



# The Stories of Abuse and Stress of Sexual Harassments faced by women in India; A Critical Study based on the novel 'Chup: Breaking The Silence About India's Women'

Sri Vaishnavi T<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. U.S. Akshara Govind<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup>Research Scholar, Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai, Email: srivaishnavithulasidoss@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor of English, Faculty of Science and Humanities, Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai, Email: akshara.english@sathyabama.ac.in

**\*Corresponding Author:** Sri Vaishnavi T

\*Research Scholar, Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai, Email: srivaishnavithulasidoss@gmail.com

**Citation:** Sri Vaishnavi T, Dr. U.S. Akshara Govind (2024), The Stories of Abuse and Stress of Sexual Harassments faced by women in India; A Critical Study based on the novel 'Chup: Breaking The Silence About India's Women', *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(6), 1734-1736

Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v30i6.5582

## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

Women's responses to childhood and adulthood sexual violence lead them to have severe and chronic psychological symptoms. Harassments like 'eve-teasing', body shaming and so on leave a question of whether women are safe or not in this generation. Many people speak highly about gender inequality which is considered to be the main root for all kinds of problems against women, but in the novel 'Chup: Breaking The Silence About India's Women' by Deepa Narayan pointed out how a woman opens up about her problem when her families trained her to behave that woman doesn't born with bodies. Deepa Narayan's 'Chup: Breaking the Silence about India's Women' collects 600 detailed interviews of Indian women both literate and illiterate to find whether the nation is safe for women or not. This paper points out how Indian families raised their daughters to forget they aren't born with their bodies and the trauma based on their experience.

**Keywords:** Feminism, Gender Inequality, Stress, Trauma, Violence.

## Introduction

The idea that "Women are not born with their bodies" and "Women should consider their bodies as objects" predates modern literature but gained prominence in major works in the late 1900s. Many feminists and critics have criticized Sigmund Freud and other scientists for their misogynistic views on women in their works. Some critics argue that Surrealism may have influenced Sigmund Freud's ideas on psychoanalysis. They point to his language concerning women's libido and hormonal changes as evidence of this influence.,

***"The woman who refers to see her sexual organs as mere wood chips, designed to make the man's life more comfortable..."***

In addition to that, many works of William Shakespeare were portrayed in a misogynistic manner. Literature and their portrayal of taming women stand as a standard example. Deepa Narayan shares her own experience in her novel about how she and her sisters were raised not to talk about their bodies in their family.

***"... Very Simple, my body was not part of my life. I had been trained at young age to forget my body. I left my body. And I kept moving, into twenty-seven homes, on many continents. I wanted to be a woman at ease with herself, at ease within her skin, at ease with her body, but ease evaded me..."*** [Chup: Breaking The Silence About India's Women, pg 15]

According to Dhidhiya A Jaleel (2022), Protection for women offered by society always comes at the price of sacrificing their freedom and being jailed at home. Moreover, she adds that victim blaming is quite common in society, especially when it comes to 'women' problems. Dhidhiya pointing that in many villages still now when a teenage woman gets raped, to protect the rapist, a rape victim was forced to marry the rapist. This also makes the rapist escape from the criminal charges. Pointing out these acts, Dhidhiya shows how women got tangled up in a twisted toxic society.

**Raising an Indian Woman According to Deepa Narayan's Novel**

American novelist Alice Walker mentions in her novel "The Color Purple" how women consider themselves as trees when well-known people abuse them. The below line expresses how women were comforted by the abuse survivor. **"... It all I can do not cry. I make myself wood I say to myself, Celie, you a tree. That's how I come to know trees fear man..."** [The Color Purple]. In Asian countries, especially in India, there are still people who think it's hard to raise a female child. Especially, from the evil gazes of misogynistic society. Though women are allowed to get their education, and employment opportunities, it is still not safe for women to be alone even in the morning. Deepa Narayan explains that women in India were raised. The main goal of raising young girls is to make them remember that they don't exist, but the major problem is that they are born with bodies. She pointed out in her work how even the most educated women feel uncomfortable with their bodies,

**"... even the most educated, are uncomfortable with their bodies. Many say, 'I don't think of myself as a woman.' This dismissal of being a woman when discussing their physical bodies is problematic. It means that women have bought into the cultural denial that they have bodies... As many young women put it, 'Ma'am, it is my personality.' What they really mean is that denial of their body is a key part of their character as good women."** [Chup: Breaking The Silence About India's Women, pg 16 & 17]

