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## **Holy Connections and Disjointed Realities: The Struggle for Cultural Identity in *Before We Visit the Goddess***

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### **Abstract**

Culture in a clear aspect provides necessary aliments for all living beings. The impact of various cultures is seen as a blessing and a curse. This study highlights the tension between resilience and alienation within diasporic identities, arguing that these women's emotional understandings reflect a broader struggle in postcolonial and transnational literature, the reconciliation of traditional belonging with modern individualism. This paper, titled *Holy Connections and Disjointed Realities: The Struggle for Cultural Identity in Before We Visit the Goddess* discovers how Divakaruni's characters grapple with hereditary cultural opportunities while negotiating the varying contours of distinctiveness, agency, and expressive freedom. Through a close documentary analysis, the study interrogates the immediate sanctity and breakability of family and cultural bonds when unprotected to immigration, generational change, and the hunt of autonomy. The changeovers between these typescripts are marked by misinterpretation, detachment, and emotional torture, symbolizing the demonstrative toll of diasporic displacement and generational change. The paper claims that while Divakaruni does not compromise definitive answers, she delivers a nuanced portrayal of women who, in their distinct quests for selfhood, illumine the intricacies of belonging, legacy, and demonstrative truth in a gradually interconnected yet cracked world.

**Keywords:** Agony, Change, Emotions, Freedom, Multiculturalism.

### **Introduction**

India is a homeland known for its implausible multiplicity. With abundant convictions, vernaculars, ethnicities, and provincial identities, India signifies one of the most composite

**Article History:** Received: 12 January 2026. Revised: 15 February 2026. Accepted: 17 February 2026. First published: 15 April, 2026.

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**Published by:** Adrija Press, India.

**Citation:** Veerasamy, R., S. Alexander & M. Nousath. (2026). Holy Connections and Disjointed Realities: The Struggle for Cultural Identity in *Before We Visit the Goddess*. *Newliteraria Journal* 8:1, 147-151. <https://dx.doi.org/10.48189/nl.2026.v08i1.018>

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multicultural cultures in the world. This multiculturalism is not an objective of social or political authenticity it is an influential force in determining Indian literature transversely time, language, and section. Indian literature reflects the assortment of its individuals. From early Sanskrit epics to modern English-language novels, writers have travelled the existence of various principles, traditions, and individualities. Each district has its own linguistic, folklore, and storytelling civilizations, contributing to an amusing mythical landscape. The multicultural countryside of Indian prose allows for a varied range of speeches and skills to be uttered, often revealing the country's profound social, religious, and philological variety.

Multiculturalism in Indian literature is apparent in the way authors discover themes like caste, religion, sex, migration, and individuality. For example, Dalit writers such as Omprakash Valmiki and Bama have a common commanding and personal stories that reveal the agony of caste-based judgement. Their works offer vision into lives that remained often omitted from mainstream mythical spaces, and their speeches have rewritten the understanding of Indian identity and justice. The religious variety of India is another major stimulus on literature. Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Christian, Buddhist, and tribal perceptions all find depiction in Indian texts.

Indian literature does more than characterize multiplicity, it helps build connections between societies. By the ideas of storytelling, writers inspire sympathy, understanding, and discussion. Literature converts a podium where multiple India's cohabit, where difference is not an issue but a source of fertility. It reflects an assortment of involvements, giving voice to both the conventional and the downgraded. Through novels, verse, and personal accounts, India's multiculturalism is not just acknowledged it is renowned, grilled, and unceasingly redefined. *Before We Visit the Goddess* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni published in 2016 is a multigenerational novel that reconnoitres the multifaceted relationships between mothers and daughters across three generations, straddling in India and the United States. The story centers on Sabitri, her daughter Bela, and Bela's daughter Tara, interlacing their lives collected through sequences of measures that reveal their brawls, objectives, regrets, and suppleness.

Sabitri, the grandmother, comes from a diffident background in rural Bengal. She is the daughter of an underprivileged sweet-maker and aims to achieve a better life through teaching. With the help of a prosperous benefactor termed Leelamoyi, she is arranged a scholarship to be present in a college. However, an instant of youthful pride and expressive entanglement chiefs to her downfall. She is disqualified from college, and the occasion for upward movement slips away.

