

**BIGOTRY VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN KISHWAR DESAI'S
NOVEL *THE SEA OF INNOCENCE***

S. Parimalah

Assistant Professor, Department of English

S.T. Hindu College, Nagercoil.

(Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli)

ABSTRACT:

Kishwar Desai as a realistic writer from the Indian soil presented her novels by learning the present condition of women with her background knowledge of her journalistic career. Her novel *The Sea of Innocence* traces the reality of modern Indian society with the use of advanced technologies and it also highlights the bigotry violence faced by women from dawn to dusk. Desai presents her novel in the detective mode in story telling by presenting the horrific crime committed against the British teenager Liza Kay. Simran Singh as the real dedicated social worker turns as the crime investigator unfolds the mystery of Liza's death and brings out the curse of modern India with drugs, surreptitious video clippings, corrupted political atmosphere, and eroded the human values. This paper focuses on the menacing darkness created by sadistic criminals towards a girl and the bigotry violence faced by her.

KEYWORDS: Molest, Victims, Criminal, Vulnerability, Extreme Pain

Through her fiction *The Sea of Innocence*, Desai freely expresses the real picture of Indian women in this post modern era. Her choices of fiction expose the hidden realities and raise her voice against all kinds of atrocities against them. The present world is filled with rape and murder of women mostly happens in the beaches of Goa and has created a severe social damage. The beaches with their tourists engaged with drugs and involve themselves in parties. This is the reason that the innocent girls roaming on the seashores become a prey in the hands of the drug addicted monsters in their dilemmatic state of mind and body. It is highly sympathetic that the foreign girl Liza's disappearance and the vanishing of young girls dream looking for the good life in Goa. Liza's ambition is to get a good job, make some money and just wanted to enjoy the life. The company which she expected to get a job also instructed that they had arranged for her to fly to Europe and learn more about the work for their development. The rapid urbanization has created the desire for wealth and white-collar employment, especially among the youth to found job opportunities in abroad. Barbara Mehrhof and Pamela Kearon in the article "Rape: An Act of Terror" points out that:

Rape supports the male class by projecting its power and aggressiveness on the world. It is being considered a political crime, a terrorist act that keeps women subordinate. It is an effective political device...a political act of oppression exercised by members of a powerful class on members of the powerless class. It is communicated to the male population as an act of freedom and strength and a male right never to be denied. (233)

Desai presents the brutality over Indian young women by displaying the gang rape on the Delhi bus. The young man accompanying the rape victim that night had also been brutally beaten up and stripped naked before she was thrown from the bus. This gang rape case was extremely tragic but as it made news all over the world. It forced attention on the increasing brutality of sexual violence against women and the almost institutionalized indifference to the suffering of victims. Her life ends with her desire to live in this world as human being. This incident is similar in Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* where Lorraine is a lesbian who is destroyed by six actively homophobic and woman hating teenage boys. One night when Lorraine returns all alone from the bar, she walks into the alley which is the boy's turf. They are waiting for her and gang rape her and it is one of the most devastating scenes in literature. Naylor describes the aftermath as:

Lorraine lay pushed up against the wall on the cold ground with her eyes staring straight up into the sky...her mouth crammed with paper bag, her dress pushed up under her breasts, her bloody panty hose hanging from her thighs. She would have stayed there forever and have simply died from starvation or exposure if nothing around her, had moved. (171)

The constant victimization of helpless women was the depressing reality of India. It is with the fact that the women are denied to register their name with the police by fearing the publicity. If a girl is missing, there is a common thought is that, she may gets raped. This is the present condition of women even though she may stay in her friend's home. Liza was a young pretty girl, the beach that was far from safety. Her disappearance makes Simran to thought that, "I thought of her being sexually assaulted by her boys, and then the rape and her molestation by Vinay Gupta" (260). This violence makes Neeru Tandon to give the view in her critical essay "Rape: The Death of Dignity" as:

Rape as a form of personal violence is not merely a physical assault and symbolic of the degradation of psyche. It is in fact a conscious process of intimidation by which men keep all women in a state of fear. In reality, the rapist is not the respecter of age or looks, community or caste and very often there is no other provocation for the crime except that the woman is woman. It is the manifestation of contempt towards women, an attitude which treats women as objects 'up for grabs'. This induced anger and worry in the feminists. (63)

The tremendous development of technologies has created a great change in the life of humans. The e-mail accounts are the connecting point to send the information's to the receiver who settles in any corner of the world. But at the same time, it is a bane to human life, when it is used in a wrong way. The password must be kept as confidential, if it becomes public, it entirely ruins the life of the individual and even the individual becomes a public property needs to face lot of problems by it.

