination and oppression. When women are not given the same opportunities as men in education or employment, it can limit their ability to reach their full potential and contribute to society. Achieving gender equity requires a collective effort to eliminate gender-based discrimination, promote equal opportunities, and address systemic inequalities. It involves changing societal attitudes and structures that perpetuate gender-based discrimination and creating policies that promote gender equality.

Key Words : Gender, Discrimination, Violation, Human, Equality, Inequality

Gender equality and human rights are closely related concepts that address the issue of ensuring equal treatment and opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their gender. Human rights refer to the basic rights and freedoms that every individual is entitled to, regardless of their race, gender, religion, or any other characteristic.

Gender equality, on the other hand, refers to the fair treatment and equal opportunities for individuals of all genders. It is about creating a level playing field where men, women, and people of all genders can participate fully in all aspects of life, including education, employment, politics, and society at large.

Gender equality is a critical aspect of human rights because gender inequality often leads to discrimination and oppression. For example, when women are not given the same opportunities as men in education or employment, it can limit their ability to reach their full potential and contribute to society. Gender-based violence is also a significant human rights issue that disproportionately affects women and girls. Achieving gender equity requires a collective effort to eliminate gender-based discrimination, promote equal opportunities, and address systemic inequalities. It involves changing societal attitudes and structures that perpetuate gender-based discrimination and creating policies that promote gender equality. Therefore, gender equality is not just a matter of human rights, but is also essential for the social and economic development of nations.

Gender equality and human rights are closely intertwined issues that are crucial for promoting equality and fairness for all individuals regardless of gender. Gender equity refers



to the concept of creating an equal and fair society where individuals of all genders have access to the same opportunities and resources. It involves recognizing and addressing the historical systemic disadvantages that some genders have faced, such as women, non-binary individuals, and transgender individuals. Gender equity requires not only eliminating discrimination and bias but also promoting proactive measures to ensure equal representation and participation of all genders in various aspects of society.

Human rights, on the other hand, are fundamental rights that every human being is entitled to, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or any other characteristic. These rights include but are not limited to the right to life, liberty, and security of person; the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; the right to education; the right to work and to a fair wage; and the right to access literature.

Promoting gender equity is a crucial component of protecting and promoting human rights because gender inequality can result in the violation of basic human rights, particularly for women and other marginalized genders. By working towards gender equity and advocating human rights, we can create a more just and equitable society where all individuals have the opportunity to thrive and achieve their full potential. Gender equity and human rights are closely linked concepts. Human rights are the fundamental rights and freedoms that every person is entitled to, not considering their gender, race, nationality, religion, or any other characteristic. Gender equity refers to the fair treatment and equal opportunities for people of different genders.

There are numerous examples in Indian English literature highlighting this issue. Arundhati Roy's novel "The God of Small Things" depicts the experiences of women who face discrimination and violence based on their gender. The novel highlights the importance of human dignity and the need to respect the rights and freedoms of all individuals, regardless of their caste, gender, or other social identities.

Anita Desai's novel "Clear Light of Day" explores the experiences of women in a patriarchal society. The novel depicts the lives of four siblings, including two sisters who struggle to find their place in a society that limits their opportunities and agency.

Kiran Desai's novel "The Inheritance of Loss" examines the intersection of gender and class in Indian society. The novel depicts the experiences of women who face discrimination based on their class and social status.

Shashi Deshpande's novel "That Long Silence" explores the experiences of women who face societal expectations and limitations based on their gender. The novel depicts the struggles of a woman who tries to balance her responsibilities as a wife and mother with her own desires and ambitions.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novel "Sister of My Heart" depicts the experiences of two women who navigate their lives in a patriarchal society. The novel explores the themes of



female empowerment and sisterhood. These are just a few examples of Indian English writers who have explored themes of gender equality in their works. There are many others who have contributed to this important conversation through their writing.

"The God of Small Things" by Arundhati Roy is a novel that explores various themes, including gender equality. The novel is set in Kerala, India, and follows the lives of a family, including the twin siblings Estha and Rahel. The novel depicts a patriarchal society in which women are expected to conform to traditional gender roles. The character of Ammu, Estha and Rahel's mother, faces discrimination and mistreatment due to her gender and her exercising choice in marrying a man not acceptable to her community. The novel challenges traditional attitudes towards women's sexuality. The character of Ammu has relationships with several men, including a lower-caste man and a man who is already married. These relationships are not looked at kindly by society, but they are portrayed as natural and valid expressions of Ammu's desires.

The novel depicts instances of gender-based violence, including the rape of Ammu by her father-in-law and the physical abuse of Baby Kochamma by her lover. These instances of violence highlight the helplessness of women in patriarchal societies. The novel also explores the potential for women's empowerment. The character of Velutha, a carpenter, who belongs to the so called lower-caste, is respected by Ammu and the twins, despite societal prejudices against him. Ammu also encourages her children to think for themselves and take decisions, and question authority. "The God of Small Things" provides a nuanced exploration of gender equality and the challenges faced by women in patriarchal societies. It challenges traditional gender roles and offers a vision of women's empowerment and liberation.

