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## Treatment of Husband-Wife Relationship in the Novels of Githa Hariharan

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### ABSTRACT

This brief study discusses various dimensions of husband-wife in the novels of Githa Hariharan. She has presented a huge variety of this relationship, like illiterate, well educate, talented Brahmin family background, lower caste, rich and poor etc. This study explores through these fictional husband-wife relationships the main reasons, loose points and gaps of break-up, divorce and destruction of this harmonious relationship. The sole aim of this study is to provide learning from the mistakes of the fictional characters so that we cannot repeat the same mistakes in our actual life because life is not so long that we learn by doing own mistakes so we must need to learn from these fictional characters and live with harmonious relationships.

Githa Hariharan has presented myriad dimensions of personal relationships through rich and complex characters with compassion. Her novels are full of man-woman, man-man and woman-woman relationships. Hariharan has presented these relationships with full care and sincerity. She has shown how man-made geographical, social, linguistic and cultural barriers come between harmonious relationships. Thus, her novels are complex web of personal relationships. Hariharan has depicted in her novels various ups and downs in man-woman relationships, especially husband-wife relationship. Githa Hariharan in her novels presented personal relationships with a number of angles. In personal relationships, it is man-woman relation which drew her attention most. Hariharan considered man-woman relation as the pivot for the existence of humanity. She has given secondary place to the relation between man and man, woman and woman and parent and child in her novels.

In man-woman relations, husband-wife relationship is the core and soul of human existence on this earth and the most important in personal relationships. Githa Hariharan in her novels presents various angles of this husband-wife relationship with their ups and downs. Githa Hariharan presents number of dimensions of this husband-wife relationship through a number of examples. Sushma Arya makes judicious and pert remark in this connection: "She analyzes interpersonal relationships, and also talks about how a Western-educated Indian girl finds that she is not suitable for Indian marriage." (50)

In her second novel, *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*, Githa Hariharan has presented Vasu-Mangla relationship as an example of husband-wife relationship. Their relationship is the story of timid but patriarch husband and a submissive and timid wife. Vasu Master is a teacher in Veera Naidu's PG school. Mangla has zero importance in the life of Vasu Master. She is a birth machine and a servant or

a caretaker in his life. He shares his views about his wife Mangla:

Although Mangla and I had two sons, Vishnu and Venu, I knew her more as a cloudy memory than a person. I found myself speculating about her real self, a woman who remained as obscure as my forgotten mother. At this distance, the Mangla I recalled was pale and insubstantial; a figure perennially on the retreat. I always saw her in my mind against a vast seashore in the background, the monotonous slosh and thud of waves against rock and drowning out all possibility of words. (Hariharan, *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*, 41)

Vasu is a husband in whose life wife is only a cloudy memory and background. Mangla who spent most part of her life with Vasu Master who served him all life and gives him two sons is still only remained as a cloudy memory and a background; she could never be a living person in the life of Vasu Master. After spending many years with Mangla Vasu Master when remembers her wonders: "Who is she?" (Hariharan, *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*, 43)

Vasu and Mangla relationship presents analogous face of husband-wife relationship in which a patriarch husband never treats his wife as a wife and a timid and submissive wife who remains a servant and a birth machine in her married life for her husband.

The relationship of Venkatesan and his wife illustrates husband-wife relationship. Venkatesan is a very religious man who spends his the most of time in worshipping and in talking about the Swami-his religious guru. He makes her wife merely a birth machine to a son from her even a father getting seven daughters. Whenever Vasu visited Venkatesan's house, he always finds the wife of Venkatesan that "she was always hugely pregnant." (Hariharan, *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*, 150) This is a picture of husband-wife relationship where wife means a birth machine, a twenty four hour serving servant, and a nurse of children. There is no attachment or even a human feeling that forces the husband to think that his wife is also a human being and she needs not only a roof, two times' meal and clothes to wear but the feelings, love, care and emotions from her husband.

