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**DELINEATION OF WOMEN CHARACTERS IN
CHITRA BANERJEE'S FICTION**

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Abstract:

The present paper attempts to portray the status of women in Chitra Banerjee's diasporic novels. Most of her written work focuses on women's shared and enduring experiences within South Asian Communities. Her recurring themes include the challenges associated with cultural adjustments, personal growth, notions of belonging, and identity creation encountered by those who have immigrated. Divakaruni's portrayal of society encompasses not just a depiction of societal dynamics but also serves as a medium for her introspection, encompassing her experiences in India and America. These insights have been seamlessly integrated into her literary works. The female protagonists of Divakaruni's works navigate and endure various societal circumstances, leading them to gain a heightened awareness of their societal position.

Keywords: *Diaspora, Belongingness, Immigration, Transnationalism, Cross-cultural Crises.*

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is widely recognized as a prominent figure in diasporic literature. As a member of the South Asian Women Writers Collective, she is profoundly committed to addressing the issues women face today. She places a significant emphasis on the portrayal and development of female characters. The primary focal points explored in Divakaruni's books encompass the subjects of immigration, transnationalism, cross-cultural crises, and the postcolonial challenges related to identity issues. Divakaruni provides an unambiguous examination of the term and notion of 'diaspora' for the scholarly community. Divakaruni's literary universe is around women's experiences as they navigate the complexities and challenges inherent in both traditional Indian society and Western society, exploring their endeavors and setbacks. Throughout her body of work, women have consistently served as the central figures around whom the narratives are intricately braided and expanded, often via their experiences of hardship and adversity. The portrayal of the female realm in her work is characterized by its realism, persuasiveness, and authenticity. The author's literary works delve into immigrant women's challenges, encompassing physical, social, and psychological issues and their hardships. The author explores the internal experiences of Indian women, as well as immigrant women, within the context of her literary works. Chitra Divakaruni has documented



the experiences of immigrants in her literary works. Within the migration framework, Divakaruni's work emphasizes women and the various obstacles they confront in Indian and American contexts.

In all instances, women have consistently been immigrants. There are several circumstances under which a woman may choose to relocate from her parents' house. One such circumstance is when she migrates following her marriage to her spouse. Alternatively, she may decide to cross the border alongside her husband. Another reason for relocation could be for professional ambitions. The narratives of migrant women's relocation are centered around the empowering capacity of storytelling to express the distressing effects of displacement. These narratives involve the translation of familial customs across national boundaries, the establishment of transnational families, the adaptation of cultural norms, the cultivation of self-worth, and the reevaluation of the notion of 'home' and the associated encounter with homelessness (Mishra, 220).

Chitra is a given name of Indian origin, commonly used for females. Divakaruni introduced fresh viewpoints to the realm of current women's literature. Divakaruni, situated at the intersection of Indian and American cultures, exemplifies the frequent themes in her literary works. As she articulates on her website, these themes encompass "women, immigration, the South Asian experience, history, myth, magic, and the appreciation of diversity." Divakaruni's literary works effectively integrate feminist perspectives, multicultural elements, and themes of exile, postcolonialism, and hybridity, intertwining with mythological and magical elements at the heart of her extensive narratives. Divakaruni's works primarily focus on exploring self-identity, with a particular emphasis on women. Divakaruni's works revolve around the experiences of women actively seeking self-discovery. The female protagonists in Divakaruni's works express a deep yearning for a sense of identity within the postcolonial world.

Through her writing, Divakaruni explores the complex challenges faced by contemporary women and sheds light on various elements of their daily lives. The exploration of self-identity encompasses many aspects, including but not limited to alienation, interpersonal connections, and societal influences. Divakaruni's literary oeuvre has effectively delineated the multifaceted transformations in women's social, cultural, and psychological realms engendered by immigration. This study examines the novels of Divakaruni to investigate the themes surrounding women's self-identity. The introductory chapter focuses on Divakaruni's role as a writer. The author has also been recognized within the current landscape of writers. This analysis thoroughly examines the thematic elements present in the books of Divakaruni and the tumultuous conditions of contemporary society, which compel the writer to seek solace in the concept of the third space.

Divakaruni's literary works exhibit a deft portrayal of the social landscape, akin to the finesse displayed by a proficient artist. The author has conducted an in-depth examination of the harsh realities prevalent in both Indian and American societies to depict the circumstances faced by women. The present-day society catalyzes for women to discern their circumstances and their standing inside the social order. Renowned for her adept utilization of magical realism, Divakaruni has effectively addressed societal concerns within her literary works. The



individual in question has assumed the role of an advocate for the pervasive issues of discrimination, displacement, disruption, and disorder.

Furthermore, she has successfully crafted a fresh artistic representation encompassing India's diverse hues and tones, capturing its historical essence and present-day relevance. Chitra Divakaruni possesses a comprehensive understanding of the contrasting elements of Indian and American societies, having immersed herself in both cultural contexts throughout her lifetime. Chitra Divakaruni's portrayal of Indian society highlights prevalent societal issues such as caste and class structure, the oppressive nature of arranged marriages, the preference for male heirs, and male supremacy.

However, she has conducted a thorough examination of American society, which, at first glance, appears to be brimming with opportunities akin to a mirage. Yet, upon scrutiny, one discovers a dearth of trust, as well as prevalent instances of sexual content and violence. The female protagonists, including Rakhi, Korobi, and Sudha, encounter the less favorable aspects of American society. In her novel *The Vine of Desire*, Sara sheds light on American culture, highlighting the prevalence of individuals who disregard societal norms and believe that certain expectations do not pertain to them. Divakaruni has found a double standard for women in numerous sectors. Women experience victimization from both cultural differences and patriarchal systems. Despite the absence of some vices that women are commonly subjected to in American society, Mishra (222) discovered that there were still double standards for women in both Eastern and Western cultures. Reviewing the novel *Sister of My Heart*, Peter Nazareth writes, "In Divakaruni's work, despite sex, class and caste oppression, women need not end up as victims. America chips away at ossified Indian tradition for people to see, as Krishna shows that the imperative of life is deeper than arranged marriage; America and India are twinned" (Nazareth, 819).

Most of her written work focuses on women's shared and enduring experiences within South Asian Communities. Her recurring themes include the challenges associated with cultural adjustments, personal growth, notions of belonging, and identity creation encountered by those who have immigrated. Divakaruni's portrayal of society encompasses not just a depiction of societal dynamics but also serves as a medium for her introspection, encompassing her experiences in India and America. These insights have been seamlessly integrated into her literary works. The female protagonists of Divakaruni's works navigate and endure various societal circumstances, leading them to gain a heightened awareness of their societal position. The novels set in India notably address the topics of arranged weddings and dowry troubles. The female protagonists, Anju and Sudha, are raised within the confines of traditional Indian society. However, upon their relocation to America following their marriages, they encounter a significant predicament since the values they have internalized and currently adhere to diverge from those prevalent in their new environment. American society, characterized by its open-mindedness, grants certain freedoms to women, although their adherence to conventional beliefs hinders their ability to experience these liberties fully.

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To Cite the Article: *Srikant*. “*Delineation of Women Characters in Chitra Banerjee’s Fiction*”. *Literary Cognizance*, IV - 3 (December, 2023): 160-163. Web.