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**Indonesian Journal of Cultural and
Community Development**

ISSN 2615-6180 (ONLINE)



BROUGHT TO YOU BY

Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo

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**Examining the Women Issues and Child Abuse as
Mirrored by Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things**

*Memeriksa Masalah Wanita dan Pelecehan Anak yang
Dicerminkan oleh The God of Small Things karya Arundhati
Roy*

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Abstract

According to many reports, abuse of women and child is the biggest human rights violation in India. In this qualitative research paper, we are going to examine the causes that lead to women issues and child abuse in India from the perspective of Arundhati Roy's novel The God of Small Things. In present India, even after its Independence, gender-discrimination and child abuse in Indian society are at worst. In order to understand the causes and reason that creates challenges for women and danger for children in Indian society, we will study the views and experiences of Arundhati Roy as she presented in her selected novel. we will be using a qualitative research methodology to analyze and collect the relevant data using the textual analysis method. For this minor research, we will read and analyze the novel written by Arundhati Roy namely, The God of Small Things (1997). At the end of this study, we will reveal the position of these issues and causes for the women's issues and child abuse issues. The significance of this study is to create an awareness among the readers on the importance of rights and freedom of women and children in India. This paper depicts how Indian women, as well as children, are facing problems and violence in their daily lives and how we used literature (novel) education to raise and build their personalities in order to contribute fruitfully in Indian society.

Introduction

Human experience has chiefly been a masculine, or what may be called a 'malist' experience. Hence, the cumulative image humanity offers are a tilted, distorted one with the female voice denied an equal force, with the woman remaining behind the walls. Ibsen commenting on the hypocrisy of the man in patriarchal society says:

[t]here are two kinds of spiritual laws, two kinds of consciences: one in man and another altogether different in woman. They do not understand each other but in practical life the woman is judged by man's law as though she were not a woman, but a man ¹.

This statement shows the plight of women in a male-oriented society. Jane Austen, in *Persuasion*, protests, "[m]en have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands" ².

The women of the early Indian English novels have been portrayed to be women with no identity. They are expected to obey the elders and to follow the traditions. Shirwadkar once remarked³:

[t]his sense of obedience to the elders which the girls have to follow pervades the Indo-Anglian novel. The picture of highly westernized girls aping the west and obsessed with the idea of physical love only was ridiculed. In contrast, the traditional ideas of obedience and faithfulness were shown as the very essence of Indian girl or girlhood (p. 31).

If we talk about women issues in India, then we can look on a report by *Thomas Reuters Foundation News* in which *Goldsmith and Beresford (2018)* reports that "*India has become the most dangerous country for women*", more specifically, they conducted a survey and based on polling among global experts they released this report that says:

The poll was a repeat of a survey in 2011 that found experts saw Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, India, and Somalia as the most dangerous countries for women. Experts said India moving to the top of poll showed not enough was being done to tackle the danger women faced, more than five years after the rape and murder of a student on a bus in Delhi made violence against women a national priority⁴.

In another report by *The Washington Post* in which *Gowen (2018)* reports that "*The report noted that reported cases of crimes against women rose 83 percent between 2007 and 2016, where there were four cases of rape every hour*" ⁵.

On the other hand, if we talk about child abuse in India then we have a report from *Ministry of Women and Child Development (2007)* which says that the age group of 5-12 are a most active victim of child abuse Ministry of Women and Child Development⁶. Over 69% of children were reported as physically abused. 52.91% and 47.09% were boys and girls respectively who faced abuse at their homes. In child labour, we have data of 50.2% children working whole week in which 81.16% of girls work in houses and 84% boys work in tea stalls. Similarly, 65.99% and 67.92% of boys and girls respectively reported as physically abused by their families who are living on the streets Ministry of Women and Child Development⁶.

