

Chapter One

Roy's *The God of Small Things*

Arundhati and *The God of Small Things*

Gender discrimination is a prominent factor to establish the social hierarchy on the basis of socially constructed structure where males always acquire higher status than females. The society does not truly evaluate the qualities of females rather tries to penetrate them into the constructed gender framework. This study undertakes an exploration of gender discrimination of India as textualized in the novel *The God of Small Things*. Ammu, the main character in the novel, is exploited and dominated in the society. She is victimized in the patriarchal society due to her identity as a divorced woman and she is supposed to be an outcaste when her sexual relationship with Velutha is known to all.

Suzanna Arundhati Roy was born in a tea state in Shilong, East Bengal on November 24, 1961. She was the child of a marriage between a Christian woman from Kerala and a Bengali Hindu tea planter. Her father was a small tea planter in Assam. Roy's early childhood was spent in a village, Ayemenem, a few kilometers away from Kottayam town in central Kerala. This is the village where the story of the novel *The God of Small Things* revolves round. Having been divorced by her father, the tea planter, Roy, her mother, had no option left except for returning to Ayemenem taking her children along with. Arundhati Roy was thus "the product of broken home" (Roy Amatabh, 1). She had to face several anxieties, fret and fever during her childhood. The Ayemenem house was dominated by the traditional patriarchal clutches. The men in and around this house were conservative in their outlook. It was because the Ayemenem house was dominated by the people full of evil, or rather say, discrimination within them. This phenomenon can be clearly seen in the novel where

Ammu, the principal character in *The God of Small Things* who represents her mother Mary Roy, has to undergo so many ups and downs.

After Roy had been taken to Ayemenem, she spent most of her time in her grandmother's pickle factory. The experiences at this village seem to have left a lasting impression on Arundhati. As her mother puts it:

There was much trauma for me in 1960s as Kottayam did not accept me as I was a woman separated from my husband... It is only when I read her book that I realize that even at five she was conscious that we were unwelcome in the native home and 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. Mary Roy (qtd. in Dodiya and Chakraborti, 5).

But in spite of all those odds and hazards, she was essentially an extraordinary genius who used to devote to the studies from head and heart. She had a voracious appetite for reading and writing when she was as a fourth grade. It was the reason why she was resorted to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as a text by her teacher.

Arundhati spent her life in very similar circumstances to the children in her novel. After having been divorced, Mrs. Roy ran an informal school called Corpus Christi at Ayemenem, which imparted western-based education to the elite of the area. Arundhati spent formative years there and acquired her literacy and intellectual abilities. She discovered the joy of reading, which seems to have contributed a lot to the development of her personality.

She lived on the edge of the community in a very vulnerable fashion. Despite of several difficulties, Roy continued her education. She left Kerala at the age of sixteen to join the Delhi school of Architecture. But, there too, "she had to spend her life in utter penury" (Roy Amitabh, 2). Roy wanted to go back Ayemenem but she

was requested not to do so by her family. She came to have a shack rented in a refugee colony. In course of time, she topped the class and took her degree, but she did not practice her architectural skill. In other words, from the age of 17 to 25, she had “absolutely no anchor” (3). This was the period during which she went to Goa and started to make cake and sell it on the beach and make a living that way. Even she had to sell a gold ring given by her friend to make enough money for her return to Delhi. After she had returned, she took a job as a Research Assistant at the National Institute of Urban Affairs.

Her life took a ‘U’ turn when she was fortunately seen by the film director Pradeep Krishna, who offered her a small role in *Messay Saab*. She played “the role of the ‘tribal bamboo’” (3). But she had to leave that job when she got scholarship to go to Italy for eight months to study the restoration of monuments.

It was Roy’s desire to do something that was more private or autobiographical. So she got a computer and started to put down her ideas which she had got in her mind. It was this period that she had “got a chance to escort a group of five rhinos by road from Delhi to Uttar Pradesh where they were being reintroduced in the hope of starting a gene pool” (4). Her first professional writing assignment was associated with the life of Rhinoceros. She wrote the commentary for Ashish Candola’s documentary film *How the Rhinoceros Returned*.

Roy is also a great screenplay writer. She wrote the screenplay for the *Bunyan Tree*, a television serial. Unfortunately, the serial was abandoned halfway through the shoot as the production company ran into financial trouble. Actually speaking, the breaking of the serial in the middle was a “very traumatic and painful thing for Roy” (4). It was during this critical juncture, the book *The God of Small Things* that was enveloped in the computer began to gain momentum among many odds and hazards.

She wrote it quietly and took four years to complete it. The novel was completed on April 6, 1996.

After winning the Booker Prize, Arundhati spent a year on a whirlwind tour of interviews and book readings. Following the whirlwind, Roy settled back to life in New Delhi. However, the critics who attacked the supposed anti-communism in *The God Small Things* may have sparked a reaction probably because Arundhati has begun to take up a number of high political issues and published a number of books on political subjects, for example *Threat Of Nuclear Weapons*, *The Promotion Of Equal Right*, *The Narmada Dam Projects*, and *The War on Terrorism*.

Gender discrimination is a prominent factor to establish the social hierarchy on the basis of socially constructed structure where males always acquire higher status than females. The society does not truly evaluate the qualities of male and female sexes; rather it tries to penetrate them into the constructed gender framework. Generally, females are not given any standard space, status and honors, but the males have high opportunity to acquire standard space, status as well as honour. Similarly, Ammu, the principal character of Arundhati Roy's prestigious Booker Prize winning novel in 1997, *The God Of Small Things* is highly affected by the misbehavior of her father, brother and her husband.

Ammu lives in her maternal home with her two children after having divorce from Bengali husband. They live with great difficulty in the Ayemenem house. Being a divorcee, she was not allowed to take part in her niece's funeral procession with her other family members. Though Ammu, Estha and Rahel are allowed to attend the funeral, they are made to stand separately, not with the rest of the family. Ammu's father insists that a college education is an unnecessary expense for a girl so Ammu has no choice. When Ammu develops physical relationship with Velutha, an

untouchable family carpenter, that is beyond imagination in a religious society. She is not allowed to include in socio-cultural rituals and ceremonies. Instead she has to face death in a hotel room. The church refuses to bury her corpse. These situations and inhuman social forces raise the issue of gender discrimination in *The God of Small Things*.

Women are highly discriminated in Indian society. They are not given equal opportunity of education, social participation and property right. Patriarchal Society generally thinks that the higher education is unnecessary expense for them. They are considered as second sex or lower class. As Arundhati Roy says:

Papachi insisted that a college education was an unnecessary expense for a girl, so Ammu had no choice but to leave Delhi and move with them. There was very little for a young girl to do in Ayemenem other than to wait for marriage proposals while she helped her mother with the house work. (38)

Here, father thinks that education for daughter is unnecessary because females are always discriminated in male dominated society. Females are limited only in house works. It is generally thought that in Indian society the women should remain inside the house and their works also are bound to the periphery of the household. On the one hand, they have to remain and work inside the house without- crossing the household. On the other hand, they are deprived of making decision inside the house. So, the women are doubly subaltern. They are dominated by their husband inside and by the society outside.

Subaltern women generally effaced in the literary texts. In the text of subaltern studies they are incidental to the events of history rather than contributors to the struggle. In *Can Subaltern Speak?* Spivak presents the women as speechless,

unpicturable, superfluity outside the labor relations and revolving inside in a discursive orbit in which “the figure of woman disappears ... into a violent shuttling which the displaced figure of ‘third world women’ caught between tradition and modernization” (306). Here in the novel Ammu is the representative of subaltern. She can not raise her voice against society. The violent shuttling makes her deduce that “there is no space from which the subaltern can speak” (307), and finally concludes that “the subaltern cannot speak” (308). In this way, subaltern can not speak.

Ammu, a divorcee returns her parents’ house, but she is not welcomed whole heartedly. She is supposed to be lowered down having a divorce amongst them. There is even the risk that the presence of a divorced woman would affect possible marriage for other daughter within the household. The narrator, through the example of Baby Kochamma, an archetype of conservative Indian women, vividly describes the attitude of the family towards a divorcee. The narrator says:

As for a divorced daughter, according to Baby Kochamma, she had no position anywhere at all. And as divorced daughter from a love marriage, could not describe Baby Kochamma’s outrage. As for a divorced daughter from an intercommunity love marriage Baby Kochamma chose to remain quiveringly silent on the subject (45-46).

