

Research Article

**Bridging The Gap Between East And West: Patriarchal Ascendancy On The
South Asian Women Presented In Anita Desai' Diamond Dust**

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to explore female's voices in Anita Desai's collection of stories, *Diamond Dust*. The plot of the various stories moves from rustic places in India to cosmopolitan cities of the West. It depicts the status of females in both rustic India and cosmopolitan life in western societies. The plight of women in eastern societies is dominated by male chauvinism where women are submissive. The present research deals with the variations in women living in the oriental life and occidental life representing Indian as well as western norms especially in America and Canada. The research concentrates on the status of females in Indian culture and western culture focusing on how they are treated differently although the common biological characteristics are almost the same. To find variation in the treatment of women 'feminism' is used as a tool in the research. It is clear that females have been secondary citizens in the West, and continue to be so even today. Similarly, in Oriental culture, the condition of females is not different from that of the Occidental. This research is qualitative in nature. Theories presented by Kate Millet, Elaine Showalter, and Simone de Beauvoir help to find the answers of the research questions for this research.

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INTRODUCTION

The emergence of third world feminism is a product of women consciousness comparing their responsibilities and status in the consecutive society they are living. Feminism meditates over the position of women in society equalizing them with males living in the same society. Over the last few decades, debates on women and their engagement in politics, administration, development, bureaucracy, management, and many other social affairs have been in a rapid rise to mainstream them along with their male counterparts for integrated and equal access. Feminism meditates over the position of women in society equalizing them with males living in the same society. There is a large body of work on women moreover there is a larger portion of the workload on women in developing nations like India, Nepal. However, this does not necessarily engage feminist issues. A substantial amount of scholarship has accumulated on women in liberation movements or the role and status of women in individual cultures. Most of the feminist scholars rewrite the traditional literary history to include the female writers who were merely relegated from the literary canon despite their great contribution. Feminist criticism examines how women are either underestimated or overestimated without tending them on the level of surface. For example, when a husband becomes happy he overestimates his wife by calling her an angel but when he is dissatisfied he calls her a demon or a witch. But he never treats his wife as a human being. Such tendency of overestimation and underestimation is vehemently criticized by feminist scholars. Similarly, the third world feminist scholars oppose the traditional patriarchal rules which view male as strong, decisive, and protective whereas feminist activists in the developed societies (third and second world) seek for This is largely due to the natural role being provided to the female (domestic works), which male refrain from doing. As such, the hegemony is set up that females are weak inferior, submissive, and fit for nurturing children and household affairs.

Feminism is a terminology that denotes the struggle and movement of females to establish them as an equal part with males in society through literature, arts, music, politics, and many more disciplines. However, some critics oppose this monotonous perspective and claim that all females that are deprived of the right to equality and are subject to subjugation should also be categorized in the table. In this context, Anita Desai's *Diamond Dust* is an anthology of the sufferings of women who have lived in the geography of the world. Feminist literary concepts and determination, in an organized bump on the Western hegemony of supremacy. It focuses on the issues and ideas of third-world women and their woes. However, this tradition is also not free from western influence, as the concept of equality and self-respect for the female has its root in Western thought. One of the interesting facts about feminism is the concept feminist movement and voice also do not necessarily engage questions on feminist concerns. They are more concerned with some of the sophisticated issues of elite class people, of course, female, but do not address

the real issue of the target group females. They construct such histories often requires reading the grain of several intersecting progressive discourses. In regards, Chandra Mohanty Telpade comments:

“It is difficult to generalize about ‘feminisms,’ but an analytical and political category . . . to explore the links between the histories and struggles of Third World feminism women against racism, sexism, colonialism, imperialism, and monopoly capital. It is an imagined community of opposite structure, imagined not because it is real but because it struggles potential alliances and collaborations across divisive boundaries and communities.” (Mohanty 1991, p.46)

