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# **Diasporic Feminism and Locating Women in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Arranged Marriage**

**Bhagyashri Shrimant Pawar**



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## Abstract

Indian diaspora women have effort to understand their multiple identities, their relation to different communities, and their connectedness to various social movements and women's movements and their struggle against various inequality existed in society. Indian diasporic feminism conceptualised their identities and circumstances on the basis of caste, class, ethnicity, gender, nationality and even various form of the oppression on their lives. They have shown their solidarity with the different women across the borders and positionalites and exposed in different forms of their writings such as novels, autobiographies, short stories and their political activism that there are always women have certain issues in their socio-political and cultural locations. However, Indian diasporic feminism have segregated in terms of their differences such as ethnic, cultural, class, national, religious, and so forth. In the post-colonial discourse, Indian diaspora is almost spread all over the world with significant population women. But the positions of women are not equal to their counterparts. Indian immigrant women are always considered as secondary migrants. Moreover, continuously suppressed, and oppressed by the male dominant attitudes.

The writing of Indian diasporic women writers largely focused on women issues in the process of migration and in diasporas. They have shown the predicament of women in new cultural spaces and raised their voice to resist it. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni as an Indian diaspora female writer largely focused on the women issues in diaspora and even their haunted memories of country of origin in her short stories collection Arranged Marriage. This study tries to examine the various issues of Indian immigrant women in diasporic space and their resistance to rigid and uneven cultural practices with the feminist lenses. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's collection of short stories "Arranged Marriage" provides various perspectives of Indian immigrant women's current scenario in diasporic space and their struggle for identity and existence.

**Key Words:** Indian Diaspora, Cross Cultural Spaces, Locating Women, Resistance Feminism etc.

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Statement: All the views expressed in the paper are of the author(s).

# Diasporic Feminism and Locating Women in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Arranged Marriage

**Bhagyashri Shrimant Pawar**

## Introduction

The paper attempts to discuss on the contemporary Indian diasporic situation from a wider perspective of critical analysis of women in diaspora. Indian diaspora, women have taken effort to understand their multiple identities in relation to different communities and their connectedness to various social movements including women's movements and their struggle against existed inequality in society. Indian diasporic feminism conceptualised their identities under the circumstances on the basis of caste, class, ethnicity, gender, nationality and even various form of oppression on their lives. Indian diaspora is almost spread all over the world with significant population of women. But the positions of women are not equal to their counterparts. Indian immigrant women are always considered as secondary migrants. The study focuses on Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni as an Indian diaspora female writer who had written extensively on women issues particularly in diasporic situations and their haunted memories of country of origin in her short stories collection titled 'Arranged Marriage'. She has explored various issues of Indian immigrant women in diasporic space and their resistance to rigid and uneven cultural practices from the feminist perspective. Her writings dealt with critical studies from feminist standpoint and also various themes such as transnationalism and multiculturalism, colonialism, migration, exile, cultural conflicts contained at the very core of Divakaruni's abundant narratives that would not subsist devoid of these diasporic dimensions of immigration.

She has established Maitri (hotline) for South Asian women of foreign land who are in trouble as secondary immigrants and confronted domestic violence, psychological and physical abuse and so on. The col-

lection of eleven short stories 'Arranged Marriage' is inspired from the Maitri that encourages Divakaruni to engage with women abuses and bravery of South Asian immigrant women. From the perspective of diasporic women and their issues, she has done her work interesting to read, *Mistress of Spices* (1997), *Sister of My Heart* (1999), *Queen of Dreams* (2004), *The Palace of Illusions* (2008), *Oleander Girl* (2013), *One Amazing Thing* (2010), *Before We Visit the Goddess* (2016) and her short stories 'Arranged Marriage' (1995) are books focused on women issues. She always focuses her writing on women issues, she says, "Women in particular responded to my work because I'm writing about them—women in love, in difficulties, women in relationships. I want people to relate to my characters, to feel their joy and pain, because it will be harder to [be] prejudiced when they meet them in real life." (Softky, 2007). She has presented her characters of immigrant women who have faced the problems of displacement and cultural trauma. She mostly writes her own experiences in diaspora as an immigrant who has dislocated and culturally diverged from one to another.