Hence, in Indian literature, as we know that literature is the mirror of the society, we have a number of novels and workpiece that focuses on women and child issues in India. Through the portrayal of the characters in the novels, writers help us to understand the lives of the victims and that enhances our interest in these issues and motivate us to dive deeply into these issues and challenges facing by women and children in Indian society. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small things*⁷ is one among these novels that focuses on women issues and child abuse in detail.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*: Brief Introduction

Arundhati Roy was born on 24th November 1961 in Shillong, Meghalaya in India. She is one of the most prominent Indian English writers, who have tried their hands at novels, screenplay writing, essays etc. She also is a social activist. She has spent her childhood at Ayemenam in Kerala and incorporated her childhood memories in her debut novel, *The God of Small Things* which she began writing in 1992 and completed in 1996. Dhawan describes this book as "*a taboo-breaking protest novel*" she also adds, "*out of a sense of complacency at having rid the society of discrimination based on caste and gender*" ⁸

The God of Small Things is the first novel of Arundhati Roy. It tells the story of childhood experiences of genealogical twins whose lives were ruined by the "*Love Laws that lay down who should be loved, and how. And how much*" (pp. 188-189). The novel discovers the effects of small things on people's lives and behaviours. This novel is knitted with different themes like Indian politics, class and culture relations, forbidden love, social discrimination, betrayal and misogyny.

While the story is heartbreaking and sometimes brutal, Roy has a way with words and composes some very beautiful sentences. Arundhati Roy's peace of work is enthralling sometimes, the story knitted around "two-egg twins", Estha and Rahel, is convincing and strange. The God of Small Things transparently depicted the hidden despairs and unmerited sorrows of those women who always bear the burden of male dominion nature mutely and docilely. She transcends the ordinary concept of feminism. The novel examines the feminist jealousy between the woman and woman, the plight of woman in the male-dominated framework. Roy shows how a woman in patriarchal set up yearns for pleasure and happiness and a life far from the shackles and constraints.

Literature Review

The main purpose of this study is to examine the possible causes for women issues and child abuse as experienced and penned by Arundhati Roy in her novel *The God of Small Things*. So, for that reason, we will also be looking at several other research papers and other writers' views on women and child abuse in India. Indian women novelists like Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Anita Desai, Shakuntala Shrinagesh, Nayantara Sahgal, and Shashi Deshpande, turned themselves towards the women's world with its intuitions, perceptions and imaginations. They cultivated a new feminine form and style, especially in the art of novel writings. These writers launched an aesthetic voyage within to explore the private consciousness of the women characters. The women characters created by them showed enough courage to fight with social evils and male superiority.

Indian women were covered with many dense, illiteracy slack layers of prejudice, agreement, and reserve in literature as well as in life. They were like lifeless things, who followed five paces behind their men, being gentle is necessary, patient, kind, and for generations altogether (Behtash & Sajjadi). Anita Desai's *"Cry, the Peacock"* focused mostly on the disharmony that exists in Indian home within the marriage relationship. The female character Maya, narrate to the reader as she explains the growth, development and peak of her neurosis. Maya as a young girl possessed by a childhood prophecy of tragedy. The belief that a woman need not just food, accommodation and clothes, is aptly illustrated in this novel. The hypersensitive mind of the women is illustrated by Anita Desai in the most tender way where the atmosphere of tension is set ideally against the backdrop⁹.

The Dark Holds No Terror the novel narrates Saritha's struggles for equality for her brother, husband and for identity and the. A story of Saru who senses as an imprisoned animal, imprisoned by the necessity to prosper at all times. Whereas a woman, she needs a person that can take care of her in marriage. The senselessness of her struggles turns out to be obvious to her after hearing her mother's comments on listening to the end of the war in Mahabharata (Bhosale). Several numbers of thinkers like John Ellis, Harold Bloom and Roger Kimball contend on tagging feminist critics an angry, hostile, and resentful who disgust literature and abuse the cannon. They believe that aesthetics and politics are not compatible, the former is staining and infecting the purity of the latter.

