CHAPTER FIVE
VOICES OF THE MARGINALIZED IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S
"THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS"

ARUNDHATI ROY

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5.1 Introduction:

Arundhati Roy an innovative writer, social worker and activist was born on 24th November 1961, in Shillong, Meghalaya. Her father was a Hindu tea farmer. Her mother was a teacher and social worker, working for the rights of woman. She was Keralite Syrian Christian. Roy started her education at Corpus Christi, a school founded by her mother at Ayemenem. She continued her schooling in Lawrence school, Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu. This school was unique where Roy developed a sense of autonomous thinking and writing. Roy left her home at the age of sixteen and started living on her own in a small shelter. She survived for seven years by selling empty bottles.

Then Roy studied architecture at the school of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi. While studying architect she met her first husband, Gerard Da Cunha. Both decided to put their degrees sideways and do something simple and dissimilar. As a part of their pronouncement they made and sold cakes to tourists and lived a bohemian life in Goa. But after few months of this bohemian life they got fed up and did not like this lifestyle. As a result, their marriage did not last more than four years. Her early life, approach and beliefs are influenced by Christianity, Marxism, Hinduism and Islam. In the course of time, Roy identified her distinctive writing abilities. Later she started writing literature.

Arundhati Roy found a job in the Department of Urban Affairs. There she met filmmaker Pradip Krishen. She marries with him. Until the writing of ‘The God of Small Things’ Roy did various jobs. Roy won Booker prize for ‘The Go of Small Things.’

5.2 Arundhati Roy as a Writer:

Arundhati Roy started her career as a writer writing script for television, movies and screen plays. She also appeared in movie as an actress directed by her husband. Roy began writing her first novel The God of Small Things in 1992 and ended it in 1996. The
novel is semi-autobiographical and a key part of it covers her early day’s experiences. Kerala Syrian Christian family is at the centre of this novel. It deals with the atrocities done to untouchables and women.

*The God of Small Things* received Booker Prize. The book achieves unbelievable achievement. *The God of Small Things* received good reviews in The New York Times. The Booker prize citation remark about this book as:

“*The book keeps all the promises that it makes*”

After completion of her first novel, Roy writes screen plays for television. She write television serial, *The Banyan Tree* and the documentary *DAM/AGE* published in 2002 are significant.

In 2007, Roy declared that she would begin to write a second novel. Arundhati Roy was contributors for writing the book, ‘we are one: A Celebration of Tribal People’. With the publication ‘The God of Small Things’ and ‘we are One: A Celebration of Tribal People’ Roy attained the place at the international level. Now she is a writer writing for the social cause.

5.3 **Arundhati Roy: An Activist:**

After the writing of the novel *The God of Small Things* Roy has dedicated herself to non-fictional writing and social work. She started writing article on diverse social issues. She has published two collections of essays. Arundhati Roy is primarily an activist and working for social cause. Roy started working as a social activist on global level. She is a spokesperson of the anti-globalization organization. She is an opponent of the intercontinental policies of the U. S.A. She uncaringly attacks the policies of U.S.A. She also blames India’s nuclear weapons policies and industrialization. She attacks on the Narmada Dam project and the Enron Power Company.
She is recognized for her controversial statements. Earlier in 2008 she has articulated her support for the autonomy of Kashmir. She expresses her anxiety for the people living in Kashmir valley. She was criticized by Congress, B.J.P. and other political parties for her remarks. Arundhati Roy harshly comments to the U.S. A. military incursion of Afghanistan. She claims that the bombing of Afghanistan is another act of terror against the people of Afghanistan. She criticizes the policies and double standard of U.S. President George Bush. Roy has articulated her doubt on the evaluation of Indian Parliament attack. Roy commented on India’s testing of nuclear weapons as the end of imagination.

5.4 Arundhati Roy’s ‘The God of Small Things’:

_The God of Small Things_ is a story of a pair of twins Estha and Rahel. Both are the victims of situation.

K.M. Pandey comments:

“The novel is a polysemic novel which can be interpreted at several levels. It may be said that the novel is a satire on politics attacking specifically the communist establishment. It may be treated as a family saga. It may also be treated as a novel having religious overtones. It may also be treated as a love story with a tragic end.”2.

The story takes place in Ayemenem in Kerala. Discrimination, Communism and the caste system are the most important issues discussed in the novel.

Ammu is the female protagonist of the novels. She is the daughter of Pappachi and Mammachi. She is sister of Chacko. Her fault is firstly she chooses her husband and
then she falls in love with an untouchable boy. She suffers because of the social code of conduct. Due to this love affair Ammu is forced to live the life of isolation and separation.

The female protagonist Ammu develops the sense of remoteness from her social participation. She is wrongly behaved and poorly treated by her own family, faultily treated by the police and insulted and ill-treated by her husband and her brother. Throughout her life Ammu remains reserved and inaccessible.

The result of loneliness she falls in love with untouchable Velutha who give her significance. But after her affair her societal position dropped inferior. She was declared ‘defiled’ by society. Inspector Mathews treatment of her is case of sexual harassment. She is disconnected from her house. The result is she dies at very young age. Finally the religious priest refused to bury her.

The tale of Ammu and Velutha’s lives is more horrible than the real story. It is horrible than the issue of honour killing. In the case of honour killing, the lovers are killed heartlessly by the priest and the society but in the later case their life is made more miserable.
5.6 Voices of the Marginalized in Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*:
5.5 Voices of the marginalized in Arndhati Roy’s ‘The God of Small Things’

5.5.1 Theme of Discrimination:

In India and some other countries people are discriminated from one another. The novel *The God of Small Things* deals with the subject of discrimination on the base of caste and gender. It is about fact that human being suffers because of man’s individual limitation and social codes.

Ranga Roa rightly comments about the novel:

“The novel is all about atrocities against minorities, Small Things: children and youth, women and untouchables.”

