Chapter V

Male Interpretation on Female Torture

This chapter, “Male Interpretation on Female torture” portrays the characters in the novels of Githa Hariharan, the treatment of woman in the home and in the society, and the relationships of man-woman, woman-woman, and the power which is latent in them. Jasbir Jain, has quoted women position from Panditha Ramabai, *The High Caste Hindu Woman,* (1888) as,

> It is an analysis of Manu’s position and exposes its in-built gender biases and the nature of its authoritarian control over women by controlling all that goes to constitute or develop the self as well as identity. Though they are words often treated as synonyms, I would like to make a distinction between them, identity being a characteristic or a condition which distinguishes a person and self-being the individual consciousness as seat of subjective thought and action. (83)

In addition to that Jain has categorized woman into two types, the first type of woman is identified by her external consideration like class, caste, status, race and the rest of it. The second category of woman has given importance to “self.” This type of woman has a strong control over “body, mind, intellect, and emotions.” When someone controls the body is indicated the acceptance of a person as a contingent being. A woman has also been focused on her biological existence. There are other important areas on which women were concerned on sex, rape, marriage, procreation, birth control, and abortion. The biological terms have implied the right to be. On the other hand the inner soul of a woman can be felt and expressed through emotions. Emotions can be felt, but
not through touch. Emotions are focused on right to feel, respond, and relate. Another category Intellect, this is related to think, coordination of thought, to have ideas, to implement the ideas, right to know, right to take correct decisions, to make choice of own and to act accordingly. Everyone has their individuality, enjoy the richness of life. But women have not considered, they have less freedom in every aspect. They should not have an idea to think, know and to decide. On the whole they have less control over the four constituent of the “self.” (83) “Society, religion, or traditions control them and more often than not religion, tradition, and morality are used to exclude women from power and knowledge and reinforce patriarchal authority” (83-84).

Hariharan has explored the entire concept of Panditha Ramabai in all her novels. In her first novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night*, in the prelude, she quotes the view of Devara Dasimayya from his work *Vacchana* which has been translated from Kannada to English by A.K.Ramanujan as,

Suppose you cut a tall bamboo
In two;
Make the bottom piece a woman,
The headpiece a man,
rub them together
till they kindle:
tell me now,
the fire that’s born,
Is it male or female?
O Ramanatha?

Hariharan is more specific in the uniqueness of man and woman; in the first page itself she proves it. In Indian tradition it has clearly stated in the myth of
Ardhanareeswara that the oneness of male and female cannot be separated which has considered being unique. In another ancient text it has been emphasized that, a wife must be her husband’s Sadharmacharini, sharer of his dharma and Sanbagini sharer of his fortune. These two terms have mentioned that a wife must not follow him as mere shadow. Mookherjee has said that in Indian culture it is very particular that “men and women are not at war, but through their collective uniqueness realize the feminine fullness of the universe” (105). This consciousness has made her to enter into a new phase where she has felt comfortable with her originality not bothering the burden of subjugation. In my opinion it is entirely opposite in real life, a wife should not overcome in certain views against her husband’s will. In Hinduism man has considered as the head, a controller of the entire family, even if a woman has taken the position of him, she has regarded as a sinful creature and could not perform the work of her.

Obviously it is true that the present Indian English Women writers have won the top most position and literary awards by focusing on the real incidents happening inside the four walls and in the society. They have given voice to concerns, experience and create body of literature of their own. These writers have made a remarkable change for the women’s society, through their works they challenge and demolish the stereotyped image of the angel in the house, a submissive housewife, and a mother. These writers have written only on women and express their revolt against the masculine world. For instance if one has taken the case of recent Tamil women poets they have expressed very boldly in what is considered to be a vulgar Tamil! These writers have made their woman as subject or the protagonist even the men characters have acted as a subject or protagonist, here they have made their woman as subjugated and powerful. Hariharan has come under this category. In the present era it is very common to foreground women as subjects of their works but global, political, historical, cultural, economical, and other
significant societal concerns also find articulation in their works. Their position of women has to be seen with human consideration. Eva Figes, in her book *Sex and Subterfuge: Women Writers in 1850*, has stated that the women writers struggle to suggest a solution in the form of a “feminization society” as,

> When women did begin to comment on the social system in fiction of their outlook was essentially humanist. Leaving aside isolated statements on the position of their own sex, which occurs in the writings of all women therefore they tended to stand aside from and indeed, distrust political systems and solutions and view the problems they described in terms of human relations […] and see the solutions in terms of the feminizations of society.(152)

Hariharan has highlighted the sufferings of women as live which has happened exactly in the society. When a woman has read her novels it can be realized the incidents happened in her life or which she has heard. Each line of her novel has narrated the female sufferings or it can be treated as an alarm to the coming generations. Especially all her novels are based on the sexual, social, and marital experiences. In her novel the marriage is not successful to her central characters, she has also pointed out that “In stories and in myth it is possible to take revenge but in reality it is not possible.” She has voiced the sufferings of her women in the dominated society through her characters like Devi, Sita, Mayamma, Sharhzad, Dunyazad, Mangala, Lakshmi, etc. These characters painstakingly steer throughout their life by satisfying their counterparts, in laws and for their children. Her stories from the myth have also portrayed the “female sufferings” inside and outside of their life. She has pinpointed the view through analysis, that the position of women is caught in “a typical male power structures.” Her women characters are focused as susceptible persons, longing for love, understanding, and all the time being
victims of their own gender. In *The Thousand Faces of Night*, Hariharan has focused on three generations of women right from the first generation till now, it is understood that male-domination has not yet come to a conclusion even in the computerized century. They have treated women as slaves. In this novel the minor characters like Gowri, Uma, including the characters in the myth has also told about their sufferings in the dominated society.

Still, it is happening in our country, right from the highest society to the lowest. A female member in a family should not ask the income sources of a male member even her husband, brother, or son. Women have to lead the entire family with what is given to her. If they ask, the problem starts immediately as a storm. They have no rights to satisfy themselves even their basic needs. She has to get permission, because she is puppet in the hands of man. But they have spent lavishly to thrust themselves in all kinds of addiction as though they have been born for the eternal happiness. Even in the present century many women are housewives they go for a job only after getting permission from their counterpart. It is highly challenging for her, both in the working place and in the society, to overcome the physical and the mental tortures. At home they are treated as payless maidservants; they do not have a world of their own. Yet she struggles for her life right from her birth till death. In this novel Hariharan has proved all the male characters having this kind of superiority like Mahesh, Baba, Gauri’s and Uma’s husband, father-in-law, Mayamma’s husband and son, on the other hand, even the mythical characters like Bheeshma, King Salva has shown their male chauvinism. The theme of the novel has thus proved the survival of women thus,

When I once asked my husband’s house keeper, old Mayamma, why she had put up with her life, she laughed till the tears rolled down her wrinkled cheeks. ’I can see that you are still a child.’ She said, ‘When I lost my first baby, conceived after ten years of
longing and fear, I screamed, for the only time in my life, why?"

