



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.

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INTRODUCTION

Gender is a term connected with social and cultural differences associated with being male or female. It is a socially constructed behavioral pattern, and identity. This idea perceives how people interact with each other, and the distribution of power and resources in society. Radical and cultural feminism is a philosophical concept emphasizing and dissecting the patriarchal roots of inequality between men and women or the domination of men ruling over women. It out-views the division of social rights, privileges, and power along with the sex, giving more privilege to men resulting in the oppression of women. This feminism opposes the existing social and political organizations as it is tied to the patriarchy. Radical feminist aims to dismantle the patriarchy and focus on getting inequality for all through legal changes. Radical feminism was rooted in the contemporary movement when the women who participated in the anti-war were excluded from the men when they both carry equal political and social rights. Many women split off to join small feminist groups while maintaining their radical ideas and methods. Meanwhile, cultural feminism depicts breaking the society and making a way for the newer generation full of hope, freedom, and acceptability rather than oppression.

Gender identity is the extent to which one associate's or identifies themselves to be Masculine or Feminine. It is their will on what they want to be identified with. Gender identity is self-identified while Gender role is manifested within the society, forcing one to live by the patriarchal rules. Sex refers to the physical differences between males and females. A baby boy who is born with male genitalia will be identified as male. However, as he grows, he may be identified with the feminine aspects of his culture. *The truth about me* is about the everyday experience of suffering, oppression, and injustice, and also about happiness, joy, and self-love. This autobiography is about setting free the soul that was shamed by society. Her life changed from a very young age when the realization dawned about her feminine interests and her irresistible attraction toward men. Being a middle-class Tamilian boy, his ways were closed. He didn't know how to conceal his identity nor did he know about the changes that were happening to his body. His likes for skirts and blouses rather than pants and shirts are rather taunted by his family and relatives. At a very young age, when society didn't accept him for what he was, the only way left was to leave everything behind and find his way. Revathi, in her never-ending quest for happiness first fled from her village to Delhi in search of her liking. There she removed her sexual organs to adapt to the feminine beauty, to adapt to what she always felt inside. There were hurdles, sufferings, pain, and loss, but in the end, he was able to adapt his true identity, *Her*.

Chup, breaking the silence about India's women, by Deepa Narayan is a book of research on the woman of India. It is an eye opener for every woman who undergoes abuse even without knowing through misogynistic acts. The subtlety of these acts is so scary that our older generations are brainwashed to believe these acts mean justice. Narayan's book gave us a way to see the life of many women with untold stories, who are suppressed to the four walls of confinement as a part of the cultural conditioning of the country.

We see the story of Meera from Delhi, who grew up in a middle-class family with her grandparents, parents, aunt, and uncle. It is said that when her father holds a strong opinion of himself but claims to be liberal in thoughts, her mother is a silent observer as well as a good listener and a wife. What was expected of Meera was to be in a medical profession when she in really wanted to do psychology. This unacceptability of forcing others will lead to oppression and then comes, depression. She ran away after three weeks of being in medical school to follow her profession whatever was left in her hand. This forcibility of ending up in such a situation itself comes when one's dream and life are suppressed. With no other option, she started staying with women

who are sex workers to survive. She took care of their kids, while they went to work. After one month, her family arrived with the police and took her back home.

The author raises a question, did you feel safe staying with the sex workers? The answer probably is what everyone knows. In an Indian household, Meera didn't feel safe. Her existence didn't matter nor did her voice. Her independence was put on hold, and until her father acknowledges her existence, she was not alive. But with them, she got the family she craved for, the acceptance she desired. From a very young age, we the women of India are taught to do things quietly; walk quietly, sit quietly, have no opinions unless asked, and be invisible until we are called out. True to words, this book did hold a mirror to every Indian Woman, to every Indian daughter.

Domestic violence is a result of the patriarchal character of Indian society, which encourages such violence at home. Aside from that, an alcoholic spouse or the desire for a male child over a female child are two more variables that contribute to domestic violence in India. Domestic violence against women has taken the form of physical and psychological abuse, such as striking, slapping, public humiliation, and so on. However, there is a statute called the Domestic Abuse Act that protects women against domestic violence, which is still a serious problem. Domestic abuse is the most common violence against women in India. The number of rape cases in India has increased dramatically during the span of the last 10 years. Every third day, around 25000 rape cases were recorded in states. In rural India, especially in Northern India, higher caste individuals utilize mass rapes as a technique to gain control over members of lower caste groups. The gruesome gang rape case in Delhi promoted the enactment of a more stringent law, the criminal law (Amendment) Act 2013, to address rape crimes in India.