Kashmira Sheth's *Boys Without Names (2010)* raises the issue of child labour in India due to some unwanted reasons for the family. Alobeytha, Ismail and Shapii in their article *The Use of Frame Story in Kashmira Seth's Boys Without Names* mentioned that¹⁰:

[s]heth exhibits her proficiency in depicting the portrayal of the child labours in India by mobilizing fables and creative nonfiction inside the frame stories. Her actions and decisions help to revive the traditional element of Indian literature through the use of fables (p. 110)

Similarly, Khushwant Singh's *The Company of Women* also talks about child sexual abuse in its content. We come to see that at one place the character in the novel, Molly told us about her sexual exploitation, she mentioned that "it was my own uncle, my mother's younger brother, a good twenty years older than me. Beast! Took advantage of poor, innocent me" (p. 229). Shushantika, another character in the novels also claims that she too was sexually exploited once and says,

[i] was sixteen. Nothing romantic about the deflowering. My own uncle, my father's younger brother. This usual thing, you know a close relative whom you trust. It seemed harmless enough at first kissing and cuddling, that sort of thing. Then he thought he'd me worked up and started playing with my breasts and stroking my crotch (p. 267).

In the same way, we are taking Arundhati Roy's views and experiences on women issues and child abuse while exploring her novel *The God of Small Things*.

Methodology

The present study is qualitative-based research as it gives the opportunity to read, reread, explore, examine and criticize the novel thoroughly¹¹. As a qualitative researcher, we need to analyse the experiences of human beings

and invite us as readers to find the data that are embedded in the words and phrases¹². The sample of the study is Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. The reason for selecting this novel as my sample of study is that this novel intensely deals with main motives and objectives of this study i.e., to examine the women issues and child abuse in Indian society. The data will be analyzed through textual analysis method as it will help us to understand human being's behaviour, their culture and subcultures as well as their involvement in society¹³.

Discussion

Arundhati Roy, as a novelist, is known for her Socio-cultural explorations. As a modernist, she has incorporated many of its devices in her writings. She involved with many modernist ideologies like regionalism, ecofeminism, socio-cultural identity, etc. The modern outlook has brought psychological demoralization, economic depression and intensified reaction to the bourgeois modes of social and economic practices. As the output of her attachment to the modernism, many of its issues are percolated in her philosophy and writings. Daily Telegraph on *The God of Small Things* back covers, "*It is rare to find a book that so effectively cuts through the clothes of nationality, caste and religion to reveal the bare bones of humanity*".

The novel deals with the inhuman effects of the villainous factors of gender, caste and politics. Conditions of women as a subaltern in society has always been closely analyzed in Indian literature. Mahashweta Devi, Mukhtar Mai, Amrita Pritam, Anita Desai are the women writers who deal with feminist themes. Arundhati Roy deals not only with the oppression of women but also with the sexual and social exploitation of the children prevalent at various levels. She succeeds in giving a voice to the concern of subalterns through her language inventiveness under the fictional backdrop of Ayemenem changing from colonial antecedents to the modern times. The story of novel moves around Ammu, her son Estha and daughter, Rahel. Mammachi, Ammu, Rahel and Baby Kochamma represents the three generations of women who are victims of patriarchal society.

First Generation Women

The first generation of women, Mammachi and Baby Kochamma, are content with their subordinate existence and silently approve of patriarchy. They show how the patriarchal system of marriage unleashes a reign of terror, misery and violence upon Mammachi and Ammu. The author showed how the reign of terror is unleashed by the system of marriage under patriarchy, the reign of misery and palpable violence in the wrath of Pappachi hitting a vase on Mammachi.

Mammachi owns the expert business skills and initiates a pickle factory on her own, but Pappachi "*would not help her with the pickle-making because he did not consider pickle-making a suitable job for a high ranking ex-government official*". She got beaten by him without any reason "*the beatings weren't new. What was new was only the frequency with which they took place*". Just after the death of Pappachi, her son Chacko took charge of the factory. Mammachi felt marginalized after losing the possession of the factory. As per Chacko's views "*what's yours is mine and what's mine is also mine*". However, Mammachi does not fight back with her oppressive son and acknowledges to his "*Men's Needs*" as he seduces the "*pretty women who worked in the factory.*" forced them to "*sit at table with him and drink tea*" despite of the discomfort of his mother. Mammachi was very skilful as she also knows how to play the violin. Pappachi, with the fear that his wife may leave him behind in popularity, stopped her music lessons immediately after Mammachi got highly appreciated by her music teacher. After all these brutalities on her, Mammachi still adjusts with his situations without any questions and with an ultimate elasticity in her nature. Her enduring capacity is tremendous that can face any torture without showing a single sign of pain.