The world of the females is as if like the idea of ‘imagined community’ that is useful because it leads us away from essential notions of Third World feminist struggles. It helps in suggesting political rather than biological or cultural bases for the alliance. It is not color or sex that constructs the ground for these struggles. Rather, it is the way we think about race, color, and gender, the political links we choose to make among the Eastern periphery. It is the in-betweens of the struggle of the third world women to counter the Western women for their rights and equality. Feminist criticism examines how literature and other cultural productions reinforce or undermine the economic, political, social, and physiological oppression of women. Feminist criticism concerns whether a cultural artifact rejects the traditional depiction of women it is hegemonies by the ideology of patriarchy. For example, most feminists praise Krishna Dharabasi for presenting Radha as a bold strong, and courageous woman instead of the submissive Radha in Hindu mythology in his novel *Radha*. In the same way, feminist critics become wary of those film directors who present women as a scapegoat and the revenge trope in the fight between males and females. In most Nepalese films a male villain abducts the lover of the hero. Such tendency to treat a woman as the revenge trope and making male the camera eye (point of view) is severely criticized by feminist criticism. Similarly, feminist scholars express their profound dissatisfaction with the tendency of medical laboratories where drugs prescribed for both sexes often have been tested on male subjects only without caring about the side effects on women as a result of which women may experience unexpected side effects. This is the outcome of the male mentality, which guides them to think that whatever is correct to the male is adjacent to the female. Eastern feminism stands in opposition to the sexist discrimination or the biological essentialism of females, to which they are subdued and discriminated.

Biological essentialism holds the view that ‘sex is for all’ or the human being having a male sexual organ is naturally powerful and a human being with the female sexual organ is inherently weak. Feminist criticism undercuts according to Bell Hooks, “cuts: such monolithic ideas” (Hooks 1989, p.42). She thinks that sex is a biological necessity, which; however, is the essence of domination of the women by the male. “Sex is a biological feature, but gender is a social construction, part of a culture that distinguishes between masculine and feminine to establish the superiority of male in the society” (Hooks 1989, p.41). As such, in the Eastern part of the world, the feminist is taken for granted, and often used and treated as an object mere for sexual and reproduction use, to which Hooks rightly comments, "Sex is biological but gender is a social construction" (Hooks 1989, p.41). A feminist scholar sees the history of human civilization as the history of female subordination. Feminist criticism rejects the nations of patriarchal social structure which equates pen with a penis. In other words, the bulk of feminist criticism is a reaction against the male ideology whose discursive practices have established a false nation that a male can only write, not a female.

The term 'feminism' is a matter of conflict among feminist critics. The feminist movement has been challenged on the ground of cultural imperialism and of shortsightedness in defining the meaning of gender in terms of middle-class, white experience, internal racism, classicism, and homophobia. All of these factors

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as well as the falsely homogenous representations of the movement by the media have led to a very real suspicion of 'feminism' as a productive ground for struggle. But, Leela Gandhi opines:

“Nevertheless, Third World women have always engaged with feminism, even if the label has been rejected in several instances. In the introduction to a collection of writings by black and Third World women in Britain, the editors are careful to focus on the contradictions, conflicts, and differences among black women, while emphasizing that the starting point for all contributions has been 'the historical link between us of colonialism and imperialism.” (Gandhi 2005, p.50)

The *Diamond Dust* helps to expose the situation of females in India and around the world through the depiction of the mentality of characters of the East and West. Allison Lurie writes “Desai is wonderful in depicting the culture of east and west and this is how, in his words, . . . will unite the people of the world” (Lurie 2002, p.27). He has further praise for Desai and her “*Diamond Dust, a Tragedy*” and writes:

“Anita Desai is one the most brilliant and subtle writers ever to have described the meeting of eastern and western culture. Her new collection of stories is both serious and wonderfully entertaining, but at the same time exposes the deeper level of sentiments of the people of different nations and societies.” (Lurie 2002, p.26)

