

Chapter 4

Marginalization and Empowerment

Optimistic possibilities (...) I have a great deal of hope for people who pass through traumatic situations and difficulties (...) I am aware of how resilient the human spirit is, and I wish in my writing to honor the human spirit that is capable of this, to come through the fire and to prevail. (Divakaruni 2001)

In the present century, yet another dimension has got added to the study of diaspora. People living in diaspora are now experiencing a different kind of social disadvantage resulting from the challenge of extreme terrorism resulting in insecurity and marginalization. Different conceptualizations of terror, violence and disasters characterize the modern times and it has resulted in painful and traumatic experiences. Under the pressure of contradictory forces, host societies have been responsible for the unabated exploitation. Feeling of personal alienation is intensified by a sense of collective discrimination. “Marginalization, alienation, and the resulting sense of victimization can encourage extremism and facilitate the exploitation of communities by radical elements.” (Dandurand 40) Violence in varied forms to a certain extent has promoted and perpetuated marginalization:

Narcissism of minor differences is now vastly more dangerous than in the past because of the new economy of slippage and morphing which characterizes the relationship between majority and minority identities and powers (...) Minority is the symptom but difference itself is the problem.

(Appadurai 10-11)

As the society gradually evolves under its pressure, literature too gets modified and tailored to beseech attention. Works of fiction tend to contextualize violence and terror temporally, causally and historically. Writers such as Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Homi K. Bhabha have explored instances of revolt, opposition, and subversion. Diaspora which in itself is a ‘deterritorializing and subversive phenomenon’ garners more attention in the wake of events like 9/11. The term ‘diaspora’ is seen as a multilayered signal and label reflecting minority identity politics and a term which conveys innermost sentiments. The concept of ‘anxiety of incompleteness’ introduced by Arjun Appadurai looms large over the world inhabited by diasporas. It poses wider questions on religion and politics and at the same time tries to make a sense of the challenges of people living together wherein to a certain extent the diasporic people try to live in a ‘utopia’ of tolerance, peace and mutual regard.

Jean Baudrillard’s referring to the event of 9/11 in itself as an “image-event” has got penned in the writings of litterateurs. Not just 9/11 but violence in any form be it domestic or national is condemnable and along with this, the growing concern, in the era of globalization, is the environmental hazards which are making mankind more prone to natural disasters resulting in mass destruction. Literature too has evolved with the changes happening in society. It tends to probe difference along the multiple chords of race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, gender, religion, generation, class and sexuality. Ananya Jahanara Kabir in her research article: “Diasporas, literature and literary studies” has mentioned, “The phenomenon of diaspora gives rise to population displacements and cultural disorientations that, in turn, catalyse creative expression as the means to grapple with, evaluate and

transcend diaspora's material consequences.” (Kabir 145) As one is marginalized or socially excluded, the tendency to empower also gains significance:

Empowerment perceived as occurring from below or from within, as marginalized individuals and groups become able to organize themselves and their resources to contest unequal structures and define their own place in the wider context of their lives. (Alsop 196)

In his book *Post Colonial Resistance: Culture, Liberation & Transformation* David Jefferess has tried to study the way in which India and Social Africa in particular underwent social and cultural transformation through resistance and reconciliation. His observation is that in India, Gandhi fought for liberation through non-violence whereas Fanon on the other hand saw violence as a strategic necessity in conditions of oppression and he has based this assumption on his knowledge on the liberation struggle in Algeria. Reactions are bound to surface in an environment of subjugation and suppression. Any kind of disaster leads to destruction and it also carries with it the seeds of rebellion and revolution. 9/11 has become a kind of literary device to study the aftermath of violence as it tends to reduce the multiplicity to singularity. In this context, we tend to remember Albert Camus' *The Plague* that describes the growth, collapse and renewal of a community but it also manifests one important theory that revolt is an essential dictum of human existence leading to an exploration of the study of such violent acts.

Though violence and terror connote negativity but it has also been examined as central to post colonial liberation by writers. Violence, discriminations and disasters hamper growth but it also instills a feeling of resistance which many theorists have

attempted to explore. Resistance thus indirectly is related to social and cultural transformation and liberation. The diasporic writers in their own ways have tried to offer through the discourse of terror a warning to the future generation. Tilottama Misra in “Women Writing in Times of Violence” has mentioned, “It is precisely because of the uncertain nature of the literary discourses that it is capable of transporting us through those regions of the wounded psyche which no historical narrative can reach effectively.” (249)

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni tends to use her writings in a way to reject the culture of violence. She has tried to grapple with the complex, confusing and fast changing social and political realities. Her literary quest parallels with her need to present the sheer impact of disasters and discriminations on ordinary people. Writing on such issues is like purgation for her but it is also directed towards creating awareness. In an interview with Madhusree Chatterjee (2011) she has stated,

I was caught on the freeway for hours when Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans. The entire city had to be evacuated. I observed lives threatened by catastrophes and a whole range of behaviour. What could people do during a crisis? And I wanted to explore people like us stuck with strangers during disasters - when their behaviour becomes extreme. (Divakaruni)

The three main genres of literature: novel, lyric poems and short stories are replete with creative responses to captivating experiences of disasters and discriminations. Michael Ondaatje, Jhumpa Lahiri, Salman Rushdie, H.M. Naqvi, Kalyani Pandya, Mahtab Narsimha, V. S. Naipaul, Amitav Ghosh to name a few have all tried to explore the terrain of diaspora in its psychic and psychological vein. Novels like Kamila Shamsie’s *Burnt*

Shadows (2009), H. M. Naqvi's *Home Boy* (2009), Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), Hari Kunzru's *Transmission* (2005), Salman Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown* (2005), Suketu Mehta's *Maximum City* (2004), Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003) to name a few delineate the post 9/11 conditions. These novels try to configure the effect of tangible bombings. Race and personalities which become markers of identity, the way they become victims of marginalization and the way it affects the psyche has been analysed through these writings. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has also tried to bring in the horrors of the terror attack which struck innocent people. A Sikh man is shot at the gas station because of his colour. The colour and features of the skin become the core identity markers and there is no place left for sympathy, empathy and solidarity. The dreams which had beckoned the people in the past now haunt them as nightmares. Rakhi, for instance, after the 9/11 episode feels rootless and yearns for 'the cool, comforting mistiness of earth, which never changes, against my skin.'(QOD 286)

In the similar vein as her contemporaries, through her writings she has also tried to present a picture of apathy and indifference resulting from discrimination of any kind but she also advocates reconciliation, appeasement, understanding and to a certain extent retribution. Her novels also tend to celebrate the spirit of resilience in the midst of traumatic experiences. Disasters don't 'break' the characters but in her novels we find that most of the times it 'makes'. She with a humanistic approach has tried to channelize the reader's psyche into a positive action. Her novels speak volumes about the emotions resulting from experiencing and enduring strong feelings of anger, sorrow, fear and pity. Noted theorist Bersani's argument falls in line with Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's approach

that the “catastrophes of history matter much less if they are somehow compensated for in art, and art itself gets reduced to a kind of superior patching function”(1)

