Chapter II

Social Realities

The contemporary world has various socio-cultural issues such as dowry system, terrorism, female infanticide, gender discrimination, racism, poverty, patriarchy, the impact of colonization, feminism and isolation between the family relationships. Such socio-cultural issues are to be taken into account to preserve our social and cultural values. Sometimes they get into the fold of the people and become a nuisance for their survival. To come out of the tangle, one has to evaluate them and find solutions or reliefs. Writers, mostly creative artists, take note of these issues, document them as historians’ perceive, and record them. But the creative artists put them with a humanist outlook. And the work of art always manifests the political, cultural and historical ethos of the society. G.H.Mair and A.C.Ward aptly observe that, “The novel if it is anything, is contemporary history, an exact complete production of the social surroundings of the age we live in” (195). This chapter provides various socio-political and socio-cultural issues that reflect on the novels *Sister of My Heart, Vine of Desire, The Palace of Illusions, Queen of Dreams* and *Oleander Girl* by Divakaruni

Terrorism is the most serious issue at present in every part of the world. The 20th and the 21st centuries have entirely subjugated by terrorism. And the people were far from being peace and happiness. Seething disagreements, vicious clashes, violence and overseas professions, meddling in the inner activities of states, rules of supremacy and power, cultural conflict, religious bigotry, different practices of bias scarcely considered
patriotism are foremost and hazardous difficulties of pleasant living among states and peoples and they have even headed to the breakup of some places in the society.

Divakaruni focuses on the downtrodden people, replicated her kindliness to how ordinary folks in their everyday lives endows, and fortifies to deal with downfalls and hindrances. Her novels relate to the political and social order of the era. Particularly in *Queen of Dreams*, she brings out the historical element that happened in the United States in 2011 which is still remembered by the month and year of the incident as well as the impact which affected immigrants who emigrated from India. In *Oleander Girl* she clearly illuminates the lately resuscitated biases in post-9/11 America and the Hindu-Muslim clash in Gujarat, India.

Reading the historical texts brings out only the historical moments but not the social crisis and political travails of the particular epoch. Nevertheless, Divakaruni throws light on the glitches that faced by Indian immigrants after the incident which made every Indian panic about their lives. The novel *Queen of Dreams* perceptibly presents the power plays and political corruption within the systems of government and enormously represents terrorism, the glitches faced by Indian immigrants and especially the women immigrants. In an interview, Divakaruni admits that,

"Women in particular respond to my work because I’m writing about them: women in love, in difficulty, women in relationships. I want people to relate to my characters, to feel their joy and pain, because it will be harder to [be] prejudiced when they meet them in real life. (The Border Book Festival)"
Rakhi the protagonist of the novel *Queen of Dreams*, the young widow and mother of a girl child resembles the oppressed women of the second-generation immigrant society. For her India is the magical and far away terrestrial, which is not within reach. After the death of her mother, she happens to manage the dream journal of her mother by which she tries to understand the dream reading techniques and magic to read others’ dreams. One day when she dreams about the buildings on the fire, she could not help them, the horror dream ever, and then she realizes that the dream was not her own but it was the dream of her daughter Jonna. Her daughter frightens about the dream and Rakhi consoles her that it was just a dream. After a week of that particular dream, on the day of September 11, the American Trade Center was attacked terrifyingly.

The historically significant day was September 11 since the immense shock faced by the American citizens as well as the immigrants. On September 11, 2001, America has been assaulted by the terrorists, which caused the enormous harm. As per reports, the loss of life was 2750 — for the most part regular citizen nationals of 90 nations at the World Trade Center, 125 persons in the Pentagon, and 265 travellers and group on the four planes. After seven years, what truly happened on 9/11, remaining parts covered in a shroud of questions and mystery. Europol's executive, Jurgen Storbeck syas, “It’s possible that he [bin Laden] was informed about the operation; it’s even possible that he influenced it; but he’s probably not the man who steered every action or controlled the detailed plan.”( ) On September 16, President Bush, brushing off doubts about Osama Bin Laden, declared a “crusade” to “rid the world of evil-doers” (Masud 1-3). This historical text (Can you name the text) reveals the incident happened in detail but unsuccessful in demonstrating the socio-political issues encountered by the people.
Rakhi prepares herself to describe about this terrific incident to Jonna, but when Rakhi tries to describe, Jonna just replies that she knows what had happened. As Rakhi tries to find her uniqueness, knowing slight about India, she discovers that uniqueness of dream reading transferred to her daughter.

The gift I’ve longed for all my life has passed over me and lightened on my daughter. Only it is not a gift but a terrible weight she’ll have to carry from now on by herself. Much as I want to, I can’t help her with it. (255)

While Rakhi thinks about the traumas that her daughter has to face, she and her families have to confront the dark new intricacies about their assimilation. Preoccupied by nightmares beyond her imagination, the issue is to put up a flag in front of the shop, which shows that they are American. Rakhi as a second-generation settler who knows only this country feels exasperated about this issue. She angrily says, “‘Belle, I don’t have to put up a flag to prove that I’m American! I’m American already. Love this country – hell, it’s the only country I know. But I’m not going to be pressured into putting up a sign to announce that love to every passerby.’”(264).

The novel *Queen of Dreams* totally represents the motifs and the influence of the author behind the novel as cultural materialists give importance to motifs behind the text’s creation and the possible influence of the author. All these historical moments and the glitches after the attacks were personally “lived and felt” by the author. In one of her interviews Divakaruni expresses her scary experience in the bay area after the terrorist attacks that,
‘There was a lot of anger and aggression and hatred,’ she said. ‘People were just kind of aiming it at anyone who looked different and dangerous.’ She added, laughing again: ‘Although I can’t really imagine that I looked very dangerous, even then.’ (Rogers)

The dreadful incidents tackled by guiltless immigrants have been clearly portrayed by the novelist, Divakaruni. The innocent people have been tortured physically and emotionally by the natives. When Rakhi and her father try to explain their side, the patriot spit on their face and says, “You ain’t no American! It’s fuckers like you who planned this attack on the innocent people of this country” (267). Even after that incident, the natives attack them severely. And after some months there are set of rules circulated by the Indian organizations that caution them not to go anywhere alone, avoid wearing native cloths, and put up American flags in the prominent locations of the houses and the working places. All immigrants become distrustful and the people over there turn vulnerable and frightened overnight. A Pakistani woman cannot come out of the apartment, an Afghani brings his children to school fully protected, a Sikh faces so many horrible incidents in a day and everyone’s life has transformed upside down. Divakaruni wrote a column for Los Angeles Times about her decision to fly an American flag at her house after the Sept. 11 attacks. More feelings that are ambivalent accompanied her patriotism, she writes, as she witnessed “backlash in this country against people who are or, to the uninitiated eye, look Islamic or Middle Eastern. Sikhs in turbans were beaten, businessmen in suits asked to get off airplanes, obscenities shouted at Divakaruni and her children” (Rogers).
The most terrifying Godhra train burning happened in 27\textsuperscript{th} February 2002 in which 59 innocent people were killed, following that there were so many Muslims attacked including women and children.

A chilling technique, absent in pogroms unleashed hitherto but very much in evidence this time in a large number of cases, was the deliberate destruction of evidence. Barring a few, in most instances of sexual violence, the women victims were stripped and paraded naked, then gang-raped, and thereafter quartered and burnt beyond recognition... The leaders of the mobs even raped young girls, some as young as 11 years old... before burning them alive... Even a 20-day-old infant, or a fetus in the womb of its mother, was not spared. (qtd. in Kanna 4)

Muslims have attacked Hindus vigorously, they burnt the houses of the Hindus and so many people have been slaughtered by this riot. The Brutalism at Gujarat around the year 2002 has been carried out in the novel *Oleander Girl*. After the attack on the World Trade Center on 9\textsuperscript{th} September 2011, the migrants were tortured by the colour of their skin, the people with native cloths, the Sikhs with the turbans, the accent of the language and so on which was faced by the protagonist Karobi.

The novel *Oleander Girl* opens with the romantic dream of Karobi, who is the protagonist. As an orphan, she lives under the shelter of lovable grandparents. Divakaruni introduces her with the beautiful dream, which turned out to be a nightmare. It was a dream about her future husband Rajat, but the dream ends with the confused face of her dead mother, who tries to tell something to Karobi but she could not hear the voice.
When she tries to ask the meaning of this dream from her grandmother, she refuses to talk anything about Karobi’s mother which makes her more confused. With this confused mind set she attends her engagement. While describing about the engagement ceremony, Divakaruni takes the readers to Kolkata’s upper-class parties where the readers can understand the mindset and lifestyle of the upper-class people.

There in the party Rajat and Karobi fall in love with each other. Like in the novel *Sister of My Heart*, Divakaruni sets a dark secret of the family. On the night of the engagement her (Who)grandfather dies and she comes to know the financial crisis of her family. After the death of her grandfather, she compels her grandmother to reveal the reality about her mother and she comes to know the dark secret that her mother married a person whom she loved in America, where she had gone for her higher studies on a scholarship.

