






Research Paper in English	    
PROF. MEGHRAJ G. GADGE Assistant Professor in English Shri Ganesh Arts College MIDC Area, Shivani-Kumbhari Tq. Dist. Akola	ARUNDHATI ROY'S "THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS: A PICTURE OF CONTEMPORARY INDIAN PSYCHE" ABSTRACT Arundhati Roy has been acclaimed as an international literary sensation with her Booker Prize winning novel "The God of Small Things" in 1997. In fact, she has an immeasurable creative genius and craftsmanship which reflects in her work of art. She has inaugurated her literary career with the publication of The God of Small Things. Of course, she received greater visibility and wider acclaim in the literary award for her innovative style.

Born on 24th November 1961 in Shillong to Mary a Syrian Christian from Kerala and Rajib, a Bengali Hindu tea planter in her mother informal Western style School Corpus Christi in Kerala. After her marriage failed, Mary Roy returned to her native village in Ayemenem near Kottayam in Kerala with her two children Susanna (she eventually dropped her first name) and son, Lalith. Arundhati Roy spent a few years in boarding school in Kerala and then at the age of 16 moved to Delhi to study architecture at the Delhi School of Planning and Architecture.

Mary Roy says about Arundhati,

"Arundhati is a born talker and a born writer while she was studying in our school it was a problem to find a teacher who could cope with her voracious appetite for reading and writing"

After receiving 1997 Booker prize for first novel The God of Small Things, Arundhati Roy has earned a place among the contemporary literary genius of the world like Amitav Ghosh, Shobha De, Salman Rushdie, Bharati Mukherjee, V.S.Naipaul, Vikram Seth, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Rohinton Mistry and Vikram Chandra due to the literary creativity, elevation and innovation. The God of small things acquired the international reputation. In the novel, "The God of small thing" with its plot set in a Woodsy Kerala hamlet the novelist has universalized.

'Ayemenem in the manner of R.K. Narayan's. Malgudi Days or Thomas Hardy's Wessex.

The novel presents vivid and lively picture of South Indian society particularly of the villages and sub-urban areas of Kerala. The pictures are so alive that the readers sometimes feel as if the history of South India has been

redrawn before them. Describing the God of Small Things, Prof. Gillian Beer, the chairman of the Booker Panel of Judges said that Arundhati Roy funneled

" The history of South Indian with extraordinary linguistic inventiveness. The story she tells is fundamental as well as local. It is about love and death about lies and lows. Her narrative crackles with riddles and yet feels its tale quite clearly. We are all engrossed by this moving novels".

The novel has been criticized by host of critics and politicians for being dubbed as a satire on politics of Communist Party and leaders. The Chief Minister of Kerala E. K. Nayanar who had earlier congratulated Arundhati Roy on her winning the Booker prize since he was Malyalee and the daughter of Communist activist Mary Roy, later criticized the novel by saying that only notable thing about her work is

"The God of Small Thing who was the Anti-Communist Poison"

Nayanar said that the West was praising the book probably because of its anti communist tone. Further remarked that The Booker Prize was earlier given to V. S. Naipaul also who had vilified the leader of Indian in his book

The plot of the novel moves around its central character Ammu, her son Estha and daughter Rahel. The sad plight of Ammu a prostitute, throws light on the inhuman treatment based upon the prostitute of Ayemenem in Kerala. The policeman approach the prostitutes with sneaking scissor in order to hack of their off their heirs. Ammu often painfully noticed in market of Kottayam. Many helpless women with vacant eyes and being forcibly saved by policeman. This was the reason that Ammu

prefers to die unnoticed and lonely in a grimy room of Bharat lodge in Alleppey where she had gone for job interview. In short the present novel shows light on the perspective of society towards women. Actually, according to Roy there is no safe and secure place for helpless women in Indian society the minds of contemporary people have been totally polluted and corrupted. They can hardly think from the moral perspective otherwise they have the fixed notion about man-woman relationship.