Winmayil mentioned that "*Pappachi, the Entomologist became frustrated by the fact that his discovery of a new species of moth was unrecognized and after twelve years the credit was bestowed to another director of Entomology*" (p. 379)¹⁴. This dissatisfaction leads to enraged Pappachi and that results in dark moods and unexpected attacks of temper that he vomits out all in the form of physical abuse to Mammachi. Because of her immense talent in violin and her expertise of running pickles factory Pappachi feel jealous and this makes him always beat her. Mammachi knew her worth and talent but still, she never complains Pappachi's male egoism. She contrary, preferred to live as a slave of his maleness and accept all kind of rejections and insults. Mammachi behaves like a completely conventional traditional Indian woman who always remains quiet to every type of suppression.

Another abused and illtreated victim in this novel is Baby Kochamma, sister of Pappachi. To her immense shock, her dreams get shattered of marrying with an Irish priest father Mulligan. Nanda mentioned that "*To win him, she converts herself to Roman Catholic faith but ultimately, she is a failure and starts living in isolation in the Ayemenem house.*" (p. 3)¹⁵. Amitabh Roy analyzed the character of Baby Kochamma and mentioned that "*It is a pity that she submits in the name of decency and honour to the very sexist, casteist and communal prejudices that*

have stood in her way and denied fulfilment to her" (p. 62). Baby Kochamma adopted intense negativity in her attitude that she even reported fake case against Velutha and with the favour of inspector she sent him in jail where Velutha got beaten to death. All these manipulations isolate Baby Kochamma to a wretched life where her only companion is TV. Thus, like Mammachi, Baby Kochamma also apparently submits to the patriarchal social norms without any hesitation but if closely examined she puts up a line of implicit resistance against the biased sociopolitical and economic order in the post-colonial India.

Second Generation Women

The second-generation women, Ammu shows assertion and aversion to the socio-cultural codes of the orthodox society. She breaks the moral norms of society and indulges in sexual freedom. Ammu pays a heavy price for her defiance. Ammu is born in a Syrian Catholic Christian family in a conservative fictional town-Ayemenem in Kerala. Male chauvinism and gender biases are the major hurdles in Ammu's life. She has been confronted with patriarchy since her childhood. Pappachi, Ammu's father, an embodiment of imperial power inflicts violence upon Mammachi and daughter, Ammu. He is not a bit reluctant in flogging Ammu and throwing the two out of the house during the winter nights of Delhi. Ammu's defiant nature challenges him. His jealousy does not let him appreciate his wife's efficient management of the family's Paradise Pickles factory. His frustration leads him to derive pleasure in beating her. Ammu is denied education. To get rid of her patriarchal father, she marries Baba after five days they have met. But her condition gets worse because her husband was an alcoholic and beats her frequently. After the divorce, she comes back to the hell of Ayemenem with her twins. She along with her kids gets humiliation because of *die-vorce* means dead according to society. Ammu and Chacko both are estranged. But Chacko receives a warm welcome and becomes the inheritor of the property. His profligacy is recognized as "*Man's Needs*" whereas Ammu is treated as a "*Veshya*". She does not neglect her bodily needs and asserts herself, "*She wanted her body back*".

In this novel, Ammu is one who got the utmost emotional abuse in her life. "*Thanks to our wonderful male chauvinistic society*" as observed and stated by Ammu, while targeting the patriarchal minds. Ammu was educated and well-spoken woman but still it becomes a victim of ruined and suffocated marriage.

[h]er husband turned out to be not just a heavy drinker but a full-blown alcoholic with all of an alcoholic's deviousness and tragic charm. There were things about him that Ammu never understood. Long after she left him, she never stopped wondering why he lied so outrageously when he didn't need to particularly when he didn't need to.