Vasu's father and his mother (Lakshmi) relationship shows a typical stereotype Indian wife and a traditional patriarch Brahmin husband who is a self contained person. Lakshmi is a simple, timid, submissive wife. Here the husband has the thinking that his wife should always blindly follow him without any ifs and buts, without asking wrong and right. But Lakshmi and Vasu Master's wife Mangla become too weak under the burden of patriarchal rule of the household that they can never even think about to revolt against this women slavery under their husbands. Vasu Master tells about his mother:

Whatever her name, I was told, she would have been timid, worrying little thing, nagging, and pestering like a high pitched-mosquito. She did not know how to bite though. (Hariharan, *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*, 32)

In the life of her husband she has only one place that is of a slave. She married to him only to serve day and night, warm his bed in the night, and gives him children. She has no big dreams and ambitions in her life or even she has no courage to see the big one because she spends her whole life under the rule of patriarchy within Brahmin families of her father and her husband. Her ambitions are mediocre as described in the novel:

Her ambitions are on low scale—escaping her husband's unpredictable explosions of temper, surviving her mother-in-law's jealous rule of household, and above all keeping the house, and everyone in it, clean, pure and unpolluted. (Hariharan, *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*, 32)

The husband snatches all freedom from his wife Lakshmi. This makes her life so miserable that her life becomes a living death. She has even not the freedom that she can talk to her neighbours in her whole married life. The novelist depicts her situation in these words:

She had never exchanged more than six words with our neighbours on either side, but she obsessed with them. They can hear, they can hear, she always whispering lower your voice and shut the door. (Hariharan, *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*, 32)

Her husband creates such a terror in her life that even she frightens to talk with her neighbours. "She fought a losing battle on all fronts." (Hariharan, *The*

*Ghosts of Vasu Master*, 32) Her husband and sometimes her mother-in-law enrage her but she finds herself helpless and humiliated and nothing can do. In the whole period of her married life she dances on her husband and mother-in-law's commands but never tries to revolt against them because of her dependence on them. She is a puppet in the hands of her husband and we know that what a puppet can do? So the novelist depicts her helpless condition in these lines: "It was not very surprising then that Lakshmi had melted away into the shadows of the loud, tyrannical household." (Hariharan, *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*, 32) In this tyrannical prison she lived like a captive prisoner. Vasu says that "she lived just about long enough to give my father his heir, obviously even that was a shoddy job." (Hariharan, *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*, 32) Vasu Master described his father's personality and attitude that "my father was unique, an individual in a way neither my mother nor I could ever be." (Hariharan, *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*, 32)

So this relationship of Vasu's father and Lakshmi is mirror of husband-wife relationship in which there is a self contained husband and a timid, submissive and life bounded slave wife.

The relationship of Sultan Shahzaman and his Queen wife in the novel *When Dreams Travel* is another fine example of husband-wife relationship. "*When Dreams Travel* (1999) is a kind of feminist retelling of the *Arabian Nights*." (Naik, 92) This relationship shows another hidden dimension of husband-wife relationship. Shahzaman was a Sultan of Samarkand who lives with his wife in the palace peacefully and happily. He was satisfied with his married life with his Queen. He was enjoying this royal status from twenty years. His elder brother Sultan Shahryar of Shahabad sends him an invitation message through his wazir that he is feeling "a great longing for his presence." (Hariharan, *When Dreams Travel*, 9) Wazir delivers the message and Shahzaman feels happy after knowing the brotherly love message. He appoints his wazir deputy ruler and starts his journey. In the night he stops journey and stays in camp few miles away from his palace. In the night he suddenly wakes up and finds unable to sleep again. He comes out of his camp and decides to go his palace alone perhaps he was has forgotten something important in the palace, may be a gift which he wants to give his brother. He reaches in his

palace, enters through secret door to which he knows only. Then uses hidden stairs and reaches in his room. He shocks when he sees his wife sleeping naked on bed in the arms of a black slave:

The pale gleaming body of his wife on his bed, two muscular arms—though he can just about make out the ebony contour of one elbow—hold her in blissful sleep. (Hariharan, *When Dreams Travel*, 11)

Sultan Shahzaman enrages to see the naked body of his wife in the arms of her black slave lover. Then he cuts the bodies of both the unfaithful queen and her black slave in pieces and slices with his royal sword mercilessly:

A deeper shade of black flows into the room. A sword dangling limply wakes at the touch of quick hand. It moves forward and pierces, slices all the flesh before him. Zaman's vision of foul woman with the black slave is dying as a wet blanket spreads itself and thin locked embrace. Now he can see only blood, all of it an identical belligerent ruby red so he can't tell whose it is. Swiftly he wipes the sword on the bed and races back to the camp. (Hariharan, *When Dreams Travel*, 11)

Sultan Shahzaman does not know that his wife was unfaithful towards him but when he sees the ghastly view of her infidelity he makes her dead.

