

RESEARCH ARTICLE



INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

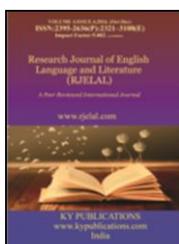
2395-2636 (Print);2321-3108 (online)

Voice For The Marginalized In 'The God of Small Things' by Arundhati Roy

A.SURAIYA¹, Dr. S. SAKTHIVEL²

¹Assistant Professor, Department of English, Periyar Maniammai University, Vallam Thanjavur

²Head, Department of English, Raja Serfoji Govt Arts College, Thanjavur



ABSTRACT

This Article (paper) tries to look over and pull out the exploitation of the marginalization and the conscientious voice which echoes towards the marginalized society and also captures social values prevailing in Arundhati Roy's novel "The God of Small Things". This novel is Arundhati Roy's first and only novel to date. It is semi-autobiographical in that it incorporates, embellishes and greatly supplements events from her family's history. Marginalization refers to the reduce power and importance of certain people in our country. (*Tribals or Adivasi, OBC's, Religious minorities and women.*) By losing their land and access to the forest means which was their main sources of livelihood and food. The sufferings of the downtrodden is clearly explicated in the entire novel through the suppressed characters. The end results as a society which is unable and unwilling to grow.

Keywords : Marginalization, downtrodden, suppressed, sociological , discrimination

©KY PUBLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Arundhati Roy, recipient of Booker Prize award was born on November 24,1961 in Shillong, Meghalaya , India. Her full name is Suzanna Arundhati Roy. Her mother Mary Roy, well known as social activist is from Kerala, and her father a Bengali Hindu tea planter. She spent her crucial childhood years in Ayamanam a small town near Kotlayamu. She then studied architecture at the school of Planning and Architecture, Delhi, At present She lives in New Delhi.

This paper tries to look over and pull out the exploitation of the marginalization and the conscientious voice which echoes towards the marginalized society and also captures social values prevailing in Arundhati Roy's novel "The God of Small Things". This novel is Arundhati Roy's first and only novel to date. It is semi-autobiographical in that it incorporates, embellishes and greatly

supplements events from her family's history. The story all along revolves in and around *Ayemenem* a small village in Kerala

This novel deftly describes the discrimination of class, culture, gender and caste, but also evaluates sociologically. The view of the author is brought to the fore and her concern for Small Things like the neglected section of the society and environment is revealed. The socio concern of the author shows that she listens to the voice less and reacts too.

The entire paper seeks to study the work of Roy's novel. 'The God of Small Things' as a text of marginalized work, which throws light on the significant happenings of life and also focuses on the marginalized people especially women, who are always associated with depression, along with their living and who experience ill treatment from the society, which affects every perspective of their

entire basic and cultural survival and their routine activity in the social life .

The reader of the novel can easily get a broad vision, a good insight and infirmity of the marginalized people living in the village. It also provides informative perspective on how to view things stand today. Even though the novel speaks about the existence of the twins.

the novel contains a contradictory mix of small things –the little moments and objects that Roy uses to build up a story and writing style that takes a childlike view of a brutal world and big things, like the ancient caste system and political turmoil in India. Despite the family's attempts at preservation, "*things can change in a day*" is one of the novel's most frequent refrains.

The entire story reflects the recollection of memorable happenings from the authors life where she meets her brother after thirty years. The story focuses about the struggle of women who is practically marginalised against the male subjugated culture

In country like India - a very complex society with a number of cultural and religious beliefs prevail. Humanity is divided not only by the very strict caste system but also by class discrimination. The novel clearly gives a depiction about the caste system, the betrayal and lost of trust among each other, the hopes in small things and the positive attitude where even when you know the little happiness will not long lost.

The novel explores '*how small things in life, affect people's lives and behavior*' and brings a constant effect on how the downtrodden are neglected by the dominated upper class. Though the novel is definitely about the twins, on the whole this novel is an argument for and against for the treatment of the good and evil in society with special reference towards the downtrodden and women. The author clearly states the revelation of caste system all over the novel.

Marginalization refers to the reduce power and importance of certain people in our country. (*Tribals or Adivasi, OBC's, Religious minorities and women.*) By losing their land and access to the forest means which was their main sources of livelihood and food.

Most of them have migrated to cities in search of work where they are employed for very low wages in local industries and at construction sites. When they are displaced from their lands, they lose much more than a source of income. In country like India - a very complex society with a number of cultural and religious beliefs. Humanity is divided not only by the very strict caste system but also by class discrimination.

Women, children, disabled, dalits, tribes, transgender and the minorities are considered to be the most vulnerable marginalized in this dominant upper groups. These people are significantly categorized as the troubled people in the world. 45 percent of tribal groups in rural areas and 35 percent in urban areas live below the poverty live. This leads to deprivation in other areas.

Many children are malnourished and the literacy rates are also very low. Destruction in one sphere naturally impacts the other often this process of dispossession and displacement can be painful and violent

The God of small things highlights the position of women folk in India. It presents before us the constant struggle of women against their never-ending exploitation, torture and struggle which they undergo because of the male dominated conservative society. Intrinsically this novel is an argument for and against the good and evil in society with special reference to the marginalized.

