

Chapter One

A Short Glimpse on Roy's *The God of Small Things*

1.1 *The God of Small Things*

The God of Small Things is Roy's first debut novel which rapidly became a world-renowned literary sensation after it was published in New Delhi in 1997. Immediately it was recognised as a great work of social depiction due to the clear representation of all attributes of social reality such as untouchability, gender discrimination, molestation, emotional insecurity, pride and death within one family (mainly in the Southern Indian State of Kerala), social hegemony, problems and clashes of cultures, corrupt police administration, patriarchal domination and so on. It was a lushly descriptive work. It won Britain's Prestigious Booker Prize in 1997 and launched its author to international fame. The book is semi-autobiographical and the major part captures her childhood experiences in Aymanam.

The God of Small Things is an ambitious work that addresses universal themes ranging from religion to biology. Roy stresses throughout the novel that great and small things are interconnected, and that historical events and seemingly unrelated details have far-reaching consequences throughout the community and the country. The novel is therefore able to comment simultaneously on universal abstract themes and a wide variety of ideas relating to the personal and family history of the members of the Kochamma family as well as the wider concerns of the Kerala region of India. Some of the novel's most thoroughly developed concerns are forbidden love, Indian History and Politics. It is in love and politics that Roy's carefully constructed, multifaceted narrative tends to dwell, and it is when love, politics and history combine that Roy is able to communicate her most profound authorial insights.

Set in 1960, *The God of Small Things* vividly portrays the shocking consequences of pivotal events in the life of two twins: Estha and Rahel. It also depicts the vivid pictures of life in a town, the thoughts and feelings of two small children and the complexity and hybridity of the adults in their world. It is also a poignant lesson in the destructive power of caste and gender system and moral and political bigotry in general. The novel tells us how life depends on small happenings in life. Pointing the small things in life, Jason Cowley in *India Today* writes: "It is considerable never to forget about the small things in life. The insects and flowers, wind and water, the outcast and the despised" (28). Even though the small things are considered less valuable they have a significant role in our life.

The plot of the novel revolves around Estha and Rahel, fraternal boy and girl twins living with their divorced mother, Ammu and her family. The central events of the novel involve the fateful visit of their half-English cousin, Sophie Mol, and her mother Margret Kochamma. In the beginning of the novel Sophie Mol drowns in the river by the family's house. The rest of the novel pieces together the events that led up to her death and the aftermath that ensued, moving back and forth between Estha and Rahel's childhood and adulthood in the process.

While telling the story of Sophie Mol's death, the novel resonates with larger political and social issues. The society that the characters inhabit is still largely shaped by the caste system, which defines social classes in India and dictates the status each person holds. The Indian constitution of 1949 outlawed the caste system and discrimination based on social status, but it is pretty clear throughout the novel that there are certain social rules that persist and that still have to be obeyed particularly in terms of who is allowed to interact with whom. The novel pays particular attention to what the narrator calls the "Love Laws," which interpret the caste to explore who is

allowed to love whom, how and how much. The violation of these social rules is central to the unravelling of the seemingly nice, simple life that Estha and Rahel experience as children and has a key role in forming the circumstances that lead up to Sophie Mol's death.

Ammu with her two dizygotic children has come to live in her parental home in Ayemenem, now part of Kottayam in Kerala state of India to get rid of her alcoholic husband after the divorce. She had got excessive malice treatment from him who treated her in a beastly manner, and even asked her to satisfy the carnal pleasure of his English boss, so that he could keep his job secure. Mammachi is the family matriarch and mother of Ammu, and Chacko is the brother of Ammu. He runs a pickle farm "Paradise Pickle and Preserve" which was founded by Mammachi. The story encircles round the visit of Sophie Mol, the cousin of Estha and Rahel, from England to India. Sophie Mol is the daughter of Chacko from his English wife Margret, with whom he is divorced.

Ammu's higher caste Syrian Christian parents were not happy with her. They hated her for her "Inter-community love marriage" (45). Her brother Chacko had also got an inter-community love marriage with an English woman. After having a daughter she left him. Chacko returned to his family home and he was wholeheartedly welcomed by parents. This reflects a mood of patriarchal society where women are extremely suppressed. It is clear that both marry out of their community. Ammu, the protagonist, marries a Hindu and Chacko, her brother, marries a British. After a while, their marriage ends in divorce but Ammu eternally pays heavy price whereas Chacko enjoys a lot of privileges since he is a man.

Velutha is a lower-caste young man. In the novel, he is presented as the male protagonist. He maintained an affair with the higher caste woman Ammu and had

attempted to transgress the prohibition of the caste system. This brought the wrath of Ammu's so-called higher caste family upon him. Christianity does not observe the caste system. However, Ammu's Syrian Christian parents paid their attention to it to a great extent. It is a sharp irony directed towards the hypocritical society of Kerala.

Baby Kochamma made a false charge against Velutha that he kidnapped and murdered the child. The police administration, mainly representing and emphasizing higher caste of Kerala, tortured him to death. The caste prejudice still ruled all the higher caste. The issue of love between Ammu and Velutha is overspread blaming and maltreating Ammu as a prostitute. The police inspector Thomas Mathew "tapped her breast with his baton" (8). Right behind him the board indicating politeness, obedience, loyalty, intelligence, courtesy and efficiency for POLICE was humiliating his behaviour and activity. The maltreatment meted out to Ammu from whole police administration was an epitome of excessive domination and prejudice in the name of caste and gender.

Ammu became a victim of male-dominated (patriarchal) society. She was not allowed to pursue her studies. The unjust treatment she underwent at her home and in her family and the society made her virtually 'untouchable'. The narrator of the novel says "Ammu, as a daughter, had no claim to the property" (57).

The God of Small Things was an unprecedented international success for the first time author, mainly for its strong and real depiction of the society as it is. The novel presents many elements of traditional society through its characters and incidents. Pappachhi and his thought, behaviour and treatment over Mammachhi and over all females, depicts the whole contemporary patriarchal society. He has shown the brutal and barbaric nature through his activity, such as beating with a brass vase, and insulting Mamachhi (his own wife) and Ammu (his own daughter). He

discourages the female ability disallowing Mammachi from playing violin even though she has exemplary skill of playing it and forbidding Ammu for getting education. Similarly, Inspector Mathew and his brutal, cynical and barbaric police administration victimizes innocent Ammu and Velutha. Likewise, Chacko and his treatment over lower caste factory workers; Mammachi and her conventional, exploitative and rigid view of the caste system; Comrade Pillai and his self-centred politics all incidents move around social problems. In this regard, the novelist Arundhati Roy has very powerfully presented the miseries, discriminations, exploitations, hurdles and constraints in the name of caste, gender, culture and social norms and values.

1.2 Review of Literature

Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* has been viewed either simply as a novel of subalternity focusing on the condition of female only or lower caste people or merely as a replica of the past colonial transgression and the hegemonic power structure of the colonial times by presenting the logic of British cultural attack and its effects over Indian culture but not as a work representing and including all social factors under the umbrella term of social realism which is an intrinsic vision and purpose of the writer behind the composition of this novel. The research limiting itself in a fragment as focusing on either only gender or caste or culture under the perspective of realism remains incomplete as the novel itself is composed with the whole influences of the broad term social realism with its all inevitable elements.

Roy apparently portrays the exploitations, dominations and prejudices in the name of caste, gender, social structure, culture, tradition as the form of hierarchy and hegemony over powerless, voiceless and marginalised groups. The novel also depicts the social injustice, economic hardships through unvarnished pictures of life's

struggle mainly in the south Indian state of Kerala. The novel mainly focuses on the plight of the untouchables like Velutha and the struggle of women like Ammu to challenge the traditional society which is under the strong grip of deep-rooted so-called higher caste and patriarchal norms and values.

Bimaljit Saint remarks, “in *The God of Small Things* Roy implicitly presses for greater social reform in the rigid positioning of women and the intolerable plight of the deprived class” (96). He is right to a great extent as Roy blames the existing society with its discriminatory mottoes for victimising the untouchables and the women. Ammu and Velutha, the major characters of the novel *The God of Small Things*, become stigma in the perspective of the family and even the whole society only by transgressing the established social norms of caste and gender. It is also proven from it when Ammu’s brother Chacko does the same thing he is easily forgiven levelling it simply as “a man’s need” (168) by Mammachi. Caste being a social construct remains as a permanent mark which makes Velutha despite “his ability to become an engineer” (Roy 75) a challenge to the conservatism. It is not Velutha’s fault of crossing the class but caste. So, caste becomes an element of social exclusion.

R.S. Sharma and Shashibala Talwar find the novel symbolic. They point out, “But if small things go, will large things be close behind?” (42). It adds the very fact and reality of the human world and human instinct stating whatever the things are and however small they are, they come with big problems in human affairs. The novel represents all these people who have been victimised by the forces of history. Paul Brain notes that “Roy critiques the communist about their sincerity and efficacy in her novel” (170). In fact, Roy is quite against the communists because just to remain in

power they join their necks with the local elites who force them to maintain the status quo rather than to raise the impartial voices regarding the real social issues.

