Resocialization in Contemporary Indian Society
Chapter II

Resocialization in Contemporary Indian Society

The human infant comes into the world as a biological organism with animal needs. The infant gradually moulds into a social being and learns social ways of acting and feeling. Without this process of moulding, society cannot continue itself, nor could culture exist, nor could the individual become a person. This process of moulding is called 'Socialization'. According to H.T. Majumdar "Socialization is the process whereby original nature is transformed into human nature and the individual into person". Resocialization is the process which reforms the social behaviour. Roles such as spouse, parent, widow, prison inmate and employee, all involve a kind of resocialization. Erving Goffman defines resocialization as a process of tearing down and rebuilding an individual’s role and socially constructed sense of self. Learning new norms and values enables people to adapt, though newly learned things may contradict with what was previously learnt. The process of resocialisation occurs throughout human life cycle. It refers to reformation in social and individual life. Our contemporary society needs reformation in all aspects. According to the present scenario, the old order should be replaced by new one. In India, family is the longest surviving institution through ages. Indian culture and family life are two amazing institutions which are inseparable in social life.

Family is considered as strong, stable, close, resilient and enduring. The value of family has been taught in Indian ancient texts called Vedas and has been practiced
for centuries in India. The elders have to pass on valuable culture, spiritual and ancient heritage to the younger generation. Social interdependence is one of the greatest themes prevailing in Indian family and society. The ancient ideal of the joint family retains its power though many Indians live in nuclear families. Family plays an important role in the life of individuals. Psychologically, family members feel an intense emotional interdependence with each other and there is a strong interpersonal empathy, closeness and loyalty. Over the last four decades, in the Indian society, significant changes have taken place in terms of social structure, processes and dynamics of social institutions. This process of change, however, has not followed predictable directions. Even when old identities persist, India has witnessed the rise of new identities and aspirations common to the modern times.

The Remains of the Feast under the title Forbidden Fruit was published in new writing by Indian women. This story is an eye opener to the present Indian society and a mirror to show the suffering of widowhood. Society tells us a lot of things about the widower. The origins and outcomes of violence are more usefully and accurately conceived in terms of structural and societal conditions. Resocialization refers to sociological concern that addresses individuals. The term ‘widow’ refers to a woman. On the other hand, a man who has lost his wife is called a ‘widower’. Ancient texts and manuscript researchers have furnished that during Vedic period women enjoyed an equal position with men. As mentioned in great epics, women of royal families enjoyed the privilege of choosing their life partners through the custom of Swayamvara. Divorce and remarriage of women were acceptable under unfortunate circumstances.
Next to Vedic period, epic era brings a huge transformation in the condition of women. During medieval period, merciless practices like Sati and child marriage penetrated into each and every part of the society. During British rule, many reformers worked for the betterment of the condition of women in India. Prominent names among them are Ram Mohan Roy, Jyoti Rao Phule and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Pandita Ramabai, etc. Ram Mohan Roy took strong steps to put an end to sati. The Government also took an active part for the betterment of women. Various laws like Child Marriage Restraint Act, Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act 1987, Dowry Prohibition Act 1961, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, Protection of Women against Sexual Harassment Bill 2007, Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act 1986, Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929, Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Amendment Act 2006, Reformatory Schools Act 1897, etc., were brought into force to protect women against discrimination.

Colonial domination had set the change in motion. There were radical changes in the life of women in modern India. Since late 1970s, feminist activism in India acquired momentum and various women’s groups together opposed the injust activities against women. Throughout the country, the All India Women’s Conference branches organized meetings at which women boldly came forward to express their opinions. Women against the custom of child marriage had begun to question the whole system, including their socialization into it. Modern women involve themselves in resocializing the contemporary Indian life. *The Remains of the Feast* is a story which deals with a
ninety year old dying woman, Rukmini. Githa Hariharan very subtly brings out how women as widows were controlled and restricted by the extreme rules and rituals. The story of Rukmini is narrated by her great granddaughter Ratna, a young girl of twenty- two, who is studying medicine. Without succumbing to grief, a great grandmother could survive even after the death of her only son and his wife Ratna says that her great grandmother is always cheerful and had never been sick. She used to share her lifetime experiences with Ratna. At the time when she comments about her husband, she will giggle, which will develop into ‘uncontrollable peals of laughter with tears rolling down her cheeks’. Her long tenure of her suffering life had taught her to accept the death of her children with equanimity and she had learnt to laugh at life’s grotesque ways. Ratna knows about her health. The old woman never suffered from sick and she never used to go to a doctor. Nevertheless, two months before her death, she is forced to agree to see the doctor by Ratna’s father and she slowly lost hope of living. She gradually dies because of a huge lump of a cancerous growth, which has spread all over her body. The old woman is living the last days of her life. Knowing that she is going to die, Rukmini prepares herself. She immediately starts to fulfil her wishes and the mission which has been buried secretly for a long period. A week before she dies, she even breaks through the shackles of being a Brahmin widow. In a patriarchal society, widow’s diet is also strictly restricted. She is not allowed to take healthy and yummy food like others and also not from outside shops. She has to undergo spiritual life willingly or unwillingly. Only her husband’s presence in the society gives her a human status. When she becomes a widow, sometimes she is even
called a creature. In some Indian Languages, a widow is referred as “it” rather than “she”. She stuns Ratna by asking for a cake particularly from the Christian shop. The old woman’s craving starts with a cake and continues with creams, biscuits and samosas. She becomes more adventurous every day. On every occasion, she gets assurance from Ratna that one of the ingredients of cake should be eggs. In a short span, she tastes lemon tarts, garlic and three types of aerated drinks. Great grandmother said:

‘Get me a glass of that brown drink Ratna bought in the bottle. The kind that bubbles and makes a popping second when you open the bottle. The one with the fizzy noise when you pour it out.’ ‘A Coca Cola?’ said my mother, shocked. ‘Don’t be silly, it will make you sick.’ ‘I don’t care what it is called,’ my great grandmother said and started moaning again. ‘I want it.’ (TAD, 13)

Gradually, Great grandmother becomes up of these usual things. She grows bold and demands for different things and she insists that they should be fulfilled immediately. However, Ratna’s mother fulfils her desire as she is always a dutiful grand daughter-in-law.

A Brahmin widow has restrictions to wear her dress too. She is not allowed to wear colourful dress because they should not look attractive. On the news of her husband’s death, she has to break her bangles and can no longer wear jewellery or use sindhoor, which denotes her marital status. Even today many widows live a life like in Vrindavan, a holy town in Northern India, which is otherwise called city of widows.
It shows that many husbandless women in India still live as impoverished and shunned by their families and society. Mittal Patel, Manager of a Government funded ashram in Vrindavan, says:

The problems of the destitute in temple towns are only one visible end of the white sari. According to the 1991 Census there are 33 million widows all over India -- 8 percent of the total female population and 50 percent of the female population over the age of 50. In terms of prevalence of widowhood, India ranks among the highest in the world. The incidence of widowhood rises sharply with age: 64 percent among women aged 60 and above, and 80 percent women aged 70. An Indian woman who survives to old age is therefore almost certain to become a widow. In contrast, only 2.5 percent of Indian men are widowers, and even in the older age groups only a small minority of men are widowed. The main reasons for this are the much higher rate of remarriage for widowers, and the fact that male mortality rates are higher than female.