The last two decades have witnessed in the emergence of diasporic women writings, which has created large number of women writers who contributed in making their history in Indian diasporic literature. In the post-colonial discourse diasporic women writers have produced huge work on various issues of immigrants in diasporic spaces. "Immigration brought new opportunities for these Indian-American immigrants, it also brought them challenges such as dislocation, isolation, identity crisis, and a sense of differentiation that could easily bring back colonial memories" (Divakaruni, 1997). The central theme of their writings were/are about women issues in homeland and their hostland where they settled to create new world through their

literary products. It has also seen that women writings not only focus on domestic patriarchal issues of women in societies but in larger context the predicament of women in socio-political and economic circumstances in public sphere. The diasporic women's writings belong to two worlds of settlement and have tried to reveal different sort of universal experiences in diasporic location.

Divakaruni's 'Arranged Marriage' (1995) is a collection of eleven short stories; basically she talks about women in India and America. She depicts women's plight, condition and their existence, search for identity, discrimination, hybridization of culture, stereotype of tradition. "As a metaphor for self-transformation... ['finding a voice']...has been especially relevant for groups of women who have previously never had a public voice, women who are speaking and writing for the first time, including many women of color. Feminist focus on finding a voice may sound clichéd at times... However, for women within oppressed groups... coming to voice is an act of resistance. Speaking becomes both a way to engage in active self transformation and a rite of passage where one moves from being object to being subject. Only as subjects can we speak" (Hooks quoted in Storey, 2013). Some of Indian women writers also talk on this plight of women in diaspora. Anita Desai, Manju Kapur, Kavita Daswani, Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, Shauna Singh Baldwin, Meena Alexander, Suniti Namjoshi and Monica Pradhan, etc. these women writers make use of literary space to highlight women's issues and their dilemmas about new culture and old culture, through the gendered lenses. "These writers have made their homeland memorable and popular by writing about it. Through the movements of migration or immigration writers are turned diasporic. It depends upon individual's response to the adopted country and acceptance by the host, this acceptance also depends upon the value/importance of diasporic individuals to the host society" (Gharge, 2016)

They have made greater effort to break patriarchal domination over women in public as well as private spheres. Divakaruni in her interview with Metka Zupancic says that, "My characters are mostly Indian women growing up in India in a very traditional family. In Arranged Marriage, many come from a background similar to my own. I grew up with very definite notions of wom-

anhood, of who is considered a good woman and how she is to behave, especially within the family context. Much of that was based on the notion that a good woman makes sacrifices. As a result of immigration, when we find ourselves in the West, there is quite a different notion of what a good woman is and what she is expected to be. Many characters in 'Arranged Marriage' are dealing with this sudden change in worldview, at once exhilarating and also terrifying. They have to make sense of the new situation, which begins to transform them as women. It begins to change their relationships with the people in their family – their husbands, who are with them in the new country, and their parents, who usually are back in India. There are children who are now born in the new environment, still caught between two cultures, yet with a completely different worldview" (Zupancic, 2012). The diasporic women writers have been tried to represent women 'margin' to 'centre' through their writings. Apart from that, in diasporic place women faced double marginalised but in diaspora they get chance to raise their voice because of influence of western culture or conscious about their rights. Mainly in diaspora women go through the problems of assimilation, alienation, negotiation, past memory in this condition they think for themselves and try to raise their voices. Although this example highlights in Divakaruni's 'Arranged Marriage' raise their voices of resistance and re-inventing new women.