Shakti Batra also views that *The God of Small Things* is merely a replica of agony, marginalisation and domination of the man made systems, mainly the colonial code of conduct. He asserts that the characters in the novel are too fragile to put an eternal stoppage on the hegemony of the social misfortune. Batra says:

The God of Small Things depicts the plight of men and women marginalised by society [...] they are hemmed in all around by oppressive and regressive institutions or beliefs and assumptions. The characters are mercilessly victimized by men and man-made systems, powerless to prevent their own downfall. (82)

In a patriarchal male-dominated society females are subalternized and marginalised. Likewise, the lower class people and the untouchables are marginalised in caste practices. The minority groups who are underprivileged are subaltern and marginalised in political systems and practices. In *The God of Small Things*, Ammu, the principal character, is doubly subalternized and marginalised. On the one hand due to her unsuccessful marriage, she is discriminated in male-dominated society, and on the other hand, she is socially segregated due to her relationship with untouchable family carpenter, Velutha . Despite his significant capacity of handling respected job, he is not respected and paid much due to his untouchable caste, Paravan. The narrator adds, “he is neglected; he is just a small thing for them. Mammachi paid Velutha less than she would a touchable carpenter but more than she would a paravan. Mammachi did not encourage him to enter the house”(77).

Roy has raised questions with regard to the caste discrimination in the Kerala society. Moreover, she has protested against the socio-political dominations and

violence against women and untouchables. Amar Nath Prasad, in this regard brings his comments:

In theme, the book *The God of Small Things* peeps into the life of Keralite society and their rites and customs, tradition and patriarchal domination; a caste ridden mentality of some certain sections of people; the fatal consequences arising out of divorce; the child psychology; the naked exposure of the malpractices of Marxism and police administration; the prosecution of the untouchable without any rhyme and reason [...]. (135)

In some sense, this novel has been an autobiographical one because it represents Arundhati's mother Mrs. Mary Roy's suffering in its character of Ammu. There was much trauma for mother Roy in the 60s as Kottayam did not accept her as she was a woman separated from her husband. The society strictly rejected her. Dodiya and Chakravarty put their views about Mrs. Roy further to reveal her daughter's realization of her sufferings: "It is only when I read her book that I realised that even at five she was conscious that we were unwelcome in the native home and that I expected her to be able to stand on her own feet, so that she would never be in such a weak position as I was." (5-6)

Ammu was not accepted by the people of Aymenem which clearly resembles the life of Roy's mother. She was not allowed to take part in public ceremony with others. Even in Sophie Mol's funeral ceremony, she was separated from her Syrian Christian community members. The narrator says, "Though Ammu, Estha and Rahel were allowed to attend the funeral, they were made to stand separately, not with the rest of the family. Nobody would look at them" (5).

The focus of this research will be on the aspects and facets of social realism such as, untouchability, gender discrimination, molestation, problems and clashes of culture, emotional insecurity, social exclusion, patriarchal hegemony and pride and death within one family mainly in the Southern Indian State Kerala. The first chapter highlights the novel and its author, Social Realism in Chapter Two, and evidences to prove the novel as the mirror of social realism in Chapter three and the detail of the sources of this research to bring it in complete and authentic one in the last. Besides, the emphasis of the writer, narrator on the history, politics, class relations, cultural tensions, forbidden love, social discrimination and betrayal of Indian society will also be the central concern of study for this research work.

CHAPTER TWO

Realistic Perspectives

An Outlook on Realism

Literature has thousands of threads which can weave a beautiful piece of art. Each thread has its own importance in the creative work. In the same way, there are different narrative techniques for the narration of literature. Among the narrative techniques, Realism, in literature, is an approach that attempts to describe life without idealization or romantic subjectivity. Although realism is not limited to any one century or group of writers, it is most often associated with the literary movement in 19th-century France, specifically with the French novelists Flaubert and Balzac. George Eliot introduced realism into England, and William Dean Howells introduced it into the United States. Realism has been chiefly concerned with the commonplaces of everyday life among the middle and lower classes, where character is a product of social factors and environment is the integral element in the dramatic complications in literature, an approach that proceeds from an analysis of reality in terms of natural forces.

Realism is a style of writing that gives the impression of recording or 'reflecting' faithfully an actual way of life. The term refers, sometimes confusingly, both to a literary method based on detailed accuracy of description and to a more general attitude that rejects idealization, escapism, and other extravagant qualities of romance in favour of recognizing soberly the actual problems of life. Modern criticism frequently insists that realism is not a direct or simple reproduction of reality (a 'slice of life') but a system of conventions producing a lifelike illusion of some 'real' world outside the text, by processes of selection, exclusion, description, and manners of addressing the reader. In its methods and attitudes, realism may be found

as an element in many kinds of writing prior to the century ago. It was also found in theatre. Realism established itself as an important tradition in the theatre in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in the work of Henrik Ibsen, Bernard Shaw, and others; and it remains a standard convention of film and television drama. In the drama, realism is most closely associated with Ibsen's social plays.

Later writers felt that realism laid too much emphasis on external reality. Many, notably Henry James, turned to a psychological realism that closely examined the complex workings of the mind. Despite the radical attempts of modernism to displace the realist emphasis on external reality, realism survived as a major current within 20th century fiction, sometimes under the label of neo realism. Realism in literature is the theory or practice of fidelity to nature or to real life and to accurate representation without idealization of everyday life.

The 18th-century works of Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, and Tobias Smollett are among the earliest examples of realism in English literature. It was consciously adopted as an aesthetic program in France in the mid-19th century, when interest arose in recording previously ignored aspects of contemporary life and society. The realist emphasis on detachment and objectivity, along with lucid but restrained social criticism, became integral to the novel in the late 19th century. The word has also been used critically to denote excessive minuteness of detail or preoccupation with trivial, sordid, or squalid subjects.

The twentieth century prevailing models of literary criticism drew a line between realist and anti-realist literature placing realist works on one side of the line and fantastic works on the opposite side. Despite this inherent questioning of the boundaries and construction of reality, the international literary scene has been largely uniform in its placement of magical realism in the anti-realist category, thereby

opposing it to realist fiction. Furthermore, the current critical climate furthers the division between realism and magical realism in the premium that it places on magical realism at the expense of the earlier social realist tradition, which is defamed for producing artistically stunted narratives without any enduring aesthetic value.

This hierarchical and oppositional division of social and magical realism into the categories of “real” and “anti-real” literature, respectively, is too simple and that this attitude of dismissal of social realist fiction must be understood within the context of the historical trends of literary criticism, as it goes hand-in-hand with the languishing of Marxist criticism. Social Realism developed as a reaction against idealism and the exaggerated ego encouraged by Romanticism. With a new sense of social consciousness, the social realists pledged to “fight the beautiful art,” any style which appealed to the eye or emotions. They focused on the ugly realities of the contemporary life and sympathized with working class people, particularly the poor. They recorded what they saw in a dispassionate manner. It is known as social realism. Social is a word that means living in company or convivial or pertaining to society. If we live in society we are called social. Realism means theory in regard to things in their true nature or freedom from prejudice.

Social Realism may be defined as reality of the society - its culture, its customs, contemporary values, all are included in social realism. It depicts the things in society such as microcosm that encompasses wife battling in fidelity, molestation, emotional insecurity, pride and death within one family or community, gender discrimination, untouchability (a great evil of society), corrupt police administration, problems and clashes of cultures, excessive hegemony over subaltern groups and so forth.

Social Realism is a term that derives from Russian inspired beliefs about the function of literature in a revolutionary socialist society. The international production of social realist fiction is characterized by a belief (now regarded as naïve) in the power of the word and in the writer's ability to portray in a satisfying documentary fashion the structure of social reality. Social realism is inspired in various ways by the Russian revolution, Soviet communism, international Marxism, and the need to respond critically and in a denunciatory fashion to the various mechanisms of repression and the frustration of personal and collective aspirations. According to the Dictionary of Literary terms by Coles;

Realism, in literature, is a manner and method of picturing life as it really is, untouched by idealism or romanticism. As a manner of writing, realism relies on the use of specific details to interpret life faithfully and objectively. In contrast to romance, this concerned with the bizarre and psychological in its approach to character, presenting the individual rather than the type. Often, fate plays a major role in the action. Realism became prominent in the English novel with such writers as Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, Laurence Sterne, Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, Anthony Trollope and William Makepeace Thackeray.

Realism in literature and the visual art is used to describe a variety of approach in which accurate depiction of reality is the aim. Each of these uses involves a contrast between human thought or imagination and an external reality independent of mind. The notion that reality has a cognitive or normative authority over the mind is also generally present.

Critics of the realistic approach to fiction claim that realism in its extreme form puts too much emphasis on external reality - and too little on the inner qualities of the characters. As Pizer writes:

The underlying beliefs of the first generation of critics of realism were firmly middle class. Literature had a job of work to do, to make us known to each other in our common political and social progress (and also, in Howells's later modification of his views our defects). It was to serve social ends as their ends were defined by the socially responsible. It is therefore no surprising to find a disparity between the radical implication of the realisms' ideal of change and the actual themes and forms of the realists' ideal of change and the actual theme and forms of the literature proposed as meeting this ideal. (7)

The above mentioned lines project that a good fiction should reveal both good and evil aspects of the society. It should equally let us know about the political upheavals or ups and downs of the contemporary society. As stated earlier, a work of art needs to reflect everyday life of the people. Pizer further puts his words:

Various threads of criticism - the celebratory democratic, the New Critical and the dynamic - are related in their common affirmative view of realism as a significant moment in [...] literary history. No longer was the movement marginalized, as had been true of much criticism of the previous generation, because of its gentility or imperceptions. Its importance, centrally, and worth had in minds of most scholars been firmly established. (11-12)

Pizer views about the importance of realism which is needed one way or the other, in various threads of criticism. Realism is nothing but an acute observation of

life as it is. It is a simple recording process from which any deviation is voluntary. Now we know that we literally create the world we see as necessarily dynamic and active. Reality is that which human beings make common by work or language. Thus, in the very acts of perception and communication, this practical interaction of what is personally seen, interpreted and organized and what can be socially recognized known and formed is richly and subtly manifested.

