

## Chapter-V

### Man-Woman Relationship in *The God of Small Things*

#### 5.1 Introduction:

Arundhati Roy is the daughter of Mary Roy, an iconoclastic educationist and crusader for women's rights. She has been architecture, film maker and original writer. Besides, she is a social activist. Roy's concern for women and their worries about environment are the major aspects of her social vision not only as an original writer but also as a social activist. It has been the fact of the modern Indian society that the patriarchal, imperialistic and mercantile systems have caused immense destruction to both women and nature.

Roy's role in Narmada Bachao Andolan and her stand against the proliferation of nuclear arms amply prove her strong social concern for human welfare in relation to humanity and environmental balance. She wrote *The Greater Common Good* in order to express her ideas about true progress of nation, the reading of which stirred the conscience of the intellectual world. In her essay, *The End of Imagination*, Roy has projected her militant opposition to the proliferation of nuclear arms. The nuclear war, as she thinks, will mean the end of our children's children. She writes:

“Our foes will not be China or Pakistan. Our foe will be earth itself. The very elements, the sky, the air, the land, the wind and water, will all turn against us, their wrath will be terrible.”<sup>1</sup>

Arundhati Roy became a world figure in the golden jubilee year of Indian independence with the publication of her debut novel, *The God of Small Things* in 1997. The novel made her earn Britain's most prestigious award, the Booker Prize. The merit of the novel remained a subject of debate amongst critics, writers and thinkers. Despite all this, the novel received acclaim almost from the world. While reviewing the novel, *The New Yorkers*, John Updike, a great novelist observes:

“This is a first novel, and it's a Tiger Woodsian debut – the author hits the long socio-cosmic ball but is also exquisite in her short game, like a devotionally built temple.”<sup>2</sup>

*The God of Small Things* emerges prominently as a protest novel dealing with the socio-cultural history of South India and as Roy maintains, “It is about biology and transgression.”<sup>3</sup> The social issues such as women, children, untouchables, conversion, political hypocrisy and environment have been portrayed in the light of socio-cultural conditions of the traditionally modern Keralite society of India.

One of the significant features of the novel is its vital relationship with the life of the novelist. The two characters- Rahel and Ammu - have been the literary transformation of Arundhati Roy and her mother Mary Roy, who had to struggle hard and suffer from the patriarchal norms of Keralite society for divorce and property rights. Arundhati Roy herself suffered from the pangs of loneliness during her childhood and adolescence. While tracing the influence of Mary Roy on her, Lorna Sage (1999) observes:

“Arundhati acknowledges her mother’s fierce independence and free thinking as powerful influences on her own life and work.”<sup>4</sup>

Then, it is well established that Arundhati Roy is an activist and a novelist with social commitment who has a touch of personal suffering in real life.

## 5.2 Man-woman Relationship in the novel, *The God of Small Thing*:

M.K. Naik in his essay, 'Of Gods and Gods and Men: A Thematic Study of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*' (2003) studies the network of human relationships in the novel. After citing the earlier reviews, he comments:

“This is perhaps the nearest that reviewers seem to come to the vital question of the thematic richness of *The God of Small Thing*”<sup>5</sup>

It emerges from his study that the nature of human relationships and human conditions of living occupy the most significant place in the thematic structure of the novel. The relations are governed by the contrary forces of power and powerlessness, the perpetrator, and the victim. In this novel, the study of the nature of man-woman relationship gains immense significance against the patriarchal social system of male dominance and caste dominance.

To begin, at the centre of the narrative, there stands Ayemenem house with the four generations of Ipe family amidst the Keralite setting of social and environmental milieu of 1960s. The novelist focuses on the life of four women from this family – Mammachi, Ammu, Rahel and Baby Kochamma – in relation to their husbands, lovers and significant of all, the social environment operated by the human unconsciousness emerging from the traditional ideas of life. In addition to this, there are other relationships such as Chacko's relationship with his mother, with his wife Margaret, his sister Ammu and the women workers in the factory. The novel poses the relationship between man and nature as male-female relationship where modern man exploits nature for his material gains. In order to reinforce the miserable conditions of human relations, the novelist narrates in the form of Kathakali stories, the stories from Mahabharata. There is an incidental narration of some other stories showing relevance to the fallen nature of man-woman relationship in the novel.

In order to understand Ipe family in its totality on the scale of Time, volume and social status, one must go back in the past to its first patriarch, Reverend E. John Ipe, the great grandfather of Estha and Rahel, who had been a priest of the Mar Thoma Church (p.22). However, at the outset, it is quite significant to note that the racially Brahmin Indian family had been converted to Christianity during the mass conversion of Hindus by the Christian

Missionaries functioning for Christianity largely in Kerala and in the remaining parts of India. With the celebrated new status as Syrian Christians of Kerala, John Ipe's father received from him, in personal touch, the blessings of the Patriarch of Antioch, 'the sovereign head of the Syrian Christian Church'. With the blessings, he becomes 'Punnyan Kunju', Little Blessed One (p.23). It becomes a part of Ayemenem folklore. Hereafter, John Ipe becomes a priest widely known and respected by the people.

It is ironic to see that John Ipe's relationship with his wife Aleyooty Ammuchi remains orthodox, almost operated by the traditional social dictates. She remains within the four walls of the house without freedom, progress and self-identity and merges herself in the name and deeds of the despotic power of her husband in the family. It makes her face quite hesitant and nervous in the oil portrait (p.30). The words 'road' and 'river; with reference to his smile indicate his smiling in the outside world, but his sternness and dominance in the family privacy. The novelist narrates the situation as she perceives it:

"Perhaps, it wasn't as easy for her to abandon the river. With her eyes, she looked in the direction that her husband looked. With her heart, she looked away."(p.30).

In fact, priest and family are the two contrary things, as the Ideals communicate. They have been brought together by John Ipe's father by making two mistakes as his parent. Firstly, he received the Blessings and later on, made him a priest. Secondly, he was married. This contrary setting of human life in one person fails to justify the either completely. As endowment by the father upon the son, it certainly failed in case of John Ipe in relation to his relationship with his wife. The reality emerges as a parental failure in view of deifying the life of his son and paradoxically marrying him. In fact, deification of human life and marriage in human life are the two supreme aspects of the racial unconsciousness of Indian land which have been found synthesized in John Ipe's father in a confused manner.

John Ipe's family life as such has not been narrated except a hint given through the facial expressions of the husband and the wife in the oil portrait and the subsequent judgment of the novelist, as referred to earlier. However, it is

necessary to look into John Ipe's family for knowing the conditions of the further generation. It is found that he has two children – a son and a daughter – who in their later life are identified as Pappachi and Baby Kochamma. It is evident that as a priest, he remains engrossed in his outside activities of preaching spiritual ideas to the people and the church work. There could be much negligence on his part about familial duties and responsibilities. Pappachi's marriage in the middle age is evident from his retirement year which corresponds to Ammu's last year of schooling. (p.38). The probable reason of delay in his marriage could be found in his higher education and career as the topmost government official, alongwith the religiosity of the father and his engrossment in his work.

The patriarchal fact of Pappachi's marriage is that he was married to a girl seventeen years younger than him (p.47). It was the patriarchal practice of males to marry a young girl irrespective of age-difference. It leads to serious repercussions in his married life. As a family, Pappachi and his wife Mammachi have two children, the son Chacko and the daughter Ammu. It is here that the family of orientation is formed for Ammu, the female protagonist of this novel. Therefore, it becomes crucially important to examine the overall treatment and environment that prevails in the family.

Vimala Rama Rao, J. Sindhu and Nirmala C. Prakash (1998) study man-woman relationship in the novel. Their study highlights the disturbing environment of the family. They comment:

“By depicting the shocking relationship between Pappachi and Mammachi, Arundhati derives home the point that children brought up in such a vicious environment crave for escape, an escape which eventually leads them to happiness.”<sup>6</sup>

It makes us begin with the relationship between Pappachi and Mammachi as husband and wife. As the family chief, Pappachi emerges as a conservative landlord, the traditional owner of paddy fields and rubber estates in addition to his position as Joint Director of the Entomology Department of the state. It generates in him tremendous energy and arrogance as superior being, almost a formation of superiority-complex. In this sense, he establishes his own image-

glorified and royal – where he expects that everybody should bow, honour and surrender before him without any attempt for superiority and potentiality. The maintenance of his status in this way demands his temperament to be despotic in many ways. Pappachi has a strong sense of racial superiority as Syrian Christian and he has extreme sense of contempt and inferiority for the low class communities, where the sense of Touchable and Untouchable and its traditional relationship becomes a part of his unconscious mind.

The dangerous dynamite that his mind carries with him all through his life is his extremely patriarchal ideas and thoughts which render the family hellish in a true sense. It brings with him a sense of subordination, dominance and negligence of the female members in the family. He deprives them of freedom, progress and basic rights. On the contrary, he celebrates Chacko as his son, the inheritor of his generation. Despite his meagre talent, he gives him freedom and opportunities to live life to the fullest.

It is also found that the social revolution brought about by the Communists and the comrade spirit in Kerala had been threatening ‘the wealthy, estate-owning (pickle factory running) feudal lords’ (p.66) Pappachi remains under fear and anxiety as to whether the Marxist movement around him may seize up his estate. Their demonstrations, slogans, protest and riotous minds about upper class lords in the city fear him to a significant extent.

The most crucial aspect of Pappachi’s personality is his ‘Anglophilia’ which is found almost in the whole family. There is a comment by Chacko while he talks with the twins. It throws light on their confused journey of Christianity which leads to their plight. The novelist puts it:

“Chacko told the twins that though he hated to admit it, they were all Anglophiles. They were a family of anglophiles. Pointed in the wrong direction, trapped outside their own family and unable to retrace their steps because their footprints had been swept away.” (p.52)

It shows that racially the family converted to Christianity adopts anglophilia rather than the true principles of Christian life. Anglophilia probably lies in following the British way of life, the loving preoccupation for the British land and life characterized mainly by instinctive materiality and a sense of

superiority. We find these aspects crystallized in Pappachi. Still, the racial roots of patriarchy are dominant in his mind and acts in his family life. As a scientist in Entomology, his talent and power is utilized more in maintaining his status and superiority and almost the security of his lordship. 'The greatest setback of his life' (p.49) is not so severe a setback as he thinks. The novelist cynically perceives it. His discovery of a moth does not involve years of handwork and talent applied in it. It is just a matter of chance that the moth falls in his glass. He observed and notes.

He undergoes frustration in two phases – initially the moth was not identified as a separate species and secondly, after twelve years, during the period of his retirement, the same moth was declared as a separate species and it was recognized in the name of his junior officer whom he never liked. In frustration and gloom, the latter phase is darker than the former one.

The real setback comes from his image of himself. Usha Bande (1987) studies Anita Desai's novels in the light of Third Force Psychology. She argues:

"The glorified images generate a structure of intra-psychic defence which Horney terms as the pride system."<sup>7</sup>

In his mindset and behaviour, Pappachi suffers from the pride system, the significant aspect of which is the absolute power and the efforts for maintaining it. From the characteristic situation of his mind, occurs his relationship with his wife Mammachi. His pride system functions in multiple ways. He has strong patriarchal unconsciousness and a characteristic male tendency against the wife and the daughter. The facts of his self-actualization – victory, honour and power – become a part of his unconscious mind in the course of time. Anything that poses challenge to it, may it be in a slight quantum, is responded in a violent manner.

As a male chauvinist, he can not tolerate any skillful activity or talent performed by his wife. Hence, a trait of jealousy is formed in his character. His jealousy operates on two levels:

The skilful organizing of the pickle factory with all its aspects makes him jealous of Mammachi. Therefore, he never helps her in her work, after retirement (p.47). He perceives it as a work below his dignity. He neither

appreciates her nor acknowledges her service to the family progress. On the contrary, the jealousy is converted to violence found in his beating of her with brass flower vase with increased frequency (p.47). The psychological fact of Pappachi in relation to Mammachi's abilities of governing the pickle factory has been narrated by the novelist:

“He had always been a jealous man, so he greatly resented the affection his wife was suddenly getting.” (p.47)

It proves that Pappachi did not like the recognition of his wife, her fame and appreciation by others. In his thought, it proves to be a threat to his status and standard of greatness and gives a sense of belittled status of his image. The significant age- difference wherein he is middle- aged and she is young, becomes a serious preoccupation in his mind. Pappachi's sexual relationship with his wife Mammachi under such circumstances is an important area of exploration where his violence against Mammachi could be traced.