(TTFN vii)

Hariharan has dealt with the important relations of men, women, and marriage in her novel. Each Indian has to be proud of the institution of marriage which has occupied a prominent role in our Indian society. The word “marriage” can be defined as “religious sacrament” in Hinduism which a man and woman are bound in a permanent relationship for physical, social, and spiritual purpose of religion, procreations and sexual pleasures. Here “[…] is about separate yet linked stories of three Indian women Devi, Sita, Mayamma. These stories have explored the various hues of darkness engulfing their married lives” (Tripathi 175). It is fact that like these three women, may be different in ages, generations, and education but the sufferings have remained same even it has happened in most of their lives in the Indian women. Marriage is not the purpose of sexual pleasure but religious progression. The purpose of the marriage is to bind equal affection, sharing and mutual understanding. Hariharan has stated the Hindu Religion mindset on relation of husband and wife reflects at the time when the husband promises in front of Agni at the time of marriage through her character Mayamma as,

Having taken seven steps, with me, be my friend; be my inseparable companion. On the darkest nights, let our common path be lit by own lustrous love. Come; let us walk together, with this guiding lamp between us. Let us unite our minds with the same thoughts and vows. I am the word and you are the melody; I am the melody and you are the word. I am heaven, you are the earth. I am seed, you are the bearer. I am the thought; you are the word. (TTFN 79-80)
Mostly man has uttered the above statement to fulfill the rituals of marriage, later they have never followed what they have said only very few of them have followed and has led their family well. Usually, the entire female have departed from their parents and walked along with their partners with golden dreams, which in reality has turned out to be a utopia! This has happened in the entire women society.

Ramabai, in her book on, *The Hindu Castes Hindu Woman*, in which she has described a typical arranged marriage and exactly mocked on the conjugal satisfaction of women in terms of their marriage by following the statement of Susi Tharu and K.Lalitha, in the article, “Introduction” has observed that:

When the conjugal relation is brightened of mutual Love, the happy wife has nothing to complain except the absence of freedom of thought and action; but since wives have never known from the beginning what freedom is, they are well content to remain in bondage. (247)

Devi the protagonist has accepted for arranged marriage with the match of Mahesh already chosen by her mother Sita, still it has believed that in the horoscope the character of a person has identified, but not in real and everyone has gone towards it. Sita has completely satisfied with the horoscope and thought he has been the perfect match for her daughter, not alone in the match of horoscope but on the basis of education as his job as a Regional Manager in a multi-national company. The nature of his job is touring “[…] be in Bangalore only ten days of the month […]” (TTFN 22). After the completion of religious rituals she has departed from Chennai to Bangalore, for sometime everything seems to be good. Later the true colour of Mahesh has come in the form of questions, comparison, pricking the emotions of Devi. He has never minded the emotions of her; always he has insulted and never considered her love. When she has conveyed her desire
to learn Sanskrit to understand Baba’s quotations better, immediately he has retorted, “Don’t be foolish” (TTFN 52). Mahesh, in nature has appeared; a person does not have a kind heart even to the old people. This has happened when Mayamma his maidservant who has taken care of him right from his childhood was not well on one day. Devi has worried about her illness to him, and told her to leave alone, but Mahesh cruelty has come out word by word “if you fuss over her today, she’ll do it more and more” (TTFN 52) He has thought that she is mere a maid servant, an old woman apart from a human being. Sometimes of being alone Devi has requested him to postpone his trip; without considering her love and chides her and said, “Why don’t I pray to be born a woman in my next birth”, he teases, “then I won’t have to make a living at all” (TTFN 54). When he has commented each word is an arrow or a knife which hurt her emotions. In each conversation of Mahesh it has been noticed. When she has raised a chain of questions to him as,

“Why did you marry me?” I asked.

‘Whatever people get married for, Mahesh said […]

‘What you been doing while I was away? Mahesh asked

‘Oh, nothing, ‘I said.

‘Nothing? How do you do nothing?’ he laughed.

‘Baba told me how to reach heaven,’ I said smiling weakly. His Laughter faded away.’ (TTFN 55)

One day, when Devi has whispered to Mahesh that she is looking for a job, he has looked her doubtful and leaves […] with a pause, an inward movement makes her to feel guilty that she is not capable. Always he has irritated her by doing which she has disparate. He has compared Devi with her grandmother, her mother, and with Tara Mahesh Junior’s wife. When he has compared with her grandmother he has revealed,
“[…] your grandmother was barely illiterate. Wasn’t she a happier woman than you are?” (TTFN 74) Whether giving up once self-respect is enough to lead a happy life! He admires Tara his junior’s wife “[…] boundless energy, her bubbling, and energy infectious enthusiasm.” (TTFN 56) He has related his mother Parvathi with his friend Arun’s mother that “when I was a boy, I was always Jealous of my friensy?” (TTFN 74). He is not ready to realize of his mother’s situation. Like Mahesh there are many men who do not determine their companion, instead they find something which is better. These kinds of men have never looked upon the female members in the family, whether they may be their mother, wife, daughter, and sister will not give importance to their individuality. Everyone has a unique character; no one is hypothetical to revolutionize their nature. In each and every activity Mahesh has found fault and criticized her. She has no self-determination to read a book of her interest. Once when he has noticed at her with Baba’s book in hand, he has commented exasperatingly, “Baba’s book again?” […] did you need books to tell her how to be a wife?” I have never met a woman more efficient than your mother” (TTFN 70). Day by day she has become a prey for loneliness, apart from loneliness gets aggravated on Mahesh’s selfish, self-centered, inhuman attitude. In all ways she has tried to compromise him but everything in vain.

When she has left Mahesh she has felt herself as a courageous heroine and also recognized her own self. Indira Nityanandan, has said the changes happened in Devi’s life in her article, “A search for Identity: Githa Hariharan’s The Thousand Faces of Night” through these lines as,

However, it is Devi who is the modern feminist. Though she lacks the will to choose and her early decisions are flattering, we note a development in her character. Initially, she is easily influenced by societal role expectations; she quits the U.S and leaves behind Dan
because of a sense of filial piety, marries Mahesh, as an Indian pativrata should. Gradually she shows her revolve in walking out with Mahesh and even greater determination in walking out on Gopal. (12)

Pandit Gopal Sharma from Lucknow has belonged to the musician family as a singer has been impressed many women including Devi with his majestic voice, and has imagined that she has got a cheerful life with him. In the beginning, she has believed that she was contented with Gopal before she has congealed with Mahesh. Gopal has shared everything with her and has visited the places with the company of her, but Mahesh has never shared any emotion rather than his official plans and ambition. Though she has experienced happiness with Gopal, she has felt “a hysterical giggle bubble up her throat” (TTFN 134) on the other part she has felt to be separated. Devi has felt that the inner self is not united for Gopal and for herself, he has plenty of admirers and disciples but she is not ready to admit herself to be one among them. However she has admired and eloped with him, now she has been departed and alien in the new world. She has felt completely comfortable with her mother again she has come to her mother. When Mahesh has complained with sarcasm that Devi has eloped with Gopal to her mother, in the beginning Sita has got annoyed on her, later she has recognized that she will be returned like a ball to the court. But Mahesh has not apprehended his mistake and he has himself thought as perfect a dutiful husband. In the Society there are many men like Mahesh having never committed any problem, but they are problem creators.

