



A Study On The Liberation Of Selected Female Characters In Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's "*The Mistress Of Spices*"

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Abstract

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is one of the prominent writers who influence her work with its high perfection and uniqueness. She is avowedly an eminent writer who contributed to enriching the tradition, culture, and feelings of humans. Her novels deal with women's empowerment, sufferings, identity crisis, culture, and love. "The Mistress of Spices" is justified as one of the most significant works of Indian Fiction in Literature. Divakaruni's works portray various dimensions of women in a dominated society. She portrays her female characters has the urge of self-emergence for their better growth. She has explored the impact of tradition and culture in her country as well as the challenges faced by the female community in other countries. She also expresses the forbidden aspects of women's habited world. She is one of the foremost Diasporic writers. Diasporic Literature is not based on any particular theory or context. It focuses to show various issues faced by the Immigrants. Divakaruni wants to uplift each woman from their sufferings through her literary works. This research work aims to explain the concern of womanhood that influences every woman in society.

Keywords: Woman empowerment, love, culture, alienation, tradition, diaspora

Introduction

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni makes an effort to change how women are perceived in society. From the viewpoint of the author, women are more than just a presence in society; they are also an integral component of it. As a feminist author, Divakaruni wants to add a fresh perspective to highlight the struggles faced by the female characters Tilottama, Geeta, Hameeda, and Lalita. Even she examines concerns of the diaspora like isolation and identity struggle. She reshapes them to be tough and proud throughout their life journey in an effort to bring out the sensitive woman in them. Divakaruni depicts the four main characters' conditions and life experiences throughout the book. Bringing out the scenarios and dilemmas in each character is a difficult endeavour. They are all utterly unique from one another. She describes her life experiences both in their own country and in other countries.

The female protagonists in Divakaruni's work go through a variety of emotional struggles while trying to manage their daily lives. They are disconnected from their own interests and ambitions. They are unable to experience the

true core of freedom and wants because of society. For the sake of their family's and society's wellbeing, they must give up their own lives. The main issues encountered as a result of marriage and relationships.

Divakaruni is successful in providing a psychological glimpse into each character's life. She only needs to bring about a shift from suppression to emerging in their identities. They ought to have social and emotional freedom. The words of Divakaruni established a good path for the future generation to address the patriarchal challenges that each woman faced.

In the sake of tradition and culture, women are imprisoned. It's necessary for culture and tradition to provide them with room to succeed, but it can't happen in this way. The domination of the other gender destroys the place of women. The male community looks for better solutions to meet their requirements and improve their life. Every woman's expectation is shattered in this place. They are receiving less respect from both their family and society as a whole.

This paper examines how both society and the family view the female community. The fantastic work "The Mistress of Spices" gives a variety of viewpoints on the struggle of female society to emerge from oppression and forge their own identities. They face social, moral, and sexual harassment. Each character has obligations to the family and to society.

"The Mistress of Spices" seemed to be a pretty straightforward piece of art that creates different effects. One of the main individuals who is emotionally influenced by love and responsibility is the protagonist Tilottama (Tilo). Readers might easily learn about the psychological and social struggles each female character was going through by seeing them. All of them are unable to carry their true selves. They are compelled to alter their way of life in response to the circumstances they encounter. Society controls their knowledge and their power.

The narrator's method of narration will affect the story's overall impact. It has a range of boundaries and dimensions. The living experiences of two nations, India and the United States, are beautifully captured in Indian-American literature. The life and characteristics of these two limits were immediately identifiable to readers; there, we could observe various cultural subtleties.

Indian-American literature is praised as being of the highest calibre. It depicts several facets of existence. Divakaruni demonstrates the multi-disciplinary framework in which she is an Indian American writer. She is a skilled and well-known writer from the Diaspora. Through all of her works, she was able to sense and highlight the diasporic sensibility. She concentrated on the status of women both in India and the United States.

Divakaruni performs the roles of a well-known author, novelist, poet, and decent person. She struggled greatly during her career to establish a good reputation. She has a sophisticated way of presenting her own opinions. Each reader's mind should be penetrated by her writing, inspiring them to begin thinking. She is one of the most well-known and significant writers from the diaspora.

One of Divakaruni's well-known works, *The Mistress of Spices*, exposes the lives of most of the female characters. Even though her art is experimental, it is highly powerful and effective.