(Newspaper article by Ridge, Mian in The Christian Science Monitor, August 9, 2007)

The above lines represent the state of a widow in the Indian society. Widowhood in India is viewed not just as another phase in one’s life but as a personal and social aberration. There are deep social, economic and cultural implications of widowhood. Widows are compelled to follow rules based on tradition in many parts of India, particularly in tribal communities. Unless a woman starts thinking of her own life and
future women generations, no one can think of her even in the 'modern' India. The orthodox Brahmin view of widowhood is that the widow is physically alive but socially dead with regard to food, dress, participation in the social functions, etc.

At last after a week, Ratna’s great grandmother’s life comes to an end. But even at the time of her death her longing for food did not die. She is unable to swallow anything, but still she shouts for raw onion, chicken and goats. Very soon she reaches the next stage. She gradually loses her ability to speak but manages to call Ratna. Both Ratna and her mother rush to her bedside. Ratna’s mother, knowing that the old lady is breathing her last, begs for blessings with tears in her eyes. She express that she wants to be wrapped in a red silk saree with a big wide golden border after her death. Further she asks for some peanuts with chilli powder from the corner shop. With this she breaths her last. Ratna tries to fulfil her last wish by covering her body with her own red silk saree. Her great grandmother had imprisoned all her desires and longings within herself so long that now at the end of her life it has taken terrifying shapes. Through this character, Hariharan tries to show that no widow is willing to sacrifice her daily amenities which she has been practised from her birth. In general, a widow was considered as an inauspicious living being and hence she was not allowed to be present at the rituals and celebrations such as marriages or birth ceremonies. In some cases, even her shadow was considered as pollution and offensive. From the time the old woman came to know about her death, she has been demanding for forbidden things and she was in a kind of hurry to fulfil all her desires, which were denied by the society since she lost her husband. At the time of death, she tries to
resocialize her own society in different form. She wants to elicit not only her yearning but each and every widow’s longing and so this is one kind of struggle for their freedom to live in an independent society. Gandhi strongly advocated women's equality in most of the spheres and provided ample opportunities for self-development and self-realisation. He frequently lamented: "Women have been suppressed under customs and law for which man was responsible". In 1926, he spoke against the double standards for men and women related to morality and divorce. Widows did not have the right to remarry but in modern India it is not so. Today, they are allowed to do but a widow who is very young does not encourage remarriage. She wants to dedicate her life for her children and her family. Sometimes, even a widower also lives only for his children. Throughout history the problem are there for both of them, but it is widow who has often found herself in difficult situations, as it is the man who provides money, food, clothing and shelter to a family. Her own family feels that she is a burden to them along with her children. Today, people’s mind has shrunk into a small circle of selfishness. If a woman is able to look after her life independently, then she looks arrogant to her in-laws and her parents. The Acts of 1937, 1956 and 2005 of the Indian Constitution, aim at eliminating gender discrimination. There are provisions to ensure gender equality under the Constitution, but most widows are not aware of their own rights so far. To change this, legal advisors or advocates have to conduct free legal programmes once in a month. It will be possible for them to assert their rights and empower themselves. The widow’s rights to own land and other properties can be recognized under the Indian Constitutional laws, along with her right to equality
and the right to live with dignity. Jawaharlal Nehru’s views on the development of the status of women are more in keeping with those of the enlightened reformers of the time. He emphasized the necessity for women to work outside the home, to be economically independent. If women are not economically free and self-earning, they have to depend on their husband or someone else and they can never be free. This economic bondage is the root cause of the troubles of the Indian women. Jawaharlal Nehru further said that one has to train women to face their problems and find solutions. This is possible only when women are educated and provided economic Independence. Social reformers and activists rallied extensively against the inhumane situation of widows. Child marriage in modern India is a much debated issue.

In the story *Revati* by Hariharan, the past and present discourses on women are expressed through the character Revati. The story is narrates around Revati, who is a child widow. Different gender discourses on widowhood are mentioned at the beginning of the short story *Revati* are shown below:

> 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 head shaved clean and her bangles broken. (TAD,92)

Widowhood and dowry are the two issues discussed in the above lines. The masses still grope in darkness. Among the poor and the rural area in India, child marriages were common because it started from the root of culture and they were bound by their own customs and tradition. The history of child marriage in ancient India represents
child marriage as the best way to protect a girl from losing her virginity. Even after the marriage she was made to live with her parents till she attains her puberty. As soon as she attains puberty, she would be sent to her husband’s house. Until her first menstruation, if the girl stays at her house, people believed that it was a sin for the whole family and because of that they would go to hell. The present and the following generations fall into the abyss of hell and they will be cursed to be born as insects and other low creatures. And especially, a Brahmin who marries a girl after her first menstruation period will become an out-caste. Moreover, he will be neither allowed to do any rituals nor be admitted in the society. The character, Revati gets married when she is ten years old. Within a year, her husband dies. At this situation, she never realizes that she is a child widow. After many years, she realise her position. After that her father decides to give good education for her future. He educates her through a tutor at his home. When she grows up, he allows her to do a degree in Madras. After her studies, one of her relatives finds her a job in a school with hostel facilities. It is explicitly clear that the rights of the Indian women are connected with education and economic conditions and the freedom of thought that when their education improves they become aware of their rights. The crux of the problem is poverty, ignorance, improper guidance and illiteracy. Another important factor is the indifference of family members towards widowhood. The practical learning for successful and enlightened living in education, religions, political and industries leaders should lead the way in changing the age old habits and concepts to bring proper dealing with women in all aspects of life. Today, because of the advancement
of social and scientific education, women are equally capable of performing all the 
duties that men perform. Equal respect should be bestowed upon women in all walks 
of life. In addition to that, women should be given special comforts appropriate to the 
nobility of their sex.

It is ten years since Revati retired from her teaching career. After a long time 
she returns to her native place and decides to spend her life along with her brother and 
sister’s family. Present India is trying to create awareness about child marriage and 
the plight of widows and women under various other critical situations. One still needs 
changes not in words but in action in every nook and corner of the world. There are a 
number of religious and social reformers working hard for the betterment of women’s 
conditions and they demand that widow’s remarriage should be legalized. As an effort, 
The Hindu Widow Remarriage Act was passed in 1856 but it did not change the 
status of widows. Though immense efforts were put in, widow remarriage did not 
receive complete approval of Indian society. Polygamy was not abolished and the 
battle for female education had only begun in modern India from the perspective of 
woman’s rights.

The story of Revati illustrates the crime of child marriage. Religion plays a 
key role in such harmful traditions and practices. According to Indian culture, most of 
the women have their food only after everyone has. Usually they eat only the left 
over. As Revati lives out of family circumstance, she is not leading her life like other 
women. She shows her passion for eating, which eventually results in a scandal
immediately hushed up by the family members. Hariharan emphasizes, a woman is primarily an individual with her own space and self:

She was an unpleasant reminder of a world gone by. A child-widow was a thing of the past, a page from a history textbook that should be safely contained between cardboard covers. Not what she was, as large as life, walking, talking, eating huge mouthfuls of our food. (TAD, 93)

Even though Revati manages to live independently, supporting herself by a teaching job, towards the end of her life she becomes a highly ambiguous figure within the brother’s family setting. The family members always criticise her for her frank appetitive for food. They neither care about her life nor her sufferings. The female code is continuously undermined by the ambiguity of Revati’s actions and her representation which subverts the notions of female chastity, modesty and silence. The dichotomy that is established by the narrative between the family and Revati reinforces her role of the rebel against the socially approved forms of womanhood.