Ammu is exploited and dominated in the society in two ways: on the one hand, she is victimized in a patriarchal society due to her identity as a divorcee; she is socially segregated because she is husbandless after marriage and living in maternal house. To live in parents' house permanently after marriage is not positively accepted in the society. On the other hand, she is supposed to be an out caste when her sexual relationship with Velutha is known to all.

After the successful achievement of *The God Of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy wrote a short but revolutionary book *The End Of Imagination* (Roy, 7). As Amitabh Roy comments, this book shows the author's "Pity argument against the nuclear weapons programmed of the Indian government to be opposed to the general mood of the people who regard it as a matter of national pride" (Amitabh Roy, 40). Her next revolutionary article is "The Greater Common God". Later it appeared in the form of a book. It deals with the author's rational and progressive attitude to the dam project of government. It deals with the author's sympathetic talks with the sufferers of the Narmada valley project her harsh and rugged satire on the faulty decision and advice attitude of the political parties. Roy believes that "big dams in India are obsolete, uncoil and undemocratic" (247).

These two evocative books published after *The God of Small Things* are the revolutionary portrayal of the discriminated, the poor and the deserted of the society. They reflect how the author is sympathetic with the neglected and the injured; how she pleads the cause of the poor against the rich, how she strongly believes in the theory of peace and harmony against discrimination.

Though *The God of Small Things* remains Arundhati Roy's only contribution to literature to date, her bio-data will remain incomplete if we fail to mention her writings on the matters of symbolic significance related to discrimination. Symbolic significance is the basic trait of her novel. The very title of *The God of Small Things* implies the nature of her use of symbols regarding discrimination. Different critics think about the title – its origin, propriety and implications.

Review of Literature

Shashibala Talwar and R.S. Sharma (1998), trace the origin of the title of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* in which one of the principal characters,

Padma, remarks under the circumstances: “What are you so long for in your face? Everybody forgets some small things, all the time” (42). That raises the question in the mind of Saleem: “But if small things go, will large things be close behind” (42).

C. Sathyamala (1995) deters more than a passing resemblance between *The God of Small Things* and Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*. She says, “The theme as well as some of the expressions is similar in the two books” (395). Sathyamala suggests that even the title bears the imprint of Toni Morrison because Poul D. reminisces in the *Beloved*: “So you protected yourself and loved small. Picked the tiniest stars out of the sky to own ...” (395).

We find in the title an indication of its moorings in myth. *The God of Small things* is clearly related to what sociologists and cultural anthropologists in India refer to as the title Gods of the Hindu tradition, the deities of the Great tradition, imposing, autocratic, awe-inspiring. Urvashi Bharat (2003) puts it:

The God of small Things can at best bring about resilience and indifference to suffering; but Big God is manifested in the evil of Papachi and Baby Kochamma, the hypocrisy of Mammachi and Comrade Pillai, the anger of Chacko and Margaret Kochamma, the sense of superiority in Sophie Mol, the sodomizing orange drink lemon drink man. (qtd. in Amatibh Roy, 42)

As Gautam Bhadra, in his essay “The mentality of Subalternity”: Kantanama or Rajdhasma says: “It is well known that defiance is not characteristics of the behavior of subaltern classes. Submissiveness to authority in one context is as frequent as defiance in another; it is two elements that together constitute the subaltern mentality” (63). So *The God of small Things* is an attempt to self- discovery

of creating subalternity through sexuality as rebellion and protest against the existing norms and values.

Although the nature of subaltern people is to rebel and speak against the elite group, they can not speak explicitly. In *Can Subaltern Speak?* Spivak says, “If in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and can not speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (83). Both Velutha and Ammu are victimized in the Kerala society.

A section of critics dismissed the novel simply with nothing serious while others discovered anti Marxism, distortion of historical truth, obscenity and vulgarity in it. It was not easy under the circumstances to read it with the open mind and to judge it without fear or favour. But Amitabh Roy in his book, *The God of small Things - A Novel of Social Commitment* defends *The God of small Things* as a serious novel and goes on to add: “Arundhati Roy could not be dismissed lightly. She had a commitment, a social vision and anyone who failed to see that could not appreciate the novel correctly”. Mr. Roy tries to evaluate the novel sociologically and finds the novel placed with numerous socially committed novels that Indian English produced. For him ‘the small things’ mean the victims of state, society and the sheer will of the unthinking power. Regardless, Amitabh finds the whole book symbolic as it voices for the downtrodden people.

In contrary, Amar Nath Prasad is fascinated by the novelist's extraordinary linguistic inventiveness. He puts: “If the reader goes through this book, his heart is overflowed with many beautiful words and phrases, images and symbols” (245). Moreover he finds a confrontation between two big symbols ‘Laltin and the Mombatti’, and the theme of the novel is taken as “cold and indifferent societal norms dominated by patriarchy; cruel and corrupt police administration; selfish and

deceiving politicians; tyranny and injustice on the dalit and the deserted; and above all, the problem of divorce” (245).

There can be no gains saying the fact that Arundhati Roy had read Rushdie and Morrison before she wrote the novel and the reading might have suggested the title. As for Urvashi Bharat, she has made her point well in her essay. But her emphasis is on the first part of the title , that is, ‘god’, while there is much in the novel to show that Arundhati Roy’s main concern is about the ‘god of small things’ which has been, in the novel, crushed by ‘the god of big things’ resulting in the tragedy .

The work is divided into four chapters where the first chapter is about the brief introduction of thesis statement and critical survey of the novel in relation to gender discrimination. The second chapter deals with theoretical tool: gender, sex, and feminism. Using critical approach and necessary support of different opinions from renowned scholars, the third chapter is textual analysis. Finally, the conclusion is drawn out by the help of textual analysis in the fourth chapter.

Chapter Two

Gender Study and Feminism

The Relation between Sex and Gender

Sex and gender are not similar but they are quite distinct entities because sex is anatomical whereas gender is social one. The biological distinction will be actual and believable but the conventional and constructed distinction may not be actual and trustworthy. Sex is seen as tending to be immutable; immanent in the individual and biological based, gender is seen as culturally mutable and variable, highly relational and inextricable from a history of power differential between genders. In other words, gender is a constitutive element of relationship depended on perceived differences between the sexes. It refers to social role and psychological identity to which we call feminine and masculine.

But now the societies have ignored the underlying realities between the male and the female sexes, and have given high emphasis on social constructed selves of male and female which is called masculinity and femininity respectively. In the process of construction and reconstruction of the identity, males are “maximized their attributes” and females are “minimized their attributes” (Sedgwick 274). So while talking about sex, we, instead of internalizing their biological differences, internalize the social constructed identities. Sedgwick (1985), in her essay “Gender Criticism” writes “sex is , however, a term that extends indefinitely beyond chromosomal sex, that its history of uses often properly be called ‘gender’ is only one problem” (274). In this way, gender is socially constructed.

Genders are not formed in opposite manner. Rather it will be reasonable to say that they are different but not opposite. Biologically, male and female bodies are made up of xy and xx chromosomes respectively. Therefore a female cannot be

opposite to a male. In short, sex is related to physical attributes such as chromosomes, physical body, reproduction, genital activities and sensation but gender goes beyond the sex that is the cultural norms and values.

The value is provided to different sexes according to the social rule and regulation; generally males are given higher value than the females in the patriarchal society. Gender cleverly uses sex to justify the genders' relation. In other words, it is the manipulation of real attributes of sex. To justify this subject matter and their different relationship, Sedgwick writes:

Sex in the sense – what I will demarcate as: chromosomal sex”- is seen as the relatively minimal raw materials on which is based the social construction of gender. Gender, then is the far more elaborated more fully and rigidly dichotomized social production and reproduction of male and female identities and behaviors. (73)

Gender is a kind of social institution. Like other social institutions, it also exhibits the social relationships. Its structure is made up according to the social structure. The society demands certain roles from certain gender. Really, our society, which is patriarchal always, tries to show the male supremacy. That is why; gender is a biased ideology where we can find discrimination between male and female. Normally, males are given higher and better values. They are considered to be active, powerful, modern, rational, bright, superior, etc, and females are given just opposite to these qualities. By using such demarcation lines, the females are excluded and called others. In *The Second Sex* Simone de Beauvoir says that because of the biased ideology, the patriarchal society labelizes the female as ‘flesh’ and male as ‘soul’. The flesh cannot transcend but the soul can easily. To transcend, females need the

mercy of males. So, in the opinion of the society, they are secondary or second sex but Beauvoir opposes the conventional belief about the gender.

