Chapter II

Traditional Indian Women

Indian English novelists, both in the pre-independent and post-independent scenario, have been portraying women either with the traditional backing or modern women with their much belief on tradition. “Tradition” is described as, the customs or beliefs or behaviours which has been passed from one generation to another generation. The same custom has been followed in the past and continues to exist in the present with same values. Women, who have followed the traditional values, come in this category. They follow the thoughts blindly without questioning the values or customs behind it. On the other hand, modern women have been encouraged in re-examining every aspect in the way of life. They have empowered to create, improve the mental ability, and reshape the surrounding with theoretical and practical knowledge.

There are two categories of women seen in all the novels and short stories of Githa Hariharan. The first category of women sacrifices, cries behind the doors, at last they lose everything in their life. The second category of women could manage both family, society and dare to face obstacles in their life. They have started asking explanation of each and every value, if it is scientific based, good and related to human values, they accept. These women are not ready to follow anything blindly.

This chapter highlights both the women belonging to the traditional and modern background from Hariharan’s novels and short stories. Traditional women are forced to do every activity with sacrifice, without knowing why they sacrifice, when they demand for their rights they become alien. But, as modern women, they have taken their freedom and tried to prove their identity and also succeeded in their life.
This chapter, “Traditional Indian Women” depicts the traditional women and the values which have to be followed by them through the way as instructed and framed by the elders. But the modern women reshape, encourage without disappointing anyone. They satisfy their desires and give importance to others. They know the art of living in the present century. The novels of Hariharan have dragged the historical incidents, sastras, puranas which have forced to thrust woman as an inferior subject. The characters and the stories are conveyed to the readers through the tales of grandmother. The novelist has particularly spotlighted the inner feelings of woman’s emotions (love, hurt, hate, anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise) which cannot be shared with anyone in their family including their closed ones. The silent woman has not had a drastic change in her life immediately. Later, she has reached her position slowly as a master and becomes the best companion of man as an advisor, a storyteller, a stepping-stone of their success.

In India, women from the rural and the sub-urban and even in urban have not been given their entire sovereignty in their society. It raises a million dollar questions in the present century. Some of the women have succeeded in their family, career and over the world. There are some women being exploited, suppressed, and marginalized for fulfillment of their lives. They have not only been honoured but also treated as slaves. They are forced to sacrifice themselves and their entire desires only for the development of their family, their husbands and their children. This concept has not been followed not only in India, but throughout the world. Ernestine has stated in the book *History of Women Suffrage* (1881) that,

> Humanity recognizes no sex; Life and death, pleasure and pain, happiness and misery recognize no sex. Like man, woman comes involuntarily into existence; like him, the possesses physical and
mental and moral powers […] Like man she has to pay the penalty for disobeying nature’s laws, and far greater penalties she has to suffer from ignorance […] like man also she enjoys and suffers with her country. Like man, woman comes involuntarily into existence; like him, she possesses physical and mental and moral powers […] Yet she is not recognized as his equal.(1)

The same position of degrading woman has been maintained from the period of Manu till now. In this period, the theory for woman has been designed by Manusmriti or Manu, in his most commanding work named Manava Dharmasastra which has represented the Hindu life and culture. According to Manusmriti, Pita rakshati komaryae, bharta rakshati youvane Rakshatiu sthavire putra, na stree swatantramaharti. (9/3) (In childhood a woman should be under her father’s control, in youth under her husband’s and when her husband is dead, under her son’s, she should not have independence). Right from the ancient days the position of woman in India has never been highlighted. The myth of her is considered as a “Goddess” and “Shakti” incarnated. She may possibly be the epithet of “Power” or “Shakti” but the power is being prohibited. As a result, woman almost loses her power and individuality. She has totally subsisted herself to be protected by the men folk is already mentioned in Manu’s statement. These thoughts have persevered with a slight passion of women of this period and have caused colossal impact to the status of women.

During the post independence time, women were projected as a symbol of the divine. On the other hand, they were also treated as inferior beings, having no freedom or even worse as seductress like Mohini. The women were made to think that, their ultimate aim in life was to get married. Later the status of the Hindu women had been improved
through recent movements such as Arya Samaj and the Brahmo Samaj which had fought against the greatest injustices against women like *sati* and encouraged widow remarriage.

But, during the Vedic Indian period, Indian women had enjoyed the pride. Scholars like Gargi, Maithreyi, and Lopomudra walked equally with men. Even Sita, Savitri, Shakuntala, Dhamayanthi, and Draupadi, who had made their appearance at a later period in the history were not said to be passive, submissive, docile, and servile. Sita in *The Ramayana* has resisted the demoniac aggressiveness of Ravana. Shakuntala in *The Mahabharata* has proved the strength of her nerves by meeting Dhusyanta’s challenge. Draupadi has displayed the female ferocity by washing her hair in the blood of Dushasana who has attempted to disrobe her in the court of Kauravas. It is rightly said in the Indian context that, *Yatra Naryastu, pujyante Ramanti Taka Devataha*. (The gods have resided in the place where woman is worshipped, a woman is being considered indispensable to man’s life.) It is also mentioned, that the images of woman as a classical Hindu wife must be performed as said by the famous saint Adi Sankaracharya, *sloka*, *Grihini, Sachivah, Sakhi, Mithah Priya – Shishyalalite*. (She has to be an adviser in his work, a slave in service to him, a partner in noble needs, as earth in tolerance, a mother in affection, a harlot in bed, and a friend in enjoyment.) In Sanskrit it is quoted as *Karyeshu Mantri, Karaneshu Daasi Rupecha Lakshmi, Kshamayaa dharitri, Bhofyeshu mata, Shayenti Ramya Shat Karma Yukta, Kula Dharma Patni*. (351) [A woman should serve her husband as minister while counseling, by her looks she should be as Goddess Lakshmi, like earth in forbearance, as a mother like feeding and in bed, she must be like the celestial beauty.]

It has been proved that women were described as a symbol of divine. In those days they were well protected. They never claimed the fullest freedom which should also be given to them. They thought what they were given, were an unimaginable position in
all the fields. They had also not realized the problems such as rape, dowry, violence against woman, child abuse, and female infanticide would come into force later. These issues have dominated in the society, made women to search for themselves for survival.

Later the position of women has changed; the problems of them have been discussed in public. The sufferings that they have gone through inside their home have become an issue. They protested against their ill treatment. Gradually, the Indian women writers have focused on various serious problems. Their writings have dealt with various social issues related to women. Their writings range from female infanticide to lesbian life style through a wide spectrum of issues like dowry, rape, violence against women, child abuse, etc.

The present Indian women writers have portrayed and compared their female characters with the legends and with histories. All writings by women are not deliberated necessarily from an emancipator or a feminist position, if they work through female heroes. In order to see the difference between feminist and non-feminist writing by women, and between western and Indian constructs, it may be useful to work by examining some critical positions. First consideration is the Freudian impact on western writing either as something to be internalized or to be contested. According to him, woman is considered as an incomplete man, as someone suffers from lack of confidence is totally unworkable in an Indian situation, where the status of a mother and the value attached to it undermines that psychological approach. In Indian society, a heightened sense of female morality is cultivated through cultural myths, social structures, religious and caste factors. Women are seen as a supplementary to male existence and her status is governed by men. Hariharan has concentrated on social issues and this has been proved in all her novels and short stories.
Hariharan’s characters are more flexible towards the extreme sacrifices and their desires for their entire family. She has portrayed variety of women through her characters, that is, a woman can be like a mother of land, a revenging Kali, and a patient Sita. *The Thousand Faces of Night* is covered with various colours of female sufferings, their relationship with men and society, and women who battle in the Indian society. The position of women in history has also been reflected through various characters and stories of *pati* her paternal grandmother, Mayama-maid servant, Baba- her father-in-law.

