Chapter Two
Mores and Modes

Culture is a word that is packed with profundity of expressions and sundry meanings. It has various layers of meaning when analysed and studied by different disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and psychology. Stuart Hall observes “Culture is not a practice. … It is threaded through all social practices, and is the sum of their interrelationship” (59). In common parlance, culture is to mean anything refined and beautiful that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any habits acquired by man as a member of society. As Francis Mulharn avers that cultures are “the symbolic forms of life of human groups, shaped in diverse conditions and growing into new shapes as they encountered new demands and opportunities” (16). In short, it includes all that man has acquired in the intellectual and psychological spheres of one’s social and individual life.

As Ashcroft et al. have rightly observed “All postcolonial literatures are cross-cultural” (110). This being so, the select fictional narratives of the writers chosen for study Arundhati Roy, Githa Hariharan and Kiran Desai are analysed to understand the prevalent cultural practices of their country and their significance. The three writers who belong to three different places and brought up in three different environments show
this interest and succeed to register the cultural practices of their country in their own perspective. This chapter makes a serious effort to examine these dominant cultural codes of the traditionally and culturally rich country like India as presented by these eminent writers.

Beliefs and rituals are the inherited forms of culture which venture out to portray the common behavioural pattern of a society in which one lives. The authors Arundhati Roy, Githa Hariharan and Kiran Desai being Indian writers depict people and incidents that clearly insinuate various cultural patterns, customs and way of behaviour of the people of their country so tremendously that they very often bring India, its culture and beliefs before one’s mind.

The longing for one’s own culture and the cultural heterogeneity of India have been faithfully expressed by the chosen authors selected for study here. Roy does justice to her narration as it is most probably her own experience in a locale very familiar to her. Her only novel, as Pinto has observed, serves as a “mirror to the cultural milieu of India in the last half-a-century with its uniqueness and variety” (105). Roy’s novel commences itself with the description of the climate of the locale Ayemenam in the month of May. She lavishly explains its geography, cultivation, its flora and fauna, which contribute their share in shaping the behaviour of the inhabitants of the land. Moreover, it also equips the global readers to have a fair picture of the cultural milieu of Roy’s novel.
Roy’s novel abounds with images that illustrate the typical Indian society especially that of Kerala, its beliefs and practices through various means. The folk and film songs are one such medium that portray some of the Indian values and custom. A folk song from the Malayalam classic movie *Chemmeen* holds much symbolic significance as it gives a peep into the distinctive belief of an average Indian woman. She believes that if a married woman loses her fidelity and dares to love another man, which is very much against the laws of Indian society and its culture, her life as well as her lover’s are prone to be doomed. Roy also proves this belief to be true through Ammu’s life. Her love affair with Velutha destroys both her and her lover’s life. Just like the innocent shark in the film which is also killed for no crime of its own, the twins’ lives are also destroyed for no mistake of theirs.

The elite and educated living in India and especially people living at the Ayemenam House in *The God of Small Things* exhibit a Western attitude towards marriage, for whom divorce is a common occurrence. On the other hand, to the common Indian folk divorce is as dreadful as death. Roy presents the diversity in the mentality of the Indians by describing how the entire village in Ayemenam visits Ammu when they have heard about her divorce. They “made over night trips to Ayemenam to commiserate with her about her divorce. They squeezed her knee and gloated” (GST 43).
Roy also has adorably presented to her readers all over the world, some of the popular beliefs of her country which are very much part of its culture and are partly superstitious as every religion has its own set of beliefs. It is widely believed by every Indian that if he/she transgresses any of the laws of the society, he/she will be punished by God. This belief recurs in *The God of Small Things*. It is this fear that drives Vellaya Pappen, father of Velutha to the house of Mammachi. “To a superstitious man, the relentless of that unseasonal downpour could have seemed like an omen from an angry god. To a drunk superstitious man, it could have seemed like the beginning of the end of the world. Which, in a way, it was” (254). He also believes that “The White man’s demon had entered” (255) the body of Ammu and Velutha, and it has given them the courage to make love.

Hariharan, another woman writer who has emerged from South India, too registers some such traditional Hindu cultural practices in her novel *The Thousand Faces of Night*. The Hindus have the custom of tying “a necklace of cotton that will be dabbed here there with turmeric and placed on door step” which they believe will “ward off snakes, demons, mythical monsters” (TFN 53). The Hindu bride and bridegroom observe the practice of planting a neem and peepal sapling on the day of their marriage. This is a very old traditional practice that is followed till today owing to the belief that “the sanctity of the marriage trees would fly like a
divine cloud across the skies, to grant the happiness of the couple they were god parents to” (58). There is also a conviction that the peepal tree is a “representation of Vishnu” (59) and neem tree is preferred for its medicinal quality. Whatever be the faith these practices nourish, they undoubtedly help in preserving a healthy green environment.

Hariharan eulogizes some of the traditional practices of her native land. The age old tradition of meditation which the saints performed, is again presented as a solution to many of the human problems both physical and psychological. Ayurveda, a traditional medical science and treatment is advocated to be the best way of treatment by the author. Through Vasu Master’s father Hariharan shows her inclination towards the traditional Ayurvedic healing process and its advantages.

Hariharan’s narrative is festooned with glimpses of Hindu culture. The Hindus of the land believe the all pervading power of god and goddess govern the life of the people and the fear of their punishments compels them to lead a virtuous life. Devi becomes the representative of such a community who believes that an “assistant goddess keeps records of every mortal on lotus leaves with a pen of reeds” (TFN 40). The story of the veteran singer Muthuswamy Dikshitar uncloaks yet another Hindu belief that goddess Lakshmi brings wealth to a family and by worshipping her sitting on the lotus one can amass wealth and prosperity in life.
The very essence of Hindu life, its belief in *Karma* and the presence of divinity in each self is also declaimed by Hariharan in *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*. The presence of God in every individual is pronounced thus by the author: “Don’t travel far and wide in search of God; travel deep;…. If you can open your body like the doors of a temple and find God within, why have you never seen the divine face?” (GVM 55). The great Indian philosophy of detachment in attachment also gets illustrated. It advocates: “detach yourself from your body, your wife and your children” (56) to taste the divine sweetness of nectar. The belief in *Karma* as an “omnipotent law; that it determined what each of us would enjoy or suffer in this life, inclusive of health and disease” (224), is typically an Indian perspective that determines the cultural practices of the people of India to a larger extent.

As a responsible citizen of India, Hariharan extols the virtues of her country and never shows any reluctance to criticize the vices. She presents some of the blind beliefs of the Indians and criticises them very subtly in *The Thousand Faces of Night*. The Indians, especially the Hindus, have strong belief in horoscope. They believe that it plays a major role in deciding the life of a person. But Hariharan’s portrayal negates this belief. Mayamma’s horoscope is inspected, scrutinized and found to be a very good one, promising a happy married life. In reality, it is a hell on earth which squeezes the essence of her life and leaves her dregs. Sita also gets
the horoscope of Devi examined by an eminent astrologer when she reaches eighteen. In spite of reviewing the match between Devi and Mahesh, it ends as a failure. Thus more than one instance is provided by the novelist to make her readers realize the futility of such a belief in horoscope.

Many Indian beliefs are highlighted faithfully, though at times with a bit of sarcasm. Hariharan attacks people’s attitude to be mute and blind before the social vices happening around them. They convince themselves in holding on to the traditional belief that they are living in a Kaliyuga, a time when atrocities reign high. The faith that what one endures in this birth is the fruit of one’s karma in the previous birth, conditions the life of an average Indian and this belief plays a major role in moulding the cultural and behavioural patterns of the people of India. Hariharan talks about this belief through a Swami to whom Vasu Master is taken to by his colleague. The Swami preaches “about the leftover karma from previous birth and also about the digestion of the karma you have cooked, and continue to cook in this life” (149).

Indians’ veneration for teachers who are placed next to God is also presented commendably by Hariharan. They are addressed as ‘swami’ and ‘master’ and to earn this respect the masters have to “renounce their individual names; shed chunks of their personal histories. They become part of a collective spirit that connects them for ever with their disciples.
For this reason, gurus receive powerful appellations such as Swami and Master” (161). The Gurukula practice and its sanctity are praised by the author who herself is a teacher. The doctrines of one of the Indian Vedas called the Rig Veda, has been elucidated by Hariharan in the context of explaining the student teacher relationship. However, she does not hesitate to criticize the unhealthy status of the present day education system, where the students show no respect, instead they display “scolding, sarcasm, scorn, shame, failure” (199). In this way she is faithful in giving a cross section of the society she is living in, which is slowly undergoing cultural degradation in some areas. The age old Indian belief that virtuous people will always be rewarded instils hope and comfort to lead a refined life, is retold by Hariharan through the chapter “The Vaid and Old Timeless”. She reiterates the basic truth that good and bad, teacher and student, domination and oppression and the new and old complement one another and make one’s life complete and fulfilling. Through Vasu Master, Hariharan shares with her readers her belief in the Niti shastra which is the wise conduct of life.

