

An analytical study on emigrational Power Politics and Conflict in the work of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's

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Abstract - Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, an acclaimed writer of South Asian origin settled in the United States, has played a vital role in enriching diasporic literature. Her body of work, which includes both fiction and poetry, delves into the struggles encountered by immigrants, such as questions of identity, displacement, alienation, cultural adjustment, and racial prejudice. Drawing inspiration from her personal journey as an immigrant, Divakaruni portrays characters who balance the tension between their Indian heritage and American surroundings. Her stories frequently highlight women who rise above social restrictions, seeking independence and self-discovery. The focus of this paper is to analyze Divakaruni's contribution as a voice representing the diaspora. The English novel authored by Indians has become a significant literary platform to explore the multifaceted realities of migration. Rather than presenting migration as a straightforward movement from one land to another, these works depict it as a layered and turbulent experience, intricately bound with issues of "power politics and conflict." Such narratives dismantle the notion of a singular, idealized migrant journey, instead presenting it as a realm of intense political and personal struggle. This study contends that Indian novelists have made a distinctive mark on global migration discourse by portraying migration not only as a quest for improved opportunities but also as an outcome of historical power dynamics, resulting in persistent internal and external conflicts for migrants. In the years following independence, the character of migration underwent change, yet its connection to power politics and conflict endured. Economic difficulties and social disparities within India fueled another wave of migration, both within the country (from villages to cities) and abroad. The uneven distribution of resources and opportunities in a developing nation remained a driving factor.

Keywords : migration, conflict, diaspora, culture, Indian, power, politics

1. INTRODUCTION

Beyond the deeply rooted inner struggles, migrants portrayed in English novels by Indian writers also encounter numerous external conflicts in their adopted societies. These challenges emerge as a direct outcome of the power dynamics within the host nation and the

unavoidable cultural clashes created by global mobility. These external forces not only shape the migrant's overall experience but also intensify their inner dilemmas. The dominance of the host country's majority culture often casts the migrant as the "other," leaving them in a state of constant vulnerability, where their identity is repeatedly questioned or misinterpreted. Fiction highlights such struggles as they surface in workplaces, where professional obstacles are common, in educational institutions, where migrant children grapple with belonging, and in social spaces, where cultural gaps may result in isolation. Importantly, this conflict does not always stem from hostility; it can also arise from basic cultural differences. ⁽¹⁾ A migrant's food habits, customs, or traditions may appear unusual or exotic to others, fostering alienation and compelling them to constantly explain or defend who they are. This unrelenting pressure to assimilate or to be persistently "understood" becomes a key source of conflict and remains a recurring theme in diaspora literature.

"The world, it seemed, was determined to be a place of suffering, and a place where suffering was caused by being who you were." — 'Kiran Desai, The Inheritance of Loss'⁽³⁾

This quotation from Desai's novel poignantly captures the essence of the migrant's external struggle. It underscores the reality that the world can become a space where one's very identity—shaped by race, nationality, or culture—turns into a reason for pain and conflict. The line emphasizes that the migrant's suffering does not always arise from their own actions but rather from being perceived as the "other" by the larger society. It serves as a profound reflection on the racial, cultural, and xenophobic challenges that constitute a central aspect of the migrant's external reality.

The migrant's connection with their homeland goes far beyond mere nostalgia; it frequently becomes a new site

of external conflict. Migrants may encounter criticism from family and community members in their home country, who may believe they have abandoned their cultural roots or been “influenced” by Western lifestyles. Such expectations to remain faithful to tradition often generate feelings of guilt and external tension. The migrant’s achievements in their adopted land may be perceived with both admiration and skepticism by those left behind, creating fractured ties with their own community.⁽⁹⁾ This strain also takes on a broader political dimension. As migrants adapt to life in their host society, they may adopt viewpoints that conflict with the political or social norms of their homeland, producing a sense of intellectual and emotional distance from the nation they once belonged to. The demand to assimilate is another major source of external struggle, pushing migrants into a difficult choice between protecting their cultural heritage and conforming to the expectations of their new environment. This dilemma becomes especially visible across generations.⁽⁶⁾ First-generation migrants often cling to traditional practices as a way to stay connected to their past, whereas their second-generation children may feel compelled to assimilate more fully, distancing themselves from parental culture in order to integrate. This dynamic results in conflict within the family itself, a recurring motif in Indian diaspora writing.