After his retirement, there is a strong realization in his mind, almost a shock, that he is 'an old man' and his wife is “still in her prime” (p. 47) His beating of Mammachi during the 'cold winter nights' in Delhi (p.181) in his earlier life and his increased beating of her after retirement can be understood as his strategy to suppress, as much as possible, her sexual desire and sexual urge by posing terror and violence so that survival be begged.

Afterall, the possibility of failure in sexual relationship due to advanced age, his constant engrossment and hardwork in the service as mega officer might lead to his reduced sexual energy. It gives him excitement and restlessness. Through this strategy, he maintains his honour intact.

Of course, the frustration given by Pappachi's search of a moth can be perceived as a significant preoccupation of his mind which contributes in his savagery of violence expressed by beating his wife. The novelist narrates his violently neurotic condition emerging from it:

“Pappachi's moth was held responsible for his black moods and sudden bouts of temper. Its pernicious ghost – grey, furry and with usually dense dorsal tufts – haunted every house that he ever lived in. It tormented him and his children and his children's children.” (p.49)

The neurosis thus gained illustrates the fact that Pappachi remained extremely nervous and violently hysterical due to the loss of his increased recognition and honour as entomologist and government officer, and the subsequent failure in his attempt to add to the glory of his image which he loves most in the world.

Pappachi is an extremely suspicious husband in relation to his wife. While his stay in Vienna, Mammachi as a student of music learning violin was appreciated by her teacher as ‘exceptionally talented’ learner. (p.50) Pappachi thinks of this remark as interest of the teacher in his wife and hence, an offence. According to his patriarchal thinking, appreciation and encouragement may lead to her identity and formation of a matrix of her career. Therefore, he abruptly discontinues her learning of music.

Pappachi’s ‘well-pressed three-piece suit’ and his ‘gold pocket watch’ (p.49) used by him upto the last moment of his life represents his sense of greatness, almost incomparable, as he thinks. It shows that he remains engrossed in it all through his adult life. The family- his wife and children – remain his least concern in his engrossment of his glory except his son Chacko who, as patriarchally viewed by him, is seen as a reflection of his continued person and power. Therefore, with a huge financial establishment- though much pampered and meager in talent - he gives him an opportunity and freedom for education and career at Oxford. M.K. Naik (2003) while studying the nature of the marital relationship between Pappachi and Mammachi, views Pappachi as a cruel patriarchal force that renders her life meaningless. He comments:

“Mammachi’s life shows how even in an educated India household, deeply ingrained beliefs and conventions, which transcend even religious considerations, can still persist and make a woman’s life miserable.”<sup>8</sup>

Thus, Mammachi has been grossly ignored, neglected and exploited by Pappachi to his ends. In her relationship with him, she hardly existed as a human being. Her failing eyesight almost to the extent of getting blind remains without any concern and consideration on the part of Pappachi.

Despite it, Mammachi works hard not only as a housewife but also as a responsible and creative proprietor of Paradise Pickles and Preserves. . Her

multiple skills, talent, organization and management of the factory remains only a matter of jealousy for Pappachi. Therefore, she never receives any help, care, concern and love from him. As a wife, Mammachi remains without love from her husband Pappachi, all through her married life. Violence, beating, cynicism, jealousy are all his ways of treating her in their co-life. In fact, it is not a co-life, but a life lived individually under one roof. The general environment in the family emanating from Pappachi has been narrated by the novelist:

“But alone with his wife and children he turned into a monstrous, suspicious bully, with a streak of vicious cunning. They were beaten, humiliated and then made to suffer the envy of friends and relations for having such a wonderful husband and father.” (p.180)

Thus, the novelist brings out the contrast between Pappachi’s public life and family life. In a former situation, he highlights himself as a good person. (p.180), while in a latter position, his relationship with his wife and daughter deteriorates to the extent of hatred and disgust. The Pappachi–Mammachi relationship in its marital context of the whole married life emerges as a relationship between highly educated, traditional and despotic husband with his own theory and glory of greatness and a slave like suffering wife with abilities of her own but without any status of human being granted to her by the despotic husband. However, in relation to later generations, it is worth significance to find that along the patriarchal unconscious, it is not only Pappachi who emerges as a father of son and father of daughter, but Mammachi also proves herself as mother of a son and mother of a daughter. This ideological difference in treating the son and the daughter by the parents determine their future life due to excess on either side. Prominently, it projects the daughter Ammu with the most anguished heart.

Ammu’s childhood, as it is forced through the prevailing family environment, destroys her real self and hence, makes her future course of life difficult. At the age of nine during her childhood, alongwith Mammachi, Pappachi flogs Ammu with his ‘ivory-handled riding crop’ (p.181) It inhumanly culminates into his shredding completely her newly purchased and the most beloved gumboots with her mother’s pinking shears, before her eyes.

The experience is permanently recorded on Ammu's mind almost as a shock, the memory of which could be torturing for her. Ammu as a female child suffers from 'this cold, calculating cruelty' (p.181) of her father. Basically, it is the traditional patriarchal attitude of the father to maintain the female child in a specific mould of female gender as socially settled and accepted by the tradition. The gumboots pose a change, a deviation from the tradition and hence forcefully unacceptable to the father. Usha Bande (1987), while studying the aspects of childhood, comments:

“Given favourable environment, warmth of affection, inner security and inner freedom, the child learns to live according to his real self.”<sup>9</sup>

In Ammu's case, she is deprived of love, care and security. She receives shocks after shocks to find the violence of the father inflicted not only on the mother but also on her. The restlessness thus gained slowly makes her forsake her real self which can no longer survive in the prevailing situation. The novelist narrates her newly emerging self:

“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.” (p.182)

Ammu's newly emerging self is rendered as her actual self which provides her with energy, courage and boldness. It endows her with tolerance to withstand the quarrels and confrontations. However, it does not stop her from neurosis somewhere in the corner of her mind, a void created by the craving for love, and awe and shock for the strangeness and brute character of the father and the dumb suffering of the mother. Ammu's adolescence is loveless as parents are almost indifferent to her: the father engaged in his work and power and the mother, in her own suffering. Ammu remains in a triangular position, psychologically separated from the parents. The three individuals – the father, the mother and the daughter – live isolated life within the skyblue Plymouth at Ayemenem and in Delhi in the past.

Ammu's schooling remains formal without genuine interest and progressive sense on the parental level. In fact, the despotic power, the patriarch, who rules the home, had maintained the two women in such a way

that they remain isolated: Mammachi could not care Ammu physically and Ammu could not support Mammachi during his violent attacks. As hereditary character, one can certainly claim talent and power prevailing inwardly in Ammu. But the last year of her schooling remains the last year of her education. The opportunity for further education to Ammu is closed by the father's purely patriarchal and therefore, the most unfortunate decision. His idea of female education is narrated below:

“Pappachi insisted that a college education was an unnecessary expense for a girl, so Ammu had no choice but to leave Delhi and move with them.” (p.38)

Pappachi's decision proves to be a turning point in her life. Certainly, it points to the wrong direction. Her abrupt termination from the faculty of education which she continued almost for ten to twelve years, results into its repercussions in her mind. The psychological establishment of her actual self vitally fused with the flow of her ideas, dreams and career associated with the further education, as rising from the school environment, becomes dysfunctional for a while, and again resumes the further way of living. Ammu succeeds in overcoming this detachment by helping her mother in the domestic work. Ammu's overcoming remains at the cost of formation of rage in her mind. The real anxiety begins when no proposals for marriage come to her, almost for a period of two years. The situation can be considered in view of Pappachi's attitude to Ammu.

As a patriarchal trait, Pappachi ignored Ammu's life, she being female. He does it to the extent of putting her marrying in crisis. The close observation of his mind shows that he is not psychologically prepared for raising money for her marriage as he has no willpower to do so. It projects his basic nervousness about Ammu's birth as female child which is not acceptable to his patriarchal mind that is formed only for receiving honour and never for losing a grain of honour. Now, it must be understood that the birth of Ammu as female is Pappachi's dishonor as he perceives it. Therefore, it can be one of the contributing factors which lead to his violence against Mammachi.

M.K. Roy (2001) studies the present novel from feminist point of view. Her comment about the serious damage done to Ammu's mind and life by the family of orientation is remarkable. She comments:

“Her frustration originated chiefly from a sudden disruption of education, uncongenial atmosphere at home and lack of viable alternative through marriage.”<sup>10</sup>

Thus, Ammu's experience of life at the family of orientation is that of a lost childhood. Her adolescence is caused mainly by the loss of opportunities and lack of harmony in her relationship with the parents. Her adult life remains full of psychological hardships where the parents are not prepared for her marriage through patriarchal irresponsibility and carelessness rising out of a condemning sense about her as a female. As a person of honour and status, the father can not afford to pay the surrender value as the father of bride in marriage and onwards. Thus, Ammu's parental life remains without love and harmony where she is cut off creativity, aspirations and dreams, longing and desires, not only in education and career, but in marriage itself.

It leads to serious isolation and neurosis in Ammu's mind. The loss of very vitality of living is restored with violent power through rage and recklessness. The aspects of life which build the column of individual's adult life have been destroyed or possibly suppressed by the parental treatment to her. Fundamentally, in its repercussions, it transforms Ammu to a subjectivity in thinking and behaviour. Her decision of marriage along her own efforts is the first outcome of it.

It betokens the most irresponsible, thoughtless and dominating behaviour of the father towards the adult daughter about to be married. It's a sheer failure of his parental duty that she had to arrange for her escape from the family in order to get married. The contrast between the two fathers – Arundhati Roy's Pappachi and Nathaniel Hawthorne's King Midas – regarding their sense of daughter are the two extremes of human life moving in the opposite direction. The comparison shows the real and the ideal in the same context. Had Ammu become Merrygold, her life would have been evergreen, loved and harmonized by the world without the slightest of altercation on her part!

In the ultimate analysis of the family of orientation in relation to the female protagonist, Ammu, it could be argued that the father emerges as a true patriarch. In fact, he transcends the human boundaries and becomes a wicked devil who gives birth to a female child, and in the course of time, by neglecting her, devours her life to pity and horror. Thus, he becomes a first sinner who brings Ammu's life to the threshold of adversity.

Ammu's marriage to Baba, an assistant manager in tea estate in Assam (p.39) begins the another phase of her sorrowful life. In fact, her marriage and marital life have been the risk factors of her life in her early twenties when she is without socialization from the family of orientation and without any experience of the way of the world. Ammu's leaving behind the parental home in anguish is indicative of her desertion of her parents in the depth of her mind. As rendered homeless and isolated amidst the patriarchal Indian society, Ammu had to embrace an opportunity of marriage irrespective of any criterion required for marriage as viewed by the marriage institution. The most significant criterion being love and liking, traits and character, are overtaken by her in order to get the socio-psychological stability and to get rid of the parental horror. The novelist narrates her psychological situation:

“He proposed to Ammu five days after they first met. Ammu didn't pretend to be in love with him. She just weighed the odds and accepted. She though that anything, any one at all, would be better than returning to Ayemenem.” (p.39)

The close study of Baba's family shows that he belonged to a once wealthy Zamindar family of West Bengal. He was well built, small and pleasant looking, (p.39) like his father who was a renowned boxer holding posts on various associations. It is seen that the combination of wealth and physical power gives the family a typical patriarchal character to view a woman as female to be possessed and owned without anybody's interference or slightest interest. It is certain that Baba proposes Ammu with his strong attraction for Ammu's beauty. His attitude is male-dominating in nature and without deep concern and love for her. The bodily love in the form of libido operates and hastily marries Ammu.

The true nature of Baba as a drunkard with gross interest in sex which is not new to him at present shows his casual approach not only to marriage and Ammu but to the life itself. He emerges as the man without college, without intellectual refinement, a raw savage in the mid-twenties, a thoughtless parasite that lives on the ancestral wealth and name. The novelist narrates the psychoanalysis of married condition:

“Ammu realized that the slightly feverish glitter in her bride-groom’s eyes had not been love or even excitement at the prospect of carnal bliss, but approximately eight large pegs of whisky. Straight. Neat.”(p.39)

With the horrible sight of the husband’s sexual relationship and his corrupt character, Ammu’s disappointment knows no bounds. The suffering opens a new way and she had to walk on it. While living at the Assam tea estate, the impact of Ammu’s beauty on the social environment has been narrated in the novel:

“When Ammu and her husband moved to Assam, Ammu, beautiful young and cheeky, became the toast of the Planters’ Club.”(p.42)

The word ‘toast’, as it emerges from the above context, gains full significance in relation to the planters’ view of Ammu. Its two meanings – a bakery product as food commodity, and a person, newly married, congratulated with enjoying wine (as stated by, The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English) - exactly co-inside with the sexual tendency of the males around her. It is evident that the male-dominating and female exploiting tendency of the Planters’ Club raises its tentacles of sexual attraction towards Ammu and hence, praise her, appreciate her acts and deeds and congratulate her with the only motivation of their sexual interest aggravated by wine consumption, without an ounce of the attitude towards her emerging from higher thinking. Thus, Assam tea estate brings Ammu to the another stark reality of patriarchal male tendency about her beauty but ironically, Ammu is unaware of it.

