

## Study of women's and Child Abuse in the context of The God of Little things

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### Abstract

Even in the twenty-first century, one of India's most significant problems is the exploitation of children and women's rights. The rights you are supposed to have as a human, regardless of gender or class you are from, and for the sole reason of being a human being, these are human rights, are being portrayed by Arundhati Roy in her book *The God of Small Things*. These differences that the Indian society casts upon its people because they were born under different circumstances are being portrayed. She accomplishes this by focusing on several universal and specific topics, including love, family, and, most significantly, identity. In this article, Arundhati Roy discusses the causes of women's concerns and child abuse in India, as well as why it is the worst violation of human rights in that country. Even after Independence, gender inequality and child abuse are still widespread in Indian society today. The current study examines Arundhati Roy's perspectives and experiences as they are described in her debut novel, *The God of Small Things*, to comprehend the factors that make it difficult for women and dangerous for children to live in Indian society (1997). The method of textual analysis is used to analyse and gather the pertinent material utilising a qualitative research methodology.

### Introduction

Men and women in India are given equal standing under the constitution, even though women are regarded as the nation's riches because they are its leaders and are a source of pride for all. Nonetheless, systematic discrimination still exists in our society and contributes to a variety of disregard, including poor nutrition, a low literacy rate, a lack of property rights, the exploitation of women, child labour, domestic abuse, etc. The independence of women is also hampered by numerous anxieties. One of the things that fill women with the most severe agony and anxiety is sexual violence. India is a rising global power in the twenty-first century, yet its women continue to struggle to live honourably.

The role of women in the novel is portrayed as one of subservience and oppression Whether it is their profession or their personal life, women face problems in every stage of their lives. Yet, the severity of the issue has not been fully recognised. As long as there is a large difference between the philosophies proclaimed by the Indian Constitution, numerous laws, and governmental initiatives, and the realities of their applications in the lives of ordinary women, the freedom of women in its genuine sense would remain an illusion. The diminishing female sex ratio accurately captures the discrimination that Indian women experience from the moment of their birth. India is expanding at the same rate that violence against women is increasing and getting worse by the day. Women from practically all social classes are routinely the victims of crimes such as harassment, assault, eve-teasing, murder, kidnapping, dowry crimes, and domestic abuse.

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In a study by Thomas Reuters Foundation News on women's difficulties in India, Goldsmith and Beresford (2018) claim that "India has become the most unsafe country for women." More specifically, they carried out a survey and, based on their findings, published a report that reads as follows:

The poll was a rerun of one conducted in 2011 that revealed the most unsafe nations for women to live in were Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Pakistan, India, and Somalia. More than five years after a student was raped and killed on a bus in Delhi, experts said India is climbing to the top of the poll, showing that not enough was being done to address the threat women faced. (Goldsmith & Beresford, 2018).

Gowen (2018) says that "Reported cases of crimes against women surged 83 per cent between 2007 and 2016, where there were four cases of rape every hour" in another article from The Washington Post.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development (2007) report on child abuse in India, on the other hand, notes that children between the ages of 5 and 12 are the most frequent victims (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2007). Physical abuse of children was recorded in over 69% of cases. The percentage of boys and girls who experienced maltreatment at home was 52.91% and 47.09%, respectively. According to research, 50.2% of kids work a full week, with 81.16% of girls working in homes and 84% of boys working in tea stalls. In a similar vein, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (2007) found that 67.92% of girls and 65.99% of boys, respectively, reported experiencing physical abuse at the hands of their street-dwelling families. As a result, a variety of novels and other works in Indian literature highlight the country's problems with women and children. Through their portrayals of the characters in their novels, authors attempt to reflect upon and comprehend the lives of the victims, which heightens readers' interest in these problems and inspires them to delve thoroughly into the problems and difficulties encountered by women and children in Indian culture. One of these books that specifically address women's difficulties and child abuse is Arundhati Roy's *The God of Little Things* (1997).

## **Introduction: The God of Small Things**

Arundhati Roy was born in Shillong, Meghalaya, India on November 24, 1961. She is one of the most well-known Indian writers of English who has experimented with writing novels, screenplays, essays, etc. She is a social activist as well. Her first book, *The God of Small Things*, which she started writing in 1992 and finished in 1996, is based on her childhood experiences in Aymanam, Kerala.