Thus this relationship shows the husband-wife relationship with new eye where a merciless king kills his wife when he comes to know her unfaithfulness by his own eyes without listening and speaking a single word.

Sultan Shahryar and his favourite queen relationship adds new dimension in husband-wife relationship. Sultan Shahryar loves his queen very much. But she has a secret extra-marital affair with her male slave Masood. But her husband does not know anything about it because the queen is very clever one that she enjoys extra-marital affair with the slave Masood when her husband Sultan Shahryar goes out of the city. One day Sultan Shahzaman, the younger brother of Sultan Shahryar comes to meet him after getting the invitation message from his elder brother Sultan Shahryar. But he is very sad then Shahryar asks him the reason of his sadness then Shahzaman answers, "I am afflicted with a painful sore." (Hariharan, *When Dreams*

*Travel*, 12) He tells him his tragic married life's story of infidelity and murdering by him of his wife. "Zaman struck by the fact that he is barely out of his city. What did the woman plan to do one he had actually left?" (Hariharan, *When Dreams Travel*, 12) Shahryar makes a plan of hunting to change the mood of his brother but he goes alone for hunting when Shahzaman refuses to go and wishes to remain in palace. Shahzaman goes room to room as he searches something. He sees out of the window the scene of royal gardens. It was day time and he shocks to see that the queen comes in the garden and does a sexual-intercourse with a slave Masood openly along with her fellow male-female.

It is day time, but almost an order, a door open, and not one but forty slaves, twenty women- twenty men emerge, Zaman sees his brother's wife among slaves, leading them to fountain. She looks up and he retreats quickly, but even from behind the lattice screen he can see undressing, then stretching out naked on the grass. All around her clothes pile up in satiny bushes; the whole world is shedding trousers, robes, veils. A naked circus cavorts before Zaman's eyes, its hungry, panting cartoonists twisting themselves into impossible shapes. Zaman watches. His face has turned bloodless, as if all their lands are round his neck squeezing. (Hariharan, *When Dreams Travel*, 12)

After watching the entire scene he feels that "he is not the only one; in fact, his brother's wife worse than his." (Hariharan, WDT, 13) When Shahryar returns from the hunting, Zaman tells him the ghastly view which he has seen in the garden. But Shahryar refuses to believe on the unfaithfulness of his wife. Then Shahzaman suggests to him that he pretends to go out of the city and conceals himself in the room. Shahryar does the same what Shahzaman plans and shocks after seeing the scene of unfaithfulness of his wife in open garden. After this both brothers come to conclusion: "women, even their wives, their noble queens, are tainted with untrustworthy desire." (Hariharan, *When Dreams Travel*, 13) But unlike his brother Shahzaman he does not kills his wife. He renounces the royal status with his brother Shahzaman and starts roaming to find another king who has been

more or equally dishonoured. One night on the seashore they see a giant jinni with a box. They climb the tree and watch the scene. Jinni opens the box "a fresh faced girl" (Hariharan, *When Dreams Travels*, 14) comes out of the box. Jinni falls asleep by laying his head in the knees of the girl. But when he is in deep sleep, the girl calls both the brothers and invites them to sex with her in miming and warns them that if they deny she will awake the jinni. They have no other option except to accept her offer, so they sex with her one after other. After sex the girl demand their royal rings and put them in a string in which she has already ninety-eight rings. Jinni wakes up put the girl in box and goes away. After this event both the brother come to conclusion, "The jinni carried her away on her bridal night when she was still a virgin, but since then she has been unfaithful to her master a hundred times, always in his presence and without ever being caught." (Hariharan, *When Dreams Travel*, 15) Shahryar after coming to his palace kills his wife along with her slaves and her lover slave Masood and starts an ideal plan to sex with a fresh virgin in night and in morning kills her. So this relationship shows another side of husband-wife relationship where unfaithful wife and the good husband present in such a situation that after knowing the infidelity of his wife a husband takes revenge of her unfaithfulness by killing other virgins of the city after sexual-intercourse with them.

