

**STUDY ON THE NOVELS OF JHAMPALAHIRI AND CHITRA
BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI**



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M.Phil., Roll No. :140709; Session: 2014-15

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ABSTRACT

The term "diaspora" refers to a group of dispersed individuals who share a cultural background but live in different parts of the world. It also refers to people of a certain ethnic group who have voluntarily or because of outside influences departed the country in which they were born. In contrast to the influential migration, which refers to the forcible banishment of people from their native land arising due to social, political, or economic reasons such as the indentured labor system or the partition of India and Pakistan, the intentional migration from a

native land to an alien land includes migration for the purpose of education, employment opportunities, marriage, and other social reasons. Immigrants face a variety of challenges when they move to a country that is part of a diaspora, including a sense of dislocation, cultural friction, and identity ambiguity. Diaspora literature, also known as diasporic literature, is a literary genre that was established when immigrant authors began writing about the experiences of those living in diaspora. Indian Diasporic Literature has developed as a result of the creative contributions made by authors of

Indian descent such as Bharati Mukharjee, Kiran Desai, Amitav Ghosh, V. S. Naipul, Salman Rushdie, Meena Alexander, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, amongst others. This research will

specifically focus on the topic of diaspora and will attempt to apply characteristics of diaspora to several works of fiction written by Jhumpa Lahiri and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.

KEYWORDS: Writers, Indian, Literature, Friction,

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, the world has seen an increase in the number of people migrating to various regions of the globe. The authors of immigrant literature, such as short stories, novels, and poems, memorialise their experiences in the creative works that they create. Not only can a research study on such diasporic works be valuable to students of literature, but it may also be helpful to immigration hopefuls who want to gain a head start on their understanding of the diaspora. Both of the authors who were considered for inclusion in this study are immigrants who were brought to the United States from West Bengal, India. However, they come from two distinct generations of immigrant families.

The basic characteristics of diasporic literature, such as a sense of displacement, alienation, memory, nostalgia, and identity confusion, are prevalent in their works; nevertheless, variances arise in their writing as a result of the age and generation gap that separates them from one another. Both Jhumpa Lahiri and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni have written about the struggles that immigrants face in their adopted countries in their writings. These struggles cover a wide variety of topics. It may be helpful to comprehend the diasporic sensibility of Indian immigrants to conduct an analysis of the many different topics that are addressed in chosen books written by both writers. The current study sheds light on the reality of the Indian immigrant community, which exists in the diasporic environment despite the challenges of isolation, nostalgia, cultural clash, identity uncertainty, and generational gap. *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri is a collection of short tales that provide the reader a variety of experiences that are both familiar and foreign. All of the stories depict Indian characters who live either in India or in the United States. Within a nation's borders, a culture functions as a unifying element, whilst across nations, it functions as a separating force. In spite of the fact that early difficulties in adapting to a foreign culture are common, it is

only normal that an individual will eventually come to terms with the foreign culture. Jhumpa Lahiri is torn between the socio-cultural intricacies of her Indian heritage and the way of living in the United States. According to what she mentioned in an interview, although America is her home, she still considers herself to be somewhat of an alien here.

ASSIMILATING THE INDIAN SOCIETIES WITH “SPICES”

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an Indian author who, like Salman Rushdie, is interested in migration, trans-national concepts of ethnic identity in diaspora, and the trans-cultural experiences of exile and belonging, alienation, and the hope of reconciliation. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is also concerned with the hope of reconciliation. While approaching such ideas from vastly different points of view, Divakaruni uses constructs of magic or "esoteric" to transcend traditional notions of geographical borders, boundaries of time and space, and limitations of identity. Moreover, she does so while utilising a wide range of different perspectives. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni wrote an excellent novel titled "The Mistress of Spices" in 1997. This book depicts an immigrant woman's journey from the set paradigms of the past to an unexplored future in the United States. The novel depicts the challenge of reconciling one's cultural and biological identity against the drama of becoming estranged from oneself and undergoing personal metamorphosis in a new country of residence.

