

RELATIONSHIPS OF MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS IN CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI'S- *BEFORE WE VISIT THE GODDESS***NEHA**

Research Scholar,
Department of Humanities,
and Social Science,
Jayoti Vidyapeeth Women's University
Jaipur, India.

DR.KALPNA RAJPUT

Research Guide,
Department of Humanities,
and Social Science,
Jayoti Vidyapeeth Women's University
Jaipur, India.

ABSTRACT

The present paper explores the relationship between mothers and daughters, and the various kinds of love that bind crosswise generations. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's "Before We Visit the Goddess" captures the beautiful complexity of multi-generational and cross-country bonds, sweeping over the twentieth century from the countryside of Bengal, India, to the streets of Houston, Texas. Divakaruni's novel "Before we visit the Goddess" unfold the story three generations of women accomplishing their womanhood. Sabitri, Bela, and Tara experience their distinct lives in various continents, different conditions, and through various disturbances. However, one cannot help but notice an invisible thread that interfaces together these women. Divakaruni describes the beautiful relation of mothers and daughters yet more about fallout in relationships because of time, misconception and individual decisions in spite of longing for each other. By the time, cobwebs of misconception are cleared the only feeling that was left of guilt and regret. Complex familial relations crosswise boundaries are presented in an empathetic way and more of an understanding of love, loss, and Bengali culture. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni offers a multifaceted look at cross-country and multigenerational bonds and at love in its many pretenses.

Keyword: Multi-Generation, Relationship, Cross-Country, Bonds, Migration

"Before We Visit the Goddess" begins with the adage "Good daughters are like fortunate lamps, brightening the entire family's name. Wicked daughters are firebrands, blackening the family's fame". (Divakaruni, 2016) Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's latest offering follows the story of three fearless women crosswise generations. It explores the relationship that Sabitri, Bela and Tara — grandmother, mother, and daughter — share together and the men in their lives. Complex familial relations crosswise boundaries are presented in a sympathetic way, giving an understanding of love, misfortune, and Bengali culture. Divakaruni treats her characters, particularly the women characters with the themes of history, fantasy, society, racial issues, magical realism authenticity, and all variety get blended together. Since the author belongs to Bengal, the greater part of her women protagonists are additionally appeared to hail from Bengal. There is a considerable measure of references to the food being cooked in Bengal and characters are believed to murmur melodies and people music. Her

nearby relationship with her grandfather and his passing away when she was in America made her realize of individuals and things she was missing. Divakaruni's desired to not let her past disappear, she decided to write and convey back memories to keep her connection with the homeland. She believed she felt she could not afford to forget her country. Writings are a way to reconnecting, for her. The distinction in the way of lifestyle and values made her rethink and to some extent immigration, all changed her into an author. The author moved to the US and she has expressed, —I lived in the most part of Northern California, which I regularly write about. The journey of the characters generally takes place from Bengal to Sanfransisco, California, New York and Houston. In her blog written with a retrospective view in 2013 —How America made me into a Writer, she writes,

"I valued the opportunity and obscurity of being in a city where just a bunch of individuals knew my identity (...) I missed my family and their protecting arms so much that it resembled having an opening in my heart. I pondered India more than I had ever previously. I understood what I acknowledged about it- - the glow, the closeness of more distant family, the manner in which otherworldliness infests the way of life. Be that as it may, I additionally perceived issues about how women are regularly treated, and a rigid class system because of which many doors are shut to everything except the most blessed and most well-connected individuals".(Divakaruni, 2013)

The story of three women, Sabitri, Bela and Tara, they share the grandmother-mother-daughter relationship but, three women are connected not by DNA as well as by their activities, however, they monumentally influence the life of the other. Sabitri gets a telephone call from her separated daughter Bela, her nervousness; her cries and her sorrow affected to Sabitri deeply. Bela's circumstance has risen on the grounds that Tara, her daughter, has decided not to continue her education further. Bela asks her mother, in her most troublesome time to speak Tara and convince her not to take this impulsive decision.

According to themes of the novel, it turns out to be certain that the story is about individual and as well as impersonal and it has gained a ground from the way in which it formed. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's own contentions helped her to stand up to the issues and present to the world the experiences which are universal and engaging. In an interview to Neila C. Seshadri (2001) she expressed that she started to write:

"About what was of significance in my life, and one of the enormous things was the act of immigration and the manners by which it had transformed me, the ways in which it had truly made me see the world contrastingly and see my place as a woman in the world differently, the ways in which it had influenced me to appreciate my own way of life and also question my own culture, and question my life in India, and all that was essential to me".(Divakaruni, 2001)

To understand the mother-daughter relationship in Divakaruni's novel "Before We Visit the Goddess" it is appropriate to appreciate the psyche of a mother.

