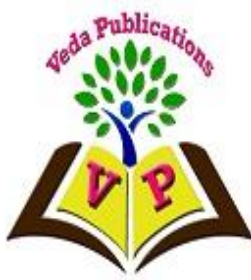




REFLECTION OF CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN KIRAN DESAI'S NOVEL

"THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS"

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*(Lecturer in English, Department of English, SWR GDC (G), Kanchikicharla.)*DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54513/JOELL.2022.v9spli1.02>**ABSTRACT**

Kiran Desai, daughter of an eminent Indian English author Anita Desai. Kiran Desai has carved out a name for herself as a novelist by writing just two books, published to a great international acclaim. In her first novel, 'Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard' she explains about nature and culture. Her second novel, 'The Inheritance of Loss', won the prestigious Man Booker award in 2006 by eclipsing the works of five other short-listed authors. Until the 1990's, Kiran Desai was known as the prominent Indian novelist. Kiran Desai first came to literary attention when in 1997, her excerpts found an honorable mention in Salman Rushdie edited anthology *Mirrorwork: fifty years of Indian writing*. In 1998 came her celebrated debut 'Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard'. Eight years later with 'The Inheritance of Loss' Kiran at thirty-five became the youngest ever women writer to win the prestigious Man Booker Prize.

Keywords: *Love, Life, Family and Loss*



The Inheritance of Loss begins with the introduction of a young Indian girl, named Sai. She is an orphan, living with her maternal grandfather, a retired judge in the town of Kalimpong on the Indian side of the Himalayas. She falls in love with her Maths tutor who is the successor of a Nepali Ghurkha mercenary, named Gyan. But he ultimately recollects his apparent privilege. He is impressed with a group of ethnic Nepalese insurgents. Some important issues of contemporary civilization have been handled by Kiran Desai in her novel. The universalised concept is a multisided platform. It has cultural, economic, educational, political and social aspects. It can also create a chance or a danger due to an alternate in universal contexts that have changed and latest concepts have emerged and humans have gone out of their areas of detention to locate company and capability amongst their counterparts.

It focuses that the women in Kiran Desai's novel ready themselves according to time and necessary requirement for development. Kiran is unlike the writers Zadie Smith and Hari Kudzu whose literature is optimistic in general.

"Hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, and songs" (TIOL, 2006: 2).

The novel highlights the fate of some helpless individual women. Kiran Desai's novel explores intimacy and insight just about every contemporary international issue such as economic inequality, globalization, fundamentalism, multiculturalism, terrorist violence and suppression of women. The Novel also mirrors the North-Eastren culture. The life of Biju is being shown, the son of Sai's grandfather's cook. He belongs to the shadow class of illegitimate migrants in New York and spends so much of his time running away from the authorities, moving from one job to another i.e. not legitimate and trying to stay away a step ahead of the INS, and is obligated to know how the anxiety of being a foreigner as well as the injustice of a world in which "one side travels to be a servant, and the other side travels to be treated like a king."

The main feature in the novel is unquestionably the essential theme of isolation, feeling unfamiliar in one's own family, in a native country or abroad. The novel especially relates to the sense of losing one's self-importance and respect. Most of the characters undergo a sense of loss at the end of the novel. In *The Inheritance of Loss*, Kiran Desai tells the story of Sai who lives with her grandfather Jemubhai, a retired judge, in Kalimpong on the Indian side of the Himalayas and at the foothills of Mount Kanchenjunga. At the same time, Desai reveals the life of Biju, the cook's son in



the judge's household, who works as an illegal immigrant in New York. The novel provides vivid descriptions of alienated individuals living in different places. The two Bengali sisters Lola and Noni yearn for their past and both are presented as delicate human beings in search of love and happiness. Furthermore, the character of Gyan in the novel tells the reader to some extent of the history of Nepal.

Through the flashback technique, Desai depicts the life of Jemubhai the judge's life is connected in flashbacks. His depression and alienation during his sojourn in England, his migration and his journey as an Indian civil servant are explained. He is married to a young girl Nimi who is from a rich family got him a chance for his education through the marriage is not fruitful. His career as a travelling judge throughout India and his life after retirement in the derelict mansion Cho Oyu etc. are narrated in a touching manner. As a student, Jemubhai feels alienated and uprooted in racially prejudiced England, the judge feels, "barely human at all" (*TJOL*, 2006: 40) and leaps, "when touched on the arm as if from an unbearable intimacy" (*TJOL*, 2006: 40).

Jemu's keen sense of isolation in a racial bias. Such society makes him gloomy due to the persistent depression that was called "nihilism" by Nietzsche which means the contradiction of one person from significant aspects of life.

Kiran Desai discloses the pangs of isolation, unbelongingness, homelessness, dislocation and nostalgia for home and homeland suffered by most of the diasporic community. Hence the themes of isolation, dislocation and search for identity play a vital role throughout the novel. On the other hand, the writer herself is an embodiment of displacement and one who travels a lot and settles down for a while but at the same time very conscious of her background and inheritance.

Sai solitude and complete isolation from the life of a normal teenage girl is further emphasized through Cho Oyo, the "unhomely" house that she and her grandfather reside. Sai's two sisters Noni and Lola live close by Mon Ami after her arrival. Noni is employed to be Sai's private tutor by the judge. Sai's little world comprises of people with a multicultural background. She is affected with the aid of aspects from the West. The cook at Cho Oyu who is Indian is only the exemption. The cook and Sai became friends and he teaches her about India and its culture and Indian way of lifestyle as well. On the other hand, they are each able to feel the difference between them that it cannot be bridged:

Kiran Desai has successfully attempted to portray two different parts of the world and has captured common vital concerns in the novel. The book beautifully expresses the three



important aspects of love, life, family and loss. It raises necessary emotions, creates humour and develops imagination. It makes the readers laugh and cry at the same time. The amalgamation of diverse characters and their varied settings have been really employed well.

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