

## Postcolonial Ecofeminism in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*

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### Abstract

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* illustrates ecofeminism by creating hierarchical dualisms and identifying the victims within these structures. Ecofeminism in a postcolonial context analyses the intertwined systems of oppression that arise from the intersection of colonialism, patriarchy, and environmental exploitation. It explores how patriarchal domination and capitalist patriarchy together impact the postcolonial environment and its people. Thus, both ecological and feminist issues highlight the locus of the 'Other' or the 'Subaltern,' who are exploited by the 'Superior Self' in terms of class, caste, race, and gender in postcolonial society. Arundhati Roy exposes how the patriarchal structure of Syrian Christian society exacts a heavy toll on the protagonist Ammu, her children Estha and Rahel, and the untouchable Velutha. She also illustrates how capitalist patriarchy impacts the nature and environment of Ayemenem. Based on Roy's novel, this essay will discuss concerns and consciousness against various injustices in postcolonial Indian society.

### Keywords

Postcolonial ecofeminism, patriarchal domination, capitalist patriarchy, Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*, power and politics

### Introduction

Writer and activist Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) critiques social, gender, and ecological injustice. In her essay "How Deep Shall We Dig" (2009/2003), Roy writes: "If it is justice that we want, it must be justice and equal rights for all – not only for special interest groups with special interest prejudices. That is nonnegotiable" (66). This illustrates her unwavering commitment to ecological justice as well as justice for the common people, which is the chief motto of most ecofeminists. Roy as an ecofeminist and as a postcolonial writer directs her narrative lens towards illuminating the multifaceted layers of

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oppression depicted in her fiction. Her focus extends far beyond the mere domination over women and nature, as she delves into the intricate peripheries where systemic injustices intersect and resonate across diverse realms of human experience.

The title “The God of Small Things” resonates with Roy’s chapter titled “Big Man the Laltain, Small Man the Mombatti.” Here, Roy skillfully juxtaposes the imagery of the “Big Man,” symbolising the entrenched power structures of the ruling class and patriarchal society, with the vulnerability of the “Small Man,” representing the marginalised and the oppressed. The metaphor of the “Laltain” conveys a sense of protection and privilege afforded to the elite, while the “Mombatti” evokes the fragility and impermanence of the lives of the disenfranchised. Through this juxtaposition, Roy illuminates the stark disparities in society, highlighting the stark contrast between the privileged and the powerless, underscoring the precarious existence of those on the margins. Roy calls her novel *The God of Small Things* instead of *The God of Small People* and exposes how the other, the small people are treated like commodities. They always exist under God, having no identity of their own. The Big man practically gets the status of God.

All the marginalised characters in the novel are treated like trivial things. Roy believes that small events and common things are stimulated to provide new meanings after being bruised and restructured. The author skillfully illustrates the pervasive influence of patriarchal and capitalist hegemony on postcolonial society, penetrating its societal fabric, impacting its people, and leaving an indelible mark on the environment. With deft strokes, she navigates a myriad of socio-political themes, seamlessly weaving together direct and indirect commentary, often infused with wisdom and humour, to shed light on the environmental degradation that plagues India. Roy posits that sometimes the small thing carries the biggest. As she states in an interview:

*The God of Small Things* is a book where you connect smallest things to the very biggest: whether it’s the dent that a baby spider makes on the surface of water or the quality of the moonlight on a river or how history and politics intrude into your life, your house, your bedroom. (Barsamian)

What Roy suggests here is that this interconnectedness highlights how small, everyday happenings can reflect and be affected by the broader societal and historical context, demonstrating the profound impact of the mundane on the significant aspects of life.

## Ecofeminism in a postcolonial context

This paper delves into the intricate intersection of postcolonial issues and ecofeminist concerns, particularly examining how their convergence on the axis of dualism engenders a hierarchical system of domination, delineating its targets and victims. In a postcolonial context, ecofeminism examines the interconnectedness of environmental exploitation, gender inequality, and the legacies of colonialism. It critiques how colonial powers exploited both nature and women, often viewing them as resources to be exploited for profit. Ecofeminism in this context seeks to dismantle structures of oppression and colonial hierarchies by advocating for environmental justice, gender equality, and the recognition of indigenous knowledge and practices in sustainable development. It underscores the importance of addressing both ecological and social injustices to achieve true liberation for both humans and the environment. The ecofeminist viewpoint arises from women's involvement in the social movement to bring ecological justice and environmental awareness among human beings. Janis Birkeland thinks that strong self and social criticism are essential to mending a thousand years old psychological overtones resulting from patriarchy (17).