The Liberation Of Womanhood

"The Mistress of Spices" is a fantastical story of romance and spices. Through earthly aspirations, Divakaruni illustrates the taboo elements of the world in which women live. Her imagined world is centred on women. Her portrayal of the world of women is convincing, natural, and realistic. She has concentrated on writing about female friendship and strives to strike a balance between that and the competing desires and expectations that come with

being a wife, mother, lover, and daughter. According to Divakaruni, female bonding is special because of the life-altering events that occur from birth.

"The Mistress of Spices" is replete with references to how society expects women to behave. She shows strong, resilient women who are focused on rebuilding their life. Being a woman herself, Divakaruni has incorporated her wide range of experiences into her works. She has excelled in the position of woman. Each of her characters is a success and stands out. The female characters in Divakaruni attempt to find themselves through breaking free from a society that is bound by convention. They hope to witness a remarkable transition from sadness to joy.

Tilottama, Lalita, Geeta, and Hameeda are just a few of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's female characters that she uses to illustrate feminine sensibility. These characters are each shown to have particular issues. Every issue can have a solution, the author of the novel emphasises, if we just look for it. Each character is portrayed as a perfect representation of the modern generation, whose mind is driven by a strong desire to aspiration and live their own life to the fullest. Tilottama (Tilo), the main character, was envisioned by the narrator as a piercing force that could solve the issues that other characters were having. The focus of the narrative is Tilottama.

Tilottama

Tilo, as being by the Mistress, has had a significant amount of hardship from infancy till she obtained her precise and determined life. Throughout her life, she goes through several transformations. She assumed several guises, ranging from Nayan Tara to Maya. She has not lived a life that is truly her own. She had fantasies about living a routine existence. However, as the Mistress of Spices, she only spent money on other people's well-being.

Tilo was raised in a typical family. Only because she was born a girl baby does she receive any acknowledgment or attention from her own parents. Her parents thought she was a financial strain on the household.

The girl child was considered to be of no value in the traditional Indian mindset, as brought out by Divakaruni. The best illustration of this is Tilo. She looked to her own parents for affection and consideration. She is a persona with several different selves. Tilo possessed certain magical abilities at birth. She possesses the ability to predict the future. She rose to stardom as word of her success spread. She, incidentally, brought the family wealth and prosperity. Additionally, their manner of life has changed. Tilo began praising her expensive attire and accessories. She was quite happy. A crew of pirates once abducted Tilo. Tilo begins her lifelong conversion at this point. Tilo's metamorphosis appears to be accomplished through magic as it moves from one person to another. She was given the name Bhagyavati, which means "luck bringer."

Later, she managed to flee the pirates' ship and make it to a deserted island. Unknown island was it. Tilottama came across the Old Mother on that isolated island. The young girls use her as a mentor while they train in the passionate art of spice magic.

Tilottama receives magical instruction, and after entering a fire called Shampati, she underwent a magical change to become the Mistress of Spices. Tilo encountered her omen of destiny after entering the fire. She may be quite self-assured in her role as mistress, but after meeting Raven (the Lonely American), a complete stranger, her life was forever altered. Her subconscious began to wave in the direction of her own love for Raven and her own fate as Mistress. Her own emotional conflicts were too strong for her to handle. Customers come from a wide variety of far-off locations to Tilottama. She was fair to all of them. She never forgets the First Mother's admonition during the vow-taking process. She then tries to exert mental control. She thought that

“The spices are my love. I know their origins, and what their colors signify, and their smells. I can call each by the true-name it was given at the first, when earth split like skin and offered it up to the sky. Their heat runs in my

blood. From amchur to Zafran, they bow to my command. At a whisper they yield up to me their hidden properties, their magic powers (3)

She wants to use her superhuman abilities to help the hurting and impoverished community. She thought that the spices and the spice shop were her one and only loves. Unfortunately, things turned out differently. Tilo has the ability to relieve suffering, find solutions to issues, and support people in leading better lives. By encouraging the use of spices, she can win over the hearts of the populace. She merely wants to ease the suffering caused by the complexity of diasporic life. Tilo blends a variety of herbs after learning about her customers' difficulties, classifying each spice based on its potency.

She was young when she entered the massive Shampati fire, but she is now elderly. She appears quite old and rough, having lost her once soft beauty. She solely existed to help the customers who come into her spice business with varied issues. Divakaruni has made an effort to purge all the bad and negativity from people's life. Readers may sense the mental suffering Tilottama is going through in this situation. She acted as very young and uninhibited in her inner self. However, she appeared very old outside.

