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Position of women in selected novels by Thomas Hardy and
Arundhati Roy.

by

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Preface

I have prepared this dissertation in partial requirement for the degree of M.A in English . I decided to work on this topic because an investigation about the gradual development of the theme of the female emancipation in two societies divided by norms, values and time appeared stimulating to me. The idea actually crosses into my mind when I took courses on English fiction in the 19th and 20th century. The purpose of this study is to find out if there has really been change in the status of women over a long period of time.

Acknowledgement

This paper is prepared for investigating the position of women in the 19th and 20th century. I cordially give thanks to the people who helped me a lot to prepare this paper. First of all I would like to thank my respected teacher and advisor , Mr. Asit Roy Choudhury Sir ,Associate Professor,department of English East West University. Without his valuable help and guidance it would not have been possible on my part to prepare this paper. Then I give thanks to my family who also helped me a lot for making this paper, especially to my mother and to my friends . Lastly I give thanks to the rich Library of the East West University. Without you all it is not possible for me to prepare this paper. I am really grateful to you all .

Study Plan

My paper is basically divided into four sections. I examined the status of women in general and then their status in England and India from the 19th and 20th century through the present time . Then I examine the two specific novels where some of the issues related the status of women has been portrayed. I came to the conclusion that though the status of women witnessed some important changes, the discrimination against them is still continuing even in this 21st century.

Introduction

I wish to investigate the status of women in selected novels written in the 19th century and as well as in the modern time. Before coming to the situations depicted in these novels I want to dwell on the development of the position or status of women in England and in our part of the world. In doing so it is necessary to examine how women had to fight hard to gain their rightful position in the society. As a matter of fact women are still subjected to deprivation and discrimination in essentially male dominated societies. If we want to know about the status of women, we have understood the concept of women in the mind of the people in the world. When we heard the word "women" what comes into our mind is that she is either a mother, a wife a sister or a girl .If we look in other way she is someone who is always dominated by others, always tortured by her family or from her husband or someone who never gets equal right from her family or husband's side. 'Tota mulier in utero', says zone, 'woman is a womb'. But in speaking of certain women, connoisseurs declare that they are not women, although they are equipped with a uterus like the rest. All agree in recognizing the fact that females exist in the human species; today as always they make up about one half of humanity. And yet we are told that femininity is in danger; we are exhorted to be women, remain women,

become women. It would appear, then, that every female human being is not necessarily a woman; to be so considered she must share in that mysterious and threatened reality known as femininity. Is this attribute something secreted by the ovaries? Or is it a Platonic essence, a product of the philosophic imagination? Is a rustling petticoat enough to bring it down to earth? Although some women try zealously to incarnate this essence, it is hardly patentable. It is frequently described in vague and dazzling terms that seem to have been borrowed from the vocabulary of the seers, and indeed in the times of St Thomas it was considered an essence as certainly defined as the somniferous virtue of the poppy. Many women particularly are prepared to think that there is no longer any place for woman as such; if a backward individual still takes herself for a woman, her friends advise her to be psychoanalysed and thus get rid of this obsession. In regard to a work, *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex*, which in other respects has its irritating features, Dorothy Parker has written: 'I cannot be just to books which treat of woman as woman ... My idea is that all of us, men as well as women, should be regarded as human beings.' But nominalism is a rather inadequate doctrine, and the antifeminists have had no trouble in showing that women simply are not men. Surely woman is, like man, a human being; but such a declaration is abstract. The fact is that every concrete human being is always a singular, separate individual.

The terms *masculine* and *feminine* are used symmetrically only as a matter of form, as on legal papers. In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of *man* to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity. In the midst of an abstract discussion it is vexing to hear a man say: 'You think thus and so because you are a woman'; . A man is in the right in being a man; it is the woman who is in the wrong. It amounts to this: just as for the ancients there was an absolute vertical with reference to which the oblique was defined, so there is an absolute human type, the masculine. Woman has ovaries, a uterus: these peculiarities imprison her in her subjectivity, circumscribe her within the limits of her own nature. It is often said that she thinks with her glands. Man superbly ignores the fact that his anatomy also includes glands, such as the testicles, and that they secrete hormones. He thinks of his body as a direct and normal connection with the world, which he believes he apprehends objectively, whereas he regards the body of woman as a hindrance, a prison, weighed down by everything peculiar to it. 'The female is a female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities,' said Aristotle; 'we should regard the female nature as afflicted with a natural defectiveness.' And St Thomas for his part pronounced woman to be an 'imperfect man', an 'incidental'

being. This is symbolised in Genesis where Eve is depicted as made from what Bossuet called 'a supernumerary bone' of Adam.