The external struggles of migrants form a defining theme in English novels written by Indian authors. Whether in the form of daily encounters with racial or cultural prejudice or in the deeper conflicts with their homeland and their own communities, these works illustrate that migration is rarely a peaceful journey. Such pressures stem directly from the power politics that triggered migration in the first place, creating ongoing tensions that migrants must confront in their search for belonging.⁽⁵⁾ The English novel by Indian writers provides a layered and insightful exploration of migration as a phenomenon shaped by political forces and marked by conflict. These narratives make clear that migration is not a simple, individual endeavor but is deeply connected to larger historical, social, and political realities. By examining themes of historical trauma, global hierarchies, and the external as well as internal conflicts of their characters, authors such as Salman Rushdie, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Kiran Desai have given a powerful and lasting voice to the migrant condition. They demonstrate that migration represents

far more than physical relocation; it is a political and transformative process that redefines one’s identity and position in the world.⁽⁸⁾

2. POWER POLITICS AND CONFLICT CHITRA BANERJEE LITERATURE WORK “THE MISTRESS OF SPICES”

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s ‘The Mistress of Spices’ presents a distinctive, magical-realist approach to the intertwined themes of migration, power, and conflict. The narrative reframes migration not through political upheavals but through its deeply spiritual and personal layers. The journey of Tilo, a Mistress of Spices endowed with mystical powers, and her customers—representing varied Indian immigrant lives—acts as a microcosm of the diasporic condition. This analysis suggests that the novel conceives of power not in political or economic terms, but as a timeless, spiritual energy rooted in cultural traditions. At the heart of the novel lies an internal conflict: the tension between sacred duty and human longing, framed within the universal struggles of migrants.⁽¹⁵⁾ In ‘The Mistress of Spices’, the experience of migration is elevated beyond material reality and infused with spiritual meaning. Migration is depicted not as an act of political or economic consequence, but as a journey of the soul, where the resilience of cultural memory helps confront the challenges of adaptation. This spiritual dimension is embodied in Tilo and, more importantly, in the mystical wisdom of the spices under her guardianship.⁽¹³⁾

While ‘The Mistress of Spices’ reflects the external struggles of migrants, its most profound conflict resides within its protagonist, Tilo. Her story highlights the migrant’s inner turmoil—a deep battle between a sacred obligation to the past and the irresistible call of personal desire. Bound by her vows as a Mistress of Spices, Tilo is committed to a lineage of women before her, a calling that demands solitude, detachment, and devotion to the needs of her community. She cannot leave her shop, touch another person, or live for herself. This duty becomes a symbol of her cultural and spiritual inheritance, anchoring her identity in a foreign land. Through this duty, she discovers purpose and belonging that transcend the everyday struggles of migration.⁽¹¹⁾ Yet this sacred duty collides with the emergence of human longing. Tilo falls in love with an American man, a relationship that violates her vows. More than a romantic attachment, this love becomes a metaphor for

her yearning for a human life—companionship, intimacy, and a self-directed future that breaks free from spiritual constraints.⁽¹³⁾

Divakaruni's 'The Mistress of Spices' makes an important and original contribution to migration literature by reframing power, politics, and conflict through a spiritual lens rather than a purely socio-political one. Power is envisioned as ancient wisdom, conflict as an inner spiritual struggle, and migration as both a process of loss and a reclamation of self. The novel suggests that migrant conflicts are not always simply cultural confrontations but may also be negotiations between the sacred obligations of the past and the intense human desires of the present.⁽²¹⁾