The marriage was totally against Karobi’s grandfather and when she returned to Kolkata carrying Karobi inside her, her grandfather insisted to stay there for the remaining life. But Karobi’s mother did not accept his words and planned to travel America within three days. Because of that problem Karobi’s grandfather argued with her, when grandmother reached the room from the kitchen, she finds her on the floor crying out with the pain. When she was hospitalised, they got only Karobi alive, and her mother was dead. And her grandfather created a rumour that Karobi’s mother came to Kolkata with the sad news that her husband had died in a car crash, but fate followed her through her pregnancy and took her and also the baby from them. They telegraphed to her husband that both the mother and the baby were dead. Karobi comes to know that her
father is alive and she discloses it to Rajat, and asks him to help her to find her father. Because she wants to meet her father who was loved by her mother the most and wants to know so much about her mother’s character. But Rajat was not so much into it, still he consoles her as she feels bad about her grandparents who lied to her all these years. At last she says that she wants to break the engagement to fly America to find her father even after Rajat’s family accepted the reality of her father. She feels that it was her mother’s wish to find her father. When Rajat hears that she wants to break the engagement, he feels shattered and betrayed. With the love on Karobi, he tells her that he could manage one month without her and she compromises with him too.

Like every other person who travels to abroad, she too had an imagination about the richness of America. But America was not as she thinks of, but looks dangerous and changed the status of the immigrant people after the 9/11 attack. Seema and Mr. Mitra, have explained the dangers of America to be lived with.

… how to navigate through the dangers of America she was always hearing about. But in the early years, neither she nor Mr. Mitra considered America dangerous. They often exclaimed how much safer it was than India—no pocket-maars snatching your wallet, no burgers breaking into your apartment, no corrupt police who showed up at your store for monthly ‘tea money.’ Then the Twin Towers fell, and everything changed. (OG 97)

Indian immigrants faced most crucible racial discrimination after the terrorist attacks. Seema explains every prejudice that happened to Indians in America, especially the
suffering Muslims who were attacked terribly by unknown persons. They were underestimated by so many ways and Louise Cainkar explains the plight that,

… mass arrests, secret and indefinite detentions, prolonged detention of ‘material witnesses,’ closed hearings and the use of secret evidence, government eavesdropping on attorney-client conversations, FBI home and work visits, wiretapping, seizures of property, removals of aliens with technical visa violations, freezing the assets of charities, and mandatory special registration. (199)

Even Karobi and her detective companion Vic face the same situation in the Airport of New York while flying to San Francisco in search of her father. The people who were pulled out for checking were Indians and they had to cross the electronic device. Karobi feels bad about the racial discrimination, but Vic has not given much importance to that incident and he says, “Welcome to flying while brown in post 9/11 America” (OG 183).

In the meantime in India, Rajat and his family face the plight of Hindu-Muslim rebellion. Divakaruni in the beginning of the novel Oleander Girl itself has given the small introduction about the Hindu-Muslim riot and Godhra train burning through the news bulletin. Both Karobi’s grandfather and Rajat’s father discuss about the train incident and the tragic end. “Ah, yes, those Muslims, a violent lot. Did you hear about the incident on the train today in Gujarat? All those Hindu pilgrims they burnt to death?” (OG 21). Even after the incident the clash continues in different ways which leads in killing the innocent people in the name of religion. The clash filled the peoples’ mind
with violence raised wrong notions towards other religion people. Karobi’s grandfather reflects the insecure mindset of the people after the riot.

“Your driver—isn’t he Muslim?” I hear Grandfather say. “If I were you, I wouldn’t have him taking my family around, nights and all.”

I cringe. I can feel displeasure emanating from Papa. But he says politely, “Asif is very trustworthy.”

“You think I’m prejudiced, don’t you? You’re too young, you haven’t seen what I saw—the Partition riots, right here in Kolkata, men chopped to pieces on the streets with hansulis—”. (OG 22)

After a few months of this mutiny in the Bose’s warehouse, the incident made a huge tension. The workers in the warehouse were filled with Hindus and Muslims together and a news bulletin regarding the clash maddens everyone which leads to the vicious fight. Rajat does not know to handle this problem as he knows only to take care of the accounts. Since the fight was more violent the workers were bleeding heavily. Now Rajat is in the situation to make the important decisions, he has to balance the heavy loss that caused by the fight. With so much of the discussions everyone comes to a conclusion that brings a CD player for the workers to hear music to prevent hearing the news from the radio. However Rajat is not satisfied with this idea and asks to separate men against the idea of his managers. The managers advise him not to fire anyone till Rajat’s father returns, because this would cause a big problem since the one whom he decided to fire is
the important employee and has much influence among the Muslim workers. But his
decision has been finalised.

When Mrs. Bose in the novel Oleander Girl comes to the gallery, she has to
handle a list of questions by the former Muslim workers who were fired by Rajat. As she
is threatened by the workers, Bose’s car driver comes to rescue her, but she
misunderstands that he was one of them and fires him from the job too. Then Asif joins
with Sheik Rehman for a job since he was insulted by Bose’s family. Asif meets Pia-
Missy and Rajat to wish Pia on her birthday near a restaurant but again gets insulted by
Rajat. After they have left the restaurant Asif feels something different in the
surroundings and finds out there a van follows Rajat’s car. The van that follows the car
attacked them. Asif tries to save them, but also got attacked.

Rajat and Pia were hospitalized. Pia was not awake yet and Rajat got fractured in
his left hand in two places. Pia had explained everything that how they were attacked by
the terrorists.

… we were our way back from the restaurant when this horrible van
suddenly rammed into us for no reason. At first I thought it was an
accident, but then it kept hitting us… I screamed and screamed for help
but the road was completely empty…—but I’m pretty sure I heard
gunshots. (OG 249)

The authentic historical elements with the social realities has been brought out in
the novel Queen of Dreams and Oleander Girl as the theory “uses the past to read the
present, revealing the politics of our own society by what we choose to emphasize or suppress of the past” (Barry 178). The novels also concentrate on the immigrant society, which becomes a marginalized group after the attacks. *Oleander Girl* in addition concentrates on the people’s lives after the religious clash. And the views and beliefs of cultural materialists such as race, class, religion, terrorism influence and determine the life of the protagonists Rakhi and Karobi.

Gender discrimination even never leaves small children to escape from disappearance as the girl children are killed either on their birth or inside their mothers’ womb. “Female infanticide is the intentional killing of baby girls due to the preference for male babies and from the low value associated with the birth of females.” (*qtd.* in Jones 2) This has an age-old history in India. The main reason for female infanticide is the dowry system of our social structure. The other reasons are patriarchy and religion. In this man made social conceptions, the females are considered inferior and weaker. Females who fill up half of the inhabitants are being victimized, harassed and oppressed regardless of the nation to which they fit in, neglectful of the religious conviction which they profess and unmindful of the period in which they exist. In every part of the world they are threatened by many provocations. Female infanticide is the biggest violence against them, which even repudiates their basic right to live in this world.

In India, this issue has developed as a burning social problem a decade before. They murder a girl baby with different horrible techniques. In south India, especially in Tamilnadu it became the highest social issue at the end of the twentieth century.
“In the nearly 300 poor hamlets of the Usilampatti area of Tamilnadu [state], as many as 196 girls died under suspicious circumstances [in 1993] … some were fed dry, unhulled rice that punctured their windpipes, or were made to swallow poisonous powdered fertilizer. Others were smothered with a wet towel, strangled or allowed to starve to death.” (qtd. in Jones 2)

After some years the government has realized the seriousness of this issue and brought out the set laws to save female children and to increase the female sex ratio. The act termed Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994: with the objectives such as:

i) Prohibition of the misuse of pre-natal diagnostic techniques for determination of sex foetus, leading to female foeticide.

ii) Prohibition of advertisement of the techniques only for detection or determination of sex.

iii) Regulations of the use of techniques only for the specific purpose of detecting genetic abnormalities or disorders.

iv) Permission to use such techniques only under certain conditions by the registered institution.

v) Punishment for violation of the provisions of the Act; and

vi) To provide deterrent punishment to stop such inhuman acts of female foeticide. (G.B. Reddy 127)
In *Sister of My Heart*, Sudha and Anju are the two young girls who can be considered as the protagonists. As the title of the novel represents sisterhood as these girls cherish their sisterhood like relationship and consider them as twin sisters. They live in the patriarchal family where they respect the traditional values. There are no other men in the family, even then they follow all the traditional values since the system of the society made by men which made up the women’s mind that way.