The theories proposed by Shiva, Mies, and Pablo Mukherjee regarding ecofeminist issues in the postcolonial context offer valuable insights into the roots of alienation, poverty, and ecological degradation. They illuminate how these phenomena stem from processes such as privatisation, uneven development, and gender-based division of labour. Arundhati Roy's advocacy for environmental protection, notably through her active involvement in Narmada Bachao Andolon (NBA; Save the Narmada [River] Movement), intertwines with her steadfast commitment to protesting injustices rooted in gender, caste, and class. This convergence of activism aligns her work with the ethos of ecofeminism, which seeks to dismantle all forms of oppression. Roy explores how subaltern and ecofeminism are interconnected in their critiques of power structures and how they impact on marginalised groups and the environment. Subaltern refers to the social, political, and cultural marginalisation of certain groups, often resulting from structures of power and domination. Ecofeminism, on the other hand, examines the intersections of gender, ecology, and social justice, highlighting how patriarchal systems exploit both women and nature. In the context of ecofeminism, subalternity can manifest in various ways, such as the uneven burden of environmental degradation borne by marginalised communities. Ecofeminists argue that these groups are often silenced or ignored. Moreover, ecofeminism critiques the dualistic thinking that reinforces many systems of oppression, including the separation of humans from nature and the devaluation of traditionally feminine qualities. By challenging these binaries and advocating for more inclusive and holistic approaches to environmental issues,

ecofeminism seeks to empower marginalised communities and foster sustainable relationships between humans and the natural world.

Velutha, a pivotal character in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, can be analysed through an ecofeminist lens due to his intersectional positionality within the novel's postcolonial context. Velutha, an untouchable or "Paravan" in the caste system, represents the marginalised and exploited groups who bear the brunt of both environmental degradation and social oppression. From an ecofeminist perspective, Velutha's story reflects the interconnectedness of environmental exploitation, gender oppression, and caste-based discrimination. As a member of a lower caste, Velutha experiences systemic oppression, which parallels the exploitation of the environment by those in power. His close connection to the natural world, particularly his work as a carpenter and his affinity for the river, symbolises the harmonious relationship between marginalised communities and their ecosystems.

Velutha's fate in the novel also highlights the violence and injustice faced by those who resist dominant power structures. His tragic death at the hands of the police underscores the brutal consequences of challenging societal norms and the exploitation of both human and natural resources. Furthermore, Velutha's relationship with Ammu, a woman from a higher caste, adds another layer to the ecofeminist analysis. Their forbidden love challenges not only caste boundaries but also gender roles and expectations, illustrating the intersectionality of oppression faced by both marginalised communities and women. Overall, Velutha's character in *The God of Small Things* embodies the themes central to ecofeminism, including environmental justice, gender equality, and resistance against oppressive systems. Through his story, Roy sheds light on the interconnected struggles faced by marginalised communities and the urgent need for social and environmental justice.

M.K. Naik in his article "Of Gods and God and Men" reminds us that it is Velutha on whom Roy bestows the title of the novel. Aijaz Ahmed regards Velutha's identity as "the untouchable carpenter, the maker of little wonders in carved wood and thus 'the god of small things'" (Tickell 3). In Malayalam, Velutha means white and he is named so because of his extreme dark colour. The irony steeped in Velutha's name transcends mere reference to his dark complexion and the marginalised Paravan caste; it also foreshadows the bleak trajectory of his future. Roy shows an ironical comparison through the eyes of Rahel during Sophie Mol's funeral where, on one hand Velutha is imagined "dropping like a dark star out of the sky that he had made. Lying broken on the hot church floor, dark blood spilling from his skull like a secret" (*The God of Small Things* 6) and on the other hand Baby Kochamma's scream for the bat baby

which, climbing up her expensive funeral sari, brings obstacles to her “roll of sadness” (*The God of Small Things* 6). As one belonging to a small people, as an untouchable person, the dark bodied Velutha, is ignored in his deep injury, while Baby Kochamma, being from that section of society with the Big people, gets attention for her negligible injury. Roy highlights the paradoxical scenario where the privileged “Big people” enact regulations for the marginalised “Small people,” constraining their ambitions and joys to modest limits. Simultaneously, the Big people often gain access to the same luxuries and privileges through transgressions, disregarding the social norms they have set.