Religion plays an important role in Indian culture. The age old practice of breaking coconuts before the idol of Lord Vigneswar to accomplish their wishes without any obstacles is also stated by Hariharan. Such beliefs are very much part of Indian culture as they have great significance in conditioning the social life of every Indian. Besides
Hariharan, Desai too presents this cultural practice in describing the journey the Judge takes towards Cambridge. While he went to sail on the ship, he carried with him “his decorated coconut to be tossed as an offering into the waves, so his journey might be blessed by the gods” (IL 36). Similarly, Indians display a belief that whenever they take a journey they will be accompanied by evil spirits, and hence they perform certain rituals before getting into their houses. Devi in *The Thousand Faces of Night* says that her grandmother will not allow them enter the house “till she exorcised the ghosts clinging to us from our other life in the city…. She would quickly fetch a bowl of water mixed with turmeric” and they have to “stand by the doorway as she drew large circles in the air with the bowl in her hands” (TFN 26).

Though grown up in an alien land, Desai too is strongly rooted in her own nation and is familiar with the beliefs of her own people which find evidence in her novels. Her *The Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* itself lists out some of the popular beliefs which though superstitious, reflect flawlessly some of the Indian ethnic and cultural practices. She writes about the Indian belief that when seasonal rains fail, the wedding between frogs can bring back the delayed rain. The Indians’ belief in one’s birth star is also represented in this novel. All get dissatisfied with Sampath, the protagonist’s lack of ambition and passive attitude towards life. On the other hand, the grandmother of Sampath avers that his “stars
are good. This is just a temporary phase. Give him a good head massage every day and the obstruction to his progress will go away” (HGO 25).

Desai also enumerates traditional beliefs in her worldly acclaimed novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. The Hindus worshipped nature and its various objects like snake and in order to protect them, they propagated that anyone who does them any harm will be fatally punished. The cook has similar thoughts. To prove his view, he narrates an incident from his life. Once he angered the snakes which were living in a pit in the garden as “mia-bibi” and as a result his “body swelled up to ten times his size” (IL 13). When he approached the priests for cure and they told him that he “must ask forgiveness of the snake”. So he made “clay cobra and put it behind the water tank, made the area around it clean with cow dung and did puja. Immediately the swelling went down” (13). Even the police men believed this for they advised him to pray “to them and they will always protect you, they will never bite you” (13).

Another superstitious belief overtly seen in India is that if one meets with an accidental death, the unsatisfied soul haunts the place of death and tries to take the people it loves along with it. Desai too spells out this belief in *The Inheritance of Loss*. When the cook’s wife died by falling down from a tree, “everyone in his village had said her ghost was threatening to take Biju with her, since she had died violently” (178). Roy’s ‘History
House’ also is said to be haunted by the ghost of Kari Saippu who committed suicide.

The chosen writers also furnish details of the attire and food habits of their country which are very much part of culture. The food habits indicate the environment, brought up, nature of people, their profession and in other words, the culture. To a great extent, the food habits depend on the geographical condition. Roy’s story is woven around a Syrian Christian family of Kerala and so it enlightens one of the dress codes and food items of that land. In Kerala, fish, rice and tapioca are the common and favourite food items of the majority. Roy narrates when Estha and Rahel go to Velutha’s house they get the smell of “red fish curry cooked with black tamarind. The best fish curry, according to Estha, in the world” (GST 79). Velutha treats them cordially by giving tender coconut water to drink, “which is a common custom in Kerala” (Pinto 106). The traditional practice of serving food in families is also presented by the author. The women first feed their husbands and children and have their food only at the end. This cultural practice is exemplified through Kalyani, the wife of Comrade Pillai who eats her meal only after her husband. Banana chips and *avalose oondas* are the very common snacks that will be available in almost every Keralian household and Roy talks about the way Chacko is treated with these snacks when he goes to K.N.M.Pillai’s home.
Besides food, dress is another important factor that reveals the culture of a country. The servant Kochu Maria wears a typical Syrian Christian attire of *chatta* and *mundu* and she also wears a *kunnuku* [earring] in her ears. Upper caste men wear *mundu* and shirt whereas untouchables wear only *mundu*. The Hindus of this region wear sari and put *bindhi* on their forehead and also put sandal paste. The plot of Hariharan’s maiden novel is woven around a South Indian Brahmin society in Tamil Nadu and so it presents the traditional attire of Brahmins. The protagonist Devi’s grandmother represents a typical South Indian traditional Brahmin woman and culture. She wears only a nine yard sari and no blouse beneath. She calls it a “modern nonsense” and “she was totally devoid of any physical vanity” (TFN 25).

Various cultural practices of the Brahmins find voice in the writing of Hariharan. *The Sumangali Puja*, a ritual performed by wives seeking long life for their husbands and *Upanayanam*, a ceremony to baptize a boy into a traditional Brahmin by wearing the divine thread called *poonool* are all illustrated in detail by the author. The South Indian custom of getting up early in the morning, cleaning the *muttam* and drawing *kolam* with a white powder is also communicated to her readers. Hindus’ belief in several births is also expressed through Thyagaraja, an eminent personality in Indian classical music who at the death of his wife wept “O Rama…. I have now reaped the bitter harvest of the sins I committed in earlier births”
Hariharan’s *When Dreams Travel* brings to light the typical Indian custom of employing women to cry over the death of a person by beating their breasts and singing melancholically the virtue of the dead person.

Desai also gives a striking picture of the very common practice of most of the Indians. After a terrific summer when the monsoon arrives the people welcome it with joy and they will not waste the rainwater, instead, they “placed buckets outside to catch the rain water and brought out candles and kerosene lanterns in preparation for the inevitable breakdown of electricity” (HGO 19). Such descriptions about the lives of people of Shahkot that Desai sketches on her canvas, “provide an insight into middle class life and attitudes” (N.Singh 28) of an average Indian.

The chosen authors for study highlight invariably some of the vices prevalent in their cultural system. Roy has condemned patriarchy and caste ridden Indian society and shown her anxiety these practices can inflict on her fellow being. Hariharan too attacks the dowry system which is very much part of patriarchy. She spits anger in illustrating the harm it brings to women, the marginalized section of the society. Dowry system is an age old practice which was introduced with the intention of helping women later turned out to be a curse. It is an additional burden on girls’ parents even in this hi-tech era and those who have no parents to look after have to undergo many hardships like the pretty servant Gouri in *The Thousand*
Faces of Night. She is as beautiful as a goddess, still she could not get married as she is poor and has no one to provide dowry.

The behavioural pattern of an average Indian is governed by certain beliefs that can be termed as myth. Myth is undoubtedly rooted in one’s culture and it enables one to comprehend the complexities of the writer’s creation including his/her characters and his/her creative excellence. The English term myth is derived from the Greek ‘muthos’ meaning - ‘the thing spoken’, or ‘the tale told’. It is a system of “hereditary stories which were once believed to be true by a particular cultural group, and which served to explain why, the world is as it is and things as they do” (Abrams 102). Myth has highly symbolic significance and is noteworthy in unveiling the social and moral norms and they are part of any culture. Many Indian writers have made an excellent use of the two great Indian epics The Mahabharata and The Ramayana in all their variety, form and splendour to drive home their themes.

Roy has innovatively used the wealth of Indian literary and mythical tradition to represent the various challenging issues of the present. Roy’s The God of Small Things places its central characters’ story in the context of traditional Hindu mythologies. By narrating the representations from mythologies, Roy extends a regional flavour to her text. In addition, Roy’s view of myth represents Beauvoir’s view: “It is always difficult to describe
a myth: it cannot be grasped or encompassed: it haunts the human consciousness without ever appearing before it in fixed form” (175).

Ammu’s drunkard husband Baba tries to pawn his wife as a commodity to safeguard his job. He agrees to the demand of his English boss Mr.Hollick who promises to cancel his dismissal provided he consents to send his beautiful wife Ammu to him to be “looked after”. Baba being a true representative of Indian patriarchal set-up, and one who values his wife nothing more than he would value his cattle or any of his household articles, feels nothing wrong in it and readily accepts his boss’ condition. M.K.Naik in this connection observes that this “belief - fortunately mostly extinct now - is actually as old as The Mahabharata, where Yudhisthira, on losing everything he owns in a Dice game with the wicked Duryodhana, finally pledges Draupadi, his wife” (228). Ammu who cannot bear this atrocity returns to her highly orthodox Syrian Christian family as an unwanted guest.

Velutha, the lover of Ammu is another character who invites parallelism with mythical characters. He is, as the name suggests in Malayalam, white to the core. When his illicit relationship with Ammu is detected, he is abused by everyone including his father. He takes refuge in the History House from where the police arrest him and beat him up. Here also Roy seeks the aid of an episode from The Mahabharata to convey the grotesqueness of the incident in its truest sense. She likens it to that of
Bhima’s beating of Dhushasana and his brother Duryodhana. The parallelism that one can derive in this context is just because, in both the stories there is a struggle between good and evil. In *The Mahabharata*, Dushasana and his brother Duryodhana represent evil whereas, Bhima stands for good. Finally, good triumphs over the evil. However, in *The God of Small Things*, the evil turns out to be victorious. Velutha who possesses a soul to love others, is crushed to death by the evil forces. One agrees with Rosy Misra who opines that in “ancient India, human rights of the weak were always protected. But in modern India, human values are encroached upon” (204). Thus, Roy employs myth for the effective portrayal of the cultural degradation that has come upon the Indian society.