The body of man makes sense in itself quite apart from that of woman, whereas the latter seems wanting in significance by itself ... Man can think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without man.' And she is simply what man decrees; thus she is called 'the sex', by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex – absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other.' The category of the *Other* is as primordial as consciousness itself. In the most primitive societies, in the most ancient mythologies, one finds the expression of a duality – that of the Self and the Other. This duality was not originally attached to the division of the sexes; it was not dependent upon any empirical facts. Thus the status of women happens to be very poor. It was before in England and now in our parts specially in rural areas, women are calculated as property or something to be use. Once used , they are to be thrown away and after that they do not have any position in a society because they are not pure or they do not have any status in the society. But the question arise who creates this position- the women

themselves or the society? The answer is that the society as well as the women also responsible for this position. It is society who creates this position. To society people women means someone who can give only bodily pleasure ,only reproduce children when married and to bring up the child, but if the child is girl then the situation is different. The girl is not allowed to go to school or colleges like boys in some rural areas even now. Not only that , some centuries before they were not allowed to go outside the house. They were born to serve the family or household so they do not have any separate identity of their own.

The reason for this is that women lack concrete means for organizing themselves into a unit which can stand face to face with the correlative unit. They have no past, no history, no religion of their own; and they have no such solidarity of work and interest as that of the proletariat. They live dispersed among the males, attached through residence, housework, economic condition, and social standing to certain men – fathers or husbands – more firmly than they are to other women. If they belong to the bourgeoisie, they feel solidarity with men of that class, not with proletarian women; if they are white, their allegiance is to white men, not to Negro women. The proletariat can propose to massacre the ruling class, and a sufficiently fanatical Jew or Negro might dream of getting sole possession of the atomic bomb and making humanity wholly Jewish or black; but

woman cannot even dream of exterminating the males. The bond that unites her to her oppressors is not comparable to any other. The division of the sexes is a biological fact, not an event in human history. Male and female stand opposed within a primordial *Mitsein*, and woman has not broken it. The couple is a fundamental unity with its two halves riveted together, and the cleavage of society along the line of sex is impossible. Here is to be found the basic trait of woman: she is the Other in a totality of which the two components are necessary to one another.

Master and slave, also, are united by a reciprocal need, in this case economic, which does not liberate the slave. In the relation of master to slave the master does not make a point of the need that he has for the other; he has in his grasp the power of satisfying this need through his own action; whereas the slave, in his dependent condition, his hope and fear, is quite conscious of the need he has for his master. Even if the need is at bottom equally urgent for both, it always works in favour of the oppressor and against the oppressed. That is why the liberation of the working class, for example, has been slow.

Now, woman has always been man's dependant, if not his slave; the two sexes have never shared the world in equality. And even today woman is heavily handicapped, though her situation is beginning to change. Almost nowhere is her legal status the same as man's, and frequently it is much to

her disadvantage. Even when her rights are legally recognised in the abstract, long-standing custom prevents their full expression in the mores. In the economic sphere men and women can almost be said to make up two castes; other things being equal, the former hold the better jobs, get higher wages, and have more opportunity for success than their new competitors. In industry and politics men have a great many more positions and they monopolies the most important posts. In addition to all this, they enjoy a traditional prestige that the education of children tends in every way to support, for the present enshrines the past – and in the past all history has been made by men. At the present time, when women are beginning to take part in the affairs of the world, it is still a world that belongs to men – they have no doubt of it at all and women have scarcely any. To decline to be the Other, to refuse to be a party to the deal – this would be for women to renounce all the advantages conferred upon them by their alliance with the superior caste. Man-the-sovereign will provide woman-the-liege with material protection and will undertake the moral justification of her existence; thus she can evade at once both economic risk and the metaphysical risk of a liberty in which ends and aims must be contrived without assistance. Indeed, along with the ethical urge of each individual to affirm his subjective existence, there is also the temptation to forego liberty and become a thing. This is an inauspicious road, for he who takes it – passive, lost, ruined – becomes henceforth

after killing Prince or succumbing to Alec—they are not wholly or directly responsible for the sins for which they are punished. This torment represents the most universal side of Tess: she is the myth of the human who suffers for crimes that are not her own and lives a life more degraded than she deserves.

Not only Tess, if we see other female characters in the novel, they are also suffer the same status as Tess. Tess's mother also suffers from male dominated society. As so she become heartless and forces Tess to go to place of her seducer. She is not a wise women. It is because Tess's mother her drives herself to her own tragedy by trying to solve the economic problem of her family twice. Tess suffers from her ignorance and foolishness. She has very slack attitude towards morality and religion. Actually these women are just the victims of the society. Male dominated society has made them develop this attitude. Though they did not intend to be like this the society has compelled them to do so.

Women has been always treated as a second class citizens. Many privileges that were open to men, were close to women; and if they were being opened like admissions

,access to libraries and books in the reserved sections that were opened to man only . Virginia Woolf in her "A Room Of Ones Own" writes "Why did men drink wine and women water ? Why was one sex is so poor and the other so prosperous?" and she said that they all down to one answer , that is men had the power and the money and the influence . She admits that men could acquire this confidence which is freedom to think of things in themselves, because their activity was given more status and importance that the activity of women. The tyrannical nature of male dominance denied women equal rights and equal pay. Then she gives the reference to the position of women is some two hundred years ago when it was still exception for women of the upper and middle class to choose their own husband. Marriage was not an affair of personal affection but of family avarice, and when the husband assigned he was lord or master, so far at least as law custom could make him. This is position of women in 19th century.