Roy’s *The God of Small Things* revolves around an unavoidable outlawed affair between a Syrian Christian touchable divorcee Ammu and the low-caste Dalit Velutha. Most of the incidents are revealed from the viewpoint of Estha and Rahel, Ammu’s small children, the twins. The narration on behalf of the characters actually reveals the consciousness and the concern of the narrator who by her own viewpoint, wants to highlight the injustice continually happening in society. Roy also says in an interview that women in Kerala are the most subservient to their husbands. In Kerala, keeping a tharawaad (lineage) is an essential matter of existence. Roy depicts how the entire life of the twins is spoiled and blocked from normal happiness without their father. They are deprived of enjoying their childhood days and made to pay a heavy price: “though later Baby Kochamma would say it was a Small Price to Pay. Was it? Two lives. Two children’s childhoods. And a history lesson for future offenders” (*The God of Small Things* 336). The novelist shows that the twins are victimised by the conspiracy of the adult, as Birkland mentions that “the silent conspiracy that holds the status quo” (17). This collective inertia can stifle progress and perpetuate inequalities or injustices, as the status quo remains unexamined and unaltered.

### **Treatment of gender and caste in postcolonial society**

After the divorce of their mother Ammu, the twins are compelled to stay in the Ayemenem house and become victimised by the patriarchal norms of the Syrian Christian society where a divorcee woman is not welcomed to her father’s home and is treated as a burden of her family. As the narrator in *The God of Small Things* states: “She subscribed wholeheartedly to the commonly held view that a married daughter had no position in her parent’s home. As for a divorced daughter – according to Baby Kochamma, she had no position anywhere at all” (45). Gerda Lerner says that the fact of bearing children for women is due to sex and the act of nurturing children is due to gender – a cultural construct. As the narrator in the novel puts it: “It is gender which has been chiefly responsible for fixing women’s place in society” (21). Thus, Roy exposes how the patriarchal structure

of the Syrian Christian society exacts a heavy price from Ammu, from her children, and from the untouchable Velutha.

After getting divorced from her husband Ammu feels the need of a man in her life, with whom she can share her small moments. She finds solace in Velutha the untouchable: “[I]nstinctively they stuck to the Small Things. The Big things ever lurked from inside. They knew that there was nowhere for them to go. They had nothing. No future. So they stuck to the Small Things” (*The God of Small Things* 338). But the supremacy of the Syrian Christian patriarchal society forces them to be parted from each other. Velutha is killed by the conspiracy of the elite class and Ammu dies alone in a room. Even her dead body is rejected for burial by the church. Two kinds of ironies are revealed here: one from the viewpoint of gender and other from the viewpoint of caste. On one hand, Roy shows how the structure of the Syrian Christian society would approve if Ammu was to be raped by the boss of her husband. When she wants love from Velutha, a low-caste man who loves her, she is called a Veshya (prostitute), and Velutha is tortured brutally by the police for transgressing the caste boundary. On the other hand, Chacko is allowed to be involved in sexual affairs with the women workers of his factory. Since Chacko is a man and the son of Mammachi, he is exempted from punishment for getting involved in an illicit love affair with low-caste women. In his issue, there is no barrier against caste or his illicit relations. He is not rejected by society; rather Mammachi helps him keep up his relations and making necessary arrangements:

Mammachi had a separate entrance built for Chacko’s room, which was at the eastern end of the house, so that the objects of his ‘Needs’ wouldn’t have to go traipsing *through* the house. She secretly slipped them money to keep them happy. They took it because they needed it. They had young children and old parents. Or husbands who spent all their earnings in toddy bars. The arrangement suited Mammachi, because in her mind, a fee *clarified* things. Disjuncted sex from love. (*The God of Small Things* 169)