In 'The Mistress of Spices', themes of power, politics, and conflict are central, although "politics" emerges more as a set of spiritual rules and systems of governance than as formal state structures. The spices themselves are portrayed as holding "magical powers" and "hidden properties," which Tilo, as Mistress, is able to command. She describes their origins, colors, and scents, noting how they "bow to my command" at a whisper and release their powers. Her unique gift extends even to other elements such as metal, earth, sand, stone, and gems, where she perceives their luminous essence. She regards her store as a unique place, one where the spices preserve the "true power" of her homeland. The political dimension of the novel lies in the rigid, sacred codes regulating the Mistresses of Spices and their responsibilities. These rules bind Tilo, prescribing the way she must live and the limits of her use of the spices. The Old One serves as both mentor and authority, imparting lessons from the island and reinforcing her obligations. Alongside this, Tilo wrestles with a subtle conflict surrounding her identity as an Indian woman in America. This is reflected in her observations of American society and her attempts to safeguard her traditions while existing in a foreign setting. At times, she feels estranged or misunderstood by the "lonely American." Ultimately, the novel demonstrates how power—both mystical and spiritual—is regulated by an ancient political order, and how defying these structures in pursuit of personal desire leads to inevitable conflict.

3. POWER POLITICS AND CONFLICT CHITRA BANERJEE NOVEL IN *SISTER OF MY HEART*

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's 'Sister of My Heart' is a deeply moving and powerful narrative that examines the intertwined lives of two cousins, Anju and Sudha, whose futures are shaped by tradition and societal norms. While the novel honors the strength of their female bond, it also serves as a sharp critique of the subtle yet pervasive power politics that control women's lives within a patriarchal framework. The story unfolds as a tapestry of both inner and outer conflicts, emerging from the ongoing tension between individual desire and family obligations. This study contends that 'Sister of My Heart' reveals how the power dynamics of patriarchy and cultural tradition generate conflicts that ultimately guide the choices, paths, and identities of its protagonists.⁽¹⁰⁾

The primary form of power in the novel is not rooted in national politics but in the deeply ingrained patriarchy of Indian society, particularly within family life. The destinies of Anju and Sudha are largely governed by the authority of the men in their families—especially their uncles—and the expectations of their community. Their decisions regarding education, marriage, and personal freedom are heavily restricted. The novel illustrates a world in which a woman's worth is frequently measured by her physical attractiveness and her ability to give birth to a male child. These dynamics, though often implicit, act as constant forces of pressure and conflict. The dominance of the older generation in shaping the lives of the younger is another key theme. The "aunts" wield considerable influence over the two girls, ensuring their conformity to established customs. Sudha's choice to follow her personal desires faces strong opposition from her family, highlighting the way in which social and familial power politics operate to enforce tradition.

'Sister of My Heart' thus emerges as a significant exploration of patriarchy and traditional authority, along with the conflicts they perpetuate. Through the intimate story of Anju and Sudha, the novel critiques the quiet yet repressive structures of power that shape their lives. It portrays a struggle of profound inner conflicts—where yearning collides with duty—interwoven with external pressures that ultimately separate the two "sisters." Its lasting impact lies in its depiction of female friendship as a resilient and enduring counterforce to the oppressive politics of tradition, a bond that provides strength and hope even in moments of separation. The metaphor of the "wings

of a butterfly” symbolizes women’s inherent aspirations, dreams, and potential, while the imposed expectation to live “like a caterpillar” represents the limitations enforced by patriarchal power and tradition.⁽¹³⁾ This imagery captures the essential conflict between a woman’s natural drive for freedom and the societal demand to live a constrained life of duty and restricted choice.

4. POWER POLITICS AND POWER CONFLICT IN CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI’S *THE VINE OF DESIRE*

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s ‘The Vine of Desire’ is a powerful examination of how power functions not merely as a political idea but as a living force that defines the most intimate human relationships. The central conflict of the novel is not confined to one single event; rather, it unfolds gradually through the erosion of the established power balance among the three main characters—Anju, Sudha, and Sunil. The rigid structures of power inherited from their Indian upbringing collide with the uncertain and shifting dynamics of immigrant life, resulting in jealousy, resentment, and a reevaluation of identity and roles. The characters remain shadowed by the patriarchal and hierarchical systems of their past. Even in America, Anju and Sudha cannot fully escape the influence of their families in Kolkata. This is most vividly seen in Sudha’s history. Her life had once been directed by the constraints of marriage and the authority of her mother-in-law, who possessed the power to determine her choices. Her decision to leave her marriage represents an act of defiance, yet the consequences of those earlier power struggles continue to echo in her present.