Short summary of The God of Small Things

Now I would like investigate about the status of women in 20th century which is reflected Arundhati Roy's novel "The God Of Small Things." Arundhati Roy is one of the few Indian English writers actively interested in contemporary social, political issues of articles which amply evidences in a number of articles interviews and books. She wrote on various topic in recent years. She is one of the foremost novelist, showing exceptional awareness of the social cries and sensivity to the problems. Arundhati Roy in her novel reflects her concern for changes of women in all sphere –political , psychological, economical and domestics. Her novels reflect a disturbing awareness and anxiety for those who have been marginalized by the age old oppressive system of the society.

Arundhati Roy was born on November 24, 1961. Her mother Mary Roy ,well known social activist is from kerela and her father was a Bengali Hindu tea planter. When she began to writing "The God of Small Things" it took five

years to write it . Now let me go through a short summary of this novel. 'The God Of Small Things' is a story of caste exploitation at the center of which is the sub-text of forbidden love between Ammu and the untouchable Velutha. The novel is set in a small town Ayememnem in Kerala. The family living in Ayememnem House is Syrian Christian convert; with the old woman Mammachi, wife of late Pappachi dies heart broken because his discovery of a unknown species of tufted 'Moth' has been stolen by a worthless scientist and named after him. Ammu the central character of the novel runs away from her parents home to Calcutta , meets and marries an assistant in Tea Estate . Soon she divorces him and returns to her own house with her twins Rahel and Estha. She faces neglect, sour reception and depthless loneliness- sees Velutha and establishes sexual liaison with him. Her brother Chacko is an undergraduate from Dehli University who goes to oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, where he meets Marget Kochamma, a café waitress and marries her. But she finds him despicable, divorces him and again marries Joe a biologist. Chacko's daughter Sophie Mol whom Chako loves greatly . After divorcing Margaret, he returns home to take over the family business, Paradise Pickle and Preserve, initially started by Mammachi. Then he gets in touch with a local communist leader, K.N.M.Pillai , a press owner who prints labels for Chacko's pickles and preserves. Velutha is a young man , a paravan who is untouchable caste. He is very enterprising and intelligent,

master of many trades, but chiefly carpenter. Meanwhile Joe dies in an accident. Margaret comes to Kerala with Sophie Mol who dies in a river Meanchal while roaring on a night with Rahel and Estha. Velutha is implicated in the tragic incident. But before that Ammu's liaison with him horrifies the Ayememnem family whose fury breaks on the heads of Ammu and Velutha. Velutha is hunted down in the History House by a posse of Kotayam policeman and tortured to death. Ammu becomes an outcaste in her own family. Ammu is expelled from her home while Estha and Rahel are sent away to Madras. The Paradise Pickle business collapses and is finished. Ammu dies at the age of thirty one. "No old, not young die-able age." No tears shed at Ammu's death.

The God Of Small Things depicts the plight of men and women marginalized by society. They are both Touchable –Ammu, Estha, Rahel and Baby Kochamma or the untouchable like Velutha. The characters in 'The God Of Small Things' are endowed with intrinsic strength even though they are hemmed in all around by oppressive and inhuman forces, whether they be conservative and regressive intuitions or beliefs and assumptions. The characters are mercilessly victimized by men and by man made system, powerless to prevent their own downfall.

The novel consists of twenty one chapters with several themes. The opening page of the novel bears a line from John Berger "Never again will single story be told as

though it's the only one." The book has been widely hailed as a classic of the post modernist ethos to explore reality from various angles as seen and experienced by different characters. The novel deals with small things ,the consciousness of these things ,the minute under current of a situation that are heaped upon those living on the margin. Its theme is the oppressive system of a society that asserts its power by enlisting the help of many centers of social changes. Even those who proclaim themselves to be the protectors of the innocent and those who have made it their life long mission to break the deep rooted decadent practices of a conservative society connive with the barbarous tradition of the society. In the end it is the weak who are victimized. The novel focuses on several things. Primarily it takes up a society that survives amid rural setting with the Syrian Christian family that still finds itself unable to discard age old traditions. The author highlights the rigid caste system that sanctions strict behavior and relations code and their underscores the serious consequences of the violation of these codes. Even their conversion to Christianity doesnot liberates them from the inhuman and unjust castist mentality. Both men and women in the Ayememnem House are governed by this mentality. In Velutha we have symbol of the victim of this cruel social system.

The novel also focuses on the helpless daughter of the Ayemenem House Ammu with her two children Estha and Rahel. She is betrayed by her husband ,humiliated in her parents home to which she returns after her divorcing , leads a lonely life ,falls in love with another luckless being Velutha ,faces cruel treatment at the hands of police ,is insulted by her brother in the ends dies in a little known hotel's dirty room. The author holds up to the discriminatory attitude of the police who's basic duties of protecting the innocent and checking the criminal are blithely trampled upon by the none other than the Inspector himself. He bullies the common citizens, leers at and humiliates shamefacedly the women. Police killed Velutha in the most brutal manner 'without sufficient evidence against him for having committed any crime . Thus we see that in this novel Arundhati Roy puts under focus the deliberately constructed agencies of cruelty that works against women's interests. In this all involved, the progressive politician police etc. In the Indian society such forces flourish and find encouragement in maintaining their holds over the weaker people. Social structure are so formed as to sanctify women's victimization.