Divakaruni’s prose writings, especially some of the more recent ones, carry profound ethical values and the promise of a world that we could all build together, with literature as an efficient and convincing tool for collective transformation based on mutual understanding and love as a binding force that may perform miracles. (Zupancic 107)

The novelist by putting her characters in situations of deprivation which cause human misery has tried to engender narrative forms and has managed to probe the multi-directional nature of memory and has reflected strongly on ethical issues that arise in the wake of contexts of cases of destruction, disasters or dehumanization. One finds that her writings reflect a paradigm shift in society. From man-made disasters like racial discrimination to terrorist attacks, from natural disasters like earthquake to cyclones which characterize the 21st century, all have been projected at length in her novels. Elements which recognize diasporic consciousness like recalling, remembering, desire to return, feeling of awkwardness, will to integrate and wish for continuation, a sense of belonging find an echo in her novels and more through the depiction of her women characters. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has shown the problem of alienation as a universal problem and thereby has tried to interpret the emerging global culture in its multifaceted form. Reluctance of any form is detrimental and this is the message which comes across.

On one hand man-made disasters tend to create distances whereas, on the other hand natural disasters tend to bring the world close. Tilo in *The Mistress of Spices* is shocked to read the newspaper and while reading she gets to know of the varied horrific

visions and demerits of this growing terrorism and racial discrimination. She has presented this through a newspaper and has thus tried to make a point which has a global impact:

The man who finds his grocery windows smashed by rocks, picks up one to read the hate-note tied around it. Children sobbing outside their safe suburban home over their poisoned dog. Woman with her duppata torn from her shoulders as she walks a city pavement (...) The man who watches his charred motel, life's earnings gone, the smoke curling in a hieroglyph that reads arson. I know there are other stories, numerous beyond counting, unreported, unwritten, hanging bitter and brown as smog in America's air.
(MOS 172-173)

Violence resulting due to racism or terrorism mar the global world but equally shocking is gender discrimination and domestic violence which creates a marginalized status of the affected. Tilo, Panchaali, Sudha and Anju the main characters of her novels had to face the brunt of gender discrimination at the time of her birth. Even Korobi feels she has not been given enough independence but in no way it stops the women to chart their own route to progress. She resists the attempt to control when she says: "Do they think that they can pick up my life like a ball of dough and roll it into whatever shape they fancy? (OG 22) They face challenges but with a deterministic attitude fight the evils of society. One finds that the characters cross the borders which put them in a dilemma but it also give them an opportunity to brave the tides and turn the tides in their favour by empowering themselves. This almost falls parallel with the view, "The hybridity of cultures influencing the development of migrant selves provides an important avenue to theorize about the reconstruction of migrant identity." (Bhatia 232-33) In the wake of suppression

and subjugation, according to Jaspal Kaur Singh the women diasporic writers:

Reinscribe themselves to disrupt the dominant narratives through painful and maddening inscriptions, and the narrative space that opens up for reinscription can be incredibly empowering for some; the nervous and alienated subject learns to negotiate its subject hood and identity within the many shifting positions (...) learn to collapse discursive boundaries and binaries in attempts to create equal alternative spaces. (Singh 27)

The same holds true for Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's subjects. Hameeda, for example, instead of cribbing on the problems, starts "taking Adult Angrezi class for free, learning to read and write the American language. May be I will study computer next in the community college, why not." (MOS 227) By learning the language she is opening up possibilities of communication and in a way assimilating into the culture of host land. The challenges are turned into opportunities of learning by the characters. The narrow conventions are broken and the modern practices are adopted. In doing so, the characters get a fair chance to bridge the gap between the traditional and the contemporary and the novelist in her own peculiar way succeeds in dissolving the boundaries between the real and the imaginary by projecting this positive change.

Failures, disappointments, tragic situations also play a vital role in transforming a person. For instance, in *Sister of My Heart*, each woman's story is a story of disillusionment and their situation is such that they are pushed down but they still fight their way up with hope. Nalini, for instance, was beautiful with 'glittery laughter', 'perfect – shaped lips (...) red like paan', 'cheeks as soft as the lotus flower' and 'eyebrows are

beautiful as wings' and hers was a love marriage done by eloping. She had high expectations from Gopal but it is only after marriage that she realizes that "it was not the ceremonial knotting of garments that binds a wife to a husband but the chain of collusion." (SMH 25) Her great ideas remained merely 'unbaked like claypots'. Her bitter life experiences though made her a 'tamarind-and-chile tongue' but even at this moment we find that her daughter Sudha does not develop any animosity but thinks and tries to decipher the meaning of her mother's behavior,

To my mother, her life must have seemed like a trick of moonlight. One moment her arms were filled with silvery promises. The next she was widowed and penniless. Alone in a world of glowering clouds except for a daughter. Words were all she had to save herself and her child ... Does she believe, as perhaps all mothers do, that through her daughter she can redeem her life? (...) A bird may escape a cage built of hate, of the desire for power. But a cage built of need? Of love's darkness? (SMH 77)

On the other hand, there is Gouri Ma who was always cared by Bijoy. The love given to her redeems her and in order to fulfill the last wish of her husband she strives to run the book store and provide good education to girls. She doesn't sit crying at the death of her husband. Instead she says, "I don't have the luxury. I made a promise and I must use all my energies to keep it." (SMH 34) She did not bother about the society and always did "whatever was necessary to ensure her daughter's future." (SMH 34) Gouri ma becomes a symbol of strength and power who is "dark and endless deep". Though Sudha is not her daughter but she wants to become 'noble and brave' like her. "Empowerment is a capacity in thought and action to address the condition and position of marginalization." (Seitz 8)

Both Gauri Ma and Aunt Nalini are widows and they have to face the brunt of social stigma and social marginalization but the approach towards this status varies. Gauri Ma by seeking financial independence to a great extent empowers herself and others in her family.

Personal losses, shattered dreams and desires generally force the people into depression, sadness and remorse, but in a way it also drives a person to fight back. America which had promised liberation for Anju ties her to a routine which she had never expected. She feels, “It’s not what I imagined my American life would be like” (SMH 186). In the similar vein, Sudha is forced to accept the superstitious notions of her mother-in-law. She is taken to the shrine with a hope that she conceives a baby boy. Her pathos and sorrow echo desperately in the words she expresses:

I want to weep too, not for me but for us all-for rich or poor, educated or illiterate, here we are finally reduced to a sameness in this sisterhood of deprivation (...) I try to remember that there is a saner world (...) where it is permissible for them to live normal lives even if they cannot be mothers.
(SMH 215)

Marginalization provides her the position on the edge of the society that allows for critique.