Sultan Shahryar and Shahrzad relationship presents a new angle to see this husband-wife relationship. Sultan Shahryar marries with Shahrzad in abnormal circumstances. Shahryar after killing his unfaithful wife turns into a killer of virgins. He sexes with a fresh virgin every night and kills her in morning and this practice continues for three long years and the city now turns almost empty from virgins. In the last Wazir sends his witty daughter Shahrzad to the palace, she tells one story every night to the Sultan and this practice of story-telling continuously goes on to a chain of one thousand one nights. In the last she becomes successful in transforming Sultan's heart from a tormentor to a nice person. He stops killing virgins and marries to Shahrzad. She gains a special place in the heart of Shahryar; her wisdom makes a rebirth of Shahryar:

He has brought to his senses by a woman;  
and with, of all things, her stories; her

ready tongue, her cleverness. In the abnormal climate where imagination—through the medium of the word— asserts its power over the blood-shedding sword. (Hariharan, *When Dreams Travel*, 21)

Thus this relationship presents another angle of husband-wife relationship where a wife transforms a killer king into a good human being by her wisdom but one aspect of this marriage is that Shahrzad never loves the king because she does not marry by the choice of her heart and imagine can a young beautiful woman loves to a killer of his own wife along with her forty fellow slaves and finally more aged than her and also a murderer of hundreds of innocent virgins.

Sultan Shahzaman and Dunyazad relationship is another fine example of husband wife relationship. She is his second wife, first he kills due to her infidelity. They spent the long fifteen years of their married life with each other. However there is age gap between them. So it is not a marriage of Dunyazad's choice but an imposed marriage on her. So she spends long fifteen years with a husband who killed his wife and has a son from first wife. After the death of Shahzaman she becomes his widow.

Wazir and Raziya's relationship is another example of husband-wife relationship which presents another angle of this relationship. Wazir is a very learned person but he is not an egoist and he never mistreats his wife while she is an ordinary woman. She gives him two beautiful and witty daughters. She is a very caring and devoted wife. The ego of learning and knowledge never touch their harmonious married relationship. Raziya accepts her husband's decision of sending her daughters in the palace for the Sultan. She respects his decision because it is for the whole city so the both husband wife ready for this sacrifice. Thus this relationship presents a learned husband and a caring and devoted wife.

The relationship of Old man and Old woman of the yellow-green house presents the quarrelsome husband-wife. In their mature age, they have no understanding. They live under one roof, but they fail to understand each other. Their relationship is like the relationship of India and Pakistan every time ready for fight. They are very short-tempered: "They had grown angry and twisted; their features glowed ominously in the

failing light. Then the old woman grabbed her broom; the old man groped for his walking stick." (Hariharan, *When Dreams Travel*, 187) They are so quarrelsome that without quarrel the food in their stomachs never digests. They are so helpless in the habit of quarrel that even they start their quarrelsome fight in the front of their guest Satyasama. So these old age husband-wife present a picture of the quarrelsome husband-wife, those on the last days of the death ready to quarrel with each other.

In the next novel of Githa Hariharan, *In Times of Siege* the relationship of Professor Shiv Murthy and Rekha presents well educated modern town-living husband-wife which gives new angle to explore this husband-wife relationship. Dr. Shiv Murthy is at "fifty two, finally a Professor of History" in a Kasturba Gandhi University of Delhi. (Hariharan, *In Times of Siege*, 21) Rekha is also a well educated lady and now she lives in Seattle, America along with her newly settled daughter Tara. One day she calls to her husband Professor Shiv Murthy who is upset at the highest degree because of his course lesson which he wrote for B.A. correspondence students about twelfth century South Indian revolutionary poet Basavanna or Basva in which he describes that Basavanna's city Kalyana, was not a model Hindu Kingdom and he openly discussed the problem of caste and untouchability created and practiced by the Brahmin and the temple Brahmin priests and their inhuman behaviour towards the other castes. This lesson hurts the feelings of the fundamentalist Brahmins and becomes the reason of his unrest. So Shiv is mentally disturbed when Rekha makes a call to him from America. On telephone she behaves like an Indian wife who is so worried about her household affairs and talks like this:

I don't know what I have called, I had better tell you – I don't know if the mali has been coming regularly, and I'm worried about the garden. I don't want everything drying up by the time I get back. I have a list for you, Shiv are you listening? Will you get a pencil and jot this down? (Hariharan, *In Times of Siege*, 56)

Dr. Shiv Murthy does not tell her anything about the problem because he does not want to make her worry. So Rekha behaves normally because she does not know what is going on in the life of her husband.

