

ISSN 2349-4948

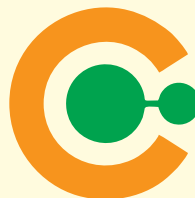
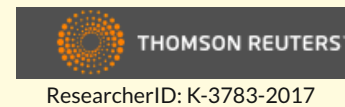
THE CONTEXT

International, Peer Reviewed & Indexed Journal of English Studies

Vol. 10 Issue 4, October 2023

Chief Editor

Wamankumar Wani



Published by

Modern English Research Alliance

Parbhani 431 401. Maharashtra, India.

www.mera.org.in





THE CONTEXT

Quarterly e-journal of English Studies

International, Indexed & Peer Reviewed / Refereed Journal

Publication details and instructions for authors:

www.mera.org.in

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Gender Discrimination: The Way of Sexual Exploitation in the Select Novel of Kiran Desai

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ABSTRACT

Gender discrimination is any unequal treatment, including privilege and priority, on the basis of gender. The other name of gender discrimination is gender inequality which is known as discrimination based on sex or gender causing one sex or gender to be routinely privileged or prioritized over another. It starts when the oppressors apply the laborer's based on the gender disparities which start from the very beginning of the childhood in which boys and girls are treated in the different ways. It may exploit male or female based on their childhood, womanhood, boyhood, girlhood and aged labour and young labour. It is now limiting the lifelong potential of children around the world – disproportionately affecting girls. The foundational concept of human rights is gender equality which is violated by gender-based discrimination by the oppressors in the various fields. It is directly related to the feminine concept of human exploitation but the deep study of the discrimination tells its knower that other than females are also victimized under the heads of the inhumanity. The present paper explores gender exploitation or maltreatment of human beings in the diasporic novel, *Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai.

Keywords: *Discrimination, Sexual Exploitation and Suffocation, etc.*

FULL PAPER

Many native as well as foreign reports indicated that Indian women are highly marginalized in India as well as in other countries of the world. Due to this assumption, women who might be equally qualified with their male counterparts, must suffer a lot in most of the organizations or institutions being other or calculated inferior beings. Under different economic conditions, they have become the object of human suffering and their hardships under the influence of specific historical, cultural, legal, and religious factors, are the key notes in the study of marginalization to the manifestations of gender discrimination. In general, they are always found marginalized relative to men, in most of the countries and cultures that's why gender discrimination has become one of the major problems in not only India but also all over the world. Woman's identity is expressed more softened by the omnipresent and omnipotent, all-pervasive, yet it is too dominant and too oppressive in this patriarchal and cultural society. She is found pushing into the dominated society and assigning herself a place away from the centre to the periphery to a margin of existence to define and salvage herself, to find out whom she is and what she has lost to break the fetters of her allotted slavery. Her sufferings become imperative as she exposes herself to unleash her pangs of life, guilt, fears, and doubts to reinstate her experience of womanhood so that she can acquire such autonomy that can discover her true gained identity. This realization of true self of a woman triggers off a journey into the recesses of her being and she strives to be reborn within the expectation of new morning. The women who are not only creator but also the follower and the protector of the culture and tradition in the social norms of structural, pre-structural or post-structural society but it is very unfortunate that the people, being constructed from these women, constructed various obstacles for them to be bounded into the four walls of the houses. In this relation, if they try to improve their conditions, they are blamed for their formulated theories in the society. Such misleading activities or misunderstanding of human beings is taken under the concept and dimensions of gender discrimination.