Mayamma the old caretaker’s story has made the readers to realize the pathetic situation of illiterate women in the society. Mayamma is married to a drunkard and gambler of no use. Her mother-in-law has often cursed her for not having a child for two years after her marriage. She has cursed her that “she eats as much as anybody else, but
is barren” (TTFN 80). She has fed yesterday’s rice and also has added that, it is enough for a barren woman. If she has been admired herself in the new sari or by others, immediately her mother-in-law has pulled her sari roughly “just as her son did every night, and smeared the burning red, freshly-ground spices into her barrenness” (TTFN 113) even she has brutally asked her to cut her breast open to fill the silver cup with blood to bath lingam. Hariharan has also portrayed one the social evils of ill-treatment of women by the mother-in-laws in the society. This has been given as a common theme by most of the south Indian writers. Naipaul, has highlighted his different opinion and the experience of the heartbroken daughter-in-law in his article, “A Million Mutinies Now” as,

Mother -in-laws were required to discipline the child brides of their sons, to train the unbroken and childish girls in their duties as child-bearers, and household workers, to teach them to the almost philosophical idea of the toil and tears of the real world: to introduce them, in this chain of tradition, to the kind of life and ideas they have been introduced to by their own mother-in-laws such a disciplining of a child bride would have been considered virtuous; the cruelty, however, willed, however voluptuous, would have been seen as no more than the cruelty of life itself. (178-179)

As a poignant woman Mayamma has never questioned and complained of her mother-in-law. She has converted all the problems, tortures as her old friends. At any time she has never given up her hope. According to Damodar Rao her self-punishment “takes multiple forms of response from self-pity to revenge and from self-inflicted suffering to a strong sense of injustice” (165). After ten years she has blessed with a son on Diwali. The time her husband has disappeared “taking with him all the money in the
house,” when her son has reached eight. Her mother-in-law has grudged her that she has been the cause for his disappearance. Her destiny of suffering has followed in the form of her son - the evil. As a mother with kindhearted she has accepted the tortures of her son. She has noticed the cruelty and the very old same tortures by her son, who starts beating her, “At fourteen he threatened to beat his mother and sold her last pair of bangles” (TTFN 81). When she has refused to give her diamond earrings he has struck her with an iron pan. First she has born the torture with discomfiture, by her mother-in-law, and by her husband. Now she has not had enough strength both physically and psychologically to tolerate her son’s notoriety as a result “he fell ill with a high fever, there was no tenderness left in Mayamma’s hands. They were efficient, cool, but they withheld reassurance” (TTFN 82). After his death she has burnt everything including the horoscope along with him. When any woman has been suppressed they have got enough courage to face all the sequences, afterwards she has reached Parvathamma’s house. The previous pain and experiences have made her to work without rest. Mayamma’s story has shown that a woman should have inner strength to bear all the sufferings; this made her to take care of Mahesh and his house properly even in her old age. J.Yellaih and G. Pratima, has suggested in the article, “Inside and out There”: male constructs and female choices in Githa Hariharn’s The Thousand Faces of Night, ” that:

Mayamma is a typical Indian female who accepted her fate, cursed it but never questioned it and lived her life exactly as was expected of her. She bore of cruelty that society had ordained for a woman as a daughter-in-law, a deserted woman, and mother. (192)

In her age woman are meek, docile, dutiful bound to the society, they have retained with the tradition of the family and also the institution of marriage. In the beginning women have thought that it is her duty to do all kind of household works. On
that time she has never been known the concept about the word “submissive.” Later she has provoked to find the meaning for submissiveness - as slave by the way they have treated. She may be wise in the society or may lead a responsible position, but in home she has been treated as a remote control.

Sita, Devi’s mother, a middle aged woman, has come in between Mayamma and Devi. Mahadevan is happy with Sita after their marriage because she has sacrificed her desires in all aspects. Even she has hidden her talent of playing Veena, when her father-in-law shouts at her to keep away the Veena she has obliged as a dutiful daughter-in-law and wife. From that day onwards, she had not even played Veena or even touched; she has pulled out the strings of Veena in anger and asserts herself to be wife and daughter-in-law. Does a woman as a wife scarifies all her wishes have been retain as a good wife? In Mayamma’s case, though she is sincere in all her duties, she is not honoured by her husband, mother-in-law, and her son. Sita has assisted and encouraged her husband “by the hand lead from promotion to promotion […]” (TTFN 104) and the status also increased in the society and in economy too. They have got a new car and renovated old house, three full-time servants and a gardener. Mahadevan has satisfied with Sita, because she has managed the house properly “A woman who did not complain, a woman who knew how to make sacrifices without fanfare” (TTFN 103). It is the fact, that many years have passed, still women have to go through Agni Pariksha to confirm earnestness, because for living as a female. As a woman she has to give up her desires, lifestyle, likings, and even her ‘food habits’. Sita, “[…] missed rice: all her life, she had eaten three square meals of rice. Marriage had meant that Sita would have to learn to eat dry chapattis, which refused to go down the throat like sticky, wet balls of mashed rice” (TTFN 103).
Gauri, a poor maidservant of Devi’s grandmother, a young virgin, looks beautiful “like a river goddess” (TTFN 31) when she has returned home after taking bath from the pond. She works in Brahmin houses, as long as “[…] to build a little pile of dowry-gold, chain by chain, bangle by bangle” (TTFN 31). She has said to Devi’s grandmother that bridegroom asks for fifty sovereigns, “and after ten years of work I have only fifteen” (TTFN 31). After hearing to the conversation Devi has suggested, “Gauri is so beautiful she could have a swayamvara” (TTFN 31). In the following year her dreams comes true, Devi has heard the news of Gauri’s engagement when she has come for her summer holidays. “Gauri ran to tell us the news. The wedding was only a week away. He has come from a big family” (TTFN 31). When her grandmother has enquired about the sovereigns, she has replied “Twenty, Amma. But I have almost eighteen. I will manage to get somehow (TTFN 31-32). Dowry system still has survived in this era, sometimes the grooms family has pretended as though they are not interested in dowry, they say that it all depends on the bride’s family, but it is hidden they need dowry. This system is seen in most of Rabindranath Tagore’s short stories. Shweta Srinivastava, in her article points out the words of Santhosh Chakraborati from, Studies in Tagore as,

The dowry system with its ugly offshoots handed down from a feudalistic past so deeply convulsed Rabindranath’s mind that in a story called Aparichita (The Unknown Women). He unravels the nakedness of a feudalistic mind set which does not baulk at robbing the sacramental bond of marriage of all its decency and dignity. The picture of the bridegroom’s maternal uncle weighing and testing the purity of the bride’s ornaments points to an ugly relic of the feudalistic marriage system in which the bride is looked upon as nothing more than a money fetching instruments. The breaking
down of so many marriages at the ceremony itself because of non-fulfillment of dowry commitments is not rare even today. But side by side with this picture of ugliness Rabindranath presents another picture – that of self-dignity first on the part of the bride’s father, Sambhunath Sen who refuses to give his daughter in marriage to a member of such a mean minded family, saying, ‘I cannot give my daughter in marriage to a family the members of which think that I have stolen my daughter’s ornaments’, and secondly, on the part of the bride, Kalyani, who remains a lifelong spinster by way of protest against such an ugly insult. (119)

Gauri has imagined about her marriage life which has brought amend to her life and has thought a sole is going to share everything. After ten years of great effort she has felt glad that she has received a good life as reward. But her expectation has shattered completely. She has returned like a ball thrown on the wall. She has explained that her husband is brutal and her in-laws have treated her “like dirt” (TTFN 32). She has met patti [Grandmother] to get back her old job, it has been absolutely vain for her. Patti has already heard that some years after her marriage, Gauri has got an illicit relationship with her brother-in-law, so her husband chases her from his home, later her brother-in-law absconds. In Gauri’s part it has seemed obvious, that she loves him. When she was with her husband, she was treated like an animal, seeing this incident her brother-in-law has made use of her. We cannot say that it is fully Gauri’s mistake, if her husband would have considered her as a human and showered love and care on her this might not have happened in her life, and the society is also a cause, because they have never heard what has happened, instead of that they label her as ‘characterless female’. Finally Devi has
felt that “Should Gauri, my happy, down-to-earth Gauri, have married a snake? And who was the snake in her story – her bestial husband or her freakish lover” (TTFN 34).

In our country still a custom has been followed which depends upon classes, races, gender. If a man has an illicit relationship with any woman no one has blamed him, in spite of that others blame his wife not the man, that she has not satisfied her husband in many aspects. There is no one could find to support Gauri. Everyone has wounded her, instead of giving her a chance to narrate the incident.

