

MULTICULTURALISM AND POST COLONIAL ASPECT IN KIRAN DESAI'S *THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS*

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Colonialism was the one type of system in which the ruler of aristocrat class used to use their power to earn wealth by dominating over the common people. So it was one type of chain of real development of humanity. In the beginning when the common people were unable to bear the torture of colonist dictator then they start revolution. But we can't ignore the services rendered by the colonialists. They have promoted in many fields. Colonialism to post colonialism was just a shift of power from the foreign rulers to native rulers so the name of post colonialism came in existence. It was another kind of change to rule by the native members selected by native peoples. Later post colonist start same process of earning money and wealth that is called corruption, same as colonist. So during this period so many problems came in existence which is discussed in post colonial literature. So now the next implementation process is being seen as the name of multiculturalism. There is no boundaries and no specific class, creed and language but mixture of all of them.

Multiculturalism has become a reality now. No nation can exist without a multicultural existence. No race, no religion, no caste, no tribe, no language can claim to be superior to others. Booker Prize winner Author, Kiran Desai is one of those contemporaries' writers who has discussed about post colonial problem in their literary work. Her novel *the inheritance of loss* is one of them. In this novel she discusses her post colonial perspectives and multicultural view point as well. Retired judge rules as a colonist living in post colonial period. The protagonist Sai represents multicultural class. The reason is that she shifted from her native place, mangle in a different place and tries to adjust in a different culture. While the son of cook Biju adjusts in a foreign country for better life style but feel frustrated in a different culture. These are the true example of post colonial problems and multiculturalism in Desai novel *The inheritance of loss*.

Kiran Desai manages to tell a coherent tale of many people's interlinked lives across continents. Born in India, Desai moved to Britain at the age of fourteen and was later relocated to the US. The people and the society around her aided well for the creation of such a widely acclaimed novel *The Inheritance of Loss*.

“Set against the gigantic backdrop of Himalayas, the novel presents lives of people belonging to different cultures, nationalities, religions, languages and customs and rituals.”¹

The present study is a modest effort in making a critical assessment of multiculturalism and post colonial aspect in Kiran desai's *The Inheritance of loss*. The story of the novel is set in northeast India in 1986 -1987 at the foot of the Himalayas against the backdrop of an uprising of

Nepalese and other non-Indians against the Indian government. Many characters in the novel share common parallels of experience which are sometimes too neatly drawn:

“The five peaks of Kanchenjunga turned golden with the kind of luminous light that made you feel, if briefly, that truth was apparent. All you needed to do was to reach out and pluck it.”²

At the same time, the scene shifts repeatedly to the contemporaneous United States and to flashbacks to other places and times. Apart from these settings the reader is introduced to innumerable countries and peoples, particular in *The Inheritance of Loss* where Desai gives vivid descriptions of multicultural societies from the whole world. Furthermore, the character of Gyan in *The Inheritance of Loss* introduces the reader to some of the history of Nepal. Desai's “*The Inheritance of Loss*” represents the themes of loss, ambition, wandering and return.

The retired grumpy judge, Jemubhai Patel studied in a Victorian England, groomed by the Raj, all of which made him rise above his humble roots, to be a revered, fearsome and very confused judge. The Protagonist, Sai, his orphaned granddaughter, exiled from the convent to be home schooled (by those delightful Bengali sisters Noni and her sister Lola) discovering the first flush of youth, the first pangs of love, with her Nepalese tutor Gyan and Biju, the judge's cook's son who is moving from one restaurant job to another, as an illegal immigrant in New York. All these discussions state the core idea of novel that these are the problems which are occurred during the post colonial Period. The multiculturalism is somewhere responsible for the problem of self identity.

First of all, the title can relate to the loss Sai feels as an orphan. Also Sai's mother experienced a corresponding loss when her mother, Nimi, died when she was a little girl. However, the title can also be interpreted in a different way. The novel soon reveals that it deals with themes related to the postcolonial period, and that it examines the inheritance from the British Empire in India. It tells the story of those who stayed on in India and those who migrated. The title of *The Inheritance of Loss* gives negative associations by use of the word “loss”. The title therefore reflects an important aspect of the novel: “could fulfillment ever be felt as deeply as loss?”³

Desai answers that question emphatically in this book. She thrusts us into an India that some of us will recognize for what it is: a product of the British Empire. Britishers, as Indians call those from the isles, may have left more than 60 years ago but their effect is still felt to this day. Desai manages to show us the human tragedy that was colonialism in India; how to succeed in this world one has to change their very person. What cost this exacts on them, their family and their society.