The novelist has contrasted Sudha with Anju. Sudha has to face the social stigma because she is unable to conceive whereas Anju is a bit terrified at becoming a mother. She feels, “How’ll I take care of the baby? What’ll happen to all my plans for my future? (SMH 220) The dichotomous situation points at the two extremes which exist in society. Both the sisters feel that moving to America would give a sense of independence to Sudha. In one of the conversations, Sudha had remarked:

America has its own problems, but at least it would give me (Sudha) the advantage of anonymity. No-one in America would care that I was a daughter of the Chatterjees, or that I was divorced. I could design a new life, earn my own living, give Dayita everything she needed. (SMH 294)

She chooses to at least try a path of empowering herself. Sudha passes through the stages of rejection, anger, sacrifice, acceptance to finally overcome the long hidden past. In the same manner Anju also discovers her husband's secret. She is astonished to find the handkerchief of Sudha which Sunil had picked up on the wedding day carefully placed in a box and notices the way Sunil allows a stranger to believe that Sudha is his wife at the California airport by not correcting him. The seeds of jealousy and germ of distrust ingrained in Anju creates a lot of speculations in the mind of readers. Sudha's words delve upon the disasters looming large on personal fronts. Lack of choices or suppression is another kind of silent violence which either can act as a slow poison or even work like a force which is suppressed to the extent of exploding. This also finds an echo in her novels:

So many violences done to me. My mother pounding my life into the shape of her desires. My mother-in-law wanting to cut from it whatever she considered unseemly. My husband backing away, with his narrow, apologetic shoulders. Sunil plunging into the centre of my body, corrosive with need. (SMH 243)

Sudha tries to fight with her own demons and exorcize the internal conflicts. She confesses in her letter to Sunil, "I came to America in search of freedom but was swept away by the longing to be desired." (VOD 350)

Personal tragedies like loss of loved ones has been paralleled with the

general tragedies like wars and terrorist attacks resulting in blood-shed, destruction and mass exodus. The tragedy of the nation helps Rakhi to understand her personal loss. It instills in her the love for the lost. It makes her realize the importance of this transitory life which has to be lived and experienced. Rakhi realizes that, “People go skittering out of our lives, never to be found. But they’re all still somewhere on the web.” (QOD 289) For the diaspora moving to a new place, accepting the new life, assimilating with the existing tradition is no less than a rebirth and a resurrection of life in a new way to suit the new environment.

The spiritual aspect and the deeper meaning of life are also unfolded by touching the element of tragedy and death. It is at the funeral of her mother that Rakhi realizes, “How frail lives were, and how little we appreciated them until they broke.” (QOD 133) It is not just the tragic, secret past of Jiang who had to part from her love which catches attention but it is also Lily, her granddaughter, who cannot forget her brother Mark who helped her discover her self confidence by leading her to take flute playing seriously but who himself became a victim of probably over-ambition. Her inner fear coupled with apprehension had led her to imagine, “What if Mark had killed himself and his spirit had come to say good-bye.”(OAT 145) Both Mr and Mrs Pritchett are in a disintegrating relationship and have a painful memory - One of a lost kitten and another of lost desires and ambitions. Tariq has fear in his mind as his father had been abducted and the consequences he had to face. His pain is both at the personal and political level. Mangalam never fails to forget his cowardice as he lost his love Latika, had to compromise into a waste life with Naina and is on the verge of an adulterous affair. “If Naina was a flashing disco light, Latika was the moon in a misty sky.” (OAT 158) He admits, “I used her to get what I wanted. It’s only fair that she became the cause for losing what I wanted even more. Karma’s wheel is

intricate.” (OAT 164)

There is Cameron searching for redemption who narrates his pain on losing Imani because of his unwillingness to say yes to marriage and birth of unborn child. For him though he fought battle on the war-field, his conflict between his guilt and emotions did not allow him to escape the war-within. Cameron’s struggle to breathe is like the ‘fluttering of a snared bird’. Malathi’s ambition of not being a bride but a ‘bride-maker’ finally pushes her to realize her big dream in USA before being warned by Lola, “Just control your temper, the next place you go (...) and when you’ve saved enough dollars, come back and open a salon in a better city.” (OAT 119)

To a certain extent, we find that Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in delineating the situation of the people caught in diaspora tends to become moralistic and advocates a kind of spiritualistic approach as she focusses on fighting not just the external pressures but also reaffirms the need to fight the internal demons of fear, guilt, greed, anxiety, ambition, lust and desire. In the novel *The Palace of Illusions* Panchaali’s struggles and battles are her debates with herself and her war is within. She fights with the set traditional system and tries to combat the attacks, both personal and public. She refuses to suffer in silence and speaks against injustice thus trying to chart a new course of history. At one point in the novel it is said, “Perhaps that is the miracle of stories. They make us realize that we’re not alone in our folly and our suffering.” (POI 278) Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has tried to create a collective consciousness and ‘the battle of Kurukshetra’ can be seen as a symbol of the internal battles which Draupadi fights alone and which later manifests in the real physical battle.

In an interview to Karthik Ramaswamy (2004), Divakaruni has said: “We

live in a world where many realities are nestled one within the other—if only we have the sensitivity to experience them.” She has unfolded the inner conflicts, personal anguishes, secret stories, hidden experiences and the way politics or national events affect the lives of people. The great disasters hitting the world at large take a toll on the personal lives and puts people in such drastic situations which become a life-changing experience for them. Mohit Das for instance says, “I can’t fight a country.”(OAT 76) It is not just a position of dilemma that the diaspora is caught in but it also serves as a backdrop for letting them realize that there is a need for the change in thoughts to redefine their lives. Her novels also seem to echo the voice of post colonial theory as Violet Lunga defines it as “a complex field of study, encompassing an array of matters that include issues such as identity, gender, race, racism, and ethnicity” (193). Analyzed on a wider spectrum her novels project all this and deals with it in a way which surfaces and yet over-crosses the supernatural elements.

Novelist’s sensitivity towards international issues like violence, exploitation and women issues run like an undercurrent but with a positive note. Identity crisis and alienation re-occur but it exhibits her contemporariness as she delves on time, culture and history and the way it impacts identity. Though the characters are away from home but they carry a sense of nostalgia and memory. The importance of matrilineal past in giving birth to a daughter’s identity has also been highlighted. In a way the novels explore the dichotomous space between needs and desires, expectations and opportunities leading to a greater understanding and identity which in a way combats diversity.

The novel *The Mistress of Spices* emphasizes the way in which the experiences generate an ‘in-between space’. Displacement also results in emergence of rebellion with a streak of transformation. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has shown for instance

Jagjit, a Sikh boy, a child who faces, lives, succumbs and struggles with a new identity forced upon him as a young boy in America. The pain of the little boy at being rejected and the way he fights out to stand up with a rebellion and on the course of it losing his identity marks a journey of transformation. It is not just the elders who miss their country and their people but it is the children who suffer the most who are forced to give up their life and adopt a life in a new environment. The way in which he has to suffer humiliation at not knowing English or because of his turban instills in him a complex leading to a feeling of rejection.

The first English word he learns is “Idiot. Idiot. Idiot” (38) and the second English word he learns is “asshole”. The tenderness of his heart and the softness of his spirit are all challenged by circumstances. Even as a child he dreams with his open eyes as he spends sleepless nights thinking of ‘fireflies in his grandmother’s kheti outside Jullunder’ and remembers the ‘saag green as his turban’. Punjabi words sound to him like rain and English becomes a curse. When he is laughed off by his friends in school because of his ‘green-turban’ though he is unable to speak but somewhere within something of him dies each day. When thrown down in school by children because of ‘long, uncut hair’ he feels pushed down not just literally but even in his own eyes.