In the novel *The Thousand Faces of Night*, three types of women are seen. Mayama, Sita, and Devi string in the same with the same emotions. The protagonist Devi has returned as an American modern maid faced multiple self-aversions in her life. She has moved from self-pitiable thoughts of revenge when her husband has possessed her body, and not endowed the wishes to her. Mahesh, her husband, has thought that marriage is only a necessary part of a life; a gamble has been played by everyone. Both of them have not known the value and the importance of marriage. They have not had a mutual understanding of sharing everything. Whenever she has been ill-treated by her husband, she has started wearing an imaginary mask as Kritya in her which has begun to desert others.

The selected characters from the legend and stories of Hariharan have occupied a prominent part in the conscious of her character, and also in the readers mind. This has been the proof of the life of the traditional women, who have led their life in their period. The two faces of the women have dominated in the novels of Hariharan. This has been reflected in Baba’s unread story the character called Kritya in *The Thousand Faces of Night*, which described her as a ferocious woman who has haunted and destroyed the house where the women have been insulted, she has burnt with rage, and she has spit fire. She has set the world blaze like Kali shouting in hunger. Through her character, it is
understood that each age has its *kritya*. “In the age of Kali […] each household shelters a *kritya*” (TTFN-69-70) and also she has simultaneously inspired by Amba and Durga: “I [Devi] have lived a secret life of my own; I was Devi. I rode a tiger, and cut off evil, magical, demon’s heads.” (TTFN 41) In those days they have believed that women had more will power which made them to be a *pathivirathai*. They were capable to burn those who insulted them. The oral and the traditional stories have occupied a dominant place in everyone’s life.

Baba tried to keep away Kritya’s reaction from Devi, as a lethal weapon kept away from children. However, it has been an unread Kritya that appealed her most the remorse silence. It was understood and realized that day by day the mythical stories have dominated her. As a result, she has started imagining herself as the embodiment of all the avenging deities. Even though she is being away from the resentful deities, her internal self has explored to be the mythical Devi. When she has resided alone with her father-in-law, a Sanskrit scholar, more conscious in tradition often told, and guided her about the role of a woman in a household. She has also remembered the statement of her grandmother. In her childhood her grandmother has started feeding her to get prepared for her marriage and sacrifice. After her marriage, her father-in-law has tuned her to be a docile woman. Through Baba, in *The Thousand faces of Night*, Hariharan has stated that a woman has no freedom to sacrifice. She should not have been taken any responsibilities related to the family and to serve God. Her ultimate aim is to serve her husband, that particular service to her husband alone is honoured in the heaven. Still the statement has been believed in the remote part of India. In his absence, she is continuously being heard hypnotic voice of him that:

[…] the housewife should always be joyous, adopt at domestic work, neat in her domestic wares, and restrained in expanses.
Controlled in mind, word and body, she who does not transgress her lord, attains heaven even as her lord does. (TTFN 71)

It is stated that right from the ancient past till now women have been treated as a machine to do their work given by the elders in their family. Even in the same period woman has been given equal rights as advisor, leaders, and daring woman to fight against all evil. Now the positions are given based on percentage. Women were honored by their family members because they were considered as “Devi’s” (Goddess) of their family. They were privileged only for gods delight and to earn material wealth. The words of Baba have echoed on her that:

Fathers, brothers, husbands and brother-in-law, should honour brides, if they desire welfare. Where women are honoured, there the gods delight; where they are not honoured, there all acts become fruitless women, said Baba, have always been the instruments of the saint’s initiation into bhakti. (TTFN 65)

Devi has been brought up with traditional background by her mother and the stories of grandmother. Even though, she was educated abroad, loved by Dan, she had disappointed him only for her mother. Dan has also felt and realized that she is not ready to take risk. She has been reminded of her grandmother’s story and the promise made to her mother. Sita’s identification with her daughter and her dreams of a bright future was viewed in the context of the Indian family system. As a wife, daughter-in-law, and mother, Sita has performed her duty. But in her mother’s role, on no account, she has not asked her daughter’s desire. In this case, there is a gap between Devi and herself. Like a dancing doll Devi has accepted everything what her mother said. Commenting on the psychological implications of mother-daughter identification in the novel *The Thousand Faces of Night*, Sudhir Kakar, has observed in his book, *The Inner World* that:
The special maternal affection reserved for daughters, contrary to expectations derived from social and cultural prescriptions, is partly to be explained by the fact that a mother’s unconscious identification with her daughter is normally stronger than with her son. In her daughter, the mother can re-experience herself as a cared for girl. And in Indian society [...] a daughter is considered a guest in her natal family, treated with the solicitous concern often accorded to a welcome outsider, who, all too soon, will marry and leave her mother for good. Mindful of her daughter’s developmental fate, the mother re-experiences the emotional conflicts her own separation once aroused, and this in turn tends to increase her indulgence and solitude towards her daughter. (57)

In contrast, Devi’s father-in-law has been entirely different from her mother’s father-in-law that is her grandfather. Sita, the mother of Devi a practical woman has never believed illusions and supported reality. Hariharan has portrayed Sita as a dutiful, wife, mother, and daughter-in-law. It has been focused that Sita a strong, self -willed woman, an anchor-rock never been wrong, questioned, a self – evident woman. Though she is a buoyant, she could not help herself at the time when her “self” is hurt by her father –in –law. This has been shown in the novel, The Thousand Faces of Night, on an occasion when Devi was sitting and hearing to her grandmother telling about Gandhari; she has enquired her grandmother that “Did Amma play the Veena when she was a girl? [...] I thought your mother had torn them all.” (TTFN 28) After that she has narrated the story of Gandhari, which has made and warned the child to prepare for her forfeit after her marriage. Once Gandhari has entered into her husband’s house as a bride, she has noticed that her husband is blind. “[...] he turned around; she saw the white eyes, the
pupils glozed and useless” (TTFN 28-29). With pride and anger, she has said nothing instead she has torn a piece of her thick red skirt and wrapped her eyes for the rest of her life. Iravati Karve, in her work, *Yuganta Poona*, has recreated the situation of Dhirtarashtra pleading with Gandhari to give up her posture of penance as they near the end of their lives,

You feel, Gandhari, that you have been cheated and deceived, but think for a moment; in the three generations of our family every person has been cheated and deceived. I am pleading you not merely to ask forgiveness but to persuade you to give up your tight against life. Give up your anger, not only against me, but against life itself. My injustice to you does not give you the right to do an injustice to your children, to your whole life. How can one wrong compensate another, Gandhari? Gandhari eventually relents only to guide him to the engulfing flames in yet form of self-sacrifice and penance. (35)

The same incident is also echoed in Sita’s life. She played veena every day, after she had finished all her household duties. One day when she was playing veena, she had not heard the words of her father-in-law. With fury her father-in-law shouted at her and said “Are you a wife or a daughter-in-law?” (TTFN 30) Afterwards, the passionate, rendering music has not been heard again. As a woman, a daughter-in-law without her husband was never allowed to go anywhere else. Their only recreation that satisfied them was the art what they have learnt in their life. According to Sudhir Kakar, in his book, *The Inner World*, the arrival of a new member in a family invariably has given rise to the apprehension of the loss of a family member to the new comer.
Unflinchingly and without complaint, the new daughter-in-law is refigured to perform some of the heaviest household chores, which may mean getting up well before dawn and working till late at night. Any mistakes or omissions on her part are liable to incur sarcastic references to her abilities, her looks, or her upbringing in her mother’s home. For it must be noted once again that the new bride constituted a very real threat to the unity of the extended family. She represents a potentially pernicious influence which, given family priorities, calls for drastic measures of exorcism. (59)