The Vedic mantras such as the Rig Veda mention that a girl can be married only when she is fully developed both physically and mentally. It mentions that a female should be married only “when she is not a child”. The child marriage tradition was brought to India during the medieval age by the Delhi Sultans who were ruling India at that time. Due to the major problem of Muslim rebels roaming free in the streets of India, the custom of child marriage practiced to protect a girl from losing her virginity not only before reaching maturity, but also before she gets married. The practice of child marriage was introduced through cultural values and grounded
in social structures. Gender socialization is the tendency for boys and girls to be socialized differently. A gender role is a set of behaviours, attitudes, personality and characteristics expected and encouraged by a person based on his or her sex. Every culture has different guidelines about what is appropriate for males and females. The family is considered as the institution that has the greatest impact on gender socialisation.

_The Reprieve_ and _The Will_ are two short stories which picturize the typical Indian old couples’ life after their spouses pass away. Gender has been one of the most socially significant social factors in the history of the world. Githa Harihara represents general role under Indian culture through her stories. In _The Reprieve_, Nagaraj Rao is a hard working lawyer. He prides over himself of being the provider of his family. Mangla, his wife, unquestioningly takes care of the children, the cousins, the widowed aunt, the bachelor grand uncles and the retired nephews. Tradition has always been a staunch tool in patriarchal society that subjugates men and women. Another interest that gradually arose with the inquiry and expositions of the role of woman was the purpose of associating ‘virtues’, especially of silence, and with this arrived the configuration and the functioning of the society that upholds convenient models for women came to its own end. On the other hand, the mythologies, the epics and folklores of India do present the marriage of a woman as a prime ability that lies in harmonizing her relationship with men especially as wife. Managala marries Nagaraj at fifteen years. She scarifies her life to Nagaraj’s family. She has to run the household
jobs with thirty members. Later the children grow up, the cousins find jobs and get married, two bachelor Grand uncles and a widow aunt also pass away.

Nagaraj Rao’s career as a respected senior advocate had been cluttered with other people’s problems. Over the years, in and out of the court, he had learnt to distinguish the genuine cases. When Nagaraj and his wife Mangala live alone, Mangala becomes seriously ill of diabetics and high blood pressure and finally she dies. He spends another six months in the house and finally hands over the cases to his juniors. All his life he has thought about himself, his comforts and discomforts. He has never cared for his wife’s likes and dislikes. Hariharan points out that in handling the problems of the household jobs, Mangla has lost her own identity and life. A few weeks later, his son takes him to his small flat in Bombay. There, Nagaraj happens to listen to the couple whispering in the bedroom, the intimacy of the modern nuclear family helps him to examine his own married life. He recalls his past life with Mangala.

Nagaraj Rao had a room for his office in the old house. Mangala use to sleep with rows of children on either in side in a big room on the ground floor. Her role had been so clearly defined and yet she had become invisible in his memory. Shaken by guilt, Nagaraj Rao made a final effort to make up for the past. He saw his wife through his young daughter-in-law. For then, called her as ‘Mangala’.

Mangala, wait, he wanted to say, though he couldn’t But she knew, she understood, and she quickly came to him, her face full of tender concern. A reprieve, he thought, the greatest tears spilling out of his eyes, and as
From the above quoted lines the deepest feelings of Nagaraj is disclosed though the words fail to express his thoughts. A reprieve stays at his heart and it flows out through his tears. His guilt takes him towards death. The fundamental characteristics of the Indian family remain valid even now despite the changes in the social scenario. Social and cultural changes have altered entire lifestyle, interpersonal relationship patterns, power structures and familial relationship arrangements in current times.

On the other hand, Sushila, a recent widow in *The Will*, learns to live only after her husband’s letter of advice on how to conduct herself after his death. Sushila has two sons and one daughter and they are married. The properties are equally shared among the children in her husband’s will and the lawyer gives an envelope which contains her husband Raghu’s letter. Knowing her innocence, he has clearly directed how she has to spend her rest of her life. His love and concern is expressed even after his death. Raghu’s minute handwriting as follows:

> Dearest Sushila, she read, and the tears welled up and ran down her cheeks. Oh, how could he leave her life? She had always been so careful and how was she to manage? Wipe your cheeks, she read. Don’t be afraid, Raghu. She laughed with relief, clutching the letter to her breast. He knew, of course. (148)
It is the duty of the husband to train his wife to live independently. He should help her in all possible ways for her successful life. The significance of married life is great indeed. It is fortunate that couple leads their married life with right understanding of its importance and greatness. After her husband’s death, Sushila first visits her elder son’s home. The son finds her with no confidence. But she is greatly admired by his friends. His friends say, “What profundity, how philosophical she is! You are lucky you have a mother like that instead of a helpless, mindless burden”. On hearing that, Sushila glows with pleasure. She reads her husband’s letter at least once in a day. It is the first thing she looks at when she wakes up and she inhales its perfume every night before she falls asleep. One day she finds the letter lying on the floor in a pool of her pet dog’s urine. After few days, she even misses it. While she is reading the letter, it flies out through the window. She runs down the stairs, forgetting the lift in her agitation and searches every inch around the compound wall but all ends in vain. She not only loses her confidence but also her desire to live. Then, one afternoon when she is on bed resting, her grandson comes to her in order to complete his homework, as there is no one at home to help him. She encourages him by her smile to recite a poem. He recites as,

A cheerful wife is the joy of life, he chanted. Standing pools gather dirt.

Spare the rod and spoil the child. A good husband makes a good wife.

(152)

So much her heart is filled up with gratitude. She feels proud of her husband who guides her to lead a peaceful life even after his death. Through this story, Hariharan
highlights the value and bondage of an ideal marriage, which is the act of loving one another. The real purpose of marriage is to help each other to become spiritually superior.

Widowhood is both a crisis and a problem. When a woman tries to cope with the implications, it becomes a problem. When one compares a widower, Nagaraj Raw in *The Reprieve* with other widows like Revati, Rukmani in *The Remaining of the feast* and Sushila in *The Will*, there are significant imbalance between widow and widower. It reveals partiality between men and women in martial relationship. It has been discussed that due to the monstrous system of child marriage, there are many a number of widows in India. The long term development is not possible without the participation and co-operation of the younger generation. Resocialization is successful when the sufferer brings out their problems to find solution from the social well wishers or social activists.