THE CONCEPT OF MIGRATION

Migration is inherent to the human experience and will continue to be so. Migration of people from one region to another is documented in great detail throughout the human history of each and every nation's various historical periods. It is possible that the earliest humans to inhabit our planet travelled from one location to another in search of food and a safe place to live. Not just humans, but also birds, animals, and every other living thing that has ever been on earth has made the decision to travel during each season in order to find food and a place to procreate. The sole reason people moved about in ancient times was to satisfy their fundamental need, such as food and shelter. The passage of time caused a growth in man's requirements, and in order to meet these ever-increasing wants, either people or things needed to be transported from one location to another. As a direct consequence of this, goods such as food, spices, clothing, medicines, jewellery, and other items started to be shipped from one location to another and all over the world. The migration of the imperial family began shortly after the establishment of the kingdom

and army. The emperors and conquerors were driven to expropriate more and more territories by their desire to amass more power and property. In addition, the inquisitive tendency of humans has always been present. The exploration of the world began with man's insatiable thirst for information and fascination with the mysterious. Throughout the course of human history, countless of people have travelled the world.

LIFE AND WORKS OF JHUMPA LAHIRI

Jhumpa Lahiri is a writer of the Indian Diaspora who comes from the second generation. She was born in England in 1967 to Bengali parents, and her family moved to the United States when she was only three years old. Her parents' native country is Bengal. Jhumpa Lahiri is of the opinion that the difficulties of exile, loneliness, a persistent sense of alienation, and the yearning for a world that has been lost are obvious and painful experiences for immigrants. *The Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), which was her debut collection of short stories, was won the Pulitzer Prize for literature in the year 2000. This book is a compilation of nine short tales about the lives of Indians and Indian Americans who are divided between two cultures: the culture of India, and the culture of the country that they now call home.

The characters have a hard time keeping their traditions alive in a new environment. They are able to maintain their culture and identities with the assistance of native language, social contacts, religious practises, and rituals; yet, this results in their developing hybrid personalities. *The Namesake*, Jhumpa Lahiri's debut novel, was published in 2003 and subsequently turned into a critically acclaimed film with the same title. *The Namesake* focuses mostly on the trials and tribulations through by a Bengali family that moves to the United States in order to build a life for their son that is different from anything they have ever experienced. The tale follows the Ganguli family over about thirty years of their lives. The parents, who were born in Kolkata, immigrated to the United States when they were young adults. In the United States, their children grew up and faced a steady draw toward American culture and American life, despite their parents' longing to return to India.

Life and Works of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an Indian American author who was born in Kolkata in 1956. She moved to the United States in 1977. Following the completion of her postsecondary education in Kolkata, she moved to the United States of America in 1976. She worked a variety of odd jobs

around the United States to make ends meet during her time at the University of California, Berkeley, where she earned both her master's degree and her doctorate. She is a well-known author, poet, and writer, and she also teaches in the Creative Writing Program at the University of Houston in Texas at the present time. She makes an effort, throughout her work, to investigate the many identities of members of diaspora communities. Her writing explores ideas such as multiculturalism, alienation, and the search for one's own identity on a journey. The majority of her works are based on the experiences and struggles that are endured by women of the middle class who feel estranged, unsatisfied, and unable to communicate their emotions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bharati Mukherjee (2019) was born in the city of Kolkata. After completing her postgraduate studies in India and receiving her master's degree, she moved to the United States in 1961 to pursue her PhD degree and continue her education. Gita Mehta was born in Delhi, India in 1943. She moved to Toronto, Canada with her family and resided there for more than a decade. Gita Mehta was born in India. Her early education was obtained in India, and she continued her studies in the United Kingdom. She writes on the social, political, and cultural complexities of India in her writings. Her works may be found here. Her paintings also contain undercurrents of mythology and an emphasis on self-discovery.

Dalit Assertion (2017) examines how the Dalits of modern India organise themselves into movements to fight for their democratically guaranteed rights. This book examines the connections between dalit assertion and development in democratic India. The primary focus of the book is on how regional variations impair the unity of the dalit people and make it difficult for them to assert themselves as a coherent group. The book "Argumentative Indian" written by Amartya Sen in 2005 demonstrates how the lengthy argumentative heritage of Indians is essential to comprehending modern India. Sen contends that the establishment of a robust and effective democracy in India is contingent upon the country's adoption of secularism; the eradication of caste, class, gender, and community-based imbalances and inequalities; and the preservation of peace across the entirety of the subcontinent.