The Constitutional mandate of India provides particular attention to women under Articles 14 15(1) and 15 (A) (C). It is maintained empathetically that the State shall not discriminate against any citizens on grounds of sex along

with any other ground. All citizens are told to regard women and not to do anything derogatory to the dignity of women. Special provisions are made through Five years Plan in order to strengthen and mobilize this long submissive section of society. The reality however, is rather scary. Women still remain objects to be appropriated, possessed and bargained in male domain. Contemporary consumer culture has further devaluated the status of women. One can see around their victimization and exploitation more than ever. Under various crowns of power freedom and glamorous she is in fact, being machine -tooled to play custom designed. 'The God Of Small Things' very pointedly portrays women's fate inside and outside Indian home and hearth. Ammu, Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, Margaret, Rahel are cases in point. Mammachi's pickle-making job earns Pappachi jealous frowns instead of favour. He greatly resents the attention she gets in the society for his skill in the society. Far from assisting her in buying, weighing, salting and drying of lines and tender mangoes "every night he beats her with brass flower vase." She is overtaken by his black moods and sudden bouts of temper. Ammu is also a victim of her Asst. Manager husband's routine drunken violence. The repelling man even feels no trace of shame or guilt when his English Boss Hollick makes an incident deal with him. Hollick demands Ammu to sleep with him and the fellow agrees and goads Ammu to gratify his Boss. Ammu's so natural declination draws his fury and she is thrashed black

and blue. Her partnership in Paradise Pickles further illustrated the status of corporate woman in India:

“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 factory , my pineapples, my pickles . Legally this was the case because Ammu as a daughter had no claim to the property.”

The fate of divorce women too is brought to the fore. Comrade Pillai’s pronunciation of the word as ‘Die-vorced’ confers morality to Rahel. Divorcee Marget is whore in Mammachi’s eyes. In order to have a clear understanding of the main concern of the novel of Arundhati Roy we should have a clear picture of the status of women in India and have a discussion on that.

The status of women in India

One of the categories of Arundhati Roy cares consists of concern for women . There can be gainsaying that despite all the socio economics developments during the last two centuries women do not occupy an enviable position in society. It is relevant therefore , to look into the causes and relegated them to the status of second sex

“The law of ancient India were so Catholic and all-embracing, if they are taken in their true spirit they can cover the entire needs of humanity . At the time when these laws were formed no century in the world produced better laws for womanhood., nor gave a higher status to woman in society.” That is how Shankuntala Rao concludes her survey of sacred law of India.

Indian society is governed more by tradition than by sacred laws. Indian society has practised an extreme form of patriarchy since the beginning of known history though the relics of matriarchy were found as late as ninetieth

century in certain regions. It is based on male predominance and female domination. It praises the wife mother role of women but not better than the legal treats her as better than legal economic and sexual property of her husband. Woman began her course of life as member of an extended family which was a small community in itself spanned several generations and comprised of the patriarch and his younger brothers with their families married sons and their widowed or deserted daughter who returned to their parental home. There were gradations based on sex age ,degree of relationship with the head of the family. All the males born in the family inherited the ancestral wealth but the daughter were not compensated at marriage with jewelry cloth's and households articles which were originally intended to be 'women's wealth' solely dowry which was demanded by husband and marital family. Thus women lost their all assets in course of time and become economically dependent.

Elders even parents did not treat male and female children equally. The family betrayed a strong pro-son bias because the son would remain in the family and carry the family name , care for parents in old age and perform necessary rituals after their death. The daughter was viewed as a "strangers wealth" because she has to be given away to marriage at a great expenses as a dowry had to be paid for the purpose. So a woman was counted less in the family and low premium was placed on her life.

This set up led to the violence against women almost as soon as she was born and female infanticide was prevalent in certain regions of the country. It was forbidden by the law in 1877 but women remained unwelcome and undesirable. In Indian tradition a daughter could not have carefree childhood because she had to handle household duties and undergo chastisement as a preparation for her married life. Education was denied to her even among the traditionally literate upper class up to who deemed education a must for boys. The girls were married well before puberty and sent to their husband house as soon as they came into age. A strong bond between husband and wife could not develop under the extended family . Nor could there develop a female bond among the unrelated outsiders who came in as daughter's-in-laws. They were all dependent on persons competing for a better share in the resource of the family.

With the early start of married life came the early motherhood which was physically traumatic, debilitating and injurious up to the point to death. If the wife failed to produce a child or bore female children she was treated as an offender of the worst kind. That could be an excuse for her being deserted by her husband. If she was not deserted her husband would marry again and have additional wife to ensure a male heir. Ignorant of the elementary facts of

genetics people laid the blame for barrenness on the wife only.