The novel is about the caste system and how women in general are marginalized. It tells the story of Ipe family along with the region and caste system of Kerala in India. It is a satirical account of gender structure, caste system and communalism in India. Roy gives an account of both the wretched quandary of untouchables and women. It is the story of the outlawed love between Ammu and Velutha, between rich lady and a poor untouchable, between mother of two children and a Paravan youth.

Discrimination on the basis of gender seems to be one of the most important issues in India and a number of other countries of the world. This issue is more rigorous and serious in India. The women are underprivileged from their right and are distressed by the society only because they are female. They are not permitted to own the property of their parents. The girl Children are not given much concentration towards their nurture and education. Ammu’s father Pappachi is against the education of Ammu. He thinks:

“A College education was an unnecessary expense for a girl.”

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Ammu undergoes an unspeakable misery and pain. She goes against the parental longing. She marries a clerk in Calcutta, but returns divorced to home with her two children Rahel and Estha. Ammu finds herself amidst her family— all Syrian Christians.

Ammu is divorced woman. She has to take care of two children. Ammu and her children live in the house of her parent. She is disregarded by her family particularly her aunt Baby Kochamma. She thinks:

“A married daughter had no position in her parent’s home.”

Ammu’s parents do not provide much kindness towards her education and are not serious about her marriage. On the other hand her parents send Chacko; her brother is to abroad for education and is taken care of every need. This is only because Ammu is female and Chacko is male. Ammu’s father Pappachi hits Mammachi everyday. These are the instances of marginalization on the basis of gender. Marginalization on the basis of gender is discussed in the novel.

Marginalization on the basis of caste is also focused in novel. Velutha is the male protagonist of the novel. He belongs to Paravan untouchable caste. Velutha is marginalized because he belongs to Paravan an untouchable caste. Velutha is well aware of live sub-ordinate and sub-standard position in the society. The writer gives a realistic picture of the society where human being is separated from each other only because he or she belongs to lower caste.

Mammachi tells her grandchildren that in the old days when Paravans were expected to crawl backwards with a broom, sweeping away their foot prints so that upper caste would not pollute them by accidentally stepping into a Paravans footprint. They
were not allowed to walk freely on the streets. They were not permitted to cover their upper bodies and carry umbrellas.

The untouchables are not permitted to walk on the streets. This is the rational presentation of the condition of untouchables in India in past days. Presently there is some change but still they are discriminated on the basis of caste. Roy has brought it to the notice of the society through two children. The terror of the touchable is also exposed in the novel.

M. Patil rightly comments:

“Roy exposes the ugliness of the society by bringing two children to react to it.”

Discrimination and marginalization are the significant issues discussed in the novel. After seventy years of independence laws are unable to establish equality in India. Roy exposes the double standards of the society through this novel. Ammu and Velutha are the victim of marginalization and the double standard of the society.
5.5.2 Voices of the Untouchables:

Untouchability is banished by law. All the people in India are given equal rights. But when one observes Indian society it seems that after 70 years of independence there are so many examples of atrocities against the untouchables and women. Untouchables are disadvantaged from their fundamental right of education. They were not permitted to enter in temple.

Novelists like Arundhati Roy, Mulk Raj Anand and many others have brought this fact to the notice of the world through their works. *The God of Small Things* depicts the cross-caste conflicts. As a matter of fact, we have witnessed social divisions in the Hindu Society. It is general assumption that untouchables are only found in the Hindu religion, neither in Islam nor in Christianity. Christianity is worldwide known for universal brotherhood and humanism but here, in the novel Arundhati has brought the fact into flash the severe cross-caste conflict in Christian religion in India. The clash is not taking place between upper caste Hindu and lower caste untouchables. It’s between upper caste Syrian Christians and lower caste Christian untouchables. It shows that untouchable are not only suffering or tortured and harassed by Hindu, but also by other religious communities in India.

The most striking aspect of the novel is the treatment given to the dalits. The dalits are called Paravans in Kerala. The central character in the novel *The God of Small Things* stands out as the representative of the lower caste untouchable. The novelist gives voice to the infinite suffering of the untouchables through this novel. The writer has brought into the notice that untouchable are facing problems in free India.
5.5.2.1 Kelan: Representative of Untouchables

Kelan is the grandfather of Velutha. He is an untouchable of the common sort who passively keeps his vision of equality. He is interested in schooling of the Paravan. He represents that the type of Paravans who were once upon a time unsophisticated and untouchables. He was tries a good endeavor for the literacy of untouchables. He builds school for the untouchable and insists untouchables to receive education.

In those days in Kerala, the Paravan are not permitted to receive education. Paravans and other untouchables were not permitted to print their foot prints on the road. They had to use broom on their back to wipe away their foot prints. The touch of untouchables was called pollution. If they touched an upper class Hindu or Syrian Christian, his religion was degraded. Such was the caste-discrimination in which the novel is placed.

Kelan is anxious about the condition of the Paravan’s. He sees dreams of equality. So Kelan and other Paravans join to the Anglican Church to escape the curse of untouchability. He has design for bright prospect of untouchables. He thinks that after independence government policies like job reservations, bank loan of low rate interest rates will help the untouchables to lift up their social position. Kelan is the man who tried his best for equal opportunity and self-esteem of untouchables. Kelan with many untouchable converted them into Christianity with the hopefulness that the conversion will bring equal opportunity.

The Paravans are only converted into Christianity but their position remains the same as untouchables. The upper caste Hindus who are converted into Christianity never permitted the Paravan to enter in the churches. Then they make arrangement of separate church, separate priests for the Paravans. After converting themselves into Christianity the expected equality was not come into exist. The intention of the Paravans to convert themselves into Christianity is never fulfilled. Kelan wants to complaint against this injustice but other Paravans are not protesting and the situation remains same. After
independence the condition of Paravans becomes more critical. As legally they are not untouchable they are deprived from the government benefits like job reservations and bank loan because they are Christian by record.

