



Eco-Criticism and Altruistic character of Tilo in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*.

L. Sharmila¹ and S. Mathivanan²

¹M.Phil Research Scholar, ^{2*} Assistant Professor and Research Advisor,
PG and Research Department of English, SrimadAndavan Arts and Science College (Autonomous),
netzachmathi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is a south Asian and award winning writer. In this novel, Eco-criticism and magical realism are mainly concerned. Eco-criticism is a study of relationship between literature and environment for an interdisciplinary point of view where all sciences come together to analyse the environment and brainstorm possible solutions for the correction of the contemporary environmental situation. The award winning novel *The Mistress of Spices* is directly high related with nature and environment. In this novel, spices are an integrated part of identity and gives solutions. She is concerned with the Indian settings and Ayurveda.

Keywords

Eco-Criticism, Eco-Feminism, nature, supernatural power of spices, altruistic character, self-identity.

INTRODUCTION

Divakaruni's first novel *The Mistress of Spices*(1997) is written with a blend of mystery and reality. Divakaruni's award winning novel of *The Mistress of Spices* has been studied as a survival issue for hollowing the power of Indian spices, natural emotions, self-identity, spiritual into the expatriate theme of the novel.

Tilo, the protagonist uses the covert power of spices to heal the emotional consciousness and marriage and loneliness of her customer who belongs to her lower community. In India we use spices for a vital purpose of enhancing the beauty or reclaim dreams and desires. The fragrance of spices gives a peculiar touch to all over the novel.

Tilo (Tilottama) is an altruistic character who struggles herself with the shifting concession of her life. She is mistress of sesame seed and follows three victims to wit;

- i) Look after desires of others
- ii) Never leave the spice store
- iii) Never touch anyone else skins.

Tilo is the immigrant from India and power of magical figure. She runs a shop in Oakland California and helps the customers. She uses the power of spices to fulfil desires and difficulties, giving a new life. Tilo's life is highly related with nature. She has the understanding of the unique power of spices. In the very first line she identifies herself as *aThe Mistress of Spices* and interrelated with nature in easy way. "I am Mistress of Spices. I can work with others too. Mineral, metal, earth and sand stone. The germs with their cold clear light. The spices are my love. I know their origins and what their colours signify and their Smells" (MS1).

Tilo believes the spices, because it holds the secret power to bestow us whatever we desire the most in life. Tilo communicates with spices in her shop. Tilo says, everyone didn't know of the other side of the common spices, which means it is used for cooling and other household activities. She claims that they have the power to recognize the life we live. She identifies herself as a mistress of secret powers. The customers used to call her by a name as a 'Witchwomen.' Tilo has left the island exactly for this purpose. Turmeric is for wrinkles and fenugreek to make rejected life desirable. All the thirteen chapters have different spices and helps the customers to solve the problem of nature to man. The customers are struggling to adopt her homeland but not adopt their hostland.

Til is the sesame seed, which ground into paste with sandalwood curse
disease of heart and, liver, till which fried in its own oil restore lustre when
one has lost interest in life. I will be Tilottama, the essence of till, life
giver, restorer of health and hope. (MS42)

The way of Tilo (Nayan Tara) is longing for love and affection for her parents and the society. Tilo (Tilottama) is a sesame and life giver, she had no real name in India. She had magical power and uses for solving the problems of the customers. Tilo tries to solve the problem and gives solution for the desires of heart, and happiness.

Tilo quietly observes her feelings and loneliness. She doesn't have any pleasure in her life. So Tilo gives turmeric for Lalita's loneliness. Lalita hopes that Tilo tries to solve the problems with help of spices.

The nature provides the man empowerment and strength. The next supernatural power is Cinnamon and its used for Jagjit. Jagjit has brutal character. Jagjit comes to her shop with his mother. Jagjit has experienced, its diabolic experiences. His parents admitted him to school. His teacher decided to put him in the last bench. He learned his first English word, idiot. At the night time also he lies with his eyes open. "Jagjit who has learned his first English word. Idiot. Asshole is his second English word. He lies with his eyes open, staring until the stars begin to flicker like Fireflies" (MS39). Every time he speaks lie and do something beastly, Tilo preferred Cinnamon to him, because, Cinnamon is like a destroyer and enemy, provider of strength to legs and arms. Time to time the immigrated people are cheated by the natives. The spice of Fennel is used for accepting the aging mainly for the middle aged people. It is brown and dark, with the leaf in a breeze. Fennel seeds are given post meal because it helps to fresh breathing and digestion.

CONCLUSION

Spices have always given mental strength and make one strong. Every day has a colour or a smell because the nature has given happiness at the same time it has given some pain also. This novel mostly relates with nature from beginning to end. The spices give power and take it back like the nature and hence called preserver and destroyer. Nature has given a new identity for Tilo in this novel. Nature is a great lover of life, its emotions are interrelated to the heart. Every chapter has a spice and describes how the spices help fulfil the desires. The aroma of spices touches the human life.

REFERENCES

- [1] Divakaruni Chitra Banerjee. *The Mistress of Spices*. London: Black Swan, Trans world publishers. 1997.
- [2] Sarangi Jayadeep. *Womens Writing in English .India and Australia*. New Delhi: Gnosis Publishers of Educational Books. 2008.
- [3] <https://www.google.com/ur//sa=t&source=web&rct=jeurl>.