Devi and Sita’s father-in-laws are entirely viewed different in nature. Sita has given importance to the welfare of her family and shattered her individual needs of dreams and desires. Her husband Mahadevan thought that she, “a woman who knows how to make sacrifices without fanfare. Sita was such a woman, he thought and she had earned his unanswering loyalty” (TTFN 103). Because of her, he has earned success in his job by getting promotion after promotion. She has suppressed all her dreams for the welfare of her family. This has also been criticized by the antagonist that a perfect woman should control all her senses, must know to forfeit her desires, and to sacrifice with silence, and also should gain the constancy of her husband and his family. She is one such woman, has never voiced her feminine urges, feelings, and sensibilities. The classical ideals of Hindu womanhood are severely imposed on women. They are still constrained to adopt a life of self-effacement, tolerance, self-sacrifice, submission, and stoicism. She has submitted herself completely under the control of her father, husband, and son. After some period, Mahadevan has realized his wife’s sacrifice by eating the food she did not like.
The married women in India are confined to “the triple role” as daughter-in-law, wife, and mother. Yet, another form of gender discrimination is also practiced in the eating customs of Indian families. Even, now a day, in the traditional Hindu families, women are supposed to take their meals after their husband’s; elders and children have finished eating. Such a habit, and of sacrifice is inculcated in women since childhood as a part of duties of women. After sometime, a woman has required eating her husband left over, which is deemed a great Prasad.

In this novel *The Thousand Faces of Night*, Mahesh’s father has always talked about the stereotyped women. “The path of a woman must walk to reach heaven is a clear, well lit one. The women have no independent sacrifice to perform, no vow, no fasting; by serving her husband, she is honoured on heaven.” (TTFN 55) But for a man there is no such stereotypical method has been followed. It is being said that a man has to be like “The Lord Rama,” but no one can be found like him, the same gender may be criticized that they never suspect their partners but merely words.

It has been followed as tradition that a wife wishes to reach Heaven as a *sumangali* to prove her divinity. Still it has been believed in the society that if any widow has come in front of anyone, they consider it as a bad omen. She has also given a graphic picture of a virtuous woman thus “A virtuous wife is so devoted to her husband that she dies before him, a *sumangali*, her forehead unwidowed and whole with vermilion, her arms, and neck still ornamented with bangles and gold chains” (TTFN 66-67).

Another character which is inspired in this novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* named Amba. She, a tender woman, has been transformed into a vibrant avenger. Devi’s inner urge has been enthused by her grandmother stories, when she has emaciated the incident that has taken place in the life of her cousin, Uma. As she was a child she could not understand the trauma happened in cousin’s life. Even when her grandmother might
have compared and encouraged talking about Amba, she could not understand. Amba, the eldest one, of Ambika and Ambalika has chosen Salwa as her husband and garlands him. But unexpectedly Bheeshma has kidnapped all the princesses and took them to his stepmother. Later, Bheeshma has come to know that Amba is already married to Salwa, again when she has returned to Salwa; he has insulted her and said that:

Do you think I feast on leftovers? I am a king I do not touch what another man has won in Battle. Go to Bheeshma. He won you when his arrow struck my eager hand on your luckiness. He is your husband. What have you to do with me? (TTFN37)

Then Amba, over again has gone to Bheeshma and made a request to accept her. But Bheeshma refused her proposal as his wife. This incident has changed Amba’s attitude towards life and to take revenge on Bheeshma. Later, the innocent Amba has spent her entire life in the forest to acquire the super human energy there by to take revenge on Bheeshma. Lord Shiva has consented Amba; “He took the garland from her, gently so gently, because those fingers razed to ashes anything they touched, and promised Amba her revenge whoever wears this garland will surely kill Bheeshma” (TTFN 39). Then she threw the nagalinga pushpa around a pillar in King Drupada’s court and went to the forest.

After the death of Amba, she is reborn as “Draupada’s daughter a daughter rose as mason” (TTFN39). In the battle of Kurukshetra, she is transformed into man: “[…] with a garland of Amba round his neck, he rode the plains of Kurukshetra to taste the heady sweetness of the beloved’s blood in the battle.” (TTFN 39) The innersole of Devi has brought out the transitional woman into a new self of her, when she has stayed alone day after day in the airless room, and thinks of all the stories she has heard, the secret of the gods. She imagined and inspired by the elder woman to lead a life with patience,
tolerance, but she has failed to be a conventional woman. “Like Durga you shall be beautiful, yellow, -- faced women with ten arms and ride on a Himalayan Lion. [...] you are born to kill” (TTFN94). When a woman is being insulted, affronted, hurt, disrespected, which has shunted her identity, made her to take a new avatar with bold decision.

Devi, with the haunted spirit has decided to leave her husband’s house on Jacaranda road. The house with duty photographs of unremembered people, cockroaches, lizards and a visiting husband has no promise of life which is focused on people with meager thoughts frequently influenced and discarded the emotions of women is belonged to any period. Finally she has flown to the house with Gopal like her unseen mother-in-law Parvati amma and Baba.

The most interesting legend which Harisharan has mentioned in the novel The Thousand Faces of Night has a powerful message and also provoked the sense of the audience is about the importance of motherhood. Though Ganga is a mythical character, she has been compared with women of all the ages for her purity and chastity. Hariharan has averted, “Motherhood is more than the pretty picture you see of a tender woman bent over the baby she is feeding at her breast. A mother has to work strange and tortuous paths” (TTFN-88). While walking alone on the bank of the Ganges, king Shantanu has fallen in love with a beautiful damsel, [Ganga a person]. She promised to marry him on the understanding that he would have not interfered with her actions, whether these were agreeable to him or otherwise. Every year she has bore the king a son. “[...] she threw the new born into the swirling, open-armed waters of the Ganga” (TTFN 88). Shantanu has noticed, he could not console himself, because of her boon. When she has given birth to the eighth child, she was about to do the same. Immediately Shantanu has broken his promise and stopped Ganga, by saying “Then him,” she said, “take him and be father and
mother to him. I shall not free him from life” (TTFN 88). This story has intimated that child-sacrifice is quiet common in ancient and primitive societies. Even now, in the 21st century itself the practice is being followed in remote Indian villages. It has not been sacrificed for God, but child-sacrifice is especially for female child. At first she has never enquired her grandmother about the story later she realized, “what she would have said to be a good mother, to be a mother at all, you have to earn the title, just as you have to renew your wifely vows every day” (TTFN 89). A woman who has delayed to give birth a child is treated in her family and in the society as one who has committed sin, an ill human, and lost her identity to live in this world. A woman has always been looked down upon if she has not born children for a long time. Motherhood has provided redemptive factor for a woman in the Indian context. Sudhir Kakar has analyzed the socio-psychological implications of the situation in his book, The Inner World as,

> Whether her family is poor or wealthy, whatever her caste, class or region, whether she is fresh young bride or exhausted by many pregnancies and infancies already, an Indian woman knows that motherhood confers upon her a purpose and identity that nothing else in her culture can. Each infant borne and nurtured by her safely into childhood, especially if the child is son, is both a certification and redemption. (56)

The same psychological aspect is reflected in Mayama’s life in the novel The Thousand Faces of Night. Her mother-in-law has advised her to do penance to change the horoscope. “She prayed, made vows, dipped herself again and again in the pure coldness” (TTFN 80). After ten years the goddess has heard to her prayers and as a result her son was born on an auspicious day, but her dreams are shattered. Her son has grown as wastrel, who tortured her mother at the age of fourteen, later he fell ill suddenly and died
due to prolonged illness. Devi remembered this story when her husband has asked for a child and made arrangements for her medical treatment.