Though his name means ‘world conqueror’ he is not able to conquer his own emotions and feelings. His school becomes a place where his personality gets snubbed. This push and pull, rejection and laughter leave in his consciousness a scar which never gets erased. It is because of this reason that when he grows up to become a teenager the angst of his heart, the pain of his humiliation gets transformed into a kind of rebellion. He changes his name from Jagjit to Jaggi to Jag (Jaguar):

Self fashioning is an ongoing process because displacement introduces dynamism in the relation between past and present and identities have to be defined continuously (...) Displacement places the choice of the dislocated population either to adapt within the host society or to withstand the forces of assimilation. (Saha 7)

With the change in the name comes the change in his nature. Though he assimilates but in the process he also loses. He rejects everything Indian in just three years of time and becomes a stubborn, aggressive teenager and seeing him Tilo is forced to question, “To ask myself over and over, was it him, was it his parents, and was it America?” (MOS 122) Whoever was responsible but the truth is that leaving a place did carry with it seeds of suppression which changed into rebellion. He gets caught in the ‘gold jaws of America’ (MOS 242)

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has not only reflected the pain of separation but also pointed at the futility of judging people on the basis of colour and country. While Raven tastes a dish, Tilo says, “It’s too hot for a white man’s mouth”, but Raven replies, “So you think I’m white.” (MOS 159) It is only later in their association that they are able to accept the reality and not just live on perceptions and presumptions. Raven says, “Okay, may be my ideas about you and your people were wrong (...) Lets teach each other what we need to know.”(331) This conversation according to the analytical study of Hillary Dawn, “holds within it a grand allegory-America, embodied in Raven, offers an apology for ignorance for in the past turning a blind eye to cultural empathy.” (Hester 47) Pain, suffering, tragedy, remorse are one and the same and each and every person of the world understands the language of love.

Violence has been examined which struck the streets of America and forced the people to re-question their choices. Her novels illustrate that “narratives are not like photographs of lives – they are discourses, the deconstruction of which will enable new narratives to be formulated” (Swartz 517). As per Oliva Espín each person experiences the stresses of immigration differently, in complex ways, “The process of adaptation and acculturation is not linear. The multiple intra psychic and behavioral changes required for successful acculturation occur at many levels. Individuals will experience these changes at their own unique paces.” (21) The characters portrayed in *The Mistress of Spices* exhibit this and each struggles in its own way to cope with the pressure. Each character represents a different shade of diaspora like ‘marginalized, rebellious, docile, traditional and modern’. K.S. Dhanam has written,

Divakaruni has her finger accurately on the diasporic pulse, fusing eastern values with western ethos. Her writing course with her identification is with a brave new world forging to life. Her sensitivity to contemporary voices, today’s issues are threaded through with an ongoing search for identity beyond anthropology, beyond sociology and beyond academia. (62)

The situation of the people who live as immigrants is not individualistic but it has a generality associated to it. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has also touched on the issue of ‘lay-offs’ resulting in economical marginalization which struck the Indian diaspora in the 1990s due to American policies. Though it is a globalized world but still the nationalistic tendencies and patriotic inclinations tend to create a sort of internal animosities. A close reading of the texts suggest that the diaspora group adopts the strategy of separating and integrating, charts the unfathomable past and tries to work in the present. The grimness of

the situation has been beautifully highlighted through the lines, “Yes, always smile, even when people say ‘Bastard foreigner taking over the country stealing our jobs’” (62) A study on “Strategies of Negation” falls in line with the way the people in diaspora try to cope with differences. It has been written,

Uncertainty gives rise to convenient manipulations of portrayals of self identity, crafted to fit the immediate situations. The temporality of identity in the context of situations self imposed upon the individual in an attempt to alleviate the feeling of not belonging is a strategy of negation, a strategy of compromise, which allows a new immigrant to the Western world to find some degree of acceptance, albeit minimal, and a sense of validation, to continue living in a marginalized status. (Mahmood 38)

Mohan has to face the brunt of the angst countrymen as he refuses to give them a bottle as he is about to close the motel. He is abused. “Sonofabitch Indian should a stayed in your own God damn country.” (MOS 170) Remarks like this almost shake a person’s whole faith and devotion. They are unable to understand where their loyalties should lie. Novels are an exploration into the dichotomous position of the diaspora caught in a web of expectations, struggle and strife. Tilo thinks, “I wish for that American hair those blue blue American eyes so that no one will stare at me except to say Wow.” (MOS 63) Life in the host land strikes in different and varied ways.

The complex problem of identity crisis strikes the diaspora, as they jostle with their own multiple images at different points. Tilo, for example, is an individual on her own, but she has been delineated as a metaphor for the struggle between social responsibility

and personal happiness. The last lines of the novel portray Tilo's resolution as she decides to take on a new name. This time emphatically she tells Raven that she wants a name that "spans both my land and yours, India and America, for I belong to both now." (MOS 337) When he names her Maya, she remembers that, "in the old language it can mean many things" including "the power that keeps this imperfect world going day after day" and asserts "I need a name like that, I who now have only myself to hold me up." (MOS 338) The novels present a multi-coloured picture of the Indian diaspora as she feels that there are Indians in US who 'heave their bodies like moneybags out the doors and into their satin cars'. For others 'being a rich person is a busy job' and still there are others who 'have forgotten to be Indian.' (MOS 76) In her study related to Hybrid Identity Formations, Rukmini Kakoty has mentioned:

Diasporas become the cultural translators or transgressors who are able to rework with their received notions of cultures and reframe and modify them accordingly to give birth to newer forms. In the midst of the demands for assimilation into the host society the diasporas carve out for themselves an identity which pulls together different notions and cultures and at the same time refusal to belong to just one of them. (3)

Geeta's grandfather thinks otherwise. He feels, "But mental peace I am not having, not even one iota, since I crossed the kalapani and came to this America." (MOS 85) He does not want to give up on any traditional values and thinks that "So what if this is America, we are still Bengalis, no?" (MOS 85) His problem is that he had to give up his community and is unable to adjust with the new environment.

