



34 between past and present. The novel, *The Inheritance of Loss* presents the lives of  
35 characters those who are entangled in class system in India. Here I refer to both the  
36 lower class and the upper class system prevalent in India. The writer has wonderfully  
37 presented hopes, aspiration and dreams of characters that are portrayed in the novel.  
38 She has also conveyed their ultimate dream and hope of immigrating to America and  
39 finally escaping the critical class and caste system of their homelands. In the novel we  
40 see that main character, Jemubhai became an itinerant civil service judge and, became  
41 typical of middle-class Anglicized Indians, somewhat alienated from his own native  
42 culture. The absence of an address protests to have fixed identity. As man possesses a  
43 limited existence, he has to keep something behind him to remind him. The individual  
44 has to live according to the societal norms. This endeavour will be falsified in certain  
45 cases, as there is an inner self against him. It creates the loss of faith in one's own  
46 country and its values. The detailed study of *The Inheritance of Loss* gives us the  
47 feelings that there is a note of compassion in the delineation of various characters in  
48 the novel. Almost all the characters Sai, Gyan, the retired judge, the cook, the tutor,  
49 and the cook's son living in abroad- all get the compassionate feelings of the author.  
50 All these characters dwell in the context of compassion and pathos. The present paper  
51 presents a story about their hard work, effort, dedication and sacrifices that they  
52 render as to achieve their minimum needs for a normal daily living. The paper also  
53 brings out interior of the novel's characters as combined with utmost expectations and  
54 dreams to gain material growth and success.

55

56 The characters in Desai's novel have diverse economic backgrounds, from  
57 the Judge's wealth to the poverty of the cook. In *The Inheritance of Loss*, the gulf  
58 between those with extreme privilege and those living in poverty is generally shown

59 to be a direct consequence of the legacy of colonialism. Though privilege comes in  
60 many forms, Desai illustrates the vicious and self-reinforcing cycle of class privilege  
61 by showing how those who have privilege continue to gain wealth and social standing,  
62 while those without such privilege live in poverty that only deepens their  
63 disadvantaged position. Colonialism reinforces the existing rigid class structure in  
64 India by enabling those with existing privilege and disadvantaging those without it, all  
65 while falsely claiming a meritocratic attitude towards poverty and privilege.

66

67 Gyan is ashamed of his home, which is somewhat modern but very close to ruin.  
68 Desai comments that this is not “picturesque poverty” but something even more  
69 dismal. Because of this, Gyan is ashamed of being with Sai and bringing her back to  
70 his home, which creates a rift between them. She calls him a hypocrite because he  
71 enjoys cheese and chocolate at her house but condemns these foods when he’s with  
72 the Nepalis because he is unable to afford them. What she doesn’t realize, however, is  
73 that he is condemning the fact that some live in luxury while others are extremely  
74 poor. The theme is reflected both in the title, *The Inheritance of Loss* and the  
75 Epigraph from Jorge Luis Borges’ poem entitled *Boast of Quietness*:

76 “My humanity is in feeling we are all voices of the same poverty, My name is  
77 someone and anyone. I walk slowly, like one who comes from so far away he doesn’t  
78 expect to arrive.” (Borges).

79

80 One understands from these lines of the great poet Borges that man’s only inheritance  
81 in this life is one of ‘poverty’ of various kinds, material and spiritual, for instance; and  
82 in the end, one can only strive for, but never actually attain, fulfillment. The Epigraph

83 encapsulates the idea of loss. All the characters in the novel appear to suffer some  
84 kind of loss which, ultimately, becomes his/her inheritance. It may be a material loss  
85 or a spiritual one, for loss is of various kinds; man's efforts in trying to realize his  
86 objective may end half-realized and half unfulfilled and to the extent that his efforts  
87 have failed to realize his objective in full, to that extent he sustains loss. Thus a man's  
88 life, on this side of the grave, is a tale of inheritance of loss.

89  
90 Though the judge himself had not come from a particularly wealthy family, the  
91 opportunity to attend school in Britain creates a cycle of more and more wealth and  
92 opportunity for his future generations. After going to school in Cambridge, the judge  
93 passes the British exams needed to be admitted to the Indian Civil Service and join  
94 the government's judiciary body. Because of this, the judge's salary increases from  
95 ten pounds a month to three hundred pounds a year. He and another Indian friend  
96 together resolve to put their Indian-ness behind them, and they avoid the other Indian  
97 students. Because they start to associate Indians with poverty, they divide  
98 themselves even further from their culture. When the judge's daughter and her  
99 husband move to Moscow, her daughter Sai is then sent to a convent and grows up  
100 "Anglicised" as well. Sai describes how she only learned how to make tea in the  
101 English way; she had never learned the Indian way. When she leaves the convent,  
102 she talks about some of the lessons she had implicitly learned: cake is better  
103 than *laddoos* (a type of Indian confection); silverware is better than using one's  
104 hands; worshiping Jesus is better than worshiping a phallic symbol; English is better  
105 than Hindi. But she only learns these lessons because the judge is able to pay for her  
106 to attend school at the convent. When Sai is on the train to Cho Oyu the nun  
107 accompanying her criticizes the people who defecate on the train tracks. Thus, not

108 only are they too poor to have a system of plumbing, but they are then criticized for  
109 trying to go to the bathroom—a basic human necessity.