It is quite uncertain to provide the exact reason of Ammu’s changed behaviour at the estate. Probably, it is the result of an admixture of the odd sentiments in her mind – a sense of her release from the despotic patriarchal

clutches of the parental life, her boredom and depression rising from the mean qualities of her husband and more crucial, the praising males around her. This altered environment in relation to Ammu is identified by Baba, he being a fish from the same pond. It breeds in his mind a wave of jealousy and rage and he ultimately holds Ammu responsible for this condition. As he can not openly revolt against the planters' environment - which could be a threat to his job - he undergoes heavy consumption of wine and gets irritated sometimes with the workers in order to relieve his tenseness. His trait of confusing and exasperating Ammu by talking lies (p.40) is his typical male-dominating tendency to torture Ammu.

Perhaps, his ego derived from the traditional Zamindari race where woman is meant for man's honour and mainly consists of family pride and a sense of greatness about himself, seems to be damaged due to Ammu's admirers and her alluring behaviour at the tea estate. The damage is so severe that it makes him lose faith in family and family values such as love, harmony and progress. The birth of twins – a son and a daughter – gives pleasure to Ammu, the only pleasure to become a mother, in her life lived so far. But Baba remains unaffected, almost indifferent, 'stretched out on a hard bench in the hospital corridor' (p.42) in a drunken position. Thus, Baba emerges as a drunken brute who suffers from ego-centric humiliation emerging from his wife Ammu. Consequently, he gets totally out of tune with the family. He becomes a dysfunctional father for his responsibilities and duties towards his wife and children.

Thus, the alienation caused from the environment renders Baba alone, separated physically and psychologically from the family and the planters' society, completely withdrawn from his duty and remaining in an idle stupor. The power of his rebellious rage is suppressed by the dominance of the planters and his fear of losing the job. But it finds its outlet in the form of increased consumption of wine to the extent of getting physically alcoholic and the constant beating of Ammu.

Ammu's experience of perceiving the repetition of her parents' relationship in her relationship with her husband makes her rebellious after a

long patience as she carries with her 'a lofty sense of injustice' from her parental family. The rise of this sense makes her inflict violence directly against Baba and renders her radically different from her traditional mother, Mammachi, who suffers at the hands of her husband almost like a dumb cattle.

The emergence of Mr. Hollick, (p.41-42) Baba's English manager, adds a new dimension to the Ammu-Baba relationship by blackmailing Baba over his irresponsible behaviour and absence in duty. He establishes the possibility of his resignation. The sexual attraction of the planters regarding Ammu culminates into Mr. Hollick's strong sexual desire for Ammu, and therefore, his idea of keeping her at his bungalow for a few months - which are required for Baba's treatment of alcoholic excess in his body-proves strongly discouraging and dismaying for Ammu.

Ammu is shocked more seriously to see the fact that Baba looked 'despondent' and not 'devastated' (p.41) by showing willingness for Mr. Hollick's idea. She is anguished to realize that her husband did not love her in a true sense. He proves to be a hypocrite who thinks of Ammu only in a carnal sense without deeply felt, ever growing emotions. It leads to a strong conflict between the husband and the wife as Ammu remains committed to her morals of married woman and Baba forces her to follow Hollick for his job security.

The relationship dissolves into divorce from Ammu's side when Baba beats not only her but the children also.. It is Ammu's love for her children and her marital commitment with Baba – the real strength of Indian woman's character – which leads to disintegration of the family initiating a new crisis in Ammu's life, now with two more lives with her. M.K. Naik (2003) comments:

“The force that has destroyed Ammu's marriage is the age-old Indian social convention that the wife is only a part of the goods and chattels a man owns”<sup>11</sup>

Wife, as Naik points out, is not only an object to be owned and possibly exchanged, but a capable human being full of human emotions and ideas deeply felt in the family tie in the form of relations. Through his humanistic view, Naik dismisses the traditional idea of wife, as Ammu proves to be its victim.

Ammu's premarital life and married life – the family of orientation and the family of procreation – prove to be nightmarish. The void of lovelessness formed during her premarital life widens to a significant extent at her husband's house. Neither parents nor husband loved her. Her loveless life once again comes in the arena of the world. Her social alienation gets vaster than that which she had experienced in the earlier phases of her life. For survival, alongwith two children, Ammu had no place but Ayemenem house which she had once deserted, almost uprooted from her mind. The social view about Ammu in the present condition evolves mainly from the patriarchal ideology of life. It initiates with Ammu's unwelcomed arrival at Ayemenem house. According to patriarchal values, once a girl marries, she has no right to come back and to stay at her father's house.

In fact, her parents respond neither to her marriage nor to her divorce which shows their negative attitude to both of these aspects of Ammu's life. Their lack of concern seems to be the chief reason behind it. It leaves the most serious marks of anguish across her soul and makes her lose faith in the word 'father.' It may remind one of the Sylvia Plath's poem 'Daddy' where the beginning reads:

"Daddy daddy, you bastard".<sup>12</sup>

Ammu's low social status at the Ayemenem house and in the society in general has been clearly perceived by Baby Kochamma who becomes a social voice formed from the rigidity of the traditions of Indian patriarchal life and its standards unconsciously prescribed for woman's life. Ammu's marriage remained an intercommunity marriage where she was Syrian Christian and her husband held another caste. The sense of 'intercommunity' itself shows social rage. The another prominent fact is that it was a love marriage, rather than arranged marriage. A sentence showing a complex of diverse conditions formed in Ammu's life are shown by the novelist:

"As for a divorced daughter from a intercommunity marriage – Baby Kochamma chose to remain quiveringly silent on the subject."(p.46)

Now, it must be noted that Ammu's life is formed of violation of social laws regarding various aspects which people bitterly react with. It develops a

specific thought and judgement of social forces about Ammu which makes her not only socially unacceptable and disliked but pushes her into the most acute realm of isolation. She is strongly alienated against the society, losing harmony and relationships. In a sense, a new phase of Ammu's alienation starts where she loses goodwill, acceptance and appreciation from society. The people perceive Ammu as a deviant being. Her image as a woman without any moral, but of a bad character, is fixed in people's mind. These social aspects stand as a new barrier in Ammu's life. Thus, the situation of Ammu's life now and onwards must be viewed as the product of her relationship with the father and the husband who did not treat her as a human being and never brought her in the main stream of life to know its true qualities. Her yearnings remain fused with her subjective self. Her subjectivity is the distillation of gross negligence, lack of concern and love, her sexual exploitation where she is deprived of social harmony and joy, the reciprocal values of relationships and more crucially, the ideological features of life set by the patriarchal values of society. Thus, the alienation as experienced so far, makes her subjective. Her life is almost cut off from the real life force which later on overthrows her.

Ammu's love for Velutha can be viewed as the inevitable product of the circumstances formed in Ammu's life as a divorced woman with two children who had been perishing in a true sense in the patriarchal structure of the Indian society almost from her childhood. Manjari Shukla (2001) observes:

"Ammu and Velutha are portrayed in the novel as the victims of the callous social system. Ammu's gender and Velutha's caste were looked upon as their faults."<sup>13</sup>

It is certain that Shukla highlights the ultimate fact emerging from the patriarchal output, but it is worthwhile to understand the conditions of living as experienced by Ammu and Velutha. It is the conditions which bring them together-soul, mind and body- and form the unique relationship in the novel where the relationship emerges as a vital need of life without which life collides against aloneness and it is almost destroyed. The social laws appear later.

Ammu's psychological suffocation which gives her an experience of the strangled individual finds solace in the company of her children without whom

she can not breathe and imagine herself. The children are badly treated by social forces. Baby Kochamma calls them 'Half-Hindu Hybrids' and treats them as 'doomed, fatherless waifs.' (p.45)

Ammu's suffocation identified and measured on the scale of time from her childhood to the present moment largely consists of losses, maltreatment, exploitation and social cynicism where she has lost the soul of living itself, and wanders in the desert of anguish. If the meaning of life existed at all, it was in her children. She used to love her children by using Kipling: 'We be of one blood, ye and I' (p.163) Ammu was everything for her children in the world and they were her world showing a ray of life for her. The novelist narrates their relationship:

"She was their Ammu and their Baba and she had loved them Double." (p.163)

With the nervousness and hostility around, her children had only one companion in the world. It was Velutha. In a way, Ammu's children-Estha and Rahel-become a connecting link between her and Velutha.

It fact, the upper caste Syrian Christian Ipe family and Vellya Paapen's Paravan family were related to each other within the traditional norms of the relationship between the upper caste and the untouchables. Pappachi was extremely strict about it. But Mammachi had a little flexibility. She had a little concern for the wretched condition of paravans living a miserable life. It was she who had persuaded Vellya Paapen to send Velutha to the Untouchable's School that was founded by her father-in-law, Reverend E. John Ipe, the priest. (p.75)

Velutha's schooling and his subsequent professional training of carpentry by a Carpenter's Guild in Bavaria for a period of three years, radically changes his mind from the old sense of life to new ideas and progressive sense where there dawns upon his mind an awareness of a new world order which is entirely different and humanistic than the age-old exploitative old social order. Thus, Velutha the paravan is no longer a traditional untouchable, but he has been enlightened with a new social order by the spirit and active demonstrations of

the Communist Party. He unconsciously becomes its element and consciously becomes its card-holding member in his later life.

For Ammu's children, only Velutha displays a wealth of recreation which gives them immense pleasure during their childhood. He makes for them wooden toys, makes them learn swimming, fishing and moving boat and endows them with a state of joy, a sort of psychological freedom, a sport and spirit of living which are the true requirements of the children for their psychological, emotional and intellectual growth. In her inner devastated world, Ammu is exalted to see the happiness of her children when the entire environment deminates and hates the mother and the children. She is surprised to see her children in Velutha's arms enjoying the play, the open air and the open skies. These moments take Ammu psychologically nearer to Velutha though there remains a distance, a stone-wall of untouchability, as socially viewed.

The another fact which fixes Ammu's relation with Velutha at present, is their childhood relationship which had a faint existence physically under the pressure of untouchability and Pappachi's seriousness about it. But there could be psychological bonds as Velutha used to bring for Ammu the gifts such as 'boats, boxes, small windmills,' (p.175) which would give her pleasure. The childhood experience of Velutha which is stored in Ammu's memories emerges afresh to see her children recreated by him. His transformation from boyhood to manhood pleases her. The novelist describes the lasting impressions of his youthful body on Ammu:

"She saw the ridges of muscle on Velutha's stomach grow taught and rise under his skin like the divisions on a slab of chocolate. She wondered at how his body had changed so quickly, from a flat muscled boy's body into a man's body. Contoured and hard. A swimmer's body. A swimmer, carpenter's body."(p.175)

One of the significant aspects of Velutha liked by Ammu is his technical abilities, especially his talent and skills in carpentry and his engineering way of dealing with machines. (p.75) He has excellent professional abilities with regards to these works.

The various aspects of Velutha's person referred to earlier render him reliable, honest, resourceful and above all, humanistic in Ammu's view. Thus, her mind is preoccupied with Velutha, where she is inclined to love him. At this moment, it is necessary to consider the conditions of Ammu's life which made Ammu love Velutha apart from his own characteristics, where untouchability itself is a part of Ammu's unconscious mind.

The most basic question that arises in the present context is, who loved Ammu in a true sense from her childhood to the present moment? - Pappachi? Mammachi? Chacko? Baby Kochamma? Her husband Baba? Mr. Hollick? Society? The absolute unanimous answer to this question is, nobody. On the contrary, Ammu as a daughter, almost unwelcome and unwanted, was badly treated by her father as she was meant for reducing his patriarchal honour. She lived a life of neglect, coldness, indifference and violence as others viewed her. The loss of harmony, security and love and the pangs of isolation from the childhood left deep scars of anguish at her mind and heart. She remains unfortunate enough to marry on her own and the parents even do not take its cognizance. Her life remains beyond the realm of their thinking.

According to Abraham Maslow (1956) all have psychological survival needs which include need for love, for safety, for belonging, for self-esteem and finally for self-actualization.<sup>14</sup>

In the light of Maslow's observations, it has been found that Ammu has none of the above at any phase of her life. The suffering in married life brings in her condition of divorced woman. With the bitter experiences of life, the void of lovelessness overwhelmingly operated by anguish, makes Ammu think of the nature of her life.