The omniscient narrator Roy is also seen to strike a resembling note with the epic character in *The Mahabharata*. In this context G.D.Barche comments, “The narrator like Sanjay of *The Mahabharata* sees all that happens here and narrates as faithfully as possible” (30). The entire story of *The God of Small Things* is presented through the author’s perspective. Another remarkable feature of Roy’s prose is her repeated reference to *Kathakali*, the traditional art form of Kerala. This art form usually enacts the episodes from the epics like *The Mahabharata* and *The Ramayana*. These stories are already known to every Indian. However, this does not subdue the interest of the audience, but rather intensifies. Roy, who has grown up amidst these, has been really fascinated and it really has given
the courage to unravel the crux of the entire story in the very first chapter titled “Paradise Pickles and Preserves”.

Roy also extends a regional flavour to her work of fiction by narrating the representation of episodes from the mythologies through the art form called *Kathakali*. The stories of Karna, Bhima and Kunti glorify the Indian culture and play a major role in bringing the twins Rahel and Estha together once again. The cruel murder of Velutha has shattered and alienated the twins. And the performance of the *Kathakali* dancers reminds them of their childhood and “they are trapped in the bog of a story that was and wasn’t theirs” (GST 236). Estha also calls comparison with a mythical character Karna who did not reveal that he was born to Kunti before her marriage as it would spoil her reputation. Just like that Estha too saves the honour of his mother Ammu by giving false “disposition before the police that Velutha had killed Sophie Mol” (Bhatt 45) to hide his mother’s illegal affair with Velutha. Thus, Roy’s use of diverse myths has equipped her to lend a regional flavour and local colour to her cosmic themes.

Hariharan, a prodigy from a South Indian family grew up by listening to the stories from Indian epics and traditional stories. This knowledge of the epics endowed her with an eruption of unending ideas which come out in the form of fictional narratives. Her very first literary attempt *The Thousand Faces of the Night* bears testimony to this. It is replete with stories from Hindu mythologies. In this novel, Hariharan
explores different facets of a Hindu society and reveals how this traditional society prescribes gender relations by means of myths.

Plato refers to ‘muthoi’ to denote “fiction which conveys a psychological truth” (Cuddon 525). As defined by Plato, Hariharan uses myths as stories to drive home the different psychological make up of her central characters. Devi, the protagonist of the novel has grown up listening to the stories of her grandmother. They have a major role to play in shaping the character of Devi and they also portray the rich cultural heritage of India and its various customs and beliefs. Moreover, they meticulously and challengingly convey the creative excellence of Hariharan as a writer.

The stories of the grandmother are not always about the usual heroes and heroines who are hailed traditionally. She does not dwell on the more prominent figures of the Hindu myths like Sita, Savitri or Anasuya, who are very often celebrated as the paragons of female virtue. On the other hand, “she retrieves the marginal figures of Gandhari, Amba and Ganga - long relegated to minority status almost forgotten and often rendered silent and invisible in patriarchal versions of myths”(Yelliah 189). These stories from the epics have created an immutable imprint in Devi’s mind. She begins to scrutinize people living around her in the light of these mythological stories. Devi’s grandmother narrates the story of Gandhari, a powerful queen in The Mahabharata to convey the sacrifice of Devi’s
mother. Gandhari did the most unusual and noble deed of renouncing her eyesight for the sake of her blind husband. Sita, the mother of Devi, practises this sacrificing quality of a wife in her real life. She relinquishes the musical instrument veena, her first lover for the sake of harmony in her husband’s house. The purpose of narrating Gandhari’s story is to teach Devi, “what it is to be a real woman” (TFN 29). It unswervingly reaches its goal for she avers that “the lesson brought me five steps closer to adulthood” (29).

The story of Ganga in *The Thousand Faces of Night* reiterates the necessity of self-sacrifice in women’s life. The river goddess Ganga sacrificed her children to redeem them. Devi’s mother-in-law Parvatiamma resembles Ganga in the act of abjuring her family. In addition, the story also hints at the cultural practice of the primitive time when child sacrifice was a custom to redeem one’s sin. The grandmother’s story of a woman who married a snake also advocates the enduring and sacrificing quality of womanhood.

Hariharan suggests through these stories that even from the puranic time onwards, the self-sacrificing virtue of women is lauded. However, she also throws light on the other side of Indian feminity which is equally good in avenging the tormentors. Amba’s story exemplifies this quality and proves that a woman can be a creator as well as a destroyer. It is this revolutionary idea that gives her the strength to elope with her lover Gopal.
when her husband’s treatment becomes unbearable. The story of Kritya, a ferocious goddess who avenged the men who afflicted the women also suggests the avenging power of women. The unending lists of stories told by her grandmother equip Devi to invent a story of her own. She visualises herself as a “woman warrior, a heroine. I was Devi. I rode a tiger and cut off evil, magical demons’ head” (41).

Through the anecdotes taken from the epics and other sources, Hariharan creates a magical world for Devi. Her consistent use of myth and religion conveys the deep rooted cultural practices of Indian life and the place of Indian women in the society and her potentialities. Moreover, through this, she also proclaims that, “myth is ubiquitous in time as well as place. It is a dynamic factor everywhere in human society: it transcends time, uniting the past (traditional modes of belief) with the present (current values) and reaching towards future…” (Guerin 184).

Hariharan’s first novel is replete with stories from Indian mythologies whereas, her second novel is filled with stories of animals taken from the *Panchatantra*, the storehouse of wisdom. Frequently, Hariharan seeks the help of small anecdotes to drive home her idea which illuminate on her nation’s cultural opulence. She also uses it for enlightening and educating her characters. In *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*, stories are mainly narrated to the mentally challenged Mani, to teach him the basic things of life. Through the story of “Mascot of Melting Point”,
Vasu Master tries to alert his pupil and elucidating the need to equip himself to live in harmony with the society, otherwise he will become a victim of the vulnerable society like the Mascot who is ultimately killed by other animals due to his strangeness.

People of India, in general, place teachers next to God in reverence and mother is believed to the best teacher. Hariharan too advocates this practice by depicting the greatness of teacher through a story of a mouse which goes to a wise snake to learn how to become a good teacher. It says, “You have to first become a judge, an ideologue, a priest and a doctor” (GVM 29). After the mouse has mastered all these, he goes to the snake which says the difficult part comes only now. “You must grow a womb that nurtures, then delivers” (30). The mouse bursts out with knowledge on hearing this and pleads with its mother to teach it “how to be a mother?” (30). The story suggests that mother ranks above anyone else and she is the noblest one in the world and thus the story justifies the traditional Indian belief that mother is a visible god. The story of the bear and the anteater suggests the need to establish order in the jungle which is a very difficult task. The jungle draws parallelism with the multicultural Indian society and it also stresses the need to instil order in a hybrid society like India where there is plurality and divergence in various fields like religion, caste, creed and language.
Myth can also be a fictitious narration of a social group which in due course becomes a belief. The history of Basava explains this. Basava was a twelfth century poet and a social reformer. As time passed by, he attained the status of a divine being. People believe that he is the bull of Lord Shiva who was sent to the earth “because of the… unfortunate status of devotion on earth” (TS 116). And when his earthly mission was over, he was taken back by Shiva. Such descriptions of the author are coloured with a scathing sarcasm as she gets intolerant towards the superstitious belief of the Indians who try to escape from crucial points of life and Hariharan through her protagonist Shiv attacks the government too who exploit the people through “these convoluted myths, bending over backwards to do some damage control” (117). The myth employed by Hariharan depicts the Hindu belief which expects miracles.

Thus, myth invariably equips the writers to throw light on the various cultural practices of the people of India and explain reasons for the behavioural patterns of their country men. They also give myth a unique identity and enrich their style and portray the impact of the past on the present. However, the cultural practices of a nation do not remain static. It “demands an encounter with “newness” that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation” (Bhabha 938). Globalization facilitates the process of cultural transition and translation.
All great cultures come into existence and grow consistently as a result of the mutual contacts with cultures of other countries over the globe. As the sociologist Vatsayayan has observed the culture which evolved upon the banks of Nile has influenced India. Similarly, Indian culture has reached China and together they made considerable and significant contribution to Western civilization. Greek culture has influenced Egyptian culture and Rome was affected by Greek culture. In the same way, the modern cultures are adopting from one to another. In the twenty first century, it is quite impossible for a man to live in his own country completely detached from other countries and their culture. In fact, culture of any nation is bound to change and it can never remain static. This fact is repeatedly presented by all the writers chosen for study. They have shown invariably through their unique style that “the world is reduced to a multi-ethnic, multiracial and multicultural village…” (Solanki 80).