She is very caring wife. But when she comes to know about the problem that the Hindu Brahmin fundamentalists through so called organization named *Itihas suraksha Manch* demand that Professor Shiv Murthy beg apology publically otherwise give the resign and withdraw this lesson from the course. She becomes so worried and says on phone to Shiv that she is coming back. Rekha come to supervise Shiv in each and everything. She is more a supervisor and less a wife. Shiv thinks that if Rekha will come back from America or if she comes to know the problem she will say:

Takes stock of the situation first. Don't commit yourself one way or the other. If you can't make a decision, go to bed and will yourself to sleep. And in the morning the ruthless with yourself. (Hariharan, *In Times of Siege*, 59)

Shiv Murthy bores from her supervision and pieces of advice and he develops an extra-marital affair with his fellow colleague, Dr. Amita Sen. But he thinks about this relationship with Amita Sen seriously and Hariharan describes his thoughts in these words:

Shiv's own campaigns are minor rebellions; secretive mutinies. He is not used to keeping much back from Rekha. Sometimes he wonders if that is the real attraction Amita Sen holds for him. That if he has some secret moments with her, he has a sordid and dark corner in his neatly swept life, a place where nothing is labeled for or put back in place. A corner unsupervised by Rekha. (Hariharan, *In Times of Siege*, 58)

When the problem which raised from his lesson on Basavanna becomes very worst then he decides to share it with Rekha because she is the only legal one to whom he can share his pains and sufferings because she is his wife and a life companion and both they were took vows at their marriage time to give company to each other in all the ups and downs of life and remain their companions. So after thinking all this, Shiv Murthy tells the entire problem in detail and adds that the circumstances are so worse that the hate mails come to him. After knowing this from Shiv, Rekha says:

'What nonsense' she says scornfully. 'Sounds like rubbish to me. Throw out the hate mails and complain to University

security. I think you're worrying too much as usual.' (Hariharan, *In Times of Siege*, 81)

Here Shiv cannot sleep because of the terror of the Hindu fundamentalists and Rekha has the view that he is unnecessarily worrying. But when she calls again to Shiv Murthy she forgets all about her household talk and tension of drying garden or even about Meena. She is very serious at this time and her voice is cool and low:

Rekha is on the phone again, but she no longer seems to remember the existence of her precious garden, or the household, or even Meena. Her low, cool voice is pitched at a higher note than usual. 'I read the news online,' she says. Why don't you tell me it was a bigger mess than I thought?' (Hariharan, *In Times of Siege*, 102)

Now Rekha is very upset and feels restless that her husband is in a problem and she should be with him in these circumstances. So in a caring voice she says on phone to Shiv:

'I should get back. I can't stay on for another month. I'll worry too much about what will happen next if I am here. About how you are managing it all.' (Hariharan, *In Times of Siege*, 102)

Rekha is very caring wife but on the other hand Shiv cheats her behind her back by developing an extra-marital relationship with Dr. Amita Sen. He is unworthy to his wife. Many a times he sleeps with Amita by ignoring the love, care and devotion of his wife Rekha.

So this relationship of Professor Shiv Murthy and Rekha presents a loving and caring wife and an cocket husband. This relationship shows another face of this husband-wife relationship.

Kamla and her husband relationship presents a husband-wife who talk very little during their whole married period because of their busy and tired schedule of life. Kamla's husband is a peon in the University of Shiv Murthy and lives with his family including her wife Kamla and a school going daughter Babli. He is a very busy man and his wife Kamla, most of the time remains sick. Their relationship is an example of husband-wife relationship where husband is made for job and wife for household. Both see various ups and downs in their married life. But the husband remains faithful towards his illiterate wife.