The personality of Tilo highlights the psychological conflict that a typical woman experiences. She doesn't intend for herself. After seeing Raven, Tilo frequently goes above the boundaries of being a mistress. While travelling with Raven, she experienced a strong sense of contentment. She began recognising her own desires and feelings. She had dreams about living a typical woman's life. She finally emerges from her cocoon and moves in the direction of her own destiny.

However, the narrative demonstrates how women can express their wants freely. Once Tilo is aware of her own sexuality, she is unable to assume the suffering of others. She serves as an angelic minister to her hurting clients. Tilottama was given by Divakaruni in the guise of a fantastic fable. She has the potential to transform society. The relevance of Tilo's persona is varied. The author highlights the unique physical, social, and psychological challenges that all women experience.

Tilottama is the figure that Divakaruni chose to represent the aspirations and passions of a typical lady. In her solitude, she assisted every client. Tilo gave them wonderful service while never expecting anything in return. She struggles with a significant internal and external conflict. She has her own aspirations and interests. The struggle between duty and affection became complicated. Tilo, though, is not meant to appease her soul. Being the great mistress was completely opposed. The author investigates the notion that every woman should have a platform to express her own desires and that in order to experience the desired freedom, she must emerge from her shell. This is done through the figure of Tilottama. Every woman should appreciate the beauty of a desirable existence, just like Tilo did as Maya.

Lalita

Lalita is one of Tilottama's concerned clients. She made her way to the spice shop in a dejected manner. Lalita is a stunning young lady. She has goals of her own. However, everything goes wrong after marriage. She is in the stage of solitude and struggles with her own sentiments of homelessness. She imagines a life that is completely dissimilar from the one she actually leads. Lalita is a skilled seamstress. But her spouse treats her in a haughty manner. She began to experience loneliness and desolation. Her spouse used to brutally beat her occasionally.

Many women in the patriarchal society lead dominated lives. She keeps her identity a secret. She has only ever been identified as Ahuja's wife. He severely restrained her and prevented her from achieving her own objective. She is not given the chance to do her assignment even by him. He treated Lalita like a caged bird with no freedom of

movement. Many women in the community have similar experiences to Lalita. The way the males treat their women is just terrible. They are not respected, and they are not free.

In her life, freedom was like an unattainable fruit. Ahuja occasionally coerces her into loving him. He forbade her from conversing with others. She tucked herself under the cultural and traditional walls. She will stay in the corner if she tries to stand up. Lalita eventually determined to escape the bonds after much agony. She made a choice and stepped out of her house. She is the object of male dominance. Divakaruni inspires the entire society about the value and independence of femininity via the persona of Lalita. As a mistress, Tilo helped Lalita regain her self-assurance to live a happy and serene life. Lalita is serving as an excellent illustration of release from oppression and emerging.

Geeta

The relevant character, Geeta, who was impacted culturally, is brought forth by Divakaruni. Her family is of Indian descent. But she wants to live an American life. She enjoys the American way of life. Geeta's very short hair has altered her appearance. She enjoys dressing nicely. She wants to be trendy. However, her family did not support her views. She appears intelligent and is quite attractive.

Her parents gave her a lot of latitude. She grew up in the United States. Geeta's family, however, continued to follow tradition. Her grandfather was an ardent supporter of Indian tradition. He rejects both Geeta's style of thinking and living. Even he has doubts about Geeta's work. She works in a male-dominated office. She used her own resources to buy an automobile. According to granddad, all of these are negative. He abides by the limitations that civilization has erected.

Geeta desired to wed a man from a different culture. Accepting Geeta's wish is really difficult because we are ardent supporters of Indian culture. They desire that Geeta wed a member of their own culture. She is from a typical diasporic household. Here, she saw a cultural confrontation between the perspectives of the first and second generations. It holds many viewpoints and attitudes. The identity-related questions are framed differently in the instance of Geeta. She tries to balance her family and her personal desires. She must balance the requirements of the people she serves with her own desires, which must come from her mind and heart.

The mentalities of the contemporary civilization are revealed by Divakaruni. People determine a person's worth based on their culture and heritage. They value culture, caste, race, and religion more highly. but without taking into account that being's pure heart. Many of them experience emotional distress. Geeta is an exception, though. She keeps her head in the right frame of mind despite being alone. She feels lonely after leaving her house. She anticipates her family's approval. Geeta's relatives finally expressed concern for her sentiments and emotions. She has strong feelings for her family even if she is alone. Divakaruni inspires all suffering beings.

Hameeda

Hameeda is a generous person. She and her family were residents of India. Because she didn't have a boy child, her husband filed for divorce. She travelled from her home to America. She experienced emotional impact. She got to know her next-door neighbour, Haroun. She considers starting a new life at this point. She gives Haroun a lot of thought.