Human dignity is a complex and multifaceted concept that is explored in various ways in "The God of Small Things" by Arundhati Roy. The novel portrays the lower castes, especially the Paravans, as oppressed and marginalized. They are treated with contempt and are not allowed to interact with the higher castes on equal terms. However, Velutha, a Paravan carpenter, is depicted as dignified and self-respecting, even in the face of discrimination and abuse. The novel depicts the experiences of the lower-caste characters, such as Velutha and his family, who face discrimination and exclusion based on their caste. Their dignity is undermined by the societal prejudices that view them as "untouchable" based on their caste. Their dignity is undermined by the societal prejudices that view them as "untouchable" and inferior. The novel portrays how these prejudices lead to a system of oppression that denies them their basic human rights and dignity. The twin protagonists, Estha and Rahel, are depicted as intelligent and sensitive children who are capable of making their own decisions and asserting their own identities, despite societal pressures to conform.

The novel also explores the experiences of women who face discrimination and violence based on their gender. Ammu, is punished by society for defying gender norms and engaging in relationships with men outside her community. Gender inequality can undermine human dignity by limiting individuals' opportunities and subjecting them to discrimination, violence, and exploitation. When women and girls are denied access to education, healthcare,



and other resources, they are not able to achieve their full potential, and feel stifled, and their dignity is diminished.

Kiran Desai's "The Inheritance of Loss" explores the theme of gender equality in various ways. Here are a few examples: Intersectionality of gender and class: The novel depicts how gender and class intersect to create a system of oppression that limits the opportunities and agency of women. For example, Sai, the protagonist, faces discrimination from both men and women in her community because she is a woman and from a lower social class. She is denied education and opportunities that are available to men from higher social classes.

Gender-based violence: The novel highlights the issue of gender-based violence. For example, Lola, the cook's daughter, is raped by a group of men, which is a common occurrence in the community. Additionally, Gyan, who is in love with Sai, becomes abusive towards her when he feels threatened by her increasing education and independence.

The impact of societal norms and expectations: The novel explores how societal norms and expectations limit the agency of women. For example, Sai is expected to conform to traditional gender roles and marry a man chosen by her grandfather. She struggles to balance her desire for independence with her obligation to her family and community.

The importance of education for women's empowerment: The novel emphasizes the importance of education for women's empowerment. Sai's education is a source of empowerment for her, and it allows her to challenge traditional gender roles and expectations. Additionally, Lola's education is a means of escaping the cycle of poverty and abuse that she has experienced.

One can therefore say that "The Inheritance of Loss" sheds light on the various challenges that women face in patriarchal societies. The novel emphasizes the importance of education and the need to challenge societal norms and expectations that limit women's opportunities and agency.

Kiran Desai's "The Inheritance of Loss" explores the theme of human dignity in various ways. Here are a few examples:

Impact of colonialism: The novel depicts how colonialism has eroded the human dignity of the characters in the novel. The characters are forced to conform to the norms and expectations of their colonial rulers, which leads to a loss of their cultural identity and human dignity.

The impact of social hierarchies: The novel highlights how social hierarchies can be used to undermine human dignity. The characters in the novel are divided along lines of caste, class, and race, which creates a system of oppression that limits the opportunities and agency of certain individuals.

Struggle for dignity: The novel depicts how the characters struggle to maintain their human



dignity in the face of oppression and discrimination. For example, Biju, the cook's son, is forced to work in a restaurant in the United States where he is exploited and mistreated. However, he refuses to give up his dignity and continues to fight for a better life.

The importance of relationships: The novel emphasizes the importance of relationships in maintaining human dignity. For example, Sai's relationship with Gyan and Lola helps her to maintain her sense of self-worth and agency. Similarly, the relationships between the characters in the novel help them to overcome the challenges that they face and maintain their human dignity.

Overall, "The Inheritance of Loss" explores the complexities of human dignity in the face of oppression and discrimination. The novel emphasizes the importance of relationships and the need to resist systems of oppression that undermine the human dignity of individuals.

Both Arundhati Roy's "The God of Small Things" and Kiran Desai's "The Inheritance of Loss" address the theme of gender equality in their own ways. Here are a few similarities and differences:

Similarities:

Intersectionality of gender and class: Both novels explore how gender and class intersect to create a system of oppression that limits the opportunities and agency of women.

Gender-based violence: Both novels highlight the issue of gender-based violence and how it is perpetuated by patriarchal structures.

The impact of societal norms and expectations: Both novels explore how societal norms and expectations limit the agency of women and how they struggle to balance their desire for independence with their obligation to their family and community.

Differences:

Setting: "The God of Small Things" is set in India, while "The Inheritance of Loss" is set in India and the United States. The cultural and societal contexts are different, which affects the portrayal of gender roles and expectations.

Treatment of Female characters: In "The God of Small Things," female characters such as Ammu and Baby Kochamma are portrayed as strong and independent, but their agency is ultimately limited by societal expectations. In contrast, in "The Inheritance of Loss," female characters such as Sai and Lola are portrayed as struggling to find agency and independence.

Education as an Empowerment Tool: "The Inheritance of Loss" emphasizes the importance of education for women's empowerment, while "The God of Small Things" does not directly address this theme.



Overall, both "The God of Small Things" and "The Inheritance of Loss" shed light on the challenges that women face in patriarchal societies. They highlight the need to challenge societal norms and expectations that limit women's opportunities and agency, and emphasize the importance of education and female empowerment.

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