



## Twentieth Century Female Education Portrayal in *The Inheritance of Loss* :

A novel of Kiran Desai

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**Abstract** : Anita Desai's daughter, Kiran Desai, is a well-known Indian English novelist who began writing in late 1990s, focusing on socio-political, moral, racial, cross-cultural and crucial man-human-relationship issues in the post-independence age. Ruth Pravar Zabwawla was the first woman to win the Booker Prize, followed by Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy, and now Kiran Desai has buried the obscurity and despair in the family that had been anticipating her mother's victory over the sought-after honour.

Among modern female authors, Anitha Desai is the most widely read. She is without a doubt the most well-known and influential author working today. Indian English fiction has greatly benefited from her efforts. In her writing, she blends Indian European and American perspectives, making her a unique voice in urban literature. She is mostly a writer of psychological fiction. As far as she's concerned, her books aren't based on Indian society or culture. Like Mulk Raj Anand, she doesn't address societal themes in her art.

**Introduction** : Having won one of the world's most prestigious literary awards as well as the 50,000-pound prize money and the potential for skyrocketing global book sales, Kiran Desai has gained access to an entire galaxy of Indian literary star chroniclers of cultural confusion and hybrid immigrant identity, allowing her to inherit her novelist mother Anita's legacy. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, Kiran Desai was a well regarded author of steamy novels. It would not be an exaggeration to say that she will be widely recognised, declared, and researched as an authoress in the Indian English context. So, before launching into my own project, I'd want to have a look at the works of Kiran Desai that have yet to be completed, which, no doubt, have provided me with several avenues for expressing my ideas. In the academic study, "Globalization's Discontents:" From the shadows, Melissa Denny addresses the theme of globalisation and diversity in Kiran Desai's book, 'The Inheritance of Loss.' Writing for the "shadow class," Desai illuminates the injustice meted out to those of lesser socioeconomic status while others are left to suffer in silence, self-loathing, and loneliness as a result of what she calls "modernity."



Novelist Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* was published in 2006 and is a series of interconnected tales about Indian individuals and their interactions with the Western world. After receiving the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Man Booker Prize in 2006 for *The Inheritance Of Loss*, author Kiran Desai was recognised as "the youngest female winner of the award" at that time. It has been widely lauded since the novel's release for its representation of Indian anglophile identities, as well as its realistic yet harsh take on First World culture. Desai's depiction of her Indian characters' "craze for the Western ideals, manners, language, and glamorous life style" and the realistic way she presents her characters "inferior, limited and vanquished by their Indian ancestry" are highlighted by Krishna Singh, a literary critic (Singh 55). It is Singh's theory that evaluates the novel in terms of Western and Eastern dichotomies that exist entirely in conflict. It seems as if he sees Western-Indian interactions as one of colonial master and subservient subject, in which the subjugated subject seeks to be like the master. But Desai asserted in an interview with *Vanity Fair* in 2008 that she did not want to portray a certain picture of the "First" or "Third" world in the film. According to Desai (Desai, "Desai: If Only Bush Read Books!"), the novel's plot emerges as "the outcome of many generations having gone back and forth between east and west" (Desai, "Desai: If Only Bush Read Books!").

Postcolonial India is the setting for Desai's Indian-American book, which is set in a country that is nonetheless connected to the West. With a focus on two Indian characters from 1986, *The Inheritance of Loss* follows an illegal immigrant in America named Biju and an educated adolescent from India named Sai. There is no clear-cut link between east and west since neither character fits into a certain region. Because of his religious convictions, Biju is unable to work at any restaurant that serves beef, even if the tale takes place in the United States. As opposed to the Hindus in India, Sai is a non-practicing atheist who only visits temples to study their architecture. He does not speak Hindi or any other Indian language. Desai's depiction of Indians living in a postcolonial environment is heavily influenced by their geographic location. To present two storylines at once, the book alternates between Biju and Sai's existence in America and India, allowing the novel to portray two distinct yet intertwined stories. Half of the book is devoted to the tale of Sai, while the other half is devoted to numerous other Indian personalities with whom she has developed close ties. Even while Biju makes new friends in the United States, the majority of these friendships are based on his current employment. He doesn't create any lasting or



meaningful bonds with anybody, and the most of the book is devoted to telling his side of the event. He stands in stark contrast to the loneliness that many first-generation immigrants experience as they struggle to fit in with a new culture and make new acquaintances. Thus, on the surface level, the tales of Biju and Sai are linked only by their fathers, "the chef" and "the judge," who both work for Biju's grandpa, Jemubhai. "The Inheritance of Loss" author Kiran Desai tells BBC's World Book Club that she didn't use a "plot" to connect the two pieces. As an alternative, she argues that the narratives of Biju and Sai are two independent "stories" tied together by similar themes, such as generational disparities, literacy and education, identity and location and, most crucially, tensions between the West and the East.

A mountainous station in the state of West Bengal, Kalimpong is where Sai's narrative takes place. As a result of the British colonial era, Kalimpong has long been recognised for its "excellent schools for the eastern Himalayan area" (Lama 33). Due to political unrest caused by the Nepali uprisings, these schools lost some of their allure in 1986. (33). As a result of these uprisings, the Gorkha or Nepali people of Western Bengal have demanded Gorkhaland, or an independent state based on their ethnolinguistic rights and a desire to identify as Indian Gorkhas themselves Through her connection with Gyan, her lover and instructor, Sai's novel explores the educational focus in Kalimpong and the push for Gorkhaland. Gyan criticises Sai for "copying" the "West" when she observes her Western customs, such as celebrating Christmas (Desai, *The Inheritance of Loss* 180, 179). According to Gyan's remarks, Indians "craze" for Western lifestyles since Sai favours Western festivals over Eastern ones. This is in line with Singh's assertions. That is not how Desai sees it. Instead, she insists that Sai does not know why she celebrates Christmas rather than Hindu festivals, but just does. When Sai's ancestors were British colonialists in colonial India, they had a close connection to Britain, which is why she has a long history of interacting with the West. Because her generational link with the west blurs the distinctions between the two purportedly binary cultures, the subject of "the legacy of loss" becomes more difficult for Sai to answer because she is Anglicized. With Sai's connection to the West, this topic creates a complicated postcolonial depiction of British imperialism in twentieth-century Indian society.



Because of the novel's diaspora classification and its concentration on illegal immigration in the twentieth century via Biju's locationally distant function, reviewers inevitably focused on postcolonial debates surrounding immigrant identity. Rather than focusing only on the desires of an immigrant to "reinvent" his or her identity, "the consequences of dislocation" are equally important in Kiran Desai's "The Inheritance of Loss," according to Oana Sabo (Sabo 388). "The work serves as a reminder for readers of the trials and difficulties that accompany relocating from one culture to another, including economic difficulties, Indophobic sentiments, and the misconceptions about the American ideal," writes Sabo. Steven Vertovec claims that opponents like Sabo are basing their arguments on a concept of diaspora that is "almost completely" based on Jewish experience, and hence "connotations of 'dislocation, victimisation, and alienation' are generally fairly negative" (Vertovec 278). Even though Biju, like many other South Asians, migrates to the West because of need, unlike the initial exodus, he chooses to abandon his nation. An attempt to generalise the basic concept of migrant, refugee, and ethnic minoritarian groups "threatens the term's descriptive utility" by conflating broad concepts (277). A new definition or perspective to the South Asian diaspora should be sought by the reader.

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