Another character Devi’s cousin Uma, a motherless girl has led her life like an orphan, has an “indifferent father and hostile step-mother” (TTFN 35). Everybody thinks that she is lucky to find a match in a wealthy home. The house has entirely decorated for the celebration with white and yellow kolams. But her married life is not successful. In the beginning it has seemed they were happy, her husband “grasped her hand, and a look passed between them, some kind of signal I [Devi] could not read […] later her husband and her father “drank till she stupefied with fear” (TTFN 35). Though it is new experience for her, she has tried several times to adopt herself to the situation, but she could not, a year “her foreboding grew into terror when her father-in-law kissed her roughly on the lips” (TTFN 35). This has shown her husband’s cheap mentality and the shallow relationship between them. Later she has lived with Devi’s grandmother till her death. Women have observed that marriage is security for them, but there also they have unsecured life.

In the beginning she has wondered Mahesh for his “frankness,” “willingness” to be bold, later when she has found out of his real self, she gets frustrated. On the other hand Mayamma has suffered right from the beginning of her life. She has to get up early in the morning, cook food for all her family members (in-laws) around twenty-thirty in number. She has to do all duties compulsorily. She:
[...] drew water from the well. I scooped handfuls of fresh wet cow dung and patted the nauseous mess into identical round cakes. With the best of the dung, I swept the floors clean [...] I sat at my mother-in-law’s feet every night, massaging her fleshy ankles. Close to midnight, she would wake up and say, you can go upstairs now, Maya. (TTFN 116)

Woman like Gandhari or Sita who has sacrificed and tolerates can survive like a successful woman, if a woman asks question Gauri, Uma, and Devi they could not. These realities and the fate of the female are said by Shubhra Tripathi, in the article, “A Timeless Tale of Thwarted Dreams: Myriad Myths in Githa Hariharan’s *The Thousand Faces of Night,*” as,

> All three, belonged to different generations and well different in terms of education and social circumstances. Mayamma could not bear a child for several years, Sita had a girl child, and Devi could not bear one. Mayamma’s husband and mother-in-law tortured her physical, Sita’s troubles were more mental; and Devi’s were due to her husband’s indifferent attitude which disturbed her emotional equilibrium. (TTFN 178)

On the other hand, in the novel, *The Ghost of Vasumaster,* Hariharan has brought out the life of a retired teacher - Vasumaster who has recollected the past memories. It has appeared in the form of Ghost shows ill-treatment of women, shabby nature of a man that had admired another woman in front of his wife and attraction towards woman. It reveals how woman is treated in another man’s sight. He has criticized himself that he can “see my own mangled body in the mirror of [Mani’s] eyes” (TGVM 25), he says that Mani’s eyes reminds his own youth, silenced for hours at a time in his authoritarian
father’s office, himself “mangled” the way Mani is deformed in skull shape (“Papaya-head”) and in his pathological silence. A bit later, he finds his dead wife’s mirror. “I looked into the mirror and I saw an ugly stranger. He had grayed, thinning hair. His face was scared pockmarks, creases, a map lines, and grilles. The eyes were shocked me the most they were a hounded animals” (TGVM 40).

When Vasumaster has noticed the mirror he himself voices, “the fruit of an idle mind are invariably rotten” (TGVM 40). This can be immediately compared to a famous proverb ‘The face is the index of the mind’. Still he is not able to remember who says that, “my father perhaps, or Venkatesan’s guru, or Veera Naidu, who had a healthy fund of what he called gems of moral sciences” (TGVM 40). When he dreams his memories are caught by these women apart from his wife her friend Jameela, Eliamma, mother, grandmother and the actress Rita-Mona his boyhood fancy. It has been understood that the generations have been changed from one to another but the custom in the treatment of women has not even changed till date. They treat her as a sexual object and also as a machine to do all the domestic works daily without fail. Even the machine may take rest when the power fails. Whenever, Vasumaster has thought of his mother immediately he has recalled how she had been treated by their parents and in the society. His mother had not named for a year, because her parents had not interested to celebrate a naming ceremony for one more girl child. They felt ashamed that people would have laughed at them. Most often the question has been raised, “Does female child a sin?” The opinion of them is ‘Yes’. This has been the important reason that the majority of infanticide has happened in villages. Of course most of the rustic has said that if it is a girl child the parents have to spend money right from her birth till her death. They have to be protected in each and every stage of life, for this purpose they have gone for child marriage. They have spent sumptuous amount for her marriage in order to have a security for her
daughter. After they have spent a lot whether she has lived happily in her husband’s place, certainly not, there the originality of her husband has come out. Due to lack of mutual understanding and the quality of compromising, misunderstanding happens in their relationship. Here the dominance plays a major role. The very word ‘woman’ for a ‘man’ is to be submissive to him throughout his life. A year later his mother was named by an old sweeper woman. She said that if she could have born ‘little extra bit of flesh, just a few inches’ (TGVM 31) will be celebrated by her entire family, then she named her as “Lakshmi” and added “the Lakshmi of her husband’s house”. In Hindu custom the name Lakshmi means for happiness, wealth, and prosperity, boon. Even in her husband’s house,

She fought a losing battle on all fronts. The neighbours knew everything about us anyway […] it was not very surprising then that Lakshmi had melted away into the shadows of this loud, tyrannical household. She lived just about long enough to give my father his heir, and obviously even that was a shoddy job. (TGVM 32)

Hariharan is very particular in pointing out restrictions of women’s individual development and also, the restrictions has followed in a domestic life and dominating patriarchy. Marxist, has stated in the book, Radical Feminism and Women’s Writing that:

If you want to change the way people think about women in a world dominated by men, you must first discourage the habit of defining ‘woman’ as an essence whose ‘nature’ is determined biologically, and whose sole destiny is to reproduce the human species.(36)
Hariharan has also suggested that man is not ready to accept woman and to make her as a part of his life or for himself till his eternal sleep. He often thinks that she is a torture to him, even if she cares for him that itself a torture. He has always separated her from himself in the entire situation and realized her fact that she is made-up to stand behind the screen. This kind of attitude has maintained distance in their relationship “what is needed is the acceptance of woman’s “otherness.” In the book Feminist Literary Studies an Introduction, Ruthven.K.K, has given Shoshana Felman opinion in the article “Constructing Feminist Theories of Criticism,” as “Theoretically subordinated to the concept of masculinity,’ the woman is viewed by the man as his opposite, that is to say, as his other, the negative of the positive, and not, in her own right, different, other, otherness itself” (41).

As a rule it is practiced that man has every right to admire another woman and appreciates her in front of his wife. Sometimes he has compared his wife to that woman and he has longed to make her as a companion for him. If a woman has admired or talked of another man, immediately he has never uttered a word in spite he suspects her virginity. This is seen in all the novels of Hariharan. Like Mahesh in The Thousand faces of Night, here Vasu Master has thought Jameela without her burqua, “she was full, earthy, with a slight limp that offset her ripe perfection” (TGVM 43).