Sex “refers to a biological fact of femaleness and maleness, to the fact that there are two forms of human species identifiable by a difference in reproductive physiology” (Buchbinder, 126). And gender “refers to the social roles and psychological identities that are called ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’, to that lived sense we have of what it means to be a woman or a man” (Buchbinder, 126). Of course, women’s experiences have been shaped by male centered value systems which define the female as static, passive and natural in opposition to the male as dynamic, active and cultural. There is a complex configuration of traits of gender relation to the own sex and to the other sex, and conflicts arising from such relations which shape both the individual and the collective experiences of women and men. Both the material and symbolic organization of gender relations constitute important points of structure and change in any society.

Unlike gender, sex refers to the functions, characteristics and behaviors of the individuals in reproduction system. Likewise, Sewgwick, defines sex on the basis of reproductive functions and sexual activities as “neither of the two main groups (male and female) into which living things are placed according to their reproductive functions; fact of belonging to one of those; sexual feeling or impulses; sexual intercourse” (475). Biologically, psychologically, genetically and sexuality as follows:

Biologically, sex is the combination of characteristics that differentiate the two forms or parts of organisms reproducing themselves by the fusion of genets and hence of genetic materials from two different sources. Psychologically, sex is the behavior directly associated with

the meeting of two sexes and in some species their copulation, to allow the fusion of the genets (fertilization) to take place. In human Sex may refer specially to the act of copulation or Heterosexual intercourse, but may extend to the related behaviors of two individuals of the same morphological sex (Homosexuality). Genetically sex is determined by the presence or absence of the smaller 'Y' chromosome in some relevant Chromosomal pair. (Jewell, 777)

Sexuality is closely connected with sex which is described as the whole activities of personality related to sexual behaviors. In other words, sexuality is sexual power or emotion which influences the whole realm of modern culture. It should not limit around certain genital sensation Sedgwick says:

To the degree that sexuality has a center or starting point in certain physical sites, act and rhythms associated (however Contingently) with procreation or the potential for it, the term in the sense may seem to be of a piece with chromosomal sex: a ideological necessity for species survival, tending toward the individually immanent, the socially immutable, the given. (275)

Generally, we can find two kinds of sexualities: essentialist view of sexuality and social constructed view of sexuality in our practice. The essentialist approach conceptualizes sex as a natural instinct or drive which demands fulfillment through sexual equality. It has taken 'natural phenomenon' that is universal and unchanging; sometime that is the part of biological make up of each individuals. It is directly based on heterosexual practice. But the social constructed approach of sexuality regards that sexuality is not only the product of biological attributes but also the product of social forces as religious teaching, law, Psychological, mental, social policy, and popular

culture. It focuses that sex is the construction of social and biological facts, which are equally significant to determine the roles and responsibilities of sex. We cannot ignore the reality that there are reciprocal relationship between sexuality and the personality. Freud and his followers think one's personality development depends on his / her sexuality. This shows that each and every branch of discussions is influenced through the sexuality either in deep or in surface level. In case of sexuality, males are aggressive and females are coy which indicate the women are comparatively passive and feeble in sexuality. The passive role in heterosexual seduction also puts forward the female oppression or, in another word female subordination.

Patriarchy and Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination is such a situation where there is inequality of rights and responsibilities on account of sex. Because of the aristocracy of male sex, females are always suppressed and depressed. Many feminist theories concern about the gender discrimination locating women's subordination in their procreation or sexual status as mediated through gendered social practices and institutions.

Janet Saltzman Chafetz, for example, argues that "specialization in the productive/public sphere undergirds superior advantage and conversely, specialization in reproductive/domestic forms the basis of extensive disadvantage" (118). She argues that women have to bear the great burden of childbirth, childcare and housework but they are never given more advantages than men rather their contribution of continuing the human race in the world becomes the mean of subordination.

In term of procreation and sexuality, male and female are really different. So they should be treated differently. In the society, women are treated not on the basis of biological difference rather of political or cultural. The males do not give any

higher position to the female in every, sector for example, in bureaucratic organization the top positions are expected to be male:

It is the man's body, its sexuality, minimal responsibility in procreation and conventional control of emotions that pervades work and organizational process. Women's bodies- female sexuality, their ability to procreate and their Pregnancy, breastfeeding, and child care, menstruation, and mythic "emotionality"-are suspect stigmatized and used as grounds for control and exclusion to function at the top of male hierarchies requires that woman render irrelevant everything that makes them women. (qtd. in Richardson and Robinson, 54)

The female workers are not treated as the male workers because their biological differences are considered disabilities; actually these biological differences are not their fault. So they should be provided compensation instead of discriminating negatively. In jobs, the females' time off for pregnancy and childbirth, is taken against job or duty but the males' time off for illness is not taken as such. So the procreation and parenting status are rooted in social politics, not biological differences.

To talk about the status of women and men, we should not forget power and privilege. Male domination is spread all over the world which always advocates the supreme power of male. Such kind of gender discrimination is practicing as if it is natural because of its long time use. Such power controls over women by locking them within four walls of the kitchen, giving the role of child minders and providing works which do not have any surplus. This shows that the females are discriminated not only on the procreation but also on the basis of roles and responsibilities, given by the power (male). Men have the approach in most of the property, media, literary fields, job, and laws. The outcome of this inequality is man's double exploitation to

the women in the job market or outside the home and inside the home. Procreation difference is not real cause of women's exploitation but its justification. Borrowing the idea of Mies and Werlhof, Lorber writes:

Women are subordinated in all industrial societies not because they are child bearers or child minders but because owners, managers, and governments depend on them as low paid accessible, responsible. They are the primary child caregivers not because of their procreative capabilities but because they are economically disadvantaged and have little choice but to do unwaged work of social reproduction. (287-88)

While we survey the overall history of gender, we can find vast differences between gender treatments in the past and the present. In the past women were given better position and respect by evaluating their performance as well as the anatomical capabilities:

The gendered division of work in early societies did not separate substance labor and child care- women did both – and many of these societies were egalitarian or possibly even woman dominated, given women's important contribution to the food supply and their evident role in the procreation of valued children. (Lorber, 292)

But, now we cannot assume such situation because of the male dominated practice. Just opposite the earlier position, women are being subordinated which also becomes the intrinsic part of modern social order. The men subordinate the women by exploiting them “as workers, sexual partners, child bearers and emotional nurturers in the market place and in the household” (Lorber, 293). So “the unequal distribution of power, property and prestige between women and men is now part of the structure of modern societies” (Lorber, 292). The national policies also do not seriously

implement the gender equality because the power holders (males) have the fear that there will be end of women's labor, sexuality and emotional exploitation.

A person either knowingly or unknowingly follows the gender activities. For the individual, gender construction starts with assignment to a sex category on the basis of what genital looks like at birth. The very sex category becomes a gender status through naming, dressing and other gender markers. In our society, in addition to male and female, the status can be transvestite and transsexual but these are not regarded as natural. The feelings of male/female gender start from the childhood through different experiences, consciousness, relationships and so many other aspects. Then, the process of gendering and the social outcomes are legitimized by religion, law, science and the social entire set of values.

Moreover, literature, language, myth, belief and many other subjects are the construction of the male dominated society where they advocate on male supremacy. In literature, males treat females as mysterious and strange but they can not represent them as such to which Beauvoir writes:

Literature always fails in attempting to portray mysterious women; they can appear only at the beginning of a novel as strange, enigmatic figures but unless the story remains unfinished they give up their secret in the end they are then simply consistent and transparent persons. (42)

Here, she wants to trace out historical inaccuracy, anthropological supposition, mythical convention and psychological perspective on women; she considers that these all concepts are based on false essence.

Men regard that women are mysterious because they cannot understand them. But Beauvoir says that women also cannot understand men. So, men are also

mysterious, since females are not similar to male in some cases, they call females as ‘others’.

Gender inequality is the devaluation of women in a patriarchal society. It has its own long history where gender is not defined in term of sex, procreation, anatomy, hormones and physiology. Rather the individual is put on the social frame deliberately and purposefully. In western society, the social order is organized around class, race ethnic and gender inequality. Lorber in *Paradoxes of Gender* says that gender discrimination is “the continuing purpose of gender as a modern social institute is to construct women as a group to be the subordinates of men as a group” (35). In this social constructed ideology, Lorber identifies the significant paradoxes that the male and female have more similarities than differences but gender tries to seek the significant differences between them. Here, he has taken the idea of Hess that “despite the evidence that women and men are more similar than different, the institution of gender continues to create and maintain socially significant differences between women and men” (Lorber, 5).

