

Novels of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni – A Critical Analysis

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Abstract – Chitra Banerjee the Bengal conceived author immigrated to the U.S. in one of the first essayists of the Diasporic writing. She frequently centers around the person adjusting two universes, especially Indian outsiders battling for tranquil life in America. The US of America a place that is known for promising circumstances and socially pluralistic culture, is no exemption for it. It's anything but a sort that opens up roads for that load of migrants who at first look for their economic condition. The trying and aspiring individual evacuate themselves from their social moorings and relocate to nations which guarantee them better everyday environment and solaces. The migrants who conveys dreams of desire additionally conveys with him his normal personality.

Keywords – Chitra Banerjee, Migrants

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INTRODUCTION

Post-Independence period in India was profoundly amazing for huge development and advancement in different fields like expressions, science, writing, engineering, etc... The advancement additionally happened in human mind that lead to a westernized change in individuals' considerations and way of life, which had both positive and adverse consequence. Outstandingly in ladies strengthening, the post pilgrim time assumed a significant part where the ladies started to sparkle in all areas. There was no deficiency in abstract works of this period which portray the cultural status of ladies, diverse personality on account of outsiders and western effect among proficient ladies. "A Perfect Life" is a brilliant artistic work by Divakaruni with dynamic philosophies. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni brought into the world in Calcutta on July 29, 1956 is a prestigious Indian American author. She got instructed by doing random temp jobs like sitter, a store representative, a bread slicer in a pastry shop, a lab partner at Wright State University and an eating lobby chaperon at International House, Berkley.

Divakaruni is granted PhD in English from the University of California, Berkley in 1985. She started her composing profession as an artist. Her first short story assortment Arranged Marriage distributed in 1995 got American Book Award, PEN Josephine Miles Award, and Bay Area Book Reviewers Award. Divakaruni's significant novels incorporate Sister of My Heart, Mistress of Spices, Queen of Dreams, Palace of Illusions, One Amazing Thing and

Oleander Girl. The vast majority of her works are viewed as semi-personal on the grounds that a significant number of her accounts are set in California where she lives. Divakaruni's own encounters as a migrant are reflected in her works particularly in Arranged Marriage. There are eleven short stories in Arranged Marriage with ladies as heroes in a large portion of the tales. "A Perfect Life" spins around the hero Meera who is a worker to California from India. Through her character one can see the authenticity of an outsider life that should adjust the unfamiliar culture.

The story starting with the line 'Before the kid came, I had a decent life' (Arranged Marriage) expands the interest of the perusers to know the existence of the hero which offers force to peruse the story further. The American life imagined by the outsiders is awfully not the same as what they find. Divakaruni depicted the hero Meera's character as an Indian lady who dismisses the stereotypic existence of Indian ladies getting hitched to the man of the hour masterminded by the guardians and by adjusting the family obligations as their sole duty. Meera imagined an American life and accomplished it's anything but an honorable work in a bank and having living in-relationship with Richard, a sort of man whom Meera had longed for in her young in Calcutta. She has a glad existence without being keen on marriage, kids or family in a lovely condo.

"In the event that purposes behind marriage are developing, so are the explanations behind tapping

out. Marriage is not, at this point a substantial identification for a superior life, similarly as staying wedded just for the wellbeing of society or living under a similar rooftop (and have separate existences) and not cause trouble is inadmissible" (Nayar).

On the difference to the above assertion cited by Ritu Sharma and Tanu Gupta, Indian ladies attract a limit to them by reveling another relationship under the pretense marriage masterminded by the family like they are conceived distinctly for marriage and kids. The striking result of the creator's depiction of sex before marriage through Meera's living in-relationship with Richard can be seen from the point of existentialism. As an individual brought into the world on earth everybody has their own right to live in this world as they need. Meera needs to wed her adoration Richard and to have youngsters like each Indian lady wants. In any case, she decides to accomplish it freely. So she defers her marriage until she accomplishes a decent economic wellbeing and a situation in her bank and furthermore endeavors to achieve it. This draws out the social intricacies looked by Meera who emphatically keeps up family attaches with India as Meera's mom consistently demands her to wed by sending groom photographs with proposition.

The story has an extraordinary spotlight on mother-kid relationship bringing up issues about its social development and passionate segment. Divakaruni challenges women's liberation in the narrative of Meera who battles to get her nurturing love towards Krishna, an image of lost parenthood. The secrecy is evoked with mother-kid relationship when Meera accidentally gets appended to the odd seven year old kid whom she gives a name Krishna as though he is her own child. Divakaruni concedes that hairsplitting is a deception corresponding to the human existence as the title "A Perfect Life" itself is by all accounts a dream. In the account of Meera a Perfect life has two measurements. One is to have a free existence without getting into the shackles of marriage and the other is to get reinforced into the foundation of marriage and bear kids the two of which are evident in the account of Meera. At first she clutches the primary measurement and step by step continues onward towards the other. The subsequent measurement questions the idea of the ladylike attitude that considers an ideal life is inadequate without marriage and youngsters as Meera effectively gets evoked to the nurturing love towards the little fellow like aching for it. The secret behind the relationship is unexplainable on the grounds that what caused Meera to get joined to the kid is left to the peruser's presumption. Meera who professes to have an ideal life (additionally an enlightened existence) with Richard gets undercut to an alternate type of protective life and starts scrutinizing her immersion in her unmarried life. Aside from compassion and humankind, it is the inclination of parenthood which made Meera hazards her life for the kid.