The term globalization has emerged out of need for the expression of political, economic, social, and cultural changes. “It’s an omnibus term, of course, not only carrying its variety of passenger interest, but travelling to and through different terrains” (Gordimer 208). The word “global” is an indicator of change. In the 1960s, this came to be used to mean “belonging to the world” or “worldwide”. Mc Luhan used the term ‘the global village’ in 1968, to suggest “a single system…” (Young 129) where the cultures of the world get mixed and interlayered. The world that the three writers bring
before their readers also bears testimony to Young’s observation. Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* talks about such a world. Her protagonist Rahel returns from America to her hometown Ayemenem in Kerala reminding her readers that they are living in a globalized world. In the same chapter, Roy writes about Rahel’s cousin Sophie Mol who arrives from England. Her father Chacko has also run a business though an unsuccessful one in Canada. All such descriptions suggest that it is a globalized world one is living and that the entire world has shrunken to the state of a global village. It is globalization that enables Ammu to apply for a UN job and dream about living “in The Hague with a Dutch ayah to look after” (GST 160). Same factor makes Rahel imagine that she will be living in Africa when she grows up. It is possible for one to aspire to reach any part of the world as globalization has shrunken the world into a mere village. Through such depictions, Roy shows “how globalization restructures women’s lives and relations …” (Mullaney 118).

The twins Rahel and Estha’s father in *The God of Small Things* is said to have moved from Assam to Kolkatta as part of his profession. However, when he retires, he moves to Australia to enjoy his retired life. It suggests the effect of changed cultural practice that comes in vogue as part of globalization, a universal phenomenon. Though Roy criticises the dilapidated state of Indian villages due to modernization and globalization, her description that cultivation is done in a small village with the loan
taken from the World Bank reiterates the fact that boundaries have started to blur. Roy also goes on to describe how the village starts to be abound with houses built with Gulf money by nurses, masons, wire benders and clerks.

Globalization encourages one to cross his/her national boundary in search of affluence and better life. As Sindkhedkar rightly says, “Globalization has produced new patterns of migration and provoked divergent responses worldwide” (60). In the globalized world, a country’s development is very much dependent on the neighbouring and other countries. Hence, a smooth and healthy environment is required among the countries all over the globe. Roy’s *The God of Small Things* identifies current economic processes as a continuation of centuries-old processes of cultural hybridization and exchange, remains attentive to the role of India as sending as well as receiving culture in such transactions. *The God of Small Things* stresses the transcultural nature of globalization as a unidirectional movement or a flow of power from the powerful to the weak, from the “centre” to the “periphery” without ever really recognizing the possibility of disestablishing the oppositions that are thereby produced. (Mullaney 115)
One can perceive the citizens of a country visiting other countries to earn their livelihood. In order to cater to the welfare of the foreigners, embassies are established. Roy indicates this phenomenon by illustrating that K.N.M.Pillai’s son Lenin, the childhood friend of Rahel is working as a service contractor for the foreign embassies. He changes his name into Levin in order to fit himself in the globalized world where there is a general aversion towards communism. This wise decision enables him to work for the Dutch and the German embassies. Trade and commerce with other countries also exists in the globalized era. Roy who gives the cross section of her society does not forget to register how many in her hometown earn their livelihood by exporting goods to the foreign countries. She mentions that Mammachi prepares pickles and jam aiming at international market and for that she is ready to exploit the Westerner’s interest in the culture and rich art form of Kerala such as the Kathakali. Mammachi and Chacko choose the picture of a Kathakali dancer - a cultural art form of Kerala as a label on their food products for “it gave the products a regional flavour and would stand them in good stead when they entered the Overseas Market” (GST 47).

The writers chosen for study invariably present that people cross their boarders not only in search of fortune, rather to pursue higher education too. It gives them dignity and reverence from the natives. Roy mentions that Rahel meets Larry Mc Caslin, an Englishman from London
in India where he is doing research in architecture. It is in the Architecture College in Delhi that they fall in love, marry and they settle down in Boston in the U.S.A. After divorce Rahel continues to work in New York. Quite amusingly, it is an Indian restaurant. Father Mulligan, an Irish monk also visits India to learn Hindu scripture. Chacko, the uncle of the twins too is a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford. Moreover, Roy informs that Ammu’s father-in-law, a Hindu Bengali had his Boxing Championship from Cambridge. Her father Pappachi had also undergone a six months diploma course in Vienna, where his wife Mammachi too had her violin lesson under a foreign tutor Launsky- Tieffenthal. Hariharan’s novel _The Thousand Faces of Night_ also opens in America where the protagonist is sent to pursue her education by her mother. It is the phenomenon called globalization that equips a South Indian girl to do her two year post-graduation in America. Devi further informs that there are many foreign students in her university in America.

Kochamma in _The God of Small Things_ could grow in her garden plants imported from Japan and other countries as a result of globalization. One is also told that at Ayemenam, there is a lot of furniture including a dressing table from Vienna. The master of the house owns the English Plymouth car. All this could be possible due to interdependent state of affairs among the countries of the world. Roy presents that in her drawing room Baby Kochamma could summon people from the nook and corner of
the world through her television and Roy writes that Baby Kochamma installed a dish antenna on the roof of the Ayemenem House and presided over the world in her living room on satellite television where even the American President could be summoned up like a servant.

Roy also hints at how globalization ushers in the foreign exchange of India through travel and tourism. She talks about a History House which is later transformed into a hotel. The tourists from various foreign countries visit there and they stay in this hotel beside the Meenachal River. Roy establishes through *The God of Small Things* how each nation is tied with the other for its growth and development. The farming done with the help of World Bank proves Spivak’s and Sharpe’s view that “the rural is a new front of globalization” (Sharpe 610).

Hariharan invests pages to depict how the world has shrunken into a village and how people fly from one country to another for diverse purposes. In *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*, the school principal Veera Naidu’s son is also in America and he has promised to send foreign equipments for the laboratory. In her novel *In Times of Siege* Hariharan reports the protagonist Shiv’s daughter Tara being settled in Seattle and his wife has gone there on a tourist visa. By sitting there, they could understand what happens in New Delhi by reading online news. These are indeed the positive consequences of globalization. Hariharan also presents that in the globalized world many Indians are employed in the West. One
of the boys and his family that visits Devi’s house boasts that the father of the boy is “an economist, highly regarded in UN organization” (TFN 17). Their family has the habit of “always going away to Europe, Africa, three years in each place on deputation” (17).

Another fictional narration of Hariharan When Dreams Travel which is an adaptation of the worldly renowned The Arabian Nights also promulgates that globalization has started centuries back as part of the cultural growth of any nation. She defines globalization in one of her essays titled “In Times of Siege: Shrinking Space in Times of Globalization” as a term that “should mean the free flow of people and ideas, allowing advances taking place anywhere– anywhere at all – to be shared by others” (38). Hariharan here presents her central character Dunyazad travelling to various places, “to land, beyond seas and mountains – China, Africa, India” (DT 23). How culture got transported along with such travel is also marvellously highlighted by the author. She writes that the “caravan inches forward over the years. Women, dreams and stories are transported from India to Persia to Arabia to France to England and back to India” (25). It is the globalized state of the world that equips the protagonist Shahrzad to tell tales that have universal themes.

Being born in one corner of India and brought up in America, Desai herself has experienced the impact of globalization and she marvels how the world has shrunken into a village in The Hullabalo in the Guava
Orchard. The protagonist Sampath’s birth is followed by a torrential rain which results in flood and the small village Shahkot receives relief from every part of the world. People think that they are the birthday gifts for the new born boy and Desai writes that even “people in Sweden have remembered to send a birthday present” (HGO 12). She also faithfully registers that many Indian politicians have “Swiss bank accounts” which is a controversial political issue even today. The newspapers both regional and national that inform the things that occurs all over the world also highlight the fact that people are curious to know what happens to humanity in general irrespective of the country or race and how they help one another at the crucial times like flood or other calamities. The song that Sampath sings speaks about the effects of globalization: “My suit is Japanese, tra – la - la, but though I may roam, tra – la - la don’t worry, Mama and Papa, my heart belongs to home” (40).

Desai’s second literary creation The Inheritance of Loss is a perfect example of globalization. It is “a brilliant study of Indian culture – the culture in its transitional phase” (K. Singh 96). The novel sprawls across two different continents. Among the two strands, one takes place in Kanchanjunga, the northern part of India and the other one in the dream land called America. She also hints how globalization has strengthened relations between the East and the West. She writes that in “Bombay a band named Hell No was going to perform at the Hyatt International. In
Delhi, a technology fair on cow dung gas stoves was being attended by delegates from all over the world” (IL 9). It is globalization that equips one to use products made in other countries. Desai writes that the policeman who comes to investigate about the Jemubhai’s missing gun uses umbrella “synthetic made-in-Taiwan one, abloom with flowers” (11). The house of the judge is built by a Scot in a remote village in North India. Desai also describes the garden of Mon Ami sisters, which like Baby Kochamma’s garden has “the country’s only broccoli grown from seeds procured in England” (44). They also have Tibetan choksee table, paintings by Nicholas Roerich, a Russian aristocrat. Though living in India, these sisters nourish the food of the colonizer and read and argue about European writers and their state of affairs.