Her act of taking instant and abrupt decisions in the condition of psychological trauma effects negatively on her as well as on those who love her. Pappachi, her father, always busy in making his good image in society with all positive attributes. In front of people he is like the kindest person on earth, but as soon he alone with his family, he becomes a monster for her wife and daughter. The tolerance of her father's wrath taught her "*to live with this cold, calculating cruelty. She developed a lofty sense of injustice and the mulish, reckless streak that develops in Someone Small who has been bullied all their lives by Someone Big*".

Ammu in her own village, Ayemenem, had to suffer from verbal, discriminatory, financial, emotional exploitation. Ayemenem people tried to marginalize her on the facts that she is "*a married daughter at parent's house, a divorced daughter, a divorced daughter from a love marriage, and a divorced daughter from an intercommunity love marriage*". She also got children who were half-Hindu twins. Her own brother Chacko was so mean to her and always tell her that, "*What's yours is mine and what's mine is also mine.*". The marriage system which is completely fruitless looks to Ammu futile. In order to fight back with all her frustration, disillusionment and alienation in life, she started to listen to her favourite songs on the radio. Arundhati Roy distinctly points out in a very poetic language the psychological and emotional trauma that Ammu was going through. Roy depicts that in the search of happiness, Ammu, "*temporarily set aside the morality of motherhood and divorcehood*". Roy named the battle of Ammu which was going inside her as an "*unmixable mix. The infinite tenderness of motherhood and the reckless rage of a suicide bomber*".

At last, when Ammu tired from every relation, she by luck came to meet Inspector Thomas Mathew who abuses her both physically and verbally. He addressed her "*veshya*" (prostitute) and her children "illegitimate" (p. 8) and in a very inhuman way used his baton to tap her breast. Embarrassed and emotionally broken Ammu from this incident, "*was unable to bear the humiliation and the fact that she could not save the life of Velutha*". Winmayil, Roy describes the behaviour of police inspector as:

[h]e stared at Ammu's breasts as he spoke. He said the police knew all they needed to know and that the Kottayam Police didn't take statements from veshyas or their illegitimate children. Ammu said she'd see about that. Inspector Thomas Mathew came around his desk and approached Ammu with his baton¹⁴.

The Hardship Ammu faced in the police station and the fake charges made against her regarding the violation of the laws of love, in which it should be kept in mind that to which person we should love and to what extent, made her psychologically ill. After sending Rahel and Estha to Ayemenem and Calcutta respectively, Ammu remains lonely and broken emotionally because of which her health becomes worst with asthma. The continuous dreams

that Ammu was having regarding the police arrest and they urge to cut off her hairs with scissors because she was considered a prostitute further tormented her mental condition. In Alleppey (a city in Kerala), Ammu left this tormented world at the age of thirty-one “*a viable, die-able age*” in a Bharat Lodge (Roy, 1997, p. 161). Her tormented soul, being a sister, daughter, wife and mother silently came to an end. However, at the end church denied burying her body there so it was given to the Electric Crematorium.

Hence, we can see from the point of Arundhati Roy that how the patriarchal society suffocated the lives of women and even never hesitate to abuse her from each and every stage of her life. This leads to a number of suicidal cases, honour killings, dowry killings, rapes, social and capital rights’ violations in Indian society. We have every second woman in India in the Image of Ammu who is suffering and dealing with the same patriarchal issues 16 ; 17 ; 18 .

Third Generation Women

Rahel, daughter of Ammu and a child of divorced parents, did not get the love from her parents that one child needs. She also had to deal with the inter-religion and inter-region differences of her parents as her mother was Christian and father was Hindu as well regionally her mother was from Kerala and her father was from Bengal. Her school life was also very disturbing where she got expelled from convent school three times and denied getting admitted again. She used to bang with intentionally with the breasts of her seniors and put fire to “*Housemistress’s false-hair bun*” . Even her own relatives Chakoo, Baby Kochamma and Kochu Maria did not like her. The only person with whom she felt comfortable was Velutha, in whom she always found a father figure. “*She knew his back. She’d been carried on it. More times than she could count*” .