Anju after her marriage leaves to the United States with her husband and Sudha enters a family led by her autocratic mother-in-law. The level of the woman’s harassment after the marriage is noticeable. As Sudha is not financially independent, she becomes an archetypal victim as a married woman. Her mother-in-law forces her to get an abortion when she comes to that it was a baby girl. Sudha informs Anju in a shattered voice that,

> … my mother-in-law said the eldest child of the Sanyal family has to be male—that’s how it’s been in the last five generations. She said it’s not fitting, it’ll bring the family shame and ill luck. (SMH 237-38)

Divakaruni brings out the attitude of the people who treat the women so low in Indian society. To tell it to her readers, she chooses the land of opportunities which one cannot imagine in the native land. When Sudha asks her husband to save his daughter he does not respond her in a proper way. She tells everything to Anju that her mother-in-law has fixed an appointment for the abortion. Anju recalls the things she knows about the sex selective abortion in India and asks Sudha whether she has any money with as she knows that her mother-in-law handles the finance in their home. But surprisingly Sudha has five hundred rupees with her which she has taken from her husband’s desk.
Anju advises Sudha to reach Howrah to live with their mothers. Sudha knows that it is not an easy thing in such type of the society. But when she reaches her mother’s house as Anju advised, she got surprised as the oldest women in the family Pishima who respects traditional values and culture, and makes a path to every other women in the family to follow the tradition, at last turns against the traditional values and comes to rescue Sudha from this evil thing and utters that,

"Why should she care anymore what people say? What good has it done to us?, a whole lifetime of being afraid of what society might think?. I spit on this society which says it’s fine to kill a baby girl in her mother’s womb, but wrong for the mother to run away to save her child." (SMH 268)

Divakaruni clarifies the status of Indian female children through her narration. Amartiya Sen analyses the issue and expresses that,

“It is interesting that even female foetuses tend to have a lower probability of miscarriage than male foetuses. Even though everywhere in the world, more male babies are born than female babies… The concept of ‘missing women’ was devised to give some idea of the enormity of this phenomenon by focusing on the women who are simply not there, primarily due to unusually high morality compared with normal female-male ratios… Anti-female bias in care and morality imposes a massive penalty across the world against the survival of women.” (224)

Today's India offers a considerable measure of chances to women, with women having a voice in ordinary life, the business world and also in political life. In any case
India is still a male overwhelmed society, where females are frequently seen as subordinates and sub-par compared to men. “You can tell the condition of a Nation by looking at the status of its Women” (Jawaharlal Nehru). But in India women’s position is still a big question mark. They do not have the valuable status in the society. The problems of women in the patriarchal society have been brought out by Divakaruni through her novels *Sister of My Heart, Vine of Desire* and *Victory Song*. She is distinct in narrating the status of women while comparing with her counter parts as she views them from the globalised perception.

Divakaruni produces the strong females who encounter difficulties between tradition and modernity. She, who is fond of creating the strongest women characters in her fictions, makes an attempt on creating a female world in *Sister of My Heart* where all the women characters are strong enough to face the patriarchal society. There are three widows and two young girls in the novel and they face all the stages of dramatic life like marriage, motherhood, widowhood and divorce. They all live without the support of men and face financial crisis like every other typical middle-class family.

*Sister of My Heart* is the story about the survival of women in modern India. The girls Anju and Sudha are deeply in love with one another and cherish their sisterhood. In fact, they are technically cousins but they want to be called by everyone as twin sisters. They were born on the same day and same place. They share every secret of their life and from their childhood they live only with their widowed mothers Gowri and Nalini. Pishima the eldest one in the family used to tell ancient stories to the girls, but Anju always refuses the superstitious tales. But Sudha on the contrary believes all such stuffs and loves to hear those type stories from Pishima.
Anju is the person whose mind is filled with rebellious thoughts: Sudha is persuaded towards goodness and is defined by her extraordinary prettiness. And the women characters in this novel face many hurdles but they overcome all their difficulties by their intelligence. Here Divakaruni shows the strength of the Indian joint family system where everyone tries to learn to face all the troubles as Anju and Sudha face in their lives. They acquire the basic concept living by hearing through the stories the rituals and the lifesaving attitudes. The Indian women should strictly follow the rituals and practices of the Hinduism. If they deny those customs they would be treated as a curse of their family.

Once Pishima tells the story about Bidhata Purush who comes down to give fortune to the new born babies. Sudha wants to know whether Bidhata Purush comes for them both, Pishima reluctantly says that, “May be Bidhata Purush doesn’t come for girl-babies” (SMH 6). But Anju by protesting against this statement and replies “May be there is no Bidhata Purush either” (6). The widowhood of that time clearly is depicted by Pishima’s character. She has lost her husband at the age of eighteen and shaved her head after the death. She still wears the white saree and cuts her hair close to the scalp. “The custom of the tonsure (shaving the head) of widows is a rather repulsive and unfortunate one… The tonsure was intended to destroy the beauty of her face and make her look unattractive” (Pinto 41). Since she is a widow, she does not participate in any rituals and stays back. “I hate Pishi when she puts on her patient smile and sits in the back of the hall on feast days, not participating, because widows mustn’t” (SMH 10).

The traditional Hindu religious system gives more importance to the patriarchal society, dominated by the male in every aspect of the society. Mainly, the Indian family
system is based on male-controlled norms; hardly one could find the female-controlled family system where the female would play a vital role in inheriting the property, than the male. After the father’s death, in the usual patriarchal household setup, the duty of leading the family lies with the mother. The woman has to support the family economically, passionately, emotionally and physically. The exact condition prevails in the family of the girls. Sudha’s father Gopal and Anju’s father Bijoy have gone for the fearful experiment of finding the ruby cave. They have lost their lives in the adventure. In the absence of male in the family, there is no one to take care of the Chatterjee family. So Anju’s mother Gourimma accepts the burden. The three adult women try to support each other to bring up the two girls Anju and Sudha.

In the novel *Sister of My Heart*, aunt Pishimi gives the moral support to the entire family, aunt Nalini physically supports the family and in the households, and Gowrimma supports the entire family economically, which becomes the biggest support for the family and makes them economically independent. After the marriage, the two sister friends have been separated. Anju goes to America with her alcoholic husband Sunil, and Sudha stays in Badhaman. Her husband has psychologically harassed Anju. Sunil keeps distance with her since he secretly loves Sudha for her beauty. Here in India, Sudha lives without the moral support of her husband and dominated by her mother-in-law. When she gets pregnant with a female baby, she was forced to abort the child by her mother-in-law. She rebelliously takes the decision of leaving her husband’s home to save her precious girl baby. And then with the help of Anju, she lands in America with her child Dayatiya.

Divakaruni at the beginning portrays Anju as a strong willed woman, but finally Sudha
proves that she is a strong and a stubborn woman by taking every decision correctly. She brings two distinct women on roles to perform the changing scenario of women in India.

Divakaruni’s *Vine of Desire* is the sequel to the novel *Sister of My Heart*, which encounters the life of Anju and Sudha after their reunification in America. The novelist shows the social realities that faced by the two urban women in San Francisco. They cross so many painful incidents throughout their life to discover their own self in the patriarchal society. Anju after her miscarriage tries to cope up with her life by being normal. But the rejection from her husband after the arrival of Sudha leads Anju to continue her education. After starting her education, she finds the new perspective of her own self and sheds all the age old customs that lies within her. She gets appreciation for her writing style from her professor for an assignment.

Sudha does not change her life as Anju since she has to take care of her little daughter. She has been the one who suffers much from her surroundings more than Anju. After the marriage, she has been the one who suffers by the archetypal family settings and poverty. Even after the pregnancy, she has been the one who has been forced to have an abortion, but fortunately escapes from the miscarriage. When she arrives at the new land she faces the problems of different types such as molestation by Sunil physically as well as psychologically. She expresses her disappointment towards the society that, much violence have been done to her - her mother defeats her life into the shape of her desires, her mother-in-law tortures her in each and everything, finally, Sunil focuses on her body, for his need.
Though Anju does not receive the opportunities like Sudha, she finds a way to get a job and becomes independent. Being independent it has been not so easily possible in India for her. The new place becomes the world of opportunities for her new findings. She decides to leave Anju’s house and starts an independent life by taking care of Mr. Sen in Trineep and Myra’s house. She meets different people in various places of America, which teaches her the different types of survival. At last, she makes a decision to leave the United States to go back to her native land. She does not need to depend on anyone and she could live on her own. She has to lead a life in India with her new experiences, which she has learnt in the immigrant land. Her choice to go back homeland is an echo of the shifting state of the immigrant land. Her replacement is a proclamation of her individuality and she is successful in transforming her identity against the patriarchal society at least moderately if not completely. Even though she takes decisions on her own, she doubts her choices, whether it is right or wrong. Yet she convincingly says, “atleast I know what I don’t want”(VD 202). As she takes decision to return to her country by denying all the offers by men she becomes a role model for every women in the country to live independently. If a novelist writes about independence of women, whatever the revolutionary things they write finally arrives at the conclusion of finding the partner for their protagonists. Only some writers succeed in writing the real feminist novel and obviously Divakaruni succeeds in producing the protagonist in such perspective.

Sudha finds new significance for her life; her experiences in diasporic land made her empowered and independent like Anju. Both of them come out of the traditional values of the man-made society which suppressed women. Their unsatisfied and
voiceless life begins to blossom with hope, satisfactory and new meanings. Divakaruni confirms that the women become aware of their own identity and quest for the new findings.