There are other critics of Anita Desai, who have raised contemporary issues on the anthology, like alienation and orientalism. Novy Kapadia claims, "The novel has raised an important issue of oriental study" (Kapadia 1989, p.32). Similarly, Tabish Khair, another important critic on contemporary Indian writing explains, the novel as, "This is the novel, which recognizes Desai as an important writer on Oriental issues" (Khair 1995, p.54).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- To highlight the main characteristics of patriarchy in the South Asian region.
- To present the social scenario and the status of South Asian Women.
- To analyze the subjects of feminism and culture.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How has Anita Desai presented the societal and cultural gaps between East and West in her novel *Diamond Dust*?
2. How has Anita Desai addressed the issues of patriarchy and feminism in the selected text?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative in nature. Theories presented by Kate Millet, Elaine Showalter, and Simone de Beauvoir help to find the answers to the research questions for this research. The gap of suspicion and disbelief has been there for ages and continues to be so, even today. Nevertheless, writers including Chandra Mohanty Talpade and Mahasweta Devi have helped on exposing this sexist male mentality to the forefront. Furthermore, through the depiction of Eastern women, as they are, writers like Anita Desai have served as an eye-opener to the people of East and West. Desai's characters bury forbidden wishes coming in conflict with the standard values that have been set to them by society. Such centered wishes disguise their real

motives and objects from the conscious mind. These characters live in a world that consists of forbidden wishes and desires, which they cherish in their soul. The chief mechanisms that affect these disguise of unconscious wishes are displacement, condensation, and symbolism which are the prominent features of feminism.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Diamond Dust narrates the events of women from rural Indian parts to the metropolis of the West. In the process, the anthology depicts how life and living are different from the east part of the world to the west. However, the basic feelings when it comes to feminist values and norms it is surprisingly the same. Desai through her masterly writing skills shows that the females of either part of the continents share common humane feelings and sentiments. It is, after all, the globe is guided by patriarchy hegemony. The theme of subjugation of females prevails even in the so-called developed nations, to the almost same degree, however, the tactics differ. In this aspect, the West, or precisely the developed nations in the Western part of the globe have since long claimed their supremacy over the Eastern, or undeveloped and underdeveloping eastern and central nations of the world. The base of their claim, though dubious, largely rests on the fact that they play a leading role in the present world politics and occupy a definite place in determining the development activities carried out in the present global scenario. In the scenario, Anita Desai's *Diamond Dust* is one of the texts that breaks through the hegemony of the so-called superior western nations and maintains a cultural bridge to the less developed nations of the East. *Diamond Dust* is a collection of nine short stories having its background, basically in the Indian topography and the characters in the stories are more Indians and fewer Europeans and Americans. However, the typical eastern characters can make their presence felt in the Western world, and many of them are even more than that, as they influence the Western people and their mentality. "Winterscape" one of the first stories of the compilation glorifies the Eastern myth rearing children and the affection associated with them. In every part of the world, children are born and mothers give them special attention. However, in India, there is a strange trend about it. It is not only the birth-giving woman, who is the mother but all the senior females in the family, who provide the child with motherly love and affection. Rakesh is an Indian origin youth married and settled with Beth, a Canadian lady in Canada. He was reared by his widow mother, whom he called "ma" (*DD* 25), and by his aunt, whom he calls "Masi" (*DD* 25).

In the East, women celebrate the birth of a child with a lot of gusto, charm, and merrymaking. Each of the relatives of the couple is invited, and the child is provided with offerings by all the attendants, followed by, in most cases giving some monetary gift. It is, however, related to various local cultures, and may differ in style of celebration and gist of the ceremony. But, the essence that the child will be blessed by the senior members of the family continues, even today. This is one of the features in which the oriental female find their identity attach. The rich side of eastern culture, which Rakesh wants to continue back in Canada, but, of course, not understood and supported by his Canadian wife, Beth invites tussle among the in-laws from India and wife Canada reared wife. Berth finds all these meaningless, as:

"Two tickets, for whom?" because she knew, Rakesh did not have a father, that his mother was a widow. 'For my mother and my aunt,' he said, in a low almost sullen voice, sitting on the edge of the bed in his pyjamas and twisting his fingers, together. [. . .]. 'Your aunt?' Beth heard her own voice escalate. 'Why do we have topay for your aunt to visit us? Why does she

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have to visit us when the baby is born? I can't have so many guests in the house, Rakesh!" (DD 27)