Such burning issues of gender discrimination have been taken as the key concepts of expressing the humanity among human beings by various writers in the literary works. In this connection, one can also read Kiran Desai's novels which describe the gender discrimination partly by touching the locality of the children as well as women. Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* is a novel with wide canvas which explores two continents and several cultures. The exploration of women marginalization as well as the migration is localized in post-colonial India and in the United States which is the new empowerment of globalization. The locale of the novel shuttles between the eastern Himalayas of Kalimpong in the northern part of Indian border with Nepal, Bhutan, and China. In this novel, Desai also focuses on basic growth of human emotions like love, sex, conflict, struggle, marriage, adjustments,

and physical and mental abuse. The story of the novel is set in the crumbling hills of the isolated house which is called Cho Oyu at the foot of Mount Kanchanjunga in the feet of Himalayas. For its backdrop the present novel has used the insurgency in Kalimpong where the Nepalese were treated as the minority of the nation. The novelist details the socio-political scenario in which India blurred like Bhutan and Sikkim and the army pulled and pushed up, by maintaining their tanks with Kaki paint. In this case, the Chinese grew hungry for more territory than Tibet. The Chinese had always acquired a messy map for the growth of the area. The novel has also its setting with the demand of Gorkha Island separately. It has got its growth with the description of four major characters suffering with the pain of marginalization as well as of migration. First of them is the portrayal of a feminine character, Sai Mistry, a young girl whose education was going on at an Indian convent. It comes to an end abruptly in the mid-1980s, when she became orphaned and sent to live with her grandfather, Jemubhai Patel, a retired judge, a patidar by caste and ICS officer. Now, he was retired after serving as chief Justice living along with Sai, his pet dog, Mutt and his cook, Gyan.

Gyan is the principal character of the present novel which introduced him as a lover and affected by the fervors of GNLFF. He has a grand wish to have his identity as an ethnic Nepali and despises Sai and her advancement of living. His son, Biju is a representative of these teeming millions who suffer from the basic needs of life that is why he has migrated to the USA and with this migration the novelist discloses the fact that everything is free in Indian constitution for the child especially when they want to be educated but he must leave the country and set up his feet in the isolated background of the foreignness due to continuing western hegemony in the last 20th century. It shows the gender discrimination of the child in India which talks much for the growth of the children but everything is looking imprisoned in the theory of the rules and regulations. The people who talk much more on the principles of advocating for children are mostly found exploiting their principles in their practicality. The story of the novel is read from the period of 1943 when Jemubhai Popatlal Patel was wedded to Bela, who later came to be known as Nimi in the novel. Their relations are called good but, it was not so.

In the setting of 1986, after his retirement, Jemubhai retreats from society to live on a large bungalow named Cho Oyu, built by Scotwen during their intense desire for virgin landscape. The site of this bungalow offered a magnificent view of the Himalayas, "That could raise the human hearts to spiritual heights" (IOL, 12). The judge was impressed by the seclusion of the bungalow, "the solace of being a foreigner on his own country for this time he would not learn the language. He never went back to court" (IOL, 29). Jemubhai is often found spending his time within the confines of his house playing chess and his life got priority to his arrival to Kalimpong. The novel introduces him to be born in 1919 to a family of peasants in Piphit which was engaged into a thriving business. His father earned money easily through the supply

of his false witness to the court of law. His father was well known for subverting the justice of the court, "He was proud of his ability to influence and corrupt the path of justice exchanging right for wrong or wrong for right, he felt no guilt." (IOL, 57) He dreamed great for his affluence as well as his son Jemu that is why when he was old enough to get his education, Jemu was sent to English medium schools for his education. Being educated in English, he developed a profound respect for the English not only in Education but also in his business. In the entrance to the school building, there was a portrait of Queen Victoria in a dress like a flounce curtain with a fringed cape and a peculiar hat with feathery arrows. Shooting out each morning as Jemubhai passed under its entrance, he found her foggy expression in this figure, "The more he pondered over this oddity the more his respect for her and the English grew." (IOL, 58) With Jemu's excellent performance in his schooling, his father's ambition soared high into the flow of sky for his next education.

