



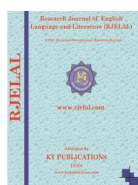
SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S "THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS"

K. SAVITHRA

Student of English, Periyar Maniammai Institute of Science and Technology,

Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu

Email: savikannan27@gmail.com



Article Received: 22/04/2021

Article Accepted: 26/05/2021

Published online:29/05/2021

DOI: [10.33329/rjelal.9.2.135](https://doi.org/10.33329/rjelal.9.2.135)

Abstract

In this paper, the caste system is described elaborately. In India, the class division is considered as most important. Different kinds of classes were divided on the basis of their occupation and behavior. There were four classes namely Brahmins, Kshatryas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Brahmins, Kshatryas and Vaishyas were considered as the upper class people. But the Shudras were the lower class. They were the untouchables. History is that Shudras were the untouchables. The occupation of the untouchables were sweeping, cleaning toilet, garbage cleaning, etc. They were considered as the polluted people. The lower class people were didn't allowed to mingle with the upper class. In Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, the untouchable named Velutha was punished and fallen dead for being in relationship with the Syrian Christian woman Ammu, who was the mother of twins, Rahel and Estha. Velutha was worked in Ipe family's pickle factory. Ammu was a divorced woman and had twins. She was disliked by the family members. Ammu need someone to protect her. She got attracted by Velutha's behavior and his body. Ammu and Velutha were in an illegal relationship. So Velutha was complained to police by the Ipe family. In the police station, he was treated harshly and died. The division of classes kills an innocent Velutha.

Keywords: History, caste system, discrimination, untouchable, practices, relationship, prey.

Introduction

People of India were divided into different types of classes. The class division made the people to live within the circle. They all form a club separately for each class. The lower class people only suffered to the peak, no other classes were affected by the class division. People of lower class suffered for their daily wages. They were suffered for their basic need. Being described them as untouchable is harmful. In the past, they received no privileges from the government. They suffered for food, education, etc. Caste vulnerability comes

under social discrimination. Arundhati Roy, an Indian novelist and mainly a social activist. She was written many novels and her novels contains mainly of social causes. I have taken her novel

The God of Small Things (1996). It received a Booker Prize in 1997. Social discrimination consumes a major part in the novel. In this novel, an untouchable was punished for his relationship with the upper class woman. History only reason for all the social causes. Society made all the rules, people followed that and that made as a history.

Social discrimination in Arundhati Roy's "The God of Small Things".

Social discrimination is that treating a group of people with disrespect and treating them differently from others. Untouchable is one of the major part in social discrimination. There was a division in caste system in India, they are Brahmins, Kshatryas, Vaishyas and Shudras. The Brahmins, Kshatryas and

Vaishyas have all the rights in the society, and they are playing a higher position among the society. But the Shudras are suffered to survive. They are struggled to survive for a day. They are the untouchables, their occupation is that cleaning toilet, sewage cleaning, etc. It was a history that made in India. In Roy's *The God of Small Things*, the untouchable named Velutha and Ammu were died due to the social causes.

The untouchables were not allowed to enter into the house of the upper class. They were not allowed to walk on the public road. They were not allowed to wear shirts. While the upper class is speaking, the untouchables kept their mouth closed with their hand, that's only the polluted breath kept away from touchables. They were not allowed to use umbrella. They were not allowed inside the temple. In villages, the untouchables had a separate street and also had separate entrance. They were not allowed to drink water from the same well as everyone had used. They had separate well to drink water. If the untouchable touch the things of the touchable, immediately they cleaned the things with water. All these practices were said by Mammachi to the fraternal twins, Estha and Rahel.

Velutha was worked in Pappachi's pickle factory. He was introduced to the Ipe's family by Vellaya Papan, he was the father of Velutha. Velutha was an intelligent mechanic and craftsman. He was become most talented at his young age. This was liked by the Ipe's family. Mammachi joined Velutha to school. He finished his schooling and continued his work in the pickle factory.

The male-chauvinism also takes place in *The God of Small Things*. In the childhood of Ammu, Ammu and Mammachi were beaten by Pappachi for

no reason. After Ammu's schooling she was not allowed to the further studies, Pappachi said women need not to study college. So that Ammu stayed in home. Suddenly, Ammu had a chance to visit her aunt home at Kolkata, there she married a tea estate manager and got separated. After the marriage, woman didn't get any kind of recognition in her parents house. In Ammu's case, she got separated from her husband, so she was treated badly by their parents.

