

# SOCIETAL CRISIS AND CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN THE NOVELS OF GITHA HARIHARAN

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## **Abstract**

***In the Indian environment, authors have the opportunity to shed light on the society's culture. Readers can only comprehend the cultural and social basis of their culture through the works of the author. As a result, it becomes a widespread practice among Indian English literature authors. The history of their culture was also depicted by the female writers. Many feminists have come to the conclusion that the topic of women's emancipation should not be reduced to the conflicts between men and women. To be liberated, a woman must empower herself to fight various institutional systems and cultural practices that subject her to patriarchal tyranny and control. This research paper examines how Indian English fiction writer, Githa Hariharan uses genre fiction as a medium to transfer culture to learners by displaying Indian myths and showing how women survive even in the most unusual conditions in their lives.***

***Keyword: Githa Hariharan, Societal Crisis, Cultural Elements, The Thousand Faces of Night, The Ghost of Vasu Master, In Times of Siege, When Dreams Travel***

## **1.INTRODUCTION**

Indo-Anglian literature is quite new. An Indian writer is noted for his writings about India and the life of an Indian living abroad. Great authors rose to prominence through their writing abilities. Such an Indian novelist is a source of pride for the country. By their writing, Indian authors have affected an entire generation. Indian writers have made significant contributions to the field of English literature over the years. Indian novelists in English, earn special recognition for portraying India; its rich social history and societal standards to western audiences.

Indian authors give a kaleidoscope perspective of the lively nation because they come from a variety of educational and social backgrounds. Readers from various walks of life have been influenced by their writings. Foreign writers were not required to depict India by Indian writers. Many well-known writers have left their impact on cultural and societal issues in recent years. Renowned writers such as Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, and others have elevated the Indian English novel to new heights.

Githa Hariharan is a renowned writer among the emerging writers. She is one among India's most prolific female writers. She was born in 1954 in Coimbatore. She is a social activist who is well-known for her compassion for women. Githa Hariharan's works include novels, short tales, articles and columns, as well as essays on many topics that interest her. Her first novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night*, was released in 1992, and she was awarded the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 1993. *The Ghost of Vasu Master* followed this novel (1994). *When Dreams Travel*, her third novel, was published in 1999, and it was immediately followed by *In Times of Siege* (2003). Besides from novels, Githa Hariharan has written a collection of short tales called *The Art of Dying* (1993) and a book of short stories called *The Winning Team* (2004).

Githa Hariharan thus occupies a pivotal position in the history of Indian English literature. On the one hand, she is a vital part of the wider heritage, but she is also an important cord in the tradition of Indian women writers. Githa Hariharan thus occupies a pivotal position in the history of Indian English literature. On the one hand, she is a vital part of the wider heritage, but she is also an important cord in the tradition of Indian women writers. The age of Githa Hariharan is unquestionably the most intricate period in India's cultural history. The invention of television and the subsequent expansion of news and entertainment channels is one of the most notable

phenomena that has accelerated the transformations. No transitional period in India's cultural history has been as forcefully accelerated as now. The spread of education is another significant aspect that occurred over the last two decades. Education was not limited to making people literate, but it also had new functions to undertake. The development of technical education and managerial courses transformed the minds of ordinary Indians, with women playing an important role in molding India's cultural past.

All five novels that have appeared on the literary scene were written during this turbulent period in Indian socio-cultural history. The crisis to which her characters are subjected is the societal crisis.

She linked together the stories of three women from three generations in Madras, India's southernmost city, in her novel *The Thousand Faces of Night*. The book depicts how they are caught between tradition and modernity while attempting to establish their own lives. Devi, the novel's protagonist, was raised in a conventional Hindu home. Despite her conservative upbringing, she overcame her challenges and acted like a modern woman. Githa Hariharan depicts our country's cultural characteristics in this novel. In this work, she says about tale telling. Some of the characters who share stories throughout the story include Devi's grandmother, Baba, and Mayamma. Githa Hariharan adapted Ramayana and Mahabharata stories. She speaks about the stories of minor characters such as Amba, Ganga, and others. Githa Hariharan expresses our society's culture through these female figures. Her characters were also role models.

In *Times of Siege*, another work by Githa Hariharan, has a true, personal backstory. In 1995, she attempted to open a bank account for her eleven-year-old son, but was told that she could only do so with her husband's signature. The ruling was based on Hindu law, which was still in effect at the time, which stated that a woman has the right to guardianship over her children only when the father dies. She and her husband decided to take the dispute to court, and she won.

The fact that an Indian court modified the constitution in favour of women in 1999, declaring that "a mother is unquestionably a child's natural guardian," is now regarded as a watershed moment in India's history of women's freedom. The novel *In Times of Siege* is a reflection of contemporary Indian society, which is increasingly characterized by extremism, hatred,

mistrust, and censorship. Githa Hariharan discusses the relationship between a pupil and a teacher in this story. Shiv is the teacher, and Meena is the student. This work also reflects societal cultural issues. Meena is Shiv's childhood friend's daughter in this case. Meena once damaged her leg and remained with Shiv. A woman staying with a man alone was considered a mistake in the past. But, Meena, being a modern girl, rejected the old belief and chose to remain with Shiv. She aided Shiv while he was in difficulty. Another example of cultural characteristics can be found in this work.

*The Ghosts of Vasu Master* is the next novel of Githa Hariharan. This novel, like the last one, is on the relationship between a teacher and a student. Mani is the pupil, while Vasu is the former schoolmaster. Githa Hariharan speaks here on the feelings of a retired person who lives alone. Even after retirement, The master does not live with his sons. She was the only person in the village. To keep himself busy, he taught classes to pupils at his house. Mani is one of the students. He is distinct from others. It is a difficult task for Vasu master to instruct Mani. Githa Hariharan employs the story-telling technique once more. While sharing stories, Vasu master recalls his mother, grandmother, and wife. Githa Hariharan used the method of story-telling to reveal her society's culture.

*When Dreams Travel* is another novel by Githa Hariharan. This tale follows the lives of two sisters and two brothers. Githa Hariharan used the story-telling style once more in this novel. To preserve their lives, the sisters Shahrzad and Dunyazad married brave brothers. To pass the time, they began to tell amusing stories that entertained the brothers. Her Githa Hariharan depicts how a king would act during their time period. Similarly, she describes how a woman would approach the problems.

A close examination of Githa Hariharan's works exposes us to the raw truths of India's evolving social structure, stripped of any emotional or ideological coating. Githa Hariharan explores the Societal Crisis and cultural elements of society in all of her novels.

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