From the moment Chacko stands up against his father’s mistreatment of Mammachi, she dedicates herself wholeheartedly to her son and “from then onwards he became the repository of all her womanly feelings” (*The God of Small Things* 168). While Mammachi is well aware of his licentious behaviour, she chooses not to confront him, preferring not to cause him pain. When Baby Kochamma brings up the issue, Mammachi responds with a measured restraint: “He can’t help having a Man’s Needs” (*The God of Small Things* 168) and Baby Kochamma easily supports her statement as “Neither Mammachi nor Baby Kochamma saw any contradiction between Chacko’s Marxist mind and feudal libido” (*God* 168). Chacko’s woman-less condition is satisfied by the women

workers of his factory but, in case of Ammu's relation with Velutha, Ammu is snubbed with the sound *Veshya*. When Ammu comes to the police station to see Velutha and to give a statement Thomas Mathew tells her that it is too late for all this. Staring at Ammu's breasts he says that "the Kottayam Police didn't take statements from *veshyas* or their illegitimate children" (*The God of Small Things* 8). But the Kottayam Police easily could violate the social rules written in the notice board in the police station which sought to instil proper conduct among the officers towards common citizens like Ammu. Karen Warren states:

Many philosophers (e.g., Wittgenstein) have argued that the language we use mirrors and reflects our conception of ourselves and our world. When language is sexist or naturist, it mirrors and reflects conceptions of women and nonhuman nature as inferior to, having less prestige or status than, that which is identified as male, masculine, or "human" (i.e., male). ("Taking Empirical Data"12)

Thus, in the name of marriage, a woman is victimised like firewood. Roy says: "For me, when I see a bride, it gives me a rash. I find them ghoulish, almost. I find it so frightening to see this totally decorated, bejewelled creature who, as I wrote in *The God of Small Things*, is 'polishing firewood'" ("Interview with Arundhati Roy" 2007). In spite of being victimised by patriarchy, Mammachi facilitates the arrangements so that her son manages to exploit the women in the factory, to meet his sexual needs. But, in case of Ammu, Mammachi does not support her, rather supports Chacko to drive Ammu out of the Ayemenem house and establish his superiority over the members of the family. Chacko and Ammu are in relations with the low-caste. But Chacko is greeted and Ammu is rejected, and Velutha, the Paravan, the untouchable, is cruelly punished by the touchables. Deane Curtin states: "In India... dalit (untouchable) women suffer the worst effects of the caste system" (82-83). Though he is a man, Velutha knows about his status, determined by means of untouchability, from his childhood. When he starts visiting the Ayemenem house, he is not allowed to enter through the front door. His entrance is prohibited from the touchable zones. He is shown the back door to enter into the house. Mammachi observes his good carpentry work and she decides to appoint him in the factory. Another part of the choice is to give him lesser wages than the other workers because of his untouchable identity. B.R. Ambedkar says in his book *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchables*: "Caste is another name for control. Caste puts a limit on enjoyment. Caste does not allow a person to transgress caste limits in pursuit of his enjoyment. That is the meaning of such caste restrictions as inter-dining and inter-marriage" (265).

After divorce, Ammu learns to recognise, in the ugly treatment of society, "the fate of the wretched Man-less woman" (*The God of Small Things* 45). She

