

Discourse of Multicultural Views in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*

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Abstract

The study aims to illustrate multicultural views of human relationships in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006). Multiculturalism is a prominent prospect of the novel that also throws light on basic human values such as culture, religion, tradition, politics, love, tolerance, hate, fame, name and respect for one another. The novel is the mirror or real image of multiculturalism in which one can see realistically what is here and what is there. The reality behind curtains is the important aspect of the writing. The study finds that the expression, feeling, opinions and emotions are nothing but own occurrences. Therefore, the novel is very realistic in nature, which keeps real image of multiculturalism in front of readers.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Culture, Tradition, Migration, Politics, Nostalgia

As a daughter of an eminent Indian English writer, Kiran Desai has carved out a name for herself as a novelist. Kiran Desai precisely assigns between first and third worlds, enlightening the pain of exile, the uncertainties of post-colonialism, and the blinding cravings for a better life, when one person's wealth means another's poverty. Kiran Desai likes staying grounded. For her, the past is an integral part of the present. When she left India, she thought like an outsider. Now she tastes Indian food, looks at Indian sculpture, takes part in readings and conferences, all to do with India.

Kiran Desai is the latest fabulous name in the world of multiculturalism. In 2006 she is honoured by Man Booker Prize for her second novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. This novel chiefly deals with world issues like multiculturalism, identity crisis, isolation, nostalgia, homesickness, migration, politics, education, community differences and social problems. She explores all horizons of the world life in the novel. Her theme of the novel deals with Indian earth, Indian society, Indian culture, and people. The first multicultural conflict in this novel presents in 1986, in the village of Kalimpong, located in the north-eastern Himalayas. The central protagonists living here are the judge, the cook, and Sai. Kiran Desai presents that all her characters lives their life in a very difficult condition. At the beginning of the novel, it has said that revolution in the hills transformed into conflict movement stockpiling men and guns.

The Judge, Jemubhai Popatlal Patel is one of the central characters in the novel who plays very important role. He is born in 1919 in the small town named Piphit, which is located in Gujarat. He was the first in his family to receive western education. Judge's experience from abroad is the most important multicultural perspective in *The Inheritance of Loss*. It is the judge from whom the all other characters lives uphold. He leaves his hometown with the strange approaches. He is aware about that he is unknown about the world outside. He confused by the treatment between white and brown. Another incident is that nobody wants to rent him a room. For this, he visits twenty-two homes before he finds the room. This is one of the first conflicts one can struggle in British culture, which has been strongly faced by Jemubhai. He also struggle with loneliness, isolation, his skin-odd colour, and peculiar accent.

Another important issue of the novel is 'Gorkhland for Gorkhas.' This is the motto of the movement. Indian Nepalese wanted their own country or their own state in which they can control their own issues. Because they think that, they are treating like the minority in the place where they are majority. Thus, the study explores that Kiran Desai illustrates the humiliation and helplessness of the protagonists against territorial's behavior. The struggle shows between two different cultures of Hindus and Nepalese and it noticeably asserts the fact that the violence and injustice has been competently disguised under false pretences of freedom and public interests.

Sufferings of Biju and his father as they are struggling to find a technique to send Biju foreign is one of the themes of the novel. Desai tries to describe how one can get so many difficulties of getting foreign

countries. For sending his son to United States, he tried everything and at last happens as expected. The cook's first approach is with a sail agent comes into Kalimpong. He announces for waiters, toilet cleaners on the boat, worker for the worst work. The local newspaper published in an advertisement that they are going to appoint legal jobs in the USA. This news has been scattered all over the town and brings out huge response. Number of people desired to get this job. Biju attended an interview with fake passport and made up stories nevertheless, he is successful. However, the big amount of money by the agent made them fool. Next time, Biju applies for a tourist visa and this time he is successful. One of the applicants, also asking for a visa, says Biju: "You are the luckiest boy in the whole world ..." (187). It shows that, desire for immigration makes people mad and they are interested in doing anything of that. They do not matter about kind of job or money but they only want to shift for foreign nations and dreams for luxurious life. Even so, one can see from Biju's condition, immigrants in the United States and imagine the realities faced by them.

Panna Lal's character plays very important and significant role in the novel, which shows very eagerness for migration to foreign countries. Throughout the novel, Kiran Desai presents his identity as a cook in the house of Judge. He is father of Biju and decided to send him New York. Their intention of going to United States forces them to do anything. Biju is an Indian immigrant living in America for the purpose of earning more money and living very lavish life there. He left India with a vision of having a luxurious life in America. From the ancient period number of people immigrated to foreign countries like United States, England, Canada and many more. There are different reasons behind their leaving it differs from person to person. In *Namaste America Indian Immigrants in an American Metropolis*, Padma Ranagaswamy states, "Of course. The personal circumstances of migration differ from individual to individual, and for Indians, it is not just a matter of personal choice, but involved the entire family" (9). Kiran Desai exposes anxiety and pain of Biju by giving focus on his sufferings in New York; he desired to write mail for his father but he did not know English. Biju and Saeed also discovered it very difficult to make responds on the answering machine. Biju reminds everything of his childhood and his village life where he spent his early years with his grandmother. He reminds his grandmother, earthen lamps of Deepawali, taste of delicious food and fresh milk. It shows unrest of Biju's mind in foreign land. He physically presents in America but mentally he feels very isolated and nostalgic, his mind always attach with his

homeland. Kiran Desai portrays inner lives of the helpless people, those who are very unfortunate to struggle for their rights and freedom.

