

THE SOUTH ASIAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI'S THE VINE OF DESIRE

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Abstract

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni the Indian American writer, who is the foremost writer of the diasporic literature, is known for her matrix of diasporic consciousness. The immigrant issues like rootlessness, loneliness, nostalgia, etc. are the explored conflicts in her writings, the anxiety of an immigrant and existential quandaries of an expatriate have been promptly evaluated as an immigrant herself. This present paper deals with The South Asian American women and their expatriate experience in the alien land with the reference to Divakaruni's *The Vine of desire*.

Key Words: Immigrant, nostalgia, consciousness, culture, Anju, Sudha.

The diasporic writers attempt the day-to-day experience of immigrant people, their sufferings and hardships, the predicament of women, cultural conflicts suffered by them in both cross-cultural interaction and within one's own culture explicitly. The diasporic writers insist on the mental trauma of their characters. In such a distressed condition, these characters recall the memories of their homeland, which is a kind of mental consolation to them, therefore, the expression of nostalgia is dominant in the literature of diasporic writers. Diasporic individuals migrate abroad for various reasons, they carry with them a strong feeling of homelessness, which the diasporic literature and its writers try to incorporate in their writings. Diasporic writers carry this cultural burden with them. Foreign immigrants often come across different cultural practices noticed within beyond one's own culture.

In the world of globalization and technology , migration has become an immense need of human life. Though people are interested to stay away from migration, new career prospects tempt them to be acquainted with the changing scenario. In the host land, migrants often experience cultural conflicts; those occur in relationship within a culture, which result in dislocation and painful experience. Ehsan Sehgal said, “The dream is a migration of thoughts and spirit towards the reality or illusion; one achieves the success, and one bears the failure”(TWTF.20).The literature of diaspora helps to study the cultural complex and displacements of immigrants.

As Divakaruni a diasporic writer exploring the displacement, dislocation, double marginalization and cultural conflicts those are suffered by the expatriate state in the foreign lands.Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni describe female subjectivity in order to form an identity that is not imposed by a patriarchal culture but by different patterns of culture. Divakaruni gives importance to her native culture in which she was born and brought up.

The Vine of Desire is a sequel to Divakaruni earlier novel *Sister of My Heart*. It arounds the lives of two women who are distant cousins biologically, but they are consider themselves as sisters of their hearts. They grow up together as individable sisters.

The Vine of Desire divided into two parts one is “**Subterranean Truths**” and another one is “**Rememberence and Forgetting**”. The first part of this novel passion running high and the characters entangled in a vine of desire,unable to separate the wishful from the reality. First part brings with “In the beginning was pain” (Divakaruni.3).Mythical texts heal the pains of immigrants and make them wise of live life honesty. The present novel, Sudha reveals the glorious stories of Jhansi Rani through her voice to Anju at the time who she is depressed because of her miscarriage. Sudha knows the mythical stories of her home culture would help her to regain her will power to face the obstacles in life.The second part of the novel, aims at redeeming all that was lost in the first part. Sudha begins her new life as a maid of Mr.sen.

The Vine of Desire starts with a heartrending description of the unfortunate death of Anju’s unborn son Prem,

“She loved speaking to Prem. In an illogical way, it was more satisfying.... Prem the way he grew still at sound of her voice the way he butted her ribs with his head.... she told Prem about the old house, that while elephant of a mansion that had been in the Chatterjee family for generation its crumbling marble facade... where she and Sudha went secretly at night to watch for falling stars to wish on”(Divakaruni 12-13).

The tragic aftermath of distress and loneliness faced by Anju and her husband Sunil. Anju remembering her past so she invites Sudha to America for emotional support. Sudha and her Dayita arrives in America. Sudha realizes the fatal folly she has committed in accepting Anju's offer. Sunil attracted by Sudha.

Anju gets disappointed with Sunil's strange behavioural patterns. In this play Divakaruni express his modern assimilated Indian immigrant in America, who is greatly influenced by the American culture. Anju try to sin corrupted her husband but he also wants divorce from her. They are fighting each other. Divakaruni shows the actual nature of South Asian woman who cannot completely break off her love for her husband.

Anju finally asked Sudha “what's the point of going over what's done with finished? We need to put the past behind us, both you and I”(Divakaruni 92).

Anju shook her head. “I can't put it behind me until I know. I keep thinking you did it because of me.... like I ruined you life all over again. Like you sacrificed yourself for me” (92). Sudha said “I wanted to be independent. And it seemed like America was the best place for that”(93).

America Sudha is free and not bound by rules of convention as in India. Even though Ashok propose to her. Sudha rejects him because she wants to lead her life independently. Sudha feels guilty to accept his because she doesn't spoil his career who has all the right to enjoy his life. Sudha create her own identity and a secured future for her baby. Anju decides to engage herself in education and creative writing, which seems to be a momentary release for Anju. In order to forget her sadness in life, she keeps herself busy in the writers class and focuses on her innovative work.

Divakaruni's *The Vine of Desire* female characters Anju and Sudha are unforgettable, that is genuine representation of South Asian diasporic women. She portrays experience of immigrant women in living in America, who struggle hard to maintain their self-identity in an alien culture, but at the same time they do not follow it completely. Sudha dislikes some American culture but later she accept survive on their own to sustain their identity. Sudha saves her daughter by breaking all the traditional cultural patterns bound with Indian marriage institution. The paper has attempted through a study of cultural distress for south Asian diasporic women in America. Divakaruni shows that the liberal American notion of feminism encourages Indian women to struggle hard for **freedom** and **indepenence**. *The Vine of Desire* characters are economically independent women in search of their individuality.

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