The saintly mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram describes marriage in her *On Thoughts and Aphorisms*:

To unite your physical existences and your material interests, to associate yourselves so as to face together the difficulties and successes, the defeats and victories of life – this is the very basis of marriage – but you know already that it does not suffice – To be one in aspiration and ascension, to advance to the same step on the spiritual path – Such is the secret of a durable union. (53)
The above lines show the real meaning of marriage is union between husband and wife. The story, *The Closed Room* is again about a woman, who like a true wife and faithful helper of a man in his act of creation. In general, women have the potential to help in creation but cannot be given the role of a creator. In this story, a sick husband who is a famous journalist dictates his work to his wife. She is a faithful helper to complete his act of creation and autobiography as his readers wish. Actually, she is from a family of scholars and she wants to be a writer. In spite of her art of writing, he uses to criticise by calling her a recording machine. In his journal, he points out:

> The word is a powerful instrument. We feel with words, we influence other people with them. Words can do unspeakable good and cause terrible wounds. (TAD, 161)

The above lines reflect the inner mind of husband who considers wife is incapable to be a writer. When he is unable to write due to ill health, she writes his dictation. So, he represents his wife as a ‘recording machine’ the word itself determines an object.

Opportunities are not given to express her anywhere. He finds three letters on his table in which his readers have requested him to publish his autobiography. Hence, he starts to write but unable to complete. In his journal, he continuously publishes his chapters about his childhood and boyhood experiences along with his friends and family. At this point of time, he falls sick and gets admitted in a hospital. She already knew that her husband had a mild stroke and that he has to be hospitalized right away. In the hospital, he stays in a small room with less oxygen. He lies on the floor, eating nothing and drinking only trickles of water which is spooned by his wife
at intervals. In the closed room, she reads his autobiography. She says: “I know there
cannot be a better reader than myself.” After a few hours, he stops breathing. After
his death, she completes his autobiography for his readers. Hariharn explains the
complexity of human relationships as a big contemporary problem and human
condition. She takes up significant contemporary issues as the subject matter of her
fiction while remaining rooted in the tradition at the same time. She explores the
anguish of individuals living in modern society. She deals with complexity of human
relationships as one of her major theme and universal issue. The protagonist of the
story shows the creative power of a woman. In general, women writers were not
allowed to expose their creative writing initially. But, later they emerged out of their
hard work and prove their creative talent to resocialize the society in different aspects.

The story *Untitled Poem* has got international acclaim and was first published
in *The Debonair*. The story has a set up of a typical Indian family where the husband
is the main breadwinner and wife is the homemaker. The narrator is a retired salesman
and an aspiring creative writer. He and his wife Sarala have now moved to a new
house built by his life savings. According to *The Bible*, the race of mankind began its
existence in a garden. Gardening is one of the hobbies that bring us close to nature
and environment. Today, cities are growing fast and space around us is decreasing.
This abode, for the first time, affords her the satisfaction of a real though it is a small
garden. All her life, she has to content herself with self contained garden in pots.
Because, they live in an apartment on the seventh floor, she could not plant anything
that could dig its roots deep into the soil. Middle classes living in apartments or
closed congregate houses in many cities have a compact enclosure where the seasonal flower and evergreen plants on a verdant green grass keep pace with the changing seasons and bring about some variety in the mechanical routine of a city life. A beautiful garden of balcony or outdoor itself is a constant source of pleasure. It forms a quiet retreat where one can rest. The couple has no children. So this garden is the only enduring place of interest in their life.

Sarala the protagonist of this story, is a garden lover who treats every plant and shrub as her child. She protects them from the hot sun and gives shelter under shadow and at the same time saves it from intruding animals. She gives fertilizer and waters it, prunes it and trims it. She watches the plant grow with a throbbing heart and a loving look. The small garden was nothing but mud at the time when she purchased the house. Five years later, Sarala’s garden is no longer empty. Even the twin trees she has planted, a neem and a peepal, are adolescent saplings. The patch below them is shady. Sarala’s enemies in her territory are everyday creatures such as sparrows that pull apart the tendermost tips of plants. Her husband tries to write a poem. For him writing poem is creativity and for her gardening is creativity. Like poetry and painting, gardening is also an art of living. In the absence of aesthetic sense, one cannot receive the taste of poetry or painting. In the same way without developing the skill of interpreting, one cannot derive immense aesthetic pleasure from the shape, colour and smell of plants, grass and flowers that abound in the well laid out garden. Living with nature makes her to be healthy and happy. The whispery rustling of the leaves fills the salesman
with a childish fear that he felt the goose pimples on his bare arms. He lies near the thick bush of creeping jasmine and invokes his familiar, wordy saviours as follows:

The heaving roses of the hedge are stirred

By the sweet breath of summer.

I remember this. I also remember:

I have loved flowers that fade

Within whose magic tents

Rich hues have marriage made

With sweet unmemoried scents. (TAD- 7)

All the images of garden turn the retired salesman into a poet. In the morning, a faint but persistent rustling and scurrying wakes him up. His arms and legs are stiff and cold on the wet grass. His head feels as if it is tightly wrapped in a thick fog. He has a large stick in his hand to kill enemy. This story, *Untitled Poem* casts some light on a purpose beyond that. It is to capture the “hairy, solid beast, the creature of blood and slime”. The frustrated poet in the story cannot get a grip on it but his practical wife, who feels a real terror, kills it with a single blow. Sarala prepares diet food for her husband and she too shares the same. Because, to them marriage meant doing things together. There are mutual help and understanding in this grand adventure of ideal living. Marriage and family sociologically signifies the stage of greater social advancement. It has been the backbone of human civilization. It is a universal
phenomenon. Marriage creates a new social relationships and reciprocal the rights between the couples. Individual happiness has been given the least importance. It is considered to be sacrament, a spiritual union between husband and wife.

Each one has his or her own individuality even though one is a member of a group. Much of the individual identities come from being connected to groups of one sort or another. A group can be based on family, gender, an occupation, a physical characteristic, a geographic location or even a certain philosophy.

Man is a social animal and he needs a family and society to lead his life. Man is by nature a social animal; an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally. Society is something that precedes the individual. Anyone who either cannot lead the common life or is so self-sufficient as not to need to, and therefore does not partake of society, is either a beast or a god.


Many researchers found that one learns many valuable lessons such as forgiveness, generosity, dignity, peace, trust and love from animals. The story Halfway Animal also teaches a lesson to mankind. It is a well written story which makes one to look at chimpanzees in a different manner. In the boss’s cabin the narrator recalls his father’s words: “How is the work going, boy? Remember, Work is worship!” His father worked hard all his life as a farmer. He did not waste an inch of field. Every patch was lovingly cultivated, tended and harvested Work is worship and God helps those
who help themselves. Both are old proverbs which represent the importance of hard working. Today man tries to conquer earth, he has set foot on the Moon and he has travelled in the space for searching a place to live in other planets.