If the husband dies earlier, the wife had to undergo a lot of traumatic experience. In some parts of India, like Bengal and Rajasthan widows were immolated on the funeral pyre of their husband. In the regions that did not practise widow immolation; they had to live on sufferance. They had to wear drab clothes and renounce all sorts of pleasure. Sometimes they were physically disfigured by shaving off their heads. They deemed auspicious and kept away from all ceremonies except mourings. Demands for social reform were conceded from time to time. Immolation of the widows was banned legally in 1829 and marriage of the widow was legalized in 1856. Then came legalization prohibiting child marriages and giving rights to women in respect of marriage ,divorce , inheritance etc. Such measures met a lot of resistance from religious bigots. In case of religious minorities has much slow for the same reasons. Impact of the legalization as well as for western ideas has not been even in different regions and classes.

Women played a significant role in the socio –political life of the country in the new age. Women fought against the British , gun in hand. But despite all that daughters are still treated as a outsiders. Once they got married they are welcome in parental home on limited occasions only. They

were reminded again and again "your place is next to your husband." Divorced or separated women are deemed unnecessary burden to the parental home , somewhat guilty rather than victimized by the society. Responsibility for the failure of marriage is generally laid the door of wife ignoring the truth that the husband the in-laws too play a role.

The Hindu Succession Bill entitled ,that the Hindu daughters equal rights of inheritance in their father's estate. But property rights to wives are seined by religious or personal laws. Divorced wives enjoy no rights to husband's property. Wives have the "rights to reside in their matrimonial homes only during the pendency of marriage. Lower class women have always been working. Though the principal of "equal wages for equal work." Is never challenged, woman are paid less than men for the same work. The other problem they face is sexual harassment and abuse. In case of the poor and illiterate victims a class bias often evident. The woman of lower classes are supposed to have nothing like character and so charges of molestation and rape are dismissed lightly if they happen to victims. Such atrocities are not confined to some backward regions only. Even from the village three hundred unmarried tribal women were reported to have become mother

certain power. The complex structure is deeply embedded and has given rise to countless stories of personal tragedies of unequally placed women. Their unequal position creates a great sufferings and hardships in their lives forcing them to accept the oppressive system in a spirit of religious submissiveness and personal renunciation. Every woman suffers in it in her own way. It can be told the story of sufferings of Ammu , Baby Kochamma , Mammachi, and Rahel. They all suffer in a different way. In country like India where patriarchal system is very strong women suffer physically, mentally and sexually. Velutha relation with Ammu spell in rebellion . “In a sense the sexual relationship that Ammu had with Velutha “ could be described as ‘small things’ if properly placed in Ayemenem context. This is because having illegitimate relations with women was something ordinary for Chacko. The position for them is that of the outcast who leads lonely life and are reduced to the conditions of creating their own little joys at gravest risks.

ranging from baton-swinging police officer to a communist sympathizer like Chacko to an ordinary cold drink seller. It silences the weak in a way no other physical exercise of power can do.

Traditional joint families are neatly structured where some women assume dominant role with greater authority over others who are lower down and therefore enjoy a certain power. The complex structure is deeply embedded and has given rise to countless stories of personal tragedies of unequally placed women. Their unequal position creates a great sufferings and hardships in their lives forcing them to accept the oppressive system in a spirit of religious submissiveness and personal renunciation. Every woman suffers in it in her own way. It can be told the story of sufferings of Ammu , Baby Kochamma , Mammachi, and Rahel. They all suffer in a different way. In country like India where patriarchal system is very strong women suffer physically, mentally and sexually. Velutha relation with Ammu spell in rebellion . “In a sense the sexual relationship that Ammu had with Velutha “ could be described as ‘small things’ if properly placed in Ayemenem context. This is because having illegitimate relations with women was something ordinary for Chacko. The position for them is that of the outcast who leads lonely life and are reduced to the conditions of creating their own little joys at gravest risks.

The position of female characters in the novel

The position of female character in the novel are discussed in the below along with the central character Ammu .If we first analyze the central character we see that Ammu is a tragic and lonely figure and is the most ignored and humiliated person in "The God Of Small Things". She is mercilessly oppressed when she tries to emerge as an individual in her own rights. As a child she was much exposed to the violence in the form of Pappachi exploring into fits of temper due to his frustrations in his professional career.Ammu had been a mute witness to the senseless manner in which Pappachi wrecked his wrath upon objects of the house and the only person he could lay his hands on Mammachi. Ammu was a small girl when Mammachi received these beatings. Ammu knew that her father was jealous of the attentions Mammachi received because she was seventeen years younger and quite talented in most of the activities that claimed her talent. Ammu had been seen brutalizing masculine power from the early years of life.