Anju, by contrast, initially finds security in the traditional framework of her marriage. Her position as Sunil’s “wife” gives her a sense of protection and social status. However, this power proves fragile, dependent entirely on her husband’s loyalty and affection. The most destabilizing power dynamic emerges through the metaphorical “vine of desire,” symbolizing Sunil’s hidden attraction to Sudha. This desire destabilizes the balance within their lives. Before Sudha’s arrival, Anju and Sunil’s marriage followed conventional patterns: Sunil held financial authority as the provider, while Anju, both homemaker and aspiring writer, exercised emotional influence.

Sudha’s entrance disrupts this arrangement. Her beauty, which in India had once been both admired and burdensome, becomes in America an unintended source of power. The novel portrays this beauty as an unspoken, magnetic force. Anju becomes aware of Sudha’s effect on Sunil, observing the subtle but undeniable shifts in his behavior. This is captured in Anju’s inner reflection:

“And for the first time, seeing the way he looked at her... I felt a sharp, hard pinch of jealousy, so cold and unexpected it was like a needle thrust into my heart.”⁽¹³⁾

In Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s ‘Sister of My Heart’, themes of power and conflict are not conveyed through sweeping political narratives but are instead embedded in the interpersonal and societal structures that define the lives of Sudha and Anju. The conflicts emerge from a continual negotiation of power within the framework of a patriarchal and class-driven society, both in India and later within the diaspora. Patriarchy is one of the most significant sources of conflict. Male authority figures, through both direct and indirect influence, shape the destinies of the two protagonists, generating the novel’s central tensions. Sudha’s arranged marriage serves as the clearest example. Her deceased father had promised that she would be married into a wealthy family, and the family’s honor rests on fulfilling this pledge.⁽¹⁹⁾ Her personal wish to marry Ashok, her true love, is overridden by this patriarchal expectation. Similarly, Anju’s mother makes decisions that, although presented as protective, stem from a power structure that gives her authority over the girls’ futures. The female characters frequently find themselves powerless before the demands of a male-dominated society.

Class and economic privilege form another major axis of conflict. The families’ financial decline following the deaths of the fathers drastically alters their social standing. Sudha’s family, once affluent, now faces economic vulnerability, which compels them to seek security through a wealthy marital alliance for her. The tension between Sudha’s modest but affectionate family and her wealthy, status-driven in-laws starkly represents this struggle. Her mother-in-law’s scorn toward Sudha’s family highlights the imbalance created by class differences. These external pressures of patriarchy and class generate deep internal struggles for both cousins, straining their sisterly bond. Anju often

feels inadequate compared to Sudha's beauty and resents the admiration Sudha receives, while Sudha envies Anju's independence and intellect. Their secrets, sacrifices, and diverging paths become central sources of tension. The novel ultimately demonstrates how even the strongest bonds of sisterhood can be tested and reshaped by societal expectations, patriarchal power, and class-based pressures that define women's lives.

5. POWER POLITICS AND CONFLICT CHITRA BANERJEE NOVEL IN "*QUEEN OF DREAMS*"

This paper examines the complex interplay of 'power politics and conflict' in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's 'The Queen of Dreams'. Centering on Rakhi and her relationships, it analyzes how personal dilemmas and societal tensions intersect with power structures. The argument here is that Divakaruni employs magical realism and a dream-driven narrative to reveal both the subtle and the explicit operations of power, extending from domestic life to the wider cultural context of post-9/11 America. Key areas of focus include memory as a form of power, the politics of identity and assimilation, and the tension between tradition and modernity. In 'The Queen of Dreams', memory and dreams are not treated as abstract motifs but as real forces that generate both internal and external struggles. Rakhi, the protagonist, inherits from her mother the gift of being a "dream-teller," able to interpret the dreams of others. Yet this gift is a paradox—it offers her power while simultaneously creating deep conflict. In contrast, 'Before We Visit the Goddess' depicts conflict not simply as interpersonal tension but as something embedded in a patriarchal framework that dictates the lives of its women across generations. ⁽²²⁾ Sabitri's youthful defiance is presented less as rebellion and more as a confrontation with entrenched authority. Her father, invoking tradition and social codes, treats her desire to marry for love as a challenge rather than a legitimate choice. This is clear in the confrontation where he declares: "'You want to marry that boy?'" my father asked. The words were not a question. They were a challenge, an accusation.' This moment underscores the imbalance of power—her father asserts control rather than offering approval. This clash initiates a sequence of life-altering events for Sabitri. By eloping, she gives up the stability and recognition her family could provide, forcing her to construct her own life from nothing. Her father's final act of disowning her is both personal and public, cutting her off from family lineage