Hameeda had a wonderful brother, which made her very lucky. He showed Hameeda the utmost respect. In her alone, he was quite kind to her. Here, we may observe masculine dominance or gender dominance through her husband's actions. Divakaruni connects Lalita and Hameeda. They are both impacted by their respective husbands.

Self-Reliant Characters

The women characters in Divakaruni are strong and contemporary. Tilottama, Lalita, Geeta, and Hameeda are just a few of the characters that the author uses to highlight the struggles that women face in both the home and in society. Amazing story "The Mistress of Spices" focuses on self-liberation. It examines the range of contradictory emotions and feelings that women experience throughout their lives.

This essay looks at how women are mistreated before looking at how they might improve their lot in life by standing up for themselves. The show Divakaruni focuses on successful women who undergo a stunning metamorphosis. She expresses worry about emancipation. Her mission is to advance the world society's dominant gender, which is female. Each character ultimately becomes a strong lady. Every generation is influenced by Divakaruni's writings.

Divakaruni used self-discovery as inspiration for writing her book. Various strategies are used to destroy each character. Divakaruni depicts some of the most strong and influential female figures. Each character has a burning desire for freedom.

In the home and in the wider community, women need their own room and freedom. Their lives were severely influenced by the patriarchal society that predominated and they were solely valued as family carers. A sense of yearning for liberation and self-worth grew in women's hearts as they were freed from the grip of existence. Women have been expected to examine their lives in the context of their relationships and families for many generations. The urge for emergence is present. Centuries of exploitation and resentment have reawakened a sense of self-worth and resolve.

Divakaruni focuses on women as unique individuals who are battling for independence and self-worth. She is one of the well-known novels who gives readers a glimpse into women's daily lives. Through the perspectives of their characters, impacted females, authors like Divakaruni portray their perception of society. The desire of women is almost always unfulfilled. They suffered from psychological, cultural, social, and personal oppression.

Incorporating feminism's component, Divakaruni also gave her means to consider and define herself as an Indian-American writer. Her writings are a collection of her many different life experiences. She bravely illustrates the difficulties that people go through by being a human. She is successful in portraying the trials of her characters and how, in the end, they change from everything awful. Each woman has been a victim and has ultimately succeeded in surviving. Almost every character in the book experiences estrangement in some way. The author focuses on female protagonists that succeed and emerge triumphantly. Finally, every character—from Tiottama to Hameeda—survived and discovered a secure place.

In order to alleviate everyone's suffering, Divakaruni uses the voice of Tilottama as a healing agent. Finally, the lives of these characters are successful. Tilo develops into a purifying force. A feeling of peace between two women can be seen here.

A woman is not someone's or something's environment's slave. She must be independent and able to pursue her own goals in life. "The Mistress of Spices" depicts a wide range of complex themes that are ultimately brought together with wonderful optimism and resolve. It tells a tale of persecution. It addresses the issue of what a typical Indian woman should expect from her family. Divakaruni wants to convey the idea that women can accomplish just as much as males. Additionally, they are driven and capable of overcoming obstacles, and they can perform well in any setting. Her writings are enhanced by a wealth of knowledge on the Indian Diaspora. Without a doubt, Divakaruni's words contribute more to the liberation of women than any other source. It captures scenarios and real life.

Our journey through life, relationships, love, culture, and tradition is made possible by Divakaruni's literary creations. Readers are kept interested in the story throughout because to the author's excellent writing style and character development. Maybe she has magic in her fingertips in addition to in her creations.

Divakaruni's writings undoubtedly have an impact on every age. In order for change to occur, she uses literature as a tool. She makes an effort to enhance the complexity of women's sensibility. She aspires to break down barriers between individuals from various communities, age groups, and worldviews through her writing.

Her writings have a strong female effect on the characters. Her popularity is attributed to her ability to accurately portray the restless mindset of Indian women residing in a sophisticated country. We can see that Divakaruni is reshaping her people's mindset and forging a distinctive identity. She concentrates on presenting the related subjects. The hardships that every woman faced are described for the readers, along with how they eventually overcame them to live happy, contented lives of their own.

The paper depicts the emotions and struggles that women in society experience. Divakaruni uses these characters to highlight the negative effects of isolation. She depicts the psychological and social transformation, and in the end, they discovered their own identities. She was a feminist writer who was motivated by the highs and lows of a woman's existence. Their way of living is really challenging. She tackled women's issues from her perspective as a woman.

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