selected a wrong man for marriage – a man who was a liar and an alcoholic. She tolerates all these till a proposal was made for her to spend the night with the Boss of her husband for the sake of his job. She escapes from there and finds only Ayemenem to stay with her twins who are too immature to recognise all these evils. Roy shows how Ammu's children are ill-treated by Baby Kochamma at their "moments of high happiness" (*The God of Small Things* 46) which they seek through catching dragonfly, by throwing small stones at it or when they get permission to bathe the pigs or when they find hot eggs from a hen. But, most of the time, when the children become ready to be happy, Baby Kochamma appears to gift them the coupon of unhappiness. The postcolonial novel starkly illuminates the intersections of gender, caste, and class disparities, underscoring the profound influence of culture in perpetuating entrenched systems of domination. Through its narrative, the novel unveils the underlying structures that uphold and perpetuate these inequalities. For Plumwood, "it is not a masculine identity pure and simple, but the multiple, complex cultural identity of the master formed in the context of class, race species and gender domination, which is at issue" (*Mastery* 5). Jon Mee explains: "*The God of Small Things* does provide a powerful imaginative statement of the way people can find themselves 'trapped outside their own history'" (139). Despite Baby Kochamma's awareness of Ammu's love affair with the untouchable Velutha, she deliberately accuses Velutha of transgression, leading to his victimisation at the hands of the privileged upper-class members of the male-dominated society. The children Rahel and Estha are utilised by Baby Kochamma to put Velutha to death.

When Baby Kochamma comes to know that the children have told the police that Sophie Mol died in the accident by drowning while Velutha is brutally oppressed as the murderer of Sophie, Baby Kochamma influences the children to say only 'yes' so that she can save their Ammu. According to Baby Kochamma's FIR, the Kottayam police puts the Paravan into lock up and he is badly tortured there for which the police doubts his breathing through the night. But the police come to know the truth from the children that the children went there by their own choice and the English child had got drowned by accident. After coming to know the truth about the death of Sophie Mol, the police become disturbed: "Which left the police saddled with the Death in Custody of a technically innocent man. True, he was a Paravan; true he had misbehaved. But these were troubled times and technically, as per the law, he is an innocent man. There was no case" (*The God of Small Things* 314). Baby Kochamma, being afraid, suggests that the police put this as a rape case. The police then throw a series of questions to Kochamma: "Where is the rape-victim's complaint? Has it been filed? Has she made a statement? Have you brought it with you?" (*The God of*



*Small Things* 314). Baby Kochamma is threatened by the police that if she is unable to gather the file from the rape-victim or the proof from the children about Velutha as their abductor, he must charge her with lodging a false FIR that is a criminal offence. Baby Kochamma then plans to mislead them by taking the issue of saving Ammu. Baby Kochamma says: “The children will do as they’re told. If I could have a few moments alone with them” (*The God of Small Things* 315). According to her plan, she starts to convince the children telling them that God does not forgive the murderer and suddenly attacks them as murderers. Gradually she starts to knit the story and confirms the punishment of Velutha. The fact of Sophie Mol’s death by drowning is politicised by Baby Kochamma whose dissatisfaction with her life and her failure in making a love relation with Father Mulligan makes her more desperate and jealous. Dean Curtin states:

While gender does have a powerful hold on individuals, there are other forces that intersect in the individual as well, including race, caste, class, and religion. This means that some men are nonsexist despite sexist constructions of gender; some women are implicated in the destruction of the environment even though women’s praxis involves caring. Consequently, my argument is that recognition of gender is a necessary condition—not a sufficient condition—for sustainable development. (87-88)

Roy shows how Mammachi is beaten every night by Pappachi with a brass flower vase. One day, when Chacko finds Pappachi beating Mammachi he catches Pappachi’s hand and twists it around his back. Thus, the novel explores the supremacist power of the male dominant society which can do both set fire and quench it. From the ecofeminist point of view, it can be revealed that Roy highlights striking contradiction in this instance. She vividly illustrates how Mammachi’s deep affinity for nature imbues her with expertise in pickle making, ultimately enabling her to establish a successful pickle factory. In contrast, Pappachi’s connection to culture brings dualism, brings separation between nature and culture because of his material attachment, his urge of being famous which is denied him by his Boss. Val Plumwood says: “[T]he logic of dualism yields a common conceptual framework which structures otherwise different categories of oppression” (*Mastery* 2-3). Roy portrays how the female characters in this novel are subjugated by the patriarchal tapestry, trapped within its suffocating confines. They find themselves oppressed in relinquishing their innate desires and aspirations.