Mohan and Veena are unable to bear this rejection and with ‘crushed tongues’ and ‘silenced hearts’ are forced to return to India. Both Mohan and Haroun become the victims of ‘a line of injustice that stretches beyond the edge of eternity.’ (MOS 235) A Hate group of New Jersey active from 1987 to 1993 finds a mention in *The Mistress of Spices*. Divakaruni has continued the legacy of the South Asian Diasporic women writers and projected, “the cultural dilemmas, the generational differences, and transformation of their identities during displacement.” (Swamy 5) Sudha in *The Vine of Desire* finally voices her innermost feelings in the company of Lalit as she says, “Haven’t you realized yet that I’m homeless. That I’ve never had a home, only delusions of belonging which the world was quick to squish.” (VOD 290)

Queen of Dreams reflects in a way cultural assimilation and identity formation behind the backdrop of being a South Asian. As Rakhi, Mrs Gupta or Belle or even for that matter Jona struggle to define themselves, they find that their self-perceptions and self-identifications are conditioned and dependent on the particular context and because of it a consciousness emerges that strikes to pose a balance between dualities. This parallels with the definition of identity as referred “to the spiritual odyssey of the modern man who has lost his social and spiritual mooring and who is anxious to seek his roots.”(Pathak 22) Rakhi has to transcend multilayer of inhibition and apprehensions before accepting the real self. The ‘bi-cultural pull’ leads to a more general sense of a new culture and liquid identity which tends to become more flexible thereby adopting and adapting. Rakhi feels like an outsider when she talks about her homeland but she seems foreign to the mainstream people with whom she has grown up thus at times becoming an outsider to themselves. Nothing is devalued nor is any context or nation demeaned. However the focus is on realizing the need

to transcend beyond time and space to realize the ultimate power which resides within.

Similarly in *One Amazing Thing* though the characters are in dialogue with each other, their stories and lives are also in dialogue with one another. By placing the characters at a horizontal level, she has brought about a new paradigm of association. In Divakaruni's own words this is very much a 'community-based ensemble novel'. The way the characters Uma Sinha, old Chinese woman Jiang and her granddaughter Lily, Caucasian couple Mr & Mrs Pritchett, Tariq-young man of twenty five with Indian features, Cameron - lanky Afro-American, Malathi & Mangalam-Indian officers working in the visa office cope with the challenge posed by a natural disaster by adjusting, accommodating, struggling, adapting and acclimatizing to the situation speaks volumes on the issue of longing in man for survival. The nine characters are prisoners of a disaster but they are also 'pilgrims of spirit'. Novel speaks about wars, betrayal, seduction and death.

It is surprising to see that each one remembers the most painful incident of his or her life which has stayed in their memory. Uma remembers that her father, at one step wanted to divorce her mother after a long married life which she finds it difficult to accept and is haunted by the question about love:

I was careful to withhold the deep core of my being, my place in my mother that would have shattered if she had learned of my father's betrayal. I didn't realize-until this earthquake, until today-that my withholding was a worse kind of betrayal, a betrayal of the self. (OAT 206)

The novel does assert the need for identity but it definitely focusses on self-realization.

Many people have voiced their views on the question of identity. Spivak

thinks of identity as a 'wound' but in other words it is also dynamic and has power structure attached to it as in it lies the discovery of the self. Identity has power attached to it but self-realization has salvation and spirituality fastened to it. Merely by confessing and by talking about one's weaknesses and failures the characters display enormous amount of strength to acknowledge the disparities and diversity. *The Palace of Illusions* portrays Panchaali in a mixed light. Even after fighting through the thick and thin the sense of completeness and wholeness is missing from her life. She has struggled with herself but the multiplicity of her dynamic personality fails to convince her whole-heartedly:

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 of palaces, the distracted mother, the beloved companion of Krishna, who refused to learn the lessons he offered, the woman obsessed with vengeance – none of them were the true Panchaali. (POI 229)

Identity in this era of internationalization can be said to have many connotations attached to it. What is distant to others may be near and what is perceived as one's own shortcoming may be the strength. However the tragic happenings of the world almost shook everyone's faith and diaspora was forced to re-question their entire question of identity.

The massive terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre which hit the world on September 11 in 2001, its repercussions and the way in which it questioned the entire scheme of things have been elaborately presented. The normal routine life of South Asians,

Indo-Americans and the disrupted life due to the terrorist attack has been parallelly placed to question the entire state of shock and surprise at the dismissive attitude of the host countrymen. Their entire life is put into a question mark and their birth becomes a stigma. The novel *Oleander Girl* gives a peek into Hindu-Muslim Godhra riots of 2002 and the way it had a huge impact on the personal lives and economical condition. “The men-some of whom had worked side by side for decades had begun to shove and punch one another.” (OG 118) On the other hand the novelist has also looked at the impact of 9/11 attacks. The couple Seema and Mitra made a move from a small town in India to USA in search of better prospects and everything went well but suddenly they had to bear the brunt of the Native Americans. “Many South Asian businesses were boycotted (...) others were attacked (...) those two days had changed him, made him bitter and silent the way he’d never been (...) she insisted on living (...) among her own kind.” (OG 102)

The conflict seethed inside the second generation who considered their host country as their ‘very own’ and a place to ‘where they belong’. They were left teary eyed as they failed to understand the growing dissension and rift amongst the so called native people against the non-natives. Rakhi’s emphatic words point at the growing tension and are also a reminder of the pain of the youth who are born to diasporic parents. “I don’t have to put up a flag to prove that I’m American! I’m American already. I love this country-hell; it’s the only country I know.” (QOD 264) Rakhi’s words echo the sound and voice of thousands of people who think the same. They have never been to the place of their origin and when their loyalty and commitment towards their nation is doubted, the entire concept of ‘nationhood’ stands a challenge. The pain which she feels voices the anguish and suffering of the diaspora who felt cheated and embittered.

Death of a family member and the terror attack on the nation gives an opportunity to come to terms with long standing issues of alienation. The attempt is not merely to mourn loss but to project the way in which loss leads to creation of identity-both individual and communal. The 'senseless brutality' of the 9/11 in a way forced the second generation to think of their homeland as inseparable part of their identity. It ruptured their sense of acculturation into American culture. Internationalisation and globalization though has promoted the mushrooming of multicultural societies but the question of amalgamation, reception and assimilation still pervade and in war like situations the negative side of human tendency of ghettoisation and pettiness of behavior came to fore.

There is a sense of hatred which the non-native Americans have to face which forces Mr Soto, a Mexican, to comment, "Is this California, year 2001 or is this Nazi Germany?" (QOD 264) Though Jespal had done nothing wrong, he is attacked by four young Americans and beaten that shows the racial discrimination of the 21st century. He mourned the loss just like any other American but his words are not taken seriously. The bullies retort and in a way abuse him, "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." (QOD 267) This incident questions the entire scheme of 'belonging', 'home' and 'nativity'. Rakhi questions, "But if I wasn't American, then what was I?" (QOD 271)

All the time her mother had dissuaded her to know about India and she wanted her to focus on this life in America because she always felt, "That way you would be constantly looking back, hankering, like so many immigrants do. I didn't want to be like those other mothers, splitting you between your life right now and that which can never be." (QOD 89) After her mother's death, Rakhi was the one who had felt that, "If I'd died I, too

would want my remains to become part of this land, because there's a way in which the geography of one's childhood makes its way into one's bones." (QOD 134) The terror attacks made them strangers and they 'lose a sense of belonging'. Rakhi basically is a person who has faith and thinks that 'relationship doesn't spoil in one night, like milk.' (QOD 12) However the hatred they are meted out with brings a change in her perception and it presses upon her brain like a tumour.