India is in the middle of an independence movement. For women, you can see the changes and improvements as well. They are educated from IIT's, with a good career in the run and a very established self. But these are just the exterior we see. With this upgradation, every single person thought the violence would end as well. But no, it didn't. We are born naked. We do not belong to any authority, nor any culture. But in reality, we are influenced by the language, neighborhood, place of living, and the characters that seep into our bodies to decide what is our true nature. And this invisible cultural compass leads to contradictions and even death. We worship goddesses, we seek their blessings from our feet, but we murder unborn girls in the name of the curse.

Meera's story is somewhere patterning the fear. The fear of being expressed and the fear of independence. Fear traumatizes. Fear kills. Fear drains life. The fear of a woman keeps society sane and stable, but it costs women. Women's bodies are also attacked by culture, which instills anxieties that can impair their mental and physical health. When the body does not correspond to society's expectations, a replacement list is created. When a woman rejects her own body, society takes its foundation and it is seen as a private and public zone of tranquility. It traumatizes the well-being of one when the base is struck.

Our culture trains women not to exist. Invisibility is one of the manifestations a woman has to acquire in order to be feminine. A woman with overpowering thoughts and high demands on society is always silenced, not to be crude, but killed. It is the easiest manner to make a woman disappear. Regardless of their education, career, and power, they are still to be dominated by the male misogynist who still thrives on the cultural contradictions. The culture of non-existence is passed on from generation to generation, as a cultural secret. It is disguised and buried in the cultural morass itself not letting women object in its regard. Rather than claiming "Ma'am, it's normal", we never let the girls speak out. The question is, from what perspective is sexual molestation normal? From what perspective is not sharing our thoughts and views in front of men normal?

In India, Hijra's are invited to auspicious occasions like child birth, marriage, and such to give their blessings, but when it's a matter of acceptance, society turns away. The purpose of these books is to bring the surface to the cruelty that is implemented on Hijra's who are also women of India and the denial of their rights to lead a normal life by the society that refuses to acknowledge them. Society itself shuns them and leaves them to the point of selling their bodies to survive. Before even being able to fight for their rights, society has created a toxic environment for them to come out of the shadows and accept their sexuality. The books of A. Revathi and Dr. Deepa Narayan teach us patiently about the torments a woman has to suffer at the hands of society to be accepted. Revathi's story makes you stand out of your shoes to look through a new perspective, a new society where every soul is accepted, not questioned. It is a compilation of true stories about the women of India. As we go deeper, the lines between cruelty and pain blur, taking a turn to the forbidden bloody streets of cruelty. But no matter what, their journey toward happiness is never ending. The land of God detests the likes of Revathi while the holy book of Ramayana and Mahabharata worships them, Irony.

CHAPTER 1- WOMAN AND IDENTITY

Our culture trains women not to exist. Drawing on the details of the lives of women, they are trained in several cultures where they express denial. Feminism is a political concept, where all the genders acquire equal rights and opportunities. It's about respecting women's experiences, sexual identities, knowledge, and strength, and leveling the opportunities to break the misogynistic society, to acquire the rights to women and girls just like that are given to men and boys. Feminism is not much changed today.

Women have education, liberty, and career just like the other gender. This empowerment was the result of previous feminist movements that gained such exposure, but even with time, women are abused because men can't handle the fame and superiority of women. They are discriminated against and forced to live in a sexual identity that was determined by society, suppressed desires, and domestic violence. Many movements have emerged to put this to a stop, but one after another, all these happen on a daily time. Every second, one or more women are put into danger in the hands of a dominant man who wishes to overpower them.