"Simone de Beauvoir in the chapter on mother writes that Some women feel their femininity as an absolute curse; such a woman wishes for or accepts a daughter with an

unpleasant happiness of self-recognition in another victim, and at the same time she feels guilty for having carried her into the world... Vexed at having produced woman, the mother greets her with this ambiguous curse: 'You shall be a woman.' She hopes to compensate for her inferiority by making a superior creature out of one whom she sees as her double, and she also tends to inflict her the hindrances from which she has endured".(Beauvoir, 1983)(533)

The mother at times imposes on the girl child precisely her own destiny. In some cases, the mother, despite what might be expected, forbids the child to resemble her. Beauvoir says that the genuine clash emerges when the girl grows older becomes more understanding, and when she wishes to set up her independence from her mother. This appears to the mother a sign of hateful ingratitude; she attempts stubbornly to checkmate the girl's will to escape; she can't stand to have her double turned into another. The pleasure of feeling totally prevalent – which men feel concerning women– can be enjoyed by a woman only in regard to her kids, particularly her daughters; she feels disappointed if she needs to revoke her privilege, her position. (Beauvoir, 1983)(534)

Sabitri, strong and ambitious, is the daughter of a sweet-maker in rural West Bengal. An intelligent young woman from a poor family household, she longs for being educated but, her family's circumstance makes college an impossible dream. The fantasy is realized when she goes with her mother Durga one day to deliver desserts to a rich and imperious woman, Leelamoyi, who consents to pay for the young girl's education. At that point, an influential woman from Kolkata encourages Sabitri, yet her generosity curdles after a solitary, unforgiveable misstep. Under Leelamoyi's wings as "neither servant nor master", Sabitri, who is thankful for this kindness yet unhappy in the new and grand surroundings, set off for college. But, one bungle costs her this cherished dream. With education not feasible now, the young girl, acquiring the skills of her mother, earns popularity in Bengal by concocting mouth-watering desserts, even as her relationship with her husband and daughter shreds destroyed. A long time later, Sabitri's daughter, Bela, haunted by her mother's decisions, flees to America with her political outcast lover, just to discover the nation—and love—endlessly from her imaginings. Sabitri's life unexpectedly turned around by her benefactor's son Bijan. Sabitri in her decision to undo the disgrace forced upon her manipulates Bijan into marrying her. Unfortunately for Sabitri, the realization that she is in love with Bijan and finding her manipulation happens on the same day.

Bela is as rebellious as her mother is strong-willed. Unable to discern what is beneficial for her, she escapes to the U.S. with the man she loves, an unlikeable student leader, regardless of her mother's pleas and warnings. Be that as it may, life in the U.S. is no easier, she realizes. She allowed her relationship with her mother to fall apart. Sabitri's daughter, Bela, had run off with her lover Sanjay. Sanjay's 'left oriented' legislative issues had made him many enemies in Kolkata and he had, however, two alternatives, either hide in India and get shot or getaway to America and live. Sabitri's disapproval to Sanjay, his sudden disappearance and mysterious emergence changed Bela to leave everything for true love. Be that as it may, this fabulous sentiment does not lead to a 'joyfully ever after.' At 50 she finds herself a divorcee, addicted to alcohol and a daughter who blames her for the divorce. Bela's relationship with her daughter Tara is similarly, if not more, rough. Her messy individual life

takes a positive turn when she becomes friend with a gay man half of her age, who urges her to take refuge in her cooking. Similarly, as Sabitri threw her spirit into Durga Sweets, Bela, without any "degrees or training", likewise discovers regard and reason the way in which her mother had.

Tara, an American by birth and an Indian by origin, who is Bela's daughter; she lives with her boyfriend, works at 'Nearly New Necessities' and has a standard life. It has been a while since she spoke to her folks. Tara, aside from being impulsive, similar to her mother, has an issue of stealing things that issue to other individuals; She throws them away. Bela's daughter Tara floats around carelessly till a near-death experience sets her back on track. Furthermore, as the title suggests these women purify themselves of all that has been troubling them before they meet their maker.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novel *"Before We Visit the Goddess"* centers on the women despite the fact that the men in their lives have a vital influence in molding them. But, none of these women crumbles despite the betrayal of trust — by husband, lover, and father. Unexpected friendships and conditions change the course of their lives and their identities in startling ways. Sabitri, strongest of the three: her letters to her granddaughter are the most inspiring parts of the novel,

Dearest Granddaughter Tara,

I am sure you are surprised to receive this since regularly we write to each other only to send Bijoya greetings. Your mother Bela informs me that you do not wish to continue with college. I am very sorry to hear this and hope you will reconsider and without education, a woman has little chance of standing on her own feet. She will be forced to watch from the sidelines while others enjoy the life she has dreamed about.
(Divakaruni, 2016)

Conclusion

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novel *"Before We Visit the Goddess"* explores the moments that resound crosswise generations and also the quiet erosions of culture that occur over time. In spite of the fact that the author skilfully handles the different decades and narratives at first, around the novel's end, the perspectives move to those of minor—and much less created—characters, such as Bela's neighbor and her ex-husband. This movement away from the lyrical voices of Sabitri, Bela, and Tara is both disorienting and frustrating, as compelling plot threads are left abandoned and unexplored. *"Before We Visit the Goddess"* catches the beautiful multifaceted complexity of these multi-generational and cross-country connections, demonstrating the deep threads of love and expectation and bravery that characterize a family and an actual existence. Divakaruni's *"Before We Visit the Goddess"* is a gracefully perceptive, brightly descriptive, and covertly stinging story that illuminates the opponent women must confront, generation by generation, as they glance for both connection and independence, Sabitri is Bengali in her passionate love for sweets and Bela straddles two cultures, Tara is as far expelled from her roots as one can imagine. The author paints her as the stereotypical revolt — a drug-addict with an eyebrow piercing and spiky coloured hair, with no information of gotras and temples and Indian culture. Tara is abnormally the inverse



of her grandmother. While Sabitri longed to be educated, Tara discards training to get herself a monotonous job instead. It is an upside down existence where previous generations look forward to while the present generations look in reverse. However, Tara's dreams are not regressive; they are simply extraordinary.

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