The gender biasness can be seen in this respected and an educated family in which Jemu was provided the best of everything, his sisters were made to suffer of the deprivation and callousness due to their feminine identity. On the completion of the school learning and with the principal's advice, his father was directed to pave his way for new horizon for his son. According to his cooperated status, Jemu aimed for the I.C.S. Bishop's college on a scholarship and then left for Cambridge. In those days to be the member of ICS, it was not only the great opportunity but it was recognized as the greatest achievement. It can be assessed when he came back as a member of the ICS, he was posted in a remote district of Uttar Pradesh. The Judge felt the happiest moment of his professional life as a civil servant in colonial India and it gave him so pride that his ego came into the family relationship. With the best of the achievements in life, Jemubhai got irritated into the habit of making his word an echo of law and order for others "...he would preside white powdered Wig using over white Powdered face hammer in hand" (IOL, 62). He was very lucky as his fate was mould by his greedy father initially and later when he got married his rich merchant and financier father-in-law Bomanbhai Patel took this responsibility and did his best for the sake of his son-in-law's progress. Living in the posh area of Piphit, Bomanbhai along with the supply of horse feed to the cantonment, unauthorized women to the sex starved British Soldiers but in this job, he was very cautious about the safety of his womenfolk. His wife and daughters were living behind a fortified Haveli within an idle orthodox but with high standard life style. Through his continual moves, he had hired a Brahmin cook to serve them in kitchen yet the hunt of prey continued: "Ambition still grawed at him, and Brahmin cook he might have but he knew that there was a wider world and only very rarely did history provide a chink allowing an acrobatic feast." (IOL, 90)

When Bomanbhai Patel learnt about Jemubhai's mighty ambition he offered for a huge support to cover all expense of his higher studies in England after getting

married with his daughter. At this, Jemu left for England within a week for a month of his meaningful convenience. Getting support with both sides, Jemubhai took his studies rigorously when he reached England, “He left the books only to go to the lavatory for the daily trial of his digestion.” (IOL, 119) He isolated himself from his friends and even from his Peer-mates who realized his imperfect pronunciation and body gesture. Nevertheless, he worked very hard, almost eighteen hours a day to equip himself for the ICS examination “He measured out a reading calendar listed each book. Each chapter in a complex chart” (IOL, 111). He could not develop his friendship. His only friendship was with the land lady’s dog whom he shared his food regularly. Prior to his isolation, Jemubhai’s performance in the ICS examination was as poor as his social updating. Most of the Indians for this exam “had crisped –ironed their speech” (IOL, 112) but Jemubhai’s “English had the twang of Gujarati.” (IOL, 112) Anyhow, he passed the ICS examination by scoring the lowest qualifying marks which made him cry for three days and three nights. On the other hand, his father was exploded with joy and he distributed sweets among neighbours and other relatives who visited him as an acquaintance. To escape from his discomfort of the poor performance in the exam, Jemubhai moved to a new and expensive lodging where he met a Bengali ICS – Bose. Later they developed so thickness in friendship that Bose betters his pronunciation and correct his syntax for the sake of designation.

In addition to, Bose was a divergent optimist and Jemubhai Patel imbibes much of it from him. Having been trained in English, he started to loath other Indians. His love for Anglo linguistic resettled him in obsession to such an extent that he developed hatred towards himself which can be seen in the textual description of the novel, “He worked at being English with the passion of hatred and for what he would become he would be despised by absolutely everyone” (IOL, 119). Due to his self-developed inferiority, Jemu lived an isolated life and “worked twelve hours at a stretch, late into the night and in thus withdrawing, he failed to make a courageous gesture outward at a crucial moment and found instead, that his pusillanimity and his loneliness had found fertile soul.” (IOL, 39) He retreated into a solitude that grew in weight day by day, “The solitude becomes a habit, the habit becomes the man, and it crushed him into a shadow” (IOL, 39). Further, his solitude made him seeking refuge in the library, against giggling girls who laughed at his accent and Indian skin which made him obsessive about the accent and colour of his own skin. This self-hatred of the protagonist of the novel is accorded by the novelist, “He began to wash obsessively, concerning he would be accused of smelling..., he would never be seen without socks and shoes and would prefer shadow to light faded days to sunny, for he was suspicious that sunlight might reveal him in his hideousness” (IOL, 40).