and erasing her social position. Such disinheritance illustrates how patriarchal control punishes disobedience. ⁽²³⁾ The theme of power and its generational impact is carried forward in the lives of Bela and Tara, who also face societal pressures and constraints rooted in patriarchal values, even when living abroad. The legacy of this original conflict lingers, shaping choices and anxieties for each subsequent generation, demonstrating how patriarchal power persists even in absence.

Divakaruni's 'The Queen of Dreams', first released in the U.S. in 2003 and later in paperback in 2005, explores human relationships, authority, and conflict with remarkable depth. Despite earlier references mistakenly calling it 'Queen of Desire', the official title is 'Queen of Dreams'. The narrative portrays how both overt and hidden struggles are embedded in family ties, personal bonds, and quests for identity. Critics have praised Divakaruni as "a master storyteller" who fuses reality with the imaginative realm of dreams, blending symbolic elements with everyday disputes and concealed histories to highlight the pervasive reach of conflict. A key motif in 'Queen of Dreams' is the intergenerational clash and the profound effect of maternal authority. The story largely revolves around Rakhi and Belle, both deeply influenced by their mothers. Rakhi's mother, for instance, exerts control not only through storytelling—which Rakhi later recognizes as selective or distorted versions of Indian heritage—but also through constant involvement in Rakhi's life. Rakhi recalls how her mother had little interest in her social activities and often made her "stay home." This influence continues into Rakhi's adulthood, with frequent phone calls and unsolicited advice affecting her personal and professional decisions. Rakhi perceives this interference as a suffocating "underground domain," leaving her with a sense of inevitability or doom. ⁽²¹⁾ Similarly, Belle experiences emotional distance, describing her mother's "chilled heart," which profoundly impacts her emotional world and artistic expression. Both women struggle under the weight of maternal expectations. Rakhi, in particular, feels her mother saw her as "unnatural, self-possessed, so different from everyone else," which intensifies her sense of alienation and conflict.

6. POWER POLITICS AND CONFLICT IN “BEFORE WE VISIT THE GODDESS”

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni stands as a distinguished voice in contemporary literature, widely recognized for her sensitive and layered depictions of the South Asian diaspora. Her writings often center on women, reflecting on themes of identity, displacement, and the intricate ties that bind families. In her novel ‘Before We Visit the Goddess’ (2016), Divakaruni crafts a sweeping, multi-generational story that moves across decades and continents, tracing the lives of three women—Sabitrī, her daughter Bela, and her granddaughter Tara. The novel is not merely a record of their journeys but a deeper exploration of the forces that mold them—tradition, circumstance, and the lasting power of maternal legacy.⁽¹⁹⁾ This paper contends that in ‘Before We Visit the Goddess’, Divakaruni employs the interconnected narratives of Sabitrī, Bela, and Tara to carefully analyze the complex nature of power politics and conflict. These forces emerge through class struggles, patriarchal dominance, and generational miscommunication, collectively underscoring the cyclical nature of women’s struggles and resilience. The narrative highlights how these power structures shape both personal identities and family bonds, while also revealing the strength women must summon in a world that consistently challenges their autonomy.⁽¹⁸⁾ Through an in-depth study of the characters’ decisions, their relationships, and the external pressures they endure, this research demonstrates how Divakaruni frames conflict not as a conclusion, but as a force for transformation, self-realization, and a testament to the enduring inheritance of women’s strength. ‘Paper Statement:’ This paper argues that in ‘Before We Visit the Goddess’, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni uses the interlinked stories of Sabitrī, Bela, and Tara to examine the multifaceted dynamics of power politics and conflict, expressed through generational gaps, patriarchal demands, and class inequalities. The novel illustrates how these forces shape women’s identities and family relationships, ultimately unveiling the cyclical nature of female struggle and endurance.⁽²²⁾

