



# THE WOMEN' SEARCH FOR LIBERTY AND RIGHTS IN KIRAN DESAI'S "THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS"

Dr.B.Ananthan

ESL Instructor part-time  
NIFTEM Thanjavur

## *Abstract*

The majority of issues raised by post-colonial writers include multiculturalism, cultural identity, poverty, racial discrimination, displacement, female identity, gender discrimination, immigration, and subordination. There are a lot of upcoming young writers today who speak up for women and their rights. Among them, Indian born American author Kiran Desai has world wide recognition and popularity for receiving the Man Booker award in 2006. Desai gives voices to the timid and submissive characters in her book, "The Inheritance Loss". She also discusses the aspirations and hopes of women in a world that is increasingly global. This study tries to examine the female identity problem in this setting, focusing on the silenced women's voice for freedom and rights in Kiran Desai's "The inheritance loss." Additionally, it examines women's subaltern status and their struggles to maintain it in a system where men predominate. Kiran Desai powerfully portrays the reality of persecution through the character Bela alias Nimi, the judge's wife. The researcher also aims to discuss how subordinated women battle for freedom, what social set up creates set back for women in achieving their rights and how the women characters of Inheritance loss deal with subordination.

## **Introduction**

Kiran Desai, who won the Man Booker Prize, is well known for her writing. She was born on September 3 1971 in India. In India, she spent her early years in Murabi, Pune, and Chandigarh. Later, she relocated to the UK before coming to the US. Kiran Desai's diverse cultural background helped to establish her as a legendary writer of the modern day. "Kiran Desai is daughter of Anita: her presence established the first dynasty of modern Indian fiction," Salman Rushdie greeted her upon her arrival. As a modern writer, Kiran Desai offers excellent views on Indian societies and contemporary challenges. Through her fictitious world, she expresses the invisible emotional truths of the people. She employs a variety of narrative strategies in her books. Her story is concise, easy to follow, and chronological. She is an excellent writer at capturing the anguish of exiles, as Salman Rushdie correctly noted. She addresses social, political, and economic issues that affect the populace in her book. She also depicts the social and physiological issues that Indian immigrants in America endure. She has brought up a number of important subjects, including women's rights, identity, and emotions of loneliness, alienation, and dissatisfaction. She is regarded as the new voice of contemporary Indian fiction and writes her novels with an Indian context. She made it clear that she used English, not Indian English, to write her works.

## The inheritance of Loss

The second book by Kiran Desai is titled *The Inheritance of Loss*. Numerous accolades and honors, such as the famous Man Booker Prize, have been bestowed upon it. She is a renowned immigrant author that concentrates on all contemporary concerns in her book. Human misery, identity, and indifference are central to her writings. The concept of loss is one of Kiran Desai's main themes in her book, *The Inheritance of Loss*, which she uses to analyze the negative repercussions of globalization and liberalization. The title itself is clear evidence that all the characters endure loss in some or the other way. There is no other option or way out for the characters. Kiran Desai talks about the numerous themes related with Indian Women mainly the difficulty of cross-cultural crises and ultimate search for Identity. She describes the female protagonist's attempts to confront the issue of cultural loss and her attempts to assume a new identity. She also illustrates the clash of cultures between the East and the West. Both India and the United States are featured in *The Inheritance of Loss*. The story begins at a small Indian hamlet Kalimpong in North -East Himalayas where the author grew up. The 1980s-set book paints a realistic portrait of Indian society via characters like retired judge Jemubhai Patel, who suffers from loneliness as a result of his cultural ignorance and sense of displacement. His teenaged grand daughter Sai and their Panna Lal, Biju, the cook's son Gyan, Saed, Haresh Harvey and the two sisters, Lolita and Nonita are the characters. In *Inheritance of Loss*, every character experiences a sense of loss that causes them to doubt who they are. The experience of living between the two cultures has a repeating topic in the work of Indian women. Desai makes an effort to combine Indian tradition. in depicting the state of Indian women, as well as western civilization.

### Cultural conflict

A society's beliefs, moral standards, values, and practices are referred to as its culture and are passed down from one generation to the next. Depending on the group of individuals, its moral value may vary. When a quarrel occurs, it profoundly affects that person's life. The novel's episodes alternate between two universes, one situated in the Indian hamlet of Kalimpong in the eastern Himalayas and the other in New York, the city of dreams for immigrants. Cultural anarchy results from these two divergent worlds. Desai depicts the conflicts of cultures in two parallel stories: the retired judge Jemumbai Patel, who lives in Kalimpong, India, with his devoted chef and granddaughter Sai, and the cook's son Biju, an illegal immigrant who battles to survive in America. Throughout her story, Kiran strives to show the lighter aspect of globalization as well as the darker side where a lot of people are robbed of their human rights globally.

