

SPECULATING KIRAN DESAI'S '*THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS*'

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Abstract

Literature enriches our life by offering necessary realities and incidences with a pinch of creative fabrication. In the process of development, individual have lost the meaning and delight of one's life. The present research paper is an attempt to speculate the impact of globalization, immigration, westernization, and isolation, insurgency on the characters and how these institutions influence their behavior, culture and family. In the wake of modernization man try to keep down and subjugate one another whenever they get an opportunity. The novel was the result of eight years of hard work; the aim of the writer was not only to write about India but also about the Indian communities all around the world. The novel is set in Kalimpong, revealing cultural diversity of India by various characters like the old judge Jemubhai Patel, his granddaughter Sai, his cook, cook's son Biju, Gyan a representative of Nepali community and Sai tutor, two sisters Lola and Noni, father Booty a swiss immigrant who forgets he is a foreigner, due to his faith in India.

Keywords: Globalization, Immigration, Westernization, Insurgency, Isolation, Modernization.

Introduction

Kiran Desai the winner of Man Booker Prize (2006) is a reputed Indian English novelist settled in the United States of America and well-known for her two novels *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998), and the Booker Prize winning novel *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006). *The Inheritance of Loss* is a novel with broad canvas portraying the story of a crumbling isolated house called Cho Oyu at the fort of Mount Kanchanjunga in the Himalayas. The novel set in 1980s, depicts the story of Jemubhai Patel, a judge lodging a disillusioned and resentful life after his retirement in Kalimpong, a hillside area in the Himalayan foothills, and his affiliation with his granddaughter Sai.

The impact of westernization can be clearly seen in the nature of the Judge. Jemubhai Patel depicted as an Indian by his sense and sensibility but he assumed himself as a British by

his habits. His mentality, and of course by virtue of his duties that he had done to the British long back, turns strange to his own people and surroundings, when he comes back to India. In his house at Kalimpong he maintained his western manners, firstly he takes only *Angrezi Khana*, wears a black coat and tie for dinner even when he is inside his house. Secondly, He did not learn the local language so that he can live as a foreigner in his own country.

He is an epithet of seclusion and estrangement, demonstrating strange, improper and negative response to colonialism. He is full of hate and atrocity for everything and everyone in India, even for his wife, Nimi. She is the direct victim of his disenchantment, banal and devouring shadow of colonialism. Nimi a typical Indian enjoying and celebrating an esteemed bridal devotion to her husband, a London returned judge. She adorns and embellishes herself and dresses especially in the best possible way in the festive and welcoming spirit, ever since Jemubhai has returned from UK, but he is as if deprived of or rather devoid of all his sentimental and emotional pleasure, reflects his cold-blooded attitude and makes fun of her virtuous sentiments, without any sense of belongingness or love to her.

The attitude of the judge is totally indifferent towards her granddaughter Sai. Sai removed from her convent school due to the sudden demise of her parents in a car accident and is given shelter by her grandfather Jemubhai. The judge directs Sai to maintain silence and distance from disturbing anyone. The lack of interaction in the house and outside fills her with deep melancholy increasing the emptiness of her life. But in the company and under the guidance of Noni and her sister Lola, Sai grow into a liberated kind of personality.

In India, during 1980s the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) led various violent movements in north eastern region and these activities are beautifully represented by Desai through Gyan. Gyan joined the GNLF movement when it gathered momentum; his only contribution to the movement is his imbecile disclosure of the weapons that the judge possesses. Gyan was appointed as Sai tutor. She falls in love with Gyan but later due to difference in opinion regarding Christmas celebration and partly due to Gorkha unrest, Gyan and Sai quarreled. Gyan does not have the courage to accept the reality, and the qualities of guiding his family which his parents expect it from him.

The impact of insurgency demanding Gorkhaland ransacked the life of people belonging to other states of India, who have been living here for long time and are considered outsiders, are being raided by the GNLF activists and the police. When Lola goes to complain the village head about the illegal encroachment at their orchard by strangers, the village Pradhan, who is a Gorkha insulted her with lewd remarks.

Father Booty another prey of insurgency is a Swiss man who has been living in Kalimpong for last forty-five years but when he was found as illegal residence in the place

without papers, he was ordered to leave immediately for his country. In Kalimpong he established dairy and helped the nearby villagers in dairy system, he always felt the place as his real home therefore he never felt the need to apply for papers. But when the orders came, he felt the pain of outcast, cries while leaving his place, friends, home, cow and buffaloes. Similar pain is felt by Biju's father, an Indian from Uttar Pradesh, who spend half of his life in Kalimpong but have to leave the place during violence breakout and to save his life as non-Nepalis are being chased to be killed.

Another facet of the immigration is experience by Biju, the only son of the cook who moved to the United States in the hope of a better life. But The destiny of Biju is no worse than that of Gyan. Biju is obliged to lead a humiliating life of an illegal immigrant in the search for American prosperity. While Biju was shuffling from one ill paid job to another the cook dreamt of his son making big in life.

As an ill-equipped newcomer Biju felt an out caste in the new world striving hard for basic survival. His first place of struggle was an Italian restaurant where his existence was begrudged because of his body odor. He was handed over with shampoo, soap and deodorant but nothing could eradicate his clumsy, appearance. Next, he united with Freddy's work where he assisted as a delivery boy.

Soon Biju vanished from his job due to customer's regular complains of late delivery of their orders. This time he initiates work with Queen of Tarts bakery. For his accommodation he lives in basement in Harlem where he met Saeed who gave up his work at Banana republic because its landlord was a gay and he kept "grabbing his ass" (121). Further Saeed married a white American girl for a green card. Learning about Saeed tactic to trick the immigration system, Biju tried to woo American women but unfortunately, he was rejected by them.

Biju's father the cook however was not aware with the exact nature of the work Biju do in America. Being unaware of Biju's difficulties and problems in abroad, he openhandedly suggested to him the name of local boys aspiring to join him in America. Biju embroiled in typical predicament soon realized that life was not easy for people from third world countries; they even find it difficult to survive in such environment for basic needs.

But soon the dreams of the cook shattered when Biju comeback to his father at Kalimpong from the grand world of New York, having lost all his savings that he saved to invest on a taxi.

The novel emphasizes on the psychological, emotional, political journey of its characters problematizing the issues of immigration, isolation, insurgency, westernization etc from multiple angles both in the homeland and the alien land. The judge lives in isolation and

has toughened so much that he has no connection with anyone not even with his granddaughter Sai. Lola suffer when her land is encroached by the Gorkhaland insurgents and she has to stay away from her daughter who is working in BBC. Biju on the other hand has to come back home with all his dreams shattered. Thus, the novel is a loss of culture, loss of human values, loss of peace and harmony and loss of individual's faith in each other.

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