Manjeet Kaur (2017) Arundhati Roy is an Indian author, social crusader, cultural critic, and well-known political personality. She has been engaged in a non-violent combat against violence done to human beings all over the world via the use of words and protests. The horrors of gender

discrimination in India are explored in the novel "The God of Small Things," as are the ways in which patriarchy contributes to the marginalisation and oppression of women in general. Through societal structures, the author brings to light differences such as caste, gender discrimination, colour, and ethnic divisions. She also firmly argues how these factors impact human connections and the specific behaviours of individuals. The ancient customs gave birth to rebellious ideas, and Roy has raised a voice of protest via her characters. The method in which injustice is done to these socially oppressed individuals because of their gender is strongly described in this work of literature.

V. S. Naipaul (2018) was a notable British author of Indian heritage who also won the Nobel Prize in Literature. In the year 1953, he was born in Trinidad. His representation of alienation and exile with psychological insight and a touch of sarcasm are outstanding, which is one of the reasons why he is acknowledged to be a master of English writing. He first gained fame for his humorous writing but eventually became renowned for his more serious autobiographical works. *A House for Mr. Biswa*, which was published by Naipaul in the beginning of the 1960s, is widely regarded as a seminal work in the author's body of work. The work is the author's re-creation of the events of his father's life that he observed while he was growing up. The fiction written by V. S. Naipaul includes the following.

S. Sujaritha (2019) in her doctoral thesis *Diasporic Chronotope in Women's Fiction: A Select Study* analyses historical and cultural aspects in various novels including Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003), Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003), Amy Tan's *The Bonesetter's Daughter* (2001), SKY Lee's *Disappearing Moon Café* (1990), Joy Kogawa's *Obasan* (1981) and Bapsi Sidhwa's *An American Brat* (1997). The writers chosen by the researcher belong to different diasporas namely Bangladeshi-English, Indian-American, Chinese-American, Chinese-Canadian, Japanese-Canadian and Pakistani-American respectively. The common characteristics of diaspora such as identity confusion, cultural conflict, discrimination, nostalgia and survival are explained in details and are chosen as basic parameters for research.

DIASPORIC APPROACH TO SELECTED WORKS OF JHUMPA LAHIRI

The Namesake, the first novel written by Jhumpa Lahiri, was published in 2003 and chronicles the narrative of a Bengali family in a gripping manner. The work also mirrors the uncomfortable position of immigrants, the friction between east and west, the familial ties, and freedom. The

novel recounts the life of the Ganguli family, Indian immigrants who settled in the United States, and in particular the life of their son Gogol Ganguli, who was born in the United States. Lahiri examines the social and psychological aspects of Gogol's experience of attempting to reconcile his hyphenated identities. The endeavour that immigrants make to plant their feet in a new nation is arduous in and of itself, but the feelings of isolation and cultural friction as well as identity uncertainty make the process even more challenging. Jhumpa Lahiri's writing is heavily influenced by the concept of exile due to the fact that she is the child of parents who came to the United States from another country. The novel *The Namesake* also includes some of her own personal experiences. In the instance of Jhumpa Lahiri, her parents were first generation migrants in England, she was born in England, and her family immigrated to the United States when she was only two years old. Jhumpa Lahiri is an author. According to her point of view, moving to the United States was more like a notion of crossing over, being drawn to it but not feeling a part of it despite the fact that she was living there. Jhumpa Lahiri's parents didn't want her to think that she is an American; they wanted her to be called Indian instead of American when she was a child. Jhumpa Lahiri's desire to become an American when she was a child was a form of betrayal against her parents. Jhumpa Lahiri said the following in an interview on her childhood in the United States: "I didn't feel American, and I was schooled not to be." Because her parents found it upsetting, they did not want her to identify as an American. They did not want her to call herself an American. Despite this, it was not an unusual occurrence. Similar to when British people arrived in India and settled here.