The novel throws light on the political activities of Communists in Kerala. The novel satirizes the politician who do politics of vested interest and throws light on such politician of doing politics for serving their own interest in the grab of serving people through the political activities. This was the reason that communist leader K N M Pillai never came heavily against the political rival Mr Chacko because of his own private business relating printing of pickles labels by his printing press for which order were obtained with the help of the rival leader. Furthermore, there were an ample elements of sex and sensuousness in bedsheet for stains in order to find out the sexual relationship between Margaret Kochamma with Chacko. In chapter I, the police inspector Thomas Mathew lustfully I as the breast of Ammu and top it by his baton. The prostitute at Kottayam are so deprived of Human Rights that the Inspector do not prefer to take statement of a prostitute and their illegitimate children as witness.

"He started at Ammu's Breast as he spoke, he said the police all they need to know and that the Kottayam police did not take statement from the prostitute or their illegitimate children Ammu said she would see about that Inspector Thomas Mathew come around his desk and approached Ammu with his baton."

The conversation of the Dalits into Christianity and feeling untouchability is one of the prime concerns of the novelist. After the arrival of Britishers to Malabar a large number of people from Paravans, Pelayas and Pulayas caste were converted into Christianity and joined the Anglican Church to escape the scourge of untouchability. For accepting conversion, they were given a little food and money by the missionary and hence other people called them as 'Rice-Christian'. The converts soon realized that

they have jumped from the frying pain into the fire. They were segregated from other Christians having separate churches, service and separate priest. After independence, they found they were not entitled to any government facilities for scheduled castes like job reservations or bank loans at low concessional rates because officially now they were Christians and therefore, belong to a casteless community. For being an untouchable Vellya Papen was sent to the school of untouchable founded by Punnyan as the father in law of Mammachi.

When Mammachi hired the service of Velutha, a parayan from Carpentry works of her factory it caused a great deal of resentment among other touchable factory workers because they thought that the Paravans are not meant to work as carpenters. In order to appease resentment of other touchable worker Mammachi pays less wages to Velutha.

"To keep other happy and since she knew that nobody else would hire him a carpenter, Mammachi paid Velutha, less than she would a touchable carpenter but more than she would Paravan. Mammachi did not encourage him to enter the house (except when she needed something mended or installed). She thought that he had to be grateful that he was allowed on the factory premises at all, and allowed to touch things that touchables touched".

Arundhati Roy is a pure Indian both in thought and spirit. So it was really a feat for her to achieve a success of functional writing in an alien language. She views Socio-Political situation of South India with an ironic detachment. Yet highlights almost each and every incident happening around her which an ordinary eye is prone to miss. In fact, she appears supremely sensitive to the various social evils such as untouchability involuntary conversion of religion, abuse of official positions by politicians and police deprivation of human rights to sex worker and Dalits and so on and so forth. Her characters are ardently aware of political hypocrisy of Communist leaders of Kerala. They act and react with various incidence of society and give minute historical details of immediate post-independence situation of South Indian society. Arundhati uses gentle irony and simple words for expressions of a creative usage of fictional writing. Probably this technique has

enabled her to achieve the supreme success in fictional writing. The mental agony of Ammu is not of her alone but represents whole of the suffering women of South India. The story of Communist leader K.N.M. Pillai is not a story of his own and in fact, it tells the tale of political hypocrisy, snobbery and treachery of whole lot of politicians in Kerala.

However, Arundhati Roy delineates the realistic picture of the contemporary Indian psyche. Her evaluation of human mind and behavior is so perfect that it enables us to visualize the entire situation of South India. The novel, 'The God of Small Things' elevates the stature of Arundhati Roy in the galaxy of Indian writing in English. Undoubtedly, she is a multifaceted genius who has an impeccable command on language, style

and visual presentation of social situation. That's why, Arundhati Roy's 'God of Small Things' helps us to understand the different sets of human psyche and mindset of the contemporary period of Indian society.

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