Her novel *One Amazing Thing* gives a peek into the man-made disasters of Indo-China War (1962), Vietnam War, September 11 attack on US by the terrorists and it also touches the dreaded word AIDS which has hit the new century. Indo-China war resulted in the end of Jiang and Mohit Das' relation, Vietnam War found a victim in Cameron and September 11 marked the turning point for Tariq in the novel. Along with the devastating wars, the effect of earthquake also has been compared. In the wake of war/ terrorist attacks the people who have settled are treated as 'though you were a criminal' (OAT 82). Tariq's feeling is the feeling of displacement, loneliness, strangerliness. Tariq's Muslim background makes him the victim of 'unjustified suspicion and distrust'. Because of this his father's once-flourishing business suffers loss and his father along with his assistant manager is arrested without a reason and detained for days together for questioning. This transformed him as an individual; he socialized less and found it extremely difficult to come to terms with his humiliation. Later, he suffers a stroke as a result of the perceived shock. Hirji in her research paper *The Next Generation: Diaspora, Youth and Identity Construction* has said, "Displacement and migration, then, may not be literal facts of these young citizens' lives, but they form part of their consciousness and affect the way that they are treated and the way they live." (7) With his predominant identity as an American, Tariq feels insulted and

betrayed by the nation which he had called his own. He cannot even think of leaving US. His words are replete with desperateness, “This was my country. I was an American. The thought of being driven from my home filled me with rage (...) conflicting loyalties warred in my head.” (OAT 131) In a literary article entitled “Bracing the Shadows” (2014) it has been mentioned,

In fact, such is the paranoia overwhelming America post 9/11 that even Uma, another second generation Indian immigrant (Hindu and most importantly, non-white) in the novel becomes guilty of harbouring baseless suspicions about Tariq on account of his religion. In a fleeting moment, she attributes the violent outburst to his Islamic identity and later takes his angry threat to Cameron in a more literal and serious manner than necessary. (Sarkar n.pag.)

The challenges before the second generation immigrants in the wake of changing social realities in US are there but Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni rests on hope. Tariq though is despaired at the happenings is able to overcome it as he is seen to be joining fellow Muslim men in standing up for their beleaguered community in America. He does not resort to violent means but chalks out a path of warmth and ingenuity. The way in which he pours his life story to the other stranded survivors, they gain a better understanding and Lily, the young Chinese American girl goes to the extent of comparing him with her older brother. However they represent millions of such people who suffered estranged relationships, broken homes and bereaved families on account of the man-made disasters. Their cases are the cases of causal callousness, ingredients of illogical instances and degrees of despaired dreams.

Panchaali's journey in *The Palace of Illusions* is not just the discovery of her power but it is also the acceptance of the negativity associated with power. She tastes the fruits of power which later turns bitter. Her narrations add to the definition of life and question the entire power structure which is generally the realm of men and she dares to enter it. Her opinions, dreams, hopes, ambitions and desires make her human but her vengeance, revenge and ego reflects dangers of modernism and points at the problematic modern sensibility. Though the novelist seems to reject the patriarchal control but at the same time she seems to snub this so called 'freedom'.

A point has also been made that vengeance always breeds disaster. The focus is on bringing out the 'immense and debilitating' costs of war and the novel is also a sort of reminder to all, that false pride has a fall but self-awareness leads to a magnanimous pride which helps surrender oneself to the Supreme without remorse and pangs of guilt. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has not glorified war, nor acclaimed the victory of the Pandavas. It is through the pain of Panchaali that she has hinted at the ruthlessness of war. Panchaali fights against the views and expectations of the people till last. After the battle she herself feels, "No wonder that for their wives, I was a harbinger of ill luck (...) the witch who might, with a wave of her hand, transform them into widows" (POI 258). Her consciousness bites her but her inner self rejects the despair and she gets a dose of consolation from the words of Krishna, "The wise grieve neither for the living nor the dead." (POI 258) Hastinapur is described after the war as 'largely a city of women'. (POI 322) The destruction posed by the war of kurukshetra which led to great devastation actually parallels the modern day terror attacks which are plaguing the modern world.

The search for home ends in creating a sense of home inside oneself. The

brush with death almost blurs the boundaries and helps in transcending narrow, cultural moorings and decolonizes in a way a conditioned mind:

Any disaster creates collective behaviour in the sense that these behaviours are triggered by the same situation and affect the whole community, share common characteristics which are in sharp contrasts to the disparity of individual activities of the normal stage. (Provitolo 53)

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has tried to achieve the purpose of writing and that is to lead her characters into a journey of self discovery and self realization thus leading to empowerment. Punishment in the form of natural or man-made disasters in *One Amazing Thing* is seen as a natural force and Divakaruni has tried to project how punishment and retribution leads to balance whereas in *The Mistress of Spices* earthquake at the end almost physically parallels the rumblings of her heart and the way she survives, it is a sign of discovery of self as she whispers, “The grace of the world, taken or given back, is there any accounting for it.” (MOS 317)

The central metaphor of earthquake in her novel has helped in presenting the theme of survival. Series of images like ‘rumble rose’, ‘giant had placed his mouth against the building’s foundation’, ‘explosion of plaster’, ‘glowing filaments of the naked bulb’, ‘rubble fell through in the blackness’ unfold the shattering dreams and recreates a gamut of emotions and package of displacement and trepidations associated with diaspora. Earthquake depicts how the lives of people fall apart with movement, break into pieces and then they try to shred it together bit by bit holding it to give a new shape. The confined walls of the consulate office hint at the narrow tendency of human beings to live within their own

boundaries and not taking the world as a whole. Memories are like the rumbles of an earthquake. The 'first rumble' is followed by the 'second rumble' and then the 'rumbles rise through the floor' which later on become a 'giant'. The way in which the characters unite in spite of initial teething difficulties to fight the problems is commendable which reflects the undying spirit of man to carry on.

Earthquake has been significantly used by the novelist to hint at the uncertainty of the situation where it is not clear whether the people would survive or perish. However the intensity with which the people try to fight the disaster is a sign of hope and recovery. Cameron is accepted as a leader because of his experience and the knack of managing disasters and not because of his race or caste or community. All differences are put aside to battle the propensity of the situation which was bubbling like a volcano ready to explode. The way all of them pool the resources, eatables and drinking water hint at the world as a big ocean wherein the water from all the rivers flow and merge. The teenager Lily's effort to trace Tariq is an instance which cannot go unnoticed. Divakaruni has tried to project that even small country (marginalized groups) and their contribution towards the world at large is significant and it is the combined effort which pays.

The tensions and stress which accompany disasters and destruction in turn have their own cathartic effect. "The internal stresses from the natural disasters do not recede with the 'new normal living'. These stresses had to have their own cathartic process and recuperative genesis alongside the physical restorations of peace." (Alvarez 171) Just as an earthquake brings in a tremor for a short while and then everything settles back, in the same way movements, migration and exile create a lot of tremor in the lives of the people but generally everything soothes down to a point where acceptance and tolerance concur.