In ‘Before We Visit the Goddess’, Divakaruni offers a nuanced analysis of power politics and conflict through the interwoven experiences of Sabitrī, Bela, and Tara. This study has demonstrated that these forces are not external intrusions but are embedded within their very lives, expressed through patriarchal influence, class

disparities, and intergenerational tensions. Sabitrī’s initial defiance against patriarchal control sets the tone, showing the severe consequences of confronting entrenched authority and the long-lasting weight of societal dishonor. This first conflict, rooted in custom and communal expectation, is inherited by Bela, whose own fears and decisions are shaped by her mother’s struggles, emphasizing how unresolved patriarchal issues can create new divisions between generations, even in different cultural environments.⁽¹⁷⁾

Moreover, the narrative vividly shows how class pressures and the pursuit of upward mobility generate additional layers of power dynamics, producing further conflict as the characters negotiate identity in shifting contexts. Ultimately, ‘Before We Visit the Goddess’ is more than a family chronicle; it is a tribute to women’s resilience. Despite unrelenting struggles—whether social, economic, or relational—each woman demonstrates strength and adaptability. Their individual battles merge into a broader, timeless narrative of endurance and empowerment, echoing the symbolic presence of the goddess. Through this complex narrative, Divakaruni conveys that while conflict is an unavoidable element of life—especially for women in layered social landscapes—it simultaneously acts as a catalyst for growth, discovery, and the passing on of strength across generations.

7. POWER POLITICS AND CONFLICT CHITRA BANERJEE NOVEL IN “INDEPENDENCE”

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is regarded as a major voice in contemporary literature, admired for her layered and emotionally rich depictions of the South Asian diaspora and the complex realities of women’s lives. Her novel ‘Independence’ (2023) adds significantly to post-colonial literary discourse, situating its story within the cataclysmic moment of the 1947 Partition of India to foreground deeply personal struggles. The narrative follows three Bengali sisters—Deepa, Priya, and Jamini—whose lives are permanently altered by both the promise of national freedom and the brutal consequences of communal violence.⁽²³⁾ Even as the nation gains independence, the sisters must confront their own battles for liberation from patriarchy, social class divisions, and family obligations. This paper contends that in ‘Independence’, Divakaruni skillfully employs the political upheaval of Partition as a metaphor for the power struggles and conflicts

embedded within the family unit. The novel reveals how the quest for national freedom parallels the sisters' personal struggles for autonomy. These tensions are not merely interpersonal; they are rooted in patriarchal domination, class ideologies, and the trauma of a divided homeland. By analyzing the journeys of Deepa, Priya, and Jamini, this study will show how such forces mold their identities, strain their relationships, and ultimately shape their fragile yet hard-earned independence. It demonstrates that, for the women in Divakaruni's work, freedom is not something delivered by a political proclamation but a lifelong pursuit shaped by both personal and historical conflict.⁽²⁵⁾

This paper argues that in 'Independence', Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni uses the turmoil of Partition to highlight how power politics and conflict emerge through the microcosm of sisterhood. The novel shows that national upheaval reflects the sisters' private battles for independence, exposing how patriarchy, class, and trauma combine to create intricate power structures that influence their destinies and family ties. In 'Independence', Divakaruni vividly portrays how the Partition of 1947 provides a powerful backdrop for examining political conflict and power relations within the intimate space of a family. This study has argued that the sisters' quests for autonomy mirror the larger national struggle, illustrating how entrenched patriarchy, persistent class boundaries, and unresolved trauma entangle them in a web of conflict that both shapes and divides their lives. The analysis established that Partition itself parallels the personal divisions between the sisters. Their different desires and pathways toward "independence" act as a symbolic microcosm of the country's upheaval. At the root of these divisions is patriarchal dominance, which initially defines their roles and choices. The contrast between their parents' views—"Father's vision of India's independence was a country where men like him would lead. Mother's was a country where women like her would serve"—captures the patriarchal framework that conditions each sister's rebellion or compliance, igniting their conflicts. The novel also underscores how class mobility and political ideologies create stark power imbalances. Priya's pursuit of middle-class stability directly opposes Jamini's radical socialist principles. The passage, "Priya believed independence meant a comfortable home and a good future for her children. Jamini believed it meant a country free of

poverty and exploitation, a place where no one was hungry," encapsulates the ideological gulf dividing them. Deepa's relationship with Qasim, a Muslim, while personal in nature, becomes a profound political act amid communal animosity, illustrating how private choices are deeply politicized in times of unrest.⁽²⁶⁾