The collection 'Arranged Marriage' divides different short stories in a way of different characters through the different issues of women. The various stories in this collection, mainly, "The Bats", "Clothes", "Silver Pavements, Golden Roofs", "The Word Love", "A Perfect Life", "The Maid Servant's Story", "Disappearance", "Doors", "The Ultrasound, Affair", and "Meeting Mrinal" focused on women issues like divorce, racial discrimination, gender role, economic inequality and forced to abortion. In this context of Divakaruni's depiction of diasporic pain and new form of upheaval, she has focused critically as feminist lenses on arranged marriages in India as well as Indian born living in America. According to Gupta, "the women in India are subjected to ghoulish, brutish and nasty treatment in married lives that they become a martyr as a result of their ages-old servitude" (Gupta, 2010). In these stories of diasporic depiction of marriage, both the families of bride and groom do check their horoscopes for the

compatibility of matching partners. If it gets suitable for these partners, they allow them to get married without any prior consent and understandings. And more over-ly, fails to assure domestic delights in the very function of marriage but to be harassed the women in diaspora.

Some of the very significant stories from the collection of 'Arranged Marriage' which explores various issues of women in diasporic space and gender roles in Indian immigrants family in United States of America. Divakaruni begins her 'Arranged Marriage' the story of **"The Bats"** is a story about young girl that expresses her father's patriarchal nature in domestic sphere. The second story **"Clothes"** spinning around a young and beautiful woman, who settled in California after her wedding with a man who has store. She has expected a lot from the California life but things go wrong because her domestic life is not better due to small space in home and she is also earning too less than her husband. **"Doors"** is a third significant story in the collection has wonderfully drawn the desire and privacy through the character that led the broken marriage life. The America born independent wife and bred woman has not experienced the conditions joint family who tolerate her husband's piercing friends. The forth one is named **"The Ultrasound"** about two best friends, who get pregnant at the same moment and yet belong to distinct cultural settings, used ultrasound for reasons. Fifth story **"Silver Pavements, Golden Roofs"** in which young girl is able to get to Chicago to join college as she ran away from the poor and boring streets of Indian city of Calcutta. However, she gradually disappointed when reached at United States of America and ongoing irregularity in her aunt's marriage. The very longest story of this collection is **"The Maid Servant's Story"**, which begins with an uncomfortable relation between a strict mother recently got married America educated daughter. **"The Disappearance"** is a story about the male protagonist whose wife has disappeared. Whether, she has been abducted is lured by an unknown/unfamiliar or has just eloped on her own choice, its remained great question for her husband.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has portrayed the experiences of Indian immigrant women in the United States of America, where she has relocated from India. These sorts of experiences are common to all immigrant's lives

and diasporic communities across the border, which has created by the interaction to race and culture and even time and space. The interaction of immigrants to new culture and their memories of old home culture kept them in dilemma to adopt new culture. However, most of the immigrant assimilates in new surroundings while some of alienates from new due to old culture. The focus of Divakaruni's short stories on women who caught between two distinct cultures, one in Indian traditional customs and the other in westernised American culture.

### **Marginalisation in Tradition and Resistance in Modernity**

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Feminism caused her to speak against Indian men in various ways because of their exploitative nature in the household. She has commented on the dominancy of male over women that she beautifully drew in her short story collection 'Arranged Marriage' (Jahan, 2007). The first story **"The Bats"** shows struggle between narrator's abusive father and strict mother, and kind of traditional and cultural stereotype of married life. Women have always been portrayed in certain roles such as daughter, wife, mother, and daughter-in-law. "The women in Arranged Marriage are portrayed as strong and willing to change their situations in life but sometimes they do also feel themselves trapped in a myth of wife, mother, and daughter-in-law" (Agarwal and Gunjan, 2014). In such consequences, they neglect themselves due to less opportunities of economic freedom. Rosalind Coward's in her book *Female Desire* argued, "Feminine positions are produced as responses to the pleasures offered to us; our subjectivity and identity are formed in the definitions of desire which encircle us. These are the experiences which make change such a difficult and daunting task, for female desire is constantly lured by discourses which sustain male privilege" (Cowards quoted in Storey, 2013). The narrator puts in the frame the story of her abusive father who always used to beat and utter abuse language to his wife even when she tells her about mother's condition. "Things fell a lot when Father was around, maybe because he was so large"(Divakaruni, 1997). She always expresses (describe) her mother's pathetic condition "That year mother cried a lot, nights. Or maybe she had always cried, and that was the first year I was old enough to notice...a yellow