The feminist movements have run a long way, and many women have joined, bringing out another aspect of feminism as well, but it is still strong and fighting. Society, especially men, views feminism as a battle for dominating the male population rather than a struggle for equal deserving rights for females. There are lots of misinterpretations, misguidance, and misunderstandings, but the world changes every day, and hopefully, the generation of today is realizing the importance and relevance of feminism. "They are denied on the right to their own body; be quiet; please others; deny your sexuality; isolate yourself; have no individual identity and be dependent." (p.3)

These habits are not personal, rather it is made. When one woman is apologetic, it is personal, but when thousands of women are apologetic, then it's systematic and man-made. When women can't speak up, they apologize, despair, and collapse and this behavior runs on a repetition. This contributes to the toxicity of culture. From childhood, I was taught, that silence is kind, silence is a virtue, and silence is polite but as I grew up, I realized, that silence is nothing but a betrayal of self.

"Being a good woman means you are alive because we want you to be alive and you need to take permission even if you want to breathe" (p. 38). The cultural denial of a body is held in a place, that is ruled by the generations. A woman's right to her body is nondeniable. Then why does society interfere? The womb of a

woman is sacred and powerful enough to create a new life. Society believes that this act cannot be done through the hands of weak and innocent women which is why they step in to take the control of women's bodies. Without owning their body, a woman cannot exist. She will be lost without identity and herself.

The fear of going against society makes them surrender the body and loses her identity as well. They fear to breathe, they fear to be heard, and they fear to exist. Every moment, someone criticizes a woman's body, that body is violated. With words and thoughts, it is ripped open for society to dissect and see what is inside. Every time a girl hunches in her stomach to hide her bloated belly, the cultural toxicity of a perfect body wins. Every time a father refuses to let his daughter play football or martial arts, he contributes to the war of cultural toxicity. Every time a girl is judged for the clothes she wears; the unseen war is waged. Society never fails to dump an undeclared war on women's bodies when they are judged and dissected in public and private spaces.

"The training in rejection starts early. Dipali, 11, from modern school, says, my bad parts are my stomach, feet, and teeth. Smridhi, 13 days, my worst parts are my tummy and thighs" (p. 24). Culture attacks women's bodies with their minds as well, by dropping insecurities that can harm mental and physical wellbeing. A list is made that needs replacement when the body doesn't match to societies way of expectation. What happens when a woman rejects her own body? The body is a foundation that one lives up to, considered a personal and private space of peace. When this foundation is Shaked, it traumatizes her well-being. She reaches the conclusion of claiming herself to be the problem and demands no change from society. Everyone, other than the woman, owns a piece of her own body. Her parents, grandparents, uncles, aunt, and even the vendors from the street get to make a judgment because society says, 'It's okay'.

"In my Kurathi's garb, I could express all the female feelings that I usually have to suppress and so felt happy for days afterwards. But I felt troubled by the feelings that men incited in me. I felt horribly shy and whenever I saw young men, I automatically lowered my head. I felt drawn to them, but wondered if I should not be drawn to woman instead, since I was a man. Why did I love men? Was I mad? Was I the only one who felt this way? Or were there others like me, elsewhere in the world? Would I find them, if indeed they were there?" (Revathi, 14)

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Let us recall one of our beloved India's daughters who passed in a very tragic accident; our own Nirbhaya. Nirbhaya means one with no fear, apart from that, a girl with dreams. The scar is too much to forget even with the distance between the states. She was gang-raped and brutally left to be killed vanishing all the ends of humanity. The patriarchal influence of the society on the rapists or rather the monsters resulted in such brutality. Their idea of women, their scheme on how a woman should lead life was passed on from generation to generation, treating such toxicity as culture was the ruins of a young innocent.

“After the brutal gang rape of a pub employee by six men in Gurgaon in 2014, the police proposed a blanket curfew on working women after 8 p.m. under which no women would be allowed out of the house without prior permission from the government labor department. The proposal ban was revoked after a public outcry. The police said they could not provide security for girls and woman because the ones who are out, especially at night and especially in bars, invite rape. Women should stay at home if they want to be safe.” (Narayan, 79)

The protection offered by the society comes at a price of sacrificing the freedom or probably, being jailed at home. If something awful happens, it's the victim's fault, not the failure of the protectors to do their right. Strategies were made, constructed to protect women rather than bringing the rightful law equal to all. One such proposal made by Haryana's former chief minister was to lower the age for marriage of girls to below eighteen. Fortunate enough, the Supreme Court of India ruled out this proposal by stating that sex with girls under eighteen or non-consensual sex will be considered rape. Another crucial proposal was to make the rapist marry the rape victim. While the first proposal raises men's lust for teenage girls, the second protects the

rapist from criminal charges. In the hands of the twisted toxic society, it is considered a great privilege for the rape victim to be married off. Such culture chokes the women to nothingness. When a culture is based on the denial of women's bodies, they feed on fear. Highly educated women sacrifice their freedom to fear to survive.

