

**THE CONCEPT OF NEW WOMAN IN CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI'S *SISTER OF
MY HEART***

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ABSTRACT

The rise of 'New Woman' can be traced back to late nineteenth century, which had a profound influence on feminism in twentieth century. The 'New Woman' is not bound in cultural fetters and is vociferous about her rights. She is adequately educated, self-reliant and financially independent. She has the moral courage to defy social conventions in order to create a better world for all. She is moving from the 'margins' to the 'centre' with a new found confidence in self. According to Usha Bande and Atma Ram:

...the 'New Woman' is one who, shown of her 'feminine mystique', is aware of herself as an individual, she is free from her traditional, social and moral constrictions and is able to live with a heightened sense of dignity, and individuality. The 'New Woman', then, is the product of a new economic order in which woman casts aside her 'invisibility', comes out of the metaphorical purdah and avails of the opportunities provided by education, enfranchisement and employment. She, with her professional and economic spheres, and deconstructs the image of a submissive, repressed and self-effacing being. The picture that emerges is of a self-reliant, emancipated and happy individual, a person, sexually uninhibited intelligent, confident and assertive. (14)

KEYWORDS: New Woman in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's