The female characters of the novel (name the novel) continue to support each other in all the situation which symbolically shows the empowerment of women and the women in the present world have started raising their voice to support their fellow women. Portrayal of the women characters shifts from the traditional to modern types. The women who seem to be suppressed by the situation become brave, spirited and liberated to fight for their rights. Divakaruni perhaps admires the women characters with boldness since she creates her protagonists with the daring and practical mind set to carve her own fate.

The novel *Victory Song* deals with the theme of independence struggle of India before the 1940s. Even though it deals with the independence struggle, it can be focused as a feminist novel too. Divakaruni gives importance to the suppression of Indian women by means of family and culture. This novel displays the predicament of Indian women. Julia Hoydis in her article says that,

> Traditionally, Indian society is firmly patriarchal-oriented with an establishment segregation of the sexes and the family of crucial importance. Consequently, these issues and suppression of women are current topics in Indian writing and especially in Divakaruni’s fiction. (*A Palace of Her Own*, 2)
The title of the novel *Victory Song* is an allusion that the novel furtively supports the freedom of women from all the suppression in the name of culture and tradition. Neela, a twelve-year-old girl with the self-determined thinking occupies the entire novel as a protagonist with her mischievous activities. Divakaruni portrays Neela as a true feminist who does not want to be a housewife in some small village and want to grow up as an activist. In her author’s note Divakaruni says that, “I chose the name ‘Neela’ because in Bengali, it means ‘blue’ a colour that symbolizes Infinite possibilities both for Neela herself and for India” (VS x).

The novel *Victory Song* is located in the little village of Shona Gram in Bengal. The first chapter opens with the arrangements of a wedding ceremony of Neela’s sister and it totally encounters about the dowry system of Indian tradition. Dowry is like selling a girl by giving so much money in the market. The bride’s family should give all the things whichever they ask for the groom’s family, which is a part of the dowry. The following passage from *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* states the position of Sikhism on the subject of dowry:

> Any other dowry, which the perverse place for show, that is false pride and worthless gilding. O’ my father Give me the Name of Lord God as gift and dowry. (qtd. in Kumbhare 134)

Elaine Showalter in her essay “Towards a Feminist Poetics” expresses that “Patriarchal societies do not really sell their sons, but their daughters are all for sale sooner or later” (VS 94). It reveals the truth that how the male dominant society made-up Indian women’s mind that they should do only the household works and they are not
supposed to do other activities like studying, reading novels, playing and so on. Those activities are only meant for men. Neela’s mother says that, “I can barely read, but I’ve done just fine, haven’t I? Usha can sew and embroider. She knows how to make mango pickles and sweet rasagollas. That’s what prospective in-laws look for in girls.” (VS 6).

Divakaruni pictures, in her writings, the generations to declare that the status of women in the society has not come to them the other day but has been existing since decades. Showalter argues,

… One of the problems of the feminist critique is that it is male-oriented. If we study stereotypes of women, the sexism of male critics, and the limited role women play in literary history, we are not learning what women have felt and experienced, but what men have thought women should be. (94)

Divakaruni while narrating the dominance of men points out that there in living situations comes the “shift” from tradition to modernity. In the novel Victory Song, Neela does not accept all these traditional myths and she has other ideas and wants to achieve something big in her life. Neela’s mother wants the wedding ceremony to be so luxurious like the marriage of Ram Prasad Choudary’s son, who is the Zamindar of the village. She represents every other mother of the Indian family who wants their daughter’s wedding to be so grand so the people who come to the wedding would wish them, however, it is not only about the wishing but about the status of the family. Neela is really upset about the dowry system as her parents struggle to arrange this marriage. “It’s unfair that the girl’s parents should have to pay much, Neela thought once again. After all, aren’t Usha’s in-laws gaining a new and valuable family member, someone to help them at home, for free,
for the rest of her life?” (VS 21). Even her father does not want to make it as a big affair since the independence struggle is going on.

Before the wedding ceremony, Neela happens to be with her elder sister Usha, and she discloses her mindset about the marriage that she is so scary about the approach of their husband’s family. Neela gets disappointed about this usual myth and thinks that why are they restricted to speak with their future life partners even after their engagement.

And yet—that’s how it always had been in the traditional Indian families like theirs. Young men and women weren’t allowed to meet alone and get to know each other, not even after their weddings had been arranged. And the thought of choosing one’s own husband was, of course, out of a question. . . But why can’t a girl choose her own husband? she thought. What’s wrong with that?. (VS 5)

Usha consoles her sister that surely they would like her since the whole family have chosen her and also she is sweet natured to get along with them easily.

Whenever Neela comes into a home with a scraped knee from climbing a tree or with her muddy dress from having given a bath to Budhi, her favourite cow, her mother would advise her to be like her elder sister to sit calmly at home with a piece of embroidery and accuses her husband that only because of him she got spoiled like this. But Neela’s father Hari Charan always supports her that she has grown up as a smart girl and the Pandit says that she reads better than any girl at her age even better than her
sister. As a traditional Indian woman Neela’s mother would not appreciate her for reading better, but would accuse that it would only fill her mind with the strange ideas. “Neela knew that what her mother said was true—that was what people wanted in a daughter-in-law. But weren’t other things important, too?” (6). Once when she read some books while taking rest her great-aunt Mangala insisted her that, “Resting does not mean straining your eyes reading all that small print, young lady” (VS 12).

Divakaruni creates an atmosphere to present her characters, particularly the women, in a way that their eagerness to nation building is much but they face innumerable hurdles to register it. At the time of the wedding, a group of freedom fighters came and asked the crowd to help them to fight against the British by giving the money. Everyone had given something to help them out and Neela has given her gold chain, which is the prime help for the freedom fighters. When her parents asked about that gold jewel she proudly and without fear said that,

I’m very sorry that I’ve upset you both so much, Baba. I didn’t realize the gold chain was for my dowry—Ma gave it to me, so I thought it was mine. And I don’t think it was wrong of me to give something so valuable to the freedom fighters. . . After all they’re risking their lives for our sake, to make us independent. . . But am willing to accept any punishment you give me. (VS 34-35)

Neela wears sari for her sister’s wedding and while talking about the bridegroom someone admires the beauty of Neela too. Divakaruni pumps her characters further through others’ criticism saying that Neela has grown up as a smart girl, but it is really
After Usha’s departure to her husband’s home, Neela has caught up with the remembrance of her sister and got worried about the new ambiance. She rebelliously thinks, “why does a bride have to go to her husband’s home after getting married? . . . Why does she have to make all the changes? (33)”. As Showalter points out that, “… when we free ourselves from the linear absolutes of male literary history, stop trying to fit women between the lines of the male tradition, and focus instead on the newly visible world of female culture” (95). Divakaruni sees Neela as bold and her father also treats her confident than her mother leaving the care with his daughter than his wife. Her father considers her as a smart and bold girl who would support her family, even if he is not there as he leaves both the family and her wife in Neela’s custody. She too promises her father that she would take care of her mother and her family.

As Neela’s father asked, she helped her mother in everything. She took care of the cows and her favourite cow Budhi. It had been a long time after the departure of her father, Neela got really worried. But her mother consoled her that he would arrive soon without knowing the seriousness of the situation. In that awful situation she had met a young boy who was a freedom fighter too. She really got inspired about the sacrifice of
that boy at this age. At the beginning she misunderstood him as a thief, but he had explained everything about him to Neela. He has got jailed and escaped from there. He got wounded by the encounter with the police and seeks help from Neela to recover. But Neela could not inform about this to her mother since her mother does not have much sympathy for the freedom fighters. So she has decided to help him out till the recovery. So she kept him in the cattle without a second thought.

Neela cleans his wound and has given him first aid. Panditji, who is the teacher of Neela helped her to nurse the boy well. Panditji had informed about this to Neela’s mother and requested her to keep him safely. Since Panditji requested, she accepted and ordered Neela not to spend much time with him as Neela had rebellious ideas in her head. The boy told about his group of freedom fighters. She asked everything about the freedom fighters and the greatest leaders like Subhash Chandra Bose and Gandhiji. Samar said that he does not have parents, but he has a cousin called Bimala who resides in Calcutta. She was the only girl who cared about Samar. He said about the struggles to become a freedom fighter. She was so curious about hearing the adventurous life of them. She has told him that even her father had gone to participate in the freedom fighting, she was so worried that he has not returned yet. He comforts her with his concerning words that, do not worry until something to worry about. When police comes in search of Samar, she acts cleverly and Samar escapes from them safely. He leaves a note on Buthi’s neck for Neela to read with the address of Samar’s cousin Bimala. (I feel there is jumble in tenses. Please take care of it)

Neela’s mother starts worrying about her husband and arranges a prayer ceremony for his welfare. After the prayer Neela reaches home before her mother. At the
same time minstrel shows at the gate of her home and she receives him happily to know some news about her father. Neela asks him whether he could help her father. He has promised that he would inquire about her father’s situation in Calcutta. She even informs about the note that Samar left for her. He expresses happily that it would be the greatest help for him to find her father. While leaving baoul teaches her the song VandeMataram,

“You are the strength in our arms, Mother,
You are the devotion in our heart.
We worship you! We worship you!
We worship you throughout the land! (Source)

This is the song about the mother India. Every man wants to liberate their motherland from the British. They struggle for the freedom of their motherland, but not for the freedom of their own mother at home. They worship their motherland, but not their mother. They say that the motherland is their strength in their arms, but they think that a woman know nothing and does not allow them to get the proper education.