On his return to India, his hatred was extended to his uneducated relatives and his unsophisticated wife Nimi who was waiting for him, cherishing the memory of their cycle ride together, by his returning and living in his father’s home. Like every

married woman, Nimi was fascinated by her husband's new possessions. In this connection, she rummaged his baggage to pick up a powder puff to make herself presentable to her foreign fascinated returning husband. She washed her face, powdered, and scented her breasts and stuffed it inside her bra and blouse so that she could welcome her husband by her beautiful attraction. Noticing her in such a beauteous form and reminding the loss of self, Jemu created a pandemonium at home which finally subsided when he plucked forth his precious possession from between her sad breasts like a "ridiculous flower, or else a bursting ruined heart his dandling puff" (IOL, 168). Not only this, but Jemu also did not hesitate to ridicule his wife by putting and announcing her thieving act before the entire family. Finally, Jemubhai started to live a loveless life with his wife, Nimi who was subjected to the brutish sex only whereby: "his gutter act taught her... the same lessons of loneliness and shame he had learned himself." (IOL, 170)

She could maintain her life if it would be simply but he continued time and again to perpetrate her psychologically and did atrocities most of the time with increasing measure of disgust. The poor woman must accept this act of his emotional and psychological harassment as her misfortune, "She grew accustomed to his detached expression as he pushed into her that ... look of a dog or monkey humping in the bazaar until of a sudden he seemed to skid from control and his expression slid right off his face." (IOL, 170) His hatred towards his wife and himself became so worthless that even, "He followed his ablutions with a clinical measure of whisky, as if consuming a disinfectant" (IOL, 170). In this way, he developed his absolute detachment towards his wife which destroyed Nimi's lust of life and reduced her to the state of a Zombie. Slowly and slowly, Jemubhai became a tyrant towards the accent of his wife and started to fascinate towards English accent. When they shifted to Uttar Pradesh, he started to think over this completion. To make Nimi a suitable match and presentable to his social status Jemu invited Miss Enid Pot to teach her English. Being aware of his last offer to maintain her dignity and status with him, Nimi determined herself to Anglicize her accent but the arbitrariness of language could not be achieved. Jemubhai in utter helplessness resorted to violate her physically and her physical violence and disorientation gained a rapid speed by her husband. She was now being insulted by her even servants who "... thumped their own leftovers on the table for her to eat" (IOL, 172). The psychology of the novel validates her, "She peered out at the world but could not focus on it" (IOL, 173) in the lack of emotional supports of her husband.

Finally, the inevitable happening in their life occurred and the two were separated from each other forever after a nasty incident. The incident was correlated to Nimi who on the request of a passionate congresswoman participated halfheartedly in a rally of the congress party to welcome Nehru at the railway station. Nimi took this decision independently of accepting the Persistent on the request of Mrs. Mohan

because Jemubhai was on a tour. He learnt about this incident of Nimi through the District commissioner's warning: "I trust that no member of your family will do anything to compromise your career again. I'm warning you, patel" (IOL, 303). Being enraged at this incident, Jemu returned home at the fixed time and drank too much and in his drink, he court-martialed Nimi.

It is said that everything has a limit and if you cross the limit there would be not only change but extra-change and this extra change can be seen in the irritation of Nimi who got angry, broke her silence for the first time and retorted him against his behaves, "you one the one who is stupid" (IOL, 304). She forgot her feminine self. Consequently, she was subjected to a merciless physical torture by her husband who emptied his glass on her head, sent for a jug of water swinging into the face he no longer found beautiful and filled her ears with leaping soda water. Then when this wasn't found enough to assuage his rage over his wife, he hammered down with his fist by his arms to bring them down on her again and again rhythmically, until his own hands were exhausted and next day his shoulders were strained sore as if from chopping wood. He even limped a bit his leg hurting from kicking and abusing her, "Stupid bitch dirty bitch!" (IOL, 304) and "The more he swore the harder he found he could hit" (IOL, 305). After doing all kinds of atrocities, he was not satisfied with. Next day, he sent Nimi back to her family existed in Piphit for serving all relations if there was any. She tried to say sorry and to pursue him for not committing any mistake against his reputation but no amount of her request could coax him to rethink over and take her back to his house. Six months later, the readers knew that Nimi's father passed away, leaving his desperate daughter on her family way of disturbance, "Each one hoped that the arrival of the baby in the world may bring the father back to their community" (IOL, 306) but this was in vain. Jemu did not make compromise with his falsified and penetrated exploitation of his wife. His father pleaded his son to take Nimi back in the name of his family, "Our family honour is gone. We are lucky Bomanbhai is dead thank God. It's the scandal of the town (IOL, 306) but there was no impact on his ego. His father might be disturbed for his reputation but Jemubhai had no repressions at having ashamed his family or the family of his wife and ever abandoned their only child.