Likewise taking the idea of Ruskin to support his statement he says, “What seems to be relevant gender differences between- is a means, not on end. The point of these differences is to justify the exploitation of an identifiable group - women” (5). He indicates another paradox that gender should define in term of procreation where the females are more powerful than males but society gives just opposite values to each other. Lorber claims that having the power of giving child birth is not the “source of subordination” but a source of strength and power. Then he quotes Rich’s words to clarify the way of resolving the gender paradox. This paradox is resolved if gender is conceptualized as a social institution often rooted in conflict over some resources and in social relationships of power” (6).

In a society an individual is within the gendered societal structure and one also continues to strengthen the gender system knowingly or unknowingly because one is made blind about the gender practices right from one's birth.

Now, gender concept has been slightly changing from the past and will change in the future but without deliberate restructuring or remapping; it will not necessarily change in the direction of equality between men and women. However, since the 1970s, the term gender has been important analytical concept used to explain the different learned identities associated with masculinity and femininity. It tries to find out real biological qualities of men and women. Usha Sharma in *Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Rights* focusing on fairness and equal opportunity between the sexes writes that, "The goal of engendering society is an attempt to make men and women similar, but a man to attain equity through equal opportunities and life chances" (151).

Here, it will be relevant to present different feminists' view on gender discrimination. Radical feminists, like Catharine MacKinnon (1982), put forward their view that sex and gender are the worldwide systems of domination of women by men through the control of women's sexuality and procreative capacity. Moreover they argue that sex-gender system of oppression is deliberate not accidental and the social institutions like family, mass media, literature and religion are formed to justify the women's subordination. They fully disagree with modern social-control agencies as law and criminal justice system because "they allow men to rape, prostitute, and sexually harass women with few legal restrictions" (qtd. in Lorber, 2). Regarding the male constructed social agencies, they want to construct their own distinct agencies in each and every field.

Elaine Showalter (1992) concerns feminist criticism that she names gynocriticism. This kind of criticism tries to develop a framework from which the female literature is analyzed. She describes the duty of gynocritics as:

In contrast to angry or loving fixation on male literature, the program of gynocritics is to construct a female framework for the analyses of women's literatures, to develop new models based on the study of female experience rather than adopted male models and theories.

(Showalter, 227)

As radical feminists, the Marxist feminists like Heidi Hartmann (1976) and Michele Barrett (1980) also concern on the women's oppression in the structure of society. Sexuality is the main focus of radical feminist but Marxist feminists observe women's exploitation on the basis of gendered division of labor. They argue that women are living under the patriarchal structure of family and economy where women are trapped within four walls and they are given the work where no wages are found. So, there is dependence of females on male for economy to sustain their lives.

Psychoanalytic feminists also argue that gender is an idea of difference that emerges from family relationships, particularly mothering. They put forward the idea that:

Gender is embedded in unconscious and is manifest in sexuality, fantasies, language, and the incest taboo. The focus is on sexuality as a powerful cultural and ideological force that opposes women because it is inscribed in bodies and also in the unconscious. (Lorber, 2-3)

The above mentioned radical, Marxist and psychoanalytic feminists present their views in different ways about the gender ideology, but their central focus remains on the similar fact that is the domination of patriarchy. The term patriarchy

refers to male center tendency where the women's subordination in all cultural domains is familial, religious, political, economic, social, legal and artistic. In this tendency females are treated as inferior and negative references from past to present time as mentioned by Abrams:

From the Hebrew Bible and Greek philosophic writings to the present, the female tends to be defined by negative reference to the male as human norm, hence as another, or kind of non-man, by her lack of identifying male organ, of male powers, and of the character traits that are presumed, in the patriarchal view, to have achieved the most important scientific and technical inventions and the major works of civilization and culture. (89)

For radical feminists, patriarchy is the central concept where the male dominates the female deliberately "through violent control of their sexuality and childbearing"(Lorber, 3). For Marxist feminists, females are exploited by males in their house and as workers in capitalist market. And for psychoanalytic feminists, females are dominated through the symbolic rule of the father. The feminists use the term patriarchy to show the women's exploitation and men's autocracy. They attack to the patriarchal system accusing that it depends on the false ideologies and it is "simultaneously the process structure and ideology of women's subordination" (Lorber, 3). Patriarchal system gives birth to feminism. The people believe that patriarchy is the synonymous word of women's exploitation because of its overused and slippery conceptualization. But ideology is not to exploit the women; however, what men do, that subordinates or exploits the women.

An Overview on Feminism

Feminism is a movement concerned with the female awareness about the male dominated tendency. After 1960s' "Women's Movement", it has got world wide importance. It takes about two centuries of struggle for reorganization of women's cultural roles and achievements, and for women's social and political rights. It has evolved as one of the major approaches in literary studies. It is no longer presumed to have a single set of assumptions, and it is definitely no longer merely the "ism" of white, educated, bourgeois, heterosexual, and Anglo-American women as once seemed to be rather it covers the total women of the world as Ross L. Murfin (2003), has noted, the "evolution of feminism into feminisms has fostered a more inclusive global perspective" (301-2).

Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), Margaret Fuller's *Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1845) and John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (1869) raised the question of female equality to male but their voice could not get any response. In each and every aspect of society, women are as inferior, weak, secondary and subhuman. It is also supposed that they do not have the knowledge, cleverness, intellect and strength. They are kept far distance from the centre. Such kinds of male ideologies trap women in the cage physically as well as psychologically. The females recognize the false charges and behaviors, and gradually they develop courage to fight against male domination and suppression. After 1960s' various disciplines on feminism from political to linguistic are launched. It is the period of high consciousness of females in each and every social function.

The term "feminist theory suggests a body of knowledge which offers critical explanations of women's subordination" (Richardson and Robinson, 50). Though there are different feminists they are bounded with the same essence, whether they are

radical feminists who focus on male violence against women and man's control of women's sexuality and reproduction, seeing men as a group as responsible for women's oppression or Marxist feminism who analyze feminism in relation to capitalist exploitation of labor or liberal feminists who focus on individual rights and choices, they all agree with the exploited status of women.

The term 'feminist' and 'feminism' are political labels indicating support for the aims of new women's movement which emerges with an aim to enhance the status of women both in theory as well as in practice. Feminism is a political theory and practice to break the social bondage or boundaries. It can be taken as a commitment to reduce the patriarchal domination. It declares that women are also human beings equal to men, and that both sexes should be treated equally in each and every aspect of social responsibilities and rights.

Feminism has often focused on what is absence than what is presence, reflecting concern with the silence and marginal features of women in a patriarchal society. Feminists regard that the whole activities are politicized by the male. Julie Rivkin and Michael Rauan (2004), note "the canon of what is currently considered classic American literature", we "preface...identity as male" (Rivkin). Nowadays these kinds of politics are not found as such strong because of social changes, of the development of education and of the women awareness.

After the contributions of revolutionary nineteenth and early twentieth century authors such as Mary Wollstonecraft and her daughter Mary Shelley, George Eliot Charlotte Parkins Gilman and Virginia Woolf have developed feminist literary criticism. They mostly examine the constructed female self in the literature. Simone de Beauvoir in her most quoted book *The Second Sex* (1949) searches the causes of women being treated as second sex. She does not find any relevant causes to prove

female as second sex and male as first sex; it is only because women are constructed differently by men to fulfill their own desire of being powerful.

The feminist movement of literary criticism is concerned with the representation of women in literature and position of women in society. Its aim is to release women from the oppression of male. It refuses the cultural definition of women which attempts to fix women's identity within the male dominated canon. It analyses the picture of women representation in literature. On the basis of that representation, it makes a framework of women in the society. Feminist criticism is an approach developed under the umbrella term 'feminism' to advocate on women's right through literature. It attempts to provide same right and opportunities to women as men by making fair and careful judgments about strong and weak qualities of females.

In other words, feminist criticism is a kind of political discourse, a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism, not simply a concern for gender in literature but relevant to the study of social, institutional and personal power relations between the sexes. Many women have been victimized intellectually, emotionally and physically by men that is why they have managed efficiently to counter male power.