Chase argues that romance is the quintessential mode of fiction. Commenting on realism, Chase declares:

After all, realism, although it was there from the beginning, did 'rise', or at least became conscious of itself as a significant, liberalizing and forward looking literary program. Whole areas of the [...] novel, both classic and modern are closed to any reader. The great writers, classic or modern, did not devote themselves exclusively to translating everything into symbols, myths, and archetypes, thus removing literature from the hazards of experience and the vicissitudes of change. These writers function in the real world or tried to, they reported significant aspects of the real world in their fictions, and often they had, besides archetypes, ideas political, cultural, religious, and historical. (21)

Thus, the job of a fiction writer is not only to give pleasure of reading to the readers but also to report different aspects of the real world in his/ her fiction. Realism should contain all the ideas, political, cultural, religious, and historical and so forth.

After its beginning in France, realism has spread all over the world and it might mean differently in different places. So Levine writes:

Realism belongs to a much more affable and moderate tradition, focusing not on the dregs of society, not on the degradations and degeneration of humans in bondage to a social and cosmic determinism. It belongs almost provincially, to a middling' condition and defines itself against the excesses, both stylistic and narrative of various kinds of romantic, exotic, or sensational literature. (240)

In England, realism is defined broadly. It includes the various areas. It focuses on both the positive and negative aspects of the society. Levine further writes:

The programmatic realism of the late century, with its pseudoscientific connections, its experimental novels, its assumption that the norm of human experience is the experience, was part of a rebellions movement against the mid Victorian real and the art [...] whatever else it means, it always implies an attempt to use language to get beyond language, to discover some non verbal truth out there. The history of English realism obviously depended in large measure on changing notions of that are 'out there' of how best to represent it. (240)

When we define broadly as the faithful representation of reality, realism is a literary technique practiced by many schools of writing. Although strictly speaking realism is a technique, it also denotes a particular kind of subject matter, especially the representation of middle class life. A reaction against romanticism, an interest in scientific method, the systematizing of the study of documentary history, and the influence of rational philosophy all affected the rise of realism.

It is necessary that important elements are needed in any work of art to be a realistic literature. As a whole the work should deal with very common and everyday activities of the people, mostly middle-class.

Influence of Realism on Literature

Realism in English literature first became important in the 1700s with the work of Daniel Defoe. In the 1800s realism became much more important in the works of Jane Austen, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, George Moore, William Makepeace Thackeray, and Anthony Trollope. Honore de Balzac, Gustave Flaubert, and Stendhal of France, and Leo Tolstoy and Ivan Turgenev of Russia were other outstanding European realists of the 1800s.

When the Industrial Revolution took place at the end of the nineteenth century it changed the lifestyle of people in remarkable ways. People left rural homes for opportunities in cities. With the development of new machinery and equipment, the US economy became more focused on factory production. Americans did not have to rely chiefly on farming and agriculture to support their families. At the same time, immigrants from all over the world crowded into tenements to take advantages of new urban opportunities. In the end, the sweeping economic, social and political changes that took place in post - war life allowed American realism to prevail. The realism of the 1880s featured the works of Twain, Howells and James, among other writers. American realists concentrated their writings on selected groups or subjects; the group was mostly middle class and they wrote much about their life styles.

The writing during this period was also very regional. The Industrial Revolution called for standardization, mass production of goods and streamlined channels of distribution. America was leaping into a new modern age and people feared that local folkways and traditions would be soon forgotten. Responding to these sentiments, realistic writers set their stories in specific American regions, rushing to capture the 'local colour' before it was lost. They drew upon sometimes the

grim realities of everyday life, showing the breakdown of traditional values and the growing plight of the new urban poor.

American realists built their plots and characters around people's ordinary everyday lives. Besides, their works contained regional dialects and extensive dialogue which concerned much with the public. As a result, readers were attracted to the realists because they saw their own struggles in print. Conversely, the public had little patience for slow packed narratives, allegory and symbolism of the romantic writers. America was shifting into higher gear and readers wanted those writers who clearly communicated the complexities of their human experiences. At its basic level, realism was grounded in the faithful reporting of all facts of everyday American life. After all, realistic literature reflected more than mere external reality.

In art and literature, Realism attempts to describe human behaviour and surrounding or to represent figures and objects exactly as they act or appear in life. Attempts at realism have been made periodically through history in all arts. The term realism is however, generally restricted to a movement that began in all the mid 19th century in reaction to highly subjective approach of romanticism. The difference between realism and naturalism is hard to define, however, and the two terms are often used interchangeably. The diction lies in the fact that realism is concerned directly with what is absorbed by the senses. The realistic movements of the late nineteenth century saw authors accurately depict the life and its problems. Realism attempted to give a comprehensive picture of modern life (Eliot 502) by presenting the entire picture. They did not try to give only one view of life but instead attempted to show the different classes, manners, and stratification of life in America.

Realists created this picture of America by combining a wide variety of 'details derived from observation and documentation to 'approach the norm of

experience' ... (3). Along with this technique, realists compared the objective or absolute existence in America to that of the universal truths, or observed facts of life. In aspects it had in common with the general truths of existence. To clarify the influence of realism on literature Eliot says:

After World War I, American people and the authors among them were left disillusioned by the effects that war had on their society. America needed a literature that would explain what had happened and what was happening to their society. American writers turned to what is now known as modernism. The influence of nineteenth century realism and naturalism and their truthful representation of American life and people were evident in post World War I modernism. Realism Modernism not only depicted American society after World War I accurately and unabashedly, but also tried to find the solution brought upon by the suffering by the wars. (705)

This realistic movement evolved as a result of many characters and transitions in American culture. In the late 1800s, the United States was experiencing swift growth and change as a result of changing economy, society and culture because of an influx in the number of immigrants into America. Realists such as Henry James and William Dean Howells used typical realistic methods to create an accurate depiction of changing American life.

The growing popularity of realism has been more than simply a reaction against the pretty world of romantic fiction. More fundamentally, its popularity has been due to two factors. One is the development of modern science with its emphasis on detailed reporting. The other is an increasing desire of writers and readers for a

realistic understanding of social problems. About the influence of realism in modernism and science, Bradley says:

Authors after World War I created a new literature of enduring merit [...] that shattered conventional taboos in their expression of physical and psychological actuality. This war is the beginning of modernism. Modernism, although strongly influenced by realism and after referred to as and Grecian of non-realistic values, was the answer to Americans new found problems. Modernism promoted and combined the scientific aspects of naturalism along with a psychological lancination of the individual and the culture. By being so experimental and intense, modernism was able to Unite American after a period of crisis. Modernism centred on explorations into the spiritual nature of men and the value of his socially and institutions. (137)

Common realistic themes include the importance of subconscious, the role of racial minorities in society, and the search for values in a hostile world. In American literature, the term 'realism' encompasses the period of time from Civil War to the turn of the century. During this period, writers such as William Dean Howells, Rebacca Harding Davis, Henry James, Mark Twain, and others wrote fiction. It had accurate representation and an exploration of American written fiction and their lives in various contexts. As the United States grew rapidly after the Civil War, the increasing rates of democracy and literacy, the rapid growth in industrialization and urbanization, an expanding population base due to immigration, and a relative rise in middle- class affluence provided a fertile literary environment. The readers were interested in understanding these rapid shifts in culture. Realism's influence in

literature can be defined as a strategy for imagining and managing the threats of social change. Hazell clarifies:

I am far from intending by this to minimize the importance of exactness of truth of detail. One can speak best from one's own taste, and I may therefore venture to say that the air of reality (solidity of specification) seems to me to be the supreme virtue of a novel the merit on which all its other merits helplessly and submissively depend. If it be not there they are all as nothing, and if these be there, they own their effect to the success with which the author has produced the illusion of life. (43)

This lets us know how careful one fiction writer is, while producing any work of art. The air of reality has always been in the centre to expose all the merits of the work. E. M. Forster, in his book *Aspects of the Novel* opines:

Daily life is also full of time sense. We think one event occurs after or before another, the thought is often in our minds, and much of our talk and action proceeds on the assumption. Much of our talk and action, but not all, there seems something else in life besides time; something which may conveniently be called 'value'... daily life, whatever it may be really is practically composed of two lives – the life in time and his life of values. (30-31)

Forster finds that realism in literature reflects the daily life of the people by exposing life in time and life of values. The life time is more valuable for the realistic writers. There are so many events that represent the real image of life and they are connected with each other. Realism later is highly influenced in the eastern literary creations. Mainly, the Indian writers expanded and explored realism through their

writings. The notable writers as Muluk Raj Anand, Arundhati Roy, Amar Nath Prasad projected the contemporary society and its real picture through realism.

Features of Realism

It is not easy to say at once whether any work of art is realistic or not. Different people have different views regarding the realistic literature. Though the opinions of the people vary from one to another, there are some salient points that a realistic literature should contain.

Character is more important than action or plot; complex ethical choices are often the subject. Characters appear in the real complexity of temperament and motive. They have inexplicable relation to nature, to each other, to their social class, to their own past. Humans control their destinies; characters act on their environment rather than simply reacting to it. Realism renders reality closely and in comprehensive detail. There should be selective presentation of reality with an emphasis on verisimilitude, even at the expense of a well- made plot. Events will usually be plausible. Realistic novels avoid the sensational, dramatic elements of naturalistic novels and romances. Class is important in realism; the novel traditionally serves the interests and aspirations of an insurgent middle class.