As soon as Rahel comes to know the physical attachment of her mother Ammu with Velutha, she rushed to the bedroom and locked herself there. When Velutha got arrested, Rahel went to the police station with Estha (her twin brother) to prove Velutha guilty. Because of her family’s instability and dysfunctionality, she too becomes numb and unsocial as well never able to boost her self-confidence. A very unusual form of social misbehaviour done by Rahel happened, although in love brother Estha, when she “*watched Estha with the curiosity of a mother watching her wet child. A sister a brother. A woman a man. A twin a twin*” .

Rahel started observing her mother when she was completely dependent on her and at times feels her awful temper that was the results of frustrations. From the novel, we come to see that how Ammu punishes her and even hurts her by her insensitive remarks that, “*when you hurt people, they begin to love you less. That’s what careless words do. They make people love you a little less*”. These comments made Rahel’s hurt squeezed from the thought that her own mother loves her very less. Although Rahel was very imaginative and we can notice this from the fact the when she is scared, she used to imagine Pappachi’s Moth with icy legs crawling inside her heart. At the funeral of Sophie Mol, she imagines the dead turning inside the coffin. She lives her life like a lost soul. Rahel was like a carefree girl who took admission in Delhi in an Architecture course where she meets a researcher Larry McCaslin, married him and went USA. Rahel rushed in the act of marriage like “*a passenger drifts into an unoccupied chair in an airport lounge*”.

Same as her mother Ammu, Rahel learns very quickly to imagine and dream about her life. But soon same as her mother, she was rejected by the patriarchal society. She too came back to Ayemenem after being divorced by her husband, just same as happened with her mother.

Hence, by studying all these female characters we can conclude that Roy has accurately understood her characters and boldly presents them in front of readers. They too are not liberated even after their well doings and named family. These female characters of three generations had struggled with themselves in order to find a path that can take away them from the pre-defined social boundaries. They were the victims of the patriarchal society but still faced the hardships of isolation.

Child Abuse in the Novel

Arundhati Roy lays bare a child’s vision of the adult world in the novel as she herself was an “*unprotected child in some ways*”¹⁹ . Her technical inventiveness lends a unique charm to the novel. She explains the psychological torture of Estha in a very vivid way. Then comes the most shameful incident of child abuse which plays havoc for the poor child. Estha gets completely bewildered after the experience with the *Orangedrink Lemondrink Man* at Abhilash Talkies. The terrible experience keeps haunting the boy like a nightmare. He feels unprotected “*the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man could walk in any minute. Catch a Cochin-Kottayam bus and be there*” .

At the Abhilash Talkies movie theatre, when Estha went to watch a movie with Ammu, Baby Kochamma and Rahel, he encountered with the worst experience in his life. He became a victim of the sexual abuse by Orangedrink Lemondrink man. At that place, Orangedrink Lemondrink man started enquiring him and said, “*Come and have a drink, a free cold drink. Come. Come here and tell me all about your grandmother*”. Then he took Estha behind his counter and served him free cold drink. Without wasting much time, he “*handing Estha his penis through his soft*

white muslin dhoti". Orangedrink Lemondrink man took the full liberty of the situation and in his wildness on a child and *"Estha's hand was wet and hot and sticky. It had egg white on it. White egg white"*. Roy illustrated this situation as;

[a]nd, so, behind the refreshments counter, in the Abhilash Talkies, in the hall with Kerala's first 70mm CinemaScope screen, Eshta yako finished his free bottle of fizzed, lemon-flavoured fear. His lemontoolemon, too cold. Too sweet. The fizz came up his nose. How would he be given another bottle soon. But he didn't know that yet. He held his sticky other hand away from his body (p. 105).