ALIENATION

In "*The Namesake*," the characters are shown as being not just culturally but also mentally estranged from one another. Leaving one's nation means severing ties to one's family and cultural heritage. The conduct of members of a diasporic group is determined by their disconnection from their home culture. They experience feelings of depression and isolation as a result of the frigid treatment they receive from the alien culture and civilization. Even the name of the book, "*The Namesake*," alludes to the existential torment that the individual who has been uprooted is experiencing. Jhumpa Lahiri's novel, "*The Namesake*," does an excellent job of elaborating on the themes of isolation and identity crisis, both of which are common experiences for immigrants who are attempting to start new lives in a foreign country. The fact that the people in the book are

separated from their original language and culture causes them to experience cultural and emotional upheaval. The narrative of the book centres on the lives of an Indian couple named Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli. A young Indian immigrant named Ashoke travels back to his home country of India to get married. According to the customs of Bengali marriage, he and Ashima were brought together through an arranged union. And after the wedding, the pair relocates to the United States. At this point, Ashoke has finished his doctoral studies in fibre optics at MIT. Because Ashima's grandmother was supposed to send suggestions for the baby's name in accordance with Bengali custom, but the letter never reaches them, the couple decides to name their first son Gogol.

MEMORY AND NOSTALGIA

The emotional gap between Ashoke and Ashima and their family members in India who live in India is unaffected by the physical distance that separates them from each other in India and the United States. They keep in touch with the members of their family who live in India through letters and telephone calls, but they miss being in one other's presence and frequently get sentimental thinking about it. The initial encounter between Ashima and the western world is not a particularly encouraging one. For her, the horrific experience is compounded by the fact that she is cut off from her family. In her early days in the United States, she was unable to relate herself with American society. She has feelings of homesickness, tears when she is alone herself, and thinks about her parents and the house they had in Calcutta. She does the calculation for Indian time in her head, and via her subconscious eyes, she is able to view what is going on at her parents' home. Already nightfall, it is half past eight in Calcutta, which is nine and a half hours ahead of where you are. At this very moment, in the kitchen of the apartment where her parents live in on Amherst Street, a servant is putting Marie biscuits on a tray while also pouring after-dinner tea into hot cups. Her mother, who will very soon become a grandmother, is standing in front of the mirror on her dressing table and using her fingers to detangle her waist-length hair, which is still more black than grey. Her father is slouched over the tilted table near the window, drawing while smoking and listening to the Voice of America on his transistor radio. Rana, her younger brother, is preparing for a physics exam while he is sitting on the bed. She remembers the grey cement floor of her parents' living room quite well, and she can still feel the firm coolness of the floor

beneath her feet even on the hottest days.... The burden of carrying the baby is temporarily taken away and replaced by the sight that unfolds in front of her very eyes...

In general, immigrants have a propensity to migrate to areas where there is a sizable population of individuals from their own group. This provides them with a sense of familiarity and a buffer zone against culture shock. After moving to Cambridge, Ashoke and Ashima find themselves in frequent interaction with people hailing from their home country. There are several other Bengali families from West Bengal that are mentioned in the book, such as the Nandis, the Mitras, and the Banerjees. Ashima is approached by a group of young Bengali bachelors who ask her about her background in a shy manner. These lads, like Ashoke, fly back to Calcutta, where they find spouses, and then they return. As a result, the bond that the Ganguli family has with the other Bengalis who live in the area is continuing to develop. They hold gatherings on a regular basis, celebrate Bengali holidays, prepare Bengali cuisine, and have conversations about India in order to lessen the sense of isolation they experience and to preserve their collective memory: The spouses hold careers in education, research, medicine, and engineering respectively.

CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

First-generation immigrants, in general, do not exhibit a desire to integrate with western society in the first time following migrating, and they are careful to preserve their cultural heritage. This is because first-generation immigrants do not have children of their own. No matter how humble an effort they put out to maintain their indigenous culture, after a given period of time they come to feel the pressure to integrate with the culture of the area in which they find themselves in order to have a sense of belonging. The process of cultural assimilation makes significant headway when offspring of immigrants who have been in the country for two generations begin to adopt western ways of life by attending western schools and pursuing western careers. Ashima has spent her whole life clinging to the traditions and principles of her home culture, and she does all in her power to pass those beliefs on to her own children. She does her best to isolate herself from western culture. The western way of life had no effect on Ashoke and Ashima at any point in their lives. While Ashima is in the hospital, she notices that other people pay visits to their loved ones or those who are near and dear to them there, and that they bring garlands with them. However, "it never occurred to Ashoke to buy his wife flowers," she says. (Lahiri, Namesake 12) Ashima places a high value on the Indian culture, her family, and the connections she has with others. She worries

that she will lose her culture if she continues to be cut off from it, and she is extremely concerned about her children's assimilation into western society.