The two sisters who were the tutor of Sai when she first arrives at her grandfather the judge's home: “She finds favour with them because they deem her their social equal and treat her with a kindness that is not extended to their servant who is, of course, beneath them.”⁵ For Sai, luck comes in the form of Gyan, an accounting student who comes to serve as her tutor, as her former tutor, a lady called Noni, gets defeated by the complexities of physics and mathematics. Gyan is described to carry an ‘unmistakable whiff of ambition’ despite his humble background, and the idea of that boy alone in a room with Sai, creates a disquiet in both the judge and the cook. For Sai it is a welcome relief. She has resided in that boring house ever since she was whisked from a Catholic school after her parents perish in a terrible accident and the school, mourning its loss of donor funds start seeing Sai as a burden, and quickly trace her dwindling relations before finally settling on her grand-father, the judge, to be a guardian. The judge,

British-educated like his grandchild is intent that she does not lose her fine accent and English manners and thus sequesters her from anything ‘undesirable’ in the environment, insisting in tutors and constant observation of her whereabouts from the cook.

Sai’s twenty year old Nepali tutor Gyan is portrayed as the champion of ethnic rights. He is an activist of the Gorkha National Liberation Front which is fighting for the independence of the Nepali Gorkhas. A conscious awareness of their own rights made them demand recognition of their identity.”There was a report of new Dissatisfaction in the hills, gathering insurgency, men and guns. Their struggle for freedom has its roots in suppression just like Indian Independence movement. It was the Indian Nepalese this time, fed up with being treated like the minority in a place where they were the majority”⁶

The problem of post colonial period is Gorkha National Liberation Federation, a Nepalese independence movement which quickly becomes violent. Gyan's commitment to the insurgency offers an ironic contrast with the commitment of his family to the colonial British army in earlier times, just as the judge's hatreds, learned in England, are ironically contrasted with his British affectations in later life. A careful observer of behavior, with a fine eye for revealing details, Desai brings her narrative and characters to life, illustrating her themes without making moral judgments about her characters--creating neither saints nor villains, just ordinary people leading the best lives they can, using whatever resources are available. The cook is as poor as poor could be, with nothing but a thin mattress, a tiny collection of old clothes and his culinary skills to his name. Still he dreams of modern amenities-refrigerators, microwaves, telephones-at night he dreams of mobile phones that fly off just before he presses the dialling pad. His sole hope is in his son, Biju, who flew to America some time back and is playing a cat and mouse game to be ahead of the immigration police as he looks for low-end, employee-abusing jobs at fast-food joints. The cook talks a lot and is proud of the judge and Sai, and cooks up fascinating hero-worship stories about working for them. He bears an unusually high level of timidity that seems ingrained to the very core of his fibre, an eagerness to please and give in, whether he is assaulted by the police or robbers alike.

Follower of multicultural perspectives character, Biju (the cook’s soon), his disillusionment with the American dream, and his deplorable living conditions in America is also very important section of this novel. In his first letter Biju Writes: “Respected Pitaji no needs to worry. Everything is fine. The Manager has offered me a full-time waiter position. Uniform and food will be given by them. Angrezi Khana only, no Indian food and the owner is not from India, He is from America itself.”⁷ The book describes his journey to America with effortless grace...the eagerness to queue at the American embassy, and the falsification of a story to earn him a visa and the attendant palpitations of his heart as he is unsure of whether his story would be accepted. It describes how he lives like a rat in America, no health insurance when he breaks his arm and having to let it heal by itself, his desperate attempts to make phone calls to his father, and how his dream of making it in America finally dwindles. He buys a ticket to fly back home to India, packing modern fanciful amenities for his further in his suitcase. It is his journey back to their mountain home that gives the story a final cruel twist.

Hence, this novel is true representation of post colonial period and multicultural aspects in true sense. It is neither about Kalimpong nor the Gorkhaland agitation. It is simply about LOSS the most well known perspectives of post colonial period. Sense of place is also immersing problem of multicultural society in which people feel frustrated and insecure in different cultural and face a lot of problem while adjusting with different culture. It is one kind of

lose of their culture and nativity. One readily sympathizes with the struggles of Indians both abroad and at home, but just when liberal salve seems about to soothe the reader into thoughts of the romantic poor, we see the rich get disinherited by liberation soldiers, homeless people on the edge of starvation, and the lower class desperate for a step up.

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