Ammu goes desperate, her spirit yearning for freedom. In an act of desperation Ammu goes to Calcutta on some pretext and marries an Assistant Manager of Tea-Estate. This act shows Ammu's intrinsic trait of bold initiative and immense confidence in herself. Her marriage is not based on love even though the choice is here. She marries because she does not want to return to Aymenem. The marriage shows her courage as well as the orthodoxy of her parents. She is daring as she goes against the custom by marrying a man who is neither Christian nor an inhabitant of Kerala. Ammu shows her strength of mind not only in marrying a man of her choice but also in divorcing him when the choice proves wrong eventually. When she finds her husband alcoholic she does not take it meekly like her mother Manmachi. She takes the heaviest with it on head and on legs. She is far from the traditional ideal woman who worships her husband like a God and obeys him blindly despite all his blemishes. She got divorce but in society a divorcee woman has no place or respect in the traditional Indian family, she knew it but had not experienced it. The divorce leaves her no options but to return unwelcomed to her parents' house with two children Rahel and Estha. Her father does not believe her story of the reasons for divorce which implies that she herself is to be blamed for it.

Ammu challenges the andocentric notions of society when he avoids surname after divorce. Estha and Rahel have no surname because Ammu considering reverting to maiden though she feels that choosing between her husband's and fathers name doesnot "give a woman much of a choice." Law doesnot give a daughter any claim to property. Though she does work as much Chacko , the latter feels free to declare the factory as his own.

The rebel in Ammu does not permit her to remain contented with motherhood and divorcehood. So she proceeds to reclaim her body. Tired of the proprietary handling of her , she examines her body in bathrooms mirror which shows her worry about her passing youth. Then there are other factors which stir her. The dream of one armed man suggests her it is no use seeking perfection in life , the small powerless people like her can but satisfy themselves with the little time provides them.the arrival of Marget Kochamma provokes her desires. And finally Velutha's return after many years makes her take a fatal decision to 'love by night the man her children loved by day.' The secret love affair goes on thirteen days until it is reported by Velutha's father and compounded by accidental death id Sophie Mol.

An illicit relationship between a divorcee touchable women and an untouchable Paravan is actually a union of two rebels protesting against hypocritical laws of the

society not in words but indeed.. She rises above the drawn line and rebels against social oppression. The price she has to pay is cruel and too great. It is unfortunate even her mother and other ladies in the family fail to understand her. She can establish a rapport only with her children , Rahel and Estha , with whom she is shown to spend tender moments. The punishment is unjust as it ruins three lives for the supposed to offence one . Ammu is separated from her children as Estha is returned to his father and Rahel is permitted to live at Ayemenem but Ammu is not allowed to visit her frequently.

Ammu emerges as a sad and much wronged character. In search of happiness she is mercilessly suppressed since her childhood. Witnessing the daily violence unleashed by her frustrated father on Mammachi ,a drunken husband who think twice before trading his job by handling her over to his boss “to be protected” while he was away , a selfcentred brither Chacko and the mean and vindictive Baby Kochamma , Ammu had only her children to love and protect.

Thus Ammu is “humiliated and cornered by her father ill-treated and brtrayed by her husband ,insulted by police and rendered destitute by her brother. Mammachi who left no soft corner for her miserable daughter in heart

and about the wretched “Manless” Baby Kochamma who plays a major role in tormenting Ammu. Ammu is a tragic figure who fights powerful tyrannical forces against her and meets an untimely death at the age of thirty one.

This is the real picture of a woman in the society. All the time mostly women rather than men suffer in the society. If we see other female characters in the novel , we will see they were having lesser position than Ammu, because somehow Ammu tries to overcome from this position but others of their time they did not even think about protesting against the society. Now let us discuss the other female characters in the novel . Another female character is Mammachi , who had pioneered the pickle making into something commercially viable and did not get any moral support from her husband Pappachi was herself a victim of her husband’s brutality and capricious behaviour. He wrecked his frustration and venom on his family ,especially his wife Mammachi beating and humiliating her. She is much submitting to the traditional notion of male supremacy love and marriage her disposition and differs a lot that of Baby Kochamma . She is more victim because she is married while Baby Kochamma retains a lots of power and privilege cost of marriage.Mammachi had got a husband from arranged marriage seventeen years older than herself belonging to her own country and community . Yet marriage does not prove happy as her husband develops some

disorder in his personality. He bursts out his anger by beating Mammachi. She is beaten either with brass verses or an ivory handled riding crop. She becomes used to it and remain passive sufferer all along. The brutality stops when Chacko comes home for summer vacation from Oxford. Mammachi is not only passive sufferer of her husband's beating ,she is a victim of his jealousy also. The same jealousy is expressed again when the pickle making of Mammachi brings attention to her. Thus her married life is devoid of love ,understanding and co-operation. It means nothing but domination by a a bully who lives bore life himself and bores others too.

Mammachi , despite her suffering at the hand of a male chauvinist and sadist husband , loses all over sympathy when we come to consider her attitude to sex in respect of people younger than herself. Her ideas here betray sex bias as well as class bias to an outrageous extent. Her daughter as well as her son is divorcee but she applies two different norms to their sex relations. To her son Chacko ,she permits "mens Needs" and does not mind in flirting with pretty women who worked in a factory. She goes to the extent of providing a separate entarance end of the house so the objects of his 'Needs' wouldnot have to go wrong. On the other hand Ammu loves a single man but Mammachi

resents her Women's need." She locked up in her bedrooms , insulted and eventually banished from Ayemenem House.

