

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

A SUBALTERN READING IN CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

Githa Hariharan's revisionary writing has been an exploration of subalternity and marginalized background. Her revisiting of myth and history reconstructs and recontextualises suppressed conditions and thereby presents unheard voices and consciousnesses. In her fictions, it is observed that she has visited some mythical figures whose names are often invoked in everyday life. The study shows that her revisionary writing has two aims: one is to reflect the contemporary social and personal predicament and create a historical link with the past. It aims to show the common experiences of marginalized women throughout the generation and create it as the basis for political identity. With this strong objective myth, tales and history are reconstructed and recontextualised. This is why Hariharan has made an effort to trace the state of subalternity, marginality and situation of voicelessness in the past. Here it corresponds with what Sreemati Mukherjee calls, "Myth as historical revisionism" (Mukherjee, 140). Another aim is to question the traditional mode of interpretation, debate over it and subvert some traditional values and aestheticism propagated by myths and tales. In this subversive practice, ethical and political interrogation is made.

Her deconstructive vision resembles with Helene Cixous' declaration, "Thus, there are no grounds for establishing a discourse, but rather an arid millennial ground to break, what I say has at least two sides and two aims: to break, to destroy; and to foresee the unforeseeable, to project" (Cixous, *The Laugh of the Medusa*, 1643). The past is brought back to discussion for argument, revisioning and creating new points of view. It also focuses on reinterpretation. This process helps to raise the subaltern voice. She has also revisited the recent past to highlight an aspect of intellectual subalternity and new subaltern in India.

Subalternity is a common aspect of Githa Hariharan's revisionist fiction. Almost in all her novels, this aspect can be seen. Basically, a strong connection between the present female subalterns and the past is made. Their situations are juxtaposed, compared and contrasted. In her novel *The Thousand Faces of Night (TFN)* Devi, the main protagonist plays a pivotal role in connecting the past and present. She is put in subaltern state which links her with present female figures and the past mythical figures. In the absence of her father, the mother plays the dominant role of a father, brother and grandmother. Devi is a western educated young woman; reluctantly she is trapped in a conditioned world, marriage institution, designed by her mother. She becomes a silent actor. She has inner protest against her mother but she is not able to express it or it is usually ignored by her mother. She questions her mother if marriage is necessary for her life. The mother never pays attention to it. This situation takes her revisits her childhood myths, tales, fables and stories told by her grandmother. She recollects stories of Amba, Ganga, Gandhari, and rethinks their marginalized background. Her same situation is extended to husband's house where she is under the

rule of Mahesh and under moral directives of father-in-law, Baba. Devi comes to realize that more or less the women are victims of such conditioning everywhere. She comes to know that her mother Sita is also subordinated by her dominant father-in-law. She has to survive on leftovers. She has been expected ideal housewife, daughter-in-law and mother. Parbatiamma, Mayamma, Gauri, Anamika are some other marginalized figures in the novel. She finds a similarity between Gandhari's blindness and her parents' blindness to see the reality or real self. Her situation is similar to Ganga, Amba, and Gandhari. She derives inspiration to rebel against social authority. Referring mythical figures appears her representing symbols of oppression and collective consciousness about it.

When Dreams Travel is a complete reconstruction and recontextualisation of marginalized background and figures of *Arabian Entertainment* or *One Thousand One Nights*. The whole kingdom of Sahabad is in the subaltern state as nobody can question the power of two sultanate brothers, Shahryar and Shahzaman and no one dare to mutate their heinous decision to marry one virgin every night and chop her the next morning. Thousands of young virgins lose their lives and many leave the place. His ministers are also silent though they know the destructive role of the king. So, neither ministers nor the parents of those unfortunate young virgins could not raise voice against the royal authority. Two young daughters of a minister, wazir Shahrzad and Dunyazad are put into the gigantic jaws of the two demons. For one thousand and one nights, under the tight surveillance of power and swords, death and terror they have been struggling to escape themselves and to save other young virgins in the country. It is a long state of repression, physical and emotional torture. They use dreams, tales and

fantasy as tools of powerless people to raise voice and challenge powerful authority. To them, it has become what Gayatri Spivak calls the alternative language of the subaltern in her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” The most marginalized figure in *Arabian Entertainment* is Dunyazad who follows her sister, Shahrzad, great storyteller when she is married to Shahryar, the woman eater. The second part of the novel, a metafictional narrative of the frame tale makes Dunyazad narrator and protagonist. It means she stands as a metaphor of marginalized voice and narrative.