The dream of Kelan to educate Paravans and bring equability remains unfulfilled. The Paravans are only taken as a labour. They are given a little rations and funds. The authoress gives the account of the condition of the untouchables during the British rule in India. She is of the view that the Christian missionaries who converted the untouchables to their religion could not improve their social status. Though they have left Hindu religion in which the casteism is deeply rooted by their conversion to Christianity has only deteriorated their societal position.

Kelan is the representative of all those Paravan who wish and try to sweep away the stigma of untouchability but fail. Kelan is the mouth piece of all untouchable is Kerala and India who wants to wash out the stigma of untouchability and wants to lead the life of equality and dignity. The writer has given voice to all those untouchables who are suffering without their fault. They are suffering because of religious and social code of conducts. The Untouchables, their lives outside society, their poverty, their humiliation, their literacy, their anticipation and the merciless treatment given to them form the setting of novel. Roy feels sympathy for the untouchables and gives voice to their suffering through this novel. Kelan is the representative of all those Paravans who suffers because of no fault of their own and who wishes to come out of this suffering.

5.5.2.2 Vellya Pappan: Father of Velutha

Vellya Pappen is the father of Velutha. He is an untouchable character in the novel. He has two sons; one of them is Velutha and the other is his elder brother Kuttappen. He is known as Paravan untouchable. He is the sufferer of caste system. He lives in hut in a very wretched condition. He is treated as an untouchable by the upper caste. He was working for the Ipe family. Vellya Pappen and Velutha visit to their master’s house to carry the coconuts plucked from the trees; they are not permitted to
walk inside the house as it would pollute it. It is the mockery that the touchable masters accept the coconut plucked from the trees by the untouchable Paravans but would not tolerate the touch of the Paravans.

Velutha and his father Vellya Pappen are both Christians but that do not take out their old-Paravan identity. Vellya Pappen was an old world Paravan and consequently he feels that any effort at social equality on the part of an untouchable would be met with most harsh punishment. He has an idea of the practice of backward crawling with a broom, sweeping away their footprints in the past.

Vellya Pappen provides a good dissimilarity to his son. One is old days Paravan with the memoirs of scrawling backward days; the other is sincere member of the communist party. One is Paravan with mortgaged limbs; while the other is expert carpenter working in the ‘Paradise Pickles’ and preservative.

Vellya Pappan remembers the incidents in his life. He meets an accident. At this time Mammachi prearranged medical help and paid for medical treatment of Vellya Pappen. Vellya Pappen thinks that his life particularly his eyes are not his own but it is the gift from Mammachi. He was bending under the dept of Mammachi.

This is the symbolic example how the touchable help a little to the untouchable and anticipate supplementary benefit from them. Mammachi help Vellya Pappan at the time of his eye injury but it is not a humanistic help but a help having some intension. One of the intention is Vellya Pappan will work for the family submissively.

Vellya Pappan’s son Velutha is a new generation Paravan. He has a lack of hesitation. He is convinced. But here the behaviour of Velutha creates fear in the mind of Vellya Pappan. His fear is well represented by the novelist.
“Vellya Pappan fiared far heis aounger san. Hei couldn’t sae what it was frighten him. It ws nat whot he saed but the way he did it”.

Vellya Pappan loves his son. He has great concern for him. Out of his anxiety for his younger son, Vellya Paapen constantly cautions him to mend his ways which results in impoliteness between the father and the son. When Vellya Pappan cautions Velutha, he protests the view of Vellya Pappan. Vellya Pappan has naturally accepted their downtrodden condition but his son complaint and is the symbol of new generation of Dalits.

When Vellya Pappan understands the love affair of Ammu and Velutha, he goes to Ayemenem house and obediently reports the story of love affair. He even asks forgiveness for himself. He told her that he is ready to kill his son with his own hands.

Vellya Pappan has his own fears. He knows that an untouchable’s affair with a touchable woman is not approved in any community. So, to present this affair he goes to inform his son’s mistake with a view to punish him. He even offers to execute his son and demolish what he has created. When Mammachi learn about the love affair she spits on his face. This was the ferocious reaction of Mammachi.

“Mamachi spratting into the raen. Thu! Thou! Thou!
An VellyhaPaapen lyng in the sleesh, weit Wiping, graveling, and offerng to kll his san.”

Thus the character of Vellya Pappan shows how untouchables are made miserable. The fear of Vellya Pappan was not imaginary. The only feeling one finds in him is the fright of touchable. He symbolizes the ordinary run of untouchables. The character is realistic. When Vellya Pappan came to know about the love affair of his son
with upper caste Ammu he is shocked. Vellya Pappan appeals the master to kill his son. This shows the terror of the touchable. The writer had given voice to the untold suffering, fear of the touchable and filthy condition of the untouchable. One feels sympathy for the father who himself plead the Ayemenem House family to kill his son for the crime his son had done.

5.5.2.3 Velutha: Victim of Caste System:

A Male protagonist:

Velutha the son of Vellya Pappan is the male protagonist of the novel. He is the Paravan, untouchable in Kerala. Roy continues the tradition of Mulk Raj Anand in giving voice to the voiceless section of the society by choosing an untouchable Velutha a male protagonist of the novel. Velutha is young and energetic. Velutha possesses heroic qualities. He does his occupation with great dedication and sincerity. Velutha is a trained Paravan; he embodies the state of ‘Untouchable’. He is living in pitiable condition. The house in which Velutha lives is very small and near the river. The writer gives the description of house which shows that how untouchables are living in an unhygienic atmosphere.

Velutha has strong physical competency. He has strong attachments in the work. He likes to work hard. He is an outstanding craftsman. Velutha has great enjoyment in making boats for the twins. As a young boy of eleven Velutha was like a little performer. He could create intricate toys. He could do amazing things like making small windmills. Apart from renovation of radios, clocks and water pumps he looked after the plumbing and all electrical gadgets in the house. He was a real master mechanic.