### **Twin's physical intimacy and social taboo**

Another significant aspect of the story *The God of Small Things* is the physical intimacy between the twins Estha and Rahel. Estha and Rahel share a deep bond that goes beyond ordinary sibling relationships, partly due to being fraternal twins and partly due to their traumatic childhood experiences. Their physical intimacy is both innocent and forbidden. They engage in behaviours like holding hands, sleeping together, and seeking comfort in each other's presence, which are typical of young children. However, the novel also hints at moments where their closeness verges on something more intimate or sensual, such as the scene where they "make history" in the abandoned house.

This taboo aspect stems from societal norms and expectations regarding appropriate behaviour between siblings, especially twins of the opposite sex. Their mother, Ammu is aware of the social stigma attached to their closeness and tries to discourage it at times, fearing the consequences of society's judgement. The novel explores the themes of love, loss, social restrictions, and the consequences of breaking norms. The physical intimacy between Estha and Rahel adds layers of complexity to their characters and their experiences, contributing a rich tapestry of the narrative. Ecofeminism often highlights the interconnectedness of human relationships and the natural world. The bond between Estha and Rahel can be seen as a reflection of this interconnectedness. Their intimacy, though taboo in societal terms, is a natural expression of their deep connection, mirroring the harmony that ecofeminism seeks between humanity and nature. Ecofeminism critiques gendered expectations and roles that dictate how individuals should behave based on their gender. In the case of Estha and Rahel, social taboos around their physical intimacy stem from these gendered expectations. The novel challenges these norms, questioning why a close bond between siblings, particularly twins, should be deemed inappropriate simply because of their genders. Ecofeminism advocates for liberation from oppressive social structures. The taboo surrounding Estha's and Rahel's intimacy represents the stifling impact of societal norms on individual freedom and expression. Their journey can be viewed as a quest for liberation from these constraints, echoing ecofeminist ideals of breaking free from oppressive systems. Ecofeminism emphasises the need for a balanced and sustainable relationship with nature. In the novel the twin's intimate connection with each other can be interpreted as a metaphor for the harmony that ecofeminism seeks between humans and their environment. This harmony is disrupted by societal taboos and restrictions, reflecting broader ecological imbalances caused by human interventions.

By exploring the physical intimacy of the twins and the taboos associated with it through an ecofeminist lens, *The God of Small Things* delves into themes of

interconnectedness, gendered expectations, liberation from social norms, and the quest for ecological harmony. These elements contribute to a nuanced exploration of ecofeminist concerns within the narrative.

### Development and degradation

Roy adeptly portrays the devastating effect of the global market in postcolonial India, where development brings calamity to the natural environment and ruins the powerless and expresses the need of social, economic, and environmental justice for oppressed woman, marginalised human beings, and nature. Thus, the gap between the empowered and the marginalised remains the same even after the colonial period. Through the eyes of Rahel, Roy shows how the physical ecology of Ayemenem has changed after 25 years: “Years later, when Rahel returned to the river, it greeted her with a ghastly smile, with holes where teeth had been, and a limp hand raised from a hospital bed” (*The God of Small Things* 124). Roy explains how the river becomes victimised by the powerful paddy-farmer lobby who allow the construction of a saltwater barrage which controls the influx of saltwater from the backwaters which release into the Arabian Sea. Thus, more rice is produced through two harvests rather than one: “More rice for the price of a river” (*God* 124). Rahel keenly observes the river’s constriction during June, on the onset of the rainy season, observing its narrowed expanse. Everything underwater comes to be float on the water surface whether it is dead fish or weeds and lily-trotters. Rahel thinks that in the earlier years, this river had the strength to evoke fear. But now it has been converted into something powerless. The narrator narrates:

Once it had had the power to evoke fear. To change lives. But now its teeth were drawn, its spirit spent. It was just a slow, sludging green ribbon lawn that ferried fetid garbage to the sea. Bright plastic bags blew across its viscous, weedy surface like subtropical flying-flowers. (*The God of Small Things* 124)

Roy has described succinctly the degraded condition of the river. Once while the bathers and the fishers were precisely led by the proper stone steps to their destination, now these lead them from “nowhere to nowhere” (*The God of Small Things* 125). The polluted and the devastated condition of the other side of the river she depicts, is poorer than the former one. The mud banks of the river not only gather the shanty hutments, the faecal wastes and the factory effluents but the filth from bathing and washing clothes also pollutes river and ruins it. Garrard thinks: “[P]ollution is an ecological problem because it does not name a substance or class of substances, but rather represents an implicit normative claim that too much of something is present in the environment, usually in the wrong place”