It has been found that many other Indian writers in English and other regional languages use this revisionist writing to explore the aspect of subalternity. Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*, *Dark Hold No Terror* and Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* and *A Married Woman* are examples of such writings. Deshpande's *That Long Silence* is about Jaya's marginalization and subordination at in-law's house. It talks about her dark situation, voicelessness and alienation in patriarchy. Deshpande has created many strong female protagonists in her fictions who are victims of subordination and exploitation. For example, Sarita in *Dark Hold No Terror*, Indu in *Roots and Shadows*, and Jaya in *That Long Silence* struggle against the oppressive social system. Jaya is like Hariharan's Sita, Parbatamma, Devi and Mayamma in *TFN* who are victims of marginalisation and domination. Manju Kapur's female protagonist in *Difficult Daughters*, Ida also encounters a similar situation as daughter and daughter-in-law. Anita Nair's later novels are concerned with female marginalisation, domestic sexual violence and hierarchical man-woman relationship in India. Her major novels *Ladies Coupe* and *Mistress* become a strong subaltern voice against suppressive patriarchy. In her *Ladies Coupe*, six ladies from different categories and backgrounds

incidentally assembled in a lady's compartment (ladies coupe) of Kanyakumari bound train and share their collective experiences of subordination and marginalisation. Akhila, the protagonist, a working woman fed up with the mundane duties of her house and office, exhausted and affected by double burdens, finally determines to go in search of a new life. She sets out for a new world. In *Mistress* Nair has raised the unseen issue of harsh reality. It talks about the anxiety of female sexuality, domestic sexual violence. Marital rape of women is common in patriarchy. Radha thinks that her marriage has no meaning for her because she has been simply a living object to gratify her husband's physical greed. Shyam, her husband like Mahesh, Devi's husband in *TFN* does not realize her love and passion, self and dignity. Meenakshi and Anjana are the two living women characters in Nair's *The Better Man* who are marginalized, oppressed and alienated. Thus, Nair too explores the life of Indian educated/ intelligent and earning women who are still dissatisfied with their state of life. K. Mathuramani and G. Kumari comment on her character portrayal,

Anita Nair portrayed some of her protagonist as economically independent women but still they don't have control over their own life, even major decisions of their life have been taken by others, she has brought this concept in light that women in modern India may be educated and financially independent women but still the rope of their life is in the hands of others (Mathuramani & Kumari 01).

There are upcoming and illustrious young revisionist Indian novelists in English. For instance, Kavita Kane, Umesh Kotru and Ashutosh Zutshi like Hariharan revisit Indian epic tales and myths and thereby they explore the marginalized backgrounds, characters and situation. Kavita Kane rethinks of the suppressed stories of Urmila, Sita's sister in the *Ramayana*, Urvi, Karna's wife and *Menaka*, an apsara in the *Mahabharata*. Their life is not focused or completely overshadowed in the narratives. Umesh Kotru and Ashutosh Zutshi's jointly written revisionist novel *Karna: the Unsung Hero of the Mahabharata* revisits Karna's pathetic story subordination and humiliation. Karna is born as a *surya putra* but brought up and identified as *suta putra*, son of lower caste and is treated as an outcast for the mystery of his birth. Kavita Kane's *Karna's Wife: The Outcaste Queen* too has retold the painful story of Karna through his wife's perspective. It also explores the painful life of Urvi, wife of Karna, and her struggle for survival amidst the humiliation and underestimation. Urvi, as the wife of a *suta putra* hero, always encounters difficulties; she is rejected by the family members, relatives; she is given secondary status by society even though she is a princess of a *Katriya* and wife of a valourous hero. Chandra Prasad Saikia, an Assamese writer also reinterprets Karna's pathetic life in his Assamese fiction *Maharathi*. Kane even reimagines a repressed story of a mythical figure, *Surpanaka*, *Ravan's* sister in *Lanka's Princess* who is known as bone of contention between Rama and Ravana, their bloody war and cause of family's annihilation. In *Ramayana* no detailed life is described *Surpanaka* (Meenakshi). In this revisioned text, the author has explored the marginalised background concerning the life of *Surpanaka*, much-accused character in the original text; the author recasts her complete story and makes