The novel begins with the story of a lady (Ammu) who desperately wants to get away from her ill-tempered father and finally she gets away to stay with her aunt in Calcutta and there she marries a man, who assists in the tea estate. But her marriage was unsuccessful and she returns home with her twin children, Estha (boy) and Rahel (Girl). On her return, apart from her mother and brother, they have their aunt (Baby) who is her father's sister staying with them. Ammu's brother gets married to an English women whom he fell in love with at college and they have a daughter named Sophie. The novel revolves around these characters and the life they live and disaster that follow in their lives.

The novel throws light on some important things of life like how love is always associated with sadness, how a person's childhood experiences

affect his/her perspectives and whole life and it also clearly gives a depiction about the caste system, the betrayal and loss of trust among each other, the hopes in small things and the positive attitude where even when you know the little happiness will not last long.

The story speaks and revolves around the so called untouchable –*Velutha*, who is skilled in performing the carpentry works, works in the pickle factory also much concerned on the twins. Who has been targeted for revenge and how he has to undergo many hardships. His skills in repairing machinery make him indispensable at the pickle factory, but draws dislike and opposition from the other untouchable factory workers.

Rahel and Estha form an unlikely bond with Velutha and come to love him despite his caste status (unaware about the strong prevailing of the caste system around them). The kids are much affectionate and had a good relationship with Velutha and his ability to fix almost anything, he makes himself invaluable to the enterprise. He befriends Rahel and Estha and thus gets closer to Ammu, although they maintain their caste-prescribed distance

Once the relationship of their mother with Velutha was caught they are forced to let down their love and also destroyed because of the limits and rigid rules followed by the Syrian Christian Families. When Velutha, caught by the police he is brutally beaten by them and was completely exploited by degrading him of his caste and who has mistakenly been targeted and undergoes many hardships. Roy tries to show the ugly face of people and society as a whole, a vivid description of the ironic world especially with reference to the marginalized men women that dwells around us.

Chacko, Ammu's brother who treat her as well as her children in a terrible manner. Since she is divorced and a divorced woman has no respectable place in society while her brother is also divorced, but no one tells anything to him and he leads life cheerfully. This demonstrates the dissimilar conditions for man and woman in the society.

Roy wants to prove that a woman is the pivotal character of a family and she forms the heart of the family and if we break the heart of a woman,

the whole family can disintegrate into nothingness. This is what happens to Ammu and then to her children who have this unfortunate descent from broken families and in turn lead a disintegrated and disturbed life.

The situation changes when the aunt purposefully logs in complaint with the police that the untouchable guy is responsible for all the unfortunate incidents happening in the family it was clear that he had nothing to do. But since he was an untouchable and they wanted to save her dignity, the kids were prompted to give fake evidence to the man they loved the most, resulting in the death of Velutha in the police station due to brutal treatment. This happenings clearly states how marginalized are targeted until their last breath.

Velutha had none of the shame and self-deprecation that Untouchables were supposed to have. Untouchables are supposed to see themselves as inherently inferior, but Velutha clearly lacks that self-hatred and is confident in his own rights and abilities. The only way he can express this is by fighting against the unfair system that oppress him and hoping that Communism will bring change.

Velutha a dalit, an Untouchable, which is a caste seen from birth as inferior no matter a person's actions or abilities. Though the idea of caste comes from Hinduism, it became a deeply ingrained social system to the point that even Syrian Christians hold the same extreme prejudices

The author clearly states how the Syrian Christians in Kerala are well settled with luxurious life, in connection with their lavish life style they also expect other to respect them in every order of living.

CONCLUSION

This novel was a revolutionary attempt on the part of Arundhati Roy who tried to open the eyes of Indian community towards the heartlessness of treating the downtrodden as objects. Marginalized thus treated are considered soulless beings, sub-human and playthings for men. This imbalance in society explains much of the unhappiness prevailing in our families and the battered lives of children who are exposed to this very partial and unjust view of life. The sufferings of the downtrodden is clearly explicated in the entire

novel through the suppressed characters. The end results as a paralyzed society unable and unwilling to grow. The novel completely portrays the vibrant and vehement approach directly towards the marginalized people.

Works Cited:

1. Roy, Arundhati. *The God of Small Things*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2002.
2. Prasad, Amar Nath. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*: a critical appraisal New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2004.
3. Rajimwale, Sharad. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*: a critical appraisal New Delhi: Rama Brothers India Pvt. Ltd., 2006.
4. Bal bharti public school Pitampura, Delhi – 110034 Class-8
5. Goel ruchita. Cultural context in the novels of Arundhati roy *Int. J. Eng. Lang. Lit & Trans. Studies* Vol. 4. Issue.1., 2017 (Jan-Mar.)

Short Profile of authors

Ms.A.Suraiya, is serving as Assistant Professor of English, at Periyar Maniammai University. She is possessing eleven years of Teaching Experience. She is pursuing her doctorate in Indian Writing in English under the guidance of Dr.S.Sakthivel. At present she is learning Mandarin-Chinese. She has presented papers in National and International Conferences / Seminars and has also published articles in National and International Journals. She has delivered Lectures in the Faculty Development Programmes. She is also interested in writing short stories and poems.

Dr.S.Sakthivel is working as Assistant Professor in Rajah Serfoji Govt. College Thanjavur. At present he is guiding Ph.D and M.Phil research scholars. He is possessing twenty two years of teaching experience. He has published many papers in National and International journals. He has delivered Lectures in the Faculty Development Programmes. He has also conducted many national level conferences, workshops and seminars in various occasions.