When he was fourteen, he has attended a workshop for the local carpenters in the Christian Mission Society. This helped Velutha to become an expert carpenter. He used to make many articles through the knowledge of carpentry. But his articles were not
accepted by the society as he is an untouchable. The untouchables were made to suffer. They are dishonored at the hands of higher caste Hindus and Christians.

When Ammu saw young Velutha she gets impressed by his personality and gets fascinated towards him. The writer narrated the incident:

“She sow the redges of masculine on Velatha’s stamach graw taight and rose ander hes sein like divesions on a slob of chcolate. A swimmers- carpentor’s bady. Polishd weth haigh-wax bady palish.’”

Mammachi considers the ability of Velutha. But she is of the opinion that as Velutha is an untouchable so he had little scope. Mammachi had remarks.

“If he hodn’t bien a Pravan, he maight hav bien an Engeeeneer.”

Considering Velutha’s qualities Mammachi had allotted him the position of in charge of general maintenance. As there are touchable factory workers in the Paradise pickle and preservation factory the appointment of Velutha as chief of maintenance caused unpleasantness and uncomfortable sentiment among other touchable workers.

Vellya Pappen, an old world Paravan, has his own fears when Velutha grew into a Youngman. Whenever Vellya Pappen warns him he thought that his father had complaint against him and Velutha did not take his recommendation sincerely. This eventually leads to a kind of tension between the father and son. The differences between father and son cultivate and one day he left for four years. His mother Chella died and his brother Kuttappan falls off a coconut tree and injured his spine. Velutha hears about it one year after the incident and he come back to home. Mammachi rehires him as chief of maintenance.
Love for Ammu and children:

Velutha’s heroic qualities can be seen in his relationship with Ammu. Ammu came to Ayemenem as a divorcee with twins. Everybody boycotts Ammu and her children. It was Velutha, an untouchable who comes forward with the helping hands. He teaches the Estha and Rahel boating and fishing. The twins enjoy their education because they didn’t know what untouchability was. The meetings of the twins bring Velutha and Ammu closer to each other. As a result, Ammu is fascinated towards the untouchable Velutha. She is attracted towards the exercised body of Velutha. The novelist gives a beautiful account of Ammu’s physical desirability to her lover Velutha. In this affair Ammu initiates and Velutha responds to her. Velutha knows the consequence of his relation with Ammu. But still he continues to love Ammu, Estha and Rahel. Finally Velutha has to sacrifice his life for the sake of his love.

Discrimination of Paravans:

Velutha is the ambassador of new age Paravan. He has taken proper training and has a competence to work better than any touchable. Considering the training, skill and competence Mammachi has appointed him as the chief of general maintenance. But the decision creates agitation among the other touchable workers. This is an example of how untouchables are discriminated by the touchable. According to the touchable Paravans cannot work as carpenters. The touchable opposes to the decision by saying, “Paravans were not meant to be carpenters.”

Though Velutha is a skillful craftsman yet Mammachi paid Velutha less than she would pay to an upper caste carpenter. When the worker become agitated after appointing Velutha as chief of maintenance Mammachi told the touchable workers that she pays less than touchable worker.

As a child Velutha visits to the Ayemenem house but Mammachi never permits Velutha and his father enters in their house. Velutha becomes young and appoints as
chief of the general maintenance of the Paradise Pickle and preservation yet she keeps safe distance.

“Mammachi didn’t encourage him to enter the house”\textsuperscript{12}

The Syrian Christians never allow Paravans to enter in their house and touch their things. They think that the touch of Paravans will defile the things. Pappachi, Mammachi, Baby Kochamma and other Syrian Christian are treating treat him badly.

Tragic End:

The novel is about the love of an upper caste woman and a lower caste man. The divorcee Ammu gets attracted towards loving Velutha who takes care of her children. But the divorcees’ illicit affair with a Paravan horrifies not only the family, but also comrade Pillai. Comrade Pillai shows that he is the supporter of casteless society. But when the love affair of Ammu and Velutha comes into light his true face come into flash.

It is Sophie Mol’s death which comes as the last fasten around the neck of Velutha. He is falsely caught up in the matter of Sophie Mol’s death. Everyone knows that Sophie Mol’s death was an accidental death. It is baby Kochamma who made Estha depose before the police that Velutha had a hand in kidnapping them which eventually led to the death of Sophie Mol.

After filling F.I.R. the Kottayam police trap Velutha, though he was innocent. Velutha’s life is put in danger. He is the sincere Marxist communist party worker but the Marxist communist party never stood by him. When the communist party worker told Velutha that police was searching for him, Velutha directly goes to meet Comrade Pillai and appeal to help him. But as the matter was settled Comrade Pillai denies helping Velutha by saying,
“Part was not constituted to, support workers indiscipline in their private life.”

Pillai makes it clear that individual’s concern was supplementary to the party’s concern. Velutha does not get any assist from the party of which he had been a sincere worker. The reason of not helping Velutha the sincere party worker is that he is a Paravans and had broken the love laws. Through this incident the writer has disclosed the hypocrisy of communist party leader. The writer harshly criticizes the policies of Communist Party. On one hand the Party and the leader talk about casteless society and on the other hand the Party leaders are conscious about caste system.

Though Velutha is innocent in the affair that he had with Ammu, everybody- the touchable – made that he was a true villain who should be stoned to death. The member of the Ayemenem family, comrade Pillai and the police played their respective roles wonderfully well to finish off Velutha.

Another feature of untouchability is folded by Arundhati Roy through the episode that whenever an untouchable accused for any crime, the touchable become united to eliminate untouchable was due to their hatred against untouchable. After filing the F.I.R against Velutha at Kottayam police station, the upper caste policemen searched for him. When they find him, at that time he was sleeping. They treat him heartlessly. They do not touch Velutha directly, but by their boots. These were the community servants of democratic India. The very description is painful.

