

## Image of Women in Bessie Head's 'The collector of Treasures'

Dr. INDU ARORA

Department Of English, BSM (PG) College, Roorkee, Uttarakhand  
Email - indua69@gmail.com

**Abstract:** Any literature on a slave country like South Africa must include, among other things, an irresistible reaction to the system which the aborigines' must feel difficult to relish. If the women writer of South Africa has to be analyzed in respect of their criticism, the fact must be borne in mind that very little is known about them other than their work on art and literature. It has been a dominant characteristic of South African writers, particularly non-white one, which they begin with a theme of alienation in exile and write more on their personal experience of imperial world than exhibiting the psycho-analytic traits of general human beings. Bessie Emery Head, in her collection of short stories and other works shares tales of panic, frustration, humiliation, which she underwent both as black and as a woman.

**Keywords:** Bessie Head, South African, Black Literature, The Collector of Treasures.

A real criticism of Bessie Head's literature is best presented by herself. She wrote, "I call myself a new African. It is an extremely painful title full of sudden and disastrous changes of fortune and a sort of a mental tight rope walk with an abyss, beneath. The abyss seems to be un-African and to belong to my soul. It is an almost violent urge to make gigantic moral abduction for the sake of mankind. What is African in the urge is the process of learning how to make these in the face of human weakness" (Ravenscraft 1976). She meant that literature among other things, is the outcome of the inner self in light of the aegis of the external entities of life, particularly tradition, costumes and the other conditions of physical life. Her idea can be affirmed from the fact that no individual is accepted in a perfect form, despite one's deeds of a superhuman order.

Bessie Head has undergone more than herself into life in South Africa, at least in her experience of her trip to Serowe. The experience, thus presented in *The Collector of Treasures*, in for more than all the tradition of the earth can tell. She has analyzed the state of black woman in respect of tradition, sensuality, race and religion on account of her experience of the down trodden lot within and without.

Bessie Head's stories in *The Collector of Treasures* present the fate of woman in the African continent much better than a demographic study of the place. ; *The Deep River*, in addition to the presentation of a literary theme, also describes the state of woman involved in every day act and routine of life. Bessie Head in her works presents not only an absurd tradition of impersonalization but also presents the tribal state of life in South Africa. In principle Bessie Head has worked on two mainlines. First, the symbolic significance of the title *The Collector of Treasures* is that it represents the traditional tribal unity of a family in South African society. She shows that a new clan or a new tribe originates not out of natural heredity rights, but out of most haphazard happenings. The disintegration of a tribal clan takes place, like the bees, purely in a military system. A chief breaks away from the original clan and establishes a new tribe with his followers. In the story *The Deep River*, Momemapee is the chief of a tribal clan after whom the tribe is named alike. Momemapee has three wives and of these he has five sons. Sebenibele is the eldest son and the other four are Ntema, Mosemme, Kgagodi and Makobi. The youngest of the wives is Rankwana. In the due course of happenings, Sebembele falls in love with the youngest of wives of Momemapee, Rankwana very secretly and claims that Makohi is his son. Both the tribals and the counsellors ask him to leave Rankwana and have another wife if he wanted. But Sebembele does not succumb to the constraints levied by the villagers and prefers Rankwana in place of chiefship of the tribe. The counselors raise the problem that in case he remained as the chief of the tribe, the youngest son Malcobi would become senior to all others. It would hamper the unity as well as the tradition of the tribe. He is given a choice but he leaves the tribe with Rankwana and his followers. He goes southward and establishes his tribe afterwards as 'Talote. Sebembele has cleared in mind that his family and tribe had lived in perfect unity and he would never disintegrate them just because of himself. The theme of the story is to maintain the deep river, a sacrifice for the sake of the tribe, no matter it brings

him a hazardous fate ahead. The chief is meant for the welfare of the tribe and that he keeps with his sacrifice. One whole tribe should not suffer because of his personal benefits.

