

**THE TREATMENT OF WOMEN IN CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI NOVEL,  
THE MISTRESS OF SPICES**

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**Abstract:**

Women characters in her novels are treated as sufferers in the society. They are suffered so much. Tilo in 'The Mistress of spices' an angel is worried because many people who need her help. The spices deal with sufferings of an individual and the characters of each spices. Mrs. Ahuju suffers because of her marriage with an alcoholic man, who abuses and tortures her. Lalita who is tortured by her husband and she leaves from her husband's home. Geeta is not allowed to marry her boyfriend. Her parents advises her to marry a man who is selected by them. Geeta suffers that she cannot marry her boyfriend. Society treat women only sufferers and not forgivers.

**Keywords:** Treatment of women, Gender problems, sufferings of women, Diasporic life of women and male dominated society.

**Introduction:**

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an Indian – American writer. She belongs to the group of young Indian writers that emerged on the literary scene with a post-colonial diasporic identify. Her position as an Indian – American writer is well established. She has spent more time outside India than in it. Her writings are partially autobiographical and most of her novels are set in California, dealing the experience of immigrants to the united states.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni was born in Calcutta on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1956 and spent the first nineteen years of her life with her parents. Her father, an accountant by profession, and her mother Titini Banerjee, a School Teacher, brought up their four children in middle – class

ambience. As the second born child and only girl with three brothers, partha, Dhruva and surya chitra spent her childhood days in siblings rivalry and camaraderie. She studied at Loreto House, a Convent school run by Irish runs, from where she graduated in 1971. In 1976, she earned her Bachelor's degree in English from presidency college, University of Calcutta.

Women characters in her novels deal with so much sufferings and sorrows. She highlights the treatment of women sufferings, theirs delineation, isolation, exile, mental trauma, dislocation, isolation, exile, mental trauma, dislocation, home and exile in her novels. She portrays sufferings faced by contemporary women. Divakaruni presents the problems faced by Indian women in the united states, the impact of American culture on them as individuals and the difficulty of the immigrants in adapting to the culture of the adopted land.

### **Treatment of Tilo:**

Tilo, the protagonist of the noval 'The Mistress of spices', runs a grocery shop, in California. She works for herself and others. She helps many people by her hope, strength and courage. She sells spices to the customers. Her power of magic mingles with humanism and the quest to share the anguish of the desperate home seekers.

In 'The Mistress of Spices' Tilo seems to achieve a serious purpose of life. She accepts, "It seems right that I should have been always that I should understand without words their longing for the ways they chose to leave behind when they chose America'. Tilo shares the pain of others but at the same time she realizes her own pain that in America, none is aware of her real name and identify, "I think that across the entire length of this land not one person knows who I am". She begins her life in America not only of her identify but also her importance to the 'Store' and 'Spices'. Tilo in her store used to listen the stories of the plight and suffering of poor women to redeem their pain. Her nobility of vision reflects in her confession, "Left it for this store, where I have brought together everything you need in order to be happy".

The turn and twists in Tilo's life is that she loves one American man Doug. He is an architect. She meet him before her store. Her life changes when she meet him. She begins to love him. Then she decides to close the store due to her family situation. On that day Doug again comes to meet her that night and sadly tells her that his Native American born brother ahdn dis. The first mother does not allow Tilo to meet Doug. She scolds her. But Tilo cannot

change her mind. She is always deeply love him. Then she goes to the store and sets the spices on fire. At that time Doug comes and searching her and finds the store devastated. But Tilo has not burned but she is alive. Doug agrees to help her rebuild the store and she happily reunites with him.

### **Treatment of Lalita:**

Lalita Ahuju's wife suffers because of her marriage with an American. He is more aged than her. He tortures her after the marriage. He is not a suitable man to Lalitha. He treats her with pain and suffering. At last he is very possessive and doubtful and also watching in all her activities.

Lalitha's life is changed with oppression and depression. She leads a lonely life. She wants to get relief from her suffering. So that she decides to go to work. But she is not allowed to go anywhere by her husband. In her life there is no choice to live a happy life. Her marriage life treats with male domination, suppressed, oppressed and depressed life.

### **Treatment of Geeta:**

Geeta treats with full freedom given by her parents. This freedom makes Geeta to select a life partner on her own. His name is Juan who is a Chicano. But her parents are not able to accept her boyfriend. Because everybody at her home get upset. They are angry with Geeta. But Geeta is not convinced by her parents advice. So she has the mind to leave with Juan. Indian parents are not accepted the love marriage. They are strict. They follow the Indian tradition and culture.

### **Treatment of Daksha:**

Daksha treats with helping minded woman. She is working as a nurse in the hospital. She treats the patients with kind and good. She also gives treatment to her mother-in-law. She treats her mother-in-law with utmost care and attention. She helps her very much. She spends time to help her. She also helps her husband. Somebody asks why you always helps and troubles? She tells that there is no trouble to help my family and others. She decides that she has to sacrifice her life both for family and others.

**Treatment of Hameeda:**

Hameeda treats with utmost sufferings of her marriage life. She get divorce and leaves from him. She has only one daughter and she wants to go to live with her in America. She has no boy-child. So that her husband sends out from the family. He marries another girl who is more beautiful than Hameeda. She feels happy because she has a brother and daughter.

**Conclusion.**

Woman characters in this novel “The Mistress of Spices” treat with much sufferings in their life. They treat with happiness till they live with their parents. After that they suffer much in their marriage life. Some woman suffer that there is no choice to select a life partner. Mostly they are suffered by men after the marriage. Some men don’t accept women after the marriage. There are arguments, misunderstandings, money problem in their family life. They can’t take any decision on their own. Treatment of women means treatment of sufferings, women suffer more than men both in the family and outside the world.

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