It gives her a sense of horror to think that she has nobody in the world except the twins, her own blood-ties. The feeling that harmony and relatedness in a true sense is almost annihilated, makes her undergo tremendous restlessness. Amidst such a mindset, Velutha's image emerges from her devastated inner world of feelings like sprouts on a burnt granary, bringing about hope for life. Though the circumstances dry her life by removing its essence, her grip over life remains fixed. One of the remarkable characteristics

of Ammu across her life- as it is observed-is her diehard optimism about life. In Velutha's prospect, she sees a new man, a new hope of life, a new life which would redeem her from her adversity and endow her with happiness. The social tradition and its value-system loses its relevance and significance here, because self-preservation dominates a set of conventions or principles. Therefore, subjectivity takes over alongwith the redeeming value of Velutha, his attributes and his life, his rebellious power, his strong and sturdy body, his technical talent and his capacity for economic establishment, Velutha's image fuses with Ammu's mind, becoming central to her dream of *The God of Small Things*. (p.215)

K. M. Pandey (2001) views *The God of Small Things* as a polysemic novel which can be interpreted at several levels. He states the idea of his paper as follows:

“The present paper aims at studying the novel as a love story whose dimensions touch and are touched by caste, creed and other socio-political realities existing in the regionally contextualized boundaries of the South Indian state of Kerala.”<sup>15</sup>

Pandey's criticism of Ammu-Velutha relationship as, 'love story' seems to be a fallacious understanding of the human situations where the horror of patriarchal reality and Ammu's subsequent suffering need to be destroyed by some power which appears in the form of Velutha. Secondly, Pandey attempts to contextualize the fictional fact to South Indian Kerala state. But it must be borne in mind that it is the universal human condition which can not be bound specifically to some land, culture or creed. On the basis of reality, the situation is saved from getting idealistic by endowing infinite power to the hero and destroying the absolute evil, but the power itself has been limited and hence destroyed by the larger power, Community and Politics.

The initial formation of Ammu's love for Velutha is spiritual, but as it emerges from the earthly being it is unknowingly transfused into physical one. It is significant to perceive the factors which aggravate the physicality of Ammu's love towards Velutha. It is observed that Ammu remains isolated from the main stream of life, not only the community around but the family themselves. The

incommunication formed between Ammu and other members causes alienation which leads to neurosis. Especially, it is the loneliness during night which gives rise to excitement in her mind and body.

Ammu's radio is the another factor which is equally significant, in conditioning the physical features of love in her mind. Ammu's constantly listening to film songs-love, the amorous lovers, their joys and sorrow- make her mind deviate towards it. In fact, it intensifies her desire to have carnal relation with Velutha.

While exploring the nature of Ammu and Velutha's relationship, one must look into the conditions of Velutha's life. Despite his might and power, we find that he passes through psychological hardships..

Velutha, as a part of Vellya Paapen's family, is not at all happy. His nervousness generates mainly from his discord and the consequent conflicts with his father. His father is an 'Old World Paravan' (p.76) , bent with gratitude to Mammachi and her family for their help and condescending sense regarding his family. His fear for his young son mainly emerges from his boldness and fearlessness in the context of the tradition of untouchability. It is narrated as follows:

“It was not what he said, but the way he said it. Not what he did but the way he did it.” (p.76)

The misunderstanding of the son about the father's advice as a grudge for his training and natural skills, widens the rift between the father and the son. He avoids the home as the ailing mother could not withstand the conflicts. The damage to Velutha's self-respect leads to psychological disintegration of his self. It gives rise to alienation from the family. Its physical features appear as follows:

“He worked late. He caught fish in the river and cooked it on an open fire. He slept outdoors, on the banks of the river.” (p.77)

Thus, the psycho-physical separation of Velutha from his parental family shows damage to his psyche, almost a state of depression . His disappearance from the family for four years - indicates his significance as a new man of the new era of freedom and progress having extreme rebel against the traditional

way of life. The two prominent events during his absence for four years - his mother's death due to tuberculosis and his brother's accident from a coconut tree with severe damage to his spine - mould him to unhappiness in his later days.

Besides, Velutha as in-charge of general maintenance of the pickle factory, is not accepted and tolerated by the Touchable workers. There is a strong commotion and protest of the touchables over his appointment and his subsequent status. In fact, Velutha's technical talent and abilities create rage of the Touchables against him K.N.M. Pillai as a politician and a false comrade plays significant role for overthrowing Velutha, as he is an upper caste.

All these aspects of the social environment beginning from his home to the pickle factory, discourage Velutha. It chills his power and confidence and he is alienated. The loneliness thus gained renders him neurotic and nervous to a significant extent. His self-actualization comes in the shadow of discouragement and disappointment. The way Ammu-Velutha sexual relationship takes place during night by the banks of the river Meenachal, shows Ammu's initiative and Velutha's fear in their coming together. His understanding of 'History' and the nature of the subsequent fear is commented upon by Nirmala C. Rakash (2001) as follows:

"He dare not involve himself with a Syrian Christian. Centuries of oppression have conditioned his emotions as much as his thinking. This is the reason why he looks up at Ammy partly in disbelief and partly with a feeling of shock when she waits for him at night by the river-side."<sup>16</sup>

It shows that the new confidence and courage gained by Velutha as a representative of new age slowly melts under the pressure of circumstances and leads his mind to his collective unconsciousness of his inferior status in society. Therefore, there is a sense of withdrawal in his initial action. His active self is gripped by the sudden neurotic fit which, by misunderstanding Ammu, transforms the fact into his vision of the planning for attack by the landlords. His communist sense rises high and he thinks that the landlords have applied Ammu as their 'bait' (p.334) in order to destroy him as a communist power, which seems to be a threat to their lordship.

Velutha's psychological crisis during his meeting with Ammu caused mainly by the debate between rational and emotional sense and finally the triumph of emotion over intellect, the triumph of the nature over the culture, enrich the aesthetic value of the theme of man-woman relationship in a much broader perspective of socio-psychological reality rooted in transcending the racial identity for fulfilling the love condition emerging from the desolated lives. The study reveals that the two embittered souls- Ammu and Velutha- discarded by the patriarchal world and therefore holding discordance against the world, get unified to form one whole by waging war against its unscrupulous ways of treating the small entities like them and finally getting crushed to pieces by its massive violent force. Their victory lies in their united souls and minds rather than their bodies. The dire need for communion and survival brings them together and the very embittered quality of life lived by them brings their bodies together. M.P.Sinha (2001) rightly observes:

“The two lovers, Ammu and Velutha, meet their tragic end. Their tragedy is not due to some accident, they did not do anything wrong but the upholders of the specific laws of culture take away their life.”<sup>17</sup>

The relationship between Ammu and Velutha has a complexity of associated factors which are wide-ranging and patriarchal in character. It is essential to critically consider these factors and evaluate their role in the formation of Ammu-Velutha tragedy. The most significant entity who holds a major responsibility of destroying Ammu's and Velutha's lives is her aunt Baby Kochamma, the spinster. Her attitude to Ammu and her children after her divorce is that of hatred and jealousy. Her failure regarding her love for Father Mulligan leads to her psychological turbulence.

To her thinking, Baby Kochamma compares Ammu with herself and views both of them as 'Man-less' (p.45) women. According to her, her superiority lies in graciously accepting her fate with restraint and determination and in doing the right thing. She is irritated with Ammu's quarrel with fate. Baby Kochamma has racial pride and arrogance as upper caste, as Syrian Christian. Her character-traits of personal greatness alongwith Anglophilia resemble almost that of her brother, Pappachi. Her patriarchal views about

Ammu's living in Ayemenem house after her divorce is clearly seen in the following narration:

“She subscribed wholeheartedly to the commonly held view that a married daughter had no position in her parents' home. As for a divorced daughter – according to Baby Kochamma, she had no position anywhere at all.”(p.45)

However, Baby Kochamma's views are convenient to her inner motives of holding possession of the Ayemenem estate, she being E. John Ipe's daughter, his only heir after Pappachi's death. To her, Ammu becomes a competitor and hence a hindrance in her way of possession.. Thus, Baby Kochamma shows her extreme irritation and hatred against Ammu in Ayemenem house with the basic aim of removing her from the house forever. Therefore, she explores every opportunity that causes trouble and hardships to Ammu and her children. All these aspects of Baby Kochamma's psychological behaviour and its behavioural repercussions in terms of acts, prepare her psychologically for Ammu's downfall, at least her departure from the house permanently, almost like a hunter in a bush about to fire at the exact time.

Her botheration of Communist activists emerges mainly from her fear of their violence and dispossession of the feudal lords in the form of estates and honour. She views Velutha in that sense. The Communist processions, slogans and violent protest make her withdraw from it. In an incident, her humiliation done on the street in a communist procession by one activist has been identified by her with Velutha. Since that moment, she had tremendous fury against Velutha. It is narrated in the following line:

“Baby Kochamma focused all her fury at her public humiliation on Velutha. She sharpened it like a pencil.” (p.82)

Baby Kochamma's image of herself is that of a high class feudal lady with racial superiority and disgust for low caste such as untouchables. Her hypocrisy reminds us of the white lady in Wole Soyinka's poem, *Telephone Conversation*. There is a striking resemblance between the two ladies on the basis of their destructive sense of racial discrimination and spiteful hypocrisy though they belong to two distinct and different lands.

Baby Kochamma's rigorous discipline for educating Ammu's children is her way of exploiting their free thinking and creative sentiments leading to their harassment and botheration which restricts their growth in a true sense. Mammachi's feat of anger with extreme protest and abuse after knowing Ammu's relationship with Velutha through Vellya Pappen, develops a potential which Baby Kochamma wants to use for overthrowing Ammu and Velutha.

The first strategy of her craft is to provide the idea of locking Ammu in bedroom. The novelist narrates her intellectual sense in Mammachi's furious passion:

"They did what they had to do, the two old ladies. Mammachi provided the passion, Baby Kochamma the plan" (p.258).

Her second strategy to lodge FIR against Velutha with false charges of rape against Ammu, and kidnapping of the children (p.259) is seriously perceived in the sense that it has potential to create scandal and the consequent violence by the upper caste Christians for the disgrace of not only the family but of the community. Inspector Thomas Matthew and the Touchable police prove its immediate impact on their minds and acts.

The communal rage of the upper caste Touchable policemen against the untouchable, works in the guise of official duty. After Velutha's search at the History House, he is beaten venomously to all the systems of his body presaging his death, which takes place during the following night at the police custody.

Baby Kochamma's third strategy against Ammu emerges from Chacko's daughter Spohie Mol's death by drowning (p.252) in the Meenachal river. Chacko, in his grief-stricken condition, is systematically briefed by Baby Kochamma against Ammu. The novelist narrates her vicious power as follows:

"It wasn't hard for her to portray Ammu as the person actually responsible for Sophie Mol's death. Ammu and her two-egg twins." (p.322)

Chacko is infuriated in such a way that he violently orders Ammu to pack her bags and leave Ayemenem. Returning Estha to his father, Baba, is her idea. Thus, the damage brought unto Ammu's life by Baby Kochamma in relation to Ammu, Velutha and Ammu's twins is severe and inhuman. She emerges as one of the wicked aunts in English literature almost like Aunt Beryl in Katherine

Mansfield's short-story. *The Doll's House* where Velutha could be seen in the spirit of Kezia and the twins of Ammu as Kelvey sisters- Lil and Our Else.

Inspector Thomas Matthew completely changes the FIR lodged by Baby Kochamma, by forcing her after Velutha's death in order to safeguard his legal side. His treatment to Ammu at the Kottayam police station shows his attempt to save himself from the false FIR of Baby Kochamma and the consequent death of Velutha by the touchable policemen. His most inhuman behaviour with Ammu as 'Veshya' (p.8) in the form of taping her breasts with his baton can be understood as his strategic way of terrorizing her in order to get rid of her courage to lodge any new FIR which would lead to his legal crisis. His talk to Ammu that Kottayam Police do not take statement from prostitutes or their illegitimate children shows his overriding power against the helpless and agonized woman where the reality is purposely distorted by the power for personal safety on legal basis. But it leads to immense shock to Ammu's mind.