“Boot on bone, on teith. The guargle of blaoed on a man does breathe when his lungs are torn by the jagged end of broken rib.”

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Velutha is beaten so severally that he became insensible. He tries to remove but the torture continued. His skull and nose was fractured. Thus, Velutha is tortured to death in the most inhuman way. The police knew that Velutha’s death was technically wrong. To save their face they had to conduct their own story. Velutha’s body was dumped in the ‘Themmady Kuzhi’, which marked the end of an untouchable, and a lover who dare to love a touchable girl.

Thus, Velutha certainly stands out as a very tall figure in the novel. It was his desire to relive as a touchable that triggered the tragedy. But he was never a coward and dared to speak out even when knew that his end was approaching.

The practice of untouchability is a serious issue in India. Throughout India the people are discriminated. The equivalent prospect on the basis of skill and intellect are neglected to the specific section of society. Roy through this novel has three generation of untouchable and advocates that there no much change in the life style, treatment to the untouchable. The untouchables expect that after independent equality will get establish but this hope is also not fulfilled.

Roy has given an account of three generation of Paravan untouchables. Kelan and Vellya Pappan are the representative of old generation and Velutha is the representative of contemporary generation. Kelan has tried his level best to come out of this inequality. He appeals his people to educate themselves. Kelan and many untouchables convert themselves into Christianity thinking that conversion into Christianity brings equality. But the upper Hindus who were converted into Christianity oppose the Paravans. Vellya Pappan is submissive. Velutha by educating himself wants to come out of the mud of untouchability. He is a skillful craftsman. Considering his skill Mammachi appoints him as the chief of general maintenance. The touchable workers oppose this act. Finally the result of his effort to come out of the stigma of untouchability is, he is killed for his courage to love upper class daughter. The writer has given the unsuccessful journey of the untouchables to free themselves from the stigma of untouchability and the united effort of touchable to throw them into the filth.
5.5.3 Voices of the Women:

The condition of women in Indian society is not so well. In the patriarchal Indian society women are given subordinate treatment. In the family and society they are ill treated. The present novel gives synopsis of three generation of women. Mammachi and Baby Kochamma is the portrait of old generation, Ammu belongs to the present generation and Rahel is a mouthpiece of modern generation. It seems that there is no much difference in the suffering of women in past and present. Roy had given conscious voice to the suffering of women.

Though The God of Small Things is much discussed for the issue of cruelty against the untouchables, yet it also talks about the discrimination of women in Indian patriarchal society. Both high class women and low class women suffer in this social structure. They are dishonored by their father, brother, and husband and society. Writer presents three generations of women: Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, Ammu and Rahel all are unhappy and are victims of male domination. The novelist argues how the female characters are treated badly by the male characters in the society. Mammachi by Pappachi’s and Chacko, Ammu by her husband and brother Chacko are tortured physically as well as mentally. The present novel is an endeavor of the socially conscious Arundhati Roy to give voice to the voiceless suffering section of the society.

5.5.3.1 Mammachi : Representative old Tradition:

Mammachi is the representative of old generation. She is the mother of Chacko and Ammu. Mammachi is dutiful towards people whom she considers to be superior to her, like her husband, son and dictatorial to people whom she regards as inferiors, like Velutha, Ammu and her children. She is very talented and having the capacity to run any business autonomously. Mammachi is the victim of child-marriage. Pappachi realizes it.
“Pappachi was seventeen yers older than Mamachi. And
relizd with a shakk that h wos an old mn when his wafe
was stell in her praime.”

Mammachi’s struggle starts, when Pappachi retires from the Government service in Delhi. They come back to live in Ayemenem. Mammachi starts Paradise Pickle and Preservation factory. Her husband does not assist her in the job as pickle making and Jam because he thinks that Pickle-making is not a suitable job for him as he is high-ranking Ex-Government Officer. His gone status has come in between him and work. Mammachi handles all work alone and that also he can’t bear. He feels that his wife becomes more smart and superior to him and that becomes the reason of Mammachi’s persecution. He used to beat her every night. She bears all the trouble without saying any word.

“Every naght he biats her with a brss flower vese. The
beating wern’t knw what was new was only the frequn cy
with whch they took plce.”

Mammachi tries to hide her exquisite demeanor and be liberal and a good Christian towards untouchables but this is simply on the surface. In fact, her attitude towards untouchables is adherent and she is determinedly rooted in the hierarchical caste system of her culture. Her real nature comes out when she comes to know about the relationship between Velutha and Ammu. Velutha is accepted as a worker in a company but he cannot enter in the house of Mammachi. He has no right to come inside the house and how is this possible in the life of Ammu. She becomes irritating only imagination of that thought. When Valley Pappen comes to inform and excuse for his sons fault, Mammachi shouts upon him and pushes him off the steps into the mud and spits on him, saying drunken Paravan liar.
Mammachi forgets her all manners when Velutha comes at evening. She talks with him very rude manner. Her behavior towards Velutha is unbelievable. She loses her sense completely while seeing to him. Velutha is good natured person when she does not know about his love affair with Ammu. She praises his working skill. She often said that he had not been a Paravan he might have become an engineer.

When Mammachi is confronted with the facts about his affiliation with Ammu, the image of coupling dogs comes to her mind. Most wanted person becomes superfluous within a few times. All good qualities are forgotten. The last thing Mammachi says to Velutha before he leaves is;

“If I faind you on my prperty tomorow I’ll hae you castratd like the parah dag thiat- you are! I’ll hve you kiled!”

This shows how the ideology of caste and religious beliefs are deeply rooted in society. Mammachi is a puppet in the hand of society.

Mammachi’s case is different. Although her husband was a high-up in the society, a renowned entomologist in fact, and was seventeen years old than Mammachi, he had always been a jealous man. Mammachi bears the cruelty of her husband every night. Mammachi’s behaves like an old traditional woman. She disguises herself according to situation. Though her husband beats her she is loyal to him. She is always fearful in the company of Pappachi. Mammachi’s identity is weird, mix of castes, religion and culture but she is too delineating as altogether liable for her action.