Humans have invented so many things which became possible because they have never hesitated to work. In this story, even though the narrator has been working for long years still his boss never calls him by name instead he calls him by his profession as stenographer. Treating employees in a right way by respecting them will lead to better and more harmonious working relationships. Providing a good working environment for employers inspires them to be more productive and it leads to more profit and benefits for the company in the long run. Githa Hariharan simply unfolds the inner mind of many employers because in most of the places the characters are represented by their professions instead by names. In general, when a person holds respectable positions like Doctor, Professor, Lawyer, etc, he or she is happy to be addressed by the profession, but when one is addressed by the profession like stenographer, Driver, Security, etc, he or she gets insulted or feels dishonoured, so as in the case of the narrator. In spite of having more working experience, when the boss addressed him by his profession stenographer he becomes offended. Moreover, he defines him in many other occasions too. Altogether, the narrator becomes disinterested in going to the office. To get solace for few weeks he goes to a park which is located near to the office. When he finds bored, he goes to the zoo where he spends his time by reading newspaper and by watching animals. He finds its interesting and soothing for his wounded heart. Once he discovers the three enclosures of apes and monkeys
and he reads about evolution which has been going on for millions of years. Until 1855, most people believed that life did not change. Lions always remained lions, roses never changed; humans are created as humans and so on. The narrator recalls about Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution. His boss use to say that man must adopt himself to change, like an Old pen should be replaced by Dictaphone or a computer. Andy Warhol said: “They always say time changes things but you actually have to change them yourself.” The world changes slowly but constantly to survive. Apes are man’s nearest relationship. Like us they have no tail but they can stand upright, although normally they walk. The chimpanzee is perhaps most like man in body and brain. Intelligent and friendly chimpanzees are popular with people because they perform manlike acts in zoo to win applause. They are truly nature’s clowns.

There are three chimps in the enclosure, a male, a female and a child. Male chimp always sits on a leafless tree and gazes outside, where as the baby chimp enjoys playing with its mother. Most of the time they both are found cuddling with each other. Hariharan never fails to express the love between the mother and child irrespective whether it is among humans or animals. This love cannot be compared with any other love in this world. Finally, two men come with a long sleek rifle, and take away the baby. The stenographer likes to move away from the place with the heavy heart. Next day when he enters the zoo, he finds the female chimp searching for her baby. When she finds the baby missing, she jabbers and chatters. She covers her face with her arms and sags furry shoulder with grief. The male slowly comes near like a man in great pain to console her. He expresses his concern and caring by
going close to her. This loving animal could not speak like men but could only express by making grunting noises. Here, Hariharan needs a huge round of applause because she sets animals as the best example for human beings like stenographer. Animals, which are real, natural and true in their feelings, make the stenographer to understand his responsibilities that how as a father and husband, he has failed to do his duties and provide a safe environment for them. After seeing this unconditional love, he decides to go back to his work.

Man is not an isolated living being but the member of a tribe, a community, a society or a country. In addition of being an individual and the member of a society, man is something more. The human personality is based on thought, word and deed. But this should not lead to stress. The stress less practice itself becomes part and parcel of one’s profession. Only then one can reap the benefits of greater happiness, wisdom, health and peace throughout our lifetime. But in modern life, it is difficult to escape from stress. Urbanization, industrialization and increase in scale of operations in the society are increasing stress. Stress is often termed as a twentieth century syndrome, born out of man’s race towards modern progress and its ensuring complexities. The story

*Retrospective* sought to identify the extent in which the employee level and stress are associated with mental health problems experienced by Prem Lal. He is a government employee working as a clerk in the Electricity Board. Before going to office, he comes across many obstacles both outside and inside home. He begins the day with his household work. He has a good and modest wife. Once, when he is drying himself in the bathroom, he notices the murky water standing around his feet like two stubborn
puddles. He comes to know that the drainage got choked with some dead animal.

It takes almost an hour to pull it out. His neighbour from the second floor looks at him with his hawk eyes and says “You should clean the damn thing more often.” His wife helps him to get ready to the office. As it is already late, he rushes to his office. He misses the regular bus. He enters into another bus and finds an empty seat. Slowly, he goes to sleep. In his dream, he visits a house with a big bright room with all the windows open to let in the fresh air. The room is painted in white. Even the floor is covered with an unblemished white marble. The room seems to be completely empty. Suddenly he wakes up and realises that he has missed his stop and then walks half a mile back to his office. The above dream picturizes his life as an unfulfilled desire. Hariharan personifies his wish to buy a new luxurious house through day dream.

Prem Lal is working as an accountant involves both customer service and financial work. Due to his high interaction, his position becomes stressful. In such a circumstance one needs to be highly motivated, organized, determined and orientated in order to thrive in his sole emotionality is the complete psychological representation in individuals. Stress is a product of the transaction between the individual and the environment, especially for long term claims. Individuals, with high levels of negative emotions tend to think more negatively about themselves and the world. In this story, a young man comes back with fault bills. His eyes are narrowed, and he shows long face and remarks as,
“Look at this bill,” he shouted. “Five thousand rupees for a month. You fellows think you can get away with anything. No one can fire you even if you do nothing but warm your chair all day long.” (TAD,102)

The rest of the queue is suddenly very quiet as they also agree with this man. Ability of an individual to deal with stress ends with their success and failure at work. Negative thoughts and behaviour create more job stress. He says to a young man, “Please sit down sir have a cup of tea, I will see your bill”. The young man is surprised and sits down calmly. Meanwhile, he calls the tea boy for a fresh cup and he requests the man to wait just for a little longer. Finally, when he is about to give up, he finds the missing link and solves the problems. Likewise, everyday he pushes to face many clients. Boss calls him to his cabin and utters negative remarks about him. He puts down his head. “Prem Lal,” he says more gently, “I know you have worked here for years. You have been a steady, reliable worker. But , let me see, how many years of service you have left”. His boss indirectly shows his dissatisfaction towards his work. Whatever his boss abuses Prem Lal simply nodes his head .it shows his helplessness. The whole story deals about the psychological suffering of Prem Lal in profession and the problems of stress for an individual leading to depression, psychogenic disability and sleep disturbances. Emotional intelligence may enhance the job performance of individuals with low cognitive intelligence. Here Lal’s dream, life and work remain incomplete. He has been battling stress for a long time. The story of Prem Lal based on work stress pressure at the work place is unavoidable due to the demands of the contemporary work environment. There are now too many work expectations in work
place due to the development of technologies. Job stress is the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities of the worker. One can easily find exist from stress through mediations and spiritual way of living. Resocialization becomes a must to relief the workers from the stress.

From one’s view, Photographers capture a moment that is gone forever. People perceive photographs as something real. The story Close Up once again represents the professional view and approach of a photographer. Photography can also be called an art because of capturing a still image. Photographer is considered as a brainchild of modern science. We can easily view the vital role of photos in daily newspapers. In the story, the protagonist is the photographer who lives in a big room which is partitioned into three as office, studio and darkroom. In the office the desk is covered with well ordered files. In this story Hariharan describes a young girl named Urvashi who is the first customer of the day. She is beautiful by nature but still wanted to have a best picture from what she is. Hence, she wears an attractive violet nylon saree which is covered with gigantic orange roses at regular intervals. She sits very still like a trained obedient animal waiting for her master’s orders. Prabhakar, who is a friend of the photographer and photo journalist, use to ask him often about realism in his job. He answers that his mission is to beautify, because his customers want more beautiful face than real. He takes a break every evening for a couple of hours. As a photographer, he likes to visit many public places like market for stills. He points out as: “I like to look at things. I guess that is why I am a photographer.
I like to see people as they never see themselves. (88)” The passing of time also adds to the aesthetic value of photographs. When he walks to the next street, he realizes the season of Pooja festival. One can see marigolds and fresh, green banana leaves lying in heaps on the pavements. The display of variety of dolls are kept for sales. Durga Pooja is one of the main festivals of India. This festival celebration is a reunion and rejuvenation throughout the nation. There is a mythological reference behind this festival. It is said that there was a notorious demon named Mahisasura torturing the earth and heaven. Even Gods were afraid of him. On their earnest prayer and request, the Goddess Durga was born from fire.