Second, Bessie Head has much to say about the traditions and meaning of love, marriage and sexuality. Africa is the continent where woman is treated as a means of entertainment, sufficing to the needs of the male. It is a traditional view that they are underdeveloped; they live under servility for the white, and the other, for the males. They are far below animals and can be a matter of a deed like cattle. Sex, love and marriage are insignificant, so far as woman is concerned. Sexuality is a free episode and does not make much difference than the real human needs. It is perhaps Sebembele who feels that sex after love is a natural thing. Nobody would mind the sex repressions other than Sebembele that he should stand to it as a responsibility. He has, for first time shown in African world of literature that love to woman prevails in its fuller meaning. He sacrifices the tribe and the chiefship for his real love of Rankwana. His departure for starting a new life also begins with the concept of the deep river of love in a South African society. Nowhere before him is heard if woman has been considered above sex, a tool of service. Bessie Head is one of the protest writers and very much persuades "the charge of sexual inequality" (Brown 1981) with a blunt and "direct insight into the African women's perception of herself and her society." (Brown 1981) She believes that woman should not be a just tool for making man sexually happy and procreating children for him. Sebembele establishes that man's fate originates in sex, but his success lays in elevating it to the level of divine love. Of course, he is denied chiefship in his tribe, but he transcends Rankwana and himself in a spiritualized state, however the controversies of his union with her remain indispensable. In spite of the several other sufferings, the deep river goes on flowing. All that is significant in *The Deep River* is Bessie Head's vehemence and vengeance for the treatment of woman, especially in the South African world. She has grudge against the tradition and the ideology of the South African society which make woman inferior. The women are used as a treat to the chief and his people for entertainment and service. They shall be present in the harvest dainties and worship of the tribal God. In spite of their household duties and care of the household, they have the curse of polygamy. They can give a lot, but the returns are limited. Most abnoxious is the fact that many more women shall make one man's household, like cattle and herd. Whether its sex, or it is the household, they have the share what can be spared of. Bessie Head "reflects a certain distaste for the traditional sexual roles" (Brown 1981) of woman, particularly for a sardonic account of polygamy and male arrogance. Rankwana is a woman in revolt who shall give a jerk to the tradition of woman being a sexual captive. She urges to her mature need and finds the young son of her own husband as her sexual partner. She breaks away from the traditional rule of being a subject of male chauvinism. She stands to her natural need which neither can be denied, nor can be controlled with simple covers of the traditional laws. The author, in protest of Rankwana, portrays a better idea than the tradition that a natural rights, after all, cannot be submitted at the throws of servitude. It is true that sex is almost free in South African society, either by force or by need, but the tradition, enslaving the fuller rights of woman cannot pay off for betterment. The South African tradition, suppressing woman in her rights, has better been bought out in the social riddle reflected in the after effect of the sexual relations of Sebembele and Rankwana, with their son Makobi. I-lead has a definite view to conceptualize that the moral order can be salvaged by reforming a tradition in favour of woman, lest the deep -river of revolt and love shall break it automatically. Woman has been a subject matter of almost all of her stories. The closing line of the story *The Deep River*, "woman have always caused a lot of trouble in the world" (Head 1977), by one of the members of the 'Talote' tribals, throw light on the place of woman in South Africa. She is deemed to be a second citizen and inferior by birth. In *The Heaven is not closed*, Bessie-Head has presented one more equation reflecting woman in a comparatively different situation. The South African traditions are male oriented and, naturally, in a "colonial society she suffers the double disadvantage of being African and female" (Brown 1981) The main theme of the story brings forward the sacrifice and the goodness of woman, irrespective of the treatment she has received both under the foreign rule and the hands of his own people. Galethebege is a missionary child, brought up in a similar atmosphere. She is a christian by faith and worships under church rules. Raloke, the person from Setswana custom, expresses his will to marry Galethebege after his first wife has passed away. She approaches the missionary people for permission, but is denied on grounds of rigorous constituents of christian faith. She is told that she cannot marry on any of the customs which is not christian in faith. She marries Raloke without affronting her faith and keeps on following christian faith all her life. Raloke dies away but Galethebege prays for him so that the problem of redemption and peace to the soul do not engross him in fruitless wanderings. Bessie Head has presented woman in the story as a savior who shall suffer all adversities of life but make the life of man easy beyond death. She is another incarnation, helping man not only in the physical but as well in the spiritual world. Galethebege makes it sure that sacrifice for the sake of the being, is her first religion since faith is the question of sincerity and loyalty, and not abstruse notions of fanaticism. She has kept the tribal traditions alive in her sincerity and in being a means to the man. But the spirit of revolt is kept alive by being a mouthpiece of Bessie Head in substantiating the worth of woman in South Africa. Bessie Head has mainly made two experiments in her concepts by presenting Galethebege as a religionist, being altogether a protest creature. Galethebege establishes that religion is not one confined to a certain system; it is unaffected with man's interaction with different communities,

people and races. Faith is one's spirit of submitting oneself to the God and the Divine. Divinity, like-wise, is never subjective to food, customs, traditions and God. Any individual can be religious in his service to the Almighty in every respect. Gelethebege could never "forsake custom in which she has been brought up. All through her married life she would find a corner in which to pray". (Head 1992) It's true that Gelethebege lives a consistent life on Christianity, but it always come in the form of devotion. She would never be a fanatic but a disciplined being, one who never changes her track.