Desai too highlights how people visit alien land in search of job. Pixie, the daughter of Lola is a reporter of the English channel BBC and she lives in England. She also gives a picture about Indian students in New York. One is also informed of Italian restaurants in America where Indians and other third world countrymen work. Desai presents this contemporary cultural practice through her *The Inheritance of Loss* which “spans continents, generations, cultures, religions and faces” and thus “Desai has wonderfully presented the human face of globalization and showed how individuals living in different parts of the planet often intersect in surprising ways” (Sinha 272).
It is globalization that makes people to go to the first world countries in search of fortune. Indians are very much interested in migrating to other countries and Desai too reiterates this by giving a long list of places around the globe where one can see Indians living in abundance. America is a dream world of many and Desai observes that there was “a whole world in the basement kitchens of New York” (IL 22). She also informs that Sai’s parents were killed in an air crash in Russia. Desai pokes fun at Indians who take pride in saying that he has “uncles from all over, Dubai – New Zealand – Singapore, wired money into my cousin’s account in Tulsa” (183). It is indeed due to globalization that one living in India can brag of being to “England, Switzerland, America. Even New Zealand. Looking forward when in New York, to the latest movie, to pizza, to Californian wine…” (183).

Desai shows that people from the third world swarms up the first world to elevate their economic status. She depicts that even the first world men migrate to third world like India in search of a peaceful life. She creates one such character Father Booty. She also talks about the international trade and open market. There is a mention of people from China coming all the way to India to sell silks and lace and “Bomenbhai’s wife’s earlobes lengthened with the weight of South African diamonds” (90). On her wedding day, Bomanbhai’s daughter wears a lot of jewels. Among them, emeralds are from Venezuela, rubies from Burma and
diamonds are *kundon* diamonds. Bomanbhai also drinks only a western “brandy with hot water in Venetian goblet” (90). As Sindkhedkar rightly observes, in “Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss* we find a globalized India, where past and future live in an uneasy juxtaposition, where lives are being pooled and pushed into varied corners, in a world where migration is the iron law of life” (60).

The darker side of globalization is also homogeneously highlighted by these writers chosen for study. Roy has described at length how the ancient and traditional art form *Kathakali* has lost its significance and disintegrated as a result of globalization. The lives of these artists are also impoverished and ruined. She goes wordy in describing how the environment is polluted and its natural resources are lost due to modernization and industrialization − the fruits of globalization. She also persistently interrogates how India is “still flinching from the cultural insult” (Mullaney 119). Though Roy is very much part of the globalized era, “she does not embrace globalization, or rather lambastes the powers that seek to co-opt her”. As she pithily puts it, “the only thing worth globalizing is dissent” (Prasad 174). In short, by reading Roy’s novel one can discern that she takes a pessimistic attitude towards “the globalization of economy that may metamorphose a tiny, truthful Ayemenem into a faceless modern city;” (Paul 172). Hariharan too highlights the negative impact of globalization. She shows how it degrades the culture of India.
The younger generation goes to the first world countries and there are "stories of boys and girls who never come back, married Americans and forgot their aging parents in India" (TFN 14).

Violence has become a universal global phenomenon which spares no one. One can "witness a kind of terror and fear everywhere. A culture of fear seems to be looming large over the society" (Pinto 123). Hariharan approves of Pinto’s views and in *In Times of Siege* says that the agitators who might be one of the Manchies threaten to harm Shiv’s wife and daughter who are in Seattle. He “reminded him that no one was out of their reach, and especially not in America, where they have any number of friends” (TS 156). The darker side of globalization is also suggested in the narration where Hariharan charges that foreign cars “wrecking damage on Indian roads and morals” (182). Her words are so sharp when she opines that globalization has failed to produce the intended result:

It should mean a free flow of advances and breakthroughs; all of us get to draw interest on this huge interest-earning deposit. If globalization is to encourage healthy competition, competition should mean more choices for the consumer and trade should make it easier for producers to get a better deal. But the reality makes a mockery of these hopeful definitions: globalization today is founded on an economic system to
which the key is held by internationally mobile finance
capital. (Shrinking Spaces 39)

Though Desai seems to advocate for globalization in her *The
Inheritance of Loss*, she also does justice to her profession as a writer who
owes certain responsibility to society she lives in. Hence, she insinuates
that an individual’s exposure to plural culture may end up in loss of
identity, self-respect and deprive one of even human qualities. Sai becomes
the mouthpiece of the author in saying that she disappointed her parents
“just as modern life did” (IL 321). She says that modern life offers little
happiness and keeps at bay a lot of misfortunes. Men will continue to live
their life, “slowly, painstakingly like ants, men would make their paths and
civilization and their wars once again, only to have it wash away again”
(323). However, she strikes a positive note too. She gives hope to her
readers by ending her novel in an optimistic way that as long as true and
selfless love is there, life will prosper even in adverse circumstances. The
reunion of the father and Biju enlightens the protagonist with this universal
truth.

Hybridity is a state that comes in with globalization. With one’s
frequent encounter with alien culture and society, one’s life gets
influenced. It results in the merging of two different cultures which
ultimately brings in the emerging of different cultural patterns in which any
one of the cultures predominates according to the intensity of the influence.
The idea of hybridity is derived from Fanon who argues that colonial oppression acts as a catalyst for transformation of colonized societies. The decolonizing project radically upsets the old cultural patterns. The old habits give way to “new attitudes, to new modes of action …. Disparate cultures meet, dash and grapple with each other in the contact zone in the relations of domination and subordination (Rai 137).

India is a land of diverse cultures. The presence of numerous languages, multireligious and ethnic characteristics of the Indian society speak about India’s pluralistic culture. Besides this, the hybrid state of an individual in India is a common factor as it has been one of the colonized lands. As a result there is a general attraction and admiration for the colonizers’ language and culture among the people of India.

Hybridity is a global phenomenon and as has been said by Bhikhu Parekh’s in his essay What is Multiculturalism, culture is ever changing. A culture’s relation to itself shapes and is in turn shaped by its relation to others. Culture of a country should accept and appreciate the plurality within it, only then it can accept and appreciate the value of other cultures. Viewed from this angle, India has a rich culture which is open to other countries, influencing other cultures and gets influenced and evolves into an ever changing and versatile one. India has thus become a “melting pot in which diverse ethnicities would submerge to create a new national identity” (Dhar 57).
Some people in India due to the influence of the Western culture become thoroughly enthralled by the colonizer’s culture and there occurs a complete disintegration of their original culture. In *The God of Small Things* “Roy comments on the colonization of mind which many Indians suffer from” (Pandit 171). A few get married and settled in foreign countries and as a result their offspring show totally different disposition which is the fine blend of both cultures. Roy’s Sophie Mol is one such character who is born to an English mother and a typical South Indian father. The cultural diversity of her life is presented by Roy beautifully. She narrates that Sophie Mol, the protagonist’s cousin is dressed like an English girl who carries with her “Made-in England go-go bag”, but she is buried like an Indian in a typically Indian way, by the “priests with curly beards” (GST 4). Though living in the southern village of India, the members of the Ayemenam House exhibit their affinity to the master’s culture. It is Pappachi’s craze to emulate the English and to attain their superior status that prompts him to buy a Plymouth car once used by an Englishman. In that car, the family goes to see the English movie *The Sound of Music*. However, on the car’s roof there is a billboard advertising their family pickle and jam with a *Kathakali* dancer’s picture over it for a “Regional Flavour” (46) Rahel and Estha are also compelled by the elder anglophiles to talk only in English and whenever they talk in the mother tongue they are punished by the elders. The family’s hybrid state and their
attempt to imitate the English are criticized by Roy. She narrates in detail the unnecessary effort taken by the elders to demonstrate their skill in talking and behaving like English and to prove to their English cousin Sophie Mol that they are quite different and more civilized than the people at Ayemenam, an attempt to impress her and her English mother and thus to claim supremacy.

Roy’s novel itself is “conspicuously hybrid in its construction” (Tickell 74) and it “is set in three culture – Kerala, Bengali and Western and they are interwoven and intermingled into the very texture of the novel” (Chandra 152). Not only her language but her subject matter also reflects the cultural texture of her childhood. About the multicultural backdrop of her locale Roy avers that

it was the only place in the world where religions coincide, there’s Christianity, Hinduism, Marxism and Islam and they all live together and … I was aware of the different cultures when I was growing and I’m still aware of them now. When you see all the competing beliefs against the same background you realize how they all wear each other down.

(Smyrl web)

Ammu’s exposure to Western culture and the family’s general inclination towards it equip her to dress like the English. Roy describes that Ammu wears backless blouses and smokes cigarettes which a South Indian woman
will never dare to attempt in those days. Their hybrid state makes them gloat over their Western aspect and their offspring’s cultural background. Roy criticises it throughout her fiction.