As an embodiment of Shakti or strength, the Goddess Durga appeared before the demon. The demon was bewitched by her beauty and was killed by her. Finally, the earth and heaven were saved from his clutches. Due to this, people celebrate this Pooja in order to honour the Goddess Durga. Every year, it is celebrated in the Hindu month Ashwin (September – October) for ten days in which the ninth day is known as Ayudha Pooja which is meant to worship implements that are used in one’s livelihood. On the preceding evening, it is the tradition to place the implements on an alter to the Divine. It is an expression of gratitude showed to God for helping one to fulfil the duties. The tenth day is called Vijaya Dhasami or the festival of victory, symbolising the moment when truth dawns within. During the festival in the Southern part of India, they prepare a Golu which means exhibition containing of clay figures and dolls. Then women visit each other home to have a look at the respective Golu and sing devotional songs. The photographer also prepares himself to celebrate Pooja.
He places his camera in front of Goddess in order to receive blessings. He keeps his Olympus and Nikon camera in Pooja because these are the important objects in his profession. Often he gets a dream of an angel like girl visiting his shop as a client. Here Hariharan states the quest and thirst of the photographer to capture a picture of a beautiful girl. He keeps searching but it remains an unfulfilled dream of his profession as an artistic photographer. Like him there are many professionals who search for a whole heartedly satisfying only a very few are blessed.

Githa Hariharan compares city and village life through two different stories Field Trip and Gajar Halwa. She shares the experience of the small boy Krishna in her short story Field Trip. The story is about Krishna who comes to the village to spend his summer holidays with his Sundarame mama. He, who is born and brought up in Bombay, is excited to see the life style in the village. Once his uncle Sundaram takes him to the village tank, there he teaches Krishna how to swim. He holds a pair of coconut husks, scooped out like two little boats. A hole has been pierced in each so that it can be tied by a rope to Krishna’s arms. Within few minutes, Krishna forgets his fear of water. He learns to hit the water as his legs and arms work well together. While he is happy in learning swimming, he feels something thin and snaky entangling around his right ankle. Krishna freezes at the moment and then he screams: “A snake! There is a snake on my leg”. Sundaram mama boldly searches for the snake but he finds only hyacinths which looked like a green snake at Krishna’s eyes. This is a memorable incident for him.
Krishna enjoys the beauty of the village by staying in a farm house which is looked after by Karuppaya and his wife along with her sister Vengammal. His lifestyle has totally become different. He takes oil bath with warm sesame oil, mixed with the jasmine and sweet smell. Oil bath is one of the oldest methods of bathing system which is still followed. The importance of it is to relax and refresh. It acts as a moisturizer to skin, kills lice and makes the skin to retain its elasticity. It is a new experience for the city living boy. He enjoys his travel in the bumpy bullock cart and in a village transport. His arms are full of sugarcane. He chews the cane on the way, which he has not experienced before. He enjoys the realistic life in his Mama’s village. Most of the people who lived in villages are farmers. Beside, some people own shops and provide the necessities of life to the villagers. Others work as potters, carpenters, blacksmiths etc. to fulfil their needs. He finds the villagers to be socially knit together. Their social sense is so strong that the guest of one is considered as the guest of all. In a town or city, one does not care to know their own neighbour. The villagers are illiterates but they lead a healthy and peaceful life because there is no smoke and it is not noisey like the city factories. They breathe fresh air which promotes their health. They also get pure milk, milk products and other fresh eatables. There is no hustle and bustle and no worries as in the modern city life. The villagers therefore are very happy and healthy. They lead a simple life and their desires are very few. They are satisfied with what they have and they usually never dream of luxuries and comforts provided by modern science. This makes their life happier. But in city, there is an endless stream
of people and, one can find people moving from one city to another with alarming speed. Many people living in cities feel much more connected to cities in other nations than to their own rural areas. Cities influence whole nation and beyond.

The story, *Gajar Halway* is about a girl Chellamma from a small village in Salem. She is taken to Delhi as a servant maid, where there she learns about the city life. The main responsibility of protecting a child lies on its parents than on the government and society. It is necessary to understand that children are important to the country because they are the future ruler. Society is in charge to produce better citizens by educating the children in order to make a successful nation. In this story, the family contains four children including Chellamma. The father is a useless lazy drunken tramp. The mother works very hard to bring up the family. She leaves at six in the morning after tea made by Chellama. Throughout the day, Chellama’s mother carries a basket on her head and the youngest son on her hip. The other child stays at home with Chellamma, who helps her brother Selvam to get ready for school and then she has to take care of her baby sister. The economic situation of the family goes worse than before. Her mother could not find work because the monsoon fails for the second year too. Poverty in India spreads widely. Hence, inability of the society results in child labour.

High poverty level results in poor quality of life. Poverty refers to an unfulfilment of basic necessities of life like food, clothing, drinking water and shelter on the material level. There are also other reasons for poverty in India. Absolute poverty can be measured through individual income level along with the family income. Illiteracy
constitutes a major cause of poverty in India, particularly in villages. Poverty makes education, balanced diet, employment, health care facilities, etc a distant dream. The major cause of child labour is poverty. Even though children are paid lesser than adults, their income serves to be a great benefit for the poor families. Parents, when they are disabled, need the help of the children to keep the household running. Another cause is poor access to school. In some areas, neither the schools are adequate nor the transport available.

In the constitution of India according to Article 39, 1949, children and youth are to be protected against exploitation and against moral. Chellamma’s mother comes to know that neighbour’s cousin is taking five of the village girls to Delhi. Hence, she also decides to send Chellamma to along with them. Chellamma is appointed as a servant in memsahib’s colony and she is paid two hundred rupees per month. She has to give memsahib fifty rupees from her salary every month. The remaining hundred and fifty rupees she sends it to her family in Salem but as days pass by she finds it tough to stay because she is treated worse than an animal. She is made to stay in a scooter garage which smells of urine. According to Article 24 in the constitution of India 1949, no child below the age of 14 shall be employed in any hazardous job. But most of the organisations and houses appointed boys and girls for less salary, as servants and for other mean jobs. They are made to mop the floor and wash the utensils and other works which are hard for children. All these are illegal. The child labour is something akin to slavery. Many of the children are forced to work long hours every day for minimal pay, Memsahib says:
One hundred and fifty, because she looks thin and weak to me. And we may have to spend on doctor and medicines too. Poor thing didn’t know that Chellamma could bargain so hard, she could even hike up the price of a rotten banana. Two hundred, memsahib. The lady in the next building has offered two hundred and fifty, but I said what is fifty rupees, my memsahib depends on me. And who will look after my sweet baba?” (TAD, 81)