(6). Roy establishes the relationship between literature and nature by representing how ecological change is greeted by the outcome of development. The capitalist patriarchal power victimises Ayemenem's river by constructing both barrage as well as the Heritage, the five-star hotel, a profound blending of colonial and postcolonial, the western and the Indian, development and reduction. The pollution and filthiness in the ecology of Ayemenem are the consequences of using pesticides which are bought with the world-bank loans and create an obstruction in the Meenachal river. The narrator in the story says: "Most of the fish had died. The ones that survived suffered from fin-rot and had broken out in boils" (*The God of Small Things* 13). She tells about it in an interview with David Barsamian that the entire world is being controlled by the WTO, the IMF, and the World Bank. She thinks that these monetary funds do agreements with those governments who collaborate with the multinational companies. For Roy, the agreements are made secretly depriving the people of the information. She states, "Contracts that governments sign with multinationals, which affect people's lives so intimately are secret documents" (*The Checkbook and the Cruise Missile* 12). Referring to the contract between Enron, the huge Houston-based organisation and the government of Maharashtra, Roy asks for the document to be made public (*The Checkbook and the Cruise Missile* 12). Carolyn Merchant shows how grassroots globalisation aims at corporate globalisation through the global corporate power exhibited by the WTO, World Bank, and IMF. Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies state in their book *Ecofeminism* (1993) that the World Bank does not actually care for the welfare of the entire world's communities, rather it is regulated by the contributors who are economically and politically powerful and the real contributors who pay the real price become voiceless. These institutions in the name of development create neo-colonialism through financing and debt-trapping to remove underdevelopment and poverty. Maria Mies states:

With increasing ecological destruction in recent decades, however, it becomes obvious that this subsistence — or life production — was and is not only a kind of hidden underground of the capitalist market economy, it can also show the way out of the many impasses of this destructive system called industrial society, market economy or capitalist patriarchy. (*Ecofeminism* 298)

So, integrating ecofeminist perspectives into development policies and practices can lead to more holistic and effective solutions to the complex challenges of environmental and social issues which can be mitigated through advocating sustainable development models that ensure the needs of both people and planet.

## Conclusion

Arundhati Roy emphasises the resilience of women, children, the subaltern, and nature in postcolonial society to emphasise the prevalent identity crises shaped by enduring discriminations based on class, caste, and gender. The introduction of development often accompanies the malicious effects of unequal social structures and environmental degradation. These crises emerge when development across all facets of life lacks sustainability. The hierarchical development that nurtures the domination of human beings by others causes catastrophe on the social ecology of a society. Similarly, the exploitation of nature for economic gain echoes this devastation, impacting both the physical ecology and the local ecology of places like Ayemenem. And, in the same way, Ammu and her twins' ecology are disturbed by the conspiracy of their own people. Roy has recorded in this fiction the subjugation and injustice which has been propagated on women for centuries and validates how women's desires are exterminated by the patriarchal domination.

As an environmental activist, Arundhati Roy unveils the harsh realities of postcolonial patriarchal society, shedding light on the brutal treatment inflicted upon women, children, the subaltern, and nature, all of whom are tragically cast as victims of this oppressive system. Roy's critique resonates strongly with ecofeminism, as she highlights the intertwined oppressions faced by marginalised women, oppressed individuals, and nature. This perspective emphasises the interconnectedness of systems of dominance and exploitation, advocating for the liberation of both marginalised communities and the natural world.

Roy's concern with all kinds of domination reaches at the national and global levels. Previously, the awareness was only limited into patriarchal domination. Later, ecofeminists explore and weave both nature and gender issues into one thread. It shows its concern by seeking solution through various movements and philosophy. So, today women along with all the subordinate beings and nature are exposed in their defeated status in such a way that gradually it brings awareness among the human beings. Indeed, among this growing awareness, an intense possibility emerges for the creation of a new world liberated from all forms of domination.

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