Another anecdote from the novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night*, which has shown to prove the chastity of a woman is about the girl who has married a snake: this has revealed the pigeonhole of a woman supposed to follow till her death. In Hinduism, right from the past till now snakes are being interpreted as *nagamma*, as a carpet to the Lord Vishnu, as an ornament to the Lord Shiva. Here a childless couple has prayed to god for a child and in return a snake is born to the woman. When the snake has grown up, his parents wish him to marry. The father has gone in search of bridegroom. When he has said the problem, his host has offered his own beautiful daughter. When she has seen the snake as her husband, she has accepted her fortune open heartedly. She has accepted her fortune without any dilemma and says that, “A girl is given only once in marriage” (TTFN 33). One night the snake has entered into the room and they spent that night together. Next morning the girl has noticed a handsome young man on her bed. First this has been co-related with the life of Devi’s maidservant Gauri, who gets married to a snake later. She has remembered the same story when she has started chanting the mantras in need of a child, and then she compared herself to the childless couple. Even though Devi is a modern woman educated abroad, she could not choose the pair of her own, but to accept an arranged marriage with Mahesh.

Hariharan’s another novel, *The Ghost of Vasu Master*, has focused the aversion of female child through Vasu Master’s mother. She died, when he was a small boy still it is remembered by him that his mother has got her name too late “My mother didn’t have a name for almost a year because her parents did not want to spend money on a naming ceremony for one more daughter.” (TGVM 31) Her parents were not ready to celebrate a naming ceremony for another daughter. “They could not bear the thought of people
laughing on witnessing their failure year after year.” (TGVM 31) They felt it as a shame on their part for not giving birth to a male child. Later an old servant maid, who has swept their backyard and collected the cow-dung, has comforted her by saying that the newborn girl baby has had a good fortune. She has also quoted that “life would have been easier with a little extra bit of flesh, just a few inches.” (TGVM 31) She named her as Lakshmi, “she can still be the Lakshmi of her husband’s house”. (TGVM-31) She has named by her as Lakshmi that is being matched to the goddess Lakshmi. Always she has been an obedient wife to her husband and an unpaid servant to her mother-in-law still. Vasu Master has remembered that:

Her ambitions were on a lower scale escaping her husband’s unpredictable explosions of temper, surviving her mother-in-law’s jealous rule of the household, and above all, keeping the house and everyone in it, clean, pure, and unpolluted. She had never exchanged more than six words with our neighbours on either side, but she was obsessed with them. They can here, they can hear, she was always whispering lower your voice, shut the door. Bathe and change your cloths before going out […]. (TGVM 32)

Though “Lakshmi” has been the goddess of wealth and prosperity, her role as a wife is under the control of her husband is of importance. Lakshmi has been shown as a devoted wife sitting at the feet of her husband, Vishnu.

In this context, Alfred Adler has sensed the two ways of helplessness in *Understanding Human Nature*. The first category is because of unsuitable and unfavorable treatment and environment. In his mother’s case, she was ill-treated by her parents “as she was the sixth daughter in her family” (TGVM 31). The second category has discussed organ interiority that has shown the treatment of her husband and mother-
in-law towards her, had led to the goaded sense of weakness. Again, Alder has pointed out another three responses, like, “successful compensation, defeat, and compromise” (UHN 72). Lakshmi whole-heartedly has accepted her weakness and entirely sacrificed her wishes to the entire family. She has made herself to be comfortable with the environment.

K.D. Gangrade, in his article, “Gandhi and Empowerment of Women: Miles to Go,” has stated the words of Gandhi as,

To call woman the weaker sex is liable; it is man’s injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength then indeed woman is less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power; then woman is immeasurably man’s superior. Has she not great intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not great powers of endurance, and has she not greater courage? Without her man could not be. If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with woman. (1-19)

Gandhi has described the discrimination against women as an anachronism. He stated that he has descended to see any reason for joyousness over the birth of a son and for grief over that of a daughter. He has also mentioned that both are God’s gifts. They have an equal right to live and are equally necessary to keep the world going. hariharan’s woman has no immediate restriction in the individual development, the restrictions towards their domestic life and dominating patriarchy.

On the other hand, in The Ghost of Vasu Master, Mangala, like Lakshmi, (Vasu Master’s wife) has lived together for fifteen years with two sons. Vasu has thought
Mangala as a real traditional woman. She never bothered her and her wishes. He has compared and remembered his wife to his mother’s.

She was unnoticeable, in conspicuous; like my mother, memorable only as an absence. I knew my wife and my affection for her only when I lived with her ghost this ghost had a trail, vapoury body; made more insubstantial by my lapses of memory about what she actually was. (TGVM 123)

Mangala and Lakshmi have mutually suffered in their lives. Mangala, as a traditional woman has also done her primary roles of a wife and a mother, “she went about her daily tasks as wife and mother with a delicate, feminine modesty” (TGVM 138). But, she has proved herself as a good teacher also when Vasu master taught Venu cycling; he had not learnt the art of balancing the cycle. But the night when Mangala was dead, both Venu and the cycle were missed, later they were found under a tree, but Venu was being sat under a tree and cried with his hands covered his face. Vasu has accepted that the place of a mother could not be fulfilled by anyone else; she has taught very consciously both wisdom and knowledge. Hariharan has proved this through a story that:

Once upon a time, there was a mouse who wanted to be a teacher. He went to a wise snake who lived in a hole nearby. Sir, said the mouse, how do I become a teacher? The snake looked at a gentle mouse doubtfully. Then he said, you have to first become a judge, an ideologue, a priest, and a doctor. Oh, gulped the mouse, but he was determined to do things the right way. He shed his timidly and learnt to make rules and pass judgments to their observance. He began to communicate his sense of right and wrong. He was
trained to delve into minds and hearts to free them of the dead weight appendages of their past and help them grow. After the mouse had mastered all this, the snake told him: Now comes the really difficult part you must grow a womb that nurtures, and then delivers. The mouse tottered home, busting with knowledge. Well? Asked his old mother. All set to be a teacher? One last lap, the mouse confessed sheepishly will you teach me to be a mother? (TGVM 98)

Later, Vasu Master has remembered her grandmother as a wise, strong fearless old woman, thinking her husband as guru. Hariharan in the novel *The Ghost of Vasu Master* has focused Vasu’s grandmother as a good wife, a respected woman, who was admired by him as; “the first love of my life.” He has compared her grandmother with his mother and Mangala. He has pointed out his mother as “She would have been timid, worrying little thing, ragging, pestering like a high-pitches mosquito. She did not learn how to bite though.” (TGVM-32) Even Mangala has the same characteristic nature of his mother. She is too submissive never spitted a word against Vasu. Hariharan has also introduced another woman in this novel, the grandmother of Vasu. She is not meek, docile, and submissive; she has not accepted her husband blindly. She has played the role of a wife and a mother not like the other women Lakshmi and Mangala. She has had her own identity.

The novels of Hariharan have focused the limelight of her woman to the readers, regarding women’s subordination, inferior position in the family and society. These women need to be bestowed their rightful, equal importance, independent status which could act women as an individual. They like Sita, Mayamma, Parvati, Lakshmi, Mangala and Lakshmi, have lived in a traditional outlook, an orthodox and from conservative...
family hinder to ask questions against the male dominant society, because of their inferiority complex. They have also tried to prove themselves as *Pathivirathai*. They are practically trained that a woman could not live in the society without the support of a man. Hariharan has stated “[...] a woman without a husband has no home” (TTFN 38). If she has been walked out of her husband or his home, death is the only source to her. Parvati Amma, mother-in-law to Devi has always chanted mantras, bhajans and has spent most of the time in pooja room, when her children have been sent to a residential school. In the mean time, she has made herself to be engaged in some activities to avoid loneliness. Besides, she has given shelter to the poor, deserted maidservant Mayamma. One day without letting a word to her husband she has left the home in search of the God, and has compared to Meera the lover of the Lord Krishna went in search of him. Before her departure, Parvatiamma has handed over a bunch of key and said Mayamma to take care of her children and husband. Later, she has left with a bag without uttering any words and never returned home. In her family no one has shown any interest to know about her psychological pressure which she would have faced like Devi. When Parvati’s husband heard that she left the home, his face changed queer and he said, “[...] she has made her choice. For a woman, who leaves her home in search of a god, only death is a home – coming” (TTFN 64).