After migrating to America, Biju spends first few weeks by selling sausages. His employer ordered to check the green cards of his employee. Nevertheless, Biju does not have any so the employer is grateful to fire them. Kiran Desai's intention is to present immigrant's troubles through her writing which shows realistic vision. Biju lives alone life in unfamiliar country, alienated from his family and he cannot visit them because he would not have any chance to return to America. This situation shows homesickness of Biju during his stay in America. That arouses the feeling of confusion and homesickness. Biju does not work steadily so he always changes his jobs one by one and this time he gets a job at Le Colonial, which ensures the authentic colonial experience.

Kiran Desai tries to shed light on hatred between Indians and Pakistani. Actually, these two are not even bothered to get to know each other. Instead of that, they quietly adopt the injustice of their fathers. It means that Kiran Desai's characters are unable to make their own decisions. Being a young, he is unable to make his own choice and decision, so that condition seems at him as being poor boy. It is worth describing Biju's conflict when he meets Saeed. Biju wants to be his friend, he amazes him, but first, he has to run through the certain doubts he has in his mind. In this multicultural diversity, Biju works in the restaurant named Brittany. He cleanses the plates with one Achootan man in the kitchen and listens to his swearing. "These white people... Shit! But at least this country is better than England. At least they have some hypocrisy here. They believe they are good people and you came from" (36). He says Biju that he acquired a slogan by which reacted to their insult. He said: "Your father came to my country and took my bread and now I have come to your country to get my bread back" (134). This man spent eight years in Canterbury and therefore he can evaluate the atmosphere towards immigrant in these two countries. Thus, one can see that Kiran Desai desire to state out the difference between America and England from the immigrant's point of view.

One more multicultural view illustrates is homesickness, which is focused by Kiran Desai in *The Inheritance of Loss*. Homesickness of Biju is realistically portrayed in the novel that shows clear picture of real emotions, feelings and desire for the homeland. Once Biju desired for foreign countries but after shifting there, he endures loneliness. In the isolated nation, Biju is feeling very eager to go back home and meet his

father but it is not easy task for him to return. So one day he meet newsagent and inform him about the problem with Nepalis in his country India. The theme of the novel runs equivalent largely in Kalimpong, a small town at the foot of the Himalayas hills and New York, one of the world's big cities, in the United States of America. The novel provides focus on a realistic expression of highly variegated human association and connection that is husband and wife, father and daughter, father and son, master and servant, and a young boy and a young girl with its setting in both the places. As considers the association between husband and wife, Jembhai Patel, the judge is an absolute failure. For him, his wife Nimi is no more than an image for the fulfillment and for the sake of social status. Realistically Indian tradition and culture of marriage system regards it as a sacred ceremony in one's life. Marriage denotes explicitly approved union, which perseveres beyond sexual fulfilment, and it deserves to understand family life. Instead of that, he throw all family bond, values, relations and love into the dust with that he ignored all Indian customs and traditions also. Such type of behaviour of the people is harmful to the society and culture.

Furthermore, *The Inheritance of Loss* deals with superfluity of other relationships among the people. The relationship tie of true friendship between Uncle Potty and Father Booty and the contrived friendship of Judge and Bose run parallel in the novel. Kiran Desai also creates strength analysis of relations, Sai likes, in the companionship of Lola and Noni, Uncle Potty and the cook. While describing multicultural perspective of human relations, it comes to knowledge that Kiran Desai has an exceptional extraordinary power of expressing it. *The Inheritance of Loss* attempts to show life between East and West counter and what it earnings to be an immigrant. The characters positioned in multicultural India and New York tolerates suffering because of their serious failure to preserve human relationships. Kiran Desai desires to recommend that western education may have severe outcome on human relations. The novelist has psychologically explored how human relationship runs in constantly changing Indian society. The relationship between Sai and Gyan shows one more multicultural perspective in *The Inheritance of Loss*. Gyan is her Math tutor who teaches her Mathematics by getting charges. Both of them fall in love and they become blind in their love. Nevertheless, their love story did not continue for long time. Their love affair carries on until the upcoming political dissatisfaction.

The aim of multiculturalism is to highlight a position of women in Indian society. The role of women changed in history but it remains the important question in the society. Kiran Desai describes typical Indian tendency by giving example of changing name of a woman after marriage. This is very old tradition in which man do not want to keep her identity of her name with her. This shows male dominate culture of India. *The Inheritance of Loss* highlights human relations, loss of culture, loss of identity, loss of security, loss of peace, loss of harmony, loss of rationality, loss of human values, loss of faith and loss of sense, which is an integral part of every character's life. Jemubhai also loses his own original culture and identity and considers foreigner himself in his own country India. He also loses peace in his life by the arrival of Sai his granddaughter. She also loses her own original cultural values in her life journey. During the process of studying in the convent English Western Christian, values enter into her blood. She also suffers from identity crises.

The Inheritance of Loss is a sensible and contemporary novel has tries to reflect Kiran Desai's own experiences of living both in and between two cultures. The novel shows significant impact of globalization. Another important feature of the novel is cultural diversity, which explores through different characters. *The Inheritance of Loss* fills up with different types of people from different community and they interact, unite, and mingle with each other. However, their cultural, economic, and political differences make them separate from each other. The whole novel goes under black clouds in the lives of the characters and the truth is that the world is full of discrimination, isolation, and cultural differences, but it does not mean that wish does not also exist. What Kiran Desai ultimately exposes is not just personal experiences, but quietly the dealings of acknowledgment between immigrants, exile, and foreigners who all struggle with the weight of history. She mainly throws light on love, kindness, tolerance, selfishness, and respect. She very skilfully highlighted the East and West socio-cultural situation in *The Inheritance of Loss*.

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