



## Analogous Traumas of Women in Arundhati Roy's 'The God of Small Things' in comparison with Mulk Raj Anand's 'Untouchable'.

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### **Abstract:**

*This article zeroes on how Indian women still face threat, violence, inequality, neglect, kidnapping, abduction, rapes and traumas through the characters of Ammu and Mammachi who are the embodiment of Indian women from 'the God of Small Things' by Arundhati Roy and through the character Sohini who is the symbolic of the sexually exploited women in and around India from 'Untouchable' by Mulk Raj Anand and shows that these two novels are the deepest explorations of the plight of women and have been written with a view to finding solutions to the existing evils and obliterating the deep-rooted moral deterioration.*

**Key Words:** *Agony, suppression, trauma, discrimination, darkened, obsession, humiliation, molested, trafficked, misogyny, harassment.*

### **Analysis**

India has produced a good number of women writers in Indian writing in English who are the most renowned in the world now. They have contributed various genres to Indian writing in English dealing with the existing evils of Indian society without reservations and inhibitions. Some of them have received India's most prestigious awards and rewards as well International appeal. Suzanna Arundhati Roy is one among them who won the 1997 Man Booker prize for the novel 'The God of Small Things'. She was awarded the Sydney Peace Prize in May, 2004 for her work in social campaigns and advocacy of non-violence.

In 2006, January, she was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award. "Since winning the Booker Prize, she has concentrated her writing on political issues. These include the Narmada Dam Project, India's nuclear weapons, corrupt power company Enron's activities in India. She is a figure of head of anti-globalization/alter-globalization movement and a vehement critic of neo-imperialism<sup>1</sup>.

The manifold issues have been discussed, debated and expounded in her writings. Since the beginning, both Pre-Independence and Post-Independence authors have unflinchingly unfolded the agonies, suppression and the trauma that women struggle with. These agonies are as old as human race. Vedic,



Classical, Medieval and contemporary ages have been facing the same agonies with equal measure till today without any marked change. Arundhati Roy has taken a brave step to barely exhibit the insolence and hypocrisy of our Indian society in her novel 'The God of Small Things' in Post-Independence as Mulk Raj Anand, one of the pioneers of Indo-English fiction who is admired for his novels and short stories and noted for his perceptive insight into the lives of the oppressed and their exploitation and misfortunes minutely depicted the plight of women through the character Sohini in his novel 'Untouchable' in Pre-Independence. Between 'The God of Small Things' which was published in 1997 and 'Untouchable' which was published in 1935, that have the span of 62 years. But unfortunately the intensity of the deep-rooted evils have not been abated either with the impact of effective writings or with the advent of science, technology and the constitutional laws.

'The God of Small Things' profoundly displays the inner struggles of the suppressed woman Ammu, one of the women characters in the novel 'The God of small Things' who is globally the embodiment of all the suppressed women. Mammachi, Baby Kochamma and other family members detest Ammu for she falls in love with Velutha, the subaltern in the novel. Ammu feels as an untouchable within the family inmates. She is physically and psychologically tormented as many women undergo the same sort of traumas and discrimination in and around India.

Illicit liaison must be surely condemned. 'Sex' is the gift of the Creator which is only permissible within the institution of Holy Matrimony. These days, the basic distinction between man and woman seems to have been given up. The youth are enslaved to prefer romance to routine. The number of divorce cases is increasing day by day due to ethical decline. Some feel sexual promiscuity as a social duty and the flesh workers indulge in all sorts of nonsense and dissipation. Many give in to nihilistic notions assuming that innocent joys of the body are not pollutions of the soul. In this modern age, adultery and fornication are not even treated as evil-doings by many in general and by so called intellectuals in particular. This is truly miserable condition of the deteriorating age. Such people verily need the correction. Ammu's liaison with Velutha must be condemned as a matter of fact but Baby Kochamma does not reprimand Ammu her daughter for she has illicit relation with Velutha but reprimands her for Valutha is a subaltern. Here, Baby Kochamma's hatredness on the subalterns is quite visible that globally symbolises the hidden hatredness of high-class people on the oppressed classes. This is the very reason Baby Kochamma makes Ammu mentally melancholic. Mammachi and Baby Kochamma show their Venom, crass and insufferable insults on Velutha. Roy adroitly writes about the pitiable condition of velutha saying that "Mammachi spat into Velutha's face, Thick spit. It splattered across his skin, His mouth and eyes" <sup>2</sup>. Velutha as well



Ammu are the passive victims of the bitterest experiences in their lives as Bhaka and Sohini in the novel 'Untouchable'.

Inspector Thomas Matthew, being the Police, looks at Ammu lustily and misbehaves rudely. In his terms, Police is meant for politeness, obedience, loyalty, intelligence, courtesy and efficiency. This interpretation is only confined to words in reality. But he fails when he has to act so. The spirit of nominal of the present age can be comprehended by the rude disposition of the Police here. Unfortunately, the moral saws are like the sign-boards which show the way but do not follow. Such is the recondite condition of the police in many places in this present age. The world has such many mere human sign-boards. At this juncture, the pain and the inner struggle that Ammu has is inexplicable and unutterable. First time Estha and Rahel, twins have seen their mother cry in their lives. But they are helpless to console Ammu, their mother. The intentional belittlement of Ammu by the family members, the husband's divorcement of Ammu and the uncourteous behaviour of the Police on Ammu are the reflections of many Indian Ammus in every corner of India. Sohini's ill-treatment by Kalinath, the priest, in the novel 'Untouchable' conspicuously mirrors the sexual exploitation and the molestation of Indian women by the high caste landlords, money lenders and the so-called custodians of religion throughout India.