IDENTITY CRISIS

The identity confusion, tension between two different worlds and conflict between two different cultures mark intense diasporic feelings of both the first and the second generation characters of the novel. The issues of cultural conflict are severe for the first generation immigrants like Ashima, whereas the forces of dual identities are acute for the second generation immigrants who also face cultural pull of two contradictory cultures right from their childhood. Gogol is unable to understand his father's association with his name Gogol, he feels embarrassed by his name and struggles with himself. He ignores the real motive that drove his father Ashoke to give him the name of a famous Russian writer instead of anything else.

GENERATION GAP

In her novel "The Namesake," Jhumpa Lahiri explores the generational divide that develops in a diaspora setting as a natural consequence of the passage of time. The challenges that come with diaspora are not the same for the first generation as they are for the second generation. The first generation of immigrants must fight against the chances of cultural conflict, protect themselves from the impact of the host culture, and eventually learn to integrate with the culture of the host country. It would appear that the position of children of the second generation has been turned on its head since they have been acclimated to the culture of the host country while simultaneously maintaining a distance from the traditional culture and values of their parents. It may be argued either way as to whether or not they are accepted by the dominant culture of the host country. The ideologies of the first generation and the second generation generally stand in contradiction to one another, most prominently on cultural grounds; this adds fuel to the fire of the first generation's diasporic predicament.

CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI: A DIASPORIC APPROACH TO SELECTED WORKS

In the book "The Mistress of Spices," the author weaves together aspects of Indian mythology, American reality, and the significance of each to women. The action of the book takes place in Oakland, and it tells the story of a woman named Tilo, who is a spice expert and who owns a grocery shop with the signboard SPICE BAZAAR. Tilo tries to find a solution to the day-to-day

challenges faced by Indian immigrants in America by employing a mystical remedy involving spices. The difficulties that are disclosed are relatable to real life. She has been schooled in the therapeutic properties of spices, and combined with her own magical skills, she is able to sense issues confronted by her clients even when she is not in direct communication with them. She makes sure to pick out the perfect spice for each of her clients so that she may get them out of their problem. The book tells various different experiences about people who immigrated from India and their attempts to understand their heritage, as well as their struggles with acculturation, racism, and identity issues. The diasporic challenges they face are illuminated and, to a certain extent, resolved thanks to Tilo and the charms of spices. Even Tilo has identity uncertainty on occasion due to the fact that she has assumed a number of different identities throughout the course of her existence. In 2005, a movie that was based on the novel and kept its name was released in theatres.

ALIENATION

The majority of the characters in the book "The Mistress of Spices" are first-generation immigrants. They come to the United States with the desire to find happiness and prosperity, but the harsh reality of life as an immigrant causes them to feel depressed. The novel "The Mistress of Spices" is set in India. They contrast the state of their minds on the inside with the status of the world around them. It's possible that the disparity between the two will cause them to experience sensations of displacement. Tilo, the heroine of the book, struggles with emotions of homelessness over the length of the story, and as a result, she feels estranged from everyone and everything she encounters. She goes by a multitude of identities, and each one of those names is tailored to the context in which she is now found. In point of fact, Tilo was not her real name; rather, she was given the name Nayan Tara, which means "star of the eye," and she was born in a hamlet in India. Her parents saw her birth as nothing more than a dowry debt, and they did not celebrate it. When it is revealed that the daughter who was left unattended is born with the ability to predict the future, the happy ending is that her parents do indeed come to see her as their "star of the eye." However, despite the fact that her magical gift has brought her fame and money, she does not believe that her life is full of joy and excitement. Even though she is at home, she does not feel at ease there. Her parents and siblings obey her orders because of the great fortune she has amassed via the presents she has received, but as the narrative progresses, she finds herself increasingly isolated. How wearisome my existence had become with all of the unending acclaim, the songs of

admiration, the mountains of presents, and the frightened respect shown by my parents. And then there were those never-ending evenings spent laying awake in a room full of girls who moaned out the names of boys they saw in their nightmares. When I wanted to escape the emptiness that was opening out like a black hand inside of my chest, I would turn my face into my pillow. I would concentrate my concentration on my unhappiness until it was resolved.