From Marx and Engels onwards, realism held a privileged position within Marxist literary criticism. This critical tradition was most fully developed by George Lukacs's in his two books, *The Historical Novel (1937)* and *Studies In European Realism (1950)*. Lukacs claimed Balzac's fiction as the culminating point of realist achievement in France, emphasizing two central qualities that defined this triumph of from: Balzai's ability to convey the force of history underlying the social details of milieu and his representation of character as types rather than as averages. To quote Lukacs:

The central category and criteria of realist literature is the type, a peculiar synthesis which organically binds together the general and the particular both in characters and in situations. What makes a type is not its average quality... what makes it a type is that in it all the humanly and socially essential determinants, in extreme presentation of their extreme, reordering concrete peaks and limits of men and epochs. (6)

Realism is viewed as a realization of democracy. The morality of Realism is intrinsic, integral and relativistic - relations between people and society are explored. Realists are pragmatic, relativistic, democratic and experimental. The purpose of writing is to instruct and to entertain. Diction is the natural vernacular, not heightened or poetic; tone may be comic, satiric or matter of fact. The use of symbolism is controlled and limited, the realists depend more on the use of image. Objectivity in presentation becomes increasingly important and evident authorial comments or intrusions diminish as the century progresses.

Interior or psychological realism is a variant form. Realism of James and Twain is critically acclaimed in the twentieth century; Howellsian realism fell into disfavor as part of an early twentieth century rebellion against the refined tradition.

Realism is the truthful treatment of material. It is believed that a realist writer should have belief in democracy and he/she should be able to describe the common and everyday activities of the people. Much emphasis is given on the middle class, its life style and its manners. The writers always center their attention on here and now. They present the specific action and its verifiable consequences. Such writers intend to be very moralistic; they want to have a moral effect on the reader. About the character and events, Lathrop comments:

Realism sets itself at work to consider characters and events which are apparently the most ordinary and as intrusting, in order to extract from these their full value and true meaning. It would apprehend in all particulars the connection between the familiar and the extraordinary, and the seen and the unseen human nature. Beneath the deceptive cloak of outwardly uneventful days, it detects and endeavors to trace the outlines of the spirits that are hidden there; to measure the changes in their growth to watch the symptom of moral decay of regeneration. In short realism reveals where we thought nothing worth of notice it shows everything to be right with significance. (24)

The authors in realism highly value the individual. They try to explore the ethical values and issues of conduct. They usually see an optimistic attitude. They show the central life of ethical and moral issues accurately as they affect the characters in actual situations.

Great deal of description is required in a realist literature. Plots are very credible and designed to both flatter the reader and convince him of the fictional truth of the story. Use of simple, clear and direct prose is a part of realism. Plots are secondary to characterization because the realists feel that life lacks symmetry and a realist story does not emphasize on symmetry and plot.

All realistic fiction is still the author's perception of what is real no matter how objective he tries to be. The main thing is that the authors always portray the social reality. They deal with common characters and give details of the everyday activities. So novels and short stories are the important ways to explore all the features of realism.

Chapter Three

Depiction of Social Realism in Roy's *The God of Small Things*

The God of Small Things is a literary mirror in which Arundhati Roy has depicted the bitter reality of the society in a profound manner. In many incidents and situations, we feel that such things are just happening before us. The novel has it all: the echoes, calls and the cries of the Earth. But, more importantly, an intellectual daring. It presents the glimpse of social realism, its true pictures through many incidents described in it.

In the novel *The God of small Things*, the laws of India's caste system are broken by the characters Ammu, the female protagonist and Velutha, an Untouchable or Paravan, the male protagonist. Velutha works at the Paradise Pickles and Preserves Factory owned by Ammu's family. Yet, because he is an untouchable, the other workers resent him and he is paid less money for his work. Velutha's presence is unsettling to many who believe he acts above his station. His own father notes this problem: "Perhaps it was just a lack of hesitation. An unwarranted assurance. In the way he walked. The way he held his head. The quiet way he offered suggestions without being asked. Or the quiet way in which he disregarded suggestions without appearing to rebel" (73).

When Velutha has an affair with Ammu, he breaks an ancient taboo and incurs the wrath of Ammu's family and the Kerala police. He breaks the rigid social rules of the caste system and therefore, the authorities must punish him. Roy describes the policemen's violent actions as being done out of fear, "...civilization's fear of nature, men's fear of women, power's fear of powerlessness"(292). The division between the touchable and the untouchable is so ingrained in Kerala society that Velutha is seen as a nonhuman. If they hurt Velutha more than they intended to, it was only because any

kinship, and connection between themselves and him, any implication that if nothing else, at least biologically he was a fellow creature who had been severed long ago. Traditionally, a woman who has had sex with a man from a lower caste would be expelled from her caste.

The God of Small Things, is the story of seven-year-old 'two-egg twins' Rahel and Estha, their Syrian Christian mother Ammu, who is divorced from her husband, and her landowning family who live in their ancestral home near the banks of the Meenachai river. As Arundhati Roy writes, "things can change in a day" (32). This suggests, it is the dynamics of a family, and specifically a declining upper class, upper caste, essentially feudal family in a society undergoing rapid changes, which are at the heart of this acutely sensitive, accurate, witty and extremely powerful novel.

There are some meritorious factors which make *The God of Small Things* unique in the context of the canon of 'Indian writers in English' in which Roy is being categorised. Firstly, in contrast to the writings of other Indian authors, the setting of the novel, the world inhabited by Estha and Rahel, is not an urban metropolis but an obscure village which for them at least is dominated by the river. The natural world as experienced by children is evoked. Secondly, in *The God of Small Things* the spotlight is turned upon precisely that point in history where the contradictions and specifically the class contradictions - inherent in the construction of India as a nation came to the fore. Arundhati Roy explicitly acknowledges the existence of organised class struggles, with a specific conjuncture in the Left movement in Kerala forming the background to the novel. Thirdly, personal themes of love, memory and loss is a savage indictment of patriarchy and of its specific character in a semi-feudal, backward capitalist society.

This is powerfully conveyed, on the one hand, in the experiences of the

children themselves, negotiating a world in which, for reasons they cannot yet fully understand, they are tolerated on sufferance, dogged by the fear of being unloved. On the other hand, it is present in the story of their mother Ammu and her anger at the crushing and destructive effects of patriarchal oppression runs through the novel, making it explicitly political.

The God of Small Things is not a novel about mass struggle. Rather, it is about the ways which individuals, particularly women, find to resist the conditions imposed upon them by society. The character of Ammu, who is to commit the ultimate transgression by loving the low-caste Velutha, epitomises this. As though she had temporarily set aside the morality of motherhood and divorce hood.

Ammu's character has been shaped not only by her experiences as a divorced woman, but as the daughter of a violent father and a resigned, submissive mother. As she grew older, Ammu learned to live with this cold calculating cruelty. She developed a lofty sense of injustice and the mulish, reckless streak that develops in someone small who has been bullied all their lives by someone Big. She did exactly nothing to avoid quarrels and confrontations. She is ultimately destroyed by the backlash from the feudal-patriarchal society she challenges; her daughter Rahel however survives by escaping from the stifling confines of the family home into an unconventional life - the impact of her return twenty three years later is left ambiguous.

Equally compelling is Roy's portrayal of the way women themselves collude in enforcing patriarchal norms, as does the bitter and malignant Baby Kochamma, ex-nun, and incumbent baby grand aunt. Baby Kochamma resented Ammu, because she saw her quarrelling with a fate that she, Baby Kochamma herself, felt she had graciously accepted. She subscribed wholeheartedly to the commonly held view that a

married daughter had no position in her parents' home. As for a divorced daughter there was no position anywhere at all. And as for a divorced daughter from a love marriage, well, words could not describe Baby Kochamma's outrage. As for a divorced daughter from an intercommunity love marriage, Baby Kochamma chose to remain quivering silent on the subject.

Roy has defined sexuality as that transcendence which takes individuals beyond history and society, straight into the real truth of their beings, overcoming barriers of class and caste by creating a phallogocentric utopia stating the relationship between Ammu and Velutha which is from the outset permeated with an inescapable awareness of history and the social relations within which they have interacted with each other since childhood. Ammu is shown throughout the novel as conscious not only of her own sexuality, but of her emotional needs and capable of acting on this basis. But the couple's helplessness, their inability to take further decisions is not due to the overwhelming nature of sexual attraction, but a result of the powerlessness of both in real terms. It is this which prevents them from making plans beyond the promise to meet again. It is precisely because Velutha fails to recognise the extent of women's powerlessness (even upper caste, upper class women) in the face of the sanction of the feudal-patriarchal establishment.

Roy manages to show the interconnections between the deep contradictions within this family and those between the social class they belong to and the working people, as she gradually lays bare the tensions beneath the idyllic and nostalgic vision of a 1960s family outing to that ultimate clean, white cinematic fantasy, *The Sound of Music*. One of the central conflicts of the novel is hinted at when Rahel spots Velutha, her most beloved friend, marching with a red flag and enthusiastically waving to him.

The real secret was that communism crept into Kerala insidiously. As a reformist movement that never overtly questioned the traditional values of a caste-ridden, extremely traditional community. The Marxists worked from within the communal divides, never challenging them, never appearing not to. They offered a cocktail revolution. A heady mix of Eastern Marxism and orthodox Hinduism, spiked with a shot of democracy. It is brought to life in the characterisation of Comrade K. N. M. Pillai, the local Party functionary. Again, the family is the site where contradictions become explicit.