Feminist criticism becomes the distinctive and concrete method to literature in 1970s after the publication of *Sexual Politics*, the first major book of feminist criticism, by Kate Millet. Women writers like Mary Wollstonecraft and Simone de Beauvoir have contributed to raise the movement. It has more than two centuries long history of struggle to establish it as an independent movement. Anyway, it is now created and recreated critical maps in five ways:

- (i) By charting the course of women as writers, who they are, how and why they write, their reception and reputation....;
- (ii) By charting the

cultural representations of gender, patterns of masculinity and femininity...; (iii) By showing the complex relations among these representations and patterns of masculine dominance...; (iv) By establishing the unreliability of other maps...; (v) By so doing stimulating vigilance about the processes of map making themselves. (Simpson, 251)

We can find representation of women and gender discrimination every where in the world. The women are passing their lives in miserable and pathetic condition embracing the margin in each and every sector of society. It is women's existential otherness. A mark of otherness is one's inability to shape one's psychological, social and cultural identities. Really women are not as feeble as they are labeled. Grewal and Kaplan (1994), write "The combination of being intellectually talented but institutionally marginal is one characteristic of the history of women, education, and literary studies" (254). Men are aware that words are the weapon to gain power. So they do not provide the appropriate situation for female to acquire higher education, but at the same time, the awareness encourages them to establish women's colleges. In the United States, in the last part of the nineteenth century and the first part of twentieth century, women explicitly studied sex and gender. Though there are many changes "until now, they could not occupy the same cultural space as men" and the "transgress and redemptive, it would tear up old maps and draw trustworthy new ones" (Simpson, 156).

To destroy such social networks women have to struggle very much. They have to improve childrearing and socialization practices which help them to treat female from new frameworks. They can organize small consciousness-raising groups which provide the significant occasion to change their status and behaviours. Women

should also attack the cultural studies because they always represent women as stereotypes. The existing cultures, art, journalism, religion and language are on the behalf of male supremacy and power. So the females need to create the cultural alternatives. Next, they should change the sites of formal education of every field. However, we can note that five major changes in higher education have occurred since the late 1960's. First most overt discrimination, which official policies and practices formalize, has disappeared. Second, they become aware of sex discrimination. Third, to end discrimination women themselves should organize formally. Fourth, women's issues have a part of institutional infrastructure. And fifth, the study of women exists and has entered in the curriculum.

Women want to remap the every social structure where they could enjoy their own freedom as men. But this new remapping structure is fearful for the male in three aspects. The first is whether it substitutes "female" truth for a "male" truth. The second is psychological fear of the loss of traditional cultural authority. And the third is the opposition in politics- that is the class between the existing world views and ideologies.

The feminist critics believe that the cause of sexual discrimination and repression is sexual difference. To erase the existing gap between two sexes, the female should "create fairer cultural and educational institutions, to rewrite literacy history, and to redesign the curriculum" (Simpson, 259). Before this, the critic should present the reason for their revolt. They should show the discrimination against women in the existing institutions. It must convince on the issue of not being fault of women's biology but being social treatment, the women are excluded.

As women have been read in words by male writers, feminists have promoted the under appreciated work of women author, and the writings of many women have

been rediscovered, reconsidered, and collected in large anthologies such as *The Norton Anthology of Literature* by women, including women who had never been considered seriously or had been elided over time. For example Harriett E. Wilson, author of *Our Nig* (1859), the first novel by African American woman, the story of a free black, is “discovered” one hundred and fifty years later in a rare book store by Yale scholar Henry Louis Gates. However, merely unearthing women’s literature does not ensure its prominence; in order to assess women’s writings, the preconceptions inherent in a literacy canon dominated by male belief and male writers needed to be reevaluated.

Along with Fatterly, other critics such as Elaine Showalter, Anett Kolodny, Sandra Gilbert, and Susan Gubar question cultural, sexual, intellectual and psychological stereotypes about women and give ways for deeper reading of their literature using both essentialist and constructivist models. The focus upon the silencing and oppressing of women is a symbol of patriarchy. Females should be considered as sisterhood but they are oppressed by males.

In *A Literature of their Own*, Elaine Showalter examines the British women writers since the Victorian period from the point of view of women’s experiences. She studies females, dividing into three phases. The first phase is called feminine phase up to 1880 when the female writers imitate and internalize the dominant male aesthetic standard. They suppose that they can develop their status along with the male dominated culture. The second phase, recognized as feminist phase, which covers the period from 1880 to 1920, and the feminists of that time are called radical who totally protest the male values, cultures, literatures and other male constructed forms. From 1920 onward to the present, the third phase of women is developed that is called female phase where the feminists do not protest against male rather they write the

female experiences and difficulties to establish their self identities as males. There is not the sense of competition and destruction rather the sense of creation of self identity through the biological experiences. Moreover, the book inspires women to take strength in their act of independence in the world and constructs a reliable map of the achievements of English writers. Showalter says that women write differently not because they are different psychologically from men but because social experiences are different.

While discussing feminism, we should not forget Virginia Woolf who is an important precursor in the discipline of radical feminist movement. In addition to her fictions, she has written an essay as “*A Room of One’s Own*” (1929) and many other essays on women authors. She always presented women from realizing their productive and creative possibilities in cultural, economical and educational disabilities within the patriarchal society.

Among many feminists, it has been established as ‘feminine and masculine’ represent social construct. It is the pattern of sexuality and behavior imposed by culture and social norms to reverse ‘female and male’ as purely biological aspects of sexual difference. Simone de Beauvoir argues that femininity is a cultural construct; by birth they are females and later the society makes them women.

The patriarchal structures are universal that there is no society where women are not subordinated at least in some respects. Patriarchy is the rule or government by a man with authority passing through the male line from father to son. This idea of patriarchy is related with two different concepts: the relation between the sexes is not only biological but also political, and the relation does not depend upon equality rather upon inequality. This relationship shows the lack of female authority and power. On the basis of not having male organ, females are dominated or subordinated.

This is the male concept of phallogentrism which tries to establish the superiority of the phallus. The fundamental issue of feminist criticism is the reorganization of such patriarchal structure of society. Feminists, minimize the power of phallus arguing that there are certain female experiences which are completely unknown to male: ovulation, menstruation, and parturition.

Under patriarchy, women have, in general been forced to occupy a secondary place in the world in relation to men, and a position comparable in many respects with that of racial minorities in spite of the fact that women constitute numerically at least half of the human race. Further, this secondary stand is not the result of imposed of strong environmental forces of educational and social tradition under the purposeful control of men. The women have in general failed to take place of human dignity with free and independent existence to associate with men in relation to intellectual and professional equality. This condition is not only limited to their achievement in many fields but also given rise to pervasive social evils. It is particularly the patriarchal effect on the sexual relation between men and women.

This patriarchy system is sustained with the power gained by physical, political, government and so many other agencies. To destroy each and every thread of constructed power, females need to struggle long time with hard effort to identify male power and means for domination. Kate Millett (1970), states:

Our society, like all other historical civilizations, is patriarchy. The face is evident at once if one recalls that the military, industry, technology, sciences universities, avenue of power within society, including the coercive power of the police, is entirely in male hands. As the essence of the politics is power, such realization cannot fall to carry impact if one takes patriarchal government to be the institution where by that half of the populace which is female is controlled by that

half which is male, the principles of patriarchy appear to be two folds:
male shall dominate female, elder male shall dominate younger.

(Richardson and Robinson, 54)

Patriarchy is used for various purposes. Firstly historical patriarchy is used to identify the historical emergence of system of male domination. Secondly, it seeks to elaborate exploration of how patriarchy works in terms of the different activities of women and men in society: and thirdly psychoanalysis analyses the operation of patriarchy on the psychic (deep rooted through an understanding of the unconscious) as well as social level (Richardson and Robinson, 54).

To remove the deep rooted structure of the society is difficult task. It takes long time to establish the identities. The feminist point of view is that, since women are equal participants in social construction, they should not be suppressed. The feminist movement of 1960s has emerged as a result of a long struggle of women to get equal status and rights society. This feminist movement is for women's social economical, cultural and political freedom; it is also a movement against patriarchy and sexism.