As from her brother Chacko too, Ammu felt the male-chauvinism. He was dominating Ammu at her every single moves. After her divorce, she was treated crucially than the past. Her fraternal twins also not treated good by the family members, because they were born for the intercaste couples. Velutha get close to Ammu and also to her twins. They made a good relationship. Ammu and Velutha's relationship was become illegal. They two have a deep relationship within them. Their illicit affair was caught by the family members. Ammu was locked into the room. Ammu was separated from her children, for her affair with Velutha.

Mammachi was imagined to the extreme of their relationship. She thinks that the untouchable touch her daughter and her daughter become impure. Ammu breaks the rules of the society and Velutha too. Ipe family's obligation is breaks by Ammu.

Velutha was complained as an attempt kidnapper, murderist and rapist. He was complained as kidnapping Estha and Rahel, and he was raped Ammu, he killed Sophie Mol. Because of his illicit affair with Ammu, he got arrested, on the command of Ipe's family. In police station, Velutha was treated brutally. Estha and Rahel were forced by Baby Kochamma for the witness against Velutha.

Ammu came to know that her children are the witness for the complaint, she got shocked. She started to hate Estha and Rahel. Ammu was banished by the family members and had separated from her children. She didn't even think of their children and her family member, did this illicit relationship with the untouchable made the family members get angry.

In the modern India, the caste system is banished from some places only. In the rural areas of India still made some rules for the untouchables. The untouchables were separated from the common people and they were lived in Separate Street, too long from the touchable, at the end of the particular village. Like the rule of the past India, they were not allowed to enter into the upper class home, and not allowed to touch the touchable and their things too. They were not allowed to enter into the temple.

The untouchable were allowed to work in the home of the upper class, but they were not invited for their family function. Likewise, the touchable invited by the untouchable for their family function, but the upper class people doesn't attend the function. Time can change but the history doesn't going to change. The modern Indian government made some rights and privilege for the untouchables. They were get first priority in job offer and education scholarship. This made a change in caste system.

Velutha was treated brutally and got severe injuries in his body. Ammu came to police station and reveals the truth. She said that because of their illicit relationship, Velutha was complained wrongly by the Ipe's family to take revenge on him. And the inspector came to know that Velutha was a communist. Truth was revealed atlast. But, due to severe injuries Velutha died at police station.

After all this incidents, Ammu separate the twin children. Ammu was not treated good by their family members. She lived alone for some years, no one is there to take care of her. At the age of 31, Ammu died. It was not considered as young age or old age, but the age to live. Because of these class division, Ammu and Velutha fallen as a prey for the society.

Conclusion

In this novel, the innocent Velutha fallen prey for the society. He didn't do anything, he loved the Syrian Christian woman, Ammu. There was a history, that the lower class people didn't had contact with the upper class people. Velutha and Ammu broke the history. They didn't punish Ammu but they killed Velutha. Ammu's brother Chacko married an English

woman, but they were not punished by the society. The rules for male and female were different. The caste system is takes place only in India.

There is no class divisions in other nations. In India, the class division is settle in the mind of the students. This is one of the harmful issues. Our government asks community certificate for education, job, etc. If the caste system should be banish, government should stop asking such kind of certificates. This is the base for the students to know about different types of class division. Not only the untouchable, women also treated too badly by the society. History made the people to live by certain rules. High class people didn't able to come out of their class and mingle with everyone. They were grownup by the way which their parents conveyed. They think that their high class gives more recognition among the society, but it doesn't. One should recognize their position by the way of studying and by progressing their career. The class division doesn't help anyone to move forward and achieve. It suppresses the growth of the particular person. Not like the past, now the lower class people being educated and they placed their position in all fields.

Reference

1. Alam, Khurshid. "Untouchables in *The God of Small Things*." Postcolonial web, 17, Jan. 2005
2. Sarode, D. A. S. (2015). Victims of Social Discrimination in 'The God of Small Things'. SMART MOVES JOURNAL IJELLH, 3(9), 5. <https://ijellh.com/OJS/index.php/OJS/article/view/9092>
3. Flynn, Travis. "Arundhati Roy." University of Minnesota, 1, Jan. 2006, pp. 1-5
4. Ghosh, Pragati. Short Summary of "The God of Small Things" by Arundhati Roy, <https://www.shareyouressays.com/essays/short-summary-of-the-god-of-small-things-by-arundhati-roy/98181>