The article entitled "9/11 and The Terror Fear in the Diasporic Community: The Recent Fiction of Chitra Divakaruni" written by Banani Chakraborty conveys the transformation in the position of diasporic community in United states after the Islamic terrorist attack on America in 9/11/2001 through the novels *Queen of Dreams*, *One Amazing Thing* and *Oleander Girl*. The attack not only shattered American citizens but also dropped its adverse effect on diasporic people due to the security norms by U.S. authority. Chakraborty, in *Queen of Dreams*, throws light on sufferings of second generation immigrants of America through the characters of the novel. Even though the second generation immigrants like Rakhi in *Queen of Dreams*, Korobi in *Oleander Girl* and Tariq and his family in *One Amazing Thing* accept the lifestyle and livelihood of America, their inner combat aspiring to connect their soul to their origin becomes even more crucial because of the strict security of the nation after the horrific attack is traced in the article.

The article entitled "The Portrayal of Sister-friend in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Sister of My Heart*" by C. Bharathi traces out the feeling of sisterhood of a woman towards another woman. The novel is dominated by female characters of three mothers Gouri Ma, Nalini and Aunt Pishi and two young cousin sisters Anju and Sudha. Gauri Ma and Nalini support one another in bringing up their daughters in the fate of meager financial status. Bharathi interprets Divakaruni's depiction of friendship in sisterhood as both Anju and Sudha give importance to each other rather than their husbands in their life. Despite possessing jealousy, anger, antipathy in certain aspects towards each other, Sudha's forsaking her lover Ashoke to support Anju's wedding fantasy and Anju's struggle in bringing pathetic Sudha to America in order to build future even after knowing her husband's attraction towards Sudha's beauty, exhibits a strong bond between the sisters. As per review, Divakaruni displays the greater significance to relationships of woman and their potential to gratify existential motif of life.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Vine of Desire: A Study of Immigrants's Cultural Dilemma's and Displacements* by Ashok Chaskar exposes the consequences of displacement. *The Vine of Desire* is sequel to *Sister of My Heart* in which the psychological change undergone by Sudha and Anju before and after migration is spotted. Ashok Chaskar's article discusses the reluctance of Divakaruni's character in continuing American life where Trideep's father and Sudha initially feel content with new American life but later adopt native land as their secured place. Sudha, brought up traditionally in a orthodox Bengali culture by three mothers tends to commit incest with Sunil after settling in Anju's house therefore deceiving her lovable sister Anju for whom once she had forsaken her lover Ashoke. The article voices out the nature of American culture that claims the

maxim "Live for Yourself" and fascinates Orient towards Occident, delineating the character Sudha.

"Self-Revelation in Chitra Banerjee's *The Mistress of Spices*" by P.Valli Deivanai discloses Tilo's inner conflict of establishing self identity. Being Chitra Banerjee's first and the most popular novel, it received many critical appraisals for its uniqueness and the fused narrative technique of prose and poetry using the literary device of magical realism. The author of the research article figures out the protagonist Tilo's distinct identity from her birth to present. Being born with super natural power of fore saying she is named as Nayan Tara and when the pirates carries her away she is named Bhagyavathi and in the island she is named as Sarpakanya by the snakes and finally to become the mistress of spices she changed her name into Tilo meaning 'life giver'. The article also criticized the test posed on Tilo to choose between her identity of saving people from their adversity and her love towards Raven (American) like an ordinary woman.