K.N.M. Pillai has been portrayed as a cunning and dubious politician without any communist authenticity, and hence a realistic caricature of it. His withdrawal from Velutha's serious situation of life despite his being communist card-holder and its activist, is coloured strongly with Pillai's communal and political interests. The real problem with Pillai is the growing popularity of Velutha as carpenter and mechanic along the communist card and the consequent public honour and status that he receives. In order to maintain and develop his position, it is his political strategy not to allow any individual grow socially. The social growth could itself be a competition and unknowingly a threat to his position. Therefore, one can observe his will power to remove Velutha from his political range. He denies help to Velutha on his personal visit to him on the grounds of the ideology of the party (p.287). The pretext of Velutha's misbehavior is put forward for denying help. In his conversation with Chacko at his home, Pillai advises him to send Velutha off (p.278) by referring to other worker's Paravan-based complaints to him about Velutha. The inner motive of Pillai is to stop the factory which emerges as a dominating entity to his position.

Pillai's unwillingness to help Velutha and save him from further tragedy has another fold of communal spirit in his mind. His absolute view of Velutha is that of a paravan, an untouchable. As an upper caste, a sense of rage against Velutha prevails in his mind also. Velutha as a progressive and talent young paravan is not tolerated by Pillai as an upper caste. It has racial, competitive and political sense. Velutha's relationship with Ammu becomes an excellent opportunity for K.N.M.Pillai to dismiss him from his active life and again to politicize it for his purposes. In the ultimate attempt of exploration, the politics of Baby Kochamma, the politics of Inspector Thomas Matthew and the politics of K.N.M. Pillai in relation to Ammu and Velutha show their own interest in self-preservation at the cost of Ammu and Velutha's lives.

Now, Ammu's relationship with Velutha needs to be studied in terms of her dream and her nightmare where the former has a personal subjective sense of love, and the latter moves into the social judgment about Ammu derived from her inter-caste marriage, her divorce, her excited nights with Velutha by the banks of Meenachal and the people's ultimate vision of her as 'veshya'.

It is found that Velutha becomes Ammu's exclusive obsession to the extent of becoming a part of her unconscious mind as she craves for him. The intensity of her desire to love him, to have a relationship with him finds its expression in her dream. But the reality of Velutha's might and power in terms of its limitations is reflected in the dream itself. The body-organization of the personage in the dream is shown with shortcomings with which he can not protect and love Ammu fully. It is given in the following narration:

"He could do only one thing at a time. If he held her, he couldn't kiss her. If he kissed her, he couldn't see her. If he saw her, he couldn't feel her." (p.215)

Velutha's untouchability, poverty and the family background is identified largely as social background which is neither background nor social. It becomes his chief short-coming. The another limitation emerges from his disability to fight against the powers higher than him such as politics, community and religion which, coming together, can destroy him.

Ammu's nightmare is significant in many ways. Primarily, it reflects the horrifying impressions of the Inspector's word "veshya" on Ammu's mind. It

leads to a deep psychological effect on Ammu's mind and it fuses with her unconsciousness. In fact, the shock is condensed into fear-psychosis due to Ammu's knowledge of veshyas as she had seen them in the market. The novelist narrates her nightmare as follows:

“She had woken up at night to escape from a familiar, recurrent dream in which policemen approached her with snicking scissors, wanting to hack off her hair. They did that in Kottayam to prostitutes whom they had caught in the bazaar - branded them so that everybody would know them for what they were, Veshyas.”(p.161)

Ammu's deep-seated anguish evolving mainly from her realization of her social image as prostitute and her subsequent fear of Kottayam Police as hacking off her hair for the identity, gives her excitement and tortures her soul to the significant extent. It is certain that the social image of Ammu which she visualizes in her nightmare, devours her life like savage from a thick forest. Ammu's death in Bharat Lodge in Alleppey (p.161) amply supports this view.

The another aspect of this image as is the misery and suffering of Estha and Rahel. In fact, the relationship between Ammu and Baba dissolving into divorce proves to be a curse which renders the lives of Estha and Rahel into meaninglessness. However, it is the Ammu-Velutha relationship which complicates their life truly in a social and psychological sense. It is observed that the relationship between Ammu and Velutha proves to be a mire in which Velutha immediately and horribly sinks while Ammu is slowly dragged and taken down the depth of the mire leaving off the bubbles of her existence, her twin children, Estha and Rahel. The children are left alone in the world to suffer under the void of lack of genuinity of love, concern and care. Thus, Ammu's tragedy begets another tragedy, the tragedy of her later generation, her children Esha and Rahel.

Almost from their birth to the adult life, they suffer from alienation and their minds are gripped by neurosis where they lose communication. The orthodox inhuman view of the Church is seen in their refusal to bury Ammu's dead body and perform the Christian rituals after burying. Of course, her inter caste marriage can be additional reason for it. J.M. Verghese (2001) studies

freedom and suffering in the novel by comparing the novel with various literary works, especially those written by Kamala Das and D.H. Lawrence. Yet, he defines its unique features. He comments:

“Therefore, the search for an ideological base for *The God of Small Things* leads us to the realm of existentialism”<sup>18</sup>

The relationship between Estha and Rahel as a study in man-woman relationship needs specific attention where it can be understood in the light of their parental discord and dysfunctioning, the conditions emerging therefrom and their general existence in the patriarchal social structure. Ammu’s marital relationship, her divorce, and her extra-marital relationship amidst the patriarchal Indian social structure prove drastic for their living. The damage is observed especially in their psychological growth. Estha emerges as the gravest victim of the hostility and abuse executed by the world around him. The first experience of the bitterness of the world which he meets during his childhood is that of the Orangedrink Lamondrink Man in the Abhilash Talkies (p.103). The man proves to be a pedophile who forces Estha to undergo a physical act that gives him sexual gratification. Estha’s feeling of vomit later on clearly shows his reflection on the act that was forced to do. The novelist puts it:

“Estha convulsed but nothing came. Just thoughts.” (p.108)

This incident during his childhood initiates neurotic condition in Estha’s mind. It generates basic anxiety and a fearful worldview in case of him. Baby Kochamma’s Christian discipline full of hypocrisy and her spiteful attitude to the twins make Estha insecure. This sense of insecurity and the violation of self-esteem is further complicated by Ammu’s desolation about the twins. Despite immense love for them, there emerges from her mind, the thought of loss of her freedom due to them.. When her bedroom door was locked by baby Kochamma and Mammachi, the grateful expression appears as follows:

“Because of you!” Ammu had screamed. “If it wasn’t for you, I wouldn’t be here! None of this would have happened. I wouldn’t be here! I would have been free! I should have dumped you in an orphanage the day you were born! You’re the millstones round my neck!”(p.253)

Estha's failure to tolerate Ammu's harsh expression showing them a place of orphanage, is found in his neurotic decision to leave the Ayemenem house alongwith Rahel and Sophie Mol during the rainy midnight. It unconsciously prepares him for the responsibility of Sophie Mol's death and consequently, he falls victim of Margaret Kochamma's wrath over the loss of her only child. Her frequent slapping to Estha even in drug induced condition shows not only the intensity of her grief but also Estha's endurance of it. The situation has been described in the following lines:

“Three or four times, swimming up through thick layers of drug-induced sleep, she had actually sought Estha and slapped him until someone calmed her down and led her away.” (p.264)

However, Estha's endurance actually occurs at the cost of damage value to his normal behaviour. It makes him undergo severe alienation and remain in a cloistered cell of aloofness sealed from the hostile environment around him. His neurosis gains somber colours. The experiences of the childhood bring him down to passivity by reducing his active life. His mind is preoccupied with dread of the environment.

The psychological situation attains its brimful stage when Estha sees and confusedly perceives the most violent beating by the police to his only companion in the world, Velutha. In fact, his feeling of loneliness is aggravated by Velutha's death and Ammu's weeping over it. It is observed that there is complete destruction of a sense of belonging. His creative sense and rebellious power are damaged at large and he is surrounded by the whirl of insecurity. Thus, the childhood circumstances utterly fail to provide the basic needs to Estha. Hence, he fails to cope up with the human world, to establish correspondence and communion with it.

Psychologically, there seems to be no survival bridge between the real self and the actual self as the former is already forsaken and the latter is not developed. Estha's wavering between these two conditions starts the tragic beginning of his adolescence. Anita Singh (2001) rightly observes:

“Estha’s paradise of childhood is contorted in the company of the pedophile, the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man. This process of alienation is consummated by his betrayal of their only friend, Velutha.”<sup>19</sup>

Estha’s separation from the three significant segments of his life-his twin sister Rahel, his mother Ammu and his beloved Velutha – who provided vitality and strength to his living, causes estrangement in a new situation where fear-psychosis grips his mind severely. The beating father of the past and the stepmother at present become the governing forces of his adolescence. As a consequence of the distorted psychological features, Estha remains a withdrawn individual and does not perform well in the school studies. His refusal to go to college (p.11) shows his fear of insults and humiliations in the adult world.

The withdrawal tendency in Estha increases so much that he prefers to live in home and do all sorts of housework and he could hardly go to market. One can observe in his mind, an acute sensitivity for humiliation which consequently evolves a strategy to avoid the situations at large in the outside world. His absolute dismissal of the verbal and physical contact with the environment paralyses his faculties of active mind which is life in a true sense. Thus, Estha attains a stage of lifelessness. The novelist narrates his condition.

“Unspeakable, Numb. And to an observer therefore, perhaps barely there. Slowly over the years, Estha withdrew from the world.”(p.12)

The nostalgia of the past agonizes him and hence, he retreats back to the extent of losing essence of life. Erich Fromm (1941) argues that man’s life is not completely governed by his biologically fixed nature but, “it results from the social process which creates man.”<sup>20</sup>

In Estha’s case, there is a complete collapse of the social process after Khubchand’s death (p.12) and in the onward movement of Time, he suffers from moral aloneness where no element of the environment could comfort him.

Though bold and rebellious, Rahel as a female child, one of the twins of Ammu unconsciously suffers after her death mainly as a result of the patriarchal negligence shown by Mammachi, Chacko and Baby Kochamma. It is observed that there is a lack of motherly love, care and concern especially in the realm of

socialization, in the approach and attitude of the three elderly individuals of the Ayemennen house. It appears in the following narration:

“In matters related to the raising of Rahel, Chacko and Mammachi tried, but couldn’t. They provided the care (food, clothes, fees) but withdrew the concern.” (p.15)

The excitement on the part of Rahel resulting mainly from the absence of motherly love, the kinship of Estha and the sporting spirit of Velutha makes her lose harmony. The isolation thus formed meets her instinctive behaviour without counseling, understanding and control for living as a process acceptable to the general social conditions. The patriarchal sense evolving from the Ayemenem house is chiefly found in the traditional thought that daughter after her marriage no longer remains a responsibility of her parents and, her children are not at all their concern. Alongwith this view, Baba accepts Estha as his son and Rahel as a female is easily ignored and forgotten at her father’s home as well as the maternal grandmother’s house.

It is undoubtedly true that Rahel’s real self is forsaken amidst the ignorance and negligence of the patriarchal family structure. But there is an inbuilt strength in her mind with which she develops her actual self and actively survives all thought the hardships of her lonely life. She inherits the optimistic will power and strength of her mother, Ammu. She radically differs from Estha’s sensitive temperament which immediately evaporates into neurosis and pessimism after responding to a situation. However, it must be accepted that the traumatic experiences of Estha during his childhood are his own. It shaped his temperament in that way. But, Rahel has no such trauma. Therefore, she succeeds in gaining strength for living by restoring her confidence. Estha’s self-alienation forms his social alienation while Rahel suffers from only social alienation. Her vitality of life is not consumed by self-alienation.

Rahel’s drifting “from school to school”(p.15), her blacklisted name and her expelling (p.16) show the instinctive character of her behaviour where she badly needs socialization. In fact, it is the isolation from the mainstream life that gives her restlessness. Her acts become a sort of amusement or entertainment used by her in order to overcome the anguish formed in her lonely mind. It is

her sheer ignorance not to know that her acts are socially acceptable and in a traditional sense, worth protesting. However, through these instinctive acts, Rahel saves herself from getting into neurosis. The lack of communion and love, and lack of understanding and harmony resulting into excitement and anguish remain the chief undercurrents which form oddities in her behaviour. The lack of strategic measures in absence of love and harmony exactly victimizes Estha to neurosis. Of course, Estha is governed more by the traumatic experiences of his past with which he continually responds and loses his active sense with the darkness of inaction, neurosis. In the study of facts, it is found that Estha and Rahel show two contrary qualities of life under the same circumstances of isolation – one dominated by neurosis while another, overpowered by instinct. Though both of them are socially unacceptable, Rahel strategically succeeds in her survival.