Sabitri's face burned. Go through life with your head held high, Durga had taught her. Why, then, would she humiliate herself- and Sabitri- by exposing to a rich, spoiled woman the tender dreams that Sabitri had entrusted to her? Dreams as impossible as sprouting wings. She would never confide in her mother again. (10)

Sabitri later builds an effective life as a sweet-shop possessor with her husband, but her initial failure haunts her. Her connection with her daughter Bela becomes worried, particularly when Bela picks to elope with a partisan activist, Sanjay, against Sabitri's wishes.

Bela's story clarifies in the United States, where she wanders with her husband in hunt of a new beginning. However, her lifespan in America is far from supreme. Her marriage depreciates, and she fights to raise her daughter, Tara, as a single mother. The cultural dislocation and emotional disorder Bela faces are extremely felt, and her affiliation with her mother, already split, becomes even more unfriendly. Bela indicates not to contact Sabitri or tell Tara considerable about her grandmother, hurtful off the linking between the generations.

But Bela, preoccupied as she often was by her own drama, didn't seem to notice. She

rushed into her tale. Tara was thinking of dropping out of college, they had to stop her, she'd only completed one semester, it would be the worst mistake of her life, the girl refused to listen to Bela, she never listened to anything her mother said nowadays. (8)

Tara, the earliest in the line, nurtures up in Houston with a fractured identity. She fails of college, becomes complicated in a toxic relationship, and senses detached feelings from both her Indian inheritance and her mother's ambitions. Her life springs into a phase of indecision and rebellion. Despite this, the passionate legacy of her mother and grandmother influences her in delicate but noteworthy ways. An essential moment comes when Tara obtains a letter from Sabitri, written before her death. Though they not ever meet in person, Sabitri's words reverberate with Tara and encourage her to replicate on her choices. "Sabitri wanted to remind Bela that she had tried all of the above with her" (18).

The narrative construction is non-linear, told over multiple standpoints and across several time periods. Divakaruni uses this uneven storytelling stylishness to show how the survives of the three women reflect and separate from each other, underlining how each woman receives not only her mommy's asset but also her injuries. Their stories emphasize themes of cultural personality, generational conflict, disadvantage, and the longing for self-determination. In the end, while the females do not come composed physically, their sensitive journeys are deeply tangled. The novel climaxes how even understood bonds can silhouette lives and how the inheritance of love, mistakes, and fortitude can passage the gap between groups. *Before We Visit the Goddess* is a touching exploration of womanhood, inheritance, and the quiet influence of storytelling to join the past and the contemporary.

Multiculturalism mentions to the attendance, acceptance, and preferment of multiple social civilizations within a solitary society. It is a thought that stresses the value of miscellaneous ethnic, sacred, and cultural upbringings, encouraging common respect and nonviolent existence among different collections. Multicultural cultures are often augmented by settlement, foreign history, or global connectivity, consequential in a blend of tongues, civilizations, principles, and existences. Alexander Gramsch (2013) in his article, "Culture, Change, Identity - Approaches to the Interpretation of Cultural Change" says, "Explaining the change of cultures, while maintaining the idea that they were homogeneous, stable and static, required the detection of one or several responsible factors or prime movers that provided the catalyst for change" (28). Cautiously, multicultural societies profit from a diverse staff with varied services and viewpoints. Immigrants often fill significant labour shortages and donate to economic growth. Multiculturalism also reinforces global trade and mediation by fostering worldwide systems and cross-cultural understanding. However, multiculturalism is not without tests. One of the key concerns is social unity.

To address these trials, it is important for multiracial policies to indorse both diversity and unity. Education plays a key character in teaching offspring about different principles and fostering esteem for all. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Before We Visit the Goddess* knottily weaves the descriptions of three generations of Bengali women Sabitri, Bela, and Tara tracing their drives from rural Bengal to urban America. Through their tiers, Divakaruni sightseer the multifaceted dimensions of individuality, immigration, and the trials of cultural acclimatization. The novel serves as a poignant reflection on the intricacies of multicultural reality, highlighting the relationship between tradition and innovation, heritage and edition. Sabitri, the grandmother, begins her voyage in a small village in Bengal. Her ambitions for education and a better lifespan are thwarted by social norms and individual missteps. Despite these challenges, she creates herself as an efficacious sweet-maker, embodying the resilience and strength of old-style Bengali values. Sabitri's story highlights the importance of cultural heritage and the role of womenfolk in preserving intimate and societal traditions.