The freedom of the girls is a very big question from the hands of the rich man. As a part of their entertainment, they search for the beautiful young girls to spend the night with them. The society considers them with high rank as boss and they have the servants who work for them even by getting the girls for seducing. In some cases, a powerful politician may get involved and no one will lift a finger against them. This political power is one of the

hindrances to the local police to file the case against them. Their job probably is to prevent any dirt surfacing about their boss. They have to wipe out all traces of his connection with Liza. They might have wanted to wipe out any evidence of the murder, as well as checking if there was anything more to link their boss with the girls.

The curse for the development of India is dragging and the delayed justice by the law. In most cases, the investigation made by police extends the time period of the case and the evidences may gets erased by the culprits. Amarjit as a police official had all the evidences and the videos regarding the Liza's disappearance. But he is in bars to take any action against the criminals.

In the case of Liza, Vinay Gupta stopped the local police from investigating Liza's disappearance for a whole year. With the involvement of minister, the police investigation has to be made personal and discreet. Someone at central government level obviously wants to make sure that Vinay Gupta is not seen to be involved in Liza's disappearance. Amarjit informs to Simran that in the case of Scarlett Kneeling, the involvement of politicians were the hindrance for his investigation. It affected the image of Goa as a place of human tragedy.

Vinay Gupta is one of the coalition partners of the government. If his name is in the crime report of rape or murder it could affect the stability of the government. According to the latest reports he is headed to become the Home Minister. It is a very crucial post. He must know the secrets of every politician, and it will be dangerous if he has some skeletons in his own cupboard. He would then be open to black mail and it is important to remove all evidence of possible transgressions.

The young job seekers are abundant in our country. Their struggle for pleasant life is not to be explained by words. They have to face several kinds of competitions to achieve their goal of getting a good job. In the case of girls like Liza, they are unaware of the real face of culprits as they appear before them as employers. They genuinely seemed to believe that her future lay with the work place. Liza has big dreams to achieve something in life. So she believes the trapping words of Gupta as, "She would travel and see the world if she worked as his employee" (310).

The growth of technology leads to the curse of woman's holiness and virginity. The women are forced to face the brutality and it is too filmed through mobile phones and secret cameras. This technical developmental so created a curse in the safety of woman. As a journalist, Desai had read a case about the warden at a girl's hostel in Haryana had been accused of making secret, indecent films of the residents. And then some schools had reportedly installed CCTV in washrooms because they wanted to monitor the children. So the modern women lost her entire privacy with the hidden cameras and mobile phones fixed without her notice even in her private resting areas.

Liza's disappearance reinforced the fears of Simran after hearing this incident in Delhi. "According to published records, more than eight women raped in the country every day" (103). There is an argument goes on in the parliament of Goa in connection with the missing girls. They point out that,

Goa was becoming the rape capital of the world...a period of three years, almost

every week there had been at least one death of a foreigner in Goa. While many of the deaths were assumed to be accidental, it was also suggested that at least some could have been drug related. And it was pointed out that many of those who died were young. (103)

Desai presents her sympathy and inner dilemma towards the missing girl Liza and expressed through Simran as, “No one else has any information about her. So we had begun to wonder where she was and what had happened to her. Had she been raped? Was she still alive? Or had she been killed and these sightings were just a case of mistaken identity?” (179).

The whole world is running after for the money and wealth. In our present world, man is ready to do anything for the sake of money. The man with big bellies tries to dominate and enslave the man who is with small bellies. In the case of trapping the girls, they use several techniques to enslave them. In the words of middle class women,

...come from middle-class or lower-income backgrounds, so that when he gives us these fat salaries, we fall for it. And that’s the trap. Once you used to this lifestyle it is difficult to get into any other work. He buys gifts, takes us on holidays. But of course, we have to stay on his right side, and we can’t refuse him anything. (311)

In most cases, the physical beauty of young girls became a curse to them because the male drug addicts tries to cover them in the web made by them. They threaten them to work as drug mules. So they agree to carry drugs to save their life. The rapid supply of drugs is made by the school girls. But “the anti-narcotics squad is usually on the lookout for older men and women” (316). It is all very subtle and organized with careful brainwashing. But the young generations are not aware with the criminal offense by their act and strictly follow the rules given to them. They change very quickly, especially if they get addicted to the drugs and its life style. But the reality is it is a challenging task in Modern India’s development and to change it as a drug free land.