Vasumaster is haunted with Jameela’s full figure and her deep throaty laughter. After few years of Mangala’s death, he has seen Jameela when she has come to collect one of unfinished pieces of embroidery, later they have met in silence. He has urged her to meet again, but it has happened when she has returned with all the works of Mangala’s work, finished by her. He has felt unhappy that there would not be any chance or reasons of meeting her again. At last he has met Jameela when she has come to say goodbye to him. After Mangala’s death her husband has also died after few months. The attraction
towards Jameela has made him to remember his early day’s fascination on the young actress Rita or Mona. Now he could not remember her name, instead of that he has said that name is not important, but the way she has dressed was like an apsara even now he has fetched her memory in his heart, which has remained stagnant right from his childhood as,

Rita-Mona wore an emerald-green sequined cloth round her billowy breasts, and an equally dazzling purple garment round her hips. Both strips were tied so tightly that her torso was a series of little wavy bulges. Her neck, shoulders, and stomach were different colour from her face and arms. Their exotic pink veiled the base skin beneath […]. Her hypnotic, piercing look and the breasts which swelled out of the calendar to smother me, were the only sights in the world which moved me to the point of constipation. (TGVM 17)

Rama Mehta’s *Inside the Haveli*, through the character Geeta, the author has stated, “women are treated as chattels.” It is fact; generally “women are treated as an object of lust.” Especially in the field of advertisement media and in media, Hariharan has strongly opposed the wrong posture of showing women in the field which is said already. The charmness of woman has made her to stay away from her excellence. For a man the image of a woman has stimulated his sensuality and promoted voyeuristic excitement when he has watched a woman in media or in real life. Women are easily fascinated towards men by their physical charm.

Another woman has remained in his memory is Eliamma. Eliamma has been known to him through the stories of Mangala. Mangala is good in story telling especially ghost stories. First she has seen Eliamma at the seashore. She has dwelt in a fishing
village nearby the sea. She has grown up like a fisher woman in the village did all kind of work like other women. “She was in fact beautiful, with thick, long hair and tapering, fish shaped eyes” (TGVM 126). Many of them have admired her and could have married anyone of them; but she has led to live alone in her hut and wandered all night by the seashore “like an orphan looking for her home.” It has happened in the society if a woman has sit alone or lives alone, everyone has ridiculed that she has a secret or she is in love even without knowing the problem. In The Thousand Faces of Night Devi’s father –in –law has advised her that a woman did not have a home of her own. In this society a woman be supposed to be either in her husband’s house or in her father’s place. Whenever she has noticed the sea, she has longed and desired to be in the centre of the sea.

One night Eliamma was sitting behind an old boat near the two guardians of the village a man and a woman, she fell asleep when she woke up, everything around her was dim and unfamiliar. She saw a stranger, a few feet away, he was tall, thin; his bones jutted out in sharp angles so that he looked skeletal in the moonlight, he was not young asked her that he would help her to become invisible and would take care of her visible body till she come back. She was extremely happy, that happiness had ever been for more than a week. When she returned, she could not find the stranger anywhere. She has remembered the words of him that he would come after a month near the old boat and hurried away. “So Eliamma waits, she waits and waits, a patient ghost, for the day she will find someone who sees her briefly, who will willingly accept her freakish gift” (TGVM 130).

Hariharan has also transmitted that there are some women still waiting for recognition and sometimes have lost their life by the falsehood of men. Vasu master has thought Mangala as “filsy evasive” as “her companion of darkness.” When she was alive
he has not even bought a new silk sari for her. He has never seen her taking rest before her death. Vasu has bore in mind that “I knew my wife and my affection for her only when I lived with her ghost” (TGVM 123), not like Mahesh in *The Thousand Faces of Night*, Vasu has been reminiscent “she looked at, but some remote point in the distance where sea melted into sky?” (TGVM 124) “She suddenly seemed different more receptive, open to the possibility of change” (TGVM 123). According to Hariharan, woman is precious which has been stayed “mysterious” to man, but he has never realized her values. Like Vasu they have become conscious after their departure. Through Mangala, the story of Eliamma has pointed out that there are some women who were totally ignored and suppressed their desires to the core by the dominated man.

Then Vasu Master has reminded his grandmother, as a good wife, a respected woman, he should have also been the last, he says her as “the first love of my life.” For his grandmother, her husband was the first guru for her. Once she has told him “What is a husband, Vasu? Just a hungry stomach and a few other things, never mind what. But equally greedy, swallowing likes a big red swollen mouth, then chewing and belching” (TGVM 174).

When he has compared her grandmother with his wife and his mother Lakshmi he has stated “she would have been a timid, worrying little thing, nagging, pestering like a high-pitched mosquito. She did not learn how to bite though” (32). He has also added that his mother had not given up her inferiority complex till the end of her life. He has recollected, that her desire were on lower scale that to escape from her husband’s volatile explosions of anger “surviving her mother-in-law’s jealous rule of the household, and above all, keeping the house, and every one in it, clean, pure and unpolluted” (TGVM 32). She has never spoken more than six words with their neighbours, always she has whispered with her lower voice to everyone.
Hariharan has conveyed that women have to realize their position in the society; they should not give up their individuality to anyone. They are supposed to be overwhelming the inferior position in family and in society. They should have claimed her “rightful,” “equal,” “independent” status that would act as a thrust for her improvement as an individual and a social being in the society.

Like Vasumaster in the novel *The Ghost of Vasumaster*, Nagaraj Rao has recollected the memory of his wife Mangala in the short story “The Reprive” from the anthology of Githa Hariharan’s “The Art of Dying and Other Stories.” In this story it is acknowledged that how Mangala has managed all her sufferings without raising a question. When she was alive Nagaraj had not spent time with her, but after her death he was caught with his wife’s memory, is mentioned as,

> Alone in his room wide-awake again in the dead of night, he tried to conjure up an image of his wife. It was not as if he had a poor or failing memory though he was seventy-two years old; and it was not as if Mangala had died so long ago that he had trouble remembering her. (TADOS 41)

Still, Nagaraj has remembered her as a pleasant, patient, hardworking, selfless, discreet, and essentially faceless; an elusive middle of the road woman runs her machinery life of a thirty member household, of the children, the cousins, the widowed aunt, the bachelor granduncles and retired nephews, in taking care by painstakingly without raising any question. Before her death he thinks that he is taking care of the entire family as a good provider by handling over his fees and the earning he has collected from the family fields of sugarcane in a distant village. Apart from this he has not interfered in the day-to-day running of the house […] Mangala had administered, ran the house without fuss, and he assumed, with competence (TAOD 42).
When Mangala was dead “she had lived, nothing ugly or sudden, just a slow, lingering, inconspicuous bundle of well-disguised pain, the flesh slowly but not offensively disintegrating, more and more gaunt and faded […]” (TADOS 43). One night, while Nagaraj and his servants were asleep, her end has come and her soul has passed away with blessing. Very soon after her death he has identified the comforts and discomforts in his life. He does not preserved information what he has talked to his wife. When she was alive he has never bothered his wife whether she has slept or not, about her health, what and where actually she has looked like. She has given a position as mistress of the house who has to take all the responsibilities. Hariharan has justified that only women can handle all the household problems; she has forgotten all her likes and dislikes, joy, even shatters her dreams.

In “Revathi,” the identity of her has become questioning. This story has focused on a child-widow does not discriminated anything of her own in the world, till her death; she has treated as a well frog. No one is there for her to share her feelings even in her old age, right from her childhood she has survived a monotonous life. It is possible for everyone to hear the problems of women, when it has observed directly it is intolerable, as the narrator has described thus “When I first met her, I too had read of sati, dowry,deaths, and child widows. I would shudder as I put down the book or newspaper I pictured an innocent girl brutally held down, her bangles broken” (TADOS 92).

Except sati still all kinds of disasters are happening to women in this male dominated society, even sati is better comparing to live in this brutalized society. Still woman needs more awareness in the movements and in the government policies which is favorable to them. Here “Revathi” “was married when she was ten. Within a year, her husband died” (TADOS 93). For some years she does not acknowledged that she is a child widow. When she was a child widow, she was not even sent to school for
education. They have arranged a tutor in the home itself on the advice of one of their relatives. Wherever she has gone she has been protected without companionship, and has lost her self. “She was an unpleasant reminder of a world gone by. A child widow was a thing of a past, a page from a history textbook that should be safely contained between cardboard covers (TADOS 93).