Rousseau, a French feminist in his newspaper Querelle des Femmes talks about feminism that,

“What makes you think more highly of [a woman]. . . –to see her busy with feminine occupations, with her household duties, with her children’s clothes about her, or to find her writing verses at her dressing table surrounded with pamphlets of every kind . . .? The genuine mother of a family is no woman of the world; she is almost as much of a recluse as the nun in her convent. . .The
feminist ideology is based on the recognition that women constitute a group that is wrongfully oppressed by male-defined values and male-controlled institutions of social, political, cultural, and familial power,“(Gilbert, 626)

Neela takes the problem in her own hand to solve it. She decides to travel alone to Calcutta to find her father. At the same time her mother brings a marriage proposal to her and fixes the engagement the next day. Neela gets fear about the engagement ceremony which is really a serious affair. She thinks that, “Engaged girls are kept under strict supervision and expected to behave properly at all times. It would be the end of whatever little freedom I have!”(68). She wishes to have someone to talk about all her problems and when she opens the bundle to see what is inside she had found a minstrel’s outfit—a longish saffron robe and a turban cloth. So she wants to take the situation in her own hand. If she tells her mother about this decision, she would not let her get away from her village.

On the next morning, she dresses like a minstrel and leaves the home by leaving a note for her mother. She happens to travel alone on the train for the first time. A woman cannot even think about these activities. But as she represents a true feminist, she breaks all the rules of the Indian tradition. Neela does not talk feminism as all the women do in the present world, but she shows feminism in her activities. There is no use of arguing about feminism, but should apply it in our life. Nevertheless, nowadays women are aware of their problems, but they have fear to raise their voice against the patriarchal society even in the twenty first century. Divakaruni portrays Neela as a strong willed girl who loves to have adventurous life as well as wants to help freedom fighters.
As the British colonized India, the situation of the women was so bad since they were doubly marginalized. They were colonized by the British as well as by their own husbands. Patriarchy does not mean that only men are suppressed women, but when we take Indian society, even women suppresses women as if mother-in-law leads the whole family and treats her own daughter-in-law as a maid. But it cannot be concluded that men are not the reason for this patriarchal society, since all the rules were man made in the olden days. When Neela reaches Calcutta, she realizes that how the British treats the Indian people. As a rebellious girl, she thinks that being the foreigners to our country they treat us as the foreigners and not even treats as a human being.

‘Hey, you!’ shouted the chauffeur of the car. ‘What are you staring at? Hatho! Hatho! Move!’…‘Damn beggars!’ exclaimed the white man in the back seat to his companion, his lips twisted in a sneer. ‘Can’t get away from them anywhere in this city. They should all be whipped.’… Neela flinched back, her face burning. The man had spoken with such disgust—as though he didn’t consider people like her to be human beings… At the same time she was furious. How dare he speak to me like that! This isn’t even his country! ... And now they think they are better than Indians! (75)

Neela finds Bimala’s house who is an upper class girl and the cousin of Samar. Bimala helps Neela to find her father. Neela hears the news that her father is in jail and would be deported to the Andaman Islands in a few days. Along with Neela, Biren, who is the leader of all freedom fighters and Samar planned something big to rescue Neela’s
father and freedom fighters who have been jailed by the British. They had rescued the freedom fighters and also Hari Charan. At last, she proves that she is a rebellious girl by saving her father from a grave danger. She thinks that her father would be angry with her for running away from home alone without informing her mother. But Hari Charan gives her a warm hug and says that,

“How can I be angry? If it wasn’t you, I’d be deported by now, to spend the rest of my life away from India and my family. You were a smart, Brave girl to do what you did, and I think your mother will understand”. (110)

Divakaruni portrayed Neela as a smart and brave girl, even at the period of colonization, where the women had no freedom. But at present women have freedom to some extent to express their feelings boldly and to rebel against the patriarchal society. As Neela, every woman in the present century should have the courage to voice their problems and should be aware of their rights. Jeane d'Ark expresses about the three stages of feminism that,

(i) With the emancipation of woman
will come the emancipation of the worker

(ii) Liberty for women, liberty for the people through a new organization of the household and industry

(iii) Equality among us, of rights and duties; Since our banner is to pain, It is just that it be to honor. (Gilbert, 639).
The main theme of the novel (name the novel) is colonization in the 1940s. But the character Neela struggles for the freedom of women throughout the novel and the novelist portrays her as a representative of women.

The novel *The Palace of Illusions* is the story, which extracted from the ancient epic poem *The Mahabharat*. The ancient epic always suppresses women and does not give any importance to them. The concept of the Mahabharat is to consider women as a movable property. In those days, if the women were ill-treated by men they should not raise against the men since they were treated as slaves and the voiceless victims. Through Draupadi’s character, Divakaruni shows the status of women in the contemporary world. There are three types of women exist in the universe; the women who follow the traditional values, the women who know what they need but could not implement them and finally the independent women.

Draupadi, is a kind of woman who falls under the category of following the traditional values as well as the independent women. She even achieves the privilege of selecting her own life partner. She feels so happy to select her life partner in *Suyamvara*. But the truth shatters her dreams into pieces that her *Swayamvara* is a trick to make Arjuna friendly to lead a war. Draupadi painfully says, “Why even call it a swayamvar then? … “Why make it a spectacle of me before all those kings? It’s my father, not I, who gets to decide whom I’ll marry” (PL 56).

Draupadi is an unsatisfied woman who thinks that her father does not like her birth, marries five men without her will, and insulted by the enemies of her husbands which leads to Gurushektra war. Draupadi loves to hear about her mystical birth from her
only companion Dhai Ma. Dhai Ma narrates the story to her whenever she asks, and it claims that everyone in that hall was unrehearsed for the appearance of Draupadi. After her arrival, there was an echo, which informs that she is the one who is going to change the entire history. Draupadi is happy that her life even at the time of her birth is considered inordinate and important. She then analytically explores the names that were given to her brother and to herself. The name “Dhristadyumna” for her brother meant “destroyer of enemies” and the name “Draupadi” for herself simply meant “Daughter of Drupad”. Her brother’s name concisely carries out the task of his life, which is to kill the outstanding Drona while her name, Draupadi, only gives her a personality knotted with her parent, King Drupad. She feels that she could have given a different name as she was born to change the history. This name seems to demonstrate patriarchy, Dhri’s name fell within the bounds of acceptability – though if I were his parent I might have picked a more cheerful appellation, like Celestial Victor, or Light of the Universe. But Daughter of Drupad? Granted. He hadn’t been expecting me, but couldn’t my father have come up with something a little less egoistic? Something more suited to a girl who was supposed to change history?

I answered to Draupadi for the moment because I had no choice. But in the long run, it would not do. I needed a more heroic name. (PI 5)

Draupadi continuously imagines of making her own palace to live with a set of laws she has created. As an unexpected girl for her father, he does not care her much. So she mostly thinks in the way man thinks. When she hears that painting, sewing, cooking
and parenting are the main works of a woman, she stubbornly rebels against those types of stereotypical education. She wants to learn all the education that has been given to her brother. She even succeeds in getting the education as her brother. Sometimes she even thinks that she has started behaving like men nowadays, “Each day I thought less and less like the women around me” (PI 26) and witnesses that it was, “making me too hard headed and argumentative, too manlike in my speech” (PI 23). A true feminist resembles in her when she hears an idea which underestimate women she just thinks, “Who said that a woman’s highest purpose in life is to support the warriors of her life” (PI 26).

The centre theme of the novel (name) is her quest for identity throughout the novel. She is always in motion and admits that,

it seemed that everything I’d lived until now had been a role. The princess who longed for acceptance, the guilty girl whose heart wouldn’t listen, the wife who balanced her fivefold role precariously, the rebellious daughter-in-law, the queen who ruled the most magical palaces, the distracted mother, the beloved companion of Krisha, who refused to learn the lessons he offerd, the woman obsessed with vengeance – none of them were the true Panchaali. (PI 229)

Draupati does not get any true love from her father; as her father treats her only as a property to be sold. So she feels so alone in her father’s palace, and expects more love from her husbands. She does not even get the normal love from her husbands, there are other things they loved more. Their notions of honour; of loyalty toward each other, of reputation are more important to them than her suffering. She plays a role of victim of all
the sufferings of the orthodox life. She feels ashamed when was gambled and insulted by Dhuryodhan before not everyone but her husbands’ come for her rescue. Dhuryodhan compares her sensitive state with the dead meat that, “She’s dead. Half of her died the day when everyone she had loved and counted on to save her sat without protest and watched her being shamed. The other half perished with her beloved home. But never fear” (PI 206).