In the context of Rahel – her psychological and familial background – the schools remain a butt of attack on the part of the novelist. Their failure to understand Rahel's survival conditions remove them from a true education process. On the contrary, their blacklisting and expelling Rahel stands largely ironic to the ideals of education which they preach and the highest ideal of humanity which the essence of all religions in the universe teaches the mankind. Thus, novelist exposes the orthodox nature of the schools emerging from the institutionalization of Christianity leading to their hypocrisy which fails to discharge the true reformatory function of education. Rahel's punishments remain disproportionate to the faults and errors in her behaviour. It leads to her psychological complications resulting into disintegration of her mind and loss of concentration in studies in her higher education at the college of Architecture.

In the absence of parental care and concern and the agonizing past life, Rahel remains an individual without social tie, without individuation in a true sense, without ideological set up of life, without planning of further education and career towards specific achievement in terms of goal. There is a lack of self-actualization which the novelist refers to as, 'fierce lack of ambition' (p.18). The 'waywardness' formed in her is characterized by her loneliness and lack of active family framework in a larger context. Rahel's failure at the college of

Architecture in Delhi almost for a period of eight years (p.17) indicates her lack of ideological realization of life and the subjective interest motivated mainly by a sense of ease, fun and comfort.

Rahel's marginal status in society formed due to her oblique behaviour caused by lack of socialization, lack of active family support and a sense of alienation emerging from it, become a major barrier for her traditional arranged marriage. The serious situation of her adult life looked after by nobody in the world promotes her subjectivity as the ultimate measure of survival in society. Her plight appears in the following lines of the narration:

“Rahel grew up without a brief. Without anybody to arrange a marriage for her. Without anybody who would pay her a dowry and therefore without an obligatory husband looming on her horizon..”(p.17)

In the patriarchal context, Rahel passes through the condition of life similar to that of her mother, Ammu. The pre-marriage and the post-marriage situations are characterized at both places mainly by parental negligence and divorce. Both try to search for true love and security for their life amidst the male-dominating society. But they search in vain and meet loneliness and misery.

Rahel marries without knowing the significance of marriage and the conditions for its formation as established by the elderly network of marriage institution. Her marriage with Larry McCaslin, a foreigner, emerges as a result of her need which is not only biological, but psychological and social. Her decision to marry him is mainly prompted by her willingness to get rid of the strokes of alienation which batter at her mind and soul for many years. It carries the long-cherished values of acceptance and love. However, in her decision itself, there lie seeds of the failure of her married life. The Indian woman proposes her married life and ‘the English god’ disposes it.

Larry McCaslin's understanding of his marriage to Rahel and his acceptance of her remain temporary. It does not contain an everlasting sense of relationship. The novelist comments on the situation:

“He held her as though she was gift. Given to him in love. Something still and small. Unbearably precious.”(p.19)

It obviously proves McCaslin's view of Rahel as a precious object to be enjoyed. It shows his lack of serious concern for her as a human being, a young married woman with ideas and sentiments, aspirations and desires, dreams and dwelling! Rahel's suffering continued with many years and its impact on her mind, expressed through her eyes is mistakenly viewed by McCaslin as 'indifference and despair' (p.19). In fact, this cross-cultural marriage shows youth as the only element common to both of them. Under the drastic pressure of the downright dissimilarity, in all aspects, Rahel and McCaslin remain heterogeneous in their marital relationship. As hypocrite, McCaslin fails to understand Rahel's life and character in a true sense. In fact, it seems to be below his dignity to do so.

McCaslin, the inheritor of the American white race holding its dominating sense of superiority and arrogance, subordinates Rahel and renders her inferior in many ways. Her growing alienation with the American culture itself shows her psychological separation which leads to growing difference and conflicts, and finally the dismissal of the marital relationship into divorce. Thus, McCaslin in his relationship with Rahel emerges as a highly civilized and educated American who deceives a helpless Indian woman by using her for his sexual purpose without any authenticity of future life. Her helplessness is maltreated by him in the form of her sexual exploitation and release. The male-dominating cultural values which he shows, prove quite ironic to his civilized state.

The patriarchal treatment of ignorance and negligence given to Rahel by the owners of Ayemenem house – Mammachi and Chacko – has its own meaning not only in patriarchal values but in the incidental happenings such as defamation of the family brought about by Ammu and the death of Chacko's only daughter, Sophie Mol, due to her twins. However, the treatment alone generates in Rahel's mind a permanent sense of separation from Mammachi and Chacko. The damage to her value-system and her consequent suffering in the void of lack of parental concern becomes a traumatic experience for her. Therefore, she does not return to Ayemenem house even at Mammachi's death and Chacko's departure to Canada.(p.18) Her relationship with the maternal

grandmother and maternal uncle, which serve as the prominent sites of kinship, remain deserted as the ultimate output of anguish and despair on her part.

The relationship between Estha and Rahel as ‘dizzigotic’ twins (p.2) gains a significant place in the aesthetics of the novel. Their togetherness during childhood where they responded to each other on any subject of the world with the communion of their souls, their separation from each other during the familial circumstances and their reunion during their desolated adulthood, are the three phases through which the novelist forces various shades of their relationship. The sameness of Estha and Rahel’s feelings and ideas, their sense of the united whole during their childhood is identified by the novelist and commented upon as follows:

“That the emptiness in one twin was only a version of quietness in the other. That the two things fitted together, like stacked spoons.”(p.20)

It is certain that their separation from each other causes breakdown of the bonds of intimacy formed during their childhood. The inner craving for each other largely affects their normal sense of psychological behaviour which shows its expression in the form of loss of activeness and formation of dullness where faith in life itself starts ebbing. Instead of being carried by the lively spirit of living, they carry with them the dry mass of life. In the absence of each other, they wither like dry leaves. With separation, the energy and force of living in each case is immediately withdrawn. It is found that their strength and growth lies in their togetherness, in their unitedness and the separation exactly damages both the aspects of their life. In their unitedness, they are meant for each other amidst the hostility of the world. In fact, the decision of Estha’s departure from Ayemenem house to his father, Baba in Calcutta, is briefed by Baby Kochamma. Therefore it originates mainly from Chacko’s wrath against Ammu and Estha as persons held responsible for Sophie Mol’s death. It is obvious that Estha is driven out from the house as the punitive action executed against him. The separation deteriorates their life. Thus, it could be commented that the separation proves largely traumatic to the twins and it destroys their confidence of life and their creative abilities by pushing them into the sombre shades of loneliness and misery.

Shanti Sivaraman (2001) studies the novel by projecting its major events and their consequences caused by the breakdown to the social laws. The ending of her paper shows reference to Arundhati Roy's judgment expressed in her interview with Emily Gutheinz. Roy opines that the social conditions contribute a major share in the deteriorating aspects of their life. Sivaraman appropriately cites Roy's comment and concludes her paper with the social responsibility towards the small things. Roy's comment is projected:

“Because of people being unprotected, the world and the social machine intrudes into the smallest, deepest core of their being and changes their life.”<sup>21</sup>

Roy's vision communicated by Sivaraman largely supports the observations of the present researcher. The psychological damage done by all the possible means during the emergence of circumstances for a period of twenty –three years, completely collapses Estha's mind. His Re-returning to Ayemenem house (p.12) from Calcutta where the father shows his disability to carry Estha in Canada, clearly indicates a severe breakdown to Estha's psychological health. He no longer remains a full-fledged human being, but an odd object completely alienated from the world. His sense of recognizing the people, as Baby Kochamma writes to Rahel in America, becomes extremely faint and he develops a habit of walking long distances. (p.13). It is an attempt to save himself from insanity.

Rahel, who shows her disgust for Ayemenem house, the ideology and ideas of its elderly people, comes back to it after receiving a shock that Eshta is severely declining towards insanity. The bonds of the childhood and kinship are renewed. Her feeling of love for the blood-tie gains momentum alongwith the identical experience of the selfish and wicked world. Nirzari Pandit (1999) comments on their adulthood:

“Rahel grows up to be a disillusioned unhappy adult with nothing but emptiness within her and Estha is forced to retreat into silence occupying very little space in the world.”<sup>22</sup>

Pandit notes the serious situation of their life moving towards the existential quality. The relationship between Estha and Rahel as adults (p.327) moves from harmony to sex. The alienation over the years on the part of both

and the consequent suffering emerging from it unites them in a true sense. The incestuous relationship emerges as a product of the socio- psychological conditions of Estha and Rahel.

It is significant to note that the vision of the novelist while depicting this particular relationship advances to the extent of putting question-marks against the very notions 'brother' and 'sister' which take their roots amidst cultural heritage and cultural structure which are realized in terms of family structure and social setup. The formation of the individuals and their relationship occurs with the open-hearted acceptance, with warmth and affection from all, where the fountain of free movements characterized by mirth and gaiety is rewarding one from the people, almost like sunlight and water to a plant where real growth occurs. But when the lives like Estha and Rahel are cut off from the system itself, and the environment shows only rejection, hatred and exploitation in the absence of family pillars, how can they grow with appropriate sense of kinship bonds? Perhaps, this is the greatest question that the novelist asks while projecting the nature of this relationship.

Their embracing becomes as natural as skin to the body. The formation of incest in the relationship then becomes a worst comment, a serious abuse by the novelist, on the social conditions which render Estha and Rahel's life miserable to the extent of making them go beyond their kinship identities.

Baby Kochamma's relationship with Father Mulligan is one of the significant dimensions of man-woman relationship in the novel. The romantic love of Baby Kochamma emerging from 'the sexual excitement' (p.23) for Father Mulligan is the most natural outcome of her youthful passion in the initial period of her life. The instinctive sense of libidinal passion underlying the Father's theological glory is the remarkable aspect of his being human. The novelist comments:

"The young girl and the intrepid Jesuit, both quaking with unchristian passion."(p.24)

The phrase 'intrepid Jesuit' appears in the context in ironic sense and highlights passion as the weakness of the monk. The overpowering impressions of Father Mulligan on Baby Kochamma result into her endless quest for his love

to her, even at the cost of her marriage and religion. Her spinsterhood all through the years passes with her imaginative living with Father Mulligan.

The world of theology created by Baby Kochamma and inherited by her father gives her so called 'reputation' but it does not enter the innermost chambers of her mind and never fuses with her heart. The fountain of desire remains active. It is certain that she loses her way of life in the labyrinth of reputation and inner desires. Her involvement with the theological features of life unconsciously proves to be a deception of her physical being which she fails to sublimate towards spirituality. Probably, it is this sense of deception which pursues her still her old age. In order to overcome it, she is inclined towards material behaviour. The following part of the narration rightly projects it:

“As a young woman, she had renounced the material world, and now, as an old one she seemed to embrace it. She hugged it and it hugged her back.”  
(p.27)

As patriarch of the family Mr. E. John Ipe, Baby Kochamma's father, emerges as the high priest of Christianity devoted to the church, religious ideas and the people around. His continuous engrossment in his work results into his failure in perceiving the mind and movements of his daughter. The overpowering spiritual sense which governs his ideas and attitudes does not identify the nature of material possibilities and facts in case of his daughter, Baby Kochamma. He remains unaware of her indomitable desire for Father Mulligan and her attempts to seek him physically.

It is quite ironic to see that E. John Ipe, as chief of the family is poorly equipped with the physical nature of human life, its material wants and man's most natural bent of mind towards it. It is exactly at this situation that he misjudges Baby Kochamma's life. His decision to send her to the convent school proves turning point to her life.

His ignorance of the significance and need of the material nature of life and Baby Kochamma's passion of romantic love for Father Mulligan overthrow her life. Baby Kochamma falls prey to the social propaganda that she has become a nun by joining the convent. This propaganda itself terminates her from marriage and conjugal life as viewed by E. John Ipe later. His another

decision to send her to America for Diploma in Ornamental Gardening (p.26) concentrates her desire and interest for Father Mulligan and the consequent material life emerging therefrom. In fact, her mind fuses with the materialistic features of the American civilization. She comes back to India, but loaded with it.

Thus, it could be argued that the responsibility of ruining Baby Kochamma's life partly lies with Mr. John Ipe. His parenthood is largely overlapped by his theological vision through which he tries to justify his children and meets ultimate failure. Baby Kochamma's 'stubborn single mindedness' (p.24) is probably the product of his lack of indepth communication, personal counseling and her adverse response to him. Thus, it is found that Mr. E. John Ipe emerges more as a theological person and less as a committed father where there is a scarcity of critical judgment about social and ideological setting of the life of his children.

Abraham Joseph (2000) while studying the various characteristics of the novel refers to some of the traits of Ayemenem house one of which has been perceived as 'duality' of character. About Baby Kochamma, he comments:

"Aunt Baby's fascination for Father Mulligan and her spinsterhood coexist."<sup>23</sup>

Mr. Joseph projects Baby Kochamma's hypocritical nature. In fact, Baby Kochamma was never meant for theology and religion, but it is her love for Father Mulligan and the fierce ambition for possessing him physically that makes her follow him from Ayemenem to Madras in the guise of theology and religion. Even her conversion of herself into Roman Catholic Christianity (p.24) is meant only for Father Mulligan.