Though she is a child widow, later as a widow her individuality has gone. Some of her distant relative has got a job for her. Though she has account of her own, everything has been taken away by their relatives. While she was in her job, she has never concentrated on anything for her. After ten years of her retirement she has wedged into loneliness and become a burden to her relatives. They have ridiculed each and every activity of her and feel embarrassed in certain situation, like when she has talked about different kind of burp. She has been taken care by a young boy arranged by their relatives, in her son’s age. He was very kind enough, but the society, even their relatives have got a wrong notion on her. So, they have sent him out with a hundred rupee note to him. At last, when she suffers in her deathbed no one is there to take care of her except the narrator and her mother-in-law. In the beginning of the short story it is well said that in cinemas it is possible for young beautiful widow will get a new life by a young man or if she is wealthy enough it is possible for her re-marriage. But in reality re-marriage is not possible at all, even if it is possible the society never accepts and after marriage most of them have not led their life happily. In reality, for a valid reason if the bride has become widow the society has accepted her as a sin and she should not have any expectations, she should state her as an innocent widower, on the other hand if the groom has become widower or divorced always he has stated himself as an innocent widow or divorce, is in search for a beautiful young girl and of equal age.
In “Forefathers,” Hariharan has shown a daughter is waiting for her father’s death. She has narrated that her father is still a dominated man, although has been paralyzed in the body. This daughter has predicted his father’s death by hitting the crow with a stone, if it has hit in the first time her father will die next week, a second attempt has meant a delay of a month, in the third shot if the bird flies away has destined that he will live for another six months helplessness. She has lost her sleep for one hundred and eighty nights, an eternity of watchfulness for fear that the paralyzed man brandish its terrifying power has made her to do this attempt. The narrator has lost her privacy in his father’s kingdom. The three daughters do not have a corner of their own, even to change their dress. They have learnt the art of cautiously dressing in public, sometimes in the narrow wet bathroom or they rush to the kitchen to finish dressing behind the open doors of their steal cupboards. Her father is the lawmaker, the lord of all he surveys and his daughters mere automated menials who can be summoned and dismissed at the ring of the bell. Like her mother she nurses her father, the cunning tyrant. It is not possible for her to prepare for the next year public exam. “He has spluttered all weekend. Anecdotes, complaints, orders” (TADOS 54). Even sleeping is a communal problem for her. Hariharan has elaborated the sufferings of women the way she has suffered in all costs. They have worn mask of “humbleness,” “dutifulness” that “absorbs the sharpest sarcasm and hides the angriest of tears.”

The short story “Untitled poem,” has discussed about the character Sarala and her retired husband, a retired salesman, and an aspiring creative writer. They have shifted to a new house built on his life-savings. She was satisfied in the new house, because she has made a real garden. Being in the seventh floor she has self-contained gardens in pots in the balcony. She could not plant deep-rooted plants; these kinds of plants can be planted in this house. This has made to know the shallow relationship between a husband and
wife each incident has revealed Sarala’s unhappiness in her life. She cannot ascertain the roots feelings of possessions. Both of thought “marriage has meant doing things together” but nothing has to be shared. They have no children to strengthen their relationship. She is busy with her garden, and he is busy with his writings. He has picked the most fertile, the lushes of her plants, he has uprooted them, torn them up in shreds, and all stalks and leaves. “He does not eat any of it. It is a song of pure destruction” this has proven the correct position of women most of them suffer. These women of soft nature, are being torn, uprooted, tattered, and stalked, they still live on. Sometimes these women might have turned like a vengeful kali a destroyer. The allegory which Shashi Deshpande, has described about the appropriate system of the Indian marriage in her novel, That Long Silence as,

A pair of bullocks yoked together … a clever phrase, but can it substitute for reality? A man and a woman married for seventeen years. A couple with two children. A family somewhat like the one caught and preserved for posterity by the advertising visuals I so loved. But the reality was only this. We were two persons. A man.

A woman. (8)

The title story, “The Art of Dying,” has projected a woman’s life – “wifing,” “child-bearing”, “bleeds, dry up, and expand with life, contract with completion.” In male point of view it is observed that women are “peaceful, gentle existence” for woman it is defined as a “contraption” which has moved in one direction- negation of self-leads to “yarning emptiness.” Woman’s life is fully compiled of pain, they have dedicated to the ‘housekeeping of the body’, their minds and hearts have demanded much more. Still they are being strived for a better position in all facets of their life. In “The Closed Room,” again another woman has perceived in this short story, a true wife, a faithful
helper, helps a man in his art of creation. They have enough potential to assist in creation, but they have not given the position as creators, because of the male dominance. Women have to learn to be unremarkable, but remains in the same position. “The Remaining of the Feast,” has brought the story of a ninety year old dying grandmother, fulfills her meek desires are not permissible in her life. These desires have come out with the scary shapes towards the end of life. She was an orthodoxical Brahmin widow; almost a century has never eaten anything prepared by non-brahmins. She has eaten only pure, home-cooked food. She has strictly followed her rituals during her lifetime. Before a week of her death she has tasted cakes, samosa, ice-creams, biscuits prepared by non-brahmin. She has drunk coloured drink, garlic eggs, cakes laced with brandy, bhel puri, peanuts, and also she wants to taste raw onions, fried bread, chicken and goats. After that she has preferred to be dressed a red silk sari with wide border of gold. She has wished for these desires throughout her life but it was not possible in her life, later it has come out like a volcano through this story Hariharan has articulated the awareness of woman’s destiny.

In the story of “The Will,” Hariharan has brought many aspects of the life of a female in the male dominated society. She has not allowed thinking independently after the death of her husband. In the histories it was stated that she had given the position of an advisor, or as a one had governed the kingdom, but now she has been guided through set of instructions. In this story the author has created the central character Sushila as a dependent woman on the will of her husband, the will here has mentioned not the wealth, or any property it is the letter a set of instruction has given by her husband the way to lead the rest of her life. She has also carved the life of Sushila worldview, and the turn of events in her life after the death of her husband. Raghu, husband of Sushila has controlled her in the form of written scripts. Hariharan has acknowledged Raghu, as “he hated nervous, silly women. She drew closer around her shoulders, and sat upright again, a
picture of dignity” (TADOS 147) for him a woman role – appearance is very important than her real self. But in this story she has led a life which has completely moulded with the extreme obedience and has obeyed the orders framed, the dictates of the society, and the dictates of her husband Raghu. She has been spent her time only with her husband and within the four walls of the household works and in the kitchen. Raghu, a distinctive conformist husband has believed the space between the husband and wife.