5.5.3.2 Baby Kochamma: Old Traditional Woman :

Baby Kochamma is an aunt of Ammu, sister of Pappachi, who lives in the house of Pappachi. She is unmarried. She is rebellious in her youth. She opposes
autonomously choosing a bridegroom for her. She converted herself into to Catholicism against her father’s will. Baby Kochamma is the character depicted as most powerful, diplomat and cruel. Though she likes to think of herself as an innocent sufferer in her mind she sets aside an structured, cautious account of thing’s she did for people and things people didn’t done for her.

As a young dashing lady she falls in love with a father Mulligan. She tries to seduce him by public exhibition of her charity. Every Thursday he comes at the home of Baby Kochamma, she tries to amaze him. But when her all efforts can’t work into truth against her father’s wish she becomes Roman Catholic, for the purpose of the company of father Mulligan. When her father comes to know about her plan her father brings her back and sends her to America for higher education. Her father thinks that aloofness and education will forget her love for father Mulligan.

She is the only woman who has taken a higher education in their family. Though she lives in America for two years but her love for father Mulligan does not die. Daily she expresses her love for father Mulligan by writing in her diary “I love you.”

In Baby Kochamma’s view a divorced daughter does not have place in her parent’s house. Her unconvinced love for father Mulligan makes her distressed and her disappointment makes her to persecute Ammu and making her life more depressed. She has accepted her life as a man-less woman. She thinks if her love has not satisfied so why Ammu’s. She is guilty for the endless suffering of Ammu’s children Esthapan and Rahel. She separates them. She also poisons the mind of Mammachi and Chacko against Ammu.

Baby Kochamma is totally irrational. On the occasion of funeral she wears luxurious sari that may result of unnatural self- repression and the consequent frustration. When the novel opens father Mulligan is dead four years. But his death does not affect Baby Kochamma. She lives in his memories.
“At last her memory of him was here wholly hers. Savagely, fiercely, hers not to be shared with faith, fat less with competing co-nuns and Co-sadhus or whatever it was they called themselves”.

Ammu’s love marriage and her love for Velutha give Kochamma psychological stress. When she learns someone enjoying love she becomes disturbed and depressed.

In unsuccessful love and lack of understanding makes her irrational and it has seen when Rahel returns. Her condition becomes more dangerous in the course of time. Baby Kochamma’s character is a representative character shows how woman can be rival of woman.

5.5.3.3 Ammu: Victim of Marginalization:

The Female Protagonist:

Ammu is the female protagonist of the novel. She is the daughter of Pappachi and Mammachi and sister of Chacko. A young beautiful Ammu belongs to respectable family. She suffers lot in her childhood. Her suffering starts when her father retired. After the retirement of Pappachi, Ipe family returns to Ayemenem. The Ipe family has seen the atrocious behavior of Pappachi against Mammachi. In Ayemenem there is little to do for the girl. She becomes grown-up in atrocious atmosphere. Ammu is the example of parent’s carelessness towards daughter. This carelessness causes the suffering of girl. The sensitive issue of the condition and status of woman in Indian society is discussed through the character of Ammu.
Neglect of parents towards Education and marriage:

The male dominant society gives subsidiary place to woman. The parents neglect their liability towards the education and marriage of a girl child. Ammu wants to take education but Pappachi stops her education. He thinks that girl’s education is an unnecessary disbursement. After the retirement of Pappachi Ipe family shift from Delhi to Ayemenem. The writer has narrated the carelessness toward Ammu.

“Her eighteen birthday come and went. Unnoticed or at least unremarked upon by her parents.”

The family is not serious about the education and marriage of Ammu. Her father beats her mother daily, talks in an irrelevant manner. She is fed up of the all the happenings in her life. She wants to flee from all those things. But she has no opportunity to go anywhere. The narrator narrated the condition of Ammu.

“All the day she dreamed of escaping from Ayemenem and the clutches of her ill-tempered Father and bitter, long suffering mother. She hatched several wretched little plans.”

Once she gets an opportunity to go to her aunt’s house and she decides not to come back to Ayemenem. There she meets a person who works in the tea estate as a manager. He is small, but healthy built and nice looking. He is not much educated. He proposes Ammu for marriage. Ammu accepts the proposal without much thinking.

She thinks it is the chance to flee from daily evil practices. She does not make any enquiry of that person. She report to the parents about her decision. The parent does not show any curiosity in the marriage of Ammu. They leave her on her own destiny. After
few days of her marriage she understands that her husband is a drunkard. He also beats her as her father beats her mother. To run away from the dirt she enters in other dirt. The parents disregard toward the liability of a daughter is the reason of Ammu tragedy.

**Divorce and return to Ayemenem:**

Unfortunately Ammu wedded with a person who was not suitable for Ammu in any way. The marriage does not go well. Ammu found that her husband makes their marriage completely horrible because of his serious habit of drinking. But now it is too late to think. To escape from Ayemenem she has taken completely wrong decision. All ways are closed to her. She has married against her parent’s desire so she can’t tell them about her husband. She is helpless. She becomes pregnant, she thinks that now her husband may give up the dreadful habits but she can’t see any change in his behavior. When Ammu is about to give birth to babies her husband was stretch hard on the bench of hospital corridor and he was drunk. She gives birth to twins.

Ammu goes into a dangerous state. One day her husband is summoned by the manager’s office and is given an ultimatum; either he has to take his beautiful wife Ammu for a night to his boss, Mr. Hollik or lose his job. Ammu’s husband conveys this licentious proposal to her. This intense sense of degradation generates profound disgust in the heart of Ammu.