On the other side, it is said that misfortune never comes alone and if it is going to be studied with the misfortune of Nimi, it did not stop here but it was reduced her to further misery when her uncle usurped her father's property soon after his death. Her ill-fate closed her life to an early painful and untimely death when she succumbed to severe burns after having been caught fire over a store while living at her sister's place. Desai minds on her business of narrating her death with a noticeable remarking comment over: "Ashes have no weight, they tell no secrets, they raise too lightly for gravity, they float upward and thankfully disappear" (IOL, 308). This could be enough to describe the gender discrimination in the novel but Jemubhai's guilty of

ingratitude heart continued making emotion blunder. He even refused to accept the parental responsibility of the girl who was born from him but now an orphan after the death of her mother. When people convinced him more, he brought her and dumped her into a convent boarding school where she grew up as a loveless child of somebody else. Being alone on her terms and conditions of life, later she fell in love with an air force pilot who was a Zoroastrian. The couple was flying for the place in Russia for the comfort of her husband, there occurred an accident in which both died. When the couple died in the accident, Sai their daughter became another orphan for Jemubhai's threshold to be brought up with full care. Now, Sai arrives to Jemubhai from Dehradun, a place where her mother had studied. Sai, before coming to Jemubhai was living in seclusion because her parents were living in Russia and the relation between them was maintained through the corresponding letters. It was nearly two years that Sai had not seen any letter from them. When the cause was found, she knew the fact that the death carried both away into the unknown world.

The considerable point is that Mr. Kakkar warns Biju that once he is back in India, everyone will ask for dollars from Biju, without considering his situations of livelihood. He adds further: "Some disease will; if not the heat, those mad Sardarji will bring down your plane before you even arrive" (IOL, 269). With this message, the novelist points out that ultimately what happens to Biju happens to all of those who migrated to the foreign countries. Biju is divested of the things which he had brought with, missing his wallet, shoes, belt, jeans, and T-shirt. He is made to stand in his white underpants so that he could be branded. Like Biju Jemubhai Popatlal can also be read as a ruined life. Both are the same; if Biju has got many urges to earn dollars, Jemubhai, though educated highly, falls a prey to the spurious ideal of the white race. Consequently, Jemu ruins his family life and status. Instead of being a good human being by not submitting to his false pride, and by bringing up his granddaughter with loving care and by treating his cook as a human being Jemu can be recognized in the cultural inheritance of India. Thus, the novel by showing conflict between love, dignity, and fellowship, has possessed the cultural inheritance, and could have attained highness of its portrayal.

To conclude, the present novel can be enquired of in the opinions of Mary Jacobus, "Is there a woman in this text?" but rather: 'Is there a text in this woman?' (Jacobus, 117-41) With this query, one can search for, if feminist readings of male texts are motivated by the need to disrupt the process of emasculation, feminist readings of female texts are motivated by the need 'to connect', to recuperate or to formulate the context and the tradition, that would link women writers to their readers. It is also important for community psychologists to understand these processes if they are to be helpful in supporting community-based movements for change:

There is no way one can escape the experience of a social context that is like a stagnant pond in which we are the suffocating organisms. There is an absence of the social conditions that make optimism and hope a realistic life strategy.” (Charlesworth, 60) In connection to expose power of feminist perspective, the argument of Patricia Parker is remarkable in the context of resistance of feminine “resistance to the attempts to fix the meanings of appropriate identity and behavior, where such meanings are interpreted as controlling, exploitative and otherwise oppressive to African American women. (Patricia, 257-291)

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