In this story Raghu is shown as a protector, on the other hand she has been protected, he has been as lover, and she has been a beloved wife, but she has not been given freedom to act individually. She has read the letter written by Raghu once in a day, for her this has been treated as important than any other thing. After the physical presence of him his words in the letters have guided her and has filled the gap, as her husband said she has stayed along with her elder son, she has been very busy and started helping the servant in cooking. She has followed the words of Raghu as instructed in the letter that no one would like a nagging mother, stay behind a inch from him and be a passive listener and watch carefully until then the presence is important for them move forward for suggestions. She has been appreciated and greatly well liked by her son and her friends. She has not believed herself that she could manage well. After four months being stayed with her son she has told him to buy the tickets for her daughters place and she added after a year she will be returned to his house. She has spelled out everything, as well trained parrot. She has decided to visit her daughter’s untidy flat in Mumbai. She has prepared herself to help her daughter in cooking, taking care of her two grandchildren and the untrained dog. As a mother she has advised her daughter and she has understood that “women are amicable when they are useful, she told her daughter, and set to work” (TADOS 150) during the afternoon half an hour she has informed them that it has been the time for her meditation and prayer. The letter which has written by her husband is the
mantra, she has chanted daily and her prayer also the same. She felt the letter is the energy drink got strength once she has read. Unconsciously she has become a trained parrot, more amicable, polite, cordial, good-natured etc, and voluntarily has done the work. One day the letter has flown out the window and she has lost it, from that day onwards she has lost the anchor of her life which has dignified her as a widow mother. It has led to loss of her conscious, as she has been alienated from her surroundings and realized herself as she has been alone, a widow. She is remained silent. As,

Sushila found that she had nothing at all to say. If someone spoke to her, or asked her for an opinion, she tried and tried, but she could not say what she thought. Her shoulders began to droop, and her hair hung uncombed and lifeless. She spent most of the day in bed, and if she was out of it, she was even more incoherent. The family began to avoid her. (TADOS151)

Sushila’s son-in-law has introduced her as a “zombie mother-in-law” to their guest, the words have pricked her. A woman has an individual mind to think and act, but it has been made by man to become rust, at once they have sharpened their mind no one can stop. When she has heard a lesson read by her seven-year-old grandson again she has got the spirit, “A cheerful wife is the joy of life, he chanted […] A good husband makes a good wife” (TADOS 152). It has stated, a man has shaped a woman to be a good, courageous, and she has been spirited by him, according to them women have a weak mind, they could not have acted individually and never allowed to take effort to think. When she has done a work of her own, there will be a group of men to criticize and will not allow her to move forward with a spirited thought. Men have believed women must be submissive, dependent for everything, now a days women have given chance to work, but the salary has to be remitted in his accounts at the bank she has refused to give the
pay the problem has been raised. It has not been an ideal couple as said a good husband makes a good wife. They are the beginners for all the problems like egoism, rude behaviour, a wife must be passive listener. Sushila, has said suddenly, remembered about her a new life, self and has looked at the child has stooped immediately as he has committed any mistake. But the words from the lesson has brought her to understand that she has again regained the spirit and started with the little tricks “what noble sentiments! Wonderful! Please, please go on” (TADOS-152). The author has described that the women have been moved towards sentiments in one way or another. They have sacrificed everything for the familial needs, epistemology, education, and acculturation.

Another story “Love Poem” which described a student, very much interested in learning the art of writing a poem. She has grabbed the woman characters, the way of treatment in the society. She has rendered different types of characters like a wife, daughter, mother, and student. Hariharan examined Neeta as a “new comer to the city, a mere girl in a protected and protective women’s college, learn the power of image, metaphor? To use it her advantage, make some private connection between what she read and felt” (TADOS 119). Each and every stage, part of her life and with the relationship has taught woman a different beautiful lesson that is important for her further improvement. A girl has not given freedom to select education of her own, but her father a small – town schoolteacher has encouraged her to continue her studies in Bombay. Later when she has continued her second year, she discovered Dr. Sharma as a person has come for lecture once in a week, a person of inspiration, lyrical, muse, metaphor and also love, she has been much interested in his class. Hariharan has also discussed the nature of the rumors which has been conversed in the society. In the college Neeta’s friends described Professor Sharma, a man has already married twice, one to cook and clean, or a homo. “That’s why the nuns let him come here” (TADOS 123). Neeta has not believed
and accepted any negative remarks of his favourite professor, she has admired him and another reason interested in learning to write a poem; the problem with weaker sex especially in the teen, if once they have admired or interested in anything or any person they have accepted everything. The admiration of her and anticipation of learning to write a poem has led to the cause of misbehavior with her. Later she has been forced to attend the class, but she could not forget 22nd March the date she has learnt real love poem. Many women from her childhood have happened to face many problems. As she grows the problem has also moved by promotion after promotion from schools to college from college to work place etc. This has caused problems in their family.

In the novel, *In Times of Siege*, Hariharan, has portrayed Shiv as a protagonist, but Meena, sociology student has studied in a university has dominated the entire novel. She has written a thesis on women stories and also she has her own mind; this has been seen by Shiv in the first day itself, when she has met Shiv. Meena the daughter of Sumathi, a friend of Murthy, a strong, vibrant, has a stable obligatory thinking on marriage. She visits his house when his leg was broken. In a book reading session at ITC Kakatiya Sheraton Hotel and Towers organized by Penguin publication, Hariharan has articulated that, “Shiv is a man with a large female component in him. He has exceeded with other gender; I want to show that the complex male figure is as much a victim of society.” He has completely secured with the female characters like Rekha wife of Shiv, Meena, and her daughter Tara. In the absence of his wife, Meena has taken part of her role, in advising him. He has taken care of the household works. Apart from his wife, he has lust-love with Meena towards the end of the novel. Shiv has a desultory affair with Amita Sen as an escape from his routine married life with Rekha. They have spent their time in the secret relationship together with few times. This has happened on four occasions, and also continued after having a hurried lunch, unsatisfactory sex at her house.
in bed. Later they have returned to the department for outward, he is appeared like a dictator. In fact Amita Sen’s husband is a talented chartered accountant has managed all the files of the higher officials, rich persons, etc, but he has failed to be a husband. Shiv has also failed to be trust worthy husband to his wife, but he has spotted the mistakes of her husband. Hariharan has quoted the state of mind of Amita through Shiv as,

Amita’s greatest fear is boredom. And loneliness, she has found, is usually accompanied by boredom. Her husband is a successful chartered accountant; he holds the income tax secrets of many rich and powerful men in his files. Amita and Shiv have never spoken of him, but Shiv doubts that the man has ever tried to unravel his wife’s melancholy file of accounts. (ITS 21)

Elizabeth Janeway, has opinioned the treatment of women in her article “On the Power of the Weak,” as, “The power of the weak are, finally, more powerful than we think and can only be ignored by the powerful at their peril” (105). Here she has raised the word “powerful” which has indicated, “the weaker sex has its own methods to deal with the other more powerful ones” (105) in the writings of men, they have made their protagonist to grow in height on the other hand their women as melting candles or minor. They have never allowed them to come forward to gain strength or to seize power. These writers have influenced men to an extreme limit, such has influenced, that is the powerful one’s has disguised in a polishing manner or to instill decency. In women studies, the weak has interpreted as “the power to influence” (105).

The novel, When Dreams Travel, is exactly related to the above statement. The queens- the two sisters Shahrzad and Dunyazad have saved themselves and the entire kingdom by risk has taken with the creative power, from the ruthless, tyrant ruler. Being a weaker sex Shahrzad has changed him into a living responsible husband through their
intelligence at last, before her marriage her father has advised Shahrzad: “This is a dangerous mission, my daughter!” […] Have you made up your mind? Do you have to go to the palace tomorrow? […] Yes, father says Shahrzad as an obedient daughter and as womanhood I must go nothing can change that I know” (WDT-5). She has replied.

Hariharan has exposed these women as courageous to tackle the lion like inhuman king. After their marriage, with the brothers (Sharyar-Shahrzad and Shahzaman-Dunyazad) for the very first time these sisters have entered into the harem. It has pictured with full of bloodstains, a sharp sword, and hangs on the top of the bed. Even she could remember this experience at the time of her “delivery day” (WDT 123) “Shahrzad tries to remember the terror that walked with her to Sharyar’s bedchamber that first night; surely this should be less frightening?” (WDT 124). She has smiled at Dunyazad, that she is going to play a game has called “The Martyr’s walk.” Finally she has gained the martyrdom even before her death.

In the chapter “Seven Days and Nights” the voyage of the present century women has been discussed as “the Journey has begun,” Shahrzad has narrated to her sister that, “She has traced the story of many a voyage, but never one which takes the traveler so dangerously close to the afterlife. To night’s story must of course be the record of a long and different journey. She […] whispers, “Travelers, and the obstacles, wonder upon wonder” (WDT126).