The story is a tremendous approach on Bessie Head's idea of religion and spiritualism. The black people of Setswana tradition live a life of love and sex enslaved by the tradition of the tribe. Bessie Head believes that what they need is direction. They are mighty, powerful, talented affectionate and hard working. They live and die with simple notions of love, race and sex. They don't have a will to elevate themselves beyond the limits of physical life. At times, their worth and capability is insufficient to bring them happiness because of the lack of discipline of the order of a faith in their everyday life. Beyond the five senses, they have never shown a liking for the sixth. It makes their life sentimental, emotional and humane but dull. Bessie Head has presented Gelethebege as a Jesus Christ who shall alone inspire the community for a spiritual regeneration. Gelethebege works and prays together and she takes care of her prayers as much as does she care for her family. This is in order to show that family must have a faith. Any religion is to make mankind and not spoil it. The priest does not permit her to be married in the church and naturally, she prefers the Setswana custom as solemnizing factor to her marriage. Bessie Head, in the action, has brought to light the forcible effort of the missionaries in following their faith as per church conditions. Gelethebege and the denial of her marriage in the church makes it clear that the missionaries, despite their good works, keep the malaise of brooding their faith, if not by conviction, then by force. The case of missionaries has been questioned by Bessie Head in respect of religion. Gelethebege excutes successfully the idea that prayer needs no church, even if the church God is the faith of the follower. The last part of the story brings more causes of the heaven being opened for the truest follower of God. Bessie Head's God is the dweller of the conscience, one who does not need any person around itself but a clear devotion. The idea is that faith involves one's acceptance of conscience and doors of heaven shall never be closed for a person with clear conscience. Gelethebege believes that heaven is the state of bliss, attainable with a clean conscience, no matter the way is different. She prays for Roleke believing him to be innocent and unaware of His presence. The closing lines of the story manifest that love and dedication make the way after death peaceful. Gelethebege at least shows that peace of mind, with submission to the great cause of the Almighty, brings all satisfaction, Irrespective of the fact whether life - the fact that happiness avows our dedication together to the good being.

*The Village Saint* is another kind of story, having exemplified the case of woman in one more aspect of injustice and chauvinism. Bessie Head has appended to woman, her sense of sacrifices and returns in terms of dejections and frustrations. In her experience of the lot of woman, Bessie Head writes in Serowe,

"Polygamy was for nation building. That... was that it assured every woman in its society of a husband and that she was performing her reproductive functions under fairly secure circumstances. A disadvantage was that polygamous households, particularly those of royalty, were a breeding-ground for terrible jealousy and strife. (Head 1981) Further, Nowhere is this more evident than the breakdown of family life in sorrows. This breakdown effects the men and women of the age groups from forty to fifty and all the young people who follow after them, so much so that most mothers are unmarried mothers with children who will never know who their real father is." (Head 1981)

It implies that woman is misutilized in South African society because of her sense of insecurity. As the lines exemplify, the disintegration of a family in South Africa is due to polygamy and in there born is rivalry among its members. Mma-Mompoti and Rra -Mompoti live in the village with their son Mompoti. Rra-Mompoti is the leading man of village since his affluence and Influence work among the people. Mma-Mompoti is always happy and serves the needy people in the village in every respect. She is present in every funeral, marriage and child-birth. The sick is her first option. The blows of destiny hovers upon her and Rra-Mompoti gets another woman as his wife:. The entire shape of the family is changed and both the psychological and the cordial implications afflict Mma-Mompoti and Mompoti. The son, Mompoti, takes it more seriously and goes almost lunatic. He serves as a manager in the village-shop and keeps himself covered with woolen blankets, jeresys, and coat. He is repressed with the actions of his father and believes that his father had weaknesses in blood. He was disloyal, a cheat and fallible. It, he believes, is a breach of trust. An untrustworthy man can never be father like, but Mompoti approves that his own blood perhaps was poor. He is married to Mary and continues giving his income to his mother. The latter given some money to Mompoti and keeps lions share for herself. But, very soon the tables are turned and Mma-Mompoti does not give any money to Mompoti later on. Mompoti wife, Mary presents and instigates him not to give any money to the woman in future. The broil develops into a cold war and the affectionate son is disintegrated from his mother. He accepts that the brains behind his disintegration are that of Mary. He acknowledges that he shall act but on her conditions.