These types of traditional women have sacrificed all their happiness to satisfy their husbands and children in serving them and their family. They never value their own self. They have slowly reached their identity in the society through woman’s liberation movements. They have shown a very slow progress in the revolutionary movements. They are called “Modern Women.” They have gradually attained their position in taking decision of their own. Often they have raised questions to their companion in all the
fields. These women have demanded equal position in the home as well as in the society. Lakshmi Kannan, in her article, “To Grow or not to Grow,” has opined that:

For a woman, her works are no less a process of self-actualization as her life is. In both, she wrestles with a host of obstinate paradigms and syndromes, precipitated by not just the myths, legends or the collective memory of the inherent conservative elements within a community, but equally with the ones thrown up by the movement of feminism itself (31).

Nowadays, the so called modern women have tried to break up the bond they have bounded, but they are tied to the traditional system which they are not successful to break their traditional bonds. The modern woman has been striving to be free and self-reliant but then the introversion and diffidence, the product of the year’s slavish and protected life pattern, has caused a big hurdle.

Devi, the protagonist in The Thousand Faces of Night, has come under this kind of women got her education in abroad. At the present century it has been most common that a woman has gone abroad and offered graduation over there. Women in the present scenario are very conscious even in selecting their life partner. Devi has a friend, black, Dan, who supported her in America. Their friendship has led to “[…] approach romance. Promises had been half made in the dark shadows of the parking lot outside the griny, friendly dinner they met at” (TTFN 3). In this relationship she has felt remote with the purple-headed, velvety black skin with impressive white smile of his sensual teeth; “the soft voice sometimes deliberately assuming the repetitious, sing song speech of the ironical black man flaunting his identity all these were the tantalizing images of some alien mirage, some barely remembered dream of clandestine passion” (TTFN 3).
In the beginning, Devi has felt that it was a healthy relationship with Dan. Later she has realised that it was a distorted region of illusion, but Dan has sincerely fallen in love with Devi. He recognized that she is a girl being bounded with the promises made to her mother. It has stopped her not to seize any risk in her life; and also “an experiment for a young girl eager for experience” (TTFN 6). But in reality, she has mediated the Indian woman who is aware of her “self” and her ambition and not to take any risk. So she has prepared herself to accept the swayamvara the “self-choice” arranged by her mother. Still, she has remembered the character ‘Damayanti’ told by her grandmother. The story of Nala-Dhamayanti in The Mahabharata is one of the famous legends which proved the chastity of womanhood. Nala the brave, handsome virtuous king of Nishads has also participated in the swayamvara arranged by Damayanti’s father. In the selection all the kings and the gods were dressed royally, but Damayanti was brave, quite witty thrown the garland around Nala’s neck. This story has invaded in her mind right from her childhood. The presence of Dan is still being remained in her mind without harming her. She cannot see the gift sent by Dan moreover she has not shared anything to her mother about the relationship. Usually, the Indian girls first have shared everything to their mother but here a distance is seen between the mother and the daughter relationship. Because of her mother Sita, she has accepted the arranged marriage with Magesh a regional manager in a multinational company.

Devi tried to enact the role of her mother to be a wife and daughter- in law, but she has reached the goal as her mother did. Magesh has owned her, only for her body and renounced her emotions by showering harsh words over her. Both have a communication gap in their relationship. Often he has gone for a trip outside all day. She was alone in the dark room, always she is occupied only with her grandmother’s story, with Baba and Mayamma. On the other hand, Devi has expected him to share everything with her, but
Magesh, a traditional husband, has viewed her as a homemaker, to maintain the house properly and to cook. She has been totally against his idea and she needed an equal contribution in her matrimonial partnership, not only Devi but any woman belonging to the present generation needs equal rights. The stories which Baba has told, are about an ideal Indian womanhood to comfort and console her. After her marriage, she has lost her liberty. When she asked him the reason for marrying her, he has not known the purpose, and justified that it everyone has got married. Most of the men have followed the same blindly. In reality, both of them have not understood the purpose of marriage.

Devi as a new woman has tried to know more about his partner. She has questioned Magesh about his work in order to know more about him. He has never shared anything to her. But he has spent most of his time in playing with his friends, whenever she has tried to talk something in common; she has never received any responses from her partner. She has also tried to cultivate his taste by learning “Teach me how to play rummy.” But he has replied her that they play for stakes, “I’ll borrow some money from you then,” she said. “Don’t be silly, all others are men,” he said (TTFN-78-79). For him, she is merely a wife; a licensed maidservant occupying only with the household duties, and bear his child. She has irritated, and not ready to bear a child which may have the same qualities of Magesh. In that house Devi, seemed like the brass “Devi,” has worn her token of beauty with pride, and on her ears large diamond earrings, glittering, flower shaped, a ruby ring on her finger. She has imitated the same and treated as a wooden puppet in the hands of Magesh. At that time, she has sit ideal and incarnated herself with the Goddess of destruction and ferocious Durga and Kali the Goddesses of strength. Here the image has denoted the strength of a woman.

According to Alladi Uma, woman has been given a perspective role in the society and also has to espouse herself depends on the situation. In her book, *Indian and Afro–
American- A Literary Perspective, “Goddesses; on the one hand Durga is difficult to know or to approach; on the other, as mother of the Universe, she epitomes tender love […] Kali, often thought as Evil, Death, Destroyer, Devourer, is also creator […]” (4). She in the same string another obedient and dutiful wife is seen in Hariharaṇ’s anthology of short stories titled The Art of Dying and Other Stories. In the short story “Untitled Poem” Sarala, an obedient wife, always takes care of her home and her husband. It has completely focused on Sarala, whose entire world is the home and the garden. She has spent most of her time in the garden along with the pot, the world of her. She has not even understood the rhythm as well the poem of her husband. She has never let any words against her husband. She has followed him wherever he goes. She has not revealed her wish and also she could not convey that to her husband. The role of a wife is to satisfy her husband and her children. In another story “The Reprive” a dutiful wife Mangala has taken care not only her husband, but the entire family. She is “pleasant, patient, hardworking, selfless, discreet-essentially faceless, an elusive middle-of-the-road woman, who did not attract attention for either her shortcomings or her virtue” (TADOS 42). She has managed the entire family. In another story “The Will” Sushila another submissive wife has blindly followed the words of her husband even after his death. She has started reciting the letter like mantras. She had not disobeyed the words of her life partner Raghu.

The main story entitled with the title “The Art of Dying” has engrossed the suffering of a mother, has suppressed her requirements and lived with full of emptiness. Hariharan has explained the life of a woman in the short story “The Art of Dying” thus “wifing, childbearing – has been determined by the subtle, undulating waves of progress creeping over the body. Bleed, dry up; expand with life, contract with completion. A peaceful, gentle existence; motion, not quite blunt edged change” (TADOS 64).
Hariharan has excellently worked on both the genres. She has made a successful try on focusing woman in all the grounds. She has also dragged the hidden sufferings of them, which led them both physical and psychological pressure. They have undergone throughout their life.