when the code of what ideal women should be is written in mythic stories and religious traditions, the knot becomes tight and cannot be undone easily. When these stories are told and shared, they sow seeds to young hearts who grow up listening to this non-adaptable change. India relatively scores high among the most religious country, where every religion, from Islam to Hinduism to Christianity to Buddhism ignores women. They are put behind a veil and invisible as well. Goddess Sita of Hindu mythology is known to be a true woman who is worshipped and followed by many. Similar to this, the transgender character that is found in the great epic, Mahabharata, is sacred and worshipped. But when taken to real life, transgenders are considered nothing, but a nuisance to society.

Ignoring the fact that the Indian government and culture took almost 73 years to recognize and accept the third gender, Indian mythology and scriptures reference various figures who defied the gender binary. Society's hatred for Hijra's were shown through such inhuman ways. We are not liable to accuse them of doing sex work and bring out a bad example to society. Rather, looking from another perspective, it's us who push them to sell their bodies or beg throughout the streets. Our unacceptability of a third gender is the reason. Our unacceptability to involve them in the economy is the reason. It is not like they are not efficient enough to carry out other jobs, or as if they are only good at doing sex work and begging, rather it's solely about the lack of space we provide for them. The spotlight will always be on the main gender, who does their best in the economy

“This was a world I had known until then. I was witness to other people's sorrows; I came to know them as my own. Women doing sex work; hijra's who had been deceived by men who praised their beauty and enslaved them, who stole their hard-earned money and spent it all, leaving the hijras with scarred faces, bruised by knives, who were little better than servants, going to the shops, washing vessels; those who had earned in thousands for their mistresses and were yet cheated by them and had to go through other places for work; those who suffered from sexually transmitted diseases and did not receive proper medical care and therefore died; those who had to put up with the capricious

demands of clients who paid them a mere fifteen or fifty rupees and who used them as they wished, brutally and left them with bite marks on their bodies, as if they had been bitten and abandoned by mad dogs; those young ones with great sorrow in their hearts who yet stood on the streets, with powdered faces and painted lips, smiling at prospective customers; those who were carried away by the police for no fault of their own, who were beaten with whips, and lathis and stamped upon by the police boots, had electric current run through their bodies, wo could only leave after paying the police a hefty bribe. I saw all this and more, all that I had not seen until then.” (Revathi 133)

The Sita we praise through Ramacharitmanas is a beautiful, young, gentle, kind, innocent wife who followed her husband everywhere without question. Her femineity was portrayed through these qualities. But she suffered silently. She never screamed or yelled and even her tears were invisible to the naked eye as well. Sita conjures up an image of a pure and virtuous woman loyal wife and hence an ideal woman for many in India. Some perceive her as a helpless and oppressed woman who did her duty whether she liked it or not obeying her husband’s demands, following him, and remaining true. Matters of such faith are implemented from childhood and these characteristics are thrust upon the new generation by the society. Valmiki, who wrote Adbhuta Ramayana right after the original Ramayana perceived Sita as a strong and independent character rather than a remorseful and meek woman.

Domestic violence is a result of the patriarchal character of Indian society, which encourages such violence at home. Aside from that, an alcoholic spouse or the desire for a male child over a female child are two more variables that contribute to domestic violence in India. Domestic violence against women has taken the form of physical and psychological abuse, such as striking, slapping, public humiliation, and so on. However, there is a statute called the Domestic Abuse Act that protects women against domestic violence, which is still a serious problem.

Identity for a woman is nothing but a story that she tells the society to make sense of their living lifetime. Womanhood is a dynamic term defined by society and culture, and also a scientific reality with various implications for women all over the world. The struggle to reconcile the disparities in identity expressed in standards of beauty, sexuality, and gender roles is constantly evolving. The changing context of female identity within and outside the home is highly impacted by cultural backgrounds and visibly characterized by

environmental surroundings; first-generation women must accept the changing context of female identity inside and outside. This pattern reflects how the identity negotiation shifts across multiple cultural dimensions; first-generation women must constantly adapt to changing norms of self-actualization, body image, and attractiveness perceptions.