The ugly face of humanity imprints a long-lasting influence on his mind. He remains afraid that *"the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man could just walk in through the gauze door"* of the pickle factory. His confrontation with the harsh realities of life distorts Estha's sensitive and innocent vision towards life. His bitter experiences haunt him to have these two views: *"(a) Anything can happen to anyone, And (b) It's best to be prepared"* He makes himself fully prepared to face the worst if that happens. We see later that all his apprehensions become true. He starts losing his sense of belongingness. He loves his mother and sister only. But his mother's stern words hurt his tender mind and compel him to take extreme steps. She extorts: *"I should have dumped you in an orphanage the day you were born. You're the mile stones round my neck"* and *"why can't you just go away and leave me alone"*. This results in Estha's flight from home. Estha and Rahel eventually decide to live in the history house, an old abandoned building. The twins want their mother to apologize. *"What if Ammu finds us and begs us to come back"*, asks Rahel. *"Then we will. But only if she begs"* replies Estha.

In the case of Rahel, there is always a fear for things which we can see in the form of a moth. At one place when Ammu was appreciating Orangedrink Lemondrink man at the movie theatre, Abhilash Talkies, Rahel immediately responds that *"So why don't you marry him then?"*. Ammu then tells her that, *"When you hurt people, they begin to love you less"*. Then suddenly *"cold moth with unusually dense dorsal tufts lands on Rahel's heart"*. This emotional abuse was faced by both Estha and Rahel at several places in the novel.

Further, Estha's bewilderment finds an expression in his rubbing out his surname from his exercise book. *"on the front page of book Estha had rubbed out his surname with spit and taken half the paper with it. Over the whole mass, he had written in pencil, Unknown. Esthappen Unknown"*. This incident indicates his inner self-erasing fury which leads to his self- effacement and self-fragmentation. He is separated from Rahel, his voice. The inseparable twins are separated for 23 years. Estha loses the power to express. Roy talks about the matter of bringing up children which throws light on the early life of the novelist. Roy is bold enough to show things in a realistic way. She frankly talks about the issues which are socio-cultural taboos in south Indian rural milieu.

Both Estha and Rahel got prejudiced from an inexplicable and bizarre atmosphere in childhood that had adversely affected their personalities and made them different from others, psychologically. Both the twins were blamed, belittled, rebuked and bullied for no reasons. The elders of this family were not able to dive into the children's world that results in the destruction of their lives. Rahel and Estha always abused and got punishment for writing backwards. Baby Kochamma punished them in the form of writing, *"In future, we will not read backwards"* hundred times. They always listen from other than this house of their maternal grandmother does not belong to them. Kochu Maria, who was the maid to that house got guts to say to them that, *"Tell your mother to take you to your father's house..., There you can break as many beds as you like. These aren't your beds. This isn't your house"*.

Conclusion

This study precisely elaborated and explained the patriarchal grips on women and child abuse as highlighted by Arundhati Roy in *The God of Small Things*. We can see that how on the one hand Ammu's inter-caste marriage and divorce is condemned by the Ayemenam family members and on the other hand Chacko's love marriage and his divorce with Margaret have not given much significance. Even Chacko's daughter Sophie Mol receives a heartfelt welcome from the family. After divorce Chacko returns to India and starts working as a lecturer at the Madras Christian College. The death of Pappachi provides him full access to the parental assets. He returns to Ayemenam and takes over his mother's business of pickle, Paradise Pickles and Preserves. Most of the events denote that when a woman becomes a widow or a divorcee she loses every power in her life once she loses her husband's protection.

To conclude, we find that Arundhati Roy has a deep apprehension for *Small Things*. Meaning of small things here is the sufferers of cultural, social-political and economic practices. Roy is taking small things as children, women and Dalits (lower caste of the society) who have always been considered as the second sex. In Indian society, women are considered as private property and always taken for granted. The defenceless children always suffer a lot to several kinds of child abuse. Became victims of society and faced even sexual abuse. Dalits and downtrodden workers are exploited and abused at the hands of masters and powerful people. Therefore, in *The God of Small Things* Arundhati Roy has raised the voice of all these voiceless to reconstruct their social-cultural status.²⁰

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