In the beginning feminism is concerned with the narrow circle because it does not cover every aspect of women domination but later it enlarges its space and proclaims a revolution in all relations between the sexes. The aim is to end the notion that one's biological sex is superior or inferior to each other. Basically, before the first half of the twentieth century women voices seem to be merely asking for the right of vote. It is the political voice but through which they want to remove social, culture and other discrimination based upon sex. They totally want the emancipation from sexual stereotype of any kind. They advocate an equal opportunity between both sexes and if it is needed they should be given compensation to enhance their status for the weak sex.

Because of the twentieth century mass production of feminists, different views emerged in the process of equaling male and female sex. They follow different ideologies and divide into different groups. They create antagonistic nature from each other instead of concerning with the primary question to establish their own right and identities. The women's movement is established by the end of 1930s by separating from feminist movement. The women's movement does not attack on the patriarchy rather being creative tries to develop distinct sector on the basis of their experience, difficulties and feelings.

Today in each and every field, women have been participating and demanding their own rights. Moreover, they are developing parallel cultural practices. As for example, we can take the discipline of 'women's Literature' that encompasses every writings by women. In the past women could not write literature and by chance if their writings appear, they would be measured on the basis of mainstream standards. Women's literature, in the past, was taken “a pejorative term and its rejection against automatic disparagement of their work” (Hoffman, 342).

Of course, the base of women's literature is the real experiences of women in the patriarchal society. They try to develop their own perspective to view the world which is different from their brothers. This different point of view does not digest to the male because “the norms of our culture are based on masculine experiences and adapted to male role and behavior” (Hoffman, 342). Moreover, the women have great difficulties to their own perspectives because all over the society, male dominated values and standards are spread, and they themselves are influencing of such values. As a result women's movement has taken long time to establish its own separate identities and still now they are continuously struggling to receive the goal of release from subordinate identity.

Chapter Three

Effects of Gender Discrimination

Pappachi and Mammachi

Pappachi, the brother of Baby Kochamma and the husband of Mammachi is a typical example of male ego. He always wants to dominate his wife Mammachi who is seventeen years junior to him. This gives a picture of the patriarchal system that treats female cruelly. This young life of Mammachi causes a mental malady in the mind of Pappachi in old age. “He was seventeen years older than Mammachi, and realized with a shock that he was an old man when his wife was still in her prime” (50).

Pappachi, Ammu's father, is a cruel exploitor. He makes Ammu suffer and unknown to the world of an innocent child. She remembers how her father beats her mother regularly. “Every night he beats her with a brass flower vase. The beatings were not new. What was new was only the frequency with which they took place” (47). One night Pappachi breaks the bow of Mammachi's violin and throws it in the river. This episode makes the famous entomologist, Pappachi looks like an animal, even worse than animal; His behavior with his family members proves that he is really a man of bourgeois mentality and sadistic behavior who takes pleasure in giving torture to his wife and children. Once it so happens that Pappachi is beating his wife mercilessly. In the meantime Chacko, son of Pappachi comes to rescue his mother, “He strode into the room, caught Pappachi's vase-hand and twisted it around his back” (48). This interruption strikes hard on his male ego that never wants to be defeated. As a result, from that very day, he never speaks to her either. This is why, Amar Nath (2004), views him as “a peculiar character... He is the ‘Lation’ or the ‘Big Man’. Like Othello, he is impulsive, obdurate, and self-dramatizing” (183).

Roy uses the image of moth to symbolize the seed of evil in Pappachi. What Roy calls 'black moth' is the very seed of evil within him. It is dark in color. Roy wants to excavate the darkness from Pappachi. He shows superior power towards the other family members. Basically female members are suppressed by him.

Patriarchal Injustice and Ammu

Ammu finished her schooling the same year that her father retired from his job in Delhi and moved to Ayemenem. Pappachi did not want her to go to college because he felt that:

College education was an unnecessary expense for a girl, so Ammu had no choice but to leave Delhi and move with them. There was very little for a young girl to do in Ayemenem other than to wait for marriage proposals while she helped her mother with the housework (38).

Ammu has nothing else to do except waiting for marriage proposals. She helps her mother with the housework at Ayemenem. She grows desperate when she crosses eighteen and dreams of getting away from Ayemenem and the churches of her ill-tempered father and bitter, long suffering mother. It shows patriarchal domination and injustice to Ammu from her family in her teen age. Unlike her brother, Chacko, in matter of education she is not given opportunity from her father thinking that it is unnecessary to provide education for daughter. So, she compels to go to distant aunt to get married herself.

Pappachi allows her to spend the summer at Calcutta with a distant aunt. At a wedding reception there, she meets her future husband who works as an assistant manager at a tea estate in Assm. "Ammu thinks that anything anyone at all will be

better than returning to Ayemenem” (39). She writes to her parents informing them of her decision.

Ammu has in Calcutta wedding with this man, who is addicted to heavy drinking. When Ammu and her husband move to Assam, her husband turns out to be not just a heavy drinker but a full-blown alcoholic with of an alcoholic's deviousness and tragic charm. There are the things about him that Ammu never understands. Estha and Rahel were born during the war with China in 1962. When they were twelve, Babu’s boss, Mr. Hollick, gave him an ultimatum. He could either be fired for his laziness or send Ammu over to Mr. Hollick’s bungalow to sleep with him. Babu tried to force Ammu to fulfill this proposition, and she beat him senselessly before returning to Ayemenem with the twins Roy writes, “Ammu left her husband and returned to her parents in Ayemenem” (42). The narrator says Pappachi's reaction about Ammu's story in the following words, “Pappachi would not believe her story- not because he thought well of her husband, but simply because he didn’t believe that an Englishman, any Englishman, would covet another man’s wife” (42).

Ammu's Relation with Velutha

Ammu's relation with Velutha is a revolt against tradition. But marriage here neither provides love and affection nor any companionship and enjoyment to Ammu. Ammu, after unsuccessful marriage, indulges in sexual intercourse with a family carpenter who is an untouchable. In the matter of sexuality all are equal, without hierarchy and demarcation. Sexual instinct is natural but marriage and social system of hierarchy of caste is constructed.

When Velutha has an affair with Ammu, he breaks the ancient taboo and incurs the wrath of Ammu’s family and the Kerala police. He breaks the rigid social rules of the caste system. Roy describes the policeman’s violent actions as being done

out of fear, "... civilizations fear of nature, men's fear of the women, power's fear of powerlessness" (308). The division between the touchable and the untouchable is deep rooted in the Kerala society. Velutha is seen as a nonhuman. If they trust Velutha more than they intended to, it is only because any kinship and connection between themselves and him, and implication that if nothing else, at least biologically he is a fellow creature and been served long ago. This caste system is relatively connected to gender identity in relation to Ammu and untouchable Velutha.

The Police Officer's Illtreatment

The novel deals with small things, the situation scarred with numerous hunts and humiliations that are heaped on those marginalized being, female, by society. Ammu is discriminated due to the forbidden love with Velutha. After the funeral of Sophie Mol, Ammu took the twins back to the Kottayam Police Station. Ammu asked for the station House Officer and she was shown into his office. She told him that she wanted to make a statement and she also wanted to see Velutha. But the House officer, Thomas Mathew, told her that it was too late. He kept staring at Ammu's breasts and said that the Kottayam police did not take statements From Vesyas or their illegitimate children. Tapping her breasts with his baton, Mathew advised Ammu to go home quietly. The narrator says:

Then he tapped her breasts with his baton. Gently, tap, tap. As though he was choosing mangoes from a basket. Pointing out the ones that he wanted packed and delivered. Inspector Thomas Mathew seemed to know whom he could pick on and whom he could not. (8)

The scene shows the gender biased relation between male and female. Females are regarded as playing things for males. When Ammu leaves the police station, she is crying. It is the first time her children have seen their mother cry. Ammu's face is set

like stone but the tears well up in her eyes and run down her rigid cheeks. It makes the twins sick with fear. So there is demarcation line between male and female. Females are oppressed by males in male-dominated society. They are not given any freedom even to express their passion.

The death of Sophie Mol, the relationship between Ammu and Velutha and their death are the governing incidents in the novel. Despite the fact that Ammu dies in a room of hotel outside Ayemenem, all other incidents take place in the premises of History house at Ayemenem. The important thing to be noted is that all these events take place in the context of discrimination. Roy employs the setting of discrimination to the major events in her novel. Ammu, the central character in the novel is a tragic figure humiliated, insulted and misbehaved by her father, ill treated and misbehaved by her husband, badly insulted by the police and deserted and rendered destitute by her brother.