This research primarily focuses on the various perceptive that define the concept of womanhood, as well as how the previous generation of women from various cultural and racial backgrounds incorporates cultural factors into their daily lives and how these factors influence their gender identity perceptions. Women are becoming more assertive about how they want to be identified themselves with the current social constraints; the process of self-assertion occurs at the same time as the construction of a woman's identity. The process of identity creation is the most crucial undertaking that any woman can do. The way a woman defines herself and what she based her sense of self on is crucial to her life.

CHAPTER 2 THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

Doraisamy, who is now known as A. Revathi was born into a middle-class family in a small village, in the Salem district. Since he was the youngest of all five siblings, the fourth one to be precise, he was pampered and spoiled. Even at a very young age, his area of interest was in Kitchen and all the “feminine activities” which were tagged by the society from the very beginning. He grew up shy, with an inclination to dress as a female, help his mother in the kitchen and draw Kolam every morning. It is also said that as soon as he got back from school, he would wear his sister's long skirt and blouse, twist a towel around his head to make it feel like braided hair, and act like a shy bride. The feeling of being a female trapped inside a male body started at a very young age. Even though the parents thought this was a phase and he might outgrow with age, the relevance given to this particular concern was nil. His body had a mind of its own and acted according to its will. His attraction to the men grew and his feminine side felt trapped with every passing day.

“To the world, it appeared that I was dressing up and playing a woman, but inside, I felt I was a woman. I had to make my chest big, and wore a blouse stuffed with cloth balls. With the skirt, anklets, long false braid decorated with paper flowers, kohl-lined eyes and painted lips, I knew I looked beautiful. I looked at myself in the mirror several times, astonished at what I had become.” (12 Revathi)

Having elder brothers, the reaction to every action is through physical punishments, were in an instant, his elder brother physically abused him with a cricket bat. This was not only a matter of acceptance, but safety was also at stake. The bullying didn't stop there. Even from school, he was taunted by being called out as number 9 and female thing for behaving like a girl and doing women's work. In the age where we teach kids about acceptance and love, the lack of good education led to instances like this.

“On the days this happened, I did not want to sit next to the boys in my class, for I felt coy and shy. On the other hand, I felt drawn to the boys who did not tease me, and I imagined I was in love with them. This confused me- I was a boy and yet I felt I could love other boys. Was this right or wrong?”

(9 Revathi)

Doraisamy spent his childhood years, trying to understand himself, his growing desires, and unnatural talents. He had confusions about his feelings, as even after being a boy, he was attracted to the same men, not women. Nobody was present to guide him through this, all he carried were his thoughts and some unanswered questions. His like for female clothing, dressing up and grooming self was exciting and true. While others teased him about his like, his insides were living and honest to nature. During his teenage, he met a few people who are similar to him, and similar to his feelings. He started meeting them more often and learned about Hijra's and adapting femineity. His visits were frequent and realization was adequate. Soon it was put to an end as they moved to Delhi, but he was left alone in the village itself.

The abuses from their family were getting intense, and with no other choice, he flew from the village to Delhi, to find his mates, his tribe. They all welcomed him with love and warmth. He was given the identity of a woman, something he kept locked inside for long, something he longed for. He was no longer him, but rather her. Revathi was born then and there. She was given saris and bangles, along with the culture and tradition. They together would go to functions, clap their hands, ask for money, and if the money is not enough, they would ask for more. At a time, they are considered holy and abomination. Their word is considered powerful and feared by all.

The Hijra's consider themselves to be a woman only when the process of organ transplant is complete. They have to get the operation to feel complete and join the tribe as a woman. Without this, they won't be accepted

as a part. Revathi, along with other girls had to undergo the same as well. The process of organ removal is called Nirvaanam which is considered sacred and pure. Once it is done, they are supposed to have sex and entertain men who come at their feet. They were not provided with any sort of medication to lessen the pain neither they were treated with humanity. The discrimination shown by the higher staff in regard to a patient was worse. The hijra's or transgenders face such discrimination from the society day by day. Their rights are denied along with freedom of speech.