blotch with its edges turning purple. It like looked like my knee did after I bumped into the chipped mahogany dresser next to our bed last month” (Divakaruni, 1997). In male dominated patriarchal society, husbands try to impose their power on wives. Women have oppressed by their roles in family laws because they cannot break marriage relationship due to strong laws of marriage institution and it’s kind of pride for bride’s family. If they decide to break relationship with their husbands, that will bring social stigma shame on family. These sorts of boundations are only suffered by women whereas men live their life more freely. Even in diasporic place women suffered double or triple marginalised because of as migrant and as women, According to Avtar Brah, “Asian women’s sexuality is categorised broadly in three ways. Firstly, there is the image of the exotic oriental women- sensuous, seductive, full of Eastern promise. Her sexuality is projected as suitably controlled but vulnerable. This image is most explicitly available in the portrayal of airline ‘hostesses’ in advertisements. The second type of representation is almost an antithesis of the first. Here Asian women are characterised as ‘ugly’, ‘smelly’, oily-haired’, etc. This image plays a vital role in the substantial exclusion of black women from ‘glamorous jobs’ where women’s femininity is required to be visible. In the third construction, Asian women’s sexuality is portrayed as licentious.” (Brah, 1987).

The racial discrimination was not happened in British it has too in America in the story of “Silver Pavements, Golden Roofs” shows that, “The American hate us. They’re always putting us down because we’re dark-skinned foreigners, kala admi. Blaming us for the damn economy, for taking away their jobs. You’ll see it for yourself soon enough” (Divakaruni, 43).

Divakaruni as a diasporic feminist has painted various difficulties of Indian immigrant women experiences in diaspora which includes their marginalised position, oppressive attitudes of patriarchal mindsets, otherness and many such, but simultaneously also provides the voice of resistance to such activities and portrayed her strong condemnation to male dominated society through her ideas of New Woman. According to Brah In diasporic place women have not only face discrimination or differentiated as migrant, women but also as religion, linguistic group, caste and sect (Brah, 39). As

Shalini Gupta pointed out, “Chitra Divakaruni writes about what she feels strongly about and one of these is the complicated position of Indian women and their challenges. She writes about many positive things too, about strong family bonds and the courage of people who find themselves in a different world after immigration” (Gupta, 2010). The emergence of New Woman feminist perspectives encouraged voiceless women to raise their voice and shows their resistance to prejudiced and stereotypical representation in society. Divakaruni has also provided new woman voice to her female characters in her short story fictions of ‘Arranged Marriage’. Eschle said that, “Feminist globalisation literature continues to extend debate on both of these interconnected political-economy issues, reaching complex conclusions about the context-specific combinations of exploitative and also sometimes empowering effects upon different women in different areas” (Eschle, 114). In these stories also focused on issues of women beyond borderers or transnational borders. Women are also facing problems of economically and politically, socially. Women were working in different fields and skilled and unskilled labour but still in patriarchal society denying to recognise them. But in diaspora women are raising their voice against these activities.

The story “**Clothes**” is all about the journey of Indian immigrant woman experiences from Calcutta to California after marriage. The women have always been considered secondary migrant in diaspora who settled after marriage because no one care their wishes either they are reluctant or unreluctant to their migration. “Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the women disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the ‘third-world women’ caught between tradition and modernization” (Spivak, 1994). The story of Sumita who immigrated with her husband, Somesh after their wedding, they settled in California confronted and interacted with different cultures but she gave great value of her own Indian culture in new space. “Indian immigrant women often struggle with being the symbolic representative of the homeland and also having to negotiate alternative cultural norms and expectations associated with the women in the United States” (Agarwal and Gunjan, 2014). Divakaruni’s protagonist Sumita has assimilated in new culture which seen in her