110

111 Biju provides another, similar perspective on poverty and privilege as  
112 experienced by immigrants journeying to America, noting that those with fortune  
113 continue to gain fortune, and those who are poor continue to be luckless. At the  
114 immigration desk, Biju observes how the more desperate the people are, the more  
115 likely they are to be turned away by the embassy officials. On the other hand, those  
116 who are rich enough to travel can prove that they will not stay in America illegally  
117 because their passports show that they have already been abroad. Stamps from  
118 places such as England, Switzerland, America, and New Zealand and  
119 corresponding return dates prove that they reliably return to India. Therefore, the  
120 more traveled a person is, the more likely it is that they will be allowed to travel  
121 again. And in New York, even with aspirations of social mobility, being an  
122 undocumented immigrant means being relegated to a “shadow class,” because  
123 people must often keep moving, finding new addresses, jobs, and names. This  
124 happens to Biju as well: after he secures a job, it often comes under threat when  
125 there are green card checks, or when people complain because he smells. Thus, the  
126 social mobility America promises is not extended to those who are the poorest.  
127 When Biju returns to India, discouraged by this “shadow” life, the bags of everyone  
128 on the airplane are lost. The airline states it will only give compensation to  
129 nonresident Indians and foreigners, not the resident Indians.

130 The resident Indian passengers complain about this injustice—those from rich  
131 countries and those who are wealthy enough to live outside of India are treated better  
132 than those who live within it. Biju then remarks on the nonresident Indians’ good

133 manners as they stand in line for their compensation, thereby “proving” how much  
134 they deserved that good fortune.

135

136 “ They don’t have enough to eat, but they knew how to cry; they memorized they for  
137 script for small lives for being lesser people”. (page no 11) Desai’s portayal of  
138 poverty not just as an economic deficit, but as an inherited emotional and social  
139 vulnerable. The cook has internalized the humiliation of social standing to the point  
140 where the grief and submission are instinctual.

141

142 In both locales—India and America alike—poverty and privilege are each treated as  
143 earned and deserved. Though this belief system is an extension of the caste system  
144 that India had prior to colonization, this system is also reinforced by colonization and  
145 meritocratic myths of capitalism. Those who are most able to afford and adopt British  
146 culture are rewarded for their assimilation, and are then assumed to be deserving of  
147 that reward. This idea also carries into America, as people immigrate in search of  
148 opportunity, but are largely denied it unless they are already wealthy. Those who are  
149 most able to afford to be there are accepted into the country most readily—a direct  
150 contradiction to the mythology of opportunity and social mobility in America which  
151 brings so many immigrants there in the first place. In Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of*  
152 *Loss*, poverty and privilege are not just economic states; they are a "legacy" passed  
153 down through generations, often dictating a character's capacity for hope, mobility,  
154 and dignity. Desai illustrates a vicious cycle, those with privilege use it to accumulate  
155 more wealth and social standing while those in poverty find that their lack of  
156 resources only deepens their disadvantages.

157 Thus, Kiran Desai's novel, —The Inheritance of Loss" is a literary masterpiece with a  
158 perfect blend of Indian culture and values. The overall study of the book gives us the  
159 feelings that there is a note of compassion, fellow feeling and rivalry followed by love  
160 and hatred in the delineation of various characters in the novel. Here in the novel  
161 almost all the characters like Sai, Gyan, the retired judge, the cook, and the cook's son  
162 living in abroad get the compassionate feelings of the author. The Inheritance of  
163 Loss deals with cultural conflicts of Europe, India and America simultaneously at the  
164 same time. The writer gets an opportunity to run through the concepts of globalization,  
165 multiculturalism, modernization, terrorism and insurgency. She has proved that  
166 wherever one goes, he/ she carries the value of his /her culture and tradition. The  
167 Inheritance of Loss has been set partly in India and partly in the US. Internal issues  
168 and conflicts in the novel are quite complicated elements that have been exemplified  
169 through the characters like Saeed, who minutely thinks that people have a choice in  
170 living their life as immigrants. He also advocated and motivates Biju to change his  
171 way of thing and his style of living by accepting the change that comes on his way.  
172 Meanwhile Sai seems to do likewise with Gyan, challenging him to recognize the  
173 contradictions in which he finds himself and not to see them as problems.

174

175

176

177

178 **REFERENCE:**

179 [1]. Chatterjee, Mohini.( 2005) Feminism & Gender Equality. Aavishkar Publishers &  
180 Distributors, Jaipur

181 [2]. Desai, Kiran. The Inheritance of Loss. New Delhi: Penguin, 2006.

182 [3]. Knott, Kim, and Sean McLoughlin, eds. *Diaspora: Concepts, Intersections,*  
183 *Identities.* India: Rawat Publications, 2011. Print.

184 [4]The Inheritance of Loss, by Kiran Desai. *The New York Times Book Review.* 12 Feb,  
185 2006.

186

UNDER PEER REVIEW IN IJAR