“I Can't bear this! It's burning. Can't you give me an injection? Please someone come to help! I don't think I will live through this. Hearing me yowl, the nurse came over and calmly said, “Why are you screaming like this? Do you want those around you to know what sort of operation you've had? Just shut up and put up with the pain.” (Revathi, 74)

Once Nirvaanam was over, Revathi was asked to get into work. Rather than experience the love and sheer pleasure of sex, Revathi had to consider this as a business. Every man who would take turns was not pleasant, instead, some were brutal and cruel. Their hatred for Hijra's were shown through such inhuman ways. We are not liable to accuse them of doing sex work and bring out a bad example to society. Rather, looking from another perspective, it's us who push them to sell their bodies or beg throughout the streets. Our unacceptability of a third gender is the reason.

Our unacceptability to involve them in the economy is the reason. It is not like they are not efficient enough to carry out other jobs, or as if they are only good at doing sex work and begging, instead it's solely about the lack of space we provide for them. The spotlight will always be on the main gender, who does their best in the economy. If we closely look into the academic forms, there is not any space for a gender that comes after male and female. Education is a basic right for every human who comes under the Indian constitution yet they are being denied this. Let's look into more economic matters now. Have we seen any Hijra teachers or a doctor? Or even a government employee? It's a big No. The world is changing day by day with its innovation and technologies, but its adapting capacity is poor and lacking. Rape cases are filed, and murder cases are

taken in, but what's next? Nothing happens. Nobody cares. Revathi with her brave heart and strong will leaped to the life she wanted to live in, but how many are brave like her? How many are suppressed in the walls and suffocating to come out?

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Aside from the horrific brutality, her quest for happiness didn't end there. She faced problems outside hijra's house and within the house as well. Guru's fighting over hijra's, oppression over what they want, and battle with other houses, but amidst this, Revathi maintained a fragile relationship with her family, who didn't accept her new state of being and carried hatred towards it. They cared more about what society said than accepting happiness. During the split with the parental property, there came an instance where she could be disowned because of her identity. When Revathi finally moved to Bangalore, she found herself with three daughters. Rather than living under the hijra customs, she strictly opposed it. She wanted her daughters to live freely, rather than to be tied under the Chela's and do sex work.

“A gang of five had come to demand money from my guru and she had refused to yield. When they persisted, brandishing a knife at her, she picked up a stick and yelled at them to get lost. The gang took to their heels, and my guru had thrown her stick at them. Meanwhile, one of them had whipped knife out at my gurubhai, who was near the tap and she took to her heels. The gang ran with my guru in pursuit and stopped when they were in a dark alley. There, the cowards that they were, they stabbed her repeatedly.” (Revathi, 295 296)

One of three daughters was Famila, a dynamic hijra-feminist-queer activist, who brought light to the realm of social activism, unfortunately, died in 2004. Famila made Revathi aware of Sangama, where she took a full-time job later. Sangama gave Revathi the language of speech and right. She learned about what could be done to educate others, and her hijra sisters as well. She became the voice for all.

Chup, written by Deepa Narayan is a book of research on the woman of India. It is an eye opener for every woman who undergoes abuse even without knowing through misogynistic acts. The subtlety of these acts is so scary that our older generations are brainwashed to believe these acts mean justice. Narayan’s book gave us a way to see the life of many women with untold stories, who are suppressed to the four walls of confinement as a part of the cultural conditioning of the country. We see the story of Meera from Delhi, who grew up in a middle-class family with her grandparents, parents, aunt, and uncle. It is said that when her father holds a strong opinion of himself but claims to be liberal in thoughts, her mother is a silent observer as well as a good listener and a wife. What was expected of Meera was to be in a medical profession when she in really wanted to do psychology.

“When girls are trained to depend on men and any attempt to be independent is declared bad, it is difficult for woman to suddenly change. Anoushka, 25, says ‘I was overprotected by my dad and brother. And now my father suddenly wants to be self-independent. I have a habit of dependence on him.’ (Narayan 154)

This unacceptability of forcing others will lead to oppression and then comes, depression. She ran away after three weeks of being in medical school to follow her profession whatever was left in her hand. This forcibility of ending up in such a situation itself comes when one’s dream and life are suppressed. With no other option,

she started staying with women who are sex workers to survive. She took care of their kids, while they went to work. After one month, her family arrived with the police and took her back home. The author raises a question, did you feel safe staying with the sex workers? The answer probably is what everyone knows. In an Indian household, Meera didn't feel safe. Her existence didn't matter nor did her voice. Her independence was put on hold, and until her father acknowledges her existence, she was not alive. But with them, she got the family she craved for, the acceptance she desired. From a very young age, we the women of India are taught to do things quietly; walk quietly, sit quietly, have no opinions unless asked, and be invisible until we are called out. True to words, this book did hold a mirror to every Indian Woman, to every India's daughter.