Pillai is trying to convince Chacko, who co-owns Paradise Pickles, of the significance of the (higher caste) workers' resentment of Velutha for having a responsible job in the pickle factory: "He may very well be okay as a person. But other workers are not happy with him. Already they are coming to me with complaints...You see, Comrade, from local standpoint, these caste issues are very deep-rooted"(278). He means to sack Velutha from there. Kalyani put a steel tumbler of steaming coffee on the table for her husband. Pillai said, "See her, for example. Mistress of this house. Even she will never allow Paravans and all that into her house. Never. Even I cannot persuade her. My own wife, of course inside the house she is Boss"(278). So, this saying vividly brings out the real attitude of the Communist Leader.

The failure of some lefts is to grasp the significance of this springs partly from narrow sectarianism, but also partly from an inability to grasp the importance of patriarchy, untouchability and the discriminatory society, the main focus of Roy's attack, to the reproduction of this capitalism. But it is also the case that the particular manifestations of this which are central to the novel the oppressiveness of caste and gender, the abuse of children are questions which are today a site of contest between

the dialectical materialist approach and the post-modernist one which negates the role of a coherent analysis of real economic and social relations and structures of power in favour of a multiplicity of co-existing subjectivities.

The novel *The God of Small Things* can be analysed very closely from the following aspects which are further sources to find the clear evidences of the very reality of the society.

3.1 Projection of Indian History, Politics and Sexual Hierarchies

Indian history and politics shape the plot and meaning of *The God of Small Things* in a variety of ways. Some of Roy's commentary is on the surface, with jokes and snippets of wisdom about political realities in India. However, the novel also examines the historical roots of these realities and develops profound insights into the ways in which human desperation and desire emerge from the confines of a firmly entrenched caste society. The novel reveals a complex and longstanding class conflict in the state of Kerala, India, and comments on its various competing forces.

For example, the novel attacks the brutal, entrenched, and systematic oppression at work in Kerala, exemplified by figures of power such as Inspector Thomas Mathew on one hand and on the other hand the hypocrisy and ruthlessness of the conventional, traditional moral code of Pappachi and Mammachi. On the opposite side of the political fence, the Kerala Communist Party, at least the faction represented by Comrade Pillai, is revealed to be much more concerned with personal ambition than with any notions of social justice. He has no concern about the hardships of lower caste and females, but he is found sowing the seeds of discrimination and social violence. He many times raises Chacko to fire the *Dalits* from his factory. Though he makes the lower caste involve in his party's demonstration, he shows biased action against them. For example, he includes

Velutha in his party but afterwards helps the police raising the issue of caste to make Velutha victim.

The interaction between private relationships and social hierarchies is a key issue in Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things*. Set in the Indian region of Kerala, it deals with the impact that crossing social and sexual boundaries within private male-female relationship has on the lives of a Syrian Christian family. As the effects of transgression turn out to be different for the individual members of the family and others involved, it is worthwhile analysing how the different relationships are portrayed in the novel and how they are looked upon by family members and society. The centre of attention will be Ammu's and Chacko's relationships with their spouses and their lovers. The social and personal dimensions of these relationships as well as the accompanying circumstances will be looked into. Striking parallels connect them in a way that reveals the varying judgements of Indian society and its modes of oppression by patriarchy and the caste system. A description of the hierarchies prevailing in Indian society, the family, the caste system and gender relations, also with regard to sexuality, forms a basis for the close analysis of the male-female relationships in the novel.

Indian society is influenced by several kinds of hierarchies that determine one's standing in it. To a greater extent than in other cultures, social relations in India are mainly judged by the question of social status that a person has relative to the other(s). The fact that each individual's self-awareness depends on their rank highlights how deeply internalized the hierarchical system is. As it is represented in family networks, the caste system and gender issues, it permeates the main spheres of life.

The hierarchical system is rooted in the network of the Indian extended family and, therefore, it influences children from a very young age. In the ideal extended family, the sons stay with their parents after their marriage, bringing their wives into their home. Widowed or abandoned daughters and other male and female relatives without a family of their own can also be part of an extended family. This way of life has economic advantages, especially for young married couples who mostly can only afford to set up a household of their own when their children have grown older. It is not unusual for children, hence, to grow up among and be influenced by all kinds of relatives. They also learn that each position within the family network differs from the others concerning one's rights and duties, making it necessary to adjust oneself to that system.

Smita Narula, the researcher for the Asia Division of Human Rights Watch, reports about the exploitation against the women in India. Her statement goes as:

The police enter houses and attack women even though they should never search when women are alone. The police are arresting women [...] they take them into custody and rape them. Some years ago, in a slum nearby, a forty three year old woman [...] was arrested along with her daughter and daughter-in-law. They were taken to the police station where the police raped the mother in front of the other women. They then brought her home and burned her in her hut. (118)

According to this report, the poor and *Dalit* women have been the victim of rape but though it is a very severe case, the destitute and voiceless women never attempt to report to the newspaper or other communication medias against such horrible treatments. It is a kind of violence and excessive exploitation in the name of caste and gender which is almost similar to the destiny of the major characters of the

novel *The God of Small Things*. Many studies also have shown similar kinds of malicious treatment as a form of violence against women of India. It is also reported that sometimes even the protectors of the society or the guardians often become the perpetrators of the crime. Some places of India such as in Kerala, Assam and Bihar, the large scale molestation by the police administration also are vivid examples of gender exploitation

The Indian caste system, consisting of Varna and Jati, subdivides society into hierarchically organised social groups. The traditional varna system consists of the differently ranked castes of priests, warriors, merchants and servants, while there are more than 3000 different professional castes in the jati system. Indians are born into a varna caste (determining their fixed social position) and belong to a jati caste depending on their profession (determining their status within their immediate environment). Jati members usually stay within their caste by practising the respective profession and by choosing a future spouse of the same caste. Following the family as the next sphere of identity development, each caste also has its own rules and values that its members internalise deeply. The position of a caste in the caste hierarchy is defined by its way of life. The purer and cleaner, the higher is the standing of the caste. The most “unclean” castes have occupations concerned with death or bodily excretions and belong to the group of the so-called untouchables, which comprises about 150 million people. They are connected with a constant state of being dirty and, therefore, must not be touched. For centuries, they were refused access to temples, schools and other public places. Members of higher castes used to react with massive disgust with an untouchable. Today, a lighter skin hue, associated with cleanness and a higher social rank, is still preferred to a darker one, associated with dirt.

3.2 Gender Inequality

Arundhati Roy has also taken on the responsibility of trumpeting injustices in her works. She has written on myriad subjects such as social justice, human rights, gender issues, and international politics. According to Roy in *Power Politics*, “there is an intricate web of morality, rigor, and responsibility that art, that writing itself, imposes on a writer” [2]. In these lines, Roy avidly defends the writer’s freedom of expression and his/her obligation to point out issues of social injustice. In *The God of Small Things*, Roy skilfully fulfils both the duties of the writer and the social activist. By narrating the story of an Indian family which represents the broader Indian macrocosm, she manages to weave a literary piece together with a critique of the various inequalities suffered by the Indian people with a special focus on gender and class discrimination.

Rahel, the twin sister of Estha, is constantly socially displaced whether she is at her hometown or, later, in the US with her husband. Rahel is an epitome of the silent observant female character who falls victim of a dysfunctional family and a confining society. In spite of her vigilance and conscientiousness, Rahel fails to connect with the people around her and never realizes her full potential due to their sense and habit of exclusion to her. Rahel’s mother, Ammu, is another interesting female character. She is deprived of the academic opportunity but her brother enjoyed because she is a female for whom education is unnecessary according to her father . She is looked down upon by her own family after courageously seeking divorce from her abusive husband. Ammu is portrayed as a smart daring person who oftentimes outwits her Oxford-educated brother, Chacko, even though she never had the same opportunities of traveling and studying abroad as he did. Eventually, Ammu is also shunned by her own Syrian Christian Church because of her audacity.

A third female character worth examination is Mammachi, Ammu and Chacko's mother. Mammachi is a successful entrepreneur who starts a pickle factory, but is constantly hindered by the male figures in her life, namely her husband and son. Her husband Pappachi constantly beats her every evening for no apparent reason. She is also very skilful in playing the violin, which is but another talent that her husband hinders probably due to his fear of being out-succeeded by his wife. In spite of all that, she is a conformist in her views of class and gender relations, never questioning the conditions of her life and of those around her.

All the characters in *The God of Small Things* are trapped within a rigidly predetermined social niche, but the female characters seem to suffer twice the plight since their gender functions as a second handcuff in addition to social class. While the female characters are portrayed as resourceful, smart, and capable of social change, they never fully mature to be strong matriarchs or agents of social change because of the rigid social structure that deprives them of every promising opportunity. Even though Rahel, Ammu, and Mammachi belong to an affluent property-owning class in Ayemenem, and though they are fully capable of playing prominent political, social, and economic roles in their communities and societies leading to holistic development that eventually benefits all members of society, they are still deprived of fully realizing their capabilities.

Spivak in her famous essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' discusses the problems involved with representation. She argues that, "the subaltern people can not speak themselves. Instead they have got to be represented. Their voices are in shadow of so-called superiors' voice. It can easily be erased" (105). Spivak posits women in the role of the subaltern questioning the male constructed voice of women with the patriarchal society. Women are denied the position from which they can speak on their own; they

are always turned into the objects of the male's desire. In her view, there is no space from which the sexed subaltern subject can speak.