The child should not become a labourer as shown above. What is more disgusting is that children who should sit with the books must work for their survival. Today there are many child labourers who fill their stomach and their families through their meagre salary. Some children aged between 0-15 years are also leased out for begging. These small kids work in factories, small tea shops and on the roads. They work from dawn to dusk. Even though, government has banned child labour, it is still taking place illegally. There are laws against child labour in India, but they are not strongly enforced because the economy relies so much on it. According to UNICEF, there are an estimated 250 million children aged two to seven in child labour worldwide, excluding child domestic labour. Chellamma, who is sent to the milk booth by her mistress, stands in a line along with other girl servants. This remains her other native place incident where women use to fight for fetching water from tap. Here, the scenario is different because everyone comes properly in a queue. She gets to know many friends who are working in other apartments. They suggest that within six months, she can get a job for double the money in a richer colony. In her few weeks in Delhi, she has also learnt enough
Hindi to converse. She has learnt everything quickly. Once her mistress instructs her to make Gajar Halwa she instructs her step by step, which she does it sincerely. As per the instruction she washes, peels and shreds the carrot. She heats the pan with butter and puts the grated carrot and cooks on low flame till the raw smell disappears. She stirs and stirs until the carrots turn to orange colour golden rain drops. Her arms get stiffer and stiffer and her fingers ache terrible, but her heartless mistress adds milk and instructs her as ‘stir, stir, don’t stop for a minute’. This Chellamma describes as,

So I stretch my fingers and begin stirring. The carrots drink up the milk, sucking like my hungry little brother at my mother’s breast.

Then more milk and sugar. ‘Stir, stir’, she barks. Don’t you dare stop.

(TAD, 84)

With her painful arms she further stirs. When it thickens, she adds cardamom powder and stirs continuously till the ghee separates from the mixture. Finally, she garnishes the Halwa with nuts.

Githa Hariharan portrays two different childhood characters Krishna and Chellamma. In field trip, Krishna is enjoying his holidays at a village but Chellamma in Gajar Halwa is suffering as a servant. This imbalance results in insufficient care shown to children. Child labour is a serious threat to economic growth. Uneducated children of today cannot contribute much in prosperity of the country. Though the
Government of India has amended several laws against child labour, they are still not properly implemented. Everyone in the society must backup for the resocialization towards child rights.

The story *The Warden* begins with a outhouse because it shows life outside the world. Everywhere the warden is picturized as strict and a hated personality, but here the warden is very kind. Hariharan gives a different definition to the word warden. In this story, the warden represents as more lovable and a caretaker than any other person in the family. The warden first meets the mistress of the house Basamma who is kept locked up in the outhouse because of her mental illness. Hence she is kept away from home. Everyone in her family neglects her. The past life of the warden is also covered with painful experience. She has no family to live with because she has lost her husband and child. Hence she spends her life to take care of her mistress.

Looking after someone who is suffering from mental illness is an extremely challenging and a stressful experience, but the warden takes care of her very well. She knows how to turn her mistress towards her wish. She knows well, through her loving words, how to dress her up.

Basamma’s son gets married and he brings his wife to the outhouse. The poor girl panics on seeing her mother-in-law because she is a mad old woman hidden in the backyard. She refuses to look at her son but she is happy to see her daughter-in-law. She takes her hand and makes her sit on the stool. She cares the girl’s face gently and fills her long, thick plait with flowers. The girl sits on the stool like a statue. The warden
used to form a story from her past village life which she makes up. Whenever she tells about her husband and baby’s death, she becomes restless.

The warden knows well to control Basamma when she misbehaves. Basamma often runs into the main house. She takes the knife from the kitchen and she goes round and round the house stealthily like a prowler, peeping, searching and snuffing. She slashes all the photographs which are arranged in rows. She drinks all the milk in the kitchen like a hungry stray cat. She finds the matches and lights a pretty little fire in the front door. She marches towards the well, giggling to herself. The day her husband died she has fever. The elders suggest taking her before her husband and pouring fresh cold water on her head. The guardian warden says as follows,

I would have shouted at the servant, but I didn’t want to wake her up. I also wanted to go to the big house and see his dead body, but my bones felt at least a thousand years old. Out, I whispered to him furiously, we know what to do. She was born a widow. She does not need you to tell her that. (TAD, 39)

The warden loves her. She shouts at the servants and others at home because she does not want anyone to wake up the sick Basamma. Warden feels, as an insane Basamma is unable to realise her own situation so there not necessary for any rituals. Except warden, there is none in the family to show love and concern for her. Here, Mother Teresa’s lines are quoted to express the importance of love in this world.
Being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody, I think that is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty than the person who has nothing to eat. One of the greatest diseases is to be nobody to anybody. -Mother Teresa

(http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/motherterere)

Unlike the normal warden, the warden in the story is portrayed in different perspectives. Through this character Hariharan emphasises that an insane should be taken care by everyone in the society. It will help him or her to recover soon. It needs to resocialize the humanity in every human being.

In the next story *Virgin Curry*, Hariharan portrays how teenagers cope with difficult situations in today’s society. This short story picturizes the spinster’s life in a working women’s hostel run by Sister Phyllis. It is a very safe, secure and comfortable shelter for the working women. Virginia and Patricia are working together as secretaries in the same office building and are staying in a same room in Sister Phyllis’ Hostel.

Pat always admires her own beauty. She gets phone calls all the time from her boyfriends and she often goes outing with those boys. She enjoys film and good food. Once, she gets a chance to meet Samit. He does not like all her dinner boys because he is older, married, and has children. His family is one of the oldest in Calcutta. He is a rich man and easily attracts her by fulfilling all her wishes. She falls in love with him and has illegal relationship. Pat slowly starts to isolate herself from her friends and hostel. When she decides to vacate the hostel her friends suggest hostel to be a safe place from crazy buggers in the city. At the same time, it is cheaper than any
other hostel in the city. When Sister Phyllis comes to know Pat’s irregularity to the hostel, she condemns her behaviour. This makes Pat to leave the hostel once for all.

A week later, she comes to the office with a resignation letter. She takes Virginia to a nearby Udupi hotel. Verginia could see a great change in pat’s looks and behaviour. She finds Pat to be very beautiful in her expensive silk saree. She sits down very carefully often checks the chair for dirt and she calls the boy to clean the table. Her friend Virginia finds everything in a dramatic manner like how a newly rich person will behave. Pat starts to talk about Samit who wants her to have a flat of her own very soon. She points out for each and every thing Samit. She moreover, says that he wants her to do a Degree in Correspondence Course and now a days she is very busy in housekeeping for Samit. Pat’s life pattern has diverted towards a secret life. Her friends often recall Pat’s memories when she was in the hostel especially during the dinner bell when the mutton curry was served and the way she use to search for mutton pieces in the gravy. Pat life represents a negative impact on teenage girls towards luxuries as the best enjoyment in life. It is possible to refocus or resocialize this perspective towards real joy. One gets real joy or happiness in good and healthy relationships which leads to self improvement.