Her rebel against the father for the Father and her stubbornness to go to Madras for communion and love with him shows her deep-rooted love for him. Her utter failure through all the attempts alter her psychological features in her later life. M.K. Naik (2003), in view of Baby Kochamma's life, in his thematic study of the novel, shows 'libido' as an elemental force to which Baby Kochamma falls victim. His further comment, showing the drastic effect of her liking for Father Mulligan, is significant:

“In the case of Baby Kochamma, however, a frustration in love at the age of eighteen ruins her for life.”<sup>24</sup>

However, Baby Kochamma’s spinsterhood remains the result of not only her desire for Father Mulligan and his imaginative presence in her mind, but the social propaganda and the consequent social image of her as a theological being where the possibility of her marriage diminishes almost to the point of extinction.

The perversion of Baby Kochamma’s frustration in love is observed prominently on two levels: Her relationship with Ammu and her twins, and her overwhelming realization of material indulgence in life with her subsequent state of swaying in it.

Her jealousy for Ammu evolves mainly from Ammu’s love relationship with Velutha. Her pride, as she thinks, lies in her superiority of loving the higher being, the white race priest, and maintaining the standard of her life, her racial superiority and control. She underrates Ammu in her love relationship, as her nausea for the untouchables is extreme. In fact, Ammu’s possession of Velutha physically and Baby Kochamma’s loss of Father Mulligan generate a true stream of spite in her mind which works in a number of ways, and finally overthrows Ammu and Velutha from life itself. Her spite is prompted mainly by her sexual and psychological starvation which creates further complications in her lonely life. Her hatred of Ammu’s twins – Estha and Rahel – is partly due to her spinsterhood which is a state of void caused by marriagelessness and her subsequent life without Man and children.

Rahel’s observation of Baby Kochamma’s person and behaviour at the age of eighty-three in the Ayemenem house is the most sound comment that throws light not only on her frustration in love, but her savage efforts to live life with the maximum material indulgence to the extent of feeling eccentric to others. The comment is as follows:

“She’s living her life backwards.”(p.22)

Baby Kochamma’s inclination towards indulgence after Father Mulligan’s death indicates her renewal of her age-old desire for marriage and full-fledged family life. In her own consciousness, she becomes the owner of the

Ayemenem house with sole possession over its estate and valuables. The novelist describes her newly-formed youth and passion of life at the age of eighty-three.

“Her hair dyed jet-black, was arranged across her scalp like unspooled thread. The dye had stained the skin of her forehead a pale grey, giving her a shadowy second hairline. Rahel noticed that she had started wearing make-up. Lipstick. Kohl.”(p.20)

It seems that with Mulligan’s death, her bond of love with him is severed and she becomes free. It shows not only her hypocrisy but also her psychological rebel against his unrequited sense of her love. Her love for him has no sublimation and no sacrifice value at the age of eighty-three. It begets another instinct of indulgence in her mind where she fully embraces to the idea of epicurean way of living and ultimately craves for Man in her inner world. Thus, Baby Kochamma’s tragedy lies more in libido and less in love. Her choice for the libido has to pay the highest cost of the world, her life.

Chacko as the only patriarchal heir of the Ipe family after Pappachi’s death and even in his life has multiple relationships with women in the family. He emerges as son, as brother, as husband and crucial of all, as owner of the pickle factory in relation to female workers. The shades of patriarchy and the sense of male dominance is distinct in almost all the relationships, except his relationship with Margaret Kochamma which needs a separate discussion.

Pappachi’s patriarchal concern for the son and his patriarchal ignorance towards the daughter has already been established in the earlier study. The emerging sense of discrimination between son and daughter remains a chief patriarchal vision of the Ipe family through which Chacko’s and Ammu’s life are forced. It is quite significant to study the patriarchal motivation and its ultimate output in Chacko’s relationship with the women in the Ipe family and their pickle factory.

As son, Mammachi’s ideas about Chacko are almost of talent and superiority unexcelled in the family and even impressing the Oxford situations. The novelist cynically narrates the patriarchal fact of his living in the family:

“Chacko was Mammachi’s only son.”(p.5)

According to Abraham Maslow's theory of basic needs and human evolution, it is found that Chacko's real self is intact, well-built, without any damage value. The freedom, harmony and love alongwith he grows, give him every opportunity for progress till he reaches Oxford as 'Rhodes Scholar' (p.38). He gains his status in the family as a self-actualized person like Pappachi. But the patriarchal values of life are also transferred from Pappachi to Chacko. He feels immense love for Mammachi as mother.

The repercussions of Pappachi's hatred and violence against Mammachi for many years are seen in the form of her intimacy and love for Chacko. However, Chacko's warning to Pappachi with full physical vigor (p.48) and his provision of security to Mammachi against Pappachi's beatings renews the relationship between the mother and the son to a significant extent. She perceives Chacko as her protector lord who rescues her from the violence of the husband against her, continued for the decades of life. This release from the physical torture takes her to the exalted heights of happiness. Therefore, her judgment about Chacko radically changes. She remains inclined to Chacko in a deviant way. So, the mother-son relationship, almost on the part of the mother, deviates from its normal course. In her frame of mind, Chacko remains not only her son but a Man who occupies all the space of her mind with no space for Pappachi. The novelist narrates:

"Mammachi packed her wifely luggage and committed it to Chacko's care. From then onwards he became the repository of all her womanly feelings. Her Man. Her only love." (p.168)

The cruelty and violence of the tyranny of the husband lasting for a long period of time comes to an end and Mammachi no longer holds relationship with him in her mind. Certainly, it is her way of deserting her marital relationship with Pappachi. This specific mindset of Mammachi regarding Chacko leads to certain characteristics of her relationship with him. Her possession of Chacko is one of the obvious characteristics of the relationship. It gives rise to her strong jealousy and hatred about Margaret Kochamma as Chacko's wife. In her inner world, there is no acceptance of Margaret.

Mammachi's strong hatred of Margaret rising from her possession of Chacko is evident from the following piece of narration:

“She hated Margaret Kochamma for being Chacko's wife. She hated her for leaving him. But would have hated her even more had she stayed.”(p.168)

It clearly indicates the complex of the relationship formed in Mammachi's mind. The complex emerges as her attempt of gratification-substitution in the image of the son as Man. Mohit K. Roy (1999) rightly observes:

“In fact, her maternal love grew into an obsession since the day Chacko prevented his father from beating his mother.”<sup>25</sup>

The redeeming quality of the son makes Mammachi remain engrossed in the world of her relationship with him where the glory of the son becomes her universe. In her personal sense of living denied to her for many years by the brutal husband, she ignores Ammu and her life.

In fact, it becomes easier for her through her patriarchal understanding of life. It must be noted that much of Mammachi's possessive sense of Chacko is psychological. But it is also observed that Mammachi's renewed love for Chacko which becomes a universe on its own, provides him with all kinds of favours which give him Manly joy and comfort. It is worthwhile to note that Mammachi does it at the cost of her scruples and social sense. Chacko's 'feudal libido' (p.168) in relation to the women of the pickle factory is given a sanction by her in the realization of 'Man's Needs' (p.168) which Baby Kochamma had to accept. The sanction is led by the arrangement of space and money for the women workers.

Thus, the relationship between Mammachi and Chacko as mother and son significantly changes towards a complex at the striking backdrop of the relationship between Mamachi and Pappachi. In fact, the former proves to be the undesirable product of the latter.

In relationship with Ammu as brother, Chacko emerges as the inheritor not only of the property of the Ayemenem house but the patriarchal value-system which is unconsciously perpetrated to him by his parents. His sense of superiority and his consequent arrogance belittles Ammu's status in the family.

The patriarchal notions of the family life render the brother and the sister as giant and dwarf respectively. Chacko remains giant by all means and Ammu stands dwarf in every fact of her life. The nature of the patriarchal growth of the brother and his patriarchal relationship with the sister, occupies a significant place in the study of man-woman relationship in the novel.

The sense of the ideological discrimination between them as son and daughter renders them remain in the two separate cells of mindset where the son is endowed with the fundamental rights to freedom, progress and happiness while the daughter is denied the life as such. It sets the brother and the sister into two different temperaments. Ammu's observations and experiences of such partiality in treating them generate restlessness in her mind and out of protest, she forms adverse judgments about Chacko. The psychological harmony between the brother and the sister is uprooted by the patriarchal ideology itself. The novelist narrates Ammu's comments against Chacko:

“Ammu said that the sad but entirely predictable fate of Chacko's airplanes was an impartial measure of his abilities.”(p.56)

It indicates Ammu's isolation in her relationship with Chacko. It is full of cynicism and laughter against him. Her rebellious power remains active against his success and superiority as she being daughter, is deprived of the opportunities despite her abilities.

It is then evident that this growing sense of discrimination and its subsequent experiences of dissatisfaction make Ammu form 'a reckless rage' (p.44) and its further growth brings her to a stage of 'suicide bomber.' (p.44)

In the light of kinship values, it is ironic to perceive that Chacko has no constructive feelings about his sister's miserable life. The patriarchal sense in him is so dominant that he does not accept her as the integral part of the Ipe family. He views Ammu with the sense of otherness. Therefore, he has feelings for mother but no sentiments for sister. His possession over the estate of the Ipe family is extreme. His talk with Ammu clearly projects it:

“What's yours is mine and what's mine is also mine.”(p.57)

This patriarchal sense of Chacko in his relationship with Ammu determines the miserable nature of her premarital and postmarital conditions of

life. She suffers as the daughter of the Ipe family as she has no property rights despite her birth in the family and her hardwork in the pickle factory. The novelist highlights her plight against the absolute ownership of Chacko:

“Though Ammu did as much work in the factory as Chacko, whenever he was dealing with food inspectors or sanitary engineers, he always referred to it as ‘my’ pickles. Legally, this was the case because Ammu, as a daughter, had no claim to the property.” (p.57)

The novelist projects this fact of lack of property rights as a significant social issue which generates high dependence, insecurity and social fear in women’s mind and makes them surrender in a death-pale situation created by the patriarchal values of male-dominance. Chacko remains the illustration of this fact in the novel. As an empowered patriarch, his dictatorial spirit rises up after his only daughter Sophie Mol’s death. His violent command to Ammu (p.225) to leave off his house renders her homeless in a true sense. Outside the home, she remains deprived of economic and security matters. In order to achieve it, she had to lose her life. Thus, the relationship which begins with the innocence of the childhood kinship as brother and sister, ends during adulthood into a relationship between a horrible dictator and the oppressed in the patriarchal background. While displaying the multiple roles of Chacko in his life, Madhumalati Adhikari (1999) observes:

“His failure as a husband, as a father and a good businessman suggest his physical and emotional enclosures. He has no authority. He exercises his power on Rahel and Estha – the children – and in the end on the weak Ammu.”<sup>26</sup>

In the above context, one can not respond to Chacko’s adult life without referring to his living at Oxford in England. It is certain that he emerges as the victim of Anglophilia in his love relationship with a white woman called Margaret. His love, love-marriage and divorce take place in a short period of time. But it has everlasting impressions on his mind. Chacko’s overpowering passion for Margaret proves contrary to his intellectual traits as Rhodes scholar. It represents his immense stupidity as an anglophile. His obsession with the image of the white lady makes him forget the power and glory of his family, the towering sense of highness of his father, the racial greatness as Indian and the

family problems within. Margaret remains a worthless white lady without standards of family background and career except racial identity and the sophistication of the white civilization.

His love for Margaret has a close resemblance with Baby Kochamma's love for Father Mulligan. In Chacko's case, there is a partial fulfillment, without thorough acceptance and the consequent divorce. In Baby Kochamma's case, there is no reaching the destination. In the ultimate nature of man-woman relationship both the love-stories dissolve into nothingness at the alter of racial superiority and cultural dominance on the part of the white individuals. Consequently, both the Anglophiles – Chacko and Baby Kochamma – embrace hardships.

Thus, in the overall consideration of man-woman relationship in the novel, it is found that the primary concern of the novelist is with the nature of man-woman relationship and its realization in terms of misery of women. The number of relationships are embedded in the patriarchal structure of the post-independence modern Indian society. The cultural, social and political aspects appear at the background. But the essence of their ideology remains a governing force of these relationships.

