



A LOSS OF IDENTITY AND RELATIONSHIP IN KIRAN DESAI'S *THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS*

Mr. Dipak C. Dharne

Assistant Professor , Department of English ,
Narayanrao Kale Smruti Model College Karanja (Gh.)
Dist. Wardha (M.S.)

ABSTRACT :

Desai's second novel The Inheritance of Loss offers an opportunity to relook at the unique concepts of modernity, human-relationship between motherland and alien land, globalization and multiplicity of culture in contrast to the western views. The narratives intertwine Kalimpong, Phiphit, England and America, showing contrary human relationship between owns culture and other culture, men in motherland and men in other land. Throughout the description, there are ample examples of the western world-first countries – imposing its uncalled presence into the third world in different ways and manners.

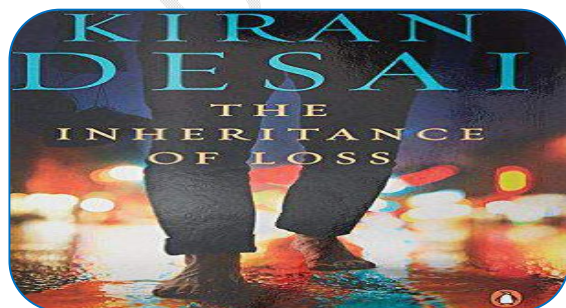
KEYWORDS : *Diaspora, Displacement, Multiculturalism, Feminism, Identity.*

INTRODUCTION

Kiran Desai portrays eccentric and weird character of Jemubhai. Jemubhai is an epitome of obsession with psychological self-colonization and the victim of racial contempt of the western discrimination. Sai's Grandfather Jemubhai Patel makes journey from Phiphit to Cambridge at the age of twenty and became maiden son of his wrecked community to join the Indian Civil Service. But the impression of western culture is so ingrained in his persona that the culture of the western makes him isolated personality. His life in England takes heavy toll on him and bruises him in many ways. Jemubhai Patel contemptuously abandons Indian upbringing with the pungent packet of puris and pickles his mother made for his ship journey. He feels ashamed of home-made food and gets raged at the awkward gesture of his mother, "Undignified love, Indian love, stinking unaesthetic love (Inheritance: 3). As Homi Bhaba comments:

Those inappropriate signifiers of colonial discourse – the difference between being English and being Anglicized; the identity between stereotypes which, through repetition, also become different; the discriminatory identities constructed across traditional cultural norms and classification, the Simian Black, the Lying Asiatic – all these are metonymies of presence. (384)

Separation and uprootedness are axis of the existence in the First World. With the return to his



home, Jemubhai tortures, persecutes his wife for want of literate, and he hates all her ways of Indianness. As a revenge of having uncultured wife, he repeats his injustice and harsh treatment in bid "To teach her the same lesson of loneliness and shame he had learned himself" (ibid: 170). He deliberately makes desperate attempt to transform his wife into an English lady but it culminates to bear no fruit, but his tortures, anglicized behavior wrecks Nimi psychologically and physically

making her nonentity. Eventually Jemubhai with his insensitive torturous treatment makes her commit suicide which he believes is an accident. It can be categorically stated that as he climbs the ladder of material success, his soul stoops low and plummets. It seems to be shocking and surprising that a man could not love his spouse, his daughter and his granddaughter, who had suffered an ambivalent circumstances and colonization. Love and affection about dog and pitiless thrashing of the cook are suitable patterns of Jemubhai's psychic approach. His affectionate relationship with dog, mutt, is not a normal affair of a man with his domestic creature, nor has he an abnormally kinship with dog. Mentioning the flurry of events, Tejinder Kaur points out that all the characters- both home and abroad appear to be hanging like Trishankus in the fluid space suffering the pangs of migrancy-which for Desai seems to be "a universal experience" (9).

In sync with the story of Jemubhai Patel, the novel presents the life of Biju, the son of cook. The cook's whole life moves around his son Biju. Biju stays in America as an illegal immigrant. He lands in USA in order to earn bread and butter to be rich with journey from innocence to the experience. America gains reputation as the land of promise of property and opportunity for the marginalized and deprived. The novel provides glimpses of excruciating conditions of illegal immigrants which was the offshoot of the intense churning of globalization. Desai highlights the intricacies of the law and the green card syndrome. He and many others are impressed by the mirage of the American dream, and stay there as illegal. However, the cook is confident that his son would prosper in America and bring name and fame to him. But Biju caught himself in a world which was relentlessly in a doldrums and devoid of many assured conditions. Given his awkward suitability and ingrained nativity upbringing, he is mired in alien land being ill-equipped foreigner and stuck more and more to his nativity conditioning as a protection against globalization as well as multiculturalism. Thus, Biju's employers cash in on his fake documents to keep him mum and subservient. In this sense Robe Pope's words hold true: every domain of language, literature and culture there is an acute sense and sometimes a flat contradiction between globalizing processes of standardization and localizing processes of differentiation. (139)