the reader see with different eyes. She is shown much rejected, bullied, tortured and outcast child in the family for her ugliness and wild nature. Her mother, *Kaikesi* does not want a daughter as she has an ambition of snatching lost kingdom of her father from *Kuber*. Mother calls *Meenakshi* monster or witch with claws. Tormented by such hatred and negligence she turns to a rebel. She takes revenge on her family. She avenges against *Rama* too for rejecting her offer of love and insult of slicing off her nose.

Similarly, Indira Goswami¹ (Mamoni Raisom Goswami), a renowned Assamese writer, teacher, scholar and chronicler has explored a marginalized history of a Bodo legendary heroine, Thengphakhri² in her historical novel *The Bronze Sword of Thengphakhri Tehsildar* (trans. Aruni Kashyab, 2013). It speaks about colonial subordination of indigenous people of Northeast India. Thengphakhri, a powerful and intelligent lady from natives who was appointed as a Tehsildar by the East India Company fought against the oppressive forces. But she was shot down by the company forces for her agitation.

Caste-based oppression and gender marginalization are deeply rooted in Indian culture which is still, covertly and overtly, prevailing in the society. Massive reformation, education and research have not fully successful in their effort to eradicate these social evils. Another notable point is that caste, class and gender discrimination work in the same line. It means these factors have been the basis of the social discrete system in the country. Sad to note is that the nation still cannot free itself from these social evils of casteism, classism and gender disparity. Fight for equality and reason has been a futile effort in India. Bama (Bama Faustina Soosairaj), a Tamil Dalit feminist writer, says in her interview with Githa Hariharan that a Dalit woman is triply

dominated- first, as Dalit, second, as poor and then as a woman. She has her own personal experience of this kind of treatment. In her an autobiographical piece of writing, *Karukku*³, she describes the pathetic struggle of her life to get an education and go beyond the traditional limitation and social order. Another example of a Sanskrit Professor in Delhi University can be mentioned, Kaushal Panwar⁴ who reveals the painful journey of her academic career beginning from school to university in an interview with Salman Khan⁷. It was not only her fellow students but teachers from high caste used to tease, humiliate, bully and torture her as she belongs to a lower caste community. Even after becoming a Professor in Delhi University she gets the severe treatment of people in the capital city. She was violently forced to move from various places and localities in the city. In Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night*, Mayamma becomes a victim of such a corrupt system and cruel tradition. First, she suffers as a barren woman and then as a poor woman. After leaving her husband, she spends the rest of her life as a maid at Baba's house. Similarly, in *When Dreams Travel*, Satyasama, a mystic poet in the court of Shahabad also suffers the same misfortune of oppression and repression for her lower caste, caste and gender.

The oppressive mechanism and complicit ideologies are formed by the people of privilege to create certain social orders and thereby keep powerless people at the underdeveloped stage for their own benefit. For instance, *Manusmriti*⁵ is a text of such ideologies. The notable point is that some high caste Brahmin priests and temples still patronize the religious fundamentalist forces to disestablish the system of equality or inclusiveness and its demanding agencies in the country. This well-hidden ideology is covertly inferred in Githa Hariharan's recently published fiction *I have Become the*

Tide (2019). In the novel, Anandagrama is a village where everyone enjoys equality and prosperity. But the temple funded religious fundamentalists, Muthuraja, Srikumar and others destroy everything in the village. The people who agitate for equality are either killed or forced to leave the village. What is obvious is that those people, researchers, writers and activists who struggle, protest and critique the oppressive system and forces to herald certain changes in society always become victims of fatal threat and death. In this novel, Professor P.S. Krishna is murdered for his voice against the caste oppression. He is always threatened for exploring pathetic life of Dalits and finally shot dead for his book on a mystic poet and reformer, Kannadeva who actually belongs to a Dalit community, son of a skinner and washerman, Sikkhia.