In the novel all emotions which the characters experience in the moment of distress and shock are the same which human beings experience in life and these shocks are double-fold if a person has shifted the base from his/ her home town to other countries, voluntarily or involuntarily. The heap of dust and mound of wreckage which mark earthquake has to be put together. This is seen as a symbol of empowerment wherein living life is to be seen as a concept about dusting of the dirt and picking up the shreds and pieces of life to put into shape. The earthquake as a natural disaster brings in commotion, smashing of hopes and destruction of the so-called existing edifices and structures. The characters are immersed in 'regret or hope or trepidation (as is usual for persons planning a major journey)' (OAT 1) Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has presented the dichotomous scenes of contradictory feelings which resurface as memories and then push and pull backward and forward. The dialectics of 'longing and belonging' has been juxtaposed with the 'coming' and 'going'. A sentence spoken by Tilo in essence underlies the message of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novels, "the smell of charred flesh is the same everywhere." (MOS 313) In the novel *Oleander Girl*, novelist has through the relationship of Pia-Missy (eleven year old young girl) and Asif Ali (chauffeur) celebrated the need to rise above narrow mentality of dividing people on the basis of religion and class. Grown-ups tend to marginalize the people from other sects but it is a child who humanely touches the chords. "He may be a servant, but he's a person first. A good person better than a lot of society people I know." (OG 236)

Gillian Bottomley has opined that diaspora, "Move into different political and economic systems where they must come to terms with already existing schemes of understanding and power relations." (39) Her novels according to me also advocate an interaction among different cultural passages to facilitate a new mode of belonging where in

a new kind of identity is formed where local and global meet. The novel *Queen of Dreams* is an exploration of the identity. Mrs Gupta integrates as well as segregates to enforce an identity of her own. *The Mistress of Spices* is not just a saga of separation and suffering but can also be termed as a chronicle of experiences which shape a person's identity. Women's issues, issues of identity and self realization in the realm of wider boundary of state, nation and world at large has been conceptualized, analyzed and interpreted. The issue of choices placed against the issue of compulsion has been deciphered to give a new meaning to the existing pattern of things. Her novels offer a site where to a certain extent claims of belonging as well as struggle for identity and solidarity coexist and become articulated. Generally her characters do not succumb before the impending pressures of life but they struggle for a sense of continuity and change.

Divakaruni in a subtle manner has brought home the truth that wars should not be between nations but it should be fought within one's own conscience. It is a fight to challenge the status of being in minority to getting empowered to garner respect. The novel *One Amazing Thing* sometimes breathes in a wave of moralistic preachy teaching but with a simplistic narration of events unfolds the most significant truths of human living. For Divakaruni it is not the boundaries between countries which are of so much importance but important matter is to understand how these boundaries can be dissolved. The underlying suggestion of the novel is -What on earth is our identity? Are we American, Indian, Chinese or Are we Human? Lancelot for instance, had forgotten his identity but in a death like situation it flashes before him and he tries to arrive at some answer as to what made him just Mr Pritchett. Identity crisis then is not just about being in a diaspora, it has much to do with one's own personal anguishes and experiences. The rumbling scene, noises, shatterings and

thunders characterizing the earthquake hit scene are like a child taking birth eventually after all the pain. So although the disaster is shocking and pain giving but it is also life giving. Tariq says, “Everyone suffers in different ways. Now I don’t feel so alone.” (OAT 136)

Any kind of disaster impacts the humanity at large and Divakaruni seems to have realized that the need of the hour is not to fight against personal differences but to rise above it. It is high time that the people all over the world experienced and shared one and the same feeling. Plurality is in terms of emotions but there is singularity in the experience of it. The diversity is in culture but there is singularity in the adherence to it. Divergence and emergence are the two sides of the same coin. When one gets pulled towards the broader concept of nation and nationhood; can the personal loyalties be forgotten? The personal allegiance finds a parallel in community duty. Public duty is nothing but the manifestation of personal responsibilities.

When Cameron takes in the charge as a disaster manager out of willingness, his personal responsibility surpasses his own grief. When Uma tries to pacify the trapped persons by coming up with a solution to narrate a story she not only super cedes her inner pathos but infact overcomes her disillusionment and paves the way for a better option. “We can take out our stress on one another-like what just happened----and may be get buried alive.” (OAT 65) By offering to go to search Tariq, Lily beats her anguish at not being able to help her brother at the right time. By over-boarding her own limits she manages to cross over her own dilemmas and confusions. “*I’m Gulliver*, she told herself. *This is a mountain in Lilliput*. Making it into a fantasy helped a little.” (OAT 50) The way in which Malathi had taken revenge against Mrs Balan and tried in her own way to sympathize with Nirmala made her take over her own suppressed desires. Though she swayed between ‘terror and

exhilaration' she in her own little way was able to conquer her fears. "It was the only time in my life I did something brave (...) I don't think I can do that again. I am too selfish. So it is special for me." (OAT 123)

What people tend to forget is that all have to go through their ordeal of sufferings. Cameron's thinking and inner feelings are much the same like that of Tariq, though Tariq is unable to realize it. Tariq seems to have suffered under the wake of Sept. 11 and Cameron feels that the colour of his skin has made him suffer, " He wanted to tell Tariq how it had been growing up with no money and skin that color in inner-city Los Angeles." (OAT 35) Jiang is forced to give up her language and communicated only in Mandarin. The change came in Jiang. She no doubt adjusted but "instead of the busy streets of China town she saw an enclosed courtyard". Each day "she could smell the mango trees" and felt like a "hollowed-out bamboo". (OAT 80) Through Mr Pritchett, Divakaruni has marveled at the tendency of the human mind to crave for what one does not have. Mrs Pritchett's words to Mr Pritchett sums up the meaning of life. "Relationships aren't businesses that can be, made healthy by pouring money into them."(OAT 63) The story of life is greater than the person who speaks it and Divakaruni through story telling has weaved a nest of relationships, associations, interactions and dealings through her novel *One Amazing Thing* . Uma's words echo the thoughts of Divakaruni, "I don't believe anyone can go through life without encountering at least one amazing thing." (OAT 65)

Through the narration of various stories, Divakaruni has presented varied point of views to highlight the lives of different people placed in different contexts but each projecting a personal, historical and emotional account of their ability to strive and survive while struggling. Almost all of the characters experience or perpetuate some kind of cultural

misunderstanding at some point but they come to accept it as their shortcoming. The message is that cultural differences have to be accepted in the wake of cosmopolitization and multiculturalism. Novels help to peek into the interdisciplinary area of Global Studies as it provides an opportunity to explore how global and transnational processes bring people together across the globe. It also examines how the lives affect and is affected by globalization. The political and socio-cultural aspects of contemporary globalization, the historical antecedents of globalization and the diverse consequences of globalization have been examined.