This clearly depicts that Draupadi has never been an ideal Indian female, who is always muted and a victim. But she represents the feminist personality who always outspoken and independent but without breaking the traditional value to be a devoted wife. As she has been treated as slave before every one she expresses her hard feelings towards every men by spitting up the words:

I am a Queen, Daughter of Drupad, sister of Dhristadyuma, mistress of the greatest palace on earth. I can’t be gambled away like a bag of coins, or summoned to court like dancing. But then I remembered what I’d read a long ago in a book, never imagining that quaint law could ever have any power over me. The wife is the property of the husband, no less than a cow or a slave. (PI 190)

Draupadi, on the contrary, most of the times behave like an ordinary woman, whenever she feels in trouble and helpless she expects kindness from the men in her life. Always she has been expecting every man to take care of her. At first when she marries a unknown person like Arjun she does not say a word and leaves her father’s place which shows the typical Indian women’s mentality. She walks with him to his home politely
when he refuses to talk with her, not even care her. She has been so polite when her mother-in-law asks her sons to share among them, which was highly terrific words she has ever heard in her life. In all these situations she has been performing as a classic Indian woman.

However, Divakaruni portrays Draupadi as a well-mannered Indian woman as well as a rebellious woman who has thrust to get freedom in her life. Somehow, she becomes a successful female in finding and getting her rights. But in her death she feels still unsuccessful in getting her true identity which is the state of contemporary women who protest against the harassments they face, but not yet achieved their goal of being entirely free and independent as men.

Everything originates with the bonding and relationships. Life is nothing without relationships, especially in Indian culture. As Aristotle says, “the life of virtue by its nature requires the presence and participation of others” (Hauerwas 33). People always surround the social system in which they live and tangle, and to play their social parts correctly, there are some imperative relationships have been established. There are so many relationships which are always given much importance in every place are husband-wife, men-women and mother-in-law- daughter-in-law but the main relationships which are not considered by many are father - daughter and mother-daughter relationships, even though they are the most committed relationships, from emotional and psychological point of view. Yet, in contemporary world gay-lesbian relationships and live-in relationships are the burning issues of discussion. It appears a little archaic to talk about the father – daughter and mother-daughter relationships. Nowadays, due to the impact of western culture there is no importance for the relationships such as of father-daughter and
mother-daughter relationships, which lead the girl child to face various psychological problems without the moral support from her parents. Since they become socially isolated and psychologically affected which leads to inability to face the society. In the select novels, Divakaruni’s women characters become socially isolated because of their parents and struggles to face the society on their own. In the novels *Sister of My Heart, Vine of Desire, Queen of Dreams*, the novelist depicts the psychologically affected daughters who are socially isolated because of their parents.

Sudha and Anju in the novel *Sister of My Heart* lives with her widowed mothers who lose their fathers even before they were born. But they are blamed for their fathers’ death as they are the children born with the ill luck. Their dead fathers not only isolate them but also create them a bad name which is because of the traditionally believed myth which says if death causes to the father when the baby in his/her mother’s womb which is because of the baby’s ill luck. Since the family has financial crisis the mothers need to work hard in order to fulfill the needs of the family. This leads the girls towards the unwanted hatred on their fathers. Anju expresses, “I hate my father. I hate the fact that he could go off so casually in search of adventure without a single thought for what would happen to the rest of us”. (SMH 24) So the cousins nurture love with one another as they do not get love from their parents.

I argue that we put a stranglehold on the richness of our emotional life if siblings attachment and love is reduced to a “second edition” of the original parental relationships (*qtd.* in Coles 71)
Most of the time, the little girls live in the imaginary world of the mythical story and compare them with the mythical characters. Even the novel *Sister of My Heart* has been separated into two different parts like the fairy tales as the sisters imagine that they live in fairy land, Sudha being a princess and Anju as a prince who always saves Sudha from the evils.

Our favorite game was acting out the fairy tales Pishi told us, where Sudha was always the princess and I the prince who rescued her… And when we had nightmares, instead of going to our mothers for comfort, we squeezed into one bed and held each other. (SMH 12)

To see this psychologically they both being neglected by their parents seek someone’s care and affection which they try to search in one another. Even though they are the cousins, they love to be called as twin sisters. Some writers say that the person who suffers from loss and abandonment would always search the love from their siblings. Some writers have commented the real life history of the poet Wordsworth and his sister as follows:

It has been suggested, by some writers, Dorothy and William’s intense relationship was linked to the loss of their mother. Dorothy and William, as in many cases of strong sibling attachment, incestuous or otherwise, has suffered loss and abandonment. (Coles 71)

In their adulthood, they get confused with the love towards men and the love between them. Their love is strong comparing with the love they have for the men. They always complement each like man and women. This is totally a confused state for both of
them when analysing it in a psychological point of view. Freud and Dann observe, “There had been no parental attention. Therefore, these children drew upon an identification with the peer/sibling group for their psychic development” (Coles 77).

The girls are so intimate and always share their deep feelings with one another. When Sudha comes to know that, her father was the reason for the death of Anju’s father, which makes her to live with the guilty feelings. In their adulthood Sudha loves a man called Ashok but sacrifices her love to save Anju’s life because in Indian tradition if a woman in a family elopes with someone the other girl of the family becomes a victim. So Sudha does not want to spoil the life of Anju like her (Sudha) father. They both get married on the same day and their path has been separated. Anju marries Sunil and migrates to the United Stated whereas Sudha lives in India with her husband Ramesh in an orthodox family and faces so many glitches.

Although they are separated while facing the troubles in their life they try to get advice from each other. As Sudha lives in a typical patriarchal family, her mother-in-law expects her to deliver a boy baby. The unfortunate Sudha carries a girl baby and when her mother-in-law comes to know that she insists her to infanticide the baby. Sudha expects her husband to stop this but he fails to do so. As she, a fatherless woman, feels panic about the situation. There were no possibilities to return to her mother’s home also, this makes her again to search for the parental help and care from Anju. Like a price in the mythical story again she rescues her from this dreadful situation. Advice from Anju boosts up the confidence of Sudha and she wants to stand up against the traditional myths to save her child. She returns to her mother’s house but her mother does not support her as always and worries about the set of laws made by the patriarchal society. Feeling
lonely inside she manages to stand on her own which always socially isolated daughters do.

In the novel *Queen of Dreams* the protagonist Rakhi has been totally isolated by her parents since her mother was a dream teller throughout her life. Even though her mother avoids her, Rakhi’s father could have cared her for some extent but she does not even get her father’s love as a child. Sarah S. Rosenthal aptly observes that,

… for women who grew up with “unavailable” fathers. These fathers come in many forms but they all have a common characteristics: they fail to provide their daughters with the unconditional love and the feeling of security that a child requires to become a woman with the positive self-concept and the ability to form close adult relationship. (Rosenthal ix)

Like most of the girls in the earth, Rakhi also longs for love, attention, and affirmation from her father and mother. Nevertheless, fails in getting the love from both, especially from her mother. No SUBJECT/NO RELEVANT

Mrs. Gupta has the ability to solve others problems through dream reading. This endowment of vision and capacity to anticipate and aide individuals through their fates entrances her little girl, Rakhi, who as an issue artisan and separated mother living in Berkeley, California, attempts to keep her balance with her family and with a world in disturbing move. Rakhi likewise feels segregated by her mother's past life in India, and she wishes for something to bring them closer. Troubled by her frightful mystery, Rakhi discovers comfort in the revelation, after her mother's death, of her fantasy diaries. Rakhi’s mother writes in her diaries, which opens the hidden truth of Rakhi’s past.
As Rakhi endeavors to awesome her character, knowing little of India however drawn unyieldingly into a frequently frightful history she is just barely finding, her life has shaken by new loathing. In the wake of the terrorist assaults of 11 September 2001 she and her companions must manage dull new complexities about their cultural assimilation. The terrible viciousness goes upon them and compels the pursuer to view those horrible days from the perspective of migrants and Indian Americans whose only problem is their complexion or the way that they wears a turban. As their ideas of citizenship are scrutinized, Rakhi's quest for personality strengthens. Spooky by her encounters of bigotry, overall finds sudden endowments: the likelihood of new love and understanding for her gang.

The novel *Queen of Dreams* uncovers autonomous, thoughtful women who have acknowledged their life as foreigners and watch the host nation with affectability and objectivity. The novel gives insinuate first individual records of first and second era outsider presence. Mrs. Gupta, the queen of dreams, holds much of her Indianess. Indeed, it is basic she does in this way, to hold the forces she had obtained in India-the force of deciphering dreams – which overall would abandon her. Despite to surrender the forces, nor eager to live in the hollows with elderly folks, Mrs. Gupta strikes a harmony between the two decisions. She determines to pick the third where she could keep the final option of dream telling so that would help others in the world. However she was to make a guarantee to never to wed through she could live with a man in light of the fact that at exactly that point. So dismissing the stately wedding in the sanctuary, she legitimately marries Gupta making him profoundly disappointed and making him feel they were not by any means wedded. To let the fantasy – soul attack her, she is prohibited to waste her
body looking for physical delights. Later, the few leaves for the United States, where the youthful dream – teller's forces abandon her very nearly totally. Not able to dream, Mrs. Gupta loses her personality and sinks into misery.