The novel also talks about the present scenario of the Indian caste system. At many higher educational institutions of India students of low caste community still do not get proper dignity and respect from others. They have always been treated as sub-human beings. What Kaushal and Bama came across in their early life is still true to many Dalit young boys and girls. On the surface, it seems that the caste system no longer exists in India but the actual reality is not so because that kind of mindset still prevails amongst the people. In *I have become the Tide* three students with high ambition-- Ravi, Asha and Satya face a similar situation of humiliation and alienation at their schools and colleges for their birth in low caste community. Mahasweta Devi, a Bengali social activist and writer, concerns herself with the same issues of oppression and marginalization of poor Dalits and Tribes of Bengal and Bihar who usually become prey of the corrupt landlords and Mahajans. Her short fiction, *Rudali* (trans. By Anjam Katyal, 1997), tells the sorrowful stories how the Rajput Mahajans exploit the poor

Ganjus and Dushas, untouchable. They are always kept in a limited world. The onus of this cruelty lies with the people of privileged caste and class and institutions. The people of the upper section formulate certain ideologies and use to keep the poor people with the belief that this is the world where they must live, work and die, and they are always with the notion that without the help of the rich they are helpless. Their children are either discouraged to attend the government schools or threatened not to attend them. Lachman, Ramavatar's nephew stands near the dead body of his uncle and says, "Hai Chacha! As long as you were alive, the lower castes never dared raised their heads. For fear of you, the sons of dushads and ganjus never dared attend government schools!" (Devi, *Rudali* 87). Ultimately, they develop the idea that they cannot do anything by educating themselves for they need to do the same lowest category of works in society. They are content that they are made for it. It becomes internalized ideological complex. They do not realize that their destiny is because of the social structure of this huge subcontinent. Thus, their dreams and vision of life are cut off at its early stage by complicit ideologies. It has been common psychology with which these poor people survive. Devi's *Rudali* tells that Ganjus and Dushads communities who belong to untouchable groups are always kept with the belief that without the assistance of the rich Rajput Mahajans they cannot survive themselves. They simply survive as slaves of Ramavatar Singh, a Rajput Mahajan. They do not know that system is responsible for their poor state of life. They live a life, full of debt; many times their property is appropriated by the rich as they cannot repay their debts. This corrupt system is worse in the case of women. The novel shows how oppressed system of Rajput Mahajans, a Tohri Brahmins poor women are pushed to the informal sector of

making a living. They are forced to become prostitutes or beggars (devadasis/ yoginis) and finally, they are turned to be professional criers for Rudalis over the death of rich people. It clearly shows the systemic violence against the lower caste people. Poor women at Tahad village are badly exploited. Sanichari, the protagonist in the novel has lost her all near and dear one yet she has not to stop struggles for survival in a Mahajans dominated village. She and her husband used to work under Ramavatar Singh, and her son and grandson followed. Her husband and son had their early death for the lack of proper health care and shortage of nutrition. Her grandson left her when she was unable to do anything. So, again she joins for a professional Rudali for the rich. The point is that the whole life of poor people is sacrificed for the people of the privileged.

Another noteworthy point is that intellectual voice in India is always suppressed by the state authority or some other powerful fundamentalist agencies. Intellectual voice is either distorted or divided by certain strategies. Intellectuals and cultural practitioners are treated as leftists. Their arguments, points of views and ideas are not listened by the authority of the state. Academicians are always kept under the strict surveillance of the state apparatus. Thus, the bureaucratization of higher educational institutions has snatched the freedom of working and doing research. Under such circumstance, intellectuals lose their collective strength and fail to raise their voice. This kind of autocracy becomes a threat to democracy. Academicians and scholars have no freedom to do research and often their findings and research results are ignored or not tolerated. Writers and cultural practitioners often encounter with life-threatening from the various fundamentalist forces or organizations supported by some