In addition to economic theories, on-the-ground experiences of development workers have proved that women are quite capable of assuming leadership roles for the purpose of realizing much-needed social change. As Bishakha Datta says, "women have successfully assumed leadership positions at local self-governments, called Panchayats, in a number of villages in India" [5]. In the study by Datta, women Panchayats were able to introduce electricity, irrigation systems, roads, and other infrastructure needed for the development of the villages. Clearly, women do not lack the potential once the proper opportunity is introduced. Women and society, however, need to be constantly reminded of this fact.

Roy adds her voice as a writer and social activist to the chorus of the economist and the development worker to challenge the history-old injustices done to women first of all because of their gender and second because of class discrimination. In *The God of Small Things* she skilfully reminds of the grave effects of neglecting the potential of half our societies.

It is ironical that the so called Love Laws are not equally applicable to all classes and gender. For instance, Chacko, a representative of the dominant mainstream culture, enjoys his sexual relations with factory-women workers. But nobody bothers and objects because he is a part of power. His mother, Mammachi, is fully aware of his illicit relations with women, but she remains tight-lipped. On the contrary, she provides a back door for Chacko to meet his needs. Indirectly Mammachi supports Chacko's misbehaviour. The narrator says, "Mammachi had a separate entrance built for Chacko's room, which was at the eastern end of the house, so that the objects of his 'needs' wouldn't have to go trespassing through the house"

(169). Mammachi deliberately encourages her son's illicit relations by paying money to the woman worker because of her affiliation with her son. But when it comes to Ammu, her own daughter, she applies different set of rules. This is the double standard morality.

Ammu is the victim of dead conventions and rules, created by deep-rooted patriarchal society where gender discrimination is one of the common issues on the hidden agenda of dominant patrician culture. It obviously shows that the application of rules differs from gender to gender and class to class. In a sense, the so-called feudal protector of the social norms socially and culturally accepts Chacko's sexual freedom. So we can say that Chacko is exempted from the rules of 'Love Laws'. Finally, Ammu, the protagonist of the novel, is destroyed and crushed due to her act of violating the biased rules. Ammu's insignificant presence in the family and society forces her to go against dominant mainstream culture that blocks her ways of freedom and liberty. Human society is an amalgam of difference in term of status, interest, talent and opinions because heterogeneity and diversity are the facts in human life. Whatever the steps Ammu has taken against the mainstream culture should not be considered as a result of her interest and need. Actually she was forced to take such steps. Yet she is blamed as a cultureless woman who has crossed the boundaries of her caste, community and culture.

On the other hand, Rahel, her daughter, a representative of new generation has also broken the 'Love Laws' by loving and supporting Velutha and loving her brother Estha sharing her single Siamese soul. After marriage, she gives divorce to her American husband Larry McCaslin, but nobody has objected because from the very beginning she was a neglected child having no concern with society and its culture. In a sense, Rahel is a complete independent woman who lives her life by her will and

wish. In a real sense, individuals like Rahel live their natural life without any man-made partial and bitter taboos and culture, caste, religion and social hierarchy. Rahel continues her mother's failed mission of breaking the boundaries of caste, class and community. By breaking the rules of dominant mainstream culture, Rahel proves herself to be an active rebel against the dominant mainstream culture.

3.3 Mainstream Culture and Subalternity

Arundhati Roy portrays society, in which dictatorial social institutions and history make biased rules. The mainstream culture holds and operates these rules for exploiting and harassing the weaker sections of society, especially women and untouchables. The recurrently used phrase in this research 'Love Laws' highlights the recurrent codes of social taboos and the validity of culture in the old tradition bound Indian society. She coins the phrase for indicating the social ethos existing in Indian multicultural society. With the help of this phrase, Roy tries to sensitize the readers about the cruelty of mainstream culture and its dehumanizing taboos. After all, different taboos exist in all societies but are not recognized explicitly because every taboo has its set of rules and values, which generally protect human interest on the humanitarian ground and mutual respect. Taboos are either cultural or religious, but are usually accepted for maintaining social harmony, peace and public interest. But in this novel, taboos are also used as a social force for humiliating and suppressing 'voiceless' groups who have been deliberately marginalized from the ages.

The God of Small Things centres on the liaison between Ammu, a Syrian Christian young divorcee and Velutha untouchable Paravan. Both violate and dishonour the 'Love Laws' of society and enter into the forbidden territory.

Naturally, the twins once again broke the Love Laws through sexual perversion. Ammu is a central character or protagonist in the struggle against the

'Love Laws' when she realizes her love for Velutha, she does not hesitate to enter into forbidden territory, but her act of breaking 'Love Laws' causes their defenders to react against her. Her forbidden relationship becomes the only way to achieve her selfhood, i.e. her self-identity. Challenging social restriction, caste and class barriers, both Ammu and Velutha come together and form their own laws of 'Love' which are more 'human' than laws made by the mainstream culture and its tradition

The novel can be viewed as an attempt to reckon with some of the main questions driving the field of Subaltern Studies. The novel attempts to tell stories of characters whose lives have been rewritten by society's, and history's, higher powers. The prototypical stories of Bhubaneswari, Chandra, and Ben Yiju resonate in Roy's narratives of the Untouchable worker Velutha as he is Paravan, the "Imperial Entomologist" Pappachi, who was under British rule and an Anglophile whose greatest setback was not having named a moth that he discovered because the government scientists failed to recognize it as a new spiny until later, the divorcee Ammu, the British-Indian child Sophie Mol, whose father Chacko an Indian and mother Margaret a British, and the twin children Estha and Rahel. With one notable exception, each of these narratives ends in disappearance and loss, due in part to unfortunate turns of events but due primarily to the marginalizing sweep of history. Embedded within the novel are stories of characters whose sexual desires are re-written as social deviancy, characters who have no choice but to internalize society's Rules and Lessons emphasizing how people are not supposed to act, and characters who are taught to be complicit in their own silencing.

Roy's novel participates equally in the subalternist project of tracking resistance. It speaks through the subjectivity of its children, treating minute sensual details as building blocks of experience and memory, and undermining the Platonic

rigidity of the linguistic sign by stripping words down to their sounds and visual qualities. In addition to enacting the tragic plight of the subaltern, *The God of Small Things* also mirrors the subalternist method of piecing together (hi)stories by examining the fragments and shards of a broken past that get lost in the process of historical explanation. Guha elaborates on the pitfalls of History as it is usually told:

The ordinary apparatus of historiography has little to offer us here.

Designed for big events and institutions, it is most at ease when made to operate on those larger phenomena which visibly stick out of the debris of the past. As a result, historical scholarship has developed [...] a tradition that tends to ignore the small drama and fine detail of social existence, especially at its lower depths.(140)

Still, to say that it all began when Sophie Mol came to Ayemenem is only one way of looking at it. In Ayemenem, she accidentally falls into the river and drowns but its brutal charge is applied over innocent Velutha. After then, the disparity of the protagonists of this novel begins

The most significant content of the novel is formed by the three narratives.

One, as foreshadowed by the narrator in the passage above, is a visit of Margaret and Sophie Mol Kochamma to India, tragically cut short by Sophie Mol's drowning in the Meenachai River; the second is an affair between Ammu and Velutha, which is punished severely by the family and by political authorities; the last is the separation and reunion of Rahel and Estha. Emerging through the intertwining of these three narratives is the ever-present but never-answered question: Can the subaltern speak, or is she or he doomed to a life and death of submission and irrelevancy? Rahel's footsteps as she returns on a subalternist-like journey to Ayemenem to make sense of the past by sifting through the minor details, fragments, and silences.

Roy presents a cast of characters strategically designed to explore subalternity from a number of different angles. Perhaps most obvious to the novel's Western readers is the form of subalternity introduced by the postcolonial situation; British film, culture, and educational values seem to have an almost oppressively entrancing hold on many of the Indian characters, even half a century after India's national independence. Through this lens, the death and glorifying funeral ceremony of the British child Sophie Mol contrasts sharply against the irreverent, unceremonial deaths and burials of Velutha and Ammu. It becomes evident in comparing these exactly which deaths matter and which do not, and the difference seems to be accounted for by the British/Indian dichotomy. Spivak, however, wrote that her intention was "not to describe the way things really were or to privilege the narrative of the history as imperialism as the best version of history. It is, rather, to continue the account of how one explanation and narrative of reality was established as the normative one" (Spivak 2198).

A strictly "postcolonial" subaltern reading of the text neglects to account for other significant forms of subalternity. Velutha, for example, becomes a victim of oppressive caste politics. Ammu's identity as female divorcee, particularly after the discovery of her love affair with Velutha, renders her politically and socially worthless according to the local gender rules and constructions. All three of the children, Rahel, Estha, and even Sophie Mol, are forced, by virtue of their age, into roles in a Play over which they are to have little or no control. "The critique of the many oppressions and discriminations is all the more felt because it is performed in the language of children and their world is shown as one of love, communication, fierce loyalty, gentleness, resistance and survival" (Singh 17). The novel even critiques Communism ("another religion turned against itself," Roy 272), a theoretical

system designed to combat economic domination in a manner that supposedly looks past boundaries of nation and race, for its failure to give voice to the subaltern in its multiplicity of forms, one of those forms being the Paravan Velutha, a devoted party member whom the party in the end betrays.