Beth does not understand the Eastern culture. However, some of her expressions are anti-eastern values, like when she says, why do we have to pay for your aunt, it is the expression of a western woman, who is unaware of the rich eastern culture. It is largely because of the varying cultures of the two nations and continents. It is also the story of a happily settled family in Canada, until the day when Rakesh decides to invite his mother and aunt to accompany him in Canada and assist in rearing up his newly born child. Thus, there are three women in his life, the mother, aunt, and his wife, and it is here we can feel the blend of Eastern flavor with that of the West. The concept of Eastern's point of view of women's perspective is visible, here. Beth, the Canadian has lived an independent life, and when the in-laws come to her house, she is miffed on them. Not having known interference of blood ties in the family, she finds it disgusting, as:

"She felt tense at the thought of not just one, but two strangers, foreigners, part of Rakesh's past, invading their house. She had already wished she had not allowed Rakesh to send for his mother to attend the birth of their child. It had seemed an outlandish, archaic idea even when it was first suggested; now it was positively bizarre. 'Why both of them? We only asked your mother,' she insisted." (DD 26)

This obvious difference in cultural perspective is one of the differences that consists of the differences among the females of the East and the West. Beth does not want two strangers, who are Rakesh's mother and aunt, and with whom she is required to share her house along with many more things. This is the Western world where things are seen as they are but, not the other aspect.

Beth is worried about the aspect that she would have to invite two women in her house for a considerably long period. However, initially, though she was not willing to accept, even one of them, at the end of the story, there is a twist in her attitude. The culture of providing the child with special treatment by senior family members is very oriental, to which Beth is not known. In almost all cultures of the world, the birth of a child is celebrated with pomp and show; however, the East has its way. The concept of treating children especially is very popular in the Eastern part of the world. Here, the entire family gathers and provides the newly born child with their blessings and offerings, with mental and physical care to the baby child. This increases familial ties and increases internal bonds and affection among the members of the family.

In this context, Rakesh, after the death of his father, was reared by his mother, and his aunt, who was his mother's sister. In the West, it might sound a little weird; however, in the Eastern part of the world, it is accepted. And, when Rakesh has his child, he invites his mother and Aunt to Canada to assist in nourishing the newly born baby boy. However, Beth is not habituated with such scenarios and culture does not find it very welcoming. She is against the idea that two of the never seen and heard women are coming to stay with them, that too, in the pretext of caring for her newly born child. For her, they both are "Two guests, two foreigners – at such a time" (DD 27). This is the gap that separates the East and the West.

Rakesh had two mothers; one who gave birth and the other, who reared him. When his real father died, his mother took him to his sister's house, and there he was reared. When this fact is disclosed to Beth, she could not digest the fact. For her, a sister could not give her blood-son to her big sister. Beth says, "Nothing, no one could make me do that. Give my baby away?" (DD 35). She is a typical western culture woman who dreams and works for herself, and not for others, unlike eastern that believed in sacrifice to look into the feelings and sentiment of their family, and it becomes their epitome of work throughout their life. This

being one of the basic features of feminism practiced in the Western world is yet to materialize in the Eastern part of the world. However, when we analyze the character of Moyna in "The Rooftop Dwellers," we can find that the trend of self-independence in the rise of this part of the world, as well.

Coming back to "Winterscape," Rakesh knows more truths about his mothers. However, he could not tell her all, as Beth could not understand it to the core. Even though he tries to persuade Beth by explaining the cultural and ethical aspects of the East, as:

"It was not like that. They understood each other. Ma looked after me she cooked for me and fed me, made me sit down on a mat and sat in front of me, and fed me with her own hands. And what a cook she is! . . . And Masi . . . she took me by the hand to school. In the evening, she lit the lamp and made me show her my books. She helped me with my lessons and I think learned with me." (*DD* 35)

As such, their feminism is sans border and boundaries, as it is about pain and sufferings which males impose on them, in all parts of the world. Feminism started as a general revolt against such domination and also to show the equal but opposite force, which can create meaning in literature. The germination of female authorial voice had in 17th century's female critic Mary Wollstonecraft. In her essay "A Vindication of the Rights of Women" written in 1792, a notable work in the field of great feminist writers, Wollstonecraft opines:

"There are many follies, in some degree, peculiar to women: sins against the reason of commission: as well as of omission: but all flowing from ignorance or prejudice, I shall only point out such as appear to be particularly injurious to their moral character and inadvertent on them, I wish especially to prove that the weakness of mind and body which men have endeavored, impelled by various motives, to perpetuate, prevents their discharging the peculiar duty of their sex: for when the weakness of body will not permit them to suckle their children, and weakness of mind makes them spoil their tempers are women in a natural state." (Wollstonecraft 1973, p.396)

She advocates that it is essential for women to acquire rights and she thinks that men are responsible for women's deprivation and obligation. Women's repressed condition was the result of a lack of sufficient training and a neglected education. For her, women should be allowed freely to exercise and use their knowledge and abilities to govern their conduct. Mary Wollstonecraft challenges the idea that women exist only to please men and proposed that women can receive the same opportunities as men in education, work, and politics.

Elaine Showalter is a feminist critic and Kate Millet, Carolyn Helburn and Judith Fellerly are some who followed Showalter. D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, and Norman Mailer, also followed her ideological model. Kate Millet in her book *Sexual Politics* expresses the idea about sexual differences which displays power relation and mechanism that expresses and enforces the relation of power in society. M. H. Abrams quotes Miller in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, as:

"Miller analyzes western social arrangement and institutions as covert ways of manipulating power to establish and perpetuate the dominance of men and the subordination of women. In her books, she attacks the male

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bias in Freud's psychoanalytic and also analyzes selected passages by D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, Norman Mailer as revealing how the authors in their fictional fantasies aggrandize their aggressive phallic selves and degrade women as submissive sexual objects." (Abrams 2000, p.88)

In these lines Millet's expression of sexual politics is clear. For Millet, feminism is a political theory, a cultural and spiritual product where gender discrimination is wiped out and women are allowed to take a free breath as men do in society. She opposed the hierarchy and studied institutional differences. Hence her *Sexual Politics* opens a space for feminist reading at a critical level.

The varieties of stories in the novel are an amusing mixture of a various diversity of social subject matter. Sylvia Brownrigg in The New York Times claims the amusing collection of the stories, as:

"The diamond is a pure gem, stretching from buried resentments (in "The Artist's Life") to the havoc caused by a dear dog, Diamond (in "*Diamond Dust: a Tragedy*") and to a businessman away from home sees his death (in The Man who saw Himself Drown"). Thus stories cover a wide variety of twists and turn in its pattern and in its way of presentation." (Brownrigg 2006, p.18)

The curious mixture of happenings in the compilation ranges from life in Indian soil, to slowly being influenced by the Western norms and ideas. This is the depiction of an amazing combination of Indian society. The Indian society is a vast mixture of people from all-most-all religions, ethnicities, classes, and statuses. All these have added to make up an amusing Indian society. Some of the best-depicted stories are "*Diamond Dust: a Tragedy*," "Winterscape," and "The Rooftop Dwellers." In the first, a man's devotion to his notoriously cantankerous dog leads him to act precipitously with fatal consequences. The variant levels of the depiction of incidents vary from stories like "Winterscape" on the relationship of the aunt and mother of an Indian married to a Canadian, who visit the couple and their newborn son and, as the unfamiliar snowfalls, understand the great cultural differences that separate them. "The Rooftop Dwellers," perhaps the tale most redolent of contemporary India, describes a young, impecunious woman who moves to New Delhi to work on a literary magazine and, renting a room on a family's rooftop, begins to enjoy the freedom such a life permits, despite a robbery and a bullying landlord. In other notable pieces, an unexpected visit from a former college friend underlines a couple's growing frailty and distance from their past "Royalty," a young Mexican studying in the US returns to the town where he grew up and finds it changed and energized, while his family remains querulously in the past "Tepoztlan Tomorrow," and a retired consultant running a hotel in Cornwall with his wife finds consolation after her death by closing the premises to guests and feeding the badgers that come out at night "Underground." All these, but, are the representation of eastern values reaching to the Western fronts, and vice-versa. This can be appropriately viewed in "Winterscape." Beth, the central figure in the story has shown disconcert to the Eastern culture. It is one of the aspects of cultural differences that prevail in today's global scenario. However, it is also a culture that lessens such differences and voices for a common global culture. Through the cultural exchange and programs, there can be a global world of harmony and peace. In this context, "Winterscape" reaches beyond the Eastern border and goes up to mingle itself in the Western. "Winterscape" is a story of a young Canadian woman, Beth, who does not understand the values and ethics of an eastern culture. She is reared up in the west and has a sister, to whom she owes no responsibility. However, when she becomes a mother, she encounters two mothers who have raised her Indian husband. As a new mother, Beth cannot understand the poignant story of these two widows who have come to visit from India – one her husband's natural mother and the other her beloved older sister to whom the mother gave the child to raise. The collection opens