MEMORY AND NOSTALGIA

The names of different spices serve as the headings for each of the chapters in "The Mistress of Spices," and Tilo associates each spice with a different one of the human senses. A number of the characters in the book go through periods in which they are alienated from others, go through identity crises, and frequently feel nostalgic. They frequently feel downtrodden as a result of their current circumstances and the conundrums they face, but the spices have the power to help them forget their sorrows. According to the opinions of Sujith Kumar Rath, the spices in this story by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni are not merely used to improve the taste, nor are they medicines. They are real people with feelings and personalities. Spices have real powers in this context; on the positive side, they can heal, soothe, enhance, possess, enliven, and energise; on the negative side, they can wreck vengeance, take offence, be mean, and strike.

CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

No matter where they end up, immigrants never lose touch with the traditions and practises of their home countries, no matter how much they may have assimilated. Their perspective on other cultures has undergone a discernible shift over the course of time, and they now appear to have developed some level of tolerance for the customs and traditions of people from other countries. On a social level, premarital and married relationships are associated with changes in wearing patterns as well as changes in eating habits. Such shifts might result in the loss of the original identity, but they also present the opportunity for a new identity. The changes that have occurred in society are not as significant for the male partners of the society, but they are noticeable for the female partners. There is a possibility that a female immigrant may fully reinvent herself as a new person in order to escape the difficulties that will inevitably result from her insistence on maintaining her own culture and traditions. There are also instances of Indian women who choose to maintain their native culture while standing up to the influences of the outside world and ultimately assimilating into the norms of western society through a process known as

"assimilation." They are better able to hold on to their cultural identity and keep a healthy balance between their cultural identity and the cultural reality when they have a good attitude toward other cultures.

IDENTITY CRISIS

The novel focuses on the lives of Indian immigrants, a significant number of whom experience feelings of displacement and suffer from identity difficulties as well as racial persecution. They frequently experience homesickness for their country of origin and run into problems adjusting to their new culture. Because the experiences, rituals, and traditions of their homeland are permanently ingrained in their minds, it is exceedingly challenging for these individuals to successfully complete the integration process. Because of this, they are forced to live in locations that are considered to be "in-between," as they do not fully belong to either their native nation nor the region where they have been settled. These kinds of diasporic conundrums become the focus of the story, and Tilo uses the medicinal potential of the spices to try to alleviate the pain they are in. Tilo is of the opinion that there is a unique seasoning that can be used to bring out the best in each individual and help them realise their potential. She is able to discern the hidden desires of her customers and holds accurate information of the qualities of each spice. In addition, she possesses this skill. She has the power to grant people their wants and even to shape the course of their lives. As the story develops, it becomes clear that Tilo, like the immigrants who patronise her business, is caught up in the turmoil of being and becoming, a struggle that the vast majority of immigrants experience as they transition from their previous identity to their new identity. Saifee and Sharma remark in their analysis of the novel that Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni "focuses on the diasporic Indian women stuck between two conflicting worlds." This is in reference to the identity uncertainty that is faced by the female characters in the book. They are caught in a state of transition and are stymied in their attempts to carve out individual identities for themselves. They make an effort to talk about their own life despite the ups and downs that they experience.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, an attempt was made to examine Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novel *The Mistress of Spices* and *Queen of Dreams* in the context of diasporic sensibility. Both books exhibit examples of each of the five characteristics of diasporic sensitivity that have been selected. The fictions written by Divakaruni centre on the day-to-day challenges faced by the working class immigrant

population, which is caught between the tug of modernization and the draw of tradition. The majority of the characters in her writings are women who are stumbling through life while trying to figure out who they are. Her characters represent both her own experience of migrating to the United States as well as the sensation of dislocation she went through during that process. Some of the most frequent themes in her stories are the search for identity, the clash between Indian culture and American society, and the decision between following one's desires or following one's traditions. The protagonists in her novels who are immigrants make an effort to integrate themselves into the culture of their new home in an effort to lessen their sense of dislocation and otherness. Their experiences of diaspora are marked by the fact that they either fight to maintain their cultural identity or make the option to forge their own distinctive identity.

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