

CULTURAL UNCERTAINTY IN CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI'S *THE MISTRESS OF SPICES*

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The word "culture" is a loaded and complicated concept. It has a polyvocal sense since it comprises various dimensions of a particular locale. The effects of "cultural dislocations" on the lives of the immigrants are some of the major themes in Diaspora literature. The topics of representation, personality, and sociocultural differences are also discussed through the purview of diasporic studies. Being a worker herself, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is one of the important voices in the American mainstream composition. She is also the best cultural translator for India. In a personal family set up, tightly associated with social, cultural, and psychological conventions with regard to food, her works depict Indian cultural traditions, notably Bengali cultural traditions of India. The Bengali nationality has repeatedly come up to highlight how immigrants preserve their native culture despite the dominating and the contradicting culture of the other land. *The Mistress of Spices* depicts immigrants who encounter cultural difficulties in an alien land, while simultaneously maintaining their own cultural beliefs and habits and gradually assimilating the cultural practices of the host country.

Keywords: Cultural Uncertainty, immigrants, Diasporic Literature, cultural traditions, native culture.

Introduction

According to the novelist and filmmaker Robert Alan, "Cultural differences should not alienate us from one another, but rather cultural diversity gives an aggregate strength that can aid all of mankind." As a result, culture is important to society and humanity. It also embodies the character and traditions of history. Every people has its own traditions and ways of life. The definition of culture according to Zimmermann's article is as follows: "Culture is the traits and knowledge about a certain gathering, language, religion, norms, social customs, music, and arts." Sometimes, due to prejudices, culture and custom generate havoc among communities. Some immigrants have discounted their own cultural heritage due to cultural disparities.

In a foreign country during the postcolonial era, the eastern migrants have had to deal with many cultural tensions. One of the main areas in postcolonial writing, dealing with the cultural tensions, is diasporic writing. It displays the hybrid nature of immigration. The present study aims to study in detail, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices* which deals with the theme of diasporic identity and cultural conflicts. This masterwork emphasises immigration conflicts in western nations, particularly the US. The motif of spices, implies the preservation of the extensive cultural heritage of India. The characters in the novel, especially the protagonist Tilo, embodies the soul of India.

When people emigrate from their own local land to some other unfamiliar land in search of opportunities and prosperity. Almost all immigrants, whether willing or reluctant, go through the agony and pangs of embracing the new land and its way of life because their new 'universe' seems to be (as James Gleick suggests) "unpleasant, not adjusted, scabrous, not smooth". In any event, they encounter a cultural clash when they land on foreign terrain. The ancient cultural and ethnic personalities of the immigrants are in jeopardy due to the cultural collision.