with "Royalty," about a couple who delay their exodus to their summer home to welcome a much-in-demand guest, a young man with such charm as to overshadow his parasitic nature towards the wealthy. It is a western trend to go on a weekend or to take a long holiday. For the same, an eastern couple Ravi and Sarla, a middle-class typical Indian family have planned to go for an outing, to escape the summer heat. However, they are penetrated in their plan by the unexpected arrival of a guest, Raja, whom they revered as a family guru.

DISCUSSION

The title story, "*Diamond Dust: a Tragedy*," shortest in the collection, somewhat comical in the description of Mr. Das's overblown devotion to Diamond, his dog "of an indecipherable breed." Indeed, the dog becomes the most precious part of Mr. Das's life, despite Diamond's pariah status in the neighborhood the dog is not only dirty, mangy, and a repeat runaway, he's also exceptionally mean with a special hatred for the postman. In the end, tragedy is inevitable. Then there is "Tepoztlan Tomorrow," the story of Luis, who decides that he was going home, tomorrow. He was quitting everything he had in this developed part of the world, Mexico, and move to the rural backdrops of his dear Tepoztlan a not very large and friendly city. Dona Celia, Luis, the narrator's aunt depicts the city as:

"Do you think Tepoztlan is the place it once was? [. . .] We all know about lively. Men come to our street to drink. All afternoon you hear them drink and gamble there under the bamboos, and by evening you may see them lying stretched out in the road, dead and drunk so lively has it grown,' Don Celia said bitterly." (*DD 140*)

So, the city has changed and its denizens, but, whatever, Luis loves the town. Indeed, one cannot quit his/her hometown for all the worldly pleasures and comfort. Had, it been so, Luis would not have decided to quit Mexico City for Tepoztlan, a small town situated in the outskirts of Mexico. This is like the homecoming of a long-lost son, who finally cannot resist the isolation from his near and dear ones, and decides to come back to them, to the warmth of one's home. The scene of homecoming should be understood more internally, rather than externally. These are the moments of glory and pomp, when the East welcomes the West, and vice-versa. During such moments, people can forget wealth and power, as the homeliness of one's culture reminds them of their own. As such, the essence and norms of all cultures are very same; however, the ways they are presented are different. Amid cultural background, people find happiness and, thus the gap is lessened. As such, culture helps to soothe our woes and worries and takes us to a new height of universal fraternity.

These feminist versions were not only criticized and condemned but also at the same time they were disfigured and deformed. Society presented women writers from writing openly. She writes: "She must have shut herself up in a room in the country to write and been torn asunder by bitterness and scruples perhaps, though her husband was of the kindest and their married life perfection" (Woolf 1929, p.819). Due to the lack of a separate writing room, women writers had to do their writing in a common sitting room. In the mid-20th century writer and critic Simon de Beauvoir revolutionized the concept of viewing and adjudging females. In her book *The Second Sex*, she projects the idea of females and as the second sex. She projects male writers usually assume and represent females as a negative 'other' to men. They are supposed to be the dominant and defining subject were women as the dominant, passive object. In her most notable book *The Second Sex*, she argues:

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"The 'other' is particularly defined according to the particular manner in which the One chooses to set himself up. Every man asserts his freedom and transcendence but they do not all give these words the same sense. For Motherland, transcendence is a situation: he is the transcendence, he soars in the sky of heroes; women roaches on earth, beneath his feet; it amuses him to measure the distance that separates him from her; from time to time he raises her to him, takes her and throws her back; ever does he lower himself down to his realm of slimy shadows." (Beauvoir 1972, p.94)

As such, if a female is to rise to the status of male, she is to be thrown because the world is radically 'male.' Of course, they pretend to take her to their status but soon throw her to where she belongs to the household chores if she is to achieve something of substance.