Ammu decides to seek divorce from her drunkard and immoral husband. Ammu along with her twins returns to the parental home Ayemenem. She has no other alternative. In her parental home, Ammu and children are subjected to all kinds of disdain and suffering. She tries to assist her brother in his work but her brother refuses. There is no place for forsaken woman in family and society.
Love and Attraction for Velutha:

A lonely woman, in this bad situation get attracted towards Velutha an untouchable who is working in Paradise Pickle and Preservation factory. She starts dreaming of Velutha. She wants to fulfill her emotional as well as physical needs through Velutha. She is in search of love and protection. Velutha has a soft corner towards Ammu. She knows that it is not possible. But she can’t stop to think about him and one day Ammu undressed covered over Velutha. Ammu’s unfulfilled desires bring her closer in the life of Velutha is irresistible. There is no support to her choice. She is collapsed totally emotionally and physically also. The physical relation of Ammu and Velutha continues till thirteen days. Afterwards her happiness comes to an end. Her bliss was lost and entered in the agony to tolerate a suffering of family and society.

Suffering of Ammu:

Ammu is a divorced woman with two children. They live in her parent’s house. She is unnoticed and poorly treated by her family like her father, mother and brother and aunt. When she comes back, she is unwanted member of the family. Baby Kochamma who is impatient to make Ammu and her twins recognize that they have no position in her parent’s house particularly for a divorced daughter.

During these circumstances Ammu falls in love with Velutha. Her brother Chacko doesn’t like it. As a result, she is locked up in the dark room for hours. She loses her all rights and rights of mother. Her children are snatched from her and alienated from each other. She is kept in a dark room away from family and children. She has no right to converse anybody. She is supposed a murderer of Sophie Mol.

She is ill treated and physically abused by the members of her own family, faultily treated by the police and deserted by her brother. When Ammu goes to the police station to see Velutha the Inspector Thomas Mathew’s speaks in bad words. He shows that he is not ready to help the woman like Ammu. He said: 
“The police new all they desirable to recognize and that
the Kotayam police didn’t take declaration from ‘Vshya’s
or their unlawful children.”²²

Inspector Thomas Mathew treats with her badly. He taps on her breasts with his stick to caution her that her body is societal property. She has her status, her children and finally Velutha gone. Police inspector tortures Velutha till he dies.

Tragic End:

When Ammu’s affair is disclosed to her brother Chacko, he ejects her out from the house. Ammu spends rest of her life in loneliness and feeling extreme alienation. She dies in the Bharat Lodge in Alleppy at the age of thirty-one and the church refuses to bury Ammu. Such a pitiable death god has bestowed on her.

The character of Ammu is the central character in the novel *The God of Small Things*. It is an example of atrocities against woman. The society discriminates between boy and girl. The boy is given much attention and the girl is neglected. This is the condition the last decade of 20th century and it continues the 21st century. The girl remains an unwelcome guest in her own family. The parents neglect their responsibility towards girl child as after marriage she is the property of others and the family in which the girl goes after things the girl as an outsider. In both the cases the girl is considered as outsider. In the novel Ammu education is stopped. Her father is of the opinion that the education of girl is just wastage of time and money. He stops the education of Ammu. As they need to make arrangement of dowry they neglect their responsibility of marriage. Ammu choose her own bridegroom. The married life of Ammu is an example of thousands of Indian woman.
The divorced daughter loses her status both in her parent’s home and in her husband's home. But if the son is divorced he is licensed to have relation with other woman and is allowed to marry for the second time. The daughter does not have right to own the property either of her father or of the husband.

The present novel shows the realistic condition of women in Kerala and India. The social code of conduct, the restriction on woman, women are deprived from education and all this result in the suffering of woman. The suffering causes death. But after death also the suffering never ends. The church denies the funeral. Roy harshly criticizes these inhuman practices done to women through the novel.

5.5.3.4 RAHEL: A NEW GENERATION WOMAN:

Rahel and Estha are twins of Ammu. After the exposure of Ammu’s affair with Velutha, the twins were separated. Estha is sent to their father’s home and Rahel remains with her mother. She sees unending torture and humiliation of her mother. Rahel is representative of new generation. She is the daughter a divorcee- mother, a homeless child, who lives in her grandparent’s home. She is an unwelcome member of family. She is given ill- treatment by the family. Being the daughter of Ammu, she is ill treated. Ammu loves her very much but she has no right to do anything independently for her daughter. At last she has no right to live in relation with her daughter. When Rahel is only eleven years old her mother Ammu dies at the age of thirty one. As a daughter she has seen suffering of her mother, her insults, torture because of her love affair with Velutha.

After the death of her mother Rahel’s condition becomes more critical. Her condition is like a dog that lives on the food of possessor. She is a tool in the hands of every person of the family. It gives rise to a rebellious mood in her mind. It encourages her to be autonomous. After the basic school education she gets admission into a Mediocre College of Architecture in Delhi. She has spends eight years for five years course, in the college without getting degree and finally gets married with a Larry
McCaslin and goes to Boston with her husband. Her husband looks upon her as something very valuable. He believes she is an award which he got in love. But when they make love he is offended by her eyes and they behaves as they were belonged to someone else. They can’t fasten each other and they are separated.

After school days, she doesn’t come to Ayemenem. Her bitter childhood memories do not allow her to visit Ayemenem. After their divorce she works as a waitress in an Indian restaurant in New York. She decides to leave the job and returns to India.

Though she goes far away from her mother land but she can’t forget her childhood days. After returning to Ayemenem she wants to meet her brother whom she hasn’t meet for many years. She, like her mother returns as a divorcee. Only difference between them is her mother has two children and she is children less. She doesn’t feel shame or moral flaw for her divorce. She tries to upset comrade Pillai by informing about it.

To a large extent Rahel is liberated woman. She keeps relation with her brother. Rahel understands her mother much better. There are enough examples in the novel where she shares the anguish of her mother.