In *The God of Small Things*, Baby Kochamma also displays the influence of multiculturalism. She dresses herself, eats and talks like the English, but she is a true Indian at heart. It is said that she dislikes the twins just like any highly conservative Indian woman for the mere reason that they are fatherless and hence doomed. She hates them more, because they are half hybrids whom no self-respecting Syrian Christian will ever marry. She wants the twins to behave like the English, but her behaviour is conditioned by the very old and traditional narrow minded patriarchal culture which believes that married woman has no position in her parents’ house and a divorced woman has no place at all and she hence becomes a burden.

Often marriages are seen as a bond that brings persons of two different cultures together. Roy gives so many instances of such cross-cultural marriages. Chacko marries an English woman, Margaret and Ammu, a Syrian Christian marries a Bengali Hindu. As a result of these cross-cultural marriages, the outlook of the Indian has undergone a considerable change. In India, people consider marriage as a sacred and a permanent one or at least a long lasting one. But due to the Western influence, it loses its sanctity and divorces become very common. Roy’s
protagonist Rahel considers marriage as a trifle and temporary thing and she moves into married life just “like a passenger drifts towards an unoccupied chair in the airport lounge” (GST 18). The problems that come with the hybrid marriages are also beautifully communicated by Roy. Clashes are common as there emerges a lack of understanding in getting into the core of alien culture as predominantly evinced in such couples. This is illustrated by the love making of Rahel and Larry. At the time, Rahel’s indifferent eyes hurt him. He could not understand what her look meant. “He didn’t know that in some places like the country that Rahel came from, various kinds of despair competed for primacy….” (19). Such a list of failed marriages among people of different cultures depict “that marriage as an institution falls from its old grace which ultimately shows how the old culture gives place to new” (Surendran 184).

The twins in *The God of Small Things* are the products of cross-cultural marriage and as a result, multicultural qualities can be perceived in their behaviour. They talk English more than their mother tongue Malayalam, sing English songs, watch English movies, learn Shakespeare and play Brutus, in addition to singing their country’s folk songs. The references to high heels, puff sleeves, lipstick and other modern comforts in the houses of the Foreign Returnees also speak at length about their pluralistic cultures. Still, they have the inherent liking for their culture and tradition which brings them together after years to the Ayemenam temple
to watch the *Kathakali* show. This makes K.N.M. Pillai to exclaim ‘‘Oho!’ he said in his piping voice. ‘You are here! So still you are interested in your Indian culture? Goodgood. Very good’” (GST 237).

The Western education drives the twins to call their uncle by his name Chacko which does not go in tune with the Indian culture, which considers addressing the elders by name is a means of showing disrespect. Chacko himself is an anglophile who adores anything and everything English. He also carries in himself the influence of his culture. Though he professes himself to be a product of Oxford, who quotes long English verses now and then, wears a traditional Kerala dress called *mundu*. The description of the dress that Chacko wears at his wedding bears testimony to his hybridity. “He was dressed like Nehru. He wore a white chudidar and a black shervani …. On his feet he wore polished black Oxford” (240). He meekly accepts the coloniser’s superiority and it is his admiration for the white people that prompts him to propose to an English girl and marries her. Even when she confesses her love for another man Joe and demands divorce, he does not get angry, instead marvels at her courage and candidness. The servant Kochu Maria too displays a hybrid existence. She wears the traditional “spotless half-sleeved white chatta and a V-neck and her white Mundu, which folded into a crisp cloth was Hulk Hogan addict” (170).
The food habits of the Indians also proclaim the hybrid state of existence. Roy describes in detail the food displayed at the Cochin railway station. On one side, there are typical South Indian food items like fresh coconuts, *parrippu vadas* on banana leaves and on the other side there are Western drinks like Coca cola, Fanta, and rose milk. The perfect multicultural social set up of India is brilliantly portrayed by Roy in describing the Cochin Airport. It is the best part of India that speaks at length about the achievement and failures that globalization has ushered in its course. The hybridity of Indian life as seen in the airport is communicated by the young author thus: “there were, the Foreign Returnees, in Wash’ n’ Wear suits and rainbow sunglasses. With an end to grinding poverty in their Aristocrat suitcases. With cement roofs for their thatched houses, and geysers for their parents’ bathrooms. …. With keys to count and cupboards to lock” (140). Though their attire and habits proclaim Western influence, in the heart of heart these non-residential Indians long for their country and its culture, food and relatives. Roy avers that they return with a “hunger for *Kappa* and *meen vevichathu* that they hadn’t eaten for so long” (140).

Roy’s only novel itself proclaims herself to be a product of multiculturalism. She is from South India and her story is woven around this cultural milieu. However, the imagery she indulges in explaining her idea is often Western. While describing the ants going one by one across
the windowsill she says that a “column of shining black ants walked across a window sill, their bottoms tilted upwards, like a line of mincing chorus girls in a Busby Berkeley musical” (155). Further, Roy writes to Rahel, that Ammu in her death “looked like a Roman Senator” (162). She says on seeing Rahel, Velutha “curtsied as he had been taught to, his mundu spread like a skirt, like the English dairymaid in The King’s breakfast” (175) and in order to enter his house he has to bend a little and in doing this he looks like “A tropical Eskimo” (212).

India being a multireligious country, where each religion has its own cultural practices which vary greatly from one another. They differ in their dress, food habits, behavioural patterns and so on. Roy explicates this aspect of her country’s culture to her international readers and thus helps them understand the Indian background, especially that of Kerala, the southern state of India. The dress of the Syrian Christian is suggested through the description of Kochu Maria and a Hindu’s way of dressing through Kalyani, wife of K.N.M.Pillai. Kochu Maria wears Chatta and Mundu whereas Hindu ladies wear saris. They put red bindis on their foreheads and apply kohl in their eyes.

Roy has shown through The God of Small Things that exposure to foreign culture results in the emulation of it. Indians are commonly portrayed to be influenced by the Western culture. She also has shown the possibility of the Whites getting influenced by the cultural practices of
India. Kari Saipu is one such man who is overwhelmed with the beauty of Kerala, the so called God’s own country and settles here. He is an example of one Englishman “‘gone native’. Who spoke Malayalam and wore *mundus*. Ayemenem’s own Kurtz. Ayemenem his private Heart of Darkness” (52). Another is the Irish priest father Mulligan. He visits India to study Hindu religion and its culture to attack it and to prove the superiority of his culture and belief. Finally he is carried away by the Indian scriptures and “became a Vaishnava. A devotee of lord Vishnu” (297).

Similar to Roy, Hariharan also possesses a multicultural brought up. She herself comments in an interview that “I am a Tamilian from Kerala, which already makes me a hybrid…” (Navarro and Tejero 208). She further exemplifies that “because of my own life and so many of our lives have been in this sense kind of hybrid life, completely heterogeneous life, where we have lived in different places while we have had certain worlds we know intimately, certain sensibilities, it is a cultural baggage we carry everywhere” (209).

Hariharan’s protagonist Devi of *The Thousand Faces of Night* too displays this hybridity. She is a traditional South Indian Brahmin who has grown up listening to her grandmother’s stories from Indian epics. However, her sojourn in America turns her into a hybrid creature. She has an American boyfriend Dan and his culture has a great impact on her. She
learns to drink wine and smoke cigars. Devi, a woman from a highly orthodox Brahmin family smokes the very strong ‘Hash’ as a part of her Western experience and as Hariharan rightly opines that “this was something to complete her American experience” (TFN 8). However, when Dan proposes to Devi, she denies as “Devi has found that she is unable to belong to the Black sub-culture from which Dan comes, in India she finds herself equally at sea in a culture which is supposedly her own” (Paranjape 19).

Though *The Thousand Faces of Night* is woven around traditional Brahmin households, Hariharan suggests that it is a pluralistic society in which her characters survive and hence, they have different behavioural patterns. Even the people living in the same locale exhibit diverse eating and dress patterns. Devi and her family are vegetarians and they consider it a sin to eat meat whereas Gouri, their servant has the ethnic practice of killing animals and offering them to the goddess.

Hariharan’s second literary creation *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* also reaffirms the hybrid state of her country. It is the result of its pluralistic background that enables one living in the remote village in Tamil Nadu called Elipettai to learn English poems written by an English poet Wordsworth. The protagonist Vasu Master is also a hybrid creature who loves Western literature and often quotes from Shakespeare. Yet, he “wore a white narrow bordered veshti, impeccably starched” (GVM 5). His father
an Ayurvedic doctor also displays traits of dual cultural practice. He believes only in the traditional medical practice of his country called Ayurveda, an ardent practitioner of it and condemns those who believe in allopathy. Hariharan goes wordy in praising Ayurveda, the part of Indian tradition which is “the science of life; not merely science of health” (22) quite unlike the English medicines which cures diseases but have strong side effects. Yet, he quotes from Western classics like Shakespeare to drive home his point: he asks Vasu Master, “Wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?” (12). He praises Shakespeare saying “O, most surely humanity was Shakespeare’s peculiar mission!” (20). The author’s love for Shakespeare also gets revealed. She says that his works “allowed more room for interpretation” (20).