political leaders or state or religious institutions. Hariharan raises this issue of the intellectual subaltern in her political novels *In Time of Siege (ITS)* and *I have Become the Tide (IBT)*. In *ITS* Shiv Murthy, a history Professor at Kasturba Gandhi Central University and specialist in medieval Indian history become a victim of such hot protest and vandalism in Delhi. Hindubadi Itihas Suraksha Manch alleges his history lesson in an Under Graduate syllabus of distortion of history and harming the sentiment of religious people. It was his research paper. He is accused of distorting historical facts. Protesters not only ransack his office, threatening to kill him and demand for his suspension. What is obvious is that scholarship, research fact and institution are suppressed by the social organisations including media. Issue of public sentiment can stop everything in this country. In other words, research fact and reason are measured by public sentiment. The text shows that history is snatched from the hands of academics and institutions by the ignorant Itihas Suraksha Manch. It is realised that historical fact or research truth is determined by the power of people's sentiment, not by the 'logic' or 'intellect'. Such kind of external interference with the learning process of past knowledge sometimes makes the scholars confused and misleading. Even the trained and established authorities like Shiv are also put into a dilemma to recognize the historical facts or put at jeopardy. The lines in the text read like this,

Suddenly, all of Shiv's reading and scholarly training, all his understanding of history as social science, dissipated into the gathering darkness around them. He was naked and unprotected. He had forgotten who exactly he was; all collective progress of the last fifty years had been torn off his body

in an instant. It was as if recent Indian history, the recent history of his father's time and his own, never happened (Hariharan, *ITS* 159).

It reminds me of Henry Derozio, the first Indian English poet who was suspended from Calcutta College for his intellectual leadership of young people by the authority for public pressure.

Hariharan's both the novels *In Time of Siege* and *I have Become the Tide* have been an allegorical narrative of the real situation as it invokes many such examples of irrational and blockheaded protests and sensations occurred in recent past in the country. The author critically points out how Indian scholarship is always controlled by the power of the state or sentiment/ power of the masses. This novel speaks strongly about many fundamental socio-political issues. It is covertly or overtly reflects socio-political phenomena of Delhi, the capital city of India. Indeed, the plot of *ITS* can be looked as a metaphor of various socio-political controversies concerning history, literature and culture. National capital experienced lots of hue and cry in 2011. It has been an allegorical presentation of a great social sensation over a scholarly research paper created by the different fundamentalist organisations, scholars, agencies and forces across the country. It was R. K. Narayan's analytical research paper "Three Hundred Ramayanas: Five Examples and Three Thousand on Translation⁶" that was included in the History syllabus of "Culture in India" in Delhi University. Respecting the sentiment of the mainstream Hindu people, the then government ordered to withdraw the paper from the syllabus. Finally, the university scraped the paper out of the syllabus (*The Times of India*, New Delhi, October 25, 2011). This is how state politics interfere with the autonomous institution of research and reason of the nation.

India is still emotionally guided and most of the time things are looked through the eyes of communalism. Every silly issue is very easily either communalised or muddled with communal colour or become messy with caste issue. In India, numerous forces of religious fundamentalism are always proactive. This is why India's secularism is always under threat. Consequently, even after seventy years of Indian independence, the nation neither has social maturity nor security of life and property. Hariharan says,

There is the real army, but there's also a temple funded army that's been growing secretly. Some of the Brahmins who went astray are coming back. Many of them have been frightened into returning where they belong. Others have been convinced by tongues greased with ghee: *ananda* can be found only in the place that holds honour and prosperity in its brick and gopuram; in the places that house milk-bathed idols and their priestly guardians (Hariharan, *I have become the Tide*, 219).

Once again 2016 brings large scale intolerance in the country. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s coming to power in 2015 rejuvenates Hindu fundamentalism and its desire for singular Hindu narrative. Always there exists both religious and academic intolerance. Writers and scholars are always under great threat in India. Journalists and writers are often threatened and killed. Thus, serial attacks and killings of the intellectuals, activists, journalists have been a continuous phenomenon in India. Hariharan's these two novels *In Time of Siege* and *I have Become the Tide* recount such several instances of suppression of intellectual voice in the country. The second novel may be an allegory of Professor M. M. Kalburgi, a popular literary figure in Vachana literature who was shot dead on 30th August 2015 for his anti-superstition movement. He spoke about the