In Hindu Mythology, Devi is also called in the name of the Goddess Shakti; the wife of Shiva. She has both the nature compassion and revenge. She has been identified as a loyal wife known as “Parvati”, “the mountain girl”, “daughter of the Himalayan Mountain”, “Uma”, “Mother”, “Gauri”, “White Sati”, and “Virtuous”. The name Devi has denoted for the “Devi”, united both the personalities of benevolence and revenger. “Shakti” has been considered as the motivating energy of the entire world without this power even Shiva could not do any work. He has been powerless in his work. A famous aphorism has said in Tamil Literature that Shakti illaail Shivam illai (means, without Shakti, Sivam has considered incomplete). Devi, the only unique Goddess, has both qualities of kindness and cruelty. Among all the Goddess, she has an independent personality of her own. In search of happiness, she has walked out her husband’s home. “I will gather together the fragments which pass for my life, however laughably empty and insignificant and embark on my first real journey. I would like to do better than to sneak out, a common little adulteress” (TTFN 95).

In the novel, Devi has eloped with Gopal because she has impressed him, and she has thought that she will lead a happy life with him. She feels comfortable with him rather than Magesh. As a husband, he has never shared his professional plans and aspirations. However she is engaged with Gopal, since she feels alienated. He has more admirers and disciples and she is not ready to admit herself as a part of them. People around Gopal are cordial towards her but the relationship makes her sensitive and touchy. “She could feel the appraisal of a straying eye, cool and dismissive, on her face. She
knows she was being labeled […]” (TTFN133). She has felt the sense of void with Gopal and the same when she was with Magesh. These two have similar in nature as they are rude or brutal. They lack mental and emotional compatibility, which has tied them together.

The position of the women in the modern India is a kind of contradiction in terms like in one corner she is at the peak of ladder of victory and on another side she has mutely suffered the violence afflicted in the society as well as her own family members. When it is compared with the women of the past, in modern era they have achieved a lot however in reality, still, they have to travel a long way. Their path has been filled with full of hurdles. These women have been protected away from their secured realm of their home and are now in the battlefield of life, namely society.

Naidu addressed in All India women’s conference in the year 1930 in Bombay thus,

We are not weak, timid, meek women, we hold the courageous Savitri as our ideal, and we join how Sita defined those who entertained those suspicious of her ability to keep her chastity. We possess the spirit of creative energy to legislate for the moral of the world. I think this conference is writing the history of women of the world. I am not a feminist. To be a feminist is to acknowledge that one’s life has been repressed. The demand for granting preferential treatment of woman is an admission on her part of her inferiority and there has been no need for such a thing in India as the women have always been on the side of men in council and in our homes or abroad. We must transcend differences. (AIWC 1-2)
In the novel *In Times of Siege*, Shiv, the protagonist is supported by his ward and his wife. Though he has acted as a protagonist, he is completely supported by the female characters his wife and Meena the ward. In an interview with The Hindu, Hariharan says, “The point is that if a college […] a place of learning, debate, and openness of mind […] is actually taking censorship seriously, we really living in times of siege. And the siege is not just external – mob or the fundamentalist or the terrorist – but within minds”. This novel has visualized the minds of the characters like Shiv, Meena, Rekha and their behaviors towards the society.

In the novel, *In Times of Siege*, the protagonist Shiv Murthy, Meena (the childhood neighbour Sumati’s daughter) and his wife Rekha have come under assertive women. These women, belonging to the same class, can challenge all circumstances and have come out with fruitful success. Shiv has remembered the silent challenge in their eyes, at that time when he has met Meena in her hostel along with her friends. She, as an optimist has been visualized by her thoughts like crystal, on what she is being wanted from life and also has gone out to get it. She has dared to overcome all the difficult situations. She has been controlled not only by herself, but by others too. Shiv has seen Meena, “[…] the girl in her twenties, she must be allowed to make decisions. And Meena, from what Shiv has seen of her for a day, certainly seems to know her own mind (ITS 22).

Hariharan has portrayed “Meena is a sociology student; she is writing a thesis on what she calls women’s stories, stories of women affected by the anti-Sikh riots after Indira Gandhi’s assassination in 1984” (ITS 24). Though she is laid in bed with encompassed leg, her disability never reduced her power. She has always seemed powerful, “[…], except that she seems more worldly-wise sometimes that he. She talks of causes and street theatre, ‘gender’ and ‘courting arrest’ with the ease of a veteran”
Through the character Meena, Hariharan has pointed out the state of mind of a woman of the younger generation, wrought by the radical text. These are the books; Meena likes *The Politics of Hate, Onward United Action, Women’s Voices* and *The Communalist Agenda*. These books are related to social issues and raise voice against discrimination. As a feminist, she is interested in reading these books. This has been a proof of present women, interested in politics and radical thinking. Even in chaotic circumstances, she has acted as a matriarch and enlightens Shiv’s positive attitude towards life, not to give up laughter.

In an interview with Luan Gaines, Hariharan has stated that, “Meena is a representative of a particular kind of young person not the Yuppie sort, but the kind passionately engaged in the world she lives in – and waiting to change all the inequalities it breeds, tolerates, and promotes.” Meena, belonged to the political awareness generation strongly, knows “The link between fascism and the ugly faces of Hinduism unveiling themselves around us is the regimentation of thought and brutal repression of culture” (ITS 101). Meena has strongly supported Shiv by conferring leaflets posters before the public and the T.V channels at the time when he has faced a critical situation.

Similar to Meena, Rekha, [Shiv’s wife] has belonged to the same class of women who can manage all difficult circumstances throughout the novel. She has performed as a dutiful wife behind the screen of actions and even it is recognized when she has rung Shiv. It has seen through the words of Shiv, “Like Rekha, Meena names things with ferocious certainty, communalist, and fundamentalist. These women warriors seem to know exactly which cities they want to raze to the ground, which they want to raise in the place” (ITS 58).

Meena and Rekha have a balanced sense of thought. Rekha has remembered Meena when she has invited for lunch a couple of times in her home. Shiv has
recollected Meena as “[…] the girl seemed self-sufficient. She was always too busy to visit them on Sundays […]” (ITS5). Later Shiv has conveyed over the phone about Meena’s arrival to her home. Shiv and Rekha have a mutual understanding without her presence. He remembers, “Rekha sounds so unsuspecting, so innocent same how” (ITS-80). She is “calm and poised as always- is infinitely reassuring” (ITS 79). Like the modern working women, Rekha has managed both office and home. When she has left Delhi to Seattle for her daughter Tara, her presence is being remained the same in Shiv. When the problem has arisen, she is been away from him. They have conversed over the phone “Shiv suspects Rekha has not fully understood what is going on […]” (ITS 81). Even though they are mutual in understanding, there seems a communication barrier in their conversation.

The novel, *When Dreams Travel* focuses on the characters like Shahrzad and Dunyazad as the heroines, and Dilshad the slave girl who supports the two heroines of the novel. The novel has more suspense and anonymity with the combination of complexities and the dark characters. As well the obscurity of woman’s life, in the palace, has made the readers to maintain patience to fulfill their thirst. The characters have challenged for the blood thirst sword and the king, who has been killing a virgin each day. Hariharan has revealed the potentiality of the main two heroines of the novel with various incidents and stories. Each day has been treated as a challenge for Shahrzad and her sister Dunyazad.

The novel *When Dreams Travel* has opened with the subtitle “In the Embrace of Darkness,” which has described the continuous death of women in the city of Samarkand and the darkness which has closed the eyes of the two brothers, the Kings. Shahrzad has proved herself as an archetypical woman who tried to save the life of the woman and courageous to pass one thousand and one nights by saying a story. The end of the story is followed by another story. Hariharan has examined the exact position of women in the
society and in the home. Nowadays the abusement of women has been increased in the society. Woman has come out of the four walls just before a few decades, but the evils of the society have dominated her in all the paths of her endeavors. Hariharan has described the life of woman who lives in Shahabad, as “All of female seems to be represented in this hellish oasis” (WDT 171). Through these characters it has been portrayed the sufferings of woman in the patriarchal society. Hariharan has chosen the characters as sisters who are amicable in nature and very strong in their destination to make the women set free from the tyrant king.