FINDINGS

Diamond Dust depicts that the position of females in the Eastern part of the world is that of 'other.' They are treated as inferiors by the Western, and even their women. The concept of feminism is not a private affair of any part of the globe, but should be of all the marginalized and subjugated women. However, when it comes to issues of feminism, the Occident has limited it to the West. Today, women despite the division of boundary, race, and politics are lost in the chores of career, the male claim. In their view, the women of today are not women at all. In men's eye-and for the legion of women who see through men's eye-it is not enough to have a women's body not to assume the female function as mistress or mother to be a 'true woman.' In sexuality and maternity women is subject can claim autonomy but to the true women she must accept herself as the 'other.' Thus, Simon de Beauvoir and Virginia Woolf both are concerned with the being of women. Both found women sexually exploited, morally degenerated, and physically weakened. They found no space for women rather found women's identity in under-eraser. They saw women were viewed and judged in terms of the masculine value system. Women were always identified as a man. It is the man who defines her according to their needs and beneficiaries. She has no right to decide for herself. She is not free to choose wrong or right. She is trained to internalize the patriarchal truth as an absolute and transcendent reality or unalienable aspect of her life. She has given up criticizing, judging, and investigating for herself by surrendering to male superiority. In the context, there are several unforgettable stories in the collection *Diamond Dust*, "The Artist's Life," about a young girl who announces she wants to be an artist, "Underground," about a couple trying to find a room in a resort town, "Five Hours to Simla or Faisla," about a day-long traffic jam caused by an obstinate trucker, and "Tepoztlan Tomorrow," about a college student who returns to his relatives' hometown in his native Mexico. All these are third world nation's issues; let it be a traffic jam, or a man willing to return to his home. All these collections are assessing the women's problem of the present world that depicts the falling aspect of cultural ties, all over the world. Every story of the anthology contains happening based on lamentation and woes of the general people, from the East to the West and the vice-versa, which thereby depicts that the sentiments of the people across the globe are the same. There are few stories set on Indian soil, consisting of simple villager's anecdotes and stories. It thereby observes the Indian people and society very minutely in a realistic manner. In today's world, every person has his/her way of living and thinking in the conception of society is seen as complex and total of competing discourses that are produced frequently over time. The ideas which are drawn out of these compelling discourses are negotiated. To understand a nation as a transcendental or ideal one is the culture of European modernity. Modernity always creates 'we' and others. And this 'we' is one of the prime

reasons to dismantle the concept of east and west. Here, Desai tries to impart the idea against 'totalized' local and national culture, which creates binary opposition and envisages multicultural utopia where no binaries remain, thus a bridge is created to gap the differences.