Death of Ammu

Marriage has not helped Ammu. It has given her trouble. Simone de Beauvoir has also talked about marital relationship. She as a feminist defines marriage differently. She says that marriage benefits male and suppresses female. In her book *The Second Sex*, she expresses her view on marriage as:

Marriage is the destiny traditionally offered to women by society. It is still true that most women are married or have been, or plan to be or suffer from not being. The celibate woman is to be explained and defined with reference to marriage, whether she is frustrated, rebellious or even different in regard to that institution. (475)

Beauvoir believes that marriage is social system established by male to suppress female. If there is not getting married then the woman should suffer a lot.

They are identified with reference to marriage. Their identity is attached to marriage. In the novel, Ammu is a divorcee who has come to her maternal home with her twins.

Mamachi, her mother is suffered years of abuse by husband. Then she begins one sided oedipal connection with her own son Chacko. Sister of Chacko, Baby Kochamma cannot marry Father Mulligan, an Irish Roman Catholic priest with whom she develops one sided love. The bitter experiences of life lead the family to the tragic end that causes the death in the family, and ruins the whole family. Inter-caste marriage is strictly prohibited. When a girl got married, her surname is changed and merged into the clan of her husband. A married woman can not have independent existence. The question raises why are the female much inferior to the males? Of course the answer is gender discrimination in the patriarchal society. So the transgress identity plays an important role to determine the gender identity in the society.

The novel *The God of Small Things* is situated in the crossfire between nationalist and feminist discourses, refusing to be forced to choose between them, refusing as well as to abandon all consideration of nation in favour of 'post nationalism'. In the Indian press in particular, Roy has had her defenders, but she has been charged with national and regional betrayal, pandering to the west for money and fame, slandering a well-known communist leader in her home state of Kerala, committing obscenities against Hinduism and producing an over wrought and overwritten, adolescent melodrama (7). Many attacks on the novel recapitulate the charges that a number of non- western feminists have faced in attempting to negotiate a delicate balance between national and gendered identities and advocacies. Roy's novel also points the way toward the radical thinking of nationalism and the female bodies that Lydia Liu calls for, with the added consideration of how categories like caste factor into the issues of gender.

Set in the southern state of Kerala in post-independence India, Roy's controversial novel *The God of Small Things* can be read as a political allegory that explodes the national imaginary of the region and the nation by narrating a shocking tale of love affair between a Brahmin's daughter, Ammu and an untouchable Velutha. This transgression of gender and caste norms and the violence of the family and state in disciplining the transgressors have life-destroying consequences for the next generation, for the children who are forever scared by what they have witnessed. This story of violence within the state is women through but cannot be reduced to the story of colonial, postcolonial and transnational relations outside the state. Indeed, the novel suggests that the state's continuing maintenance of a system of gender and caste violence against some of its own citizens is the betrayal that has made it and continues to make it vulnerable to outside national and transnational forces. The paralysis and suffering of the children Rahel and Estha who have witnessed the trauma and remained frozen in its temporal frame allegorises both a regional and a national consciousness.

The novel deals with small things. It is a story of forbidden class cast love and what the community will do to protect its old ways. It shows caste exploitation of forbidden love between Ammu and the untouchable Velutha. Mammachi's daughter Ammu leaves the ancestral home goes to Calcatta and gets married an alcoholic assistant manager in a tea estate in Assam. She soon divorces him and returns to Ayemenem with her twins Rahel and Estha. She faces a hostile reception in the household. Lonely and frustrated, the neglected Ammu sees the untouchable Velutha and establishes a sexual liaison with him.

Velutha works in Paradise Pickles and Preserves, started by Mammachi. Chacko is the brother of Ammu. Chacko gets married Margarate but she divorces him

when she is pregnant and marries a biologist, Joe. Chacko is greatly attached to their daughter Sophie Mol. When Margarate's husband dies in a car accident in London, Chacko invites her and Sophie Mol to Ayemenem. Two weeks after her arrival, Sophie dies while rowing with Rahel and Estha in the Meenachal River at night. Velutha is implicated in the tragedy as his liaison with Ammu has already horrified the family.

Velutha is hunted down by a posse of policemen in the History House and tortured to death. Ammu becomes an outcaste in her own family while Estha is despatched to Madras to live with his father. Chacko's business, Paradise Pickles and Preserves, collapses and is almost finished. Ammu dies a miserable and lonely death while hunting for a job away from home in Bharat Lodge. She is cremated unconventionally in an electric crematorium when she is only thirty one

As a matter of fact, the great tragedy of Sophie Mol's death and the tragedy coming out of the illicit relationship between Ammu and Velutha are given shape just beside the 'history house' that is situated in the bank of Meenachal River.

Roy thinks that people who don't fit into the pattern of history get miserable fate. R.S. Sharma (1998) holds:

Arundhati Roy conceives history as an awful burden. History is immutable and it can not be defied. History has its own cruel ways of dealing with those who don't fit into this pattern and who don't conduct themselves according to its ruthless requirements. (55)

But the character Ammu is not ready to fit into its pattern. Initially she is bold enough to challenge its immutability. Neither does Velutha accept to fit himself into it. Both of these characters are aware of the power of the history but they are ready to endanger themselves by trying to defy it. It is a tragic fate of them as well as the

twin's life that at tender age they “learned how history negotiates its terms and collects its dues from those who break its laws” (55).

She always lacks a man who loved her from his heart. This sense of lack creates a desire in Ammu. She desires a man who could protect her in his mighty arms. She has a dream of one armed lover, which symbolically suggests Velutha.

Ammu symbolically dreams:

That afternoon, Ammu traveled upwards through a dream in which a cheerful man with one-arm held her close by the light of one oil lamp. He had no other arm with which to fight the shadows that flickered around him on the floor. Shadows that only he could see. (68)

Here the ‘shadows’ reflects discrimination, cruel and monstrous law of society which never permits an untouchable to love never allows him to cross the premises of age-old tradition of so called morality. However, this man comes in Ammu's dream. He comes in her mind as a true lover who could satisfy her desire by quenching her thirst. So, she “leaned against the door in the darkness ---” (330).

Ammu, who is sitting against the bedroom door in the dark, is preparing her mind to meet Velutha. Here the 'darkness' indicates the sexual desire, or rather say the needs psychology of Ammu, she feels her dream, her afternoon-mare “more inside her like a rib of water, rising from ocean, gathering into a wave” (330). She wants to answer back to the undercurrent of sexual jealousy that emanated from Mammachi by breaking the ‘love laws’. A tide of sexual thought rise up in her mind then she walks out onto the front verandah. She paces up and down for a while restlessly. Then Ammu sits on a chair for a while. She switches on the transistor and listens to the song coming from it. Though the song ends, she continues sitting on the chair. Then she suddenly:

rose from her chair and walked out of her world like a witch ... she moved quickly through the darkness, like an insect following a chemical trail further downstream in the middle of the river, Velutha floated on his back, looking up at the stars ... (332)

Here Ammu goes out of her house at night to meet Velutha. If we study Ammu closely, we find some psychological elements playing vital role in the inner working of Ammu. She is suffering from the sense of depressed mental psychology. She does not follow the age-old rules of social conduct in the patriarchal society but develops her sexual relation with an untouchable of her village. It is only because of the fact that her past life is not fully satisfied, never satisfied. It is interesting to note here that human organism has certain needs which he/she wants to get them fulfilled at any cost. Most of the sexual disturbances, psychosomatic diseases, hypertension and many other such elements are the result of psychological imbalances caused by discrimination.

Never does Ammu intend that her life shall be destroyed. Neither does she want to be departed from her dear children. But what can she do when she is swallowed by discrimination? She can no longer restrict herself from going to meet an untouchable Paravan. She fails in her life. So she surrenders herself to Velutha, in whose arms only she feels protected. Entire world outside is very scary for her. It terrifies her.

Ammu is punished in the society for not following the traditional rules. She is expelled from her paternal home. Such concept of caste system was deeply rooted in Kerala society. The Communist leader of Kerala, Comrade KNM Pillai, an advocate of equality and socialization, does not allow Velutha to enter his house because he is a Paravan or an untouchable. Talking with Chacko, “a self-proclaimed Marxist” (65).