The Indian society is male dominant society. Roy has given an account of three generation of women. Mammachi and Baby Kochamma is the delegate of old generation. Ammu is the representation of present generation and Rahel is representative of modern generation. Some are half educated and some are highly educated and intellectual. But education and intellect do not give any excuse from misery and torture. Roy has expressed her sympathy and given voice the suffering of woman in Kerala.
5.5.4 Double Standard :

It is general observation that the society stand by the side of dominant. The society plays dual role. It has one standard for the high class and the other for low class, one for the male and the other for female. The novel comments on this dual standard of the society. The plot of ‘The God of Small Things’ is woven around the repression and misery of Ammu, her lover and her children caused by both her family and the society in the name of custom. Ammu has been subjected to marginalize at her own home just because she is not male. She is disadvantaged of her right to education, marriage and parental belongings. In her depression, she chooses her groom herself. She finds her decision wrong and she has to come back to her parent’s home. At Ayemenem the due alienation Ammu gets attracted towards Velutha. Mammachi is the mother of Ammu and Chacko. She makes discrimination of her own son and daughter without any sense of disgrace. She openly shows her corporate standard in accusing her daughter harshly of her affair while at the same time licensing her son for his illicit relationship.

Mammachi never even enquires Chacko about his female company. She adjusts to it and gives a separate access to Chacko’s room. The separate entrance is built for him so that his female visitors will not have to pass through the house. She even gives the money to ladies who visit Chacko secretly. Mammachi’s broadminded, pardonning approach towards her son does not apply to her daughter and her extramarital relationship. The information that Ammu has a relationship with a Paravan is intolerable to Mammachi. Ammu’s affair and Chacko’s illicit relation are not measured by the same standards due to their gender.

On the contrary in the case of Chacko Mammachi love for her son may be also due to the fact that Chacko tells Pappachi never to beat his mother again. He becomes the ‘Master of the house’. When Velutha and Ammu’s affiliation has been uncovered, Mammachi acts autonomously from Chacko to prevent their relationship from developing any further.
Arundhati Roy criticizes the policies of the Marxist communist party and the dual standard of the party leader. Comrade Pillai is the character who believes on the ideology of Marx. It seems from his speeches that he is a strong devotee of casteless society. He organizes meetings of worker and makes them aware of their rights. Velutha is a dedicated card member of the party. In the Party meeting Comrade Pillai appeals people to be courageous and struggle for their own constitutional rights. He says:

“…be courageous, dae to faiht, dify dificulties and 
adv ance weve upon wave, then the whale world will 
belang to the peaple.”

Mr. Pillai has forms his image as a sponsor of the untouchable and working class people. But he is also extremely caste conscious fellow. He belongs to upper caste and is caste conscious. While talking with Chacko Comrade Pillai accepts that he and his wife never allow Paravans in his house. He says:

“Se har, for exampale Mistres of ths hause. Evn she wll 
nver allaw Paavans and all that ito her hause.”

Velutha is informed by the communist comrade that the police was searching for him. Velutha directly goes to meet Mr. Pillai and asks for help. Mr. Pillai, who was talks about the welfare of the workers and about the casteless society, denies helping Velutha. He is more worried about the reaction of the people. He tells Velutha that he will not interfere in the family matter. The writer through the example of Mr. Pillai and the working of communist party try to show that the political party’s are hardly ever democratic.
5.6 Conclusion:

Arundhati Roy has raised her conscious voice against discrimination of untouchables and females. She has raised her voice for social cause. She has courageously commented on the sensitive issues such as Narmada Dam, Enron Project, India’s nuclear policies and Kashmir issue. Roy has shown her great concern for the common people of the country. Roy had seen the hypocrisy of the politician in Kerala and harshly criticizes on their policies.

Kerala is the highly literate state of India. It is general assumption that the untouchability is practiced by illiterate, uneducated, orthodox and traditional people. In Kerala there is great impact of Communism. It is thought that Communism is against caste system. Casteless society is the aim of communism. But through the novel Arundhati Roy has shocked to this assumption that with education only discrimination will not come to an end and communist are against caste system. The writer has shown the educated people practice casteism consciously and communist party plays double role.

Roy herself had the first hand knowledge of the caste system in Kerala. She herself has experienced that how women are neglected and given sub-ordinate place in Kerala. The present chapter is an attempt to show how the Booker prize winning novelist had tried to touch the issue of discrimination on the basis of caste and gender. ‘The God small Things’ are an overview of the period of near about fifty years.

In the family and society women are ill treated. This is reflected in literature particularly in novels. The present novel gives synopsis of three generation of women. Mammachi, Baby Kochamma are the ambassador of Old generation, Ammu is the representative of present generation and Rahel is a representative modern generation. It seems that there is no much different in the suffering of women in past and present. Roy had given conscious voice to the suffering of women.
Roy has shown that both high class and low class women suffer in this social structure. They are dishonored by their father, brother, and husband and society. Roy presents three generations of women: Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, Ammu and Rahel all are unhappy and are victims of male domination. The novelist argues that the female characters are treated badly by the male characters in the society. Mammachi by Pappachi’s and Chacko, Ammu by her husband and brother Chacko tortured physically as well as mentally.

The society does not pay much attention towards the education of male and neglect the education of female. Pappachi beat Mammachi and Ammu’s husband beat Ammu. Chacko denies the legal right of Ammu to own the parental property. In the case of woman society decides who to love and how much. When Ammu falls in love with untouchable Velutha, the society considers that Ammu had broken the laws and punishes her. The writer had given realistic picture of the suffering of women.

The untouchable wants to come up from the mud. They converted themselves into Christianity. But all the efforts to raise their social status went in vain. The upper caste Hindus never allowed the Paravans to enter in their church. The upper caste worker complains that they are not ready to work under untouchable Velutha. Finally when Velutha break the established love law of the society he is killed. The writer has shown the pathetic condition of Paravan untouchables in Kerala.

The novel The God of Small Things is an endeavor to give voice to untouchables and women, the voiceless section of the society.