In the following text, She points out how people welcome a baby with relief and joy if he is born with a penis, but it is the opposite if the baby is born with a vagina. When a baby girl is born, people welcome the baby with fear, despair, disappointment, anger, hate, and blame. The author shares her experiences as one of five children. She and her sisters were never allowed to speak about their bodies. She pointed out that she and her sisters had never seen their mother's legs; they were always covered. When she was 11 years old, while sleeping with her sisters in a big double bed [two beds joined together], if they accidentally touched or brushed each other, they would practice moving or pushing each other. **The Stories of Abuse and Stress**

Women's responses to childhood and adulthood sexual violence are complex and highly individualized. Sexual harassment in the workplace, crowded gatherings, rushed metropolitan transports like buses, subway rails, etc. turned out to be women's worst nightmare. Some women shared their stressful situations of fear thinking when they will become scapegoats for unwanted sexual contacts. Many women poured out their robust of emotions towards their experiences which shocked the researchers as well. Though the world is developing, problems based on sexual harassment never fall down for every gender. In Deepa Narayan's novel 'Chup' women themselves are compared to laboratory animals where they are caged, trying to escape from the electric shock, forced to accept the electric shock, and they have to pretend to lie dead even if the electric shock isn't provided. Interviews of a few women explain their rage and possible counterattacks forced them to keep themselves quiet. One such interview was Aunshka's. Anushka, 25, working in a large accounting firm used to take the metro after her work. She used to come home from work by eight-thirty at night in that metro where majority of people were men. She explained that she found herself in a situation where she received unwanted sexual contact from all sides which stressed and depressed her. Another woman named Rekha, 28, used to work as a domestic maid. One day while she crossing a local park, she found that a man had been stalking later hitting her elbow. Being uncomfortable with the man's action Rekha grabbed his collar and dragged him out of the park. After that, she never found that man in the park.

Though women also yell, kick, and beat against the offenders many women fear the effects of counterattacks by the offenders. One such interview about counterattacks against women is Priya's interview. Priya, 23, is a social science researcher. She says that Vigilance is her only companion whenever she walking on the streets on Delhi. One day she went to a place called Chandni Chowk in Delhi for shopping and found a man trying to touch her. Whenever the man attempts to touch her she manages to dodge him like a boxer. After losing her patience she kicked him and thought that it was fun. Later that day she started to fear whether the man would stalk her or throw acid on her or any other possibilities for revenge.

### Childhood Sexual Harassment

Child molestation or child sexual abuse shows various traumatized impacts in a child's older adolescence and adulthood periods. Many studies and researchers pointing that from the age of 7 to 13 are the most vulnerable to childhood sexual abuse and harassment. Deepa Narayan expressed her shock when women were molested when they were young by adult men. Interviews of Sweta and Anu are examples of childhood sexual harassment. Anu, 24, says that she is always vigilant even when she is in prayers or temple pujas because of the incident that happened to her at the age of eight or nine. She said that she was in the temple when her mom and her aunts were not around. A man started to grope her and touch her breasts and caress them and Anu couldn't sense what happening until her mother was found her and the man. The man ran away. That day Anu's mother taught about good touch and bad touch. She finishes her interview that she feels disgusted whenever she thinks about that.

Little girl's trust was taken as an advantage to abuse children. This statement was explained well in the interview given by Sweta. Sweta, 24, works in the financial sector. She describes her incident with the dance teacher when she was in Class 4. She was excited to learn dance. The teacher asked her to come to his room and told her to stand against the wall. She described that the curtains and the door were closed. She thanked the god for the bell that rang at the right time when the teacher rubbed his body on her. The author points out

that many mothers asked the traumatized girls not to share their experiences with others as it ruined their reputations.

### Conclusion

Stress is nothing but a reaction when a person feels he/she is under pressure, but when it comes to abuse or harassment, it manages to stay in mind throughout life. Many interviews and research explain that not only women but men also found these types of abuse. Deepa Narayan pointing that a girl child should be raised as a woman. Not that she wasn't born without her bodies and she is an object. Interviews of women expressed their fears of getting attacked, getting unwanted attention, and standing against the harassers clearly explain that every day turns out to be a battlefield for women to return safely home. These stereotypes in our society travel decade over a decade and thus society wants women to remain chup.

### References

1. Jaleel, A, Dhidhiya: Pai, R, Geetha. (2002). *Women Breaking The Silence: An Analysis On The Truth About Me, A Hijra Life Story By A Revathi And Chup: Breaking The Silence About India's Women By Dr. Deepa Narayan*. Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Researches. Vol 9 [9]
2. Narayan, Deepa. (2018). *Chup: Breaking the Silence About India's Women*. Juggernaut Books.
3. Walker, Alice. (1982). *The Color Purple*.