Bessie Head has planned the story very well in order to substantiate her concepts of South African woman and her berated virtue. In the first instance, she has to say that polygamy breaks away any premises of the male and makes woman feel that she cannot be the recipient of male love so long the existing African traditions work. A simple act of her husband's retreat blows off her ambitions. She is dejected and feels that if Rra-Mompoti has been snatched away from her, it is her son who shall suffice his father's place. Things go fine, but very soon all changes with the entry of Mary into the family. All like her husband, the son is snatched away by another force, born of his matrimonial situations, Mma -Mompoti reflects that she has once again been dejected as if her lot is to suffer for all the love and service she has extended to the man. Bessie Head cogently perfects her plan of presenting woman an entity to be suppressed for all that good she can do all her life.

The story consists of a psycho-analytic study of human traits in a society where traditions make them obsessed with insomnious rules of polygamy and free sex. Mma-Mompoti and Mompoti are as well to be studied trait-wise. The woman is not disloyal, but it is true that loyalty has not been worked upon her. The similar is the case with Mompoti. The sex free state makes him to suspect his own vitality so that he loses severely confidence of his manhood.

Bessie Head exhibits through the incidents of the story that virtue is not one succumbing to situation, it grows even when the situation has been tense and adverse. The case of virtue, particularly relating women in the South African society is unexpected. Mma-Mompoti is a saint and helps the sick and the needy. She is considered virtuous because she can sacrifice herself for the sake of the poor. But, the virtue degenerates the moment she has been dejected first by her husband and later by her son. It is implied that she does not hold virtue of sainthood so long she denies her daughter-in-law to take water from the tap of her yard. Virtue is degenerated into a family prejudice and a clasp for ego.

Bessie Head, in her chapter, 'Roman Catholic' in *Serowe* wrote, "My grandmother was one who believed in God all her life and church was a big thing." (Head 1981) If it related many of his characters in the village of Rain wind, it also implied many of her concepts on God, religions and man. *Jacob: The story of a Faith-Healing priest*, presents her views on the same through the main action of the story. Bessie Head presents a problem of a prophet who does not know any definite rules of the church and religion, but avows a better faith all his life. The author shows that the world and the man in it are differently controlled by the Almighty and it is immaterial as which way does he come to the being. Faith is not the law book of religion and, at times, the directory of the dos and don't dos. Religion is for making the God and His ways apparent and not that the religion is to be made at the cost of man's realization of Almighty. This is to say that the real faith is to feel and understand the presence of the Almighty and dedicate ourselves to His cause. If true faith has to be embraced upon, it is to accept all his manifestations. Faith never succumbs to the confinements of the given laws of religion. God is always above religion. The theme of the story depicts a similar concern. Jacob is a prophet like Lebojang in the village of Makaleng. Jacob is God fearing and lives a dignified life with his family. Lebojang is jealous of him and tries to poison him so that he survives as the sole ruler of the village. Jacob is made aware by his inner-self which releases in the form of a voice, extending him strength in his view of his faith in Almighty. Jacob does leave everything to the Almighty and accepts all that he gets in form of God's manifestations. Bessie Head has drawn a parallel of faith to morality. She is decidedly of the opinion that moral laws are men-made and so transitory. One's acceptance of the Almighty and faith in His givings is permanent. A similar notion is perceived in the visit of Johannah to the village of Makaleng. The episode runs in flash-back as the grown up children of Johannah come before him, he revives his own days and feel sympathy for himself memorizing as how he had been neglected by his uncle for being a Colored born of a German father. He thus, finds himself attached to Johannah and marries her out of this natural love. The episode substantiates the fact that love is the prime manifestation of the Almighty and it must breed tremendous faith for humanity if executed on sympathy. Lebojang is a manipulator and is caught in a sort of smuggling. He is sentenced to death after conviction. The comparative lives of Jacob and Lebojang reflect Bessie Head's belief that utterance and faith in the Almighty brings success at the end. The grand happiness on earth is neither religion, nor richness, but approving the ways of the Almighty.

*Life* is a grown up portrayal of the lot of African women by Bessie Head. The story, despite explaining the condition of South African women, describes for the first time human nature dexteriously. On one hand, tradition makes human psychology and, on the other are traits of the individual which make the complex of the characters.

Bessie Head has attempted for the first time a unique conflict between two different traits whose atmosphere is undoubtedly the tradition itself. Women in South African society is suppressed and lives the standards of a wretched being. 'Life', the young girl in the story, reflects the fate of woman where tradition shall make her life hard-pressed so she develops the trait of an intolerable creature.