To take for, "*Diamond Dust: a Tragedy*," Desai's characters seem out of place, foreign, and unfamiliar, even to their author. But they are linked with the universal codes of love, sentiments, and the sense of fraternity. The stories seem contrived, ending on a clumsy unexpected twist the secrets of the hotel owner who would not take any guests, the lodger who was living an artist's life far different from the one the young protagonist imagined, and the young man's disappointment at how his once-familiar Mexican town and its inhabitants have changed. As found in "Winterscape," where a Canadian lady comes in term with the eastern way of mothering and values associated with it. Beth cannot come to terms with the concept that her Indian husband was nourished by two mothers. These two mothers, one biological, and the second the biological mother's sister, were a burden imposed on her and her freedom; until she understands them and their motherly love. Similarly, in "*Diamond Dust: a Tragedy*" the story of a dog Diamond, might be amusing to typical eastern people, who might find the love of the dog, rather amusing in this part of the globe. At the same time, in the story of Moyna in "The Rooftop Dwellers," the boarding house resident can be termed as both western and eastern. It is so, as, toward the middle part of the story, Moyna develops a liking to the gossips of the females in the locality and befriends them during the festive. Similarly, Beth, a Canadian-born lady has disliked the eastern culture. She cannot digest the fact that her husband, an Indian, the fellow has been reared by two blood-sisters; one the biological mother and, second the teacher mother. However, when she is aware of the love of the two women to her husband, she is spellbound and ultimately develops a liking towards the eastern culture. Thus, Desai's *Diamond Dust* dismantles the hegemony of supremacy of the west and inferiority of the east by bridging the cultural gap among them. Desai most excels, as many writers do, in the stories that are perhaps closest to her experiences, at least in surroundings and environment. It is beyond doubt that her eastern rearing has to do with the manner of her presenting stories. She is eastern at the soul, and western by education and grooming. This is reflected in her character's way of living and mentality to which are habitual. A similar trend is reflected in almost all the stories, where she has depicted the rise of eastern culture to the height of the west, and a parallel culture is in the offing. Her female characters move from the dusty streets of India, as far as the farthest corner of the globe to Canada, and then again come back to their native land India. In this way, the concept of the East mingles with that of the West. It is as such, Desai shows the condition of females of either side of the globe to combine to depict similar feelings and mentality shared by women despite the barriers of distance, race, geography, and level of development. Her strongest stories are those that take place predominantly in Indian locations, people with Indian characters, but associated with western ways of living. There is no feminist issue like a national or local culture; all have, but fallen victim to male dominance, since time immemorial. It thereby creates a uniform and organized form of female dominance in the present world. It is thus, Desai shows the issues of the female of the different parts of the world in a subtle, yet touching manner.

The present research focused upon the plight of women due to the discrimination enacted culturally in a patriarchal society. It also highlights their dissentient self-women are capable of and also possess inner strength of protest the injustice and inequality imposed upon them. Females of one part of the world are being increasingly being affected by the happenings to that of the other parts of the world. Due to the impact of global culture females are coming to newer dimensions, however, their sufferings remain the same, in different parts of the world. The border is merely an illusion when it comes to the sufferings of the females. They are coming to know that what is called the West also has similar sufferings when it comes to females' woes, and of course, the Orient always has been so. In this context, the *Diamond Dust* brings the once

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unknown and hostile behavior and practices in regards to females present in different parts of the world into a forum to depict their common sufferings. In the concept of feminism, all types of borders are being crossed to link societies and communities never known or heard, before. This change is largely due to the technological and material development taking place in the world. To add to this, the growing attitude of people to know and explore the mystic of other cultures has added to this trend. This has certainly increased fraternal feelings and, lessened hostilities between the societies. Due to this, growing attitude of people to know around the world, they are fast becoming a part of a global community. *Diamond Dust* brings females of varying communities of the world into a common forum who is binding in each other's ideas and values. Desai portrays the voice of the global community through the colorful sides of human society and changes coming to them. She depicts some of the touching humane issues through the display of love, gesture, and sentiments to address the voice of the global community people. These touching issues are the voices of the people of the global community, who are in an attempt to reduce the global indifference that has bridged females for ages. Females in Desai's *Diamond Dust* are characterized by their gentleness and empathy of its characters towards the changing place around them. With its often poignant and amusing characters, struggling to achieve their dreams in a complicated and unsympathetic world; often crossing the traditional lines determined in the name of culture, Desai voice the coming of generation. This is the accent of the new generation, and its offspring, who do not want to remain within any sorts of dogmas, thereby bridging the gap between east and west.

CONCLUSION

Diamond Dust creates a global consciousness that creates a set of values and beliefs that shape up the way of living and thinking of females and, determines the course of a society. For ages, people all over the world have adapted to different cultures and trends; however, until now. The different cultures that have dominant different societies are coming together, and the cultural gaps are being fast falling declining to pave way for global culture. The recent days, also have seen cultures falling prey to the development and invention of various twenty-first-century gadgets. These gadgets are, one of the means to communicate various ethics and values, and thereby to dismantle the gap among the females of varying cultures residing in different geopolitical backgrounds. As such, today feminists are no more bounded by borders, but through a common sharing of troubles, they are being joined together. Thus, *Diamond Dust* is the narration of females who are divided by political borders but bounded by a similar thread of a common sense of surfacing of similar issues and concepts in regards to struggling against the patriarchy. As such, the zeal for equal treatment, voice to end all forms of imposition against females is similar in different parts of the world.

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