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**THE THEME OF THREAT TO INDIGENEITY IN KIRAN DESAI'S NOVEL *THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS***

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Abstract

The novel *The Inheritance of Loss* talks of the threat to indigeneity made by the British during colonization. The character of Jemubhai Patel is the apt example of the victims of this threat. Jemubhai is an anglophile, who always wears his three-piece suit even in his home. He goes to the extent of eating chapattis with knife and fork. His disgust towards his own nation makes him follow the dream of working as an ICS officer under the British government so that he can be equal to the British and a bit more civilized than the native. Jemubhai is just one among many anglophiles of British India. Such anglophiles treat the natives as inferior to them. The first generation of these inferiors remain slaves to their superiors, but the second generation natives rebel and form the Gorkhaland movements, asking for a separate nation for themselves. The indigenous people of Sikkim, West Bengal, and Nepal put forth the idea that due to the immigrants from nearby states, they are outnumbered.

The native Gorkhas are treated as second citizens in their own region. Gyan is one such citizen who is not given placement even in a school to teach. He is the representative of the entire Gorkha populace, who are denied the basic rights in an independent nation. The loss of identity in Biju and Jemubhai shows the impact of such a threat. The British policy of 'Divide and Conquer' scattered the natives to different parts of the world.

Keywords: *native, anglophile, colonization, gorkhaland*

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The novel *The Inheritance of Loss* is an exemplification of indigeneity threat. Kiran Desai has depicted the irrefutable framework of colonization in India. Each character in the novel is

displaced due to the impact of colonization and globalization. The author has likewise exposed the various divisions among the people of the same nation

Desai has taken the story abroad and demonstrated how America is suffering as a melting pot. The character Biju, an Indian, is suffering in a foreign country whereas the immigrants are enjoying the wealth of India. America is the dreamland for many youngsters nowadays but the people there suffer for they are the other. The racial tension still prevails, also Indians are called 'desi', a term used to demean immigrants of Asia. Though America is labeled as a 'melting pot', it is an outstanding 'salad bowl'. The Americans hate the immigrants from third world countries, failing to accept the fact that they themselves are immigrants. They are trying to safeguard their indigeneity with is more.

The novel on the other side shows of how the native people in India are treated the same way even after Independence. The nation can proudly say that it has got independence from the British but it is still ruled by the colonizer. Jemu Bai Patel, the Indian judge, is an anglophile. Jemu Bai Patel's way of eating chapatti with fork and knife shows that he is a staunch follower. Jemu always wears a three-piece suit despite the weather condition.

Jemu feels inferior to the white people and lives most of his life in shadows in England. He feels ashamed of being an Indian because of the ill-treatment by the British people. Jemu has lost his indigeneity in a foreign country. The harsh conduct of outside has made Jemu's inner self go hard and he racks his wife physically. At the beginning itself, we are shown how Jemu played the chess game with no opponent. Jemu fights with himself that is his own past where he was segregated for being a dark-skinned man.

Many Anglophiles like Jemu have tried to imitate the English and become one like them. But they are considered as copy cats and inferior to them. These Anglophiles can neither turn back to their native nor can they live among the whites. They have to suffer for the rest of their lives, without identity, as a nonentity among natives.

The natives on the other side ail in the hands of these native superiors. The constant interruption of nonnative affects their normal life. The native people of Kalimpong are treated as second rate people. Gyan is one among them. These Gorkas are the native people of Kalimpong. Gyan is the best student in his college but he is not given any job for he is a Gorka. He gets a job as a tutor for Sai in Cho Oyu. For that job, he has to cycle to the top hill. The cook in Jemu's house is also a Gorka. He is given a meager amount of money as salary.

A Gorka is treated as a subordinate to the immigrant people. They have lost their culture, land, money, home, and integrity. The military soldiers on the borders where fed with the best of

food and first-rate clothing all for just marching up and down the hill. The government spends an enormous amount of money on the military but not on the eradication of poverty and illiteracy.

The population of Nepali in Kalimpong is 80% but they don't earn even a single tea estate in and around Darjeeling. They felt betrayed for not given the equal share. In a rally, Gyan saw his friends shouting for a new nation Gorkaland. Gyan thought of how he desperately wanted to go out of this country which provided no support to him. He saw the patriotism to be false thought it must be frustrating. The leaders trying to harness the situation and gain through it. Then here thought of the Indian independence struggle, "India for Indians... British Raj Murdabad!"(Desai 158) The nation would repeat it's past. Suddenly Gyan felt ashamed of himself being ignorant of the problems around him. His childish tea times and chats with Sai. Gyan curses himself because he gave importance to his own life. He joins the Gorka and movement and many other men too join the protest and Gyan is mesmerized by the roar of the march.

The struggle for a separate nation has started in 1906 but the name Gorkaland was coined recently. Till now it is the manifesto in all elections of West Bengal. The thread to indigeneity still prevails and people of Nepal are taking more crucial steps for their freedom.

#### Work Cited

Desai, Kiran. *The Inheritance of Loss*. Penguin Books India,2006.Print.