Comrade Pillai countesses, “He may be very well 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 stand point, these caste issues is very deep-rooted” (263). Thus, through the issue of caste system, the nature in the novel shows how the power twists the laws to corrupt the mind of the suppressed class. The postcolonial scholars want to create a society where the voice of the subject class can be heard. When Velutha has an affair with Ammu, he breaks the rigid social rules of the caste system and he is punished by the society and on the other hand Ammu’s gender identity is reflected in relation to Velutha.

Ammu tries to break the hierarchy of sex in the society. Inter caste marriage is not allowed. To make love with the person from different caste is supposed to be extreme in the society in which any emotional contact with a person lower one’s caste is supposed to be a great sin. One, who has an affair, with the lower caste male, would be expelled from her caste. Velutha breaks the social rules and crosses the forbidden territory. The narrator says, “Perhaps Ammu, Estha and Rahel were the worst transgressors but it wasn’t just them. It was the others too” (31). Almost all characters in the novel try to resist the existing rules of the society. In this way, subalternity and sexuality overlap one another.

A divorced woman often returns to her parent’s house, but she is not welcomed whole-heartedly. She is supposed to be lowered down having a divorcee amongst them. There is even the risk that the presence of divorced woman would affect possible marriage for other daughters within household. *The God of Small Things* is based on the same type of Indian social and family structure. The narrator, through the example of Baby Kochamma, an archetype of conservative Indian woman

vividly describes the attitude of the family towards a divorced woman. The narrator says:

As for a divorced daughter according to Baby Kochamma, she had no position anywhere at all. And as for divorced daughter from a love marriage, well words could not describe Baby Kochamma's outrage. As for a divorced daughter from a inter community love marriage- Baby Kochamma chose to remain quivering silent on the subject. (172)

Love, discriminated family relationship, and death are most significant themes in the novel. But above all, it is a rebellion against love laws, "the laws that lay down who should be loved, and how much. And how much" (177). Everyone in the family crosses the love laws. Mammachi, who has deep one sided oedipal connection with her son, with young girl for his 'men's need' from the backdoor. Baby Kochamma is tortured by her unflourished love, which later satisfy herself by pressing Ammu.

Ammu, a touchable and a member of a high class family in social status, develops the physical relationship with Velutha, an untouchable family carpenter that is beyond imagination in such a tough religious society and is supposed to be a great crime against the god. Velutha is accused of kidnapping Sophie Mol, Rahel and Estha's cousin and killing her and, therefore, is killed by policeman together with other people. Ammu also dies in grief. The church denies burying her, the worst transgressor who broke the love laws by having sexual relationship with Velutha. She dies alone, and there is nobody to support her.

Ammu died in a grimy room in Bharat Lodge in Alleppen, where she had gone for a job interview as someone's secretary. She died alone.

With a noisy ceiling fan for company and no Estha to lie at the back of

her and talk to her. She was thirty one. Not old, not young but a viable, die-able age. (154)

In the lodge, Ammu sits up in the strange bed in the strange room in the strange town. She does not know where she is, she recognizes nothing around her. Only her fear is familiar. The Faraway man inside her begins to shout. Since she has developed a sexual relationship with Velutha, Ammu is outcasted. She is not allowed even to take part in her niece's funeral ceremony with her family members. The situation reflects how she is discriminated from the society being her identity as female.

Almost all of the marriages in the novel have failed and cause of the failure of the marriage relations is because of the treatment of wives as their personal property by their husbands. There is also the lack of love, affection and mutual cooperation between married partners. Talking about marital relationship, Janet Saltzman and Anthony has said:

Marriage is supposed to provide each of the partners with companionship, affection and a sexual outlet in short way to lead life that is more satisfying than singleness. In this kind of marriage, the emphasis becomes personal expression and 'growth'. However, largely because of our gender roles, in reality, marriages rarely resemble this ideal. In fact they are often little more the economic units with child rearing resemble this ideal. In fact, they are often little more than economic units with child rearing responsibility. This disjuncture between the realities of marriage and our ideas probably helps to account for the high divorces rates not merely in our own society, but in virtually an industrialized, modernized society. (184)

The death of Sophie Mol, the relationship between Ammu and Velutha and their death are the governing incidents in the novel. Despite the fact that Ammu dies in a room of hotel outside Ayemenem, all other incidents take place in the premises of History house at Ayemenem. The important thing to be noted is that all these events take place in the context of discrimination. Roy employs the setting of discrimination to the major events in her novel. Ammu, the central character in the novel is a tragic figure humiliated, insulted and misbehaved by her father, ill treated and misbehaved by her husband, badly insulted by the police and deserted and rendered destitute by her brother.

Eventually, she is forced to separate from her children and goes through extreme misery, dying in a grimy hotel room from a bout of asthma-unattended and unwept. This tragedy of Ammu comes out of her evil desire of having contact with an untouchable man-a pariah whom her family of aristocratic extraction despises, and whom the Ayemenem society never accepts. This condition shows the sense that a woman cannot live freely as man. Either she has desire or not, she must follow patriarchal values. Certainly those values are not in favor of females. They always look females from the secondary perspective. This very cause is highly responsible for the death of Ammu.

Chapter Four

Establishment of Ammu's Identity as the Tragic Heroine

The social and cultural beliefs are responsible to determine the personal identity. In *The God of Small Things* Ammu is depicted as the image of surface reality in society. Ammu, the central character in the novel, is marginalized in the world of man. The bitter realities are vividly presented in the novel. The patriarchal society is guided by the ideology of male supremacy. The very cause calls out the gender discrimination in the society. Roy's "*The God of Small Things*" is the real portrayals of the male dominated society where we find different positions of different genders; normally in the patriarchal society the males acquire higher position and the female lower.

In the Society, the individual status is determined on the basis of gender, but not on the basis qualities and performances, where the male is always superior and the female is inferior. As a result females are exploited and dominated which is also their inevitable destiny in the male made society. In the society, this gender discrimination is internalized as natural due to its over- uses. The females are confined within the sphere of domesticity, and males are given absolute right everywhere. As a male, Chacko, brother of Ammu gets freedom of everything and everywhere. Then he acquires respected ranks, enough wealth and adequate honor and love. He has used his total freedom provided by the society. He easily raises his own journey of progression and gets rank from treasurer to good position. He is always looked from positive eyes, and thought that he should be given the adequate opportunities to disclose his inner potentialities. These social concepts pave him to acquire his status, honor and wealth.

On the other hand, the society views females from just opposite concepts. Patriarchal society does not give opportunities to the female to be wealthy, happy, superior, educated, and rational. These are the social constructed means of women's subordination. If any woman tries to go beyond the boundaries fixed by the society, she cannot easily exist in the society. It means no woman can survive by breaking away completely from the notion of the patriarchal society. This is the reason why a woman cannot dare to go against the role of woman as housewife confining within four walls of the house. She does not have any chances to develop her qualities. In other words, her identity remains as usual, and she cannot hold her rank, honor and wealth. Certainly, it is the result of gender discrimination in patriarchal society. Such society does not provide any opportunity to female to be superior to male. That's why she has to leave each and every achievement.

Though she has desire to hold her position, she herself becomes psychologically feeble and feels ashamed in the society and runs away leaving each and every achievements. The social norms are so strong that nobody can go beyond it. This gender biased network is the cause of Ammu's death. Being a female, she loses her opportunity for education, unlike her brother, as well as to fulfill her sexual desire. When she makes sexual contact with Velutha, who is taken as an untouchable that becomes the root cause of Ammu's death.

If there was no gender hierarchy, she could easily hold power, wealth, honor and position as Chacko. But there is no equality between male and female. As a result, she has to confine within the males' framework. Females are always considered to be inferior and males are always superior. Ammu has to face miserable condition but she does not worry about it because she has aroused her hatred towards the male dominated society. She is bold and rebels against the tradition of patriarchy and caste

system. She thinks that women can not raise their heads in that society until and unless the male constructed social structures are changed. She fully knows the existing gender discrimination and also knows that along with internalizing the male constructed codes, she can not get the liberation. So, she desires to create females' own cultures, rules and desires. That is why she wants to live in a lonely place that is under her favorite, History House to fulfill her repressed sexual desire with Velutha, so she is banished from her own house. She dies at the age of thirty-one.

To sum up, Ammu's death is the result of gender discrimination in the patriarchal society. As other women, she also has to face the same fate of inferiority. Since she breaks the love laws, the society never excuses her. Moreover, it does not allow her to continue her discriminated life. As a result she has to face her death. She is a tragic heroine, who establishes her identity. She is destroyed but not defeated.

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