modern wearing in United States while, Saris are only used in special occasions. “(My expensive Indian ones are to be saved for special occasions-trips to the temple, Bengali New Years) and serve tea to the old women that come to visit Mother Sen, where like a good Indian wife” (Divakaruni, 1997). Women are also not allowed to address their husbands by their names even in liberal life of United States due to their Indian traditional conservative mentalities expects respect from the wives. “I must never address my husband by his name” (Divakaruni, 1997). She was very dependent woman on her husband and in-laws in California but after her husband’s death she became a New Woman in diasporic space. Her new identity constitute independence, strong, and empowered woman. The story explores various stages of her identity and symbolising multiple identities changing from traditional woman to westernised woman in California, by having freedom of choice. Finally, she has decided to settle in California to work (Damor, 2015). People from India or generally other nationals, do migrate to foreign countries with the goal, desire and expectation of life with full of liberty, fulfilment and existence which responsible to create conflicts with the culture, and traditional values of their own homelands. Trapped in between two distinct cultures and worlds, they fought to do maintain their cultural values and assimilate themselves in the new milieu (Kumari, 2014). Divakaruni has explored feminist attitude of her protagonist in this story.

This story “The Ultrasound” is basically set in India touched various issues of women in their married lives such as abortion, violence and gender biased lenses are very crucial issues of Indian society. The central character of story is Runu who belong to conservative traditional Indian family suffered lots of problem because of her In-laws and her rigid husband. In her family, in-laws and her husband forced her to go through ultrasound to know whether is there girl or male child in her womb but she is rejects due to love for unborn baby. She is curious about as she wants to give birth of child. She has one friend who lives in California. They were always talking on telephone, tells her family gossips. “They want to kill my baby.”... They want me to have an abortion.” Divakaruni has condemned Indian society for such kind of activities and the mindset of patriarchal society who always curious about male child. Her in-laws with her husband forced to do what they want but

he fails to convince her. After that she decides to leave her husband’s house forever “Just in case I decided not to go back” (Divakaruni, 1997). In this way, women should defence themselves from such attack which force them to participate in criminal activities. This is a great message of Divakaruni’s story to not only Indian but also all women of the world.

“**The Disappearance**” is a story of modern woman who wants to spend her life in liberal way but her parents has chosen a man whose she does not know because of arranged marriage. He is very abusive and violent in nature and physically molests her in home. They do not have balance in their married life. He even does not know what kind of behaviour he has done with her. After her elopement from home force him to think about her wife who disappeared from her home. This is a story all about of mismatched married couple and the disappearance of wife who by her own way want live her life. The attitude of her husband after disappearance makes clear that he was not in love with her. Family members including her husband were not familiar with her departure. However, finally truth reveals with the full of evidence that she was not kidnapped but she has left home willingly due to oppressive and dominating nature of her husband. Then her husband decides to marry secondly but do not want marry with educated girl and want to settle life happily after second marriage but the memories of his first wife that she has left him always hinder him one way or others. The idea of Divakaruni’s story puts forward that the education is very significant part of women’s lives that lead them to take their own decisions. The growing awareness and education in contemporary modern society women demands their various rights equal to men in society. It has also stopped various sort of domestic violence and abusive patriarchal nature of people who consider women as others (Kaur, 2015).

In the story of “**Doors**”, Preeti is a central character who has educated, who has modern lifestyle. She got married with a person who she has selected by her own choice but she does not adjust with her husband due to his unjust imposition because she wants to live separate room because she could not share her own house with his cousin Raj who came from India. “The story “Doors” is a classic example of the contrast between the cultures of India and the West. Indians are usually

brought up in large joint families and there is not so much as called private and personal space unlike the West with its individual culture where there is a distinct space between private and public life” (Fernandez, 2014). He interferes in their personal life that she cannot adjust with him. She raises voice to her husband and says, “I can’t live with Raj in the house anymore. He’s driving me crazy. He’s . . .” (Divakaruni, 1997). Her husband did not accept to Preeti and said she can take decision to leave her house. “I am”, she said, her voice very calm. “I am going to move in for a while with Cathy” (Divakaruni, 1997). In diaspora, women from the conservative family with modern education tries to assimilate in new liberal culture. Divakaruni has presented the family drama in the cosmopolitan cities in which the issues of house are significant that separated family members from each other.