involvement of superstition in Hinduism. Like P.S. Krishna, he was accused of his research finding on a mystic poet Basava, a 12th century philosopher of Hampi. Likewise, Dr. Narendra Dabholkar, a medical doctor, social activist, rationalist and author from Maharashtra who founded the Maharashtra Andhashraddha Nirmoolan Samiti (MANS) was shot down on 20th August, 2013. Again, Gobind Pansare, a left-wing politician of CPI and author in Marathi language was attacked on 16th February 2015 who died from a severe wound on 20th February 2015. Moreover, Hariharan, in a public lecture, talks about a Dalit boy, Huchangi Prasad, son of a devadasi in central Karnataka who happens to be a journalist and writer receives recurrent threats from the upper caste Brahmins, and one day she was brutally beaten by Goons for writing on the issue of the caste system. Similarly, three journalists who raised voice against corruption were killed in 2015. One more recent example of such thoughtless suppressive work is the arbitrary arrest of Kanaiya Kumar, a JNU students' leader, General Secretary of the Students' Union, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Indian regime always suppresses the collective voice of intellectuals and it accuses them as leftist. There was lots of conflict on the issue related to the cow in Rajasthan and other places in India by 2015. Hence, 2015 was declared as 'cow year' of India by *The Hindu* and 2016, definitely, can be declared as 'year of intolerance'. The novel shows great metaphorical significance. It is already said that bans and vandalism are the most common practices in India. It has been a tradition since long. A number of books have been banned here. For instance, Mulk Raj Anand's *Two Leaves and a Bud* was banned in British India. Vijay Tendulkar's play *Ghasiram Kotuwal* had the same fate. List of banned books in India includes Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, Wendy Doniger's *The*

Hindus: An Alternative History, Taslima Nasreen's *Lajja*, Aubrey Menen's *The Ramayana*, Naipaul's *An Area of Darkness* etc. (<http://blog.juggernaut.in/banned-books-india>, 05-10-18). Historians are often threatened. For, example, in an interview noted historian Romila Thapar, a Professor of History in JNU discloses that she has been threatened several times by some organisations and individuals for writing certain repressed history. M. F. Hussain, a famous Indian artist was attacked for his painting of Hindu goddesses in nude. Thus, there are plenty of instances of such wretched protest, threat, bans and vandalism in the country. Ram Punyani, a noted academic and prominent civil society member and Professor at IIT Bombay, receives threats to life from Right Wing Goons and he registers an FIR on 7th June, 2019 in Mumbai Police Station (<https://indianculturalforum.in>, 16/06/2019).

As it is already said that Hariharan's major works are engaged with issues concerning to power and politics. Githa Hariharan confesses on her personal website, "All my work looks at power politics in some way or the other" (<http://githahariharan.com>, 07-10-18). Her novel *ITS* is concerned with major political issues of India. It can be termed as a political allegory. The whole plot is the metaphor of the one and over a controversial lesson on medieval history which was included in the UG level syllabus of Distance Education under Delhi University. It is all about the one and half month tension over a lesson on the medieval history of a person with versatile talents, Basava. It deals with many contemporary Indian political issues ---- academic intolerance, religious fundamentalism and hegemonic authority. It presents conflicts between several forces: secularism vs pseudo-secularism, fundamentalism vs secularism, nationalism vs anti-nationalism, leftist and rightist, scholars vs public. It

throws insightful thought on the lingering conflict of singular Hindu narrative vs multiple narratives of Dalits, Tribes, Muslim and Christian. It has been a platform of the suppressed multiple voices. In the text, different organisations and individuals come up with their voices. Moreover, hidden forces and voices are exposed. This work is a sarcastic criticism of suppressive Hindutva or Hindu fundamentalism and its desire for singular narrative. Hariharan alleges, “true Indians, whose souls vibrate to ancient truths, must reject modern errors and misinterpretations” (Hariharan, *ITS* 149). This remarkable novel raises questions about the freedom of scholarship and research in the Indian context as often scholars and writers become victims of controversy, vandalism and communalism. She raises one fundamental question-- who owns the authority of history? Who is the authority of writing censorship in the country? Ban on the book and the movie has been a regular practice in India. Usually, what government imposes such kind of ban is not for the sake of truth or right criticism but to satisfy public sentiment. Authority's interference does not lead to solving the problem, rather it is an escape. Bias judgement is given in most of such cases by the government. The government often acts simply to satisfy public sentiment. It shows that public sentiment is more significant, more respectful than academic truth or reason. This type of bias judgment often dissatisfies cultural practitioners and academics in the country. Writers, researchers and cultural practitioners most often become victims of such prejudiced judgment of the authority. This is how Hariharan talks about intellectual subalternity in her fiction.