By synthesizing these perspectives, 'Independence' emerges not simply as a historical narrative but as an exploration of how large-scale national events profoundly impact familial and individual lives. Divakaruni reveals that power relations are layered, stemming from historical transformations, entrenched social systems, and personal responses to turmoil. The novel ultimately asserts that women's independence, especially during moments of vast historical change, is never straightforward—it is hard-won, multifaceted, and requires constant negotiation between external pressures and inner desires.⁽²²⁾ This study contributes to post-colonial literary analysis by showing how Divakaruni interlaces the political with the personal, focusing on the distinctive struggles of women during national transformation. It emphasizes that the fight for freedom is not singular but involves battles against patriarchy, social inequality, and lingering trauma. 'Independence' thus stands as a moving testament to resilience, underscoring how women, despite immense challenges, carve out their own meanings of freedom and agency.

8. CONCLUSION

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's works consistently offer a layered and insightful exploration of migration as a phenomenon shaped by political forces and marked by conflict¹. Divakaruni, drawing from her personal immigrant journey, portrays migration not as a straightforward movement, but as a complex and turbulent experience, intricately bound with "power politics and conflict"

Her narratives delve into the numerous internal struggles faced by immigrants, such as questions of identity, displacement, alienation, and cultural adjustment². She also highlights external conflicts stemming from power dynamics within host nations, cultural clashes, racial prejudice, the pressure to assimilate, criticism from their homeland, and the dilemmas of preserving cultural heritage versus conforming to new environments⁵.... These internal and

external pressures create ongoing tensions that migrants must confront in their search for belonging⁹.

- Through various novels, Divakaruni demonstrates how these themes manifest:
- In "The Mistress of Spices," she uses magical realism to portray power as spiritual energy and conflict as an internal struggle between sacred duty and human longing, suggesting migrant conflicts are negotiations between past obligations and present desires.
- "Sister of My Heart" critiques pervasive power politics within a patriarchal framework, showing how societal norms and male authority govern women's lives, leading to inner conflicts between yearning and duty, and external pressures that separate individuals.
- "The Vine of Desire" examines power as a living force in intimate relationships, where rigid structures from Indian upbringing clash with immigrant life dynamics, causing jealousy and resentment. It highlights how patriarchal and hierarchical systems persist, shaping destinies and generating deep internal struggles, even testing strong sisterly bonds.
- "Queen of Dreams" employs magical realism and a dream-driven narrative to reveal subtle operations of power and conflict, particularly focusing on the intergenerational clash and the profound influence of maternal authority, leading to feelings of suffocation, alienation, and conflict for the protagonists.
- "Before We Visit the Goddess" explores power politics and conflict through class struggles, patriarchal dominance, and generational miscommunication across three women's lives. It underscores the cyclical nature of women's struggles and resilience, portraying conflict as a force for transformation, self-realization, and the enduring inheritance of women's strength.
- "Independence" uses the 1947 Partition of India as a metaphor for power struggles and conflicts within the family unit, showing how the quest for national freedom parallels the personal battles for autonomy of three sisters, rooted in patriarchal domination, class ideologies, and trauma. It emphasizes that women's independence is hard-won, multifaceted, and requires constant negotiation between external pressures and inner desires.

Ultimately, the article asserts that Divakaruni's narratives make it clear that migration is not a simple, individual endeavor but is deeply connected to larger historical, social, and political realities. Her work contributes significantly to diasporic literature by giving a powerful voice to the migrant condition and women's experiences. Through her examination of historical trauma, global hierarchies, and the constant interplay of external and internal conflicts, Divakaruni demonstrates that while conflict is an unavoidable element of life, especially for women in complex social landscapes, it simultaneously acts as a catalyst for growth, discovery, and the passing on of strength across generations. Her writing serves as a moving testament to resilience, underscoring how women, despite immense challenges, carve out their own meanings of freedom and agency.

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