“**The Maid Servant’s Story**” is the longest and the most complicated constructed narrative in the short story collection of Divakaruni’s ‘Arranged Marriage’. She has provided story within a story and the web of relationship between two generations of women with different social-economic background (Divakaruni, 2000). The narrator and the protagonist of the story is Manisha, young and dynamic professor at a California university who came to visit her home in Bengal. Divakaruni also portrays exploitation of maid who is a victim male’s sexual assault. Through her short story, Divakaruni exposes the hypocrisy of man. In the story, a man from the rich and aristocrat Bengali family tries to molest his poor maidservant of home in the absence of his wife. He also assures her that he would keep all these activities in secret and no one would come to know about it (Sharma and Gupta, 2016). “Let me go, Dadababu.” The maid was kicking at the man’s shins now. When the man didn’t release her, she clawed at his face, her voice rising threateningly. “Or else I’ll scream loud enough to wake everyone in the house” (Divakaruni, 1997). These sort of brutal activities are common in most of the household in which male try to take all benefit from poor social background.

Divakaruni explains in her story “**Silver Pavements Golden Roof**” the role of new women in diaspora and their bitter experiences with the search for the freedom of their self identity. Jayanti is protagonist of this story, Jayanti’s aunty Partima married to Bikaram uncle and

Jayanti goes to complete her education with her immigrant aunt Partima. She was isolated from her family and homeland, she desired to adopt fully American culture. Her dream was to marry with a prince from a distant land and enjoy complete liberation. (Barman, 2015). “Will I marry a prince from a far-off magic land where the pavements are silver and the roofs all gold” (Divakaruni, 1997). Jayanti also resisted her uncle’s control on her aunty; she asked her aunty to go outside but her aunty refuses and said “your uncle does not like me to go out. He is telling me it is dangerous.” I say. It’s just a ploy of his to keep her shut up in the house and under his control” (Divakaruni, 1997). Jayanti tries to convince her aunty, uncle (male) dominated to her aunty. “... I wonder how a marriage could ever have been arranged between a man like Bikram-uncle and my aunt, who comes from an old and wealthy land-owning family” she confused about her aunt’s thoughts about arranged marriage in opposite of her aunty she thinks her husband or marriage will be her own choice not her aunty if he will whites she will break away Indian tradition of arranged marriage “No arranged marriage like Aunty’s for me!” (Divakaruni, 1997). Women characters of the Divakaruni’s short story collection strongly resist male dominant patriarchal society and the lives of women in diasporic space. Their struggle for assimilation in new and modern culture and at the same time their feelings and nostalgia about traditional home culture alienated them in diaspora. Her literary protagonists Preeti, Jayanti, and Sumita are significant characters of that kind who shows women are confronted various problems in new country but they also proclaimed their identity.

To sum up, all short stories are different issues and related to women, which women are facing in India and diasporic society as playing gender roles. In the story of “**Cloths**” shows as wife and daughter suffering from domestic issues and patriarchal nature of father. Women mostly migrated as marriage migration or secondary migrant. But after her husband death she became independent and empowered women in America. “**The Ultrasound**” in this story women are able to take decision of their choice whether in India or in America. The story of “The Disappearance” is also showed women strongly took decision to leave her house because of husband’s patriarchal attitude. Story of “**Doors**” Preeti leaves her husband’s house because she wants to pri-

vate space in house. **“The Maid Servant’s Story”** Divakaruni has exposed the hypocrisy of man. Divakaruni shows the mentality of male and ego about their power and class. The man tries to molest his poor maidservant of home in the absence of his wife. He exploited sexually because of poor class women poor social class women facing degradation and marginalised in society. For instance, we can take theory of Global feminism also focused on women are facing problem because of economic status or class. Women are working but still they are not safe. These are relation between capitalism to patriarchy. In the story of **“Silver Pavements Golden Roof”** Jayanti as protagonist shows in story as liberal and modern. She wants to marry her own choice not like arrange marriage. This kind of all stories Divakaruni has draw women are challenging the patriarchal system.

