

The Narratives Of Motherland In Kiran Desai's Novel 'The Inheritance Of Loss'

Dr. Siddarth Keshao Patil^{1*}, Prof. Dr. Varsha Vaidya²

^{*1} Rani Laxmibai Mahila Mahavidyalaya Sawargaon

² Taywade college Koradi

*Corresponding Author: - Dr. Siddarth Keshao Patil

Abstract:-

Diaspora writers depict the pangs of loneliness and alienation of the people living a diaspora life in foreign land. Motherland forms the emotional psyche of people who carries its burden to the settled land of their choice. Migration frames the world only to disperse with identities which sets differences between the host countrymen and the migrated people. The utmost result occurs with alienation, loneliness and a feeling of separateness in the behavioural patterns. The attachment with ones motherland causes detachment with the newly formed places. Such diaspora consciousness is apparent in the writings of the diaspora writers. The present research article is a sincere attempt to focus on the narratives of motherland which celebrates the love for motherland of diaspora writer Kiran Desai through her the Man Booker Prize winner novel *The Inheritance of Loss*.

Keywords: Diaspora, Alienation, Loneliness, Exile, Affection, Migration, etc.

The coveted prize winner novelist, Kiran Desai inherits a large part of her personality from her motherland India. Born in India in 1970, she was brought up till the age of fourteen in India. Her mother Anita Desai left India with fourteen-year-old Kiran for England. Kiran holding her mother's finger walked on the journey of her life with her mother having handful of collected experiences from her homeland. Anita Desai soon shifted to the USA to teach and now both the mother and the daughter are living in US. Kiran spending a handsome time of her life in India revives her experiences through her works. She opted to the Creative Writing Course with her mother's advice which benefitted her to share her creative thoughts through her novels. She comes up on the literary scene in 1998 with her maiden novel '*Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*' which bagged the Bretty Trask Prize. The novel is based on the mischievous and lazy young man of twenty who runs away from home and settles himself on the guava orchard. He becomes a spiritual godman mistakenly. Desai pictured the ordinary life of Indians in an extraordinary way.

Kiran Desai took almost seven years rest and relived the collected experiences from her homeland India to write the story of her next novel. She published her second novel *The Inheritance of Loss* in 2006 bagging the most coveted prize for any writer the Man Booker Prize of 2006. The

novel was acclaimed worldwide bringing universal fame for the novelist. The novel captures varied themes such as multiculturalism, globalization, alienation, loneliness, separateness, longing for homeland, absurdity of lives, illegal immigration, and so on. The realistic picture of the era of globalization seems horrific through the story. It shows the diaspora consciousness with brutally damaging the personality as well as the people within. There are various stories of people running from their homeland in pursuance of 'making it big'.

The writers of diaspora often expresses their deep concern over diaspora identity. The migrant community is torn apart into the host country and the homeland. "Desai shows how her characters lead the lives of dislocation—physical, psychological, emotional, cultural and political in both the alien land and the homeland" (Kaur 9) the social milieu in the host country is unable to bridge the gap in the world of globalization. The migration resulting from various issues continues to hamper the developed countries with the burden and weight of over population. All is nothing perfect seems many in these countries. Apart from their issues to solve, these burdening makes them to form strict rules and laws for migration. Kiran Desai's novel directly raises question about these migrants who try to make their way into developed nations for their progress. The people migrate generally for

better career opportunities, education, occupation, etc. They settle permanently by living their motherland. Some succeeds, some not. What lies behind in all this mess is the reminiscences of motherland; the people, the places? Commenting on diaspora people, Aysha Viswamohan aptly notes;

Desai's complex examinations of home involve endless self-fashioning and sketch gritty portraits of immigration and journeys-Jemubhai Patel and Biju; Sai and her parents; Gyan and his ancestors; Uncle Potty and Father Booty; Saeed Saeed and the hords of illegal immigrants in the United States; Indian students, Professionals, and entrepreneurs; and a heterogeneous mass of people in transit that readers encounter at Dum Dum Airport in Kolkata. They see themselves as immigrants, migrants, exiles, and expatriates and bear the marks of fractured identities, homelessness, and boundaries. (Viswamohan 261)

Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* projects the love for motherland of such immigrants. The story is set in Kalimpong, India in 1980s. It shifts from Kalimpong to America. There are stories of motherland in these two places. Jemubhai Papatlal Patel, Biju, the Cook Panna Lal, Harish Harry, Saeed Saeed, Gyan, Father Booty are some of the characters who gave way to their emotions. Their wish is to be accepted at host country and to feel at home. The hostile treatment tears apart them by making more anxious about their home country. The travelogue of Jemubhai tells his story about his separateness from his newly wed wife and country. His story belongs to the colonial era. He leaves for England to become an ICS with his love and lust for his wife. He is not welcome in England. He faces racism and unworthy treatment by the English. He is insulted over his pronunciation, colour of the skin, appearance, clothes. 'The young and beautiful were no kinder; girls held their noses and giggled, "Phew, he stinks of curry!" (IOL 40) He also witnesses a worse incident of racism in which a boy just like him 'was being kicked and beaten behind the pub at the corner. He watches the incident meekly as one person 'unzipped his pants and was pissing on him' (IOL 209). After witnessing such horrific case of racism, his mind starts to warp. He does not feel 'human at all'. His identity is shattered and he becomes more like British to loathe his people and 'worked at being English with the passion of hatred' (IOL 119). His arrival is celebrated as the first ICS in the community. He despises everyone including his wife Nimi. Jemubhai's love for motherland is crushed by his journey and the experiences. His belief is devasta-

ted. Therefore, he forms his ideology by detaching his people. He sends his wife never to return as unsuitable for him. He forbids his father not to see him again. He settles himself at Kalimpong far away from his hometown in Cho Oyu 'in this shell, this skull, with the solace of being a foreigner in his own country'. (IOL 29)

By portraying the character of Jemubhai, Kiran Desai brings out the notion of the impact of colonizer on the colonized. The colonial setting of the novel shares much of the Indian minds who forgetting their countrymen served the British with utmost loyalty. Homeland becomes an intellectual burden which poses question on their double identity. In this case, the character of Biju fits himself in his love and loyalty for his motherland. Biju is an emblem of those third world countries aspirants of 'American Dream'. "Immigration in globalized times offers a mesh of possibilities, and multiplicity of meanings. The American Dream is positioned right at the centre of all that is attractive about immigration to the United States" (Viswamohan 261). He is the son of the cook, Panna Lal who works for the retired judge Jemubhai Papatlal Patel. The cook longs to send his son in America to make it big and succeeds in his attempt. His son Biju gets one week travel visa and stays as illegal immigrant. He knows no English and also English language. Therefore, he fails in his endeavours to earn livelihood. He works on meagre wages at the American restaurants. He jumps from one job to another and lives in the basement kitchen in filthy atmosphere not to be caught by the authorities. "Just disappear quietly is my advice..." So they disappeared. (IOL 16) He leads an unbearable life for the sake of his fathers' dream.

Biju falls victim to racism too. He learns that all the third world countries people try to enter in America despite the fact that they are not welcome. He is abandoned among the foreigners. He hardly knows anybody. He befriends Saeed Saeed but for a short while. The feeling of alienation makes Biju often longing for his homeland. He often revives his past through reminiscences. His past life with his father, his grandmother and his village whenever 'the emptiness Biju felt returned to him over and over' (IOL 102). His father advises him to "Stay there as long as you can". "Stay there. Make money. Don't come back here." (IOL 191) Biju remembers his father talking about village life. "How peaceful our village is! How good the roti tastes there." These nostalgia makes Biju unwanted in America.