Mammachi's attitude toward Margaret shows the same unhealthy bend of her mind. Even before she has seen her, she despises her. Margaret is not better than a shopkeepers daughter to her. She hated Marget for being Chacko's wife . She hated for leaving him. Obviously she is jealous in seeing other woman happy. Her experience in a world dominated by men in the enclosure called marriage with a brutish husband have dehumanized her and perverted her mind. She slips money secretly keep the women who satisfy Chako's need because a fee clarified things. She cannot imagine that Margaret has come to her former husband for any other purpose than sex.

Ammu's secret relationship with Velutha is no less natural and justifiable on biological ground than all the relationship Chacko has with numerous women. Yet Mammachi behaves brutally with Velutha due to caste and class bias. Even a woman discriminates other woman on sexual matters whereas she does not hesitate to condemn a man for similar affairs. She summons Velutha to her house and then abuses him. Mammachi is not as crafty as Baby Kochamma but her mind is hardly less prevent than that of Baby Kochamma. She subscribes to the logic and ethics of the male chauvinism in too.

Now we come to the third woman in the novel Baby Kochamma. She is the daughter of a priest. He had seven children but only two of them survived. Baby Kochamma is one of the survivors. It is not strange for the son or daughter of a man such as a priest to be attracted to religion, but her family background is not the real reason of her turning to religion in her early life. In fact she creates herself and people around her by pretending to be religious. Her adventures in the realm of religion are an outcome of a normal biological impulse which she attempts to promote in a deceptive grab. The attempt fails eventually and the result is she lands in abnormality and perversion. Early in her life, at the age of eighteen she falls in love with an Irish Monk Father Mulligan who comes to her father's house frequently and his father's disapproval with him. Though her father fails, the Jesuit recognizes the sexual excitement in the girl while she hovers around the table. Then she tries to seduce Mulligan with "weekly exhibition of staged charity."

Baby Kochamma resolves to become a Roman Catholic because she thinks that it will enable her to be in close contact with Father Mulligan. So much against the wishes of her father, she converts to Roman Catholic. This is the first rebellion which she shows against her family, but she dares to challenge the traditional ideas about love and marriage. Her frustration in love and repressed libido provide us with the key to comprehend the cold

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,calculated and inhuman role she plays in the novel. Despite having her Western education she rears all the reactionary areas inherited from the feudal past in her heart and misses no opportunity to express them violently in word and deed. She is unkind to children , to the lower class and even to the women .

Baby Kochamma subscribes to the commonly held view that a married daughter in her parents room and a divorcee one no position anywhere at all. Ammu according to her , committed a serious offence by marrying a Bengali Hindu and the divorce turned it more serious. Infact she is jealous of Ammu for daring to exercise her right to choose the man she marries and to discard him when found unworthy. Like Mammachi she has a double standard in matters regarding sex. What is permitted to men is strictly denied to women according to her ethics. So Chacko is allowed to carry on his relationship with women in factory and a separate entrance for Chacko's room is built to facilitate it. Baby Kochamma explanation that Chacko has his "Men's Need" which must be satisfied. Obviously she does not believe in 'Women's Need' or woman's right. That is why she does not bother about how Ammu can endure the smell of a Paravan. As soon as Ammu's relationship with Velutha is revealed she locks Ammu and rushes to the police station with a false complaint. Eventually it leads to the death of Velutha and the banishment and dispersal of Ammu and her children. She is

responsible for running the lives of Ammu ,Estha and Rahel. She is responsible poisoning the minds of Mammachi and Chacko , for concocting a false case against Velutha , for tricking the children into betraying Velutha ,for advising Chacko to return Estha to his father and to ask Ammu to pack her luggage and leave.

Baby Kochamma seems detestable to us when we consider her role in the 'terror' that kills Velutha and causes the untimely death of Ammu and ruins the lives of Estha and Rahel. But is not only a victimizer , a tool of social oppression but she is herself a victim of a society. We have to bear in mind how false notion of ideal womanhood are filled in the brains of girl at tender age . Brainwashed with sexiest casteist class and communal ideas they become incapable of thinking and fulfillment . Baby Kochamma's power prosperity and glamour dissolve in thin air when we realize her defeat and failure in life.

The most young female characters in the novel is Rahel . The novel deals with the story of her life only to the age of thirty one and most of the story belongs to her childhood. So she deserves to be treated in the following chapter. Therefore we confine us to few words about her adult life. For the sake of convenience we assume the adult life to begin with finishing schooling.

Deserted by father and separated from her mother , she is neglected by her maternal uncle grandmother and grandaunt. The neglect has accidentally has grown to independent, daring and capable of taking initiative.

After finishing her schooling ,she gets herself to a college of architecture in Dehli. The decision is taken not of interest in architecture but simply she finds easy to get herself admitted. Obviously it is her way to stay away from Ayemnem where she is unwanted. During her stay at the School of Architecture she meets Larry McCaslin in Dehli and marries him. Though the decision is here it is not taken under the ideal conditions. She is aware of the fact that she has no locus stand at Ayemenem ,that there is nobody to arrange marriage and pay dowry for her.