Bessie Head brings her potentials in full swing in characterizing 'Life' and her world. After the borders of South Africa and Botswana have been settled, the flocks of the Botswana people, living elsewhere, start immigrating into their native land. 'Life', after having lead the life of modelling, parlours and brothels comes to Botswana in a comparatively strange outlook and characteristic. She worked, often, as a call-girl and made her both

ends meet in a decent manner, she sold herself for the luxuries of the physical world. She could not see any harm in both fulfilling her sex and making money out of it. Her philosophy would never change and neither would she adapt to the traditional climate of Botswana. Sex in Botswana is also free, but it is in accordance to an innate feeling of love and satisfaction. But, Life's emphasis is upon money than love. The different groups of Botswana, including the beer-brewing women, reject her for her approach and professional cunningness. She is having good money and takes on Lesego as her husband, thinking that it would give her a satisfactory life as she would have wanted in Johannesburg and elsewhere. Lesego marries her on three conditions, one among these is that she would not be in sex with any one after marriage. But, a moment comes when Lesego finds that she is in coition with someone else and, just out of arrogance and revenge, murders, both 'Life' and her partner. The end of the story is tragic in bitter sense of Shakespearean tragedies. "Are you trying to show us that rivers never cross here? There are good women and good men but they seldom join their lives together. It's always this mess and foolishness" (Head 1977) speaks Siananato Lesego about the episode of the murder and its after effects in his business. The point, which Bessie Head instils here, is very clear that the world may live or die, the human ego shall work for itself. The psychology of Lesego is that his manhood is challenged and he takes Life's behaviour as a challenge to his prowess. At least in the tradition of South Africa, he himself has been an instance of free sex and nowhere in any community of women, in Botswana, matters relating sex and love were taken seriously. Lesego does not kill Life out of a passionate rivalry; Life simply does not understand his mind. Lesego's hurt ego is what leads to the tragedy, and not the sinful conduct of a cheat. There could be a question involving Life's sex needs, but it does not satisfy her conditions so long she remembers her promise to Lesego. It can also be said that Bessie Head has presented a woman, not only suppressed in the Botswana traditions, but also sexually repressed for her nature. The case of woman has still been pleaded with 'Life' and her story. The crux of the story is the murder. It fulfills Bessie Head's aim to show the suppression of woman, whether she is good or bad. 'Life' does the heinous act to feed her descent ways, but she cannot go long way with it unless solemnized by a husband. She decides upon Lesego, but the two do not work. She has been a bad name among the women folk, but tries to win a place in her husband's life, at least leaving him unworried on account of the money she has brought with her. But, her lot shall never change as Lesego keeps her under strictest conditions.

Bessie Head, in addition to the portrayals of different social institutions of South Africa, particularly the evil traditions exploiting the women, has described the prevalence of the evils which make the society more terrible. The story, *Witchcraft*, throws light on the exploitative evils of society which have been let loose by the literate class. The history of the world has been that the literate class comes forward to guide and lead the illiterate ones forward. It is most unfortunate that the blacks of South Africa, among whom illiteracy is terrible are exploited by the literates. Head is hopeful that the time and the situation shall make the illiterate procure the means of eradicating the exploitation from their society.

The story brings to light the popular beliefs, of South Africa with a reaction to its existence, not by the rich but the backwards. Witchcraft, like any other superstitious belief, undoes the Botswana people and Bessie Head, naturally. The people of Botswana believe that the supernatural is more powerful and a doctor could only work for the protection from an evil source with the help of charms and the medicines. It is popularly believed that 'baloi' is the power which can stun, capsize, dominate and delude any of the normal creatures. It is considered to be the presence of the evil spirits which swarm around the people and activate for devilish motifs. Mma-Mabele and Maggie belong to the folk of the village which are in immediate trauma of being bewitched and troubled. Things become more serious when Banophi, the son of Maggie, tells his younger sister, about her absconding patch of locks. It is taken for granted that the 'baloi' or either kind of the evil spirits, is responsible for the missing lock. In order to avoid any consecration, the whole lock of hair is cut and burnt. The village doctor is consulted and heavy fee is fixed for clearing the charms and the spell ensued upon her. She is not ready to pay a single penny and affirms her faith in the church. The witchcraft is psychological and seldom does it work on a faith.

The anecdote, served by Bessie Head, is psychological, whether it is born of need or faith. The suppression of woman already disrupts the South African tradition and Bessie Head knew that the evil tricks, like witchcraft, shall devastate it completely.

The traditions of South Africa make it more panic stricken with many of the superstitious beliefs of the country. If the life in African continent has to avail any happiness out of sacrifice, it is the woman to be the prey to men. Bessie Head presents a pathetic story involving the curses and the superstitious beliefs, carries by the people. Illiteracy and unjust attitude towards female sex has made the continent darker than it should really have been. Most of the South African woman, Bessie Head writes, "a woman is never as bad as a man. I think the same form that made woman made me because I am so kind" (Head 1977) The clear indication of the statement is that women in South Africa is an innocent creature at the hands of the male for whom, traditionally, she can be used the way the male wants. The law of the land is less significant than their superstitious belief.