Githa Hariharan deals with all aspects of contemporary life. She penetrates into the life of Neeta, a college girl. Neeta is a newcomer to the city for her higher studies. She is doing her sophomore of college and knows about other girls. Girls say that she is a bookworm and they make fun of her oily hair and thick spectacles. Her bushy eyebrows and her old salwar kameez make her look odd. One of them appreciates her as a more
knowledgeable student in her home town. Neeta always comes early for Dr. Sharma’s lecture. The corridors outside buzzed with gossip, opinions and laughter. Dr. Sharma teaches a poem in their class. The girls would stare back at him and they giggled if he moves. Neeta is not part of the philistine giggling mob. As a scholarship student, she is dutiful in taking notes. She spends long hours at the library. Her father, a school teacher, is proud of his liberal views on the education of girls. So he agrees to leave Neeta to study in Bombay. Her father’s efforts place her in college because her mother does not like to send a girl out of native place. Dr. Sharma comes to college once in a week to deliver his lecture. He speaks eloquently. In the hostel, girls gossip that he is separated from his wife. He left her when she was pregnant. He has two wives. Neeta is least bothered about all these gossips. She really does not care about his personal life. According to her, he is a Guru (teacher). She spends hours at night in her studies. Sharma notices her loyalty after the day he reads out a poem by Neruda. He begins lending her books that she could not find in the library. She reads many poems of famous poets along with other literary works. One day, Sharma invites her to his house to teach her poem. As an obedient student, she goes to his house and he welcomes her with a cup of tea. She looks around the books lining all the walls and magazines on the floor. The door is an independent entrance to his room. He understands her love for poetry and her potential for something different from other girls in her classroom. In the midst of his lecture about modern poetry, he asks a question, “What do you think of when you read a love poem? How does it move you?” Neeta sits frozen in her chair. She did not know what to reply and he starts explain the lyrical
words with his naked body. By seeing this, Neeta runs away from his house. The next week, she forces herself to go to Dr. Sharma’s class. He comes as usual and begins the lesson of the day. He starts to write a poem on the board when everyone giggles at him as usual Neeta without listening to his teaching, she writes the sentence, “March 22\textsuperscript{nd}, In memory of the perfect love poem.” on her note book. Because, she could not get rid of the incident happened in his house. Thus, today’s education is learner centred and not teacher centred. The students learn many things out of class by using new technologies. So the teacher-student interaction has to undergo changes to meet their requirements. The modern scenario has turned education in to a money making business. As a result, ethical values are slowly decreasing. Parents have to teach their children about outside world. The moment one feels uncomfortable, he or she should report it to others otherwise the perpetrator will take it for granted. Neeta has shown him that she is helpless. There is an illusion that the women college is for the girls safety. Most students do not even know that they are being sexually abused because they do not realise that sexual harassment does not always mean physical abuse. It can also be verbal, through gestures or veiled reference to the students’ bodies.

According to the Ministry of Women and Child Welfare survey, 53 percent of Indian children have experienced some form of sexual abuse. As a society, it is important to recognize that the sexual exploitation of children is fundamentally about power. There is also an acknowledgement that social workers, superintendents of residential homes, wardens, counsellors, teachers and family members all need training and sensitise to the issue. At least a minimum set of rules should be put in action to enable people to
help a child who is being sexually exploited. Currently, the Indian Constitution recognizes various crimes against children that are linked to their sexual abuse.

In urban India, parents get their children married at young age to protect them from sexual abuse. In the story *Love Poem*, Neeta feels insecure. For the fear of being humiliated she avoids sharing her bitter experience to anyone. Parents should be friendly to their children only then they will share their experiences so that parents can easily guide them in the right way. The Female abusement and harassment is not only a subject matter in literary work but it is also prevalent in the contemporary society. A gang rape incident has shaken the entire world. On 16th December 2012 in Munirka, in the Southern part of New Delhi this case involved a rape and murder of a twenty-three year old girl, a physiotherapy student while travelling with her boyfriend in a private bus. There were six others in the bus, including the driver. All of them beat and raped the girl. Thirteen days later the girl died of injuries while undergoing an emergency treatment in Singapore. The incident generated widespread national and international coverage and was widely condemned all over the world. All the accused were arrested and charged with sexual assault and murder. Sexual abuse is against law. It is a crime, but unfortunately it has become more common in the contemporary society. This incident impels the parents and the educational institution to teach the girl to protect themselves from sexual abuses. They have to learn to handle themselves against the evil prevailing in the society. Socialization is a practice which should be mentioned by parents consistently to know the difference between right and wrong in their life. The protagonists of love
poem, Repeat performance and Virgin curry proved that the male dominated society has exploited the weakness of the women for their desires. By giving more awareness to the girl children, the resocialization will be attained.

Another short story *The Summer Times Incubus* shows the protagonist Manoharan recalls his past memory. Once in his college days he failed in his exam, in order to escape from his father’s scolding, he found rescue in his grandmother’s house. Grandmother’s house was a modest little house near the sea. He spent a few days on the beach. After a week, he visited his father’s friend’s house down the beach. He borrowed many books from Rajam. Who is the wife of father’s friend. She treated him well as a guest. In this way, he started to read many novels. His reading habit created him to become a writer. He introduced a woman character in his first novel that was similar to Rajam. After the novel was published, he received a letter from Rajam. After reading a novel she commented about the character present in it as “It’s a good novel, I like the martyred little wife best. You realize, of course, that you cannot come here again.” The letter explained that she found herself in Martyred’s wife character. In the second novel, he portrayed a fair young woman, but it was not as successful as the first novel. The chief mission of the writer is to enlighten the society where he lives. This role is determined not only by his place in literature but also by the degree of his involvement in the society's public life. He comes back to his office atmosphere with heap of files on his desk. The next novel was already in the planning stage. The story emphasises the role of writer in the society. The protagonist’s debut novel became famous because of portraying the real character such as Rajam.
But his second novel, unlike the first, is not popular since the character is created out of his imagination. By picturising the reality of life in their work, the writer should resocialize the society.

Socializing is very important for healthy existence of human beings. Human beings generally are divided into five stages from birth to death. They are, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age and death. These stages are socially constructed by its own nation’s culture and heritage. At the beginning, one socializes the child according to its family background and later the learning of new norms and values when life circumstances change. History is another social science which is related to sociology virtually, India has outstanding variety in every aspect of social life. Diversities of ethnic, linguistic, regional, economic, religious, class and caste groups constitute Indian society. Due to these reasons, India needs continuous resocialization process. *The Art of Dying and Other Short Stories* penetrates into the contemporary Indian life. People with active lifestyle have comparatively sharper minds. They are happier; they live with a sense of belonging and are less susceptible to negative emotions. Globalization has an astonishing impact on the modern world. It has allowed nations to connect with other nations easily. Resocialization helps us to update ourselves. Sociology deals with society about how people interact, their culture, norms and values. On the other hand, psychology also deals with people, their behaviour. These two are closely related with each other. Thus, the individual without being a burden to the society will satisfy his or her intellectual urge and thirst for knowledge. Man is not a mere matter. The physical body functions because of the life energy. As the perspectives
of a society which keeps changing, the education it imparts to its youth also needs a continuous updating. The lives of individuals are enriched in every way through resocialization. As Mahatama Gandhi says,

Wealth without work; pleasure without conscience; knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity, religion without sacrifice; and politics without principle will lead to sinful acts disturbing peace and happiness.

(www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/m/mahatma_gandhi.html).

It is immensely important for the human race that harmonious relationships should be maintained among all people in the family, in the society, in the country and in the world. One has to understand human nature properly so that psychology depends on sociology. Sociology provides necessary materials regarding the structure, organization and culture of society, in which human behaviour is born.

The forthcoming chapter deals with psychology in feminist perspective through Githa Hariharn’s The Thousand Faces of Night under the title An Existential Crisis.