Bela, Sabitri's daughter, signifies the first group to practice life outside India. Her relocation to the United States with her partner, Sanjay, marks the commencement of her fight

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with national identity.

Bela had slashed the wood with her favourite Parker fountain pen, which Sabitri had saved for months to gift her with when she entered college, ruining both pen and table. This, because Sabitri had insisted that Bela stop seeing the man she was in love with, a man who would later entice her into running away to America (28).

In America, Bela looks the challenges of complementary her Indian inheritance with the stresses of a new culture. Her journey reproduces the intricacies of being an immigrant, wedged between the outlooks of the old world and the authenticities of the new. Bela's involvements highlight the theme of national negotiation and the search for fitting in a multicultural context.

Tara, Bela's daughter, is innate and raised in the United States, symbolizing the second group of immigrants. Disconnected from her Indian roots, Tara contends with issues of uniqueness and self-worth. "I wondered where Tara-of-the-fussy-stomach was at this time, when her mother could have done with some family support. I knew not to ask" (108). Her voyage is marked by revolt, substance exploitation, and a sense of interruption from her heritage. However, through individual growth and contemplation, Tara begins to rewire with her national roots, realizing the position of understanding her extraction. Her story demonstrates the encounters faced by second-generation migrants in retrieving their cultural distinctiveness amidst the compressions of adjustment.

Bela had forced Tara to come home from college, hoping that her presence would make him change his mind. Hah! To think he was going to let Bela manipulate him like that! Tara hadn't said a thing, though Bela had cried and carried on enough for all three of them. (129)

Sabitri, the protagonist, exists with her mother, Durga. Durga is an accomplished sweet-maker, and their livelihood is contingent on the sweets they formulate and sell. "At home they had eaten together, Durga listening with fascinated admiration to Sabitri's recital of her day" (BG 13). This setting is steeped in institution, with a strong wisdom of community and ancestral bonds. The village embodies a world where social averages are rigid, and occasions for women are imperfect. Sabitri's journey to Kolkata represents a break from these constrictions. Kolkata, with its hurried streets and expatriate architecture, offers Sabitri the coincidental to chase education and a changed life. However, the municipal also allows her to new contests, including class divisions and the densities of urban life. Her understandings in Kolkata highpoint the tension between practice and modernity, and the individual costs of determination.

Bela whirls to find Sabitri standing behind her chair, wearing a flowery salwar kameez that makes her look too pretty. She's suddenly angry, because Sabitri seems untouched by this move which has torn Bela into pieces and then reassembled her haphazardly, and Sabitri doesn't even realize it. She's angry, too, because Sabitri has had something to do with her father's drinking, though if anyone asked Bela what, she wouldn't be able to explain. (36)

The novel's construction, moving between dissimilar times and seats, highlights the generational shifts in values and involvements. Sabitri's life in country Bengal is marked by traditional roles and potentials, while her descendant Bela's life in America is fashioned by the search of personal freedom and the trials of cultural addition. Tara, Bela's daughter, epitomizes the third generation, directing the complexities of distinctiveness in a multicultural humanity. Each setting pastoral Bengal, urban Kolkata, and America plays a key role in prompting the characters' identities and familiarities. The novel explains how place impacts personal growth, ethnic identity, and the intergenerational broadcast of values.

## Conclusion

*Before We Visit the Goddess* proposals a rich drapery of narratives that discover the intricacies of diverse identity, immigration, and generational modification. Through the stories of Sabitri, Bela, and Tara, Divakaruni delivers a profound explanation on the intricacies of living between principles. The novel highlights the importance of empathetic and implementation one's legacy while navigating the experiments of a multiracial world. It serves as a witness to the flexibility of personalities and families in protecting their cultural distinctiveness amidst the services of globalization and acclimatization. The idea of culture is unique for all individuals from the aspect in which they are taken for consideration. Even though the rules are similar, the manner in which each of them possesses is important. The main female characters in the novel revolt, rebel and regain many qualities from the aspects of the environment in which they are produced. A multicultural aspect provides a clear attention on the emotional factors which are being affected on the external environs.

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