Cultural diversity of India is marvellously conjured up by Hariharan in writing how the uneducated grandmother of the protagonist speaks English words. Nuisance is one such word which she uses often and uses “it more effectively – invest it with more nuances of feeling, and meaning-than any English-speaking persons” (48). She makes “Vasu Master’s name bilingual, a hybrid omen of things to come. Nuisance – saniyan” (48). His father also talks in English prolifically at home. He uses it in “the best way to send his mother scurrying out of the room”. He would declaim: “Beware of entrance to a quarrel; but being in, bear’t that the opposed may beware of thee” (49). Hariharan informs that even in a small town in India there are
two cinema halls that screened English films and many Indians like Vasu Master take their family to view English movies like Henry VIII. The students of Vasu Master are also taken to watch Shakespeare’s plays and they are taught or rather guided by the words of one of their colonizers, William Cobbett’s Advice to Young Men.

The great orator Guru Khote of In Times of Siege, while talking on a typical Indian issue quotes from a foreign writer which states the hybridity of the public. He says, “As Swift said, we have just enough religion to make us hate each other…” (TS 133). A procession and a meeting conducted in India having references to international issues also state the uniformity of the incidents happening all over the globe and show the multicultural background of India where people shout slogans that have global references: “Stop Talibanization of India” and “Clinton, Go Home! Don’t drop your balls on us” (145).

Shahabad, the main locale of the novel When Dreams Travel is presented by Hariharan as a kingdom that had “Persians, Kurds, Romans, Armenians, Ethiopians, Sudanese, Berbers, Hindus” (DT 90-91). The song that the one-eyed woman sang can also be cited as an example of the global hybridity. She sings “of the eternal marriage between east and west” (144).

The religious hybridity of India is suggested in yet another novel of Hariharan titled In Times of Siege. This hybrid culture becomes instrumental in the existence of the power-play in the Indian society where
one group tries to gain power over others and it is an ever changing phenomenon. As a result, one religious or cultural group which dominates a period of time is thrown to the periphery and the one from the margin regains the centre. Hariharan subtly suggests this universal trend saying, “Today, apart from Muslims, even Christians or Sikhs are in a majority” (TS 19). Desai too paints a multi-religious milieu in her novel The Inheritance of Loss. She splendidly brings before her readers the multicultural Indian society through a description of the Piphit town: “…on the streets thronged all manner of people: Hindu, Christian, Jain, Muslim, clerks, army boys, tribal women” (IL 57).

Desai belongs to the group of Indian writers who “feeling alienated from the national culture, try to present a picture of India which still suffers from the colonial hangover” (Chakravarty 98-99). She presents multiculturalism as another “characteristic feature of Indian society. Jemu, Sai, Biju, Cook, Lola, Noni, Booty, Potty, Gyan, Mr. and Mrs. Mistry belong to different cultural backgrounds. Desai herself inherited multiculturalism from her parents and grandparents” (K.Singh 97). Her grandfather was a refugee from Bangladesh and her paternal grandfather came from Gujarat. He was educated in England. Although Desai lives in New York, she returns to her home country every year. “She maintains convivial attitude to all cultures and mildly exposes the vanity and hypocrisy imbibed in them” (K.Singh 97). Being a hybrid creature herself,
Desai’s characters also display multiculturalism. The locale Kalimpong is also filled with people termed as Anglophiles who lived “with gymkhanas, libraries stocked with Agatha Christies and Trollop es: pampered pets, BBC, Marks and Spence underwear, Christmas pudding and chocolates…” (Thekkayyam 169). The judge Jemubhai is the best example of an anglophile just like Roy’s Pappachi. He is from a remote village in India called Piphit. However, he manages to reach Cambridge. While he sails towards the West, the objects that he carried with him portrayed the hybridity of his life. His traditional Indian parents compelled him to carry a decorated coconut and it also had the New Oxford English Dictionary. The heterogeneous interest is seen in his friend too who hails from Calcutta, and his hobby is “composing Latin Sonnets in Catullan hande casyllables” (IL 37). Though Jemubhai lives in India, he sticks on to the habits of an Englishman as he considers the English culture to be a high culture respected all over the globe. Such an attitude compels him to hate anything native, even the food and the way it is served. He finds fault with the Indian cook, because never “ever was the tea served the way it should be, but he demanded at least a cake or scones, macroons or cheese straws” (3). The irony is, though he wants English food, served in the English way, he wants them to be prepared in an Indian way - to “make it over wood” (3). His admiration for the English started when he went to England to pursue his studies at Cambridge and there on he tried to imitate their life style.
After his sojourn over there, his cabinet contains “bottles of grand Mariner, amontillado sherry, and Talisker” (7).

Sai Mistry is another hybrid creation of Desai. She is the daughter of a Zoroastrian father and a Hindu mother. She has never lived outside India, but only speaks English, knows only ‘the English way’ to make tea, can’t eat with her fingers; her convent education has been a disorienting mix of ‘Lochinvar’ and Tagore… highland fling in tartan and Punjabi harvest dance in dhotis, national anthem in Bengali and an impenetrable Latin motto emblazoned on banderolles across their blazor pockets. (Hamilton 25)

Being the educated couple, the parents of Sai like any other Indian, dream to fly to the first world country to add to their heterogeneity. Desai observes that

They considered themselves lucky to have found each other, each one empty with the same loneliness, each one fascinating as a foreigner to the other, but both educated with an eye to the west and so they could sing along quite tunefully… they felt free and brave, part of a modern nation in a modern world. (IL 26)

Their daughter though an Indian, is brought up in a western way and she longs to visit the “chocolate Amazon … a transparent butterfly snail in the
sea, ... old Japanese house slumbering in the snow.... She found they affected her so much ... the feeling they created was so exquisite, the desire so painful” (69). It makes her unfortunate and misfit to survive in a village like Kalimpong after the death of her parents. How she suffered is beautifully conveyed by Desai thus: “She had no idea how to properly make tea this way, the Indian way. She only knew the English way” (6). She has been called by the Mon Ami sisters as “an orphan child of India’s failing romance with the Soviet” (42). Desai pronounces convent education as one of the reasons for her hybridity. Sai’s romance with Gyan, the mathematics tutor fails just because of her hybridity.

Kalimpong in Kanchenjunga in North India is shown by Desai as a place where people of different races and classes exist together and it gives an instant of India’s pluralistic background. One could see there “Nepali ladies with golden nose rings dangling and Tibetan women with braids... Lepcha medicine men” (83) and so on. One also witnesses people coming from Bhutan, Sikkim, Bangladesh, and Nepal visiting Calcutta. The house Cho Oyu, the main locale of the novel itself is the best place to evince the multiculturalism of India. As Hamilton has rightly observed, “Cho Oyu is a tragi-comic metaphor for the seedy remains of British imperial culture in India” (25). The judge dresses and behaves like an anglophile, but has Indian attitude towards life and his granddaughter Sai knows only the
Western way of life, whereas their cook is a typical Indian who knows only Hindi and Hindu way of life.

Desai promulgates India as a multicultural land through her novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. Indian’s encounter with the colonial masters drives them to prefer their master’s food and dress which are very much part of anyone’s culture. The postcolonial impact on the Indian society and its resultant cultural hybridity bring in their choice for foreign food habits. An Indian has commenced to relish “Swiss rolls, queen cakes… taught to him by missionaries on the hillside, peanut butter cookies evocative of, the ladies thought, cartoon America” (IL 66). The cook though an illiterate display an affinity towards the Western way of life – “his desire was for modernity, toaster ovens, electric shavers, watches, cameras, cartoon colors” (55). Thus, “Kiran Desai beautifully sums up the attitude of the anglicized class of Indian society, educated in schools which believe that ‘cake was better than laddoos,… English was better than Hindi’” (Narayan 35). Similar is the world of Roy’s characters.

The plurality of a postcolonial India is also suggested in the language used by the common man. He combines his admiration for his English master and his inclination towards his traditional practice. It may be the reason why the cook calls his master as *masterji* – a combination of English and Hindi. Their children also call them in different languages: “Ma, … Ammi… Mummy” etc (IL 13).
Desai follows Roy and Hariharan in depicting heterogeneity as a universal phenomenon which can be evinced in the first world country like America. The male protagonist Biju works at a hotel called Baby Bristo which is a perfect example of the country’s hybrid state. Desai writes above “the restaurant was French but below in that kitchen it was Mexican and Indian. And when a Paki was hired, it was Mexican, Indian, Pakistani” (21). People who migrate to the first world countries speak English in addition to their mother tongue; however, they adhere to Western culture, thus end up as hybrid creatures. They could say “Namaste, Kusum Auntie, aayiye, baiyiye, khaiyiye!” as easily as “shit”. They “took to short hair quickly, were eager for western-style romance and happy for a traditional ceremony with lots of jewelry…” (50). Desai also speaks though briefly about the Indian’s unmatched virtue of unity in diversity. Biju supplies food to the Indian students in America and they express their thanks to Biju using a lot of words so that he can understand their happiness in meeting an Indian.