This marriage likes that of her mother and uncle is outside her community. Larry is an American scholar in Indian Architecture and so her choice is socially acceptable. Larry is not chauvinist but the marriage proves prosaic. Larry values her but fail to understand her. He is at his loss to decide what he sees in her eyes and places it somewhere between the relationship when she realizes its futility. Marriage to her is not a yoke. So she breaks it soon. Evidently she has a charity of perception and confidence which suppresses that of her mother. She does not feel shame or moral weakness for divorce and do not leave her

depressed. She works as a waitress in a Indian restaurant in New York. And then she serves as night Clerk at a Gas station outside the Washington.

We may conclude appraisal of Eahel with the remark that Rahel understands her matter better than Ammu ever could her mother. There is enough evidence that she shows the agony of her mother , realizes the great injustice and cruelty done on her mother and filled with profound compassion for her mother. Seen from feminine perspective ,the novel records a progress ,albeit show ,in feminism offers some rays of hope and seems to suggest a distinct possibility of redemption. .

A few words about Kochu Maria will not be out of place here .Kochu Maria is the cook who has been serving the Ayemenem House since the days of Benan John Ipe. She is a Syrian Christian proud of her social status and very keen to assert it. She seems to be mischievous by nature and jelous in carrying ay the evil design of her employers. She serves well to Mammachi when Mammachi asks her to exmine the bed-shit of Marget. She attends Baby Kochamma as she "midget lieutenant" in getting Ammu locked in her bedroom. Lastly she is the only companied of the television addict Baby Kochamma after the death of Mammachi and departure of Chacko.

What emerges from the study is that the novel with three women Baby Kochamma, Mammachi and Ammu presents a perfect trio of sufferings women. Baby Kochamma herself a victim of social prejudice is conditioned by society and identifies herself with ideas and forces of oppression. Mammachi is dehumanized and her mind becomes twisted as a result of sufferings in a society dominated by men and money. Ammu on the other hand is the rebel who represents the defiance of the present state of society from an educated, passionate and thinking woman. She stands for those women who are aspiring for freedom and equality. This section of women is challenging the ideas and conventions. The hopes for the future lie with this only. The other section consists of characters like Baby Kochamma, and Kochu Maria. They are satisfied with their presents and they become consumerists who care little about fellow beings. They are television addicts caring nothing but life style. Obviously they held no hope for the future. Despite possessing and using latest products of modern science and technology, they are not leading the society forward. To use the words of Arundhati Roy they are living their lives backwards. Arundhati Roy's depiction of the miserable lives of the novel critiques in unremarkable terms the perpetuation of this exploitative focus.

Conclusion

As one critic observes that under the gender revolution of 1970's writing women of about women stresses a strong element of protest wherein like their Western counterparts, the question, the oppressor or the social order. The woman of the 90's is a mother, a wife and daughter struggling to keep her own identity. Her circumstances and her aspiration make for very difficult choices, family or finance, dreams or dependence career or cooking. It is not the only the only woman's life that receive the exclusive attention, but by focusing her experiences women writers explores the social and familiar constructs; that have led to the formation of these structures that represents the exploitative and oppressive bias. In the process the writers have shown a remarkable extension of their vision, a maturity as an artist ready to venture into new areas of narrative art in inventing ever. Women are learning to know and discover themselves fighting in a world of rapid radical challenges in all sphere -- political, economical and domestic.

Women writing is not necessarily be feministic. She has freedom of her writing . The women can write about women's life as well as they can also share the problems of society which she can reflects in her writings. Some women writers accepts full blame for any failure in their lives in their writing. But much of this changes since 1970. Many women writer have discover or uncovered new facts as well as come up with new stories .Another short coming of women writers is that some of them follows men tradition way of writing. Women has always been to the poetry to the men, they always prefer men's writing whereas they should have their own identity in their writing.

Women should their power in writing in proper time. They should have in mind that when they start writing it should be within the time of their power .It should not be too late when woman writers realize that about their power. We can quote it in this way when women writers' does not realize their power in proper time:

“When Sleeping Beauty Wakes up
She is almost fifty years old.”

We have investigated all major female characters in “Tess Of The D'urberville” by Thomas Hardy and “The God Of Small Things” by Arundhati Roy. The two novels belong to different centuries practicing two different norms and values which in many ways dissimilar. It is , however interesting to note that there has been any significant change

the status of women in essentially male dominated societies . They face injustice ,abuse and grow inequality from societies. Double standards are applied to force them towards this doom. The lapses which is even considered excusable and ignorable ,surface as unpardonable sin in women. Society does not take into consideration the compelling factors that make some women sinned against rather sinning. Tess is not a scheming sinner. Monstrous injustice and abuse forced her to turn violent and take law in her own hand. Betrayal to desperation and make her look for a biological fulfillment in a Paravan youth . Society was never lenient on them and it shut its door on their faces.

To conclude there has actually been little real improvement on the status or position of women during the last two centuries. Grudgingly men have given some consciousness to women under specific circumstances. Their job opportunities have widened , equal rights in educational institutions have been assured and a semblance of equality to women has been granted in many other areas. But women continue to remain victim of veiled inequality , gross injustice and double standard.

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