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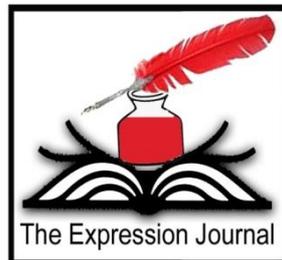
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**SOCIAL CONNECTION OF WOMEN IN KIRAN DESAI'S  
*THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS***

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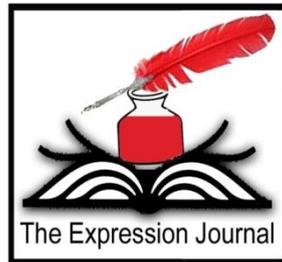
**Abstract**

Human bonding and its capacity depend on two factors, one is the location and the other is gender. The book *The Inheritance of Loss* discovers the state of human realities in which one is trying to discover a relationship after migration and others are living in one locality for years and trying to sustain the relationship. Unlike Judge and Biju; Noni, Lola, Sai and Nimi live in India for a long time and fight against the uprooted class. On the ground of gender identification, they have developed connections and bonding with each other. During this phase, they just do not struggle to unite but express their opinion and affection for each other.

**Keywords**

Social connection, Human Bonding, Social isolation, Sexual Intercourse, Patriarchy, Matriarchy, Women, Womance.

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## **SOCIAL CONNECTION OF WOMEN IN KIRAN DESAI'S *THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS***

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Social connection is the experience of feeling closed and connected to others “[i]t involves feeling loved, cared for, and valued, and forms the basis of interpersonal relationships. Feeling socially connected depends on the quality and number of meaningful relationships one has with family, friends, and acquaintances. Going beyond the individual level, it also involves a feeling of connecting to a layer community” (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>).

Roy Baumeister proposed his influential “belongingness hypothesis: that human beings have a fundamental drive to form lasting relationships, to belong” (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/socialconnection>).

Women in India are considered inferior in the patriarchal set up. Few of the traits like warrior, strength, self-dependent are associated with men at the same time women are considered as fragile, weak and dependent. Some books such as Simon de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949), Mary Ellman’s *Thinking about Women* (1968), Kate Millet’s *Sexual Politics*, etc. played vital role to put forward the issues like equality, justice for womankind. Indian Writings in English create the space for all kinds of identity to discuss their issues. There has been quite a spurt in writings by Indian Women who have brought the opinion of Indian Women to the fore. Writers like Shashi Deshpande, Kamala Das, Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai are notable examples. The patriarchal establishment considers the importance of fulfilment of material needs. Women are considered physical entities, not ethical animals. Social isolation is a common trait found among females.

Women characters of *The Inheritance of Loss* discovered the connection and belongingness, somehow, with each other. Meanwhile, the voice of selfhood comes out in the book. The characters like Sai, Nimi, Lola, Noni vividly portrayed by the author. Cho Oyu and Mon Ami are the two places where all kinds of interaction about womanhood emerge.

Elaine Showalter, the well known feminist critic, proposes an idea of women 'subculture' which records the three stages of progress: 'Feminine', 'Feminist' and 'Female'. It could be further decoded and classified as imitative, reactive and self-fulfilled respectively. Only Nimi falls in the category of muted one while other major characters in *The Inheritance of Loss* can be classified as the articulate one, means self-fulfilled. Domestic violence might be the reason for keeping Nimi isolated and muted in society. The only time she comes out of her home, to attend an event with a peer group, is to welcome Nehru. Most of the time, she remains secluded inside her home, submerged under the expectations of her husband. Interpersonal relationship requires the process of human bonding. The bond shows features such as affection and trust. But unfortunately such kind of human bond misses in the relationship between Judge and Nimi:

For the First time, he hit her, although  
he had wanted to before and thought about the  
urge for some time. He emptied his glass  
on her head, sent a jug of water emptied into the face he no  
longer found beautiful,  
her ears with leaping soda water.  
Then, when this wasn't enough to  
assuage his rage, he hammered  
down with his fists, raising his  
arms to bring them down on her  
again and again, rhythmically,  
until his own hands were exhausted  
and his shoulders next day were  
strained sore as if from chopping  
wood. He even limped a bit,  
his leg hurting from Kicking her. (Desai 304)

Not only the physical action, even his abusive behaviour is the matter of regret in the case of Nimi, "[s]tupid Bitch, Dirty Bitch! The more he swore, the harder he found he could hit" (Desai 305).

According to the Lacan, symbol is nothing but "the unconscious is structured as a function of the symbolic" ([nosubject.com/unconscious](http://nosubject.com/unconscious)). The author of *The Inheritance of Loss* uses the symbol of trunk which reminds the phallic state of the Judge in the book, "[n]o doubt the trunks had jogged his memory... Mr. J.P. Patel, SS Strathnaver" (Desai 37).

A "Womance" is a close but non-sexual, non-romantic relationship between two or more women, usually, it stands as a female bonding relationship. Lola and Noni are modern women with political views. They discussed the insurgency, religion, and the system within the society "[a]nd, of course, you would feel freer

than ever to sin if you were aware of such a safety net: sorry, sorry, oh so so sorry” (Desai 200).

Although they were sisters their independent outlooks could be seen on the different occasions in *The Inheritance of Loss* when they learn to appreciate the difference between each other “[t]hey have a point, said Noni, ‘maybe not their whole point, but I’d say half to three-quarters of their point.’ ‘Nonsense’. Lola waved her sister’s opinion away” (Desai 127).

In *The Inheritance of Loss* both the sisters, represent the sign of matriarchy where Sai, who is surrounded by a patriarch, finds herself groomed “[i]f you get a chance in life, take it.... you must do it on your own, Sai” (Desai 69).

Sai, in the book, is influenced by the dead Nimi. The author shows the relation between Sai and Nimi with an object of trunks which is common to the Judge:

He was silly to be upset by Sai’s arrival,  
to allow it to trigger this revisitation of  
his past. No doubt the trunks had jogged his memory.  
Miss S-Mistry, St. Augustine’s convent.  
Mr J.P. Patel, SS Strathnaver. (Desai 37)

Like Jhumpa Lahiri’s Twinkle in *The Blessed House*, Sai struggles to preserve the symbol given by the patriarchal society. If Twinkle tries to keep the Christian symbol in the right place then Sai struggle to find the place of the trunk in a patriarchal set-up.

Social connection and Social isolation are the two ways to lead a social life for an individual. Women characters have varied individuality as proven by Elaine Showalter in her book *Literature of Their Own*. Kiran Desai has successfully drawn the picture of the individuality of women which is directly proportional to the company they share. In many ways, the thrust of the author is upon the sisterhood.

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