### The women' search for liberty and rights

According to reports, the ideal woman in Hindu society was supposed to be devoted to her spouse as a wife. This has hindered women's advancement in numerous ways and led to autonomous existence failing. Female characters of Kiran Desai can be classed into two types, one is the rustic and illiterate class and the second is educated and metropolitan females. Nimi represents the first category and Noni and Lola second. First is represented as oppressed by the patriarchal structure whilst second demonstrates life of liberation and meaning. Desai has had an impact on three generations by illustrating the struggles women faced from enslavement to liberation. As Nimi belongs to the first generation her life is filled with oppression, injustice, deprivation, loneliness and estrangement. Along with portraying Nimi, Kiran Desai also provides voices for a number of other female characters. She has shown numerous sides of womanhood through diverse female characters but the oppression and the subservient position of women in the society are best pictured in the character of Nimi. Through the character Nimi, Desai highlights the status of Women in the male dominated society and their desire for liberation and rights. The volume of incidents makes clear how frequently women's rights are denied throughout the book. Bela, now known as Nimi, is just fourteen years old when she marries Jemubhai Patel. She asks to be spared her wedding night since she is so afraid. Desai draws attention to the suffering of young girls who are expected to accept the long-standing custom of getting married young. The novel also discusses the practise of child marriage. The bride must deliver dowry to the groom's family in accordance with Hindu tradition. Cash, gold, emeralds from Venezuela, rubies from Burma, uncut kundan diamonds, lengths

of woollen cloth, and gold were among Bela's dowry's contents. The child marriage and dowry system have been the starting point of pain for the enslaved women. Another noticeable feature is how the bride's name was changed by the groom's family on the wedding day. The loss of her name is the suppression of women's lifelong personal identity. Bella is finally renamed Nimi. Desai seeks to depict the realities of female tyranny. Tradition and culture have placed restrictions on Nimi's life, and she has no other options. Another instance illustrating the Indian wife's injustice is when Jemubhai severely punishes her after noticing her footprints on the toilet paper. Nimi unintentionally serves on the Nehru welcome committee for the Indian National Congress; the judge expels her because he feels humiliated by her actions.

Sai, another significant figure in Desai's work, comes to represent modern women. She has the ability to run her own life thanks to her western education and cultural sophistication. Desai also depicts a distressed woman who is consumed with her inner thoughts, her pouting dissatisfaction, and the internal conflict. In this fictional work, Kiran depicts Sai's awareness of the flaws in society as they are shown through her grandfather's life. She makes a concerted effort to forge a life of her own, free of the colonial shackles that the judge and the two Afghan princesses use to cling to the ghosts of the past. Through these personas, Kiran promotes a better way of life for women. Sai feels alienated in her own country as a result of the indoctrination of English. By becoming engaged to her teacher Gyan, she hopes to leave her isolation behind. But after a brief period of passion, the two youngsters' bond breaks down because they both perceive the other as foreign, belonging to a different culture, and leading a different life. Sai lives in a state of social isolation that is all but complete, only interacting with a small group of people on a regular basis. Their elderly cook, who goes unnamed in the book, tends to her more, and the Judge, who has a strong dislike for all things Indian, insists that she be educated by nuns in the English fashion. Later, to help her complete her studies, her grandfather hires Noni and Lola, two aging anglophile women. Sai is a foreigner in her own country since she is surrounded by people who are steeped in colonial heritage and have literally been taught to despise all things Indian.

## Conclusion

People revere female deities, but they don't respect their wives like fellow humans. Respect and advancement for women are essential. This leads to the conclusion that feminism has encouraged women to live more authentic lives since they have rights and freedoms that should be respected. Desai also shows how this sense of loss has been passed down to other generations and how it has affected their ability to enjoy life's simple pleasures. She also emphasizes how people's rights and freedoms are curtailed by the struggle for survival in the age of globalisation. Every word in the novel, which reflects Desai's love for her native India and her commitment to it, beautifully captures the struggles oppressed women confront as well as their attempts to be heard. After a never-ending search for individuality, women have increasingly turned their ire on men throughout history, which has changed their condition. Modern female novelists speak out for a feminine sensibility that varies from writer to writer. Through Bela's enslavement as Nimi Patel, Desai presents an alternative viewpoint. She portrays Bela as a helpless, submissive character who offers no resistance. Her pursuit of liberty and justice is, however, implicitly questioned throughout the entire book. The quest for identity of Desai's female characters upends the gender-specific conventional customs that bind women. Desai describes the world through the figure of Sai. Desai also explained the situation of an orphan who meets every problem with bravery and guts with the aid of this figure. The stories alternate between hope and despair as they relate to Bella (Nimi) and Sai's freedom and rights.

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