

# A Voice to the Voiceless: Deepa Narayan's work 'Chup'

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## Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to uncover the voices of unvoiced section of society, Particularly , the voices of Indian women. The modern literary works have given the voice to those who are still unheard. It is a medium to reflect the mean, ugly, unhappy aspects of life. Deepa Narayan has taken 600 interviews in her book entitled 'Chup,' of women and some men across India's metro's. Deepa Narayan, social scientist, identifies seven key habits that dominate women's everyday lives, despite their education, success, financial status and family background. Women inculcate these habits implicitly and that makes huge difference in their characters. Dr Deepa Narayan is an international poverty, gender and development advisor who has worked at the World Bank, The United Nation and in the Non- government sector. She was senior advisor in the poverty reduction and economic management group. In her book 'Chup', Deepa Narayan has broken the silences of women very systematically. The book uncovers the issues like domestic violence, abuse, rape, sexual, and mental harassment of female. It glimpses over the fact that the silence of women caught the women in the state of fear, powerlessness, incapability to make argument, opinion and take a decision. It really hampers the growth of character of women.

**Keywords: Identity, Isolation, Voices, Patriarchy, Oppression.**

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## Introduction:

The purpose of literary works lies not only in the recounting of human beings life and their culture but also in creating awareness about certain shortcomings and inconsistencies ,which require rethinking and reconsideration . It is also responsible to give the voices to the individuals . Deepa Narayan in her book 'Chup', uncovered the voices of Indian Women particularly. She found the overpower of cultural beliefs over the rational intellect. The artificial or external changes are made at the larger extent but inner world changed in some extent. She found that changes happened in the life of women but conditions of women are not changed in large extent. She argues that sex ratios at birth or child ratios have worsened since Independence even as income have gone up. Female fetuses and girls 0-6 years old are still being killed or dying in large numbers. The cases of rape, violence, abuse, sexual and mental harassment still happens in so called women safety world. In this book she has taken the interviews from different section of society, she has changed the names and occasionally key identifying information to protect the women who trusted to speak. It seems that there is wide gap between our intellectual beliefs and actual behaviors. This book about the pervasive power of cultural indoctrination that starts with childhood and prepares women to be deleted and then to women to delete themselves as well as other women without their conscious awareness. . Because stereotypes are so naturalized within a culture, often based on power relations in representation, they can function as taken-for-granted assumptions about groups that may impede understanding and social justice (Hall, 1997). If we uncritically perpetuate stereotypes and dominant perspectives about human superiority and other animal species, they are imposing their cultural values and anthropocentric biases on the public. This discrimination is so naturalized that routine exploitation or marginalization can masquerade as facts that are simply indicative of "the way it is" rather than being perceived as cultural constructs for women to question. New narratives of womanhood

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should be created and told to create new form of society. Dr. Deepa Narayan said that-

'I focus on the everyday behavioral detail in the hope that both women and men will be able to see themselves and hear their own voices or the voices of their fathers and colleagues'. Deepa Narayan strongly argues against Indian deep embedded cultural value system which keeps women invisible and non-existent. It perseveres asymmetrical relationship between women and men. She says that Indian culture trains women not to exit despite of well settled position of women. She says that, 'our (Indian) culture trains women not to exist...The culture of non-existence is kept in generation after generation because nobody talks about it. It is a nameless cultural secrets'. The hundreds of ordinary, everyday behavior, proverbs and admonishments that are part of our cultural morass that keeps to perpetuate a culture of non-existence of women. She found that the whole world suffers from this biased embedded society. Its not only the problem of Indian women but also the whole universe suffer from it. The seven key habits are the cultural habits of females invisibility. These habits are as deny the body; be quiet; please others; deny your sexuality isolation ; have no identity. Girls are always taught to be stay quiet either in private or public matters. They are told not to speak or interfere in any matters. This habit of constant silencing becomes common and hampers the growth of child. That silence later on creates violence about women.

Namini 21 year old girl says that,

Mom always said kam bolo, dhare bolo, speak less, speak softly'. It indicates that when a little girl are told over-over again by their parents ,the very people they love ,that must not to speak up , they stop, very opposite of this is *Chup or chup karo* . It means *be silent, be quiet*. In the family of loving parents girls voices, emotions, freedom, self-respects are always are kept aside. Meera,17 year old girl, when eloped from medical college ,like so many other women ,she was raised by loving parents to become body-less and voice-less.

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She says that, " When I lived in the slum with sex workers ... I felt safe there is so much violence ,so much threat to life ,and illness .There is no hygiene , sanitation, etiquette all that is missing and that sense of vulnerability, there is a sense of ... Spokeness. Yes ,that is what it is ,they would talk about everything." It indicates that the girls in the sex workers commonly express their emotions whenever they want , they have freedom, self - respect , they talk freely to their clients ,they have their voice.

Biologically, girls are equipped to start speaking earlier than boys and as a result have greater vocabulary at the of sixteen (16 ) months .But they become less able to speak as they grow old .

In fact mothers tell their daughters to be followers, to just follow, like a little duckings and not to speak. Deppti ,33, a stay at home mother with a Master's degree in economics, sum up that', 'A good women is like her mother ,she follows everyone ,follow father ,follow husband ,follow society ,follow boss''. Moreover, women have bought into the cultural denial of their body. They do not speak of their body from the early childhood and this becomes cultural normalized practice as a good women.

Akansha, 24 ,asserts that, ' But we never spoke about it [the body] in our family'. This denial of the body is the major part of their character as good women. But it has severe consequences like as the silence around molestation and rape. The author says that , ' Don't see, Don't speak, Don't hear. The worst consequence is the silence around molestation and rape.' However, no human beings exists without a body, so no girls can exist without body.

## Conclusion:

The constant denial to speak about body, emotion, self – respect, leads to the worst effects in the character of the women. It keeps women to be silent about the injustices. They can not holds the arguments. They forget their self and just live for other selves. It results the paralyzed condition of girls. The Girls are not able to take their own decision, give opinions, fear exists. It is necessary unfold the false cultural beliefs which holds women behind the curtain .To find out the new way of life that dismantle the false cultural values. Thus, we can say that the writer has been successful in providing voice to the voiceless and have established their voices.

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