## Conclusion

Divakaruni has combined traditional values and Western thoughts and ideals, which explores crucial insights into oppositional powers of East and West culture. She has purposefully portrayed Indian (or South Asian) women in these consequences to exhibit the construction of identity of women. The collection of short stories ‘Arranged Marriage’ is dealing with the individual and social complexities of Indian immigrant women in new diasporic space particularly in California, USA and their homeland Calcutta, India. The most characters of these stories especially women from the different socio-economic background who come to settle in United States of America with the hope of bright future trapped between two nations and two cultures in the hostland. Arranged marriage is a kind of performance of duty and it can be seen through representations of fictions, Bollywood movies, such as Sanjay Leela Bhansali’s *Devdas* (2002), which has shown that arranged marriage as a means for personal fulfilment and performing duty or role. Apart from that, some diasporic writings and films represented that arranged marriages negatively. Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake* (2003), which has depicted women roles in arranged marriage, through the character of Ashima Ganguli, she preserved her old culture, it clearly shows that women are carrier of home culture and in Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* (2003), Nazneen’s engage affair with Karim, Ali shows how the physical attraction that explodes between them destroys their

moral expectations. Apart from that, the central character of novel *Nazneen* was not return with her husband (Chanu) to India. After 9/11 attack she decides to stay in London this sort of decision also choice of women. These both novel’s themes are of arranged marriage to highlights the nature of assimilation. As diasporic feminist, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni reveals the true image of diasporic communities in United States of America that involves in domestic, sexual, and physical and psychological violence of women due to their status as ‘other’ in society. The marginalisation of women in Indian society and their double marginalisation in diasporic space is significant part of Divakaruni’s writings. “In Arranged Marriage, Divakaruni once again reveals her ability to create subtle images of women’s anguish when trapped in terrible relationships, when forced to live within rigid codes” (Rustomji-Kerns, 1995). She has enormously depicted abusive nature of male characters towards women in diasporic household.

Divakaruni through her short stories attract the attention of people those who are not familiar with reality of diasporic communities and their behaviour with women. “Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s women, often, face the conflict between their inner selves and the existing norms of traditional society. At times, they succumb to societal pressures; for example, in the very first story ‘Bats’, a victim of domestic violence abandons her husband’s house and resides in her uncle’s place with her child. Unable to bear the taunts of the neighbouring women she finally returns to that tormented life. In the story “The Ultrasound”, Arundhati’s determination to give birth to her girl child despite the strong protests by her in-laws make her a woman of change, who is simply not ready to make her life dependent on other’s wishes. She refuses to follow the conventional path of going back to her parents’ place and resolves to live her life on her own terms” (Prabha, 2017). Divakaruni’s ‘Arranged Marriage’ is a practical depiction of women living under the shadow of patriarchy in Indian society and their internal conflict to change their lives from deep-rooted oppressive traditional values. There is need to improve women’s condition in diasporic space because women can equally contributes for the upliftment of homes and nations as whole. The ideas of Divakaruni’s ‘Arranged Marriage’ stories shows that conservative traditions are responsible for women’s oppression and exploitation but the progressive and mod-

ern thought will defiantly bring out women from that bog to new and liberal life.

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# Migration and Diasporas An Interdisciplinary Journal

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# GRFDT NEWSLETTER

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*Roots and Routes* is a monthly newsletter of the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT). It is inclusive of articles, book reviews and news analysis, which help in disseminating latest information on research and policy development in Diaspora and Transnationalism. The newsletter enjoys readership of academicians, policy experts, diaspora think tanks etc.

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Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT) is a consortium of researchers and policy makers drawn from national and international universities, institutes and organizations. GRFDT is presently based in India and is shaping as the largest such group focusing specifically on the issues related to diaspora and transnationalism.

The GRFDT works as an academic and policy think tank by engaging national and international experts from academics, practitioners and policy makers in a broad range of areas such as migration policies, transnational linkages of development, human rights, culture, gender to mention a few. In the changing global environment of academic research and policy making, the role of GRFDT will be of immense help to the various stakeholders. Many developing countries cannot afford to miss the opportunity to harness the knowledge revolution of the present era. The engagement of diaspora with various platform need to be reassessed in the present context to engage them in the best possible manner for the development human societies by providing policy in-put at the national and global context.