This novel When Dreams Travel has dragged the strong issues against women in the society. In our society, most of the women are dominated by men both inside and outside their family. The stories which are described in this novel are closely related to the main characters. In the beginning, Hariharan has shown the heroine as submissive and lost her sleep for thousand and one night, to satisfy her husband by telling tales. She is clear enough to win the heart of the persecutor King, her husband. When she married Shraryar, as a wife she has not had a room of her own, later she became the queen. But she has lost her entire happiness and the dreams which she has as a woman. Hariharan has described her as,

Orphaned, Shahrzad the saviour seemed to learn to fend for herself all over again. She slowly changed, or her real, usurping nature came to the surface. Though she called it her empathy for the people’s needs, her ambitious were visible once too often for the comfort of royal advisers. The thought came to Shahryar one day that this most chaste woman, Wise Shahrzad was turning into a wily Shahrzad. (WDT 159)
The king has noticed the changes that have been made in her life, as a storyteller to a royal advisor. She has started admiring Shahrzad as a woman full of craftiness and keenness for power.

The voices of Shahrzad and Dunyazad have opinioned the novelist’s view, as a strong feminist. Hariharan has proved and framed the story that has happened in the real situation. In addition, she has given an explicit description of the male dominated society and encourages the readers to understand the real situation in the society. She has encouraged the woman to have courage and to raise questions for them and to make the rightful chances. She has also stated that the society is like a hell where women are treated as sexual objects and are discarded once the purpose has been satisfied. She has explained the position of woman in the society as mentioned in the novel, *When Dreams Travel*, “It is time for him to make his offering to his hunger god. He can feel the goat’s heart beating against chest” (WDT-174). Here it has been compared with goat that is offered as a sacrificial animal which is offered to god the Shahryar. They have treated woman as an animal which could not say anything, but simply accept whatever is given to her. She is supposed to satisfy the hunger of the demy god without having the rights to express anything. This has shown the readers to understand the real position of woman in the society and also has revealed the status of woman the way they have been treated in the nation.

Hariharan has stated clearly that the same position will not remain, as women have all the potential, they are well talented to deal the difficult situation, even at certain point they are ready to take the weapon to protect themselves. They have considered the family, so they have never taken the weapon. They have remained silent and accepted all the pain. In this novel Hariharan has expressed the real self of woman through the
character Poison – Skin from the novel, one of the stories has been told by the slave girl Dilshad. She has described Poison-Skin as,

When she woke, she heard a man stifling his sobs; it was a young goatherd, holding on to his thigh. He had been bitten by a snake [...] Poison – skin felt his sorrow merge with her own. She rolled over to him and took him wordlessly into her fleshy arms. For a day and night they loved each other [...] The snake – bitten lover did not die. He went on his way, singing praised of Poison – Skin everywhere. (WDT 212)

The King Shahryar has been portrayed as the brutal man, who killed woman everyday, those who failed to prove themselves as a virgin. Hariharan as a female and as a novelist, in this novel When Dreams Travel has framed the characters with boldness and power to win in the game. She has shifted the power from the man to woman. In the story the Poison – Snake has the skill to slay anyone she has planned to take revenge. Though she has the power she used that only to save the people, but Shahryyar has misused and killed woman in the city only for his pleasure. Here, Hariharan has pointed out the strength and the identity of woman. The character Poison-Skin has the ability to cure the man, who has bitten by the snake. She has helped the dying man at young age and also helped herself from not being murderer for the rest of her life. She is skilled in turning her curse, her poisoned skin, into something useful which has made to save herself from the cruel fate of living as a demon that kills her own lover as well to save the lives of other innocent men. This occurrence has exposed the treatment of woman in the male dominated society, though the male society ill-treats them, they have given the best to men. But men could not have given the best to the women. This can be compared with the Protagonist Shahrzad. She has sacrificed her life to protect the innocent virgins
of her country. Though she has the power to kill the king, she has not taken revenge in order to save the young virgin of the country. Instead of killing him, she has planned to cure the madness of the king. She is confident to win him with the help of the stories, her patience, fortitude, serenity as medicine. Finally she has succeeded and won the heart of the king. Later he also regrets the mistake he has committed to woman.

In the end of the novel, *When Dreams Travel*, the protagonist has warned the new women generation to be careful with all the problems faced by them in the society. She has said that “curving one into the other, a circle with no beginning or end. She says to them, this old warrior in times of peace: I fought for myself and yes for you as well” (WDT 276). The words of the Shahrzad have warned the younger women generation to be careful with their weapons to master the male dominated society. The society will never be changed. But the younger woman is supposed to sharpen the blunted sword of thoughts with the age and freshly sharpen them to face the dominated society without fear.

When the modern women have been compared with the traditional women, they have guided their husband even in their absence. Sita in *The Thousand Faces of Night*, Mangala and Lakshmi in *The Ghost of Vasu Master* have supported their mates behind them like shadows of their own. For them the desires are hidden treasures and they treat their husbands as their Lord. But, *In Times of Siege*, Shiv has spent most of his days in the remembrance of Rekha,

[...], the frame that will always be there, the frame that holds Rekha. Competent, through Rekha, an expert at keeping up appearances. Shiv sees Rekha, arched eyebrows raised as if she is assessing something, her sari and hair held firmly in place with an assortment of pins. (ITS 172-173)
Rekha has “the efficiency that makes her an administrative asset in her office, took over” (ITS 4). On the other hand, she has taken the role of a poise wife at all times who knows just when to move, when to go limp and lie still. “[…] her face now has a look of passive waiting, as if she has many more years to go before she is let out on parole for good behaviour” (ITS 173). Shiv filled the void with the sweet memory of his wife Rekha as,

[…] a tourist perhaps, who has overstayed in a small and boring place. She has nothing left to discover but there are weeks of emptiness stretching before her, empty days and nights she must will herself to fill. Rekha’s face says she has seen everything there is to see; she has seen through shiv. Having exhausted emotion, all that remains is habit. The management of the mask she presents to the world; the management of his small drifting life. (ITS 173)

Another independent character in the novel, In Times of Siege, is Shiv’s daughter, Tara, always-self sovereign, an indifferent student. She has deserved a job in America to do wonders in the field of computers. It is explicated that she belongs to the same blood of Rekha. “Shiv wonders now about Tara: how well does he really know her? She is younger than Meena, but unlike her, Tara couldn’t wait to finish with life of a student” (ITS-111). Tara has a separate world which is “[…] a small piece, but she knows it very well indeed Delhi to Seattle via computer courses, competitive exams, a job that promises a Yuppie future”. (ITS 111-112) Tara is being eluded from her father’s fumbling as she is completely been free from his thought, “his hole- in – the-soul sense of being incomplete” (ITS112). Tara, a self-reliant girl, has wanted to be outstanding and has taken effort to come with colours in her life. Shiv still has remembered Tara as a courageous and intellectual girl when ‘she was in seven or eight, “a plump, a neat little girl” (ITS 112).
She sought him out in his study and told him, with all the confidence of a conformist bent on survival, my teacher and my friends say there’s a god. The whole world says it; only you say there isn’t a god. I’ll believe the whole world not you. (ITS-112)

Tara has believed everything practical and never trusts anything with blind folds. Through Tara, Hariharan has brought out the values of Indian culture. It has clearly understood if anyone has gone away from their world and moved from one place to alien land, at the time they would have realized the value of their tradition. “It’s only after coming to the US that many of us have learnt to appreciate Indian traditions” (ITS-112). She has dared enough to point out the mistakes of her father and send an e-mail that, “I’ve been getting messages from friends in Delhi and some Indians here. It’s sort of weird and embarrassing to explain why you have written something against temples and priests and all that” (ITS-112).