The theme of the story center around the traditional sacrifice of two innocent girls for bringing rain on earth. The woman has been presented as a silent side, working and dying together for men. There is draught and pestilence in the village for a long time and the village folk is told of the coming rain in the Kgotla village. The villagers, in view of cultivating the farms, migrate to this village bag and baggage, including the cattle they have in their yard, Mokgobja, a seventy years old man also plies towards the village with his son Ramadi, daughter-in-law Tiro, and two granddaughter, Neo and Boseyong, Nesta, the sister of Tiro, accompanies them on the journey. They reach Kgotla and get prepared for the ploughing of the fields after the rain has come. But, all to the misfortune, of the family, that Kgotla carries a more grim tale of starvation and devastation. The family keeps on waiting for the rain to come, but their hope shatters into grim sorrow. By and by all the cattle are sold for food and the land remains still parched in the scorching heat under the sun.

Brooding over the ill into of the family and the region, the old man is reminded of a ceremony from his tribal experience which would certainly bring rain in the village. Over-night, the family agrees to the proposal of the old man and it is well devised to set the ceremony performed with the sacrifice of the two young girls, Neo and Boseyong. Necessary festivities are observed and the dead bodies are laid on the ground next morning. The young girl has been sacrificed but there is no rain in the village. The family buries the dead bodies and returns back to their original home. While interrogated by the village folk about the young daughters, the family excuses several reasons for their demise. But, the signs of woe and guilt are distinctly visible on their faces and the police comes in between. They narrate the real story before the police and Mokgobja and Ramadi are sentenced to death in due course. The family, thus, is ruined in a very simple way of ignorance and disbeliefs.

Bessie Head has presented a poor and simple life being wasted by the pangs of ignorance and superstitious beliefs. She has excelled not only in theme but the presentation of a heinous but simple experience in a most significant and effective language. The system of sacrificing children at the altar of the Gods and Goddesses are very frequent in South African tribes and Bessie Head wants to alarm these people of the ills of the such traditions. She dictates the community to be aware of the main stream of the world and not to ruin their own families for ignorance and disbeliefs. The most effective part of the story is Bessie Head's treatment of the superstition and its impacts in making of life in tribal inhabitant parts of South Africa. The atmosphere of the story is highly commendable for its sensibility of a kind which suits to the attitude and the temperament of the character.

'Kgotla' presents the scenario of a South African black establishment with all its traditions and systems. Bessie Head, in Serowe, describes 'Kgotla' as a unit of a black village where from the rules governing the society and its traditions are made public, and likewise, controlled. She has excerpts, there are so many small village wards in Serowe and each small ward has its own Kgotla. This means that the number of small Kgotlas cannot be counted; there are many. If the president of the senior ward cannot manage a case, he shall refer it to the chief's Kgotla which is the main Kgotla. (Head 1977) Further, the people who have a case must address the president and the court politely in case their very manner helps them to lose the case. People brought to Kgotla are not necessary criminals as we think of it in a court of law. They are brought there by people who want their grievance redressed. These grievance arise over the sharing of property between relatives, the use of impolite words, to some body, a loan of money to somebody who is taking a long time to repay the loan or trespassing on a man's home or land". (Head 1977)

Bessie Head has undertaken to describe a similar Kgotla with all its systems and importance in a South African village. She brings forward the system of village courts, giving verdicts in every matter, relating marriage, property, disputes, loans and other rights. The story is a perfect reflection of a South African village in which poverty, helplessness, prejudices, jealousies and rivalries make it more compact. The most significant dispute in a South African village have been those involving the impact of polygamy and the clashing ego of women there in it. Bessie Head has undertaken the role of women in substantiating her place and rights of the family. Love is a natural facet of life and, whether its a polygamous or a polyandrous society, the individual seeks to stand in comparison to the nearest. The story describes similar trio of Gobosamang, Rose and Tsetso with regular ups and downs in the matters of everyday life. Bessie Head presented as how Kgotla manages to settle the disputes of the village, particularly when the matter involves not money but the prejudice of two women in a cold war. Gobosamang is a blind man to have come to the Kgotla from a certain world of Serowe. He is blind and comes in touch with Rose at the school where he has gone to teach. He marries her in accordance with the South African tradition and necessary cattle is offered to the family of Rose. In the long course, Rose is treated as a foreigner to the family culture of Gobosamang since she hails from a distant ward known as Sindebele. She is not respected primarily because she is a woman and chiefly because she is alien to the soil. Soon they part and Tsetso comes as the new wife of Gobosamang. She is said to be the most beautiful, among the village folk and Gobosamang fears his weaknesses that some day a danger of her departure could haunt him again. He, thus, begins to show his dominance over her, forgetting that she had loved him out of sympathy, treating him to be a blind and helpless creature. In the long run, the question of departure again comes in between, Galeboe Lentswe, mother of Gobosamang, defends the case of her son.