Vasigaran in his doctoral work titled "Cross-Cultural Experiences of the Indian Womanhood through a Postcolonial Feminist Perspective: A Study on the Select Works of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni" presents the Cross-Cultural experiences viewed by Divakaruni in her short stories such as *Clothes*, *Silver Pavements*, *Golden Roofs*, *The Word Love* from the short story collection *Arranged Marriage* and the novels *The Mistress of Spices* and *Sister of My Heart*. The researcher attempts to bring out women's misery in a patriarchal society stating "The ideal of the traditional, oppressed woman persisted in a culture permeated by religious images of virtuous goddesses devoted to their husband, the Hindu goddesses Sita and Savitri, serves as powerful cultural ideals for women" and the cultural clash encountered by South Asian immigrant women. The research article "Reading Feminine Mysticism in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Queen of Dreams*" by Wenying Xu maps the story of Mrs. Gupta and Rakhi and reveals Divakaruni's feminine mysticism. Divakaruni diminishes the power of patriarchal society by centering the extra ordinary super natural elements of women through the characters of Mrs. Gupta and her daughter Rakhi. The representation of female deity in the reading of Pre historic period in the novel evidences feminine mysticism. The *Queen of Dreams* has strong Hindu cultural background delineating the tradition of worshipping female goddesses which is contrast to the contemporary gender practices of India that degrades the possibility of women empowerment. "In other words, in Hindu culture "the Goddess pervades the world and everything in it.... Beyond and above, within and without, nothing exists or stirs in the cosmos that is not infused with the power of Goddess" (1). The researcher in the article exemplifies the Amaterasu, the sun Goddess of Japan and many Greek Goddesses parallel to the Hindu culture in the Prehistoric religious worship that promotes feminine mysticism in a patriarchal society.

Divakaruni's feministic aspect is transparent in most of her works and in the *Queen of Dreams*, her abundance in incorporating super natural powers and potential to women characters indicates her contradiction to patriarchy.

The article named "Trauma and Repercussion in Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and Divakaruni's *One Amazing Thing*" written by Aparajita Tiwari aims to compare and contrast similarities and dissimilarities in both the works. The article presents the elementary nature of trauma and its effects in human behavioral science instancing two novels that has similarities in imposing characters to struggle for life. The children in *Lord of the Flies* enter into an isolate island during an air crash and struggle to signal for survival and in *One Amazing Thing*, the nine characters from different parts of world trapped in the basement of Visa office during earthquake seeking for the rescue team to approach them, come together and form basis for the comparison with the theme of trauma which is a common factor in both the novels. In *One Amazing Thing* the story of the nine characters revealed to one another at the trauma of life or death discloses the lives of loss, guilt, betrayal and misdeeds that bring salvation to all the characters. Divakaruni features the psychological change and the behavior at the known end of a life that influences in revelation of own self and the realization of self identity.

Mahabharata, the great epic of India retold by Divakaruni in her novel *The Palace of Illusions* is advocated as a Postcolonial work of art by Ashalata Kulkarni in her article "Gender and Postcoloniality in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions*". The article connotes the fact of gender discrimination after British rule in India as explored by the famous psychologist Ashish Nandi "According to him earlier to British rule Indian gender roles were much more fluid and flexible but after the advent of British the imperial ideology of superiority of male and masculinity brought in the change of increase in the Kshatriya mode of masculinity". The saga is written from the perspective of Draupadi by Divakaruni. The Postcolonial aspects of gender, race and colonial impact were the chief discourse of the article in which Draupadi reflects gender bias. Racial discrimination is often spotted in the ancient period where the great legend like Dronacharya in *Mahabharata* rejects to educate Ekalavya as he belongs to the tribes.

Raminderpal Kaur in his article entitled "Female Quest for Identity by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, with special reference to *Oleander Girl*" voices Divakaruni's prominence of female characters and their individuality in her novel *Oleander Girl*. The novel centers the lead character Korobi Roy who deserves everything which an ordinary Indian girl longs for but struggles to find her identity after becoming aware of her migration to America in search of her father and past history. The article

“The Old Rules Aren’t Always Right”: An Analysis of Four Short Stories by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni” by Felicity Hand analyses the four short stories *Affair*, *The Word Love*, *Doors*, *Ultrasound* from the short story collection *Arranged Marriage* in multiple context. Divakaruni’s appeal to gross Indian women through her writings is explored by the researcher in the article. Especially Divakaruni voices out for the Indian immigrant women who suffers for their self identity in a patriarchal society. Felicity Hand signifies the term “Social Realism” which is rooted in the select four short stories of Divakaruni. The article titled “Travelling across time: A Critical Analysis of *The Mirror of Fire and Dreaming and Shadowland*” by P.V.L. Sailaja and N. Ramakrishna deals with the notion of travelling across different time and space zones. The trilogy of the conch series revolves around the magical conch hidden in the mountain folds of Himalayas and the adventures behind the attainment of conch by Anand, the protagonist of the series of three novels and the evil characters ways out for the incorporation of dynamic theme by Divakaruni. Anand’s time travel to past, future is described by Divakaruni by the means of fighting against the evil to locate all his missing friends and to protect the conch from corruption.

The review of the research articles and dissertations discusses various themes like alienation, feminism, patriarchy, cultural conflict, social realism, magical realism, self-identity, incorporated by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni as an eminent Indian diasporic writer. The research on the literary works of Divakaruni appeals her social contribution and the expression of personal experience to the world as the writer herself is an Indian born settled in America. The knowledge gap identified through the review is lack of criticism related to the men characters and societal provocation for the migration.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To separate the techniques grasped by the maker for portraying the characters in the books.

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