3.4 Caste System, Untouchability, Transgression and Punishment

Arundhati Roy's Booker Prize winning novel deals with the ravages of caste system in South Indian state, Kerala. Roy presents both the miserable plight of untouchables and also the struggle of a woman trying to have fulfillment in life in a patriarchal society. Velutha, transgresses the established norms of society by having an affair with a woman of high caste. The ultimate outcome of this love affair is the tragic death of an "Untouchable" by the "Touchable Boots" of the state police, an event that makes a travesty of the idea of God. God is no more in control of "small things" rather the small things have an ultimate power over God, turning him to "The God of loss" (Roy 265).

The idea of untouchability is explored at two levels in the novel. Firstly, we have socially untouchables, or Parvans, who are never allowed basic human rights. Secondly, we have metaphoric untouchables in high castes. Here discrimination expresses itself in marginalizing the women in their personal and public life.

The community represented in *The God of Small Things* is Syrian Christian. The Christians of Kerala are divided into five churches: Roman Catholic, Orthodox Syrian, Nestorian, Marthoma, and Anglican. Syrian Christians claim the Apostle Thomas as their founder. The term "Syrian" refers to the West Asian origins of the group's ancestors and to their use of Syriac as a liturgical language. For centuries, their spoken language has been Malayalam. Syrian Christians have a history that predates European rule. While the Jesuits made only limited alteration to community

life in 1830s and 40s, the nineteenth-century British Colonial state played a significant role in undermining Syrian Christian-Hindu connections.

In the issue of caste, class and untouchables, M.K. Gandhi relates his views in his book *Hindu Dharma*. He argues;

I see no germ in accepting clear water from a pool filled in a clear manner by a clear Antyaja (*Dalit*). Ordinary members of other community accept water served by Ghatis (*Dalit*) that is in dealing with them the same rule should be followed which are so-called upper caste. The upper caste people should follow their intercourse with the other caste. (77)

The above lines make it clear that Gandhi is positive about the sexual intercourse between a lower caste and the upper caste. It should not be understood by the society as a horrible issue as it happened in the case of Ammu and Velutha in the novel *The God of Small Things*. On the account of untouchability, Gandhi further contends: "The practise of untouchability is sin and should be eradicated. I look upon it as my duty to eradicate this sin. It is however, to be eradicated on the initiation of other Hindu not the Antyaja. The practice of untouchability is an excrescence on Hinduism." (93)

Gandhi clearly presents his views about caste, class and religion. The system of untouchable is sin and it is the greatest obstacle of the development and progress. There is not any verdict evidence about caste system. It is only man made theory. There is not any biased origin and concept regarding caste, gender and class.

Virendra Prakash Singh has also given his attention to the caste discrimination when he meditates upon the treatment of the touchable towards the untouchables. He explains how the Shudras were made slaves:

But a Shudra, whether purchased or not, can be forcibly pressed to work as a slave, because self-existent has himself created a Shudra to be slave of Brahmins. A Shudra, even after getting rid of his master, can not get rid of slavery. Because the slavery is associated with his birth. (33)

The above mentioned explanations regarding the perception of Brahmins and Shudra in the society very clearly prove that the biased rules were not born simultaneously with the birth of the society but rather after the birth of the society the rules were set by the so-called dominant and higher status based people for one sided benefits and desires in the name of caste and gender.

In the novel religious differences appear in the disagreements between Father Mulligan (who belongs to the Roman Catholic Church) and Reverend Ipe (who belongs to the Mar Thoma Church) as well as in Baby Kochamma's conversion to Catholicism and her consequent lack of suitors. The socio-political changes brought about by colonial rule led to upper-caste Hindus shunning the Syrian Christians. *The God of Small Things* thus refers to the school for "Untouchables" built by the great-grandfather of the twins, Estha and Rahel. However, as Roy points out,

“Even though a number of Paravans and members of other low castes converted to Christianity, they were made to have separate churches and thus continued to be treated as untouchables. After Independence, they were denied government benefits created for untouchables because officially, on paper, they were Christians and therefore casteless". (72)

Castes are ranked, named, endogamous groups, and membership in a particular caste comes through birth. According to the Hindu sacred texts of the Rig

Veda, there were four main castes and each caste performed a function in sustaining social life. Brahmins were the priests; Kshatriyas, were warriors and rulers; Vaisyas were landowners and merchants; and Sudras were artisans and servants. Since 1935 Untouchables have been called "scheduled castes." They are also called Mahatma Ghandi's name for them "Harijan" (The children of God). More recently these group refer to themselves as Dalits, a Hindi word which means oppressed or downtrodden. Despite some improvements in certain aspects more composition of them still live in rural areas, and nearly more than half are landless labourers. In many parts of India, land is still held by the upper castes that use the ideology of the caste system to economically exploit low- ranking landless labourers.

In 1957, under E. M. S. Namboodiripad, Kerala became the first Indian state to elect a communist government. Despite a damaging split in the party in 1964, there have been communist-led governments in Kerala more often than not. Roy writes that the reason behind the Communist Party's success in Kerala was that it never overtly questioned the traditional values of a caste-ridden, extremely traditional community. The Marxists worked from within the communal divides, never challenging them, never appearing not to. This double standard is emphasized when Comrade Pillai incites the workers of Paradise Pickles and Preserves to strike against their owner, Chacko, but refers to the latter in theoretical terms.

Apart from being tactically the right thing to do, the disjunction between the man and his job helped Comrade Pillai to keep his conscience clear about his own private business dealings with Chacko. His contract for printing the Paradise Pickles labels gave him an income that he badly needed. He told himself that Chacko, the client, and Chacko, the Management, were two different people. Quite separate of course from Chacko-the-Comrade.

Pillai's double standards are also seen when despite his slogans of "caste is class," he deliberately distances himself from Velutha in order to maintain the support of Chacko's other workers who dislike working with a Paravan. Chacko himself appears to be an armchair Communist with no real understanding of the politics that surround him. Roy's representation of the Communist Party has met with much criticism from the Party. The late E. M. S. Namboodiripad criticized *The God of Small Things* for promoting sexual anarchy and bourgeois values.

In *The God of Small Things* the conflict exists at individual and societal levels. The novel graphically shows how people are helpless to resolve these levels of friction. Velutha, the outcast, can never co exist peacefully with the "touchable" communities for so long as the stigma of untouchability attached to him and countless others like him. Velutha is highly intelligent, an excellent carpenter with an engineer's mind, but he is also "The God of loss", "The God of Small Things". He left no footprints in sand, no ripples in water, no images in mirrors" (Roy 265).

In contrast to Velutha, Chacko can get away with his debauchery or his "man's needs" as his mother terms it because he is a touchable. Roy has justly put the issue when she says, "Change is one thing. Acceptance is another" (279). The novel shows the process of creating and labelling Parvans within the high class families and the people who go beyond the unwritten laws of society in pursuit of happiness.

Velutha offers what is denied to Ammu, Estha and Rahel in society and family. In the daylight, he is the best companion of the children, who feel suffocated in Ayemenm because of their divorced mother. The outer world is hostile, and only the few moments they spend with Velutha afford real happiness. Ammu meets him in darkness, along the river bank, a symbol of division between the two classes. Baby Kochamma, spending a frozen life in her past, appears as the guardian of system.

Velutha, "the Untouchable" is killed by the "Touchable Boots", of the state police. Ammu is banished and dies alone, only thirty one "a very viable diable age" (161).

Roy presents a pessimistic picture of society. With the death of Velutha, the last ray of hope disappears. He is accused of kidnapping the twins, and Estha falsely confirms it. Estha becomes a silent creature whose incomprehensible "Yes" served to prove an innocent man guilty. Roy expresses her disillusionment with the social conditions of the postcolonial world in which the untouchables of the past still face a hostile society that does not let them live as free and independent individuals.

Velutha, the God of small Things, the outcast can never co-exist peaceful with the "touchable" communities for as long as the stigma of untouchability is attached to him and countless others like him. Ammu, another "untouchable" within the "touchable" cannot pursue happiness because doing so threatens the existing order, and the society takes every possible step to stop change.

It is rare to find a book that so effectively cuts through the clothes of nationality, caste and religion to reveal the bare bones of humanity. *The God of Small Things* presents a confrontation between the Big Man and the Small Man as Roy has compared with the 'Laltain and Mombatti' respectively give us light.

In Indian context everything in society matters a lot. It is worth to note that Arundhati Roy handles the aspects of transgressions, biased love laws and punishments in her novel *The God of Small Things* very effectively. As an architect, Roy constructs her space of story-telling by manipulating landscapes of Ayemenem and setting up the locations for specific characters. The social norms in the novel are called the Love Laws, the laws that lay down who should be loved, and how and how much. Both Ammu and Velutha are punished for following their hearts. Velutha is beaten to death as soon as their love affair is revealed, and Ammu is sent away to live

the rest of her life and die alone. What Ammu does to cross the social boundaries is particularly breaking the caste system. Despite the fact that love laws as social code regulate people's behaviour and restrict their freedom in searching for love, the two pairs of transgressors, Ammu and Velutha, Rahel and Estha who had never felt socially comfortable, in the novel still break them and follow their own free will. They ultimately get the punishment of disparity and death. Hope and despair frequently follow each other in the lives of these people.

The incidents come consecutively to be bitter on the ground of caste as Velutha, an untouchable worker at the pickle factory and a close friend to Rahel and Estha, is blamed for killing Sophie Mol and raping Ammu. In fact, he has nothing to do with Sophie Mol's death, and he carries on a brief and voluntary affair with Ammu until Inspector Thomas Mathew's police officers beat him to death. On the other hand Ammu has to die alone in a cheap hotel at the age of thirty one in which Chacko has her cremated because the Syrian Christian Church will not bury her. The reason behind it was on the one hand she was divorced and more than that on the other hand she had affair with lower caste Velutha. So, caste and social transgression finally carried these two protagonists to disparity and death.