Hybridity seen in the citizens may result in the clash of culture. Roy shows how the hybrid state of the postcolonial Indian society invites certain ambiguity and encounters clashes when come to face with people of pure Indian culture. It is illustrated through the bitter experience that Estha undergoes in the Abilash Talkies. There the Orange drink Lemon drink man is surprised to see Estha singing English songs and talking about
pocket-money. He is intimidated with these foreign words and so wants to humble him in order to hide his anxiety and shame. He finds it difficult to pronounce the word pocket money. He asks, “Porke t munny?” and continues “First English songs and now Porket munny! Where do you live? On the moon?” (GST 102). The cultural divergence is once again suggested by Roy very subtly. Rahel who sees Velutha in the Communist March in Cochin, enquires this to him for which Velutha only smiles. It makes her say “‘smiling means, It was you’ for which Velutha replies ‘That’s only in English!....’ In Malayalam my teachers always said, ‘Smiling means it wasn’t me’” (178). Roy also records the clash that occurs due to cross-cultural weddings. Chacko’s marriage is a failure as “he is the representative of eastern culture whereas Margaret of western culture with her liberalism. Ammu and Baba’s marriage also fails. The clashes between Christian culture and Bengali Hindu culture create problems. Rahel’s marriage to a foreigner also fails” (Chandorkar 187).

Hybridity is a state that can be discerned in every part of the world as a result of globalization. Hariharan portrays it through the sketch she paints of America where the White and the Black co-exist and shows how they engage in different cultural practices where clashes are common occurrence. It is in this group Devi an Indian too joins. Hariharan faithfully records that in a hybrid society, it is quite common to witness cultural clashes. Hariharan beautifully insinuates that what is beautiful and
much admired by the Indians is viewed with contempt by the Americans. Devi, Hariharan’s protagonist presents Dan’s American friends with a wall hanging of Lord Krishna who “looked blue baby-faced man on cloth, bare chested and crowned with a peacock feather, as he played flute” (TFN 5). Any Indian would have received the gift with gratitude, whereas the Black friends could not enjoy its beauty for they feel that the Indians “couldn’t bear to have a black god, so they made him blue” (5). There is contempt in their voices and this makes Devi feel that “she had brought the wrong gift” (5). This is an apt example to prove how clashes are very common in a multicultural society. Devi’s sojourn in America has enabled her to see the difference in the cultural patterns of the different countries. In America, the girls of Devi’s age shared everything with their mother. “They chatted about boyfriends, they quarreled, they kissed… and said casually ‘I love you Mom’” (13), which embarrasses Devi. She has not touched her mother and never has talked about love.

The clash of cultures creates conflicts in a person who encounters plural cultures and the idea has been commendably highlighted by Hariharan. Though the American educated Devi clad herself in a six yard of silk sari as a typical South Indian Brahmin girl, she longs for the shirt and swim suit that her boyfriend Dan has sent to her. She clings at them and “burry” her nose in it, as if trying to “smell out a clue, some connection which would link these two obstinately disparate chapters of
my life” (20-21). She struggles between the two cultures unable to decide which one to adhere to.

Desai also falls in line with Roy and Hariharan and has expressed that living in a pluralistic country often invites clashes and creates bafflement. The clash occurs in the love between Sai and Gyan due to cultural difference and it forms the reason for the loss of love. He betrays her just because she is a girl of hybrid culture. Gyan feels uncomfortable even to sit with her and eat together. Thus, the cultural disparity finally rings the knell bell of their love. He hates the people who possess Western style of life. Hence, he questions Sai, “Don’t you have any pride? Trying to be so westernized they don’t want you!!!! Go there and see if they will welcome you with open arms. You will be trying to clean their toilets; even then they won’t want you” (174). “As an ethnic Nepalee in India Gyan is frustrated and he breaks the love affair with Sai owing to her hybrid culture” (Shameem 53).

However, Desai strives to focus on the affinity that could be possible among people of hybrid culture. She proves this through the relationship between the cook and Sai who could love each other despite the fact that “she was an English-speaker and he was a Hindi speaker” (IL 19). Hence, it can be said without any least scope of doubt that “Hybridity is definitely a very important subject in Kiran Desai’s The Inheritance of
Loss, the term signifying a key concept of cultural diversity” (Shameem 53).

Modern man shows a little hesitation to move from his motherland. His hybrid cultural brought up facilitates him not to put down roots anywhere. The culture and tradition of one get more value when one crosses the border. The patriotic feeling in him compels him to glorify everything about his country and at times, this love drives him to exaggerate the truth and gets delight in his country. Hariharan registers such an attitude of the Indians in her narrative In Times of Siege. Tara, Shiv’s daughter informs him that some Indians in America have explained to her about the problem Shiv has created by discussing a controversial issue on the twelfth century poet Basava who has been assigned godly status by the Indians. She reflects the typical attitudes of the Indians settled abroad. They are so devoted to their cultural heritage after immigrating to other countries that they cannot tolerate when their belief is questioned, though relevantly. Tara becomes the spokeswoman of the immigrants and rebukes Shiv by questioning him, “Why you have written something against our temples and priests and all that. It’s only after coming to the US that many of us have learnt to appreciate Indian traditions” (TS 112).

Diasporic literature also brings to light the cultural deterioration or plural culturalism which might spring up in an alien land. It happens in all walks of life including dress, food, customs and rituals. This condition may
result in cultural clash. They try to renounce their originality and try to imitate the majority. Desai uncloaks how Indians settled in America try to speak English like an American and she articulates that they use very “Indian – trying to be – American accent” (137). However, Desai presents that there are men like Saeed, a man from Zanzibar who is rooted in his culture. Biju, the male protagonist also resembles him. He refuses to work at restaurants which cooked beef. Once when he refuses the job, he overhears its owner remarking, “They worship the cow” (137), but instead of feeling proud Biju “felt tribal and astonishing” (137). Such an attitude can be explained as a result of the diasporic experience which brings in a clash within himself due to the cultural diversity to which people like Biju are exposed to. The consequence of the cultural disparity and diversity is commendably communicated by Desai. She observes “the Indian students coming with American friends, one accent one side of the mouth, another the other side, muddling it up, wobbling then, downgrading sometimes all the way to Hindu to show one another…. And the romances – the Indian – white combination, in particular was a special problem” (148).

The new cultural pattern of the immigrants is marvellously narrated by Desai. Most often, hybridity results in the domination of one culture over another and as a result, it makes clashes within the immigrant family between the traditional parents and modern children. As Homi Bhabha asserts “Hybridity expresses a state of “in betweenness” as in a person who
stands between two cultures” (qtd. in Habib 750). Desai too believes in the words of Bhabha and it is seen in the delineation of the American settled Indian Harish Harry. He is an Indian at heart, but his daughter who is brought up in America becomes an American in both appearance and behaviour. When the father reprimands her daughter like a traditional Indian father, a clash of culture occurs and the girl’s true American self emerges out. She says defiantly, “I didn’t ask to be born. You had me for your own selfish reasons, wanted a servant, didn’t you? But in this country, Dad, nobody’s going to wipe your ass for free” (IL 169). The American way of using words upsets the poor Indian father. He thinks, “Not even bottom! Wipe your ass! Dad! Not even Papaji. No wipe your bottom, Pappaji. Dad and ass” (149).

Desai avers that change in behaviour comes not only to the daughter but to Harrish Harri’s wife herself. The author discerns that “she had left India a meek bride, scrolled and spattered with henna, so much gold in her sari she set off every metal detector in the airport - and now here she was - white pantsuit, bobbed hair, vanity case, and capable of doing Macarena” (150). It also shows that “diasporas have often been viewed as problematic, the diasporic community experiences the pangs of oppression, dispossession and displacement from their motherland” (Shameem 51). They feel alienated and as they stand apart culturally from the majority, it
makes them impossible to cope with that culture and so they become easily vulnerable. However, it is a modern necessity.

Thus, a scrutiny of the literature of the three eminent women writers promulgate the highly essential truth that “man and culture are intimately linked like the umbilical cord” (Pinto 124). Their fictional writings also demonstrate the fact that India’s “past was the colonial yoke but the future will be multiculturalism and multi-ethnic society” (Solanki 70). Through The God of Small Things, Roy seems to assert that India’s rich cultural heritage resides in villages like Ayemenam and it is the duty of an Indian citizen to uphold the Indian culture and strive for its progress. Hariharan too highlights the traditional richness of Indian culture and how they have undergone transition and transformation in course of time and due to the colonial impact. She admits that one cannot escape from the influence of other cultures, at the same time suggests through her novels that one should have strong roots in one’s own country. She also stresses the importance and need for acknowledging and appreciating one’s culture as it alone can equip one to respect and live in harmony with other cultural forces. Similarly, Desai’s writing shows the impact of colonial rule in India and she asserts that it has done an irretrievable damage to the Indian citizens. As a result, they inherit a series of loses. Thus, the careful perusal of these writers and their works bring out the essential truth that literature is a part
of culture and it is a meeting place. One must care from where people come
from and their patterns of life in order to respect and relish their literature
or any creative art. This justifies the study and the need to review literature
on its cultural basis.