Shahrzad has taken this journey of her life as a challenge to save the young woman from the blood-dripping sword. She has never minded the sword, which leaves her alive or not. In this battle she may live or deflowered by the king. Hariharan implied through Shahrzad that she has imagined the life of a woman the kind of life she led. She has faced more obstacles and to tackle all the twist and turns throughout her life, which she never expected.
The novel, *When Dreams Travel*, has two parts. In Part One, Hariharan, has endowed in giving the subtitle as “In the Embrace of Darkness”. Then it has slowly moved from darkness to “On the Way to Paradise”. Last it has shown “Knots in the afterlife”. These titles has given the outlook of the entire story that the first one shows the kingdom is under darkness symbolizes moaning and is being vanished by the cruel rulers, and the women in the kingdom are brutally killed by them. Next, after the arrival of Shahrzad it happened because of her art of telling stories, and with her cleverness, it has been moved from Darkness to paradise. In “Knots in the After Life” has shown Dunyazad’s anticipation to know the secrecy lurking behind the death of her sister. She has also remembered all the incidents happened in the harem along with her Sister, and also recalled her father’s death, and her mother Raziya’s death.

In Part Two, the novelist, has explained the entire story through Dunyazad and Dilshad in “Seven Nights and Days.” The first story “Rowing a Floating Island” is not said in the original text, which has focused on the sufferings of Shahrzad. Dunyazad’s stories, prolongs the suffering of Sharayar and her sister. Each story in *When Dreams Travel* has expressed the sufferings of women. Even though they are courageous, talented, their sufferings and frustration has extended throughout their life. Dunyazard’s story has pointed out the sufferings of the queen Shahrzad. Sharyar’s misery is shown in “A Lovers a Tomb” after his betrayal by his son “Umar.” In Hariharan’s novel and in the short story, the male characters have realized their importance of their women after they disappear.

Dilshad’s stories have conveyed woman’s adventures, talents, innovation, and their joy. Finally has received punishments and sufferings as reward for their talents. “Nine Jewels for a Rani” has revealed Satyasama the poet who is eager to see the sky and has turned into a monkey-face later one-eyed and finally has remained with a moaning
voice in the city. In “Rupavati’s Breasts,” the treatment of woman is shown, the stories generally based on the virginity of woman. Through Shahrzad, Hariharan has said, it is an excuse for sultan, can have many wives in their harem. Even ordinary men have many wives in their worst situation. It is a leisure pursuit for a man to suspect her wife. When Shahrzad has told the stories, it has signified the chaste and unchaste wives. This indirectly has shown him “that all kind of men could be cuckolds” (WDT 130).

In the last chapter “The Morning After” has got a revelation to the readers. The queen is still alive, as a feeble woman, has survived with the care of the slave girls in the remote corner of the palace. A virgin (Shahrzad) the one has saved Shahabad from destruction through her quick wit and “felicitous” and “beguiled” the sultan and has also saved herself. Though she is safe and alive, she worries about the present generation has to be aware of them to protect from all the social evil. In any form the sword may occur, they have to face everything with their quick wit. This novel has entirely portrayed woman as a lustful objects, the main aim is to degrade and befool man, specially their husbands. Man has always suspected the virginity of a woman specially his wife. This has happened in Hindu Mythology. Once the Lord Rama also has done the same, he has insisted Goddess Sita to chaste her virginity that she is pativiratai. In order to prove her chastity in front of the people, the so-called society, she has done everything for the Lord Rama. Finally she has proved her virginity. In this novel Shahrzad, without proper sleep, has tried to prove the same “Her tone she has learnt from her Justice-loving teacher, though not the words: ‘Here I am, talking for my life and yours, and you talk of more bloodshed? Look at this empty harem. Can’t you hear its walls weep? (WDT 131).

The tortures have given to the protagonist as well to the woman has symbolized, even stones shed tears by seeing the cruelty of the king by raping women at the nightfall and kills them in the dawn. In the palace she has given the position of the queen, but she
is treated as mere slave. The room itself is an example. She has dwelt in the untidy, unwashed bed tarnished with blood, sweat, and semen. At the time when she gives birth to a child, she never cares for her; completely she lost herself as a wife, queen and a mother. She has not shared her pains to anyone. She is not given time to feel the ecstasy and joy of fulfillment of motherhood as the new born baby is handed over to the nurses to be reared in another corner of the place. She is forced to continue her creation and procreation in order to save herself and the city. She lives thousand and one nights inside the room to satisfy the sultan and to prove all women are not same. Finally she has won the game and also the sultan has realized his mistake. It is articulated by her as,

At the end of the play, a bloodthirsty drama in which swords pierce soft, yielding flesh, a happy conclusion is announced. The sultan, powerful, noble, deluded, has seen the light. He has been brought to his senses by a woman; and with, of all the things, her stories; her ready tongue, her cleverness. In this abnormal climate where imagination-through the medium of the world-asserts its power over the blood-shedding sword, everyone forgives everyone.

(WDT 21)

Shahrzad felt happy that she has saved many women from death. She has alarmed the younger generation to be aware to her forebodings so that they have to face the challenge boldly when their role comes: “[…] when the drums roll, and the sword blunted with age, the rusty, and wake up to be freshly sharpened?” (WDT 276).

In this novel, Hariharan has specified the silence women of the Wasir’s wife and the two brave daughters. In the original male text these women have no space, said Mohua Ghosh. In this novel, it has been glimpse on the mother of the two brave daughters, is enforced to maintain silence. Hariharan has shown Raziya’s bitter
hopelessness, and fury of her life, through her daughter Dunyazad. The death of the submissive and indiscernible is explained as natural death of broken heart. But Hariharan through Dunyazard has illustrated her as,

She saw her mother’s heart for a moment before it was shrouded from sight and buried forever. And what she saw was not a broken spring, but a chamber where outrage swelled the air, stretched it to grotesque dimensions till the tightly packed, thin-skinned balloon of a place exploded the aftermath of an enraged heart. (WDT 84)

There are many women like Raziya. They could not let a word against their husbands. When Wazir took the decision to make his daughters as scapegoat to the king Raziya was disappointed with her husband’s decision. Though he has taken a bold and wise decision, he would have advised the king as an advisor. He has not taken the permission of her daughters. The real situation is also not known to them. Everywhere women have been exploited and also in all the fields. In Indian constitution every citizen has equal rights, but for women still there is discrimination. It can be seen in all the levels and in all the ages from Infant to ninety-year-old lady. Meena Usmani, in her article, “Violence against Women” has remarked as,

The women have frequently been ruthlessly exploited in our society and the problem is growing day by day. The case of eave teasing, sexual harassment, abduction, sati, rape, and wife battering in public and at work place etc., have been more regularly reported since the 1960s and early 1970’s, the issue of violence against women has become the public problem as women are discriminated at work, home and denied their due in early field. The constitution of India promises freedom, equality, opportunity,
and protection to women and give them several rights. In spite of that enjoy an unequal status. (13)

The detailed study depicts that Hariharan’s novels prove the present position of women, still the women search for their identity. It is understood that from the past to the present century they have been probing for a proper place to fix themselves. This should never exceed in future also. But it seems it becomes weaker and weaker, a woman is seeking for her identity, but on the other side, infanticide, child abuse, partiality between children is going on. This discrimination has to be uprooted from the bottom. Why? Again the weak has to become weak again. There are some women, have shown their potential to a weak man. The entire society has not been blamed, but it has to be changed. She can dominate others in the society, but has lost her individuality to a man after her marriage.