Divakaruni has indirectly studied the the Oriental and the Occidental culture. She feels that the differences can be bridged by letting go off the minor differences and respecting the human dignity. “She captures different aspects of the cultural encounter, the ways in which identities are codified forms a common matrix in her writings.” (Subashini 57) Diversity meets at a point of confluence and converges into becoming a multicultural society. Her novels have become a vehicle for the promotion of universal understanding, spiritual salvation and moralistic materialism. As an author she has tried to bring in the note of importance on this ‘transient mote of glitter-dust on the web of the world’ (QOD 307) and has in a way sent a message to ‘touch the orbits’. She has looked at Indian tradition, culture, problems, and shortcomings from a distance and has asserted the need for empowerment, adjustment and adaptability as global phenomena.

Works Cited

- Alsop, Ruth, Mette Frost Bertelsen, and Jeremy Holland. *Empowerment in Practice: From Analysis to Implementation*. USA: The World Bank, 2006. Print.
- Alvarez, Deborah M. *Writing to Survive: How teachers and teens negotiate the effects of Abuse* UK: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2011. Print.
- Appadurai, Arjun. *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger*. USA: Duke UP, 2006. Print.
- Bersani, Leo. *The Culture of Redemption*. UK: Harvard UP, 1990. Print.
- Bhatia, Sunil. *American Karma: Race, Culture, and Identity in the Indian Diaspora*. New York: New York UP, 2007. Print.
- Bottomley, Gillian. *From Another Place: Migration and the Politics of Culture*. Cambridge : Cambridge UP, 1992. Print.
- Dandurand, Yvon, and Vivienne Chin. "Human Security Objectives and the fight against transnational organized crime and terrorism." *Human Security, Transnational Crime and Human Trafficking: Asian and Western Perspectives*. Ed. Shiro Okubo, Louise Shelley. New York: Routledge, 2011. 36-55. Print.
- Dhanam K.S. "Negotiation with the New Culture: A Study of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*": *Critical Essays on Diasporic Writings*. Ed. Dr. K. Balachandran. New Delhi: Arise Publishers. 2000. Print.
- Divakaruni, Chitra. Interview by Karthik Ramaswamy. "Conversations". 2004. Water bridge review. Web. 16 Dec. 2012. <<http://www.waterbridgereview.org/>>.
- . Interview by Madhusree Chatterjee. "I explore complex diaspora identities". 2011. Sify. Web. 16 Dec. 2012. < <http://www.sify.com/news/>>.

- . Interview by Neila C. Seshachari. "Writing as Spiritual Experience" .2001.Web.17 June 2012 <<http://weberstudies.weber.edu/>>.
- . *Oleander Girl*.New Delhi: Penguin, 2013. Print.
- . *One Amazing Thing*.Great Britain: Doubleday, 2010.Print.
- . *The Mistress of Spices*. Great Britain: Doubleday, 1997.Print.
- . *The Palace of Illusions*.Great Britain: Doubleday, 2008.Print.
- . *The Vine of Desire*.Great Britain: Doubleday, 2002.Print.
- . *Sister of My Heart*.Great Britain: Doubleday, 1999.Print.
- . *Queen of Dreams*.Great Britain: Doubleday, 2004.Print.
- Espín, Oliva. *Women Crossing Boundaries: A Psychology of Immigration and Transformations of Sexuality*. 1st ed. New York: Routledge, 1998. Print.
- Hester, Hillary Dawn. *Breaking the Bonds of Silence: The Immigrant Experience in Magical Realist Novels of Katherine Vaz and Chitra Divakaruni*. Diss.Electronic Theses and Dissertations.2003 Web.16 March 2013.<<http://dc.etsu.edu/etd/833>>.
- Jefferess, David. *Post colonial Resistance: Culture, Liberation & Transformation*. Canada : U of Toronto P, 2008.Print.
- Kabir, Ananya Jahanara. "Diasporas, literature and literary studies". *Diasporas-Concepts , Intersections and Identities*. Ed. Kim Knott, and Sean McLoughlin. New Delhi: Rawat, 2011 .Print.
- Kakoty, Rukmini. "Locating Hybrid Identity Formations: Reading on Mississippi Masala, The Namesake and Bhajji on the Beach" . *The Asian Conference on Media and Mass Communication 2013 Official Proceedings*.1-10.Web.6 March 2014. <<http://www.iafor.org/>>.

- Lunga, Violet. "Postcolonial Theory: A Language for a Critique of Globalization?"
Perspectives on Global Development and Technology, 2008.191-199.Print.
- Mahmood, Iqbal. *Strategies of Negation: Postcolonial Themes and Conflicts in the English Language Literature of the East Indian Diaspora*. US: Author House, 2006.Print.
- Misra, Tilottama. "Women Writing in Times of Violence". *The Peripheral Centre: Voices from India's Northeast*. Ed. Preeti Gill. New Delhi: Zubaan, 2010. Print.
- Oju, Taiwo Oloruntoba. "Smells, Skins and Spices-Indian Spice shops as Gendered Diasporic Spaces in the Novels of Indian Women Writers of the Diaspora". *Shared Waters: Surroundings in postcolonial Literature*. Ed. Stella Borg Barthet. Netherlands: Rodopi, 2009. Print.
- Pathak R.S. *Indian English Literature: Marginalized Voices*, Ed. Avdesh Kumar Singh. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2003.Print.
- Provitolo, Damienne, Edwige Dubose-Paillard, and Jean Pierre Miller. "Emergent Human Behaviour during a Disaster: Thematic versus Complex Systems Approaches". *Proceedings of EPNAC 2011 within ECCS'11*. Vienna- Austria- 15 Sept.2011. Web. 12 Dec. 2013 <<http://litis.univ-lehavre.fr>>.
- Saha, Amit Shankar. "The Indian Diaspora and Reading Desai, Mukherjee, Gupta and Lahiri". *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 14.2 (2012):1-8.Web.16 Dec. 2012. <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/>>.
- Sarkar, Ananya. "Bracing the Shadows". *Muse India*.55 (2014): n.pag.Web.21 Oct.2014. <<http://www.museindia.com/regularcontent.asp?issid=45&id=3663#>>.
- Seitz, Virginia Rinaldo. *Women, Development, and Communities for Empowerment in Appalachia*. USA: State U of New York P, 1995. Print.
- Singh, Jaspal Kaur. *Representation and Resistance: South Asian and African Women's texts*

at Home and in the Diaspora. Canada: U of Canada P, 2008. Print.

Subashini, N. "Juxtaposing the East and the West in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Sister of My Heart*". *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*.3.16 (n.d.):55-57. Web.17 July 2013. <www.iosrjournals.org>.

Swamy, G.Serwani. "A Perspective on Complexities of Dislocation, Assimilation and Transformation in Multicultural Societies of Selective Diasporic Women's Writings". *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research* 1:2(2012).Web.13 May 2013. <<http://ijmer.in/>>.

Tyson, Lois. "Postcolonial Criticism". *Critical Theory Today: A User Friendly Guide*. New York: Routledge, 2006.Print.

Zupancic, Metka. "Ethics of Wisdom and Compassion in the Novels by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni". *Asian Studies* I (XVII):1 (2013): 105–117.Web.19 Jan. 2014. <<http://revije.ff.uni-lj.si/as/article/download/248/301>>.