Professor Shiv Murthy's father and his mother relationship adds new dimension in the husband-wife relationship. Shiv's father is a freedom fighter and eloped away when Shiv was in his teen years of age. Shiv's mother loves her husband very much. So Shiv's uncle searches him many a times but there is no clue of him. At the end they come to conclusion that he is no more in this world. But his wife never comes to believe on this she does all that what a traditional Indian wife can do for coming back of her husband. Shiv says about the efforts which she did for her husband: "My mother spent the rest of her life performing all sorts of *pujas* (worshipings) to lead him back. But nothing—we heard of him again." (Hariharan, *In Times of Siege*, 35) His mother is not ready to believe on this hard fact that her husband will never come back and she does not believe on this that her husband is no more in this world. The novelist describes that:

Shiv's mother was sure that husband was alive, that she would hear from him in a day or two, a month, a year. She didn't just believe this; she made sure she put her act of faith on record. She sustained her belief for three years spending most of her waking hours praying in puja room. (Hariharan, *In Times of Siege*, 192)

She loves her husband very much. She spends her rest of life on belief and hope that he must be return one day. She obsesses with this feeling. She cannot live without her husband. But every illusion and hope has an end, one day we must need face to face encounter with reality so after the long span she defeats or breaks and admits the fact that her husband is dead now and dead never come back. So one day she realizes this hard fact.

Then she slipped away without anyone in the house noticing, as if ashamed she could not stay on the prod her husband to come back, or pleads with the gods to let him return. (Hariharan, *In Times of Siege*, 192)

She has now lost her hope as well as the battle of her life. So one day:

Shiv found her dead in the puja room, sitting rigid on the floor, her eyes closed. She gripped the big brass puja bell so firmly that she had to pray it out of her lifeless hand. (Hariharan, *In Times of Siege*, 192)

This is the end of this husband-wife relationship. This relationship shows a wife who loves her husband so much that she dies in the waiting of her lost husband. This relationship of husband-wife shows a disappeared husband and a wife who lives on the hope that one day her husband will return back and for that she devotes her remaining life in all sorts of worshipping even she dies in puja room.

Dr. Arya and Mrs. Arya relationship throws light on another side of this husband-wife relationship. Dr. Arya is a self contained Brahmin husband and Mrs. Arya is a timid and submissive wife. Dr. Arya is a Fellow Professor in the same University in which Dr. Shiv Murthy works. He is a patriarch Brahmin. He does not love and respect his wife or rather she is a working slave in his home. They have an only son Akshai who is blind. Dr. Arya snatches all the rights of a mother from her. The husband even does not allow her that she can give a bath to her son. Mrs. Arya discloses her pain as a wife in the rare social gathering in their department with Rekha. She says:

Akshai's father does everything for her. He won't even let me bathe the child. She looks both proud and pained as she says this; she laughs a strained laugh, a laugh she has to cough up like a foreign body stuck in her throat. (Hariharan, *In Times of Siege*, 30)

Mrs. Arya kept her child nine months in her womb and even nurtured him during his infant period. But this patriarch Brahmin husband snatches all the rights of a mother from her. She is only a serving person in her home. This relationship of Dr. Arya and Mrs. Arya presents a submissive wife and a self contained patriarch husband which provides us another window to see this husband-wife relationship.

Dr. Amita Sen and her chartered accountant husband is the another example of husband-wife relationship. Dr Amita Sen is a Professor in Kasturba Gandhi University of Delhi. She is very beautiful lady. "Her husband is a successful chartered accountant." (Hariharan, *In Times of Siege*, 21) He is a very busy person. His eyes always stay on income tax files. He is so busy that even he forgets that he has a beautiful wife. He is a fantastic example of a busy man who does not have interest in the outer world