Once Rose enters his life again, Tsietsso becomes jealous and requires her money back which she had given to Gobosamang. The case is referred to Kgotla in which Kelapile and Thatayarona appear as two of the judges. The case is difficult to be solved since it has come up in view of jealousy of love, and not money only. Tsietsso is adamant and Gobosamang is unable to pay back the money. The Kgotla would have definitely punished Gobosamang only if Rose had not come with her offer to work in place of money Gobosamang had taken from Tsietsso.

The members of Kgotla are stunned to know that the sacrifice of Rose changes everyone's view of her stature. She was treated as foreigner, but now everyone realizes that it is love which matters and not nearness bringing two people together. The story brings to light the South African tradition of woman and her sacrifice. It is well judged that love together shall bring perfection and, otherwise, a cause of complete destruction to the man and herself. *The special one*, is set on the theme of conceptual study and implications of monogamy in the South African state. Bessie Head precipitates the idea on her experience that maximum of the instability in African society has been caused due to the evils of polygamy and the maltreatment of woman. Poverty is a matter of endurance and any couple can go with sharing it very happily, provided there has been a companionship otherwise. Woman can shoulder to any responsibility that the man gives, provided that her sense of love and dedication is not exploited. It is a human right that the woman must avail equal rights to the man whether in society or in sex. But, the things are all adverse to the woman as she has been used not more than a tool serving man's passions.

She cannot even resist the illegitimacy of the children she has given births to. The curse which makes her fate wretched is polygamy inherent in the black tradition. Bessie Head has indirectly worked as a social reformer demanding the eradication of polygamy and establishing the tradition of one man against one woman. Man has procured immense rights of keeping wives and procreating the legitimate and the illegitimate number of children he likes. This is inhuman, unjust and irreparable loss to woman.

In the present story, Bessie Head has put forward a situation which tells us of the scourge of polygamy and free sex. Woman has been the scapegoat of the debauchery of man. It is proposed that the abolition of the tradition of polygamy will bring back honor, happiness and hope to woman. If all the riches of the earth make her unhappy in a polygamous society, relief, in the form of monogamic society, ensures her security, hope and love. This is all the woman lot must strive for in a country like South Africa where she has been living the life of the underdog. 'The special one' presents the most aspired sentiment of being the special in the eyes of the person she loves. Bessie Head wrote in Serowe, All Serowiaris live with the tale end of polygamy story. They all have quantities of relatives, totaling something like six hundred each. They all have parents and grandparents who have more than one wife and it is a great delight to ask Serowian to recount his family tree (Head 1977). The passage refers to the tradition of polygamy which ultimately gives a long family, often appreciated by the tribal people of serowe.

Bessie Head here recounts that a clan may have a better name in respect of relatives, but the image of woman is tarnished as a puppet playing for the happiness of man. Mrs Maleboge is one of the woman whom the speaker has accredited to as a friend and well wisher. She is aged, but has a sorrow of being robbed of by her brother in property and the material. Whether it's her husband or a brother, woman has been sacked as a downtrodden creature. It is true that Mrs Maleboge has rumours of courtship even at that old age, but the human need has no substitute. The author has worked in story as a protagonist and a commentator without involving her own views, either on woman, or her condition. Gaenametse is another point of description whom Bessie Head has introduced as an experiment in the most polygamous society of the tribal blacks. She is deserted by her husband for the sake of another woman and feels absolutely out of wits for the loss. Only after a short period, she tells the protagonist about her real state of courtship to an aged priest in the church. She is contended both mentally and sexually with her priest husband. Gaenametse comes with a new option and makes it a popular belief that a marriage for being discarded after her passionate use is of no avail. If there is contentment and love for woman in the companionship without a marriage, it is better to have it than being exploited at the polygamous nature of husbands. At least the one man shall be her own man and there must be no chance of being humiliated at the several hands. The woman should also try to be a 'Mosadi-ra'- special one, for the man whom she loves and gets reverence from him. The ultimate happiness is in being somebody's point of love than the bete-noire of all. The story is Bessie Head's a unique idea, a solution, which may work to emancipate woman from the yoke of male-oriented society. *The Collector of Treasures* is the representative story by Bessie Head, squeezing her idea on woman and her place in a South African society. On the either hand Bessie Head has attempted a problem on the aspects of woman's rights, particularly in respect of her matrimonial status. It is almost true that Bessie Head brings forth her experience of woman as a double slave, first to the African tradition and second to the British rule. Woman could be of greater importance in supplying satisfaction to the man in both sex and procreating children. But it is not the stage for which she is born and must go for. All by nature and her right, she is an equal partner to man in pulling ahead the generation after generation. She is treated as an ignoble and unworthy of her birth. A most natural entity is put to disadvantage in an unnatural manner. A similar, and, perhaps a much better cause of satisfaction she can be to the world is her sense of regard to love and sanctity.