The following lines by Mammachi who is the woman of having extreme rigid view of the caste system portrays the society very clearly. Mammachi remembers the day:

When Paravans were expected to crawl backward with a broom, sweeping away their footprints so that Brahmins and Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into a Paravans' footprint. In Mammachi's time, Paravans, like other untouchables were not allowed to walk on public road, not allowed to cover their upper

body, not allowed to carry umbrellas. They had to put their hands over their mouths when they spoke to divert their polluted breaths away from those whom they addressed. (73-74)

In this way caste and transgression ruined these people from which Estha and Rahel also could not remain untouched. Their mother Ammu, close friendship with Velutha and their emotion sense to each other at last traumatized and separated them. They passed most of the time in disparity.

3.5 Love Laws and Sexuality

Arundhati Roy tries to exhibit the fact that no social, moral, economic or cultural barriers can stand in the way of sex that separates as an omnipotent force in human universe. Sex dominates over everything in human world and men and women are simply its passive victims, who still necessarily form the rigid laws under the name of culture. Ammu, a challenger of social taboos, breaks the 'Love Laws' not only for her own sake but for the sake of her lovable twins, who are left uncared and unloved in the Ayemenem house. Her motherly affection is the best sign of her feminine culture. The mainstream culture is so dynamic and progressive, but not a fixed property of a particular group, gender or a caste. Ammu's innocent children are also marginalized and side tracked by the family members of the Ayemenem house. The social forces victimize them due to their mixed parentage and their mother's revolutionary act of violating the social norms of not having chosen a person from her own caste.

A sexually deprived and mentally harassed Ammu, automatically drifts towards Velutha who is now only a supporting source to both Ammu and her children. In the dappled sunlight filtering through the dark green trees, Ammu watched Velutha lift her daughter effortlessly as though she was an inflatable child

made of air. As he tossed her up and she landed in his arms, Ammu saw on Rahel's face the high delight of the airborne young. Ammu's rebellious act of breaking the laws shocks the so-called defenders of the 'Love Laws'. Therefore, they start whispering against her. It was a time when the unthinkable became thinkable and the impossible really happened. Ammu, the 'unmixable mix', with her trodden youth, oppressed existence and prostrated dreams, drifts towards the other person of the oppressed and marginalized class, Velutha, and gets solace in his arms.

However, the 'Love Laws' of the society deny them a chance and right to live their natural life without restrictions. Even the inspector Thomas Mathew denies her statement and calls her 'Veshya' because she dares to love outside the rules of the 'Love Laws'. In his outrage, inspector Mathew says. "The police knew all they needed to know and that the Kottayam police didn't take statement from 'Veshya' or their illegitimate children" (Roy 8). Finally, all the repulsive social forces come together and punish the 'rebels' who dare to violate the 'Love Laws' for cultivating their subculture. Due to love laws, two small things in novel, Velutha and Ammu, got the result of disparity and death for their natural desire.

There are different types of subcultures, but Ammu and Velutha try to develop an oppositional subculture, which resists on age-old dominant mainstream culture. With their capacity, they try to resist the pressures of caste community and class and enter in the enterprise of cultivating their new subculture. But they fail in their novel mission. Man-made laws are always incomplete and partial, but universal laws are more concrete and impartial. The most obvious motif of the novel is the inseparable role of sex in human life, where no other factor can work. Universal laws of human biology cause the tragedy of Ammu and Velutha. Ammu, a member of Syrian Christian family, a touchable (but a woman) cannot suppress her biological needs, her

sexual appetite. Basically she is a young woman who can not go without someone, for satisfying her sexual needs. She is bound to submit to the natural urge for sex and gets sexual satisfaction by Velutha, a member of the 'untouchable' community.

Through this mainstream development Roy has demonstrated the universal fact of human biology that there are no taboos and cultural traits in the question of sex and love. Ammu and Velutha have focused the question of human biology. Here man made cultures have secondary place before the universal laws because cultural values are transitory and changeable, whereas universal laws are static and consistent. They have accepted each other on the ground of mutual trust and love because they believe in their common subculture which is more valuable to them and less harmful to others.

So, with the all above mentioned facts which have the very suitable composition so as to claim and analyze the entire novel very closely from the perspective of social realism. It is also fact that, before the imagination of this novel, the author intensively thought of catapulting the indispensable reality of the society through a piece of literature. As a result, the thunderous masterpiece of her *The God of Small Things* came in the sky of literature.

Chapter Four

Consequences of the Tragic Struggle of the Marginalized

Arundhati Roy's celebrated novel *The God of Small Things* is a mirror of reality which has reflected almost all the characters' real panic of tragedy and suffering. The main cause behind the excessive suffering is the very traditional and biased society. The traditional social structure of India as a whole plays a role of an antagonist to destroy the lives of the weak, voiceless and innocent human beings. Roy has spoken on behalf of the suffering subjects of whole Indian society as their representative so as to reflect the reality of the society in which for no apparent reason, the subalterns or the marginalised groups are victimized in the name of caste, gender, culture and so forth. This research aims to show that Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* is a complete epitome of reality of Indian society through the many incidents described in it. The novel has been analysed from the perspective of social realism as it gives full evidence of the aspects of untouchability, gender discrimination, patriarchal domination, cultural dominations and biased social rules and values imposed upon marginalised group of the society.

The orthodoxy of the caste system of India prohibits any sort of human relationships between the people of higher caste and lower caste. The striking incident of the novel is in which a higher caste woman Ammu and the lower cast man Velutha fall in love. Untouchables are affected in the society because they are compelled to adopt and accept the whole social structures, rules, norms and values which are made under the motif and desire of the so-called superiors. Their voices are under shadow. Their history is fragmented and episodic. They are subject to the ruling class. If the untouchables try to get freedom, they will be victimised because it will be against the rules and systems of the social superiors that create the truth and discourse to suppress

the inferiors. Despite the potential skills and ideas, the untouchables, the paravans of Kerala society of India, are considered sub-human and stigma of the society because they have lost their identity since their birth falling in the category of lower caste. They have to work to satisfy their masters for less payment. In the novel, Velutha, an untouchable of Kerala, works in the factory of Mammachi, but he is neither paid equally in comparison to other factory workers nor is respected for his engineering mind and skills. But he is absolutely dominated and discriminated.

The love affair between Velutha and Ammu is the transgression and breaking of the social taboos. It is resistance against the contemporary society of Kerala, India. The untouchables who are not allowed even their basic human rights have no chance to be accepted by the society to have love affair with a higher caste woman. Moreover, Velutha was not an initiator of that love affair but rather he was enticed by Ammu's love to satisfy her sexual needs. Due to love laws of the society and his caste, ultimately, his love affair with Ammu cost his life. Inspector Mathew's police officers beat him to death.

Roy has presented political aspects also in the novel. Kerala was the first state where the Communist Party won the election and ruled the city but class, caste and gender discrimination continued in the society. They raised no voice against social exploitation, evils and discrimination but only used the people for their selfishness. They had no care for the small things of the society.

Women are silenced and erased due to the patriarchal social structure. The presentation of the male characters in the novel reveals the domination and exploitation of males over females in the society only in the name of gender. The principal character of the novel, Ammu is exploited in different ways. As she is a divorcee, living in her maternal house, she is not allowed to be involved in different

social ceremonies and functions. Even before marriage, her father Pappachi told her that education for girls was not necessary. It was all worthless. After marriage also she could not get love and sympathy from her husband but rather she was forced by him to sleep with his English boss. After divorce, she transgressed social rules having physical relationship with her family carpenter Velutha, and later she was considered an outcast, a stigma of family and the society.

Roy has tried to touch the postcolonial aspect by depicting the British colonizers' legacy over the exploited Indians, the formerly colonized people, the mainly attacking society, language and culture. India has suffered from the long rule of the British imperial power. The British altered the language and cultural values of the Indians. Emphasizing the caste system of the Hindus and others, they fragmented and violated the whole society sowing the seeds of social violence, discriminations, exploitations and crimes.

Roy has created symbolic aspects to portray the society clearly. The characters of the novel can broadly be studied under two symbols employed in the novel Laltins and Mombatties. The innocent characters like Estha, Rahel, Sophie Mol and the principal characters like Ammu and Velutha can be studied under Mombatties whereas characters like Pappachi, Mammachi, Chacko, Baby Kochamma, Mr. Pillai, inspector Mathew, etc. can be studied under the Laltins. The Laltins are well fed and well protected but the Mombatties are likely to be jeopardised in the society. The Laltins represent the dominant and the Mombatties indicate the dominated. So, Roy has vividly depicted the social conflicts and the clashes between the superior or dominant and the inferior or dominated in the issue of caste, gender and culture in the society of Ayemenem in Kerala.

The society of Ayemenem in Kerala which was under the strong grip and influence of certain superiors or dominant power mainly the senior caste males excessively dominated, exploited and discriminated the untouchables, females and broadly the voiceless groups in different ways creating self-centred and biased social rules or social norms in the name of caste, gender, culture, politics, hierarchies and so forth. *The God of Small Things* is a novel of social realism, which has depicted the very reality of the society of India in a profound manner. Roy has raised her voice against oppressive social fetters that have been oppressing the lower caste, women, children, poor and powerless people of India. She also has focused on the matter through the major characters of the novel that we should know our place and position in the society or wherever we go. We should not try to transcend it. If we try to transcend or cross the forbidden boundary, we will be punished.

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