God created the man equally but the man divides themselves by various differences. The physical features of man and woman are different but the flesh and blood is same for both of them. But the world is too partial with woman and subordinates them both physically and mentally. This mental attitude also makes men to perform several kinds of brutalities against women in the merciless way. It is evident from the videos which Simran receives in her mobile. It is a package of videos, with a number of girls faced the brutal death from the hands of the male chauvinist. The brutal appearance of a dead girl in the video is explained by Simran as,

...blue eyes slightly open even in death. Her cheek had been cut and roughly stitched up. The cruel black thread ran like a barbed wire across her face. The soft blonde hair lay in contrast on her cheek. They had obviously sliced through her skin to take an imprint of her teeth for identification.... Especially if it was being treated as unidentified. (324)

In most cases, the present world is unsafe to woman in many ways. The privacy of girls is arrested by the use of hidden cameras. The art of filming with a mobile phone without their

notice threaten the life of women and even makes them to face serious complications. Liza's complete image gets spoiled by recording her rape in the form of video and sending it into the public notice. The undeniable fact is that rape on the beach was shot as video as a trending fashion of the present world. As per the view of Sudista Prasad Singh in her critical essay "Feminism in Manju Kapur's *A Married Woman*" presented her view as:

The national crime Bureau has recorded the increase in number of violent crimes against women in recent years. Despite the extraordinary proliferation of laws violence against woman including rape, sexual abuse, female foeticide and sexual exploitation still occurs on a staggering scale. Indeed, the past decade has witnessed a phenomenal increase in the number of major violent crimes against women. (132)

The shocking reality of Liza's disappearance is exposed by Vishnu. The video clips in his mobile pictures Liza's abuse and eventual death had laid buried under the debris of electronic gadgets in his shop. It is to be revealed when he came back from jail. He had filming Liza's rape and death, but he is not sure what to do with the eventual material.

The drug transport is completely offensive and it is a criminal act in our country. But for the sake of money and wealth, the Fernando's gang packed the cocaine and heroin in the dead body of Liza. In the words of the novelist,

Most of her organs were removed for the so-called post mortem, in any case, and in their place, plastic bags of cocaine and heroin were packed, When her corpse reached London the apparently devastated fiancé, along with some other members of Fernando's gang, ensured that the packets were quickly removed. After that, Vira Jennigs alias Liza kay was buried somewhere, very quietly. (338)

It is not the single person's involvement in Liza's murder. There is a circle of culprits working for their own benefit by exploiting the species of women like Liza, Scarlet kneeling, Vicky etc.

Money also makes the cruel man not only to kill the innocent boys and girls but they continue to exploit them even after their death. This is one of the worst forms of bigotry violence against mankind. The post mortem would be conducted by the corrupted physicians and separate the drug from the dead bodies. This illicit way of transporting the drugs could be conducted without the knowledge of others. It sounded like the dead made perfect drug mules. The culprits got escaped, when there is no demand for a post-mortem examination whether in Europe or Russia or Israel or wherever the bodies were sent. The International drug smugglers who operate from Goa have perfected each aspect of sending their corpses back, right down to the death certificate.

The dead bodies of the girls were sent with a reason as "accidental deaths" (341) and which are rarely discussed. They had passed of Liza's body as "unidentified female" (34) and it is completely incorrect. She is having her sister and father in Goa. Everyone is very familiar with her at Fernando's Restaurant. But they didn't get a single witness to identify her. It was not an accidental death but a planned murder for developing the drug smuggling business. The culprits have received millions by this process. But the poor Liza, who aspired for the good life, got nothing out of it and lost her life in this world.

The post modern world lost its mercy and love for human beings. By working with machines, their minds also turns into machines and their life is completely focused on the luxurious life with artificial things rather than humans. This mindset even makes man to perform any crucial act towards another man even by eroding their life.

From the novel *The Sea of Innocence*, Desai pictures the fiendish activities done by post modern man with the use of technologies against women by converting her as a victim for the transportation of drugs. In this present scenario, it is the utmost duty of the woman to grapple her in this beastly war to survive in this world as a human being.

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