except his job. He reminds us the character of Marco in the famous novel of R.K. Narayan *The Guide* whose chief interest is in dead caves of Hempi but not in his beautiful wife, Rosie. So in the same way this chartered accountant loves and has passion for income tax files but not in his charming beautiful wife Amita. He never remembers that he has a beautiful wife and she also needs time, love and affection. The novelist describes a picture of this busy man like this: "Her husband is a successful chartered accountant; he holds the income tax secrets of many rich and powerful men in his files." (Hariharan, *In Times of Siege*, 21) Amita feels alone in the journey of her life. Her loneliness increases boredom in her life. "Amita's greatest fear is boredom. And loneliness, she has found, usually accompanied by boredom." (Hariharan, *In Times of Siege*, 21) In this lonely life she needs someone who fills her empty hours of life and satisfies her physical needs. So, to fill the empty hours of her boring and lonely life she develops an extra-marital relationship with Dr. Shiv Murthy, a married man of fifty two. She forgets or she wants to forget her busy accountant husband in the arms of Shiv Murthy so they never talk about her husband whenever they meet. Amita's husband is a successful chartered accountant and a big failure as a husband. Can we say a man successful whose wife sleeps or sexes with someone else? He can be a materialistic successful man but materialistically gains do not mean that a person is a successful man. He is very miserable husband who has a beautiful wife but he has no time and interest in her. Shiv Murthy says about her husband that he never try to open the file of her miserable wife. Githa Hariharan depicts: "But Shiv doubts that the man (Amita's husband) has ever tried to unravel his wife's melancholy file of accounts." (Hariharan, *In Times of Siege*, 21) Amita's husband never tries to think that she is also a human being, she has also feelings, emotions, sufferings and pains. One can see the different picture of husband-wife relationship through this relationship of Dr. Amita Sen and her husband.

In the last novel of Githa Hariharan, *Fugitive Histories*, Asad-Mala relationship presents a new dimension of husband wife relationship. Mala or Malathi is an educated Hindu Brahmin girl who marries to Asad, a Muslim by birth and a secular by ideology. Her family is against this marriage but she

takes a courageous step and marries with Asad. Asad is an artist-painter by profession. They have two children- a son and a daughter. They take all decisions by combine understanding. But after some years of her marriage Mala consciously feels deserted by Asad. He is very caring and loving husband. But he dies from heart attack and after his death she feels alone. Mala starts to live with the ghost memories of her husband Asad like Vasu Master in the novel *The Ghosts of Vasu Master*. Now Asad is no more in this world but he remains alive in the memories of Mala his loving wife.

Bala and her husband relationship set another example of husband-wife relationship. Their relationship is a story of early age marriage. Bala is married at very early age. Her husband from the first day of their marriage does not like Bala. The novelist describes:

Bala was barely twelve when she came to the house, a week after she began menstruating. Her husband is only five years older, but already he had firm ideas on who fits where in his household and his life. It did not take long for him to decide that this childish flat-chested chattering girl was not the bride he deserved. (Hariharan, *Fugitive Histories*, 15)

He viewed that Bala is not the right match for him. He is very angry man ready to quarrel to anyone. He was bully, never lovable, but sometimes human and he was the undisputed warden. Bala turns to a lunatic in her old age and now she called her husband "bastard boss." (Hariharan, *Fugitive Histories*, 25) She hates her husband due to his unsympathetic and indifferent behaviour towards her. Her granddaughter Mala is her only friend to whom she likes. Her husband died from heart attack and she also dies after sometimes. Their relationship is a story of a husband and wife who remain East and West for each other during their long married life.

Asmin and her husband relationship present another face of husband-wife relationship. Asmin is a housewife and does the work of stitching and sewing for earning and her husband runs a little shop at downstairs of the house. They have a daughter and a son. Akbar Ali, their college going only son disappeared in the massacre of 2002 in Ahmadabad. Both husband and wife suffer a lot



because of their lost son. They love and respect to each other and remain companion in the suffering days of their life. They have no complaint from each other. They continue the search of their lost son.

Their daughter Yashmin says:

Abba went to the thana after Akbar Bhai did not come back from college. Abba persuaded Ammi to stay at house. It wasn't easy; she did not want him to go out of the house unless they went together.  
(Hariharan, *Fugitive Histories*, 32)

Asmin is very caring wife. Their relationship presents the life time companionship.

To conclude one can say that the novels of Githa Hariharan present multicolour picture of this husband wife relationship. Through her fictional characters and situations we not only familiar with the things which make a relation harmonious as well as we also come to know the things which destroy a harmonious relationship.

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