In a sense, Biju starts and follows the judge, Jemubhai Patel. The separation and uprootedness that Jemubhai goes through is a reflection of his servitude due to his psychological colonization. *The Inheritance of Loss* is modeled on the defective, divisive globalization. It is the west which propagates its ideals as in the case of Jemubhai and Sai and his westernized neighborhood on the other India is the power which is being spread across the west. So the novel is caught in the tug-of-war that is occurring between the western culture and the eastern one. There are five characters Pinky, Sampath, Sai, Gyan and Biju. Sampath yearns for space of autonomy, Pinky desires her demands to be fulfilled, Sai longs for seeking love and Gyan was in search of idealistic chimera. Desai portrays their inner pent-up feelings and paves way for self-conscious obsession with their self-image. Sai looks in the glass repeatedly she passes by it and frequently 'smothered it with a perfectly formed film star kids' and said hell "half to herself and half to someone else." Love and infatuation between Gyan and Sai starts growing. His entry comes at a time when Sai goes through excessive reading that makes her restless. She creates an influence over him and increasingly

"They played the game of courtship, reaching, retreating, teasing, feeling - how delicious the presence of objective study and in a week or two, they were shameless as beggars, pleading for more." (Inheritance: 129).

Kiran Desai brings out the burning intensity and reciprocal attachment experienced by both Sai and Gyan in romantic delineation. They stroll and roams together and

"When they would finally attempt to rise from those indolent afternoons they spend together, Sai and Gyan would have melted into each other like pots of butter – how difficult it was to cool and compose them back into their individual being" (ibid: 129).

Sai is bogged down in between diametrically two different cultures, the East and the West, which culminates in the fractured crisis of identity. Her identity is vacillated between two opposite way of thinking, and she gets uprooted and remains in quandary as to where she comes from. Cook and Sai develop proximity over the years. As a result, she gets hurt to see the cook feeling separated and being humiliated by

the judge. Though they both know very well but they are altogether different in regard with class and cultural background. Sai, Gyan and the Cook have fully realization that they belong to different social culture. When the Cook teaches her about the culture of India and the life of India she senses the striking difference between their cultures. During the growing intense romantic relationship between Sai and Gyan, the GNLF, (Gorkha National Liberation Front) raises its ugly head. The main intention of the GNLF is to get fulfilled the demand of the separate Gorkha province for the Nepali-speaking people. Gyan also get recruited in the militia and he betrays Sai in the flurry activities of the movement. Sai receives jolt to their love-relationship with this dramatic turning point. GNLF attacks Jemubhai's house to get hold of weapons Gyan knows are kept in house. Thus, the question is arised before Sai about her search for identity and she desperately tries to fathom Gyan's treachery. In this way, treachery and betrayal make the Sai alert and watchful of ethnic differences and racial discrimination: "You hame me! Said Sai, as if she'd read his thoughts, for big reason, that have nothing to do with me. You aren't being fair" (Inheritance: 260). Under the sway of GNLF, along with Sai, Judge Jemubhai, and the characters the cook, Noni, Lola, Father Booty, a Swiss man, and Uncle Potty bear the brunt of uprising. They all have been living Kalimpong for year and never bothered to think about their freedom to inhabit in the land are very much caught in the vortex of darkness and always regarded the place their motherland. Under the influence of indoctrination, Gyan thinks he needs to reject Sai due to her affiliation with westernized and bourgeois lifestyle. With his treacherous gesture, he risks the life of his lover, her grandfather and the cook. He also feels Indians are deserved to be despised due to their discrimination against the Indian people with Nepalese background.

Lola and Noni are representatives of the British era who have been able to exert their influence on the local community. Lola suffers the humiliation more painful than death; insurgency was at the root of humiliation. Social position and properties of Lola fail to save her from insecurities that are usually affiliated with exiled condition. When Lola meets the chief of the GNLF organization for the Kalimpong area to relook her situation and spare her, but she is humiliated and discriminated due to her ethnicity, class and gender. Suchinmayee emphatically highlights:

"Gender refers to the socio-cultural definition of man and woman, the way societies distinguish men and women and assign them social roles. The concept of gender also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviors of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). It is used as an analytical tool to understand social realities with regard to women and men."

The Inheritance of Loss brings out vividly various themes of consumerism, globalization, economic inequality, fundamentalism, racial discrimination, insurgency and colonization. The female characterization throws light upon the hierarchical pattern of power in the male-dominated society. The portrayal of women characters have analysis of the complexity of human-relationship premised on the race, religion, caste, gender and culture. Excessive assertion of patriarchal power leads of victimization of Nimi, the Judge's wife. Indoctrination of gender and female subjugation was existent and intact in the hierarchical structure of Patel family. Nimi is the epitome of slavery, a commodity, deserved to be discarded and subjugation owing to discriminatory approach of men, imposition of 'blind cultures'.

REFERENCES:

- Bhabha Homi K. *The World and the Home*. Social Text,1992. 384
- Desai, Kiran. *The Inheritance of Loss*. New Delhi: Viking Penguin Books India, 2004
- Kaur, Tejinder. Lives of Loss: Travails of Diaspora Journey and Existence in Kiran Desai's "The Inheritance of Loss", *Pragati English Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 2, December 2017
- Pope, Robe. *The English Studies*, Great Britain: Routledge, 2002. 139
- Suchinmayee, Rachna. *Gender Human Rights and Environment* New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors 2008.