The women from Ipe family – Mammachi, Ammu, Rahel and Baby Kochamma – show significant individualization in their person and character. But, it remains without appropriate recognition and support for its positive development as the circumstances created by the patriarchal forces in terms of male- dominance and the patriarchal unconsciousness in general, remain overpowering. Vimala Rama Rao, J. Sindhu and Nirmala C. Parkash (1998) conclude their paper in the following words:

“The novelist undoubtedly exhibits her capability to probe into human psyche by exploring vast area of human experience in a unique manner. She also shows an awareness of the need of understanding man and woman beyond the simple biological relationship.”<sup>27</sup>

The view of the above scholars can be partly accepted as there is no tracing of the exact reasons. The present study shows that *The God of Small Things* in its nature of man-woman relationships emerges mainly as a novel of

survival conditions, caused by the traditional ideological forces in the modern Indian society.

The two prominent literary devices with which the novelist portrays the nature of man-woman relationship are imagery and narrative technique.

### **5.2.2 The Device of Imagery:**

The device of imagery in *The God of Small Things* shows intellectual character rather than poetic. Like conceits of the metaphysical poets, the novelist vivifies the exact rationale behind the situations, objects or persons by employing the appropriate images. Shashi Bala Talwar (2001) analyses the nature of imagery in the novel and its function in communicating the ultimate theme. She observes:

“When, we closely read *The God of Small Things* from this point of view, we discover that Arundhati Roy’s favourite trope is simile. She perceives the world, both internal and external, in terms of likeness.”<sup>28</sup>

However, the central image of ‘God’, which builds the thematic structure of the novel, appears in the form of metaphor. The word, ‘God’ in the present context implies the traditional sense as well as the humanitarian appreciation in the form of God. The word ‘God’ as such implies strength, power, grace, protection, victory and honour. In fact, the God and the untouchable, as traditionally viewed, are two different aspects of Indian life which remained mutually exclusive in the social history of India. The novel becomes a modern classic for its aesthetics of endowing the qualities of God to the young untouchable Velutha who has his own abilities and talent. The novelist’s realization of his limitations before the larger structure of the society qualifies him as the god of small things (p.224).

While comparing this ‘Small God’, to the higher structure of the society, her perception of ‘Big God’ emerges. It refers to the powers such as community, social institutions, politics, ideology and religion. The ferocious upper hand of the ‘Big God’ over the ‘Small God’ destroys him to the extent of his annihilation. The phrase ‘small things’ itself functions as metaphor to indicate the deplorable quality of the life of women and children where their existence

no longer remains human, but deprived of the qualities of human life. They become the objects, without feelings and ideas.

The two images, 'Laltain'(Lantern) and 'Mombatti' (Tallow-stick) used to define the life and person of 'Big Man' and 'Small Man' (p.89) in the socio-cultural context of the novel highlights the social stratification in terms of power and powerlessness, strong and weak, protected and victimized. The relationship governs the ultimate nature of the man-woman relationship in the novel. The image of 'mangoes' used by the novelist in order to project Inspector Thomas Matthew's view of Ammu's breasts appears as follows:

"Then he tapped her breasts with his baton. Gently, Tap, Tap. As though, he was choosing mangoes from a basket. Pointing out the ones that he wanted packed and delivered." (p.8)

It shows Matthew's lustful attitude to Ammu derived mainly from her social image as 'veshya', a prostitute. She has been treated almost as a commodity to be consumed without confirmation of the authenticity. The situation remains highly ironic to the six principles of the police written on the wall. It shows Mathew's male-dominating hold against the helpless woman where the word 'veshya' and his subsequent perception of her becomes a continuous torture to her mind, generating fear-psychosis followed by the consequent nightmares.

Comrade K.N.M. Pillai's emergence in the novel as a cunning and corrupt politician is significant in relation to Ammu-Velutha relationship. There are two images which reflect his diabolical and dubious character. The first image appears as 'A professional omeletter' (p.14). The image projects his tendency to destroy a positive creativity and growth of others for preserving and developing his political power. His political tactics and constantly changing ideas while moving through the socio-political situations are communicated in the tendency expressed in the image of 'chameleon' (p.14), a reptile known for changing colours of its body according to the environment. The character-traits of Pillai communicated by these images present him as a politician who purposely fails to help Velutha and pushes him in the pit of death. In his act, he maintains his communal and political dominance.

Ammu's secret act of meeting Velutha during night at the banks of the river Meenachal is expressed in two images. Her personal leaving of Ayemenem house during midnight has been referred to as 'witch' (p.328). It shows her trait of moving at night prompted by her love of Velutha, her beauty as magical power over Velutha and her ultimate desire to unite with him. Ammu's moving through the darkness of night with sexual excitement and sensations towards Velutha has been compared with 'trail of a chemical' (p.330).

The analogy between Locusts and Ammu (p.57) as viewed by Chacko, expresses his patriarchal idea that Ammu as a married and divorced woman has no right to her parental home and property. It is Chacko's declaration that Ammu can not hold parasitic relationship with the Ipe family.

The images such as 'log', 'serene crocodile', 'wolf'(p.333,334) used regarding Velutha indicate his isolation from the main-stream civilization, the limitations of his strength and his good-heartedness. The darkness in the History House at midnight where Velutha hides himself before the attack of the Touchable Police, has been compared with 'python'.(p.191) The comparison anticipates Velutha's death not forwarded by darkness but by the batons, boots and the 'machine-gun' minds of the police. It is suggestive of the fatal features of violence against Velutha which would emerge as a consequence of his relationship with Ammu. The darkness, python, violence and Touchable Police are integrated as one whole that would destroy Velutha.

The serious situation of Velutha's life formed due to his sexual relationship with Ammu has been narrated as follows:

"He left behind a hole in the Universe through which darkness poured like liquid tar." (p.191)

Here, the word "Universe" denotes the upper caste Christian community. The word 'hole' refers to Velutha's sexual relationship with Ammu as upper caste woman. The darkness which is defined in the image of 'liquid tar' refers to the horror and violence inflicted by the community against Velutha. The metaphorical situation carries a cluster of images and projects Velutha's fatal condition of life.

Larry McCaslin's idea of marriage seems to revolve around Rahel's attractive body only. If she has to escape from isolation and boredom, he has to give way to his sexual energy. He marries her without understanding the nature of her existence. The sense of relationship that he holds with her appears as follows:

“He held her as though she was a gift. Given to him in love, Something still and small. Unbearably precious.” (p.19)

The resemblance between Rahel and precious gift refers to McCaslin's sexual view of her almost as an object to be enjoyed. It shows her belittled status and his dominance over her.

Margaret Kochamma's married life with Chacko is slowly caused by poverty, dissatisfaction and frustration. Her inclination towards Joe for betterment of her living in the form of material opulence and conjugal life appears in the following image:

“Margaret Kochamma found herself drawn towards him like a plant in a dark room towards a sedge of light.” (p.208)

The image of ‘a plant’ with significance of darkness and light truly projects Margaret's British character. Mallikarjun Patil (1999) while studying the nature of the imagery in the novel comments:

“Arundhati Roy with her pen makes the inanimate things talk and act the way she desires or her characters do.”<sup>29</sup>

Patil shows the novelist's power to form images for human as well as non-human world. Thus, the study of imagery in the novel shows vivification of the diverse conditions of human existence where character-traits and situations are projected. Most of the images appear in the form of simile as commented earlier by Shashi Talwar. The images of Nature, subhumans, reptiles and insects signify the natural forces in human behaviour. They also denote violence and damage as the inevitable outcome of the violation of social laws by the ‘love laws’ which govern the nature of man-woman relationship and its social consequences, as emerge from the novel.

### 5.2.3 The Narrative Techniques:

The narrative techniques express the socio-psychological conditions of man-woman relationship in the novel, *The God of Small Things* have been communicated by the specific strategies followed by the novelist in the structure of the narrative. The entire narration of the novel is in third-person point of view. There is an authoritative voice that narrates the life of the three generations of the Ipe family. It shows a strong sense of cynicism and irony emerging from the novelist's mind.

The narrative starts where chronologically the story ends. The preceding human life is narrated later. The opening paragraph of the geographical setting of Ayemenem during the summer season performs allegorical function in communicating human life. It symbolically suggests the nature of human life, especially the nature of man-woman relationship. It appears as follows:

“May in Ayemenem is a hot brooding month. The days are hot and humid. The river shrinks and black crows gorge on bright mangoes in still dust-green trees. Red bananas ripen. Jackfruits burst. Dissolute bluebottles hum vacuously in the fruity air. Then they stun themselves against clear windowpanes, and die fatly baffled in the sun.

The nights are clear but suffused with sloth and sullen expectation.”(p.1)

The beginning projects the universal situation of human life where ‘May in Ayemenem’ becomes a period of suffering and neurosis in human life. The symbolic value of the shrinking ‘river’ corresponds to the ebbing humanity in society. The phrase ‘black crows’ communicates the evil, corrupt and dominating tendencies in society. The phrase, ‘bright mangoes’ indicates the sites of opportunity, meant for exploitation. ‘dissolute bluebottles’ refers to the male tendencies quite lecherous and addicted to vices. The phrase ‘fruity air’ projects male-dominating exploitation of women as commodity. The clarity of ‘the nights’ projects traditional unconsciousness of male and female life where there is a little realization of pain, ‘suffused with sloth and sullen expectation’ (p.1)

Thus, the opening paragraph of the novel shows poetic character and it has a strong symbolic association with the thematic complexity of man-woman

relationship and their individual life. It functions as an excellent piece of poetry which anticipates the meaning of the life of the various characters belonging to the generations of the Ipe family amidst the patriarchal modern Indian society.

The narration is characterized by the linguistic experimentation which carries the high value of creativity towards the theme of human relationships. The starting phrases such as 'Locust Stand I' or 'die-voice' enrich the nature of man-woman relationship in the novel. While studying linguistic deviation as a narrative style of Roy, Jaydeep Sarangi (2000) comments:

“No linguistic rule can explain Arundhati Roy’s Linguistic experimentation.”<sup>30</sup>

The variety and complexity of the deviation may be beyond the grammatical analysis, but it is certain that it provides a strong sense of meaning to the situations and persons projecting the theme of human existence.

In the narrative structure of the novel, the novelist uses the added strands of the theme in terms of anecdotes, songs, films, Kathakali dances etc. They enrich the context and reinforce the theme of woman’s relationship with the patriarchal society. This technique of reinforcing the theme is adopted by William Shakespeare in his tragedies where he arranges minor stories along with the main plot. The all-pervasive use of italics is one of the features of the narration which segregates the meaning and then integrates it with the whole range of the theme.

The novel shows in its narrative structure, a technical preciseness of a treatise. The first chapter emerges as introduction in which the crucial parts of the life of many characters have been narrated. Towards the end of the chapter there is an argument: “Equally, it could be argued that it actually began thousands of years ago.. .. The laws that lay down who should be loved, and how and how much.” (p.33)

The argument proves to be a hypothesis and all the subsequent chapters go on testifying it. Mohan Ramanan (1999) studies the narrative features of the novel. He comments:

“In narrative strategy, Roy is no sophisticated manipulator either. A simple flashback technique is all she can offer and this every novelist or fiction

writer can also do and in this respect Mukul Kesavan, Shashi Tharoor are far ahead not to speak of Rushdie.”<sup>31</sup>

It seems that Ramanan’s judgment is biased due to one reason or the another. There can be no disagreement over the truth that the narrative style in modern fiction is highly conducive to its theme. Roy needs to be understood from this point of view.

The overall scheme of narration is divided by the novelist into twenty-one chapters which proves to be twenty-one slides of the past arranged in a haphazardly manner. This sense of disorder in narrating the past is indicative of the disorder in the life of the characters. The artistic violation of the rules of writing represents the breaking of the social laws by the humans and their transgression of the boundaries, which appears as the prominent feature of the theme of the novel.

The twenty-first chapter of the novel, ‘The Cost of Living’ is remarkable for ‘Ending’ as a narrative strategy. The psycho-physical union of Ammu and Velutha is the central aspect of this chapter. Their sexual relationship remains at the cost of their life. As a thematic feature of the novel, it shows the overpowering of the laws of nature over the laws of man. Of course, it takes place under the drastic social conditions and the suffering which can never be ignored. Thus, the ending of the novel testifies to the hypothesis set by the novelist at the end of the first chapter.

In the ultimate analysis, it could be argued that the various aspects of the narrative strategy employed by the novelist successfully communicate her vision of the ironic and cynical presentation of man-woman relationship and the subsequent plight of woman amidst the modern Indian social set up which is patriarchal in nature.

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It is a poem written by Sylvia Plath. It shows Plath's strong reaction against her despotic father who always forced her to remain within the four walls of the house and restricted her freedom to the

extreme. It suffocated her to a large extent. Ammu's relationship with Pappachi is viewed along this parallel situation.

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