

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Despite the portrayal of unique mixed-background society of Kerala, caste remains to be the dominant ideology which controls the social structure and conducts daily life of its members. The existence of casteless institutions such as Christian church and Marxist political party in this novel does not bring significant change in the way society react toward caste prejudice. Social restriction as the main characteristic of caste is still maintained by most of the characters, particularly between two contrasting polars of Touchable as the upper-caste and Untouchable as the pariah.

Caste as dominant ideology is maintained through ISAs and RSAs. These apparatuses are found in various elements of the society. Mainly, it takes shape in some key institutions: religion, politics, family, and police. Each apparatus plays important role in maintaining caste as dominant ideology. Cooperation between these apparatuses is significant in setting caste at the top feature of social life, beyond the ideologies of these own institutions.

First type of apparatuses in this novel is represented by religion, politics, and family as ISAs or Ideological State Apparatuses. It works in subtle way through internalization of caste values toward the members of these institutions. Boundary between Touchable and Untouchable is developed among them in different social areas such as church, family circle, and political party. It is important to notice that caste is maintained by both sides of ruling Touchable and

also the subjugated Untouchable. This both sides mechanism strengthens the position of caste as dominant ideology.

Second type of apparatuses which is more repressive than the first one is signified by the police as RSAs. Unlike ISAs, these Repressive State Apparatuses have the power to enforce behavior directly as proved by the physical violence they do toward Velutha. Within this mechanism, an outbreak or transgression in society as found in Velutha and Ammu's case is likely to be controlled repressively by these apparatuses.

Through these complex and superior apparatuses, Roy points out the destructive potency of a society toward its powerless members. The social punishment toward those who dare to challenge and break the rules of caste is carried to such an extreme level where the world becomes so inhuman. An Untouchable man dies as a criminal, while a Touchable woman dies as a pariah. Two children live and grow up with damaged memory of their tragic childhood. They lose not only figures of a beloved mother and a friend, but also a loving family and a reliable society. In a way of seeing, these victimized characters are evidences of negative impact of rigid caste-oriented society in protecting its structure.

The harsh and rigid depiction of caste in Indian society gives an insight of the way culture or tradition dominated a society and how it is manifested in various social forces along with the individuals. Culture as dominant ideology, such as the deep-rooted caste, is something which is difficult to change by individual act. It needs whole society to really change this general perspective into

a more critical and dynamic one. Overall, The God of Small Things leaves a deep impression on the effort of discovering the inhuman values of our own culture. Hopefully, this discovery will give a poignant lesson for the future generation to really appreciate each other as human being regardless social attributes and inspire them in creating a more egalitarian society to live in.

BIBLIOGRAPHY