This book was written "out of a sense of complacency at having cleansed the society of prejudice based on caste and gender," according to Dhawan (1999), who also calls it "a taboo-breaking protest novel." *The God of Small Things* (1997) is Arundhati Roy's debut book. It describes the early years of genealogical twins whose lives were destroyed by the "Love Rules that lay down who should be loved, and how, and how much." The novel explores how little things may have a big impact on people's lives and behaviours. This book weaves together a variety of subjects, including Indian politics, relationships between classes and cultures, unrequited love, social discrimination, treachery, and misogyny breaking. Roy has a knack for words and crafts some

exquisite sentences. Sometimes, Arundhati Roy's work is engrossing; the bizarre and believable tale centred on Estha and Rahel, the "two-egg twins," is well-written. *God of Small Things* portrayed the unseen despairs and unjustified sorrows of the women who silently and docilely carry the weight of male dominance throughout their lives. She goes beyond the typical definition of feminism. Ammu, Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, and Rahel, among other female characters in the book, had several difficulties in their day-to-day existence. Their inner selves are impacted by cultural boundaries and family pressure. Their lives were made wretched by the abuse they all endured at home at the hands of their own. The novel explores female rivalry and the condition of women in a patriarchal society. Women are expected to conform to traditional gender roles and are punished for deviating from them. Ammu, the mother of Rahel and Estha, is a prime example of this. She is divorced, which is considered scandalous in the society, and is forced to move back to her family's home with her children. She is also expected to fulfill the duties of a good daughter and sister which puts her at odd with her desires to live happily and independently. Roy demonstrates how a woman in a patriarchal society longs for pleasure, happiness, and a life free of all restrictions.

## Consideration

Novelist Arundhati Roy is renowned for her investigations into socio-cultural issues. She is a modernist and uses many of its techniques in her work. She participates in a variety of modernist philosophies, including regionalism, ecofeminism, sociocultural identity, and others. Economic misery, psychological demoralisation, and an escalating backlash against bourgeois social and economic activities are all results of the contemporary viewpoint. Many of modernism's difficulties are percolated in her thinking and writings as a result of her connection to it.

According to the Daily Telegraph, it is uncommon to discover a work that so skillfully exposes the human condition beneath the layers of race, religion, and caste. The book examines the cruel impacts of politics, caste, and other evil elements.

Indian literature has long examined in-depth the circumstances of women as social outcasts. The female authors who address feminism are Mahashweta Devi, Mukhtar Mai, Amrita Pritam, and Anita Desai. In addition to the subjugation of women, Arundhati Roy also addresses the social and sexual exploitation of children that occurs on many different levels. With the use of her inventive language use and the imaginary setting of Aymanam, which shifts from colonial to modern times, she can give voice to the concerns of subalterns. Ammu, her daughter Rahel, son Estha, and their relationships are central to the tale. The four ladies that make up the three generations of women who are victims of patriarchal society are Mammachi, Ammu, Rahel, and Baby Kochamma. So, the researcher looked at Arundhati Roy as a case study to see how the patriarchal culture stifled women's lives and even didn't think twice about abusing her (and women in general) at every stage of her life. This results in several suicide instances, dowry killings, rapes, honour killings, and violations of social and capital rights. Every second woman in India is suffering from and coping with the same patriarchal difficulties in the same way as Ammu did. Kumari (2014), Saryal (2017), and Murthy (2017).

In the book, Arundhati Roy exposes a child's perspective of the adult world because she was an "unprotected child in certain ways" herself (Rani, 2017, p. 314). Her technical ingenuity gives the book a special charm. She gives a very detailed explanation of Estha's psychological suffering. Then the most repugnant case of child abuse occurs, wreaking havoc on the unfortunate child. After her encounter with the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man at Abhilash Talkies, Estha becomes perplexed (Rani, 2017). Estha had the worst experience of his life when he went to see a movie at the Abhilash Talkies theatre with Ammu, Baby Kochamma, and Rahel. The Orangedrink Lemondrink male was subjected to sexual assault. The Orangedrink Lemondrink man approached him there and invited him to partake in a complimentary cold drink. Come tell me everything about your grandmother when you come here (Roy, 1997, p. 103). He then pulled Estha behind his counter, gave the man a free cold drink, and assaulted him sexually.

### **Conclusion:**

This study accurately described and extended the patriarchal control over women and child maltreatment that Arundhati Roy addressed in *The God of Small Things*. The researcher noticed that while the Aymanam family members denounced Ammu's intercaste marriage and divorce, they gave little weight to Chacko's love marriage to Margaret and subsequent divorce. Even Sophie Mol, Chacko's daughter, is warmly welcomed by the family. Chacko leaves for India after his divorce and begins working as a lecturer at the Madras Christian College. The researcher concludes that Arundhati Roy has a profound fear of small things. The victims of cultural, social-political, and economic practices are referred to as "little things" in this context. Children, women, and Dalits (a lower caste in society) are all referred to by Roy as little things who have historically been seen as the lesser ones.

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