The prior night she leaves Calcutta, her auntie provides for her a blessing - a pocket with a scoop of earth gathered from the walkway before the hollows. “It is from the walkway in front of the caves, she told me, ground that centuries of dream tellers have stepped on. You’ll need it where you’re going” (QD 176). She thinks that how it would be of any utilization to her in America. In America she does not have any dreams. Urgently she puts the pocket of Indian soil under her cushion and vivid dreams blast on her. Her delightful dreams stand out from her husband's grisly ones, which closes their marital life. She grieves at the cost she needed to pay, friendless nights without her husband's physical touch. Along these lines, from that point on she heads the life of a companion without any activities of a married woman. Not long after, be that as it may, the dream – teller finds that she is pregnant with Rakhi and scratches off her plans. She tries to compensate for it with him by focusing on family obligations.

The dream teller’s separation from her husband and little girl makes a breaking down family in which the little girl vainly strives for her mother's consideration, and the father occasionally sinks into the blankness of drinking. Rakhi's association with her father has broken all through her adolescence. The power of the mother/little girl relationship eclipses the father's delicate endeavours to join with his little girl. Despite the fact that Rakhi understands that her father is much more open to her than her secretive mother she regularly slights him, inclining toward the organization of her mother. As Rakhi puts it, Father,
“He was the tidy one in our household, the methodical one, always kind, the one with music. My mother – secretive, stubborn, unreliable – couldn’t hold a tune to save her life. I wanted to be just like her” (8).

Despite the fact that she can without much of a stretch identify with her father, it is the mother – little girl bond that both entrances Rakhi and makes her uneasy.

The mother in Queen of Dreams shrouds her past trying to keep her little girl from encountering a certain part between her Indian and American characters; she inevitably understands that her hesitance causes her girl to envision her ethnicity and also her mother's local nation through the western viewpoint of the lion's share society. Appallingly, it is just after the mother deceases in an auto collision, Rakhi and her father find the mother's confession booth dream – diary in which she at last permits her family an impression of her true self. Writes in Bengali and gives minimal social foundation with respect to her local nation, the mother thinks that the little girl will change her attention towards her father to fill in the emptiness in her story in the diary. Consequently, the assignment of social transmission is finally redirected to the father. Clarifying Indian society to his daughter, the father answers Rakhi's essential requirement for ethnic having a place, commonality, and coherence, hence helping her reproduces her character.

Rakhi frantically needs to succeed as an issue or as an issue shop holder. Rakhi as an issue subject constrains to live in a ceaseless condition of pressure and irresolution because she is not able to disjoin her ties with the fanciful country however; she has suited into the host society.
The grievances of the mother's life as a vagrant remain generally implicit; even in her diaries she does not inform much regarding her youth. Living as a vagrant in the slums, confronting yearning and hardship, the mother spares by her ability of dream advising:

In the slums where I grew up, people had been afraid of me because I seemed to know secrets about them, their hidden thoughts. It afforded me some protection in that place where orphans were used in cruel ways. (QD 230)

The distance between the mother and the girl shapes existential estrangement all through the novel. Rakhi, as well as her mother, as well, is compelled to face her shortcomings through her association with her little girl. Humorously, despite the fact that Mrs. Gupta evidently has the kind of superhuman personality perusing capacity that empowers her to interpret the fantasies of other individuals, she neglects to translate the psyche of her own girl. At the point when Rakhi has a bad dream that frequents her for a few nights, the girl turns to her mother for help. The mother, nonetheless, can't decipher her girl's fantasy from the portrayal Rakhi gives. She then chooses to see the fantasy for herself; the fantasy teller enters her little girl's cognizance and tries to help her, yet she is frail notwithstanding the dangers she sees in the fantasy. In Rakhi's bad dream, a man is seeking after her in the undergarments segment of a retail chain; his words some way or another lure Rakhi. The mother neglects to caution her girl, and later on, can't understand the meaning of her daughter’s dream about the unknown man.
Rakhi is ignorant of her mother's unintentional harm disguised only in view of concealing her past, she subliminally understand her mother more than anything and it heads both the protagonists as an existential distanced. Rakhi's cognizance pushes her mother to face her own particular past in connection to her girl's available and future. Understanding that her little girl has subliminal information of her mysteries, the mother tries to piece the pictures of her past from showing up in the little girl's brain. While trying to safeguard the separateness of their awareness, and accordingly keep her girl from getting to every last bit of her privileged insights, she endeavors to push Rakhi go into her body. Since Mrs. Gupta never imparts her distresses to Rakhi, the little girl does not create the social abilities vital for powerful correspondence with her family and companions.

The distance Rakhi deliberately makes between of herself and her husband parallels her separation from her mother that Rakhi has encountered for the duration of her life. This broken example of correspondence repeats itself with Rakhi's girl, Jonaki, who inherits her grandma's fantasy – telling ability. At the point when Rakhi discovers that her girl can foresee the future by seeing other individuals' fantasies, she understands that generally as she didn't have any acquaintance with her mother, she doesn't have any acquaintance with her girl as completely as she thought she did. In Rakhi's words:

> She who had come out of my body, tiny and crumpled and containable – even she now has parts to her life that I can’t enter. It doesn’t matter whether they’re real or imagined. I feel excluded all the same. Like the rest of the family – my mother, my father, Sonny – she too has become an enigma (65).
Rakhi succeeds in translating her mother's aims by watching her outward appearances and substantial developments, when the mother tries to show her little girl an activity in dream-advising, her face gets to be hazy to customary human comprehension. At the point when the fantasy teller/mother exhibits to her girl how “to dream what the fox dreams” (143), she gets to be out of reach to her girl:

The girl can see the stillness that takes over her mother’s body. Only the tip of her nose has the slightest quiver in it. And her eyes: they’ve turned moist and flecked with brown… Even though her eyes are open, the girl knows that if she waved her hand in front of their beautiful opaqueness, her mother wouldn’t blink. The girl begins to cry. She feels panic cramping her knees, her fingertips. It is not because she doesn’t know where her mother has gone or that she fears she might not return (these, too, she feels) but because she, Rakhi, cannot follow. (144)

Culturally and socially situating herself as a migrant Indian Mrs. Gupta not acculturates or absorbs yet simply adjusts or modifies with life around her, without changing or changing herself. Her adjustment and she will to be a bona fide Indian surface when Rakhi's Chai Shop was at the purpose of disintegrating and Mrs. Gupta's profitable idea was called for.

Mrs. Gupta's manoeuveres to evacuate Rakhi from her past result in Gupta's disclosure of her ownself. “All this time I thought I was doing it for you. But I’d only been protecting myself” (90). She immovably adhered to her roots opposing the siege or impact of an outsider soil yet neglected to prepare her little girl to discover her roots:
I thought it would protect you if I didn’t talk about the past. That way you wouldn’t be constantly looking back, hankering, like so many immigrants do. I didn’t want to be like those other mothers, splitting you between here and there, between your life right now and that which can never be. But by not telling you about Indian as it really was, I made it into something far bigger. It crowded other things out of your mind. It pressed upon your brain like a tumor. (89)

Raised in the wrong path by her mother, through error as her mother concedes in clear Bengali which Rakhi needs to think to comprehend, Rakhi closer views the bunch issues that unavoidably take after a diasporic subject. Consequently, Rakhi defies the bias and ill will of the lion's share for the minority society when Java, the infamous café, shows up in their region, whose approach was opening new stores in the region of existing coffeehouses, and draws their clients.

Right away before her demise, the mother concedes that her choice not to let her know little girl about India was a mix-up. At the point when Rakhi's café confronts insolvency, she approaches her mother for counsel. Landing at the store Mrs.gupta at last recognizes the issue – “This isn’t a real cha shop’ – she pronounces the word in the Bengali way - ‘but a mishmash, a Westerner’s notion of what’s Indian. Maybe that’s the problem. Maybe if you can make it into something authentic, you’ll survive” (89). Not able to control her response, Rakhi snaps at her mother: “And whose fault is it if I don’t know who I am? If I have a warped Western sense of what’s Indian?” (89). Mrs. Gupta's response is at first communicated through her non-verbal communication by biting her lip, something she has never done previously. Rakhi additionally recognizes that her teeth
are little, with serrated edges like a child's. This outward appearance gives the girl a striking picture of her mother's hidden mental state and uncovers her powerlessness. Perceiving her mother's closeness to a youngster, the girl affirms an adult's position, but the mother re-builds her power by clarifying her thought procession:

I thought it would protect you if I didn’t talk about the past. That way you wouldn’t be constantly looking back, hankering, like so many immigrants do. I didn’t want to be like those other mothers, splitting you between here and there, between your life right now and that which can never be. But by not telling you about India as it really was, I made it into something far bigger. (89)

Assuming liability for her decisions in raising her girl, Mrs. Gupta likewise accentuates her great propositions. Incidentally, endeavouring to ensure her girl from feeling like a pariah in America, she makes her feel like an untouchable both to her mother's past and her family's character.