The Modern Indians have started moving after the westernization by following their culture and tradition. Meena has not gone abroad, but she drinks and smokes. She breaks off; and is physically attracted towards Shiv, a man almost his father’s age. This shows that the Indian woman has appealed to alien tradition. The lust with Meena and Shiv proves to be an annoying distraction in the novel which ends without much closure. When she has left Shiv, she received his father’s walking stick as a token of love, for him it is considered a treasure. Though she is courageous, at the time of parting from Shiv, she has felt painful.

Shiv has noticed the courageous look of Meena in two circumstances. First, he has met her in the hostel, the next time when he met her at the time of departing. “All the certainty that is second nature to her, all the challenge that she has exhaled with every
breath, has deserted her for the moment” (ITS 203-204). This has shown, she has fixed in
the class of modern woman, who can manage all the difficult circumstances.

Meena, Tara, and Rekha hold together in the right place of the modern world. They have managed even if they could not. Today’s woman has managed herself to satisfy all her needs. They are away from their family to survive, to earn, and to lead their life with full independence. They have experienced all kind of situations and activities. The word Independence has taught them how to manage her, to mingle in the society. In Meena’s case, when she broke her leg, she was accompanied by Shiv. He has planned to call her mother to his home to take care of her or to send her along with her mother. But Meena has smelt his plan and said, “Look, I know you plan to call my parents” (ITS-3). Here Hariharan states, “She slips this in casually, though she is watching him carefully.” She also says, “I’d rather you didn’t. That you didn’t worry them. I’ll be right here. You don’t mind, do you?” (ITS-14). Tara has managed at the time she has left her father for a job in alien country. In case of Rekha, she has played a duel role in doing the household works and has taken care of the administrative work. These women are subjected in ‘authority, intelligence, competence, and common sense’.

Another woman in this novel In Times of Siege is Amita Sen, colleague, of Shiv. She has resembled Meena. She has followed the alien tradition “[…] she stubs out her cigarette” (ITS-21). She too has lust with him like Meena. Usually, Amita is accompanied by boredom, which is her greatest fear. Her husband a charted accountant has detained the income tax of top industrialist. Both of them (Shiv and Amita) have never spoken her (Amita) husband, but Shiv has suspicion that the man has not studied his wife’s woebegone; instead he has gone with the files and accounts. The attitude of Amita’s husband has made her to move with Shiv,
Amita and Shiv have slept with each other a few times. But perhaps slept with each other is inaccurate. They have, on four occasions, had extended lunches; lunches which have extended to hurried, unsatisfactory sex at her house. All four times she lays in bed afterwards, her face veiled by cigarette smoke, watching him dress; each time he let himself out of the house and got back to the department, feeling like a tyrant schoolboy. (ITS-21)

Hariharan’s women are the most confident, self-reliant, assertive who can manage life for themselves even in difficult situations. In her first novel The Thousand Faces of Night, Devi the protagonist, her mother Sita and In Times of Siege Meena, and Rekha have successfully managed their lives, and have walked on their own way. Today Indian women are excelled in each and every field in the society from the social works to visiting space stations. They question the system made by the society, break all the barriers, and earn a respectable position in the society as well as in the world. There is no space where the Indian women unconquered. Indira Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India, addressed in the All India women’s conference in 1980 has said,

I have often said, that, I am not a feminist, yet, in my concern for the unprivileged, how can I ignore women who, since the beginning of history, have been dominated over and discriminated against in social custom and in-laws […]. In the west, women’s so-called freedom is often equated with imitation of man. Frankly, I feel, that, is merely an exchange of one kind of bondage for another. To be liberated, a woman must feel free to be herself, not in rivalry to man, but in the context of her own capacity and her personality. We need women to be more interested, more alive,
and more active, not because they are women, but because they do comprise ‘half the human race. Whether they like it, or not, they cannot escape their responsibility nor should they be denied its benefits. Indian women are traditionally conservations but they also have the genius of synthesis to adapt and absorb. That is what gives them resilience to face suffering and to meet upheavals with a degree of calm, to change constantly and yet remain changeless which is the quality of India herself. (3)

The speech has dominated and inspired the nationalists have framed resurfaces, the conflation of the Indian women with Indian nation and culture and its very special identity. The inspiration of the activist has motivated the women society has to come out of the image of a traditional woman who merely keeps on following her assigned roles and allotted place in the family. When anyone looks at the ancient sculptures and paintings, women have been portrayed as charmers, as dancers, as courtesans. The entire aim seems to be just to exhibit their charms and sensuous moods.

The image of woman as displaying physical charm emerged predominant with the eclipse of her mental accomplishments, creativity and her forced seclusion and consequent isolation from the productive process of the contemporary society. (Vashishtha 111)

It is understood that Hariharan has proved and anticipated the issues which are related to woman, religion, culture, and tradition in the land in detail and in depth. The incidents which she has quoted in her novels have raised and alert the silent inferior being in the society and also she has dragged out the darkness which has still protracted in their life and in the society.
It is observed that the varieties of women in Hariharan’s novel and short stories focus on the authentic position of women. Devi, the protagonist of the novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night*, could not fall either on traditional woman or as a modern woman. Though she has been trained to follow the traditional role models, it is possible for her to hear only the stories and enjoy. She has questioned many times to Mayamma, Grandmother, and Baba to clarify her doubts. She has not received any answer rather than, she is being advised not to raise questions. In real life, she finds it difficult to survive a monotonous life in her husband’s house. Though, she belongs to the new generation, she was completely monitored and taken care by her mother. She has been completely a dependent right from her childhood. First she is protected by her parents, next by Dan abroad, later by her husband again as a ball returned to her mother. In the beginning, she does not have the courage to tackle the situation. She has not let anything (her likes or dislikes) to her mother. Similarly, Mayamma, Parvati, and Sita come under traditional women. They have not shared any of their emotions with anyone. They are supposed to do their household work regularly. These women never raise their voice; they satisfy themselves with what they have. Mayamma, without questioning she did everything like bathing the *Lingam* with her blood. Sita has adopted herself according to the family. She sacrificed everything for her husband and his family. She stopped playing Veena; she ate the food which she did not prefer. Like Mayamma, Lakshmi and Mangala in the novel, *The Ghost of Vasu Master*, never let a word. They remain silent. Mangala has never asked for a sari, she wore the torn sari and performed as a perfect daughter-in-law, mother and wife. These women thought that once they raised question they would be sent out of the house. They were trained as if they could not survive in the society without one’s support. As a result they prepared themselves to be submissive to their husband, their family and in the society.
In the novel, *In Times of Siege*, Tara and Meena belong to the present generation and they are bold enough to come out of their ideas. They are completely independent and good decision makers. Meena supported Shiv completely when he was in trouble. She encourages him, and also supports women by writing stories. Rekha (wife of Shiv) knows her husband well, even in her absence. She can also manage herself in the absence of Shiv. She plans how to manage family, home, and office. Shahrzad, in the novel *When Dreams Travel* has thought widely, understands the situation, and plans according to that, as a result she won the heart of the King as well as the audience.

Always women in India have to be passive listeners and their duty is to perform the work assigned by their elders. They should not ask any doubt, if they ask it is a crime. All the novels and short stories of Hariharan have given the exact happening in the south Indian family. Each of her characters has stood as an epitome, has moved from stereotypical portrayal, self-sacrificing women to self-assured women, assertive and ambitious women. They have started demanding the society for their demands and needs; still, they should need knowledge in knowing the law which supports them. Hariharan’s women question the system designed by their elders. Finally, they have started to create a new world of female companionship for themselves, who is longing for love and care. Sita, the mother of Devi, accepts her daughter’s decision to return to her. There is a gradual change in silent revolution, in the attitude of the Indian Women.