Thus, Hariharan's *ITS* makes a strong point in her fiction that in India singular Hindu narrative or Hindutwa is completely a myth. It is never possible in such a pluralistic society. Hariharan is very critical about India's acute desire for a singular narrative. She argues that since long India as a subcontinent grows as a fragmented nation with multiple narratives and diversity. Diversity is one of the basic features of this subcontinent. It is a hallmark of this nation. India holds a diversity of culture, race and ethnicity. It is often defined as a plate of mixed-salad or unity in diversity. Besides the dominant mainstream Hindu narrative, there are multiple narratives of Muslims, Christians, Dalits, Tribes, and et al. Cultural narratives of Muslim, Christianity and other non-tribes in India cannot be ignored because they have the major contribution in the construction of collective cultural, social and religious entity of the nation. Muslims have large scale contribution in the cultural growth of India. Christianity has the same significance. Indian tribes have a different distinct cultural identity. Many tribes with different belief system find it difficult to identify themselves with mainstream Hindus. For example, Bodo people who follow the Bathauism⁸ declare themselves as non-Hindus. Besides, within the Hindu there is inner disagreement or conflict. Upper caste Hindu cannot accept the lower caste Hindu. The best example is Dalits are Hindu but they are not included as part of the mainstream Hindu culture. Moreover, there are contrastive versions of the south, the north, the west and the east. Northeast India has a unique cultural identity. People of this region have peculiar environmental, geographical and cultural experiences. They often feel alienated in mainstream Indian culture in mainland India. This is how Hariharan announces that singular mainstream Hindu narrative is never possible in India. The fact is that no singularity can represent

India as a nation. In *ITS Meena*, Shiva's accomplice says, "Fine, we are all different. But can't we remain different and still have a language or two in common? Can't we have more than one voice or one identity?" (Hariharan, *In Time of Siege*, 142).

Thus, contemporary Indian women writers like Githa Hariharan, Shashi Deshpande, Manju Kapur, Kavita Kane, Anita Nair and Mahasweta Devi not only concern with women's experiences in feminist politics of revisionist writing, but also with the general aspect of marginality in society. No doubt, they want to reach to the core centre of female marginalization and domination, but while doing this they are mapping the picture of the whole life in a particular context. What insightful lesson is received from their powerful writings is that in India there are active forces to order the daily life of common people following the biased tradition of caste, class, gender and ethnicity. They have shown the continuity of social hierarchy and disparity in our society. Whatever dream we have for equality is simply a Utopia. Seeking a righting the wrongs of the past, in their writing they have explored the marginalized text and context, characters and perspectives in the classical literature, present context and thereby interrogate female participation and representation. Their writings have re-appropriated and reinterpreted the past for correct representation of their self experiences, world views and reinstate their real self and identity. Hariharan's revisit of myth and history in order to reconstruct the marginalized text and context of the past can be justified by Satchidanandan's statement,

.....such subversive interpretations often persuade us to interrogate our status-quoits notions of dharma from the point of view of the victims of the discriminatory social order: woman, Dalit, tribals, ethnic, religious minorities, etc.

thus employing myth in the service of democracy, human rights and social justice” (Satchidanandan xiii-xiv).

Above discussion shows that writing as re-revisioning revisits and re-interprets the past; the old texts, context and characters are revisioned. Feminist revisionist works dig out not only the hidden history of female talent, adventure, heroism and show the women’s role in the process of humanity, but also re-examine the whole history of subjugation and marginalization. It is a rethought of women’s history, reliving life and renarrating life from women’s points of view. This is how politics of identity involves this act of revisioning the past; ancient literary works, myth, *kathas*, *puranas* and history get reinterpreted. Hence, the main objective of the feminist ideology of writing is to re-explore lived experiences of the female, to express themselves and reinstate their lost identity and dignity. It also helps to redefine female subjectivity, self and sexuality. This act of revisionist writing is a politics of reclaiming, representing, redefining and reinterpreting life and world. Thus, Hariharan’s revisionist political writings create a strong voice against the suppressive forces in the country. Khuswant Singh rightly observes, “Hariharan writes with anguish, pain and anger about what is happening to our country” (cited as a comment on the cover of the text).

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