Rakhi's suspicions about her mother's aims turn out to be very exact. In one of the last areas of her diary, the dream teller concedes: “I was not a good mother to Rakhi. I loved her, but not fully. To love someone fully is to give up selfhood, and I could not risk that. She knew this. Perhaps that is why she constantly longed to understand who I am, to become who I am” (297). The relationship distance between the mother and girl was without a doubt started and managed by the mother, so she could keep up her powers as an problem – teller. The diary uncovers that, as an issue, the mother was detracted from the slums to the hollows of dream – tellers where she was taught to utilize her ability. In
spite of the fact that dream tellers shouldn't fall head over heels in love, the mother defies the senior citizens and runs off with a young person (Rakhi's father) whom she meets on an outing to Calcutta.

Since the mother (Mrs. Gupta) can't effectively take an interest in the familial compromise, it remains to a degree inadequate. In any case, the mother's diaries start the remaking of the father-daughter bond. As the father makes an interpretation of the diaries to Rakhi, the little girl deals with her mother's demise and gradually rediscovers her father's novel character and gifts. In spite of the fact that from the beginning, Rakhi accuses her father for her mother's passing, when the father and little girl begin participating to spare Rakhi's café, the girl figures out how to trust her father and step by step gives up her outrage. Sitting late into the night and offering thoughts, the father and little girl understand that it is the first occasion when they have addressed one another straightforwardly, without the mother's consideration:

Through their excitement they are dimly aware that this is a first-ever event. Before this, all their interactions took place in the presence of the mother, through her as it were. She was their conductor, their buffer zone, their translator. She softened the combative edges of their words and clarified their questions, even to themselves. I'll take care of it, she whispered without words. Don't you worry … (165)

Rakhi to be sure creates in connection to both her mother and father. While the mother's diaries uncover her mysteries, therefore giving the little girl the vital setting to
comprehend her mother, the father's stories help Rakhi's feeling of distance. At the point when the father first recounts to her an anecdote about India, the little girl:

She leans forward, her eyes shining. Here is the kind of story she has waited for her entire life, has begged, cajoled, badgered her mother for - in vain. And to think it was waiting all this time inside her father, the drinker, the singer, the skeptic who never believed in dreams. The parent she always dismissed, although affectionately, thinking he knew nothing she’d have any use for. (168)

After the death of her mother (Mrs. Gupta) in the secretive auto collision, her father volunteers to help revive the Chai House into “an Indian snack shop, a chaer dokan, as it would be called in Calcutta. They’re going to model it after the shop the father worked in so many years ago, with a few American sanitary touches thrown in” (165). The blending of two societies is firmly felt in the new rise of the radiant café under the standard 'Kurma Shop'. The revival of the 'Chai House' and its survival was so significant to Rakhi in light of the fact that the trusteeship of her little girl Jonna relied on it. Hitched and divided – which is basic in American society - from Sonny, the most obvious DJ of well-known night club, the raising of her tyke swung to support her as a result of the shop.

The viciousness unleashed in the American culture because of the besieging of the World Trade Center takes an extraordinary toll on the lives of the worker. Marked as terrorists for keeping the shop open they are tossed into a bad dream where they begin to scrutinize their character. Foul words are flung at them: “Looked in a mirror lately? One
of them spits. You ain’t no American! It’s fuckers like you who planned this attack on the innocent people of this country. Time someone taught you faggots a lesson” (267). Ruminating over these words Rakhi reflects “But if I wasn’t American, then what was I?” (271). All the implicit feeling of being American is lost on that day of extraordinary misfortune to numerous individuals as they acknowledge,“And people like us, seeing ourselves darkly through the eyes of stranger, who lost a sense of belonging” (272). Rakhi, hence, experiences different hassles and is compelled to build an identity where she needs to find herself.

After the disaster of flame in the 'Kurma Shop' she understands her mother's words that, “Calamity happens so we can understand caring” (237). The obligation of fondness creates after the disaster. Calamity makes the clients more casual in their relationship to Rakhi. The way that they all have a place with one nation makes them relate and they structure a different ethnic gathering and group. The clients start to rush around the Kurma Shop to hear Gupta sing their loved old, cherished Hindi tunes. They rediscover the delight like a “unexpected oasis tucked into an arid stretch of dunes” (196) a joy they thought they would never find in America.

Rakhi's reception to America begins as right on time as her introduction to the world however her absorption to American society is a very troublesome one. Yet, living as a migrant offers her enormous plausibility of creativity and she is sufficiently enabled to make new accounts of having a place and personality. Her issue of complete osmosis to the host society and convention is convoluted and complex. In spite of the fact that conceived in America, America does not offer her the travel permit of being an American. Yet, the stamp of a genuine American is seen in her. Her flexibility of soul
while confronting chances in life and tolerating difficulties, imagination reflects the individualistic attribute of the American. She makes cultural assimilation her quality, as towards the end of the novel she figures out how to acknowledge Indian instruments produce music that is not absolutely Indian yet an American blend. She moves from here to a deeper theory of life which prepares her to set right her repelled existence with Sonny, her husband, in the move corridor “on the web of the world where Sonny and she have touched orbits once more” (307) preparing for an incorporated family life, all that much like that in an Indian setup. By receiving American ways, Rakhi moves towards achievement and solidness in life, despite the fact that briefly she endures a setback because of questions about her feeling of having a place and character. Her mother, Mrs. Gupta, then again, decides to adjust, to keep herself Indian to the centre on American soil, to only change in accordance with the American courses for a reason - a cause that is vital to her, a high cost that she is ready to pay so as to safeguard the force of dreams that empower her to contact individuals around her, whether Indian or not, and help individuals with their issues. Her stance of receiving, however it breaks her typical home – life, turns into the passage of raising the homes of all various.

Artistry and personality are indicated as associated segments of Rakhi's self. It is just when she ingests the better approaches for creative interpretation that she is equipped for breaking the parallels between what generally is seen as American or Indian. Her mother's composition and her father's stories, and the band's cosmopolitan music and the Indian-American compositions, furnish Rakhi with option methods for definition toward oneself. It is consequently through these genuine trades with others that she understands that there is more than one authentic approach to be ethnic or Indian American. The
social character Rakhi at last permits her to reinterpret the ethnic other not as distinctive, outlandish or mysterious, but instead as an equivalent subject that has the ability to recognize an alternate individual as an autonomous self. In the wake of disposing of the western, individualistic methodology to herself, Rakhi succeeds in creating her exceptional painting style and begins making legitimate showstoppers that identify with her Indian – American experience. The novel *Queen of Dreams* depicts the likelihood for securing a bicultural personality regardless of Mrs. Gupta's beginning refusal to transmit her society. Divakaruni's methodology as an existential distance is unexpected with the perspective of South Asian Diaspora that has faith in the need of coordinating the Indian legacy with its American experience.

The novel *Queen of Dreams* outlines a female protagonist from India and passes on the topic of lack of understanding between the relationships. The novel depicts the invigorating feeling of probability and goes against the crippling feeling of misfortune, yet the extravagant determination of the female draws in to them and precludes the influence from securing compassion. The novel capably reflects the trials and tribulations afflicting the American culture. The migrant experiences are additionally demonstrates as hurt or throbbing. They exhibit a complete American who feel and live isolated in their entire life.

Several socio-political and socio-cultural issues have been immensely brought out through the fictions of Divakauni in this chapter. The novel *Victory Song* derives the cringes of the Dowry system in colonial period which exists even now and the sufferings of the women in the patriarchal society. *Queen of Dreams* illuminates the impacts that caused by the Twin tower blast which demonstrates the terrorism in the contemporary
world. In *Oleander Girl* she throws the light on the resuscitated biases in post-9/11 America and the Hindu-Muslim clash in Gujarat, India. *Sister of My Heart* displays the women’s poorest status in India which leads to female foeticide. The problems like Dowry system, women’s social status, loneliness and relationship problems in the contemporary society are analysed through the novels *Sister of My Heart, Vine of Desire, Victory Song* and *The Palace of Illusions*.

Divakaruni’s novels resemble the theory of cultural materialists as her works always deal with every single factor of the social aspects of the particular period. The protagonists of her novels face the social problems that influence their lives and they try to overcome the cringes they face. Her writings are mostly influenced by her personal life even her protagonists resemble her own character. In an interview, she even has expressed about the autobiographical touch in her novel *Oleander Girl*,

“With each novel, I like to set myself a different writing challenge. In *Oleander Girl* it was the idea of a family secret and a search that started me off. Only as I got deeper into the novel did I become aware of certain painful biographical elements out of my family history that had crept into the book. I resisted them for a while, but finally I realized they needed to be there and that they strengthened the book. As I wrote, I also fell in love with the ancestral mansion in which Korobi grows up. The book thus becomes a dance between the old India and the new” (“Free”).

To analyse these aspects in her novels the next chapter discusses regarding the immigration experience of the characters and Indian culture.