When Sohini protests against the sexual assault by Pandit Kalinath, he abuses her for defiling him. Anand poignantly outlines the teasing experience of Sohini "That man, that man, she said, that man made suggestions to me, when I was cleaning the lavatory of his house there. And when I screamed, he came out shouting that he had been defiled"<sup>3</sup>. The teen-aged Sohini who suffers humiliation, discerns that the attempt made by the Pandit cannot be retaliated. In fact, the priest lies and accuses innocent Sohini of polluting him. The priest is the one who teaches that one should not lie but he himself lies. He is the blind who shows the path to the blind. Sohini's heart is broken at the darkened behaviour of Kalinath. Bakha, Sohini's brother had heard about a similar incident about a young rustic how he had teased a friend's sister as she was coming home through the fields after collecting fuel. Likewise, Lachman, a Hindu water carrier, who washes the utensils of the caste Hindus also playfully irritates Sohini with mild jokes. When she comes to the well, he happens to be there with mental obsession of Sohini. Gulabo, Ram Charran's mother, a washer woman abuses the sweeper girl, Sohini' and even rushes to hit her. Thus innumerable Indian Sohinis are humiliated, suppressed and oppressed within and outside the family in present India. Both Pre-Independence Sohini and Post-Independence Ammu are analogous and miserable. The crimes against women are formidably rising up. Many baby girls are brutally killed after birth in



many areas even now. The number of kidnappings and abductions is at incredible rate. Some women are killed in disputes for dowry, the widows are looked down upon, furtively jeered at and even some parents feel relieved and think that everything is finished after their daughters' marriage. Some are tormented, molested and trafficked and some others terribly face threats, violence, inequality and neglect. "Analysts say deep-rooted changes in social attitudes are needed to make India's women more accepted and secure, there is deeply entrenched patriarchy and widespread misogyny in vast swathes of the country, especially in the north" <sup>4</sup>. Even there are many unending and untold miseries of Ammu in and around India.

Ammu's Marxist's brother chacko exploits the poor women labourers in his factory both financially and sexually. The women in the factory silently suffer humiliation and sexual exploitation as Sohini in the hands of Kalinath and Iachman. Past Sohini and present Ammu have no voice to retaliate. They reservedly accept injustice and exploitation in the hands of Kalinaths, Iachmans and Chackos. The perverted men are the causes for all these mounting evils. According to Oxford Advanced Dictionary, 'perversion' means "Behaviour that most people think is not normal or acceptable, especially when it is connected with sex". The many men in the world are literally in the grip of this mental mania.

All Districts in our country have women's cell and Police stations look into grievances of women regarding harassment against them, neglect, desertion, non-recognition of their rights and even family discords. For the prevention of atrocities against women, Social security committees have been established in all district headquarters. But the scenerio is graver than ever before. A gang rape and a fatal assault case of Nirbhaya on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012 in Munirka, South Delhi brought a great shame upon our nation. A 23 year old female was gang raped in a private bus by six beastly men with roving passions including the driver. The girl died from injuring thirteen days later while undergoing emergency treatment in Singapore. The public protest was on the state and central Governments for failing to provide adequate security for women. Some women described Delhi as a rape capital out of shocked and mental agony. It might be the failure of state and central Governments and the Police force. But above all, according to my knowledge, it is the seared conscience which is willingly warped for the fulfilment of passions. Many innocent women are ill-treated throughout the country and go through the valley of tears, premonition and untimely deaths due to lack of adequate security.

As we are aware, our country is one of the developing countries. We have gone a good far off scientifically, technologically and industrially. We are able to use all technology like smart phones, web counselling, video conferences, internet and many such



privileges. But the moral disorder is the one and the same. The morals are ashamedly on the wane. In 2013, the Criminal Law ordinance, several new laws were decreed and six new-track courts were created to hear rape cases. The courts are unable to turn a blind eye to such crimes. But still there is no change in the rape culture and related brutality on women.

'The God of small Things' and 'The Untouchable' are a kind of hopeful protest and solution for the emancipation from brutal treatment of women in the society. But the pitiable thing is that the readers and the writers are many but the observers are a few or few. Mammachi, the mother of Ammu and chacko puts up a kind of resistance against patriarchal oppression. She is also physically and psychologically abused wife like many other women in Indian society in the hands of many sadistic husbands. Mammachi that undergoes torture and trauma in a different dimension is the symbolic of the victims of our prejudiced society. Her husband is entomologist when her music teacher, launsky Tieffenthal praises her to be exceptionally talented and potential, her husband abruptly stops music classes with prejudice. Ammu as a divorced woman, a single mother and as an educated woman lost her rights of inheritance. Ammu suffers alone without any comforter. She is the voice of all alienated and ostracised women of the world. Many laws are into force but still there is something deeper and divine needed so as to curb violence on women. The one sage said: "character is what we

are in secret". The education that we acquire should help us to mend the society and follow the right pricks, qualms and dictates of conscience. 'The God of Small Things' in Post-Independence and 'Untouchable' in Pre-Independence have explored the burning issues through the characters of Sohini, Ammu and Mammachi who are the representatives of all suffering women in India as well the world with a view to bringing awareness nationally and internationally. The secret of the success of some of the prominent novelists is that there are no secrets in their novels for they left no stone unturned for investigating the problems of India to be solved. Arundati Roy, being an Indian, heralded the deep-rooted evils of India to the world through her writing 'The God of Small Things' as Mulk Raj Anand through his novel 'Untouchable'. Perhaps, her boldness and outspokenness to unfold the deep-rooted heart-rending cries of women to the world is truly appreciable.

Isn't it the high time to enhance whole-heartedly the good spiritual standards which can transform pandemonium like society into paradise like society, to follow good conscience to obliterate recondite evils and to see violence-free Indian society? I hopefully wish all women to have unceasingly the tranquilisation of the heart and lead undisturbed lives.



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