The political disruption evokes out of the GNLF movement. Biju smells danger to his father's life and plans to return home. With the handful money in his pocket, Biju begins his journey back to his homeland not to return in America again. His dream of returning home comes true despite the warning of Mr. Kakkar "You are making a big mistake" and the fact "the minute you arrive, you will start to think of how to get the bloody hell out". (IOL 269) Biju feels at home when he arrives at the outside of the airport. Biju looks at the Indian people which brings 'sweet drabness of home'. The bus services are shut down because of the disruptions in the valley. He has to beg the GNLF men. However, he gets boarded but creepy feelings touches his mind when he travels with them. The GNLF men ask him to get down in the middle of the jungle and his belongings are robbed. He is left half naked with his underpants. His shoes are also snatched by the men with dollars. All is lost for Biju like a worse nightmare. On finding his way through the forest, he remembers all advices that the Mr. Kakaar has suggested him. Harish-Harry—"Go for arrest and then return." Mr. Kakkar warned him—"My friend, I am telling you, you are making a big mistake" (IOL 318).

He puts on a nightgown and meets his father in his avatar. His father is happy to see his son in the time of insurgency in which life becomes meaningless. The lad never forgets his country and his longing for his homeland drives him back to his home. Biju's experiences in America makes him to step ahead towards his home. The filthy life of illegal immigrant is unfit for him. Therefore, in search of his identity, he decides to get rid of the life of illegal immigrant. The feeling of at home sensed by Biju shows his eagerness for homeland. "Sweet drabness of home—he felt everything shifting and clicking into place around him, felt himself slowly shrink back to size, the enormous anxiety of being a foreigner ebbing—that unbearable arrogance and shame of the immigrant" (IOL 300)

The 'Gorkhaland for Gorkha' is a GNLF movement to get the benefits for the Nepali-Gorkha people. The utter poverty-stricken lives of these people are aptly mirrored by the novelist. It shows her depth knowledge about their problems. Yet, she does not mean to support the ghastly invaders of the movements who caused great havoc to the hillside by their disruption. The people in Kalimpong are Gorkha in majority where they are treated like minority. Desai promptly captures the agitation of the people. "We are treated like slaves" (IOL 159) (Desai) is their feeling about the rich and the government. Lack of employment, education

and facilities make their lives filthy. Therefore, they want change for the upcoming generation and begin uniting against the government. The concept of slavery in their homeland incites the young bloods like Gyan. Thus, "insurgency is not just the background of Kiran Desai's novel. She has studied the issue from a neutral standpoint and focuses on the sufferings of the displaced caused by insurgency" (Halder 92) the people involved in the GNLF movement are young boys who undertake the movement for their selfish reasons. They do not have sympathy for their people. They just roll on their animal instincts to harass common men. The movement is flopped by these people as their motto does not reflect by their deeds. They forget the objectives of the insurgency they create.

Father Booty is a Swish businessman. He settles himself in Kalimpong since long period. With the surge of the movement, his documents are found illegal and he is impelled to leave the country with all his belongings and property. He is the man who devoted his life to initiate employment for the people by making dairy products. He thinks India his homeland and forgets to renew his documents. Therefore he is declared as illegal in his homeland. The cook, Panna Lal also feels the alienated and foreigner in his own country. His native place is in UP. He has been living since long time with the judge. With the GNLF movement, outsiders who settle themselves in Kalimpong with buying properties are now targeted. The Bengali sisters, living in a bungalow Mon Ami are threaten and some part of their land is encroached by the Gorkha people for setting up huts.

The entire pages of the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* reflect the love of a novelist for her motherland though she lives in US. The retired judge Jemubhai Poptal Patel, Biju, the cook, Harish-Harry, Father Booty are such unforgettable characters that Desai has penned down. Their longing for their motherland shows the attachment with the soil. They simply cannot outrage the frustration and become a stigma of weak masculinity. Thus, the narrative of homeland varies from place to place in the novel *the inheritance of Loss*. It all begins with the process of globalization in which the world come closer. The easy access makes it possible for the aspirants to move towards lucrative jobs in foreign. The feeling of loss of homeland incurs the mildest. The pangs for motherland through the characters like Biju makes one to shiver in fear to loose contact and live an alien life. Kiran Desai aptly depicts the expressions of the characters for their motherland who owe a debt for their existence. The novelist raises appropriate questions about the identity of a person in his country and the foreign land. The notion of home and displacement forms the crux of the story.

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