Bessie Head is a protest writer and, in fact, she has put woman on war footing against the injustice and inequality imposed upon her. If a man does not understand her sense of love and confines her to his sex need on the name of security, she ought to snatch away her rights even at the cost of a crime. The story bears a similar theme of woman's rise against the tyranny of the custom and the man in it, with the extent of making him aware of her presence, if not in form of love, the crime. Dikeledi Vokopi is a lady living in the Puleng village of South Africa with her three sons, Banobothe, Inalame and Motsomi from her husband Garesego Mokopi. The tale of her desertion by her husband is repeated, like many other woman of the African interiors. She was having a good life, as she thought, but the realizations and preoccupations of her husband never make him feel her love. As the mother earth, she goes on feeding her children by sewing clothes for different people. She understands that her husband is emotionless, heartless and irresponsible. Her silence is brewed in her love and responsibility of the poor kids. When a new couple, Paul The bolo and his wife, Kenalepe, come to the village, she attributes her love to them not only in sewing their clothes but as well sharing their woes and happiness. Paul The bolo is kind hearted person and extends help to Dikeledi at times. When the children grow up, Banabo the, her eldest son has to join the secondary education, Dikeledi, in constraints approaches Garesego Mokopi, first time after long eight years, to collect remaining amount for the fees of her son. All to her luck, Garesego is still wanton and irksome. Naturally, her immediate friend Paul The bolo and his wife Kenalepe come to her help.

After a long time, Garesego comes back to Dikeledi's house and she does not refuse since he has not divorced her legally and thereby stands her legal husband. Irrespective of his fight with Paul The bolo and blemish thrown upon her, she has to welcome him. She is hopeful and puts the problem of fees of her son once again. Garesego has now here realized her love and keeps on denying her as if she was born to bear him. She prepares herself for the revolt and murders her husband out of constraints of rage. All is left to her sense of resolution and feels calm having no repentance because she knows that she has not killed anyone but grabbed her actual right. She makes it clear that a man is not only to marry woman for sex and servitude but also to bear the full responsibility of his wife as well as children. Dikeledi appreciates Paul The bolo as a virtuous man and makes itsure that a vicious man, like Garesego, has no right to exploit her identity as a whole; he is equally responsible for rearing of the children as does she every time. Dikeledi is put in prison and the discussion among, the lady prisoner makes the theme of the story much clear. Woman, both for man and her children, is a boon and incarnation of love. She is a treasure and to the world and the family in every respect, but unfortunate is her treatment by the male. She can be good to a vicious husband; the orphan kids; a sincere friend to Kenalepe and a devotee of the cause of human love in the prison. If man has at all failed to explore the treasure land, the devastation of the social balance is natural. It is, perhaps the first instance among all women writers of South Africa that a woman is made to rise arm up against man and shroud his shoulders with the demand and seizer of her rights.

## REFERENCES:

1. Brown, Lloyd W. ,Women-Writes in Black Africa (London :Greenwood Press, 1981)
2. Head, Bessie, 'The Deep River: A Story of Ancient Tribal Migration', in The Collector of Treasures (London: Heinemann,1977), p. 6
3. Head, Bessie, 'Heaven is not closed', in The Collector of Treasures (London: Heinemann,1977)
4. Head, Bessie, 'Life', in The Collector of Treasures (London: Heinemann,1977)
5. Head, Bessie, 'Serowe: The Village of the Rain Wind', (London: Heinemann, 1981)
6. Ravenscraft, Arthur, 'The Novels of Bessie Head' in Aspects of South African Literature, edited by Christopher Heywood. (London :Heinemann, 1976)

## Bio of the Author

Dr. Indu Arora is an associate professor of English, BSM (PG) College, Roorkee, Haridwar, Uttarakhand. She did M.Phil from HNB Garhwal University, Srinagar and Ph.D from Gurukul Kangri University, Haridwar, Uttarakhand. She is a genuine pursuer of knowledge. She has presented numerous papers in seminars, symposia and workshops at various institutions of the country, which have been published in journals of national and international repute. Currently she is engaged in studying Indian intellectual tradition.