Don't speak, speak softly. The feminine aspect of a woman is undermined by the tone she uses to speak. The story of Priyanka, a 22-year-old with an MSc degree recalls how her mother trained her to be silent. The word sober is often used as an Indian word to indicate a woman who is quiet, serious, unsmiling, and not getting into any trouble. A sober girl is a safe girl, someone who is a marriageable, moral girl, and approved by society. There is a very short line between being quiet and invisible. Girls are taught that they do not need to speak nor do they have to give in their opinions on matters. A woman can be a good listener as well as a speaker. She can lift you when you are down and treat you with kindness and care. But why are girls expected only to listen and follow others? Why not to self? Mariam, 21, was trained not to speak about herself, as it rather breaks the cultural indoctrination of girls not to exist.

“When girls persist in speaking, qualifiers are brought in. Girls are told, if you must speak, speak softly. Loudness among girls evokes great agitation in mothers. It is forbidden. Loudness breaks the cultural agreement to train good girls to become invisible, not to exist. The agreement itself is never spoken about. It is too silent. It is treated as harmless training for politeness. Girl must stand behind a curtain of politeness and silence.” (Narayan 26)

“Powerless women are not attractive models. Women have raged at and sometimes denied, buried or looked away from this societal decision of unbalanced power. I believe unless we understand power in new ways and see how power is imbued with morality, our strategies for change will not engage our heart, mind and soul; they will not engage women and men to move from fear and anger to love, connection and hope. Individual change is good, but we need collective change in order to change

culture and social systems. For this, we need to go beyond talking about human rights and understand power.” (Narayan 189)

The early training and something that kills the ability of girls to fly is the lack of confidence. Constant oppression, criticisms, and insecurities about one self will lead to this. Smriti 24, appears confident in her tight jeans and fitted top talks about her insecurities and questions that arise if she’s doing the right thing or what is the right thing. These questions and doubt she has for herself keeps her self-esteem down. Even though she laughs off it as a joke, she talks about how one should blame the parents for the damage as they are the ones you interact with the most while growing up.

While Reetu, an analyst describes her inner turmoil about how she feels being defenseless. Even after being what she wanted in life, her happiness is not here yet, all she could see and feel is inner chaos. In an unfair and unequal system, where only men are considered equal, the cultural assumption of man is the protector itself is false. One can be one’s, own protector. Power has acquired a dirty name which means controlling through force. But power is also, persuasion, motivation, creativity, and holding together. This power is the definite base required in a man and woman’s relationship. It’s time to set a new code, to make a new change.

CONCLUSION

India is emerging as a worldwide force in the twentieth century, yet half of the population, namely woman, continues to face challenges and struggle for life and dignity. Women in all walks of life must overcome obstacles and deal with pressing ideas. Women of today’s age can teach us how to achieve an ideal life balance. Women’s oppression makes it harder to recognize their rights as human beings. Women must perform a multifaceted function in society, including being the family’s earner, caregiver, mother, wife, daughter, and society’s service provider. Even though women contribute equally to the nation’s progress, prejudice based on gender exists. Women in India are being denied their fundamental right to dignity and are left to deal with the issue of gender equality on their own. In India, women confront issues such as dowry, female feticide, domestic violence, denial of inheritance, rape, sale, and girl trafficking, among others. Our non-mission profit is to develop solutions that enable women to be as human as males, not less but nothing more.

In developing nations like India, the proportion of women in the population compared to males is alarmingly low. One of the key causes of sexual assaults against women in India is the distinct changes in the sex ratio in different states. Brokers sell children, primarily girls from low-income families, especially in northern India, where the problem of an uneven sex ratio is quite visible. Apart from that, because of women's subjugation, there have been incidences of women going missing from their married homes. In India, dowry deaths among women in their married homes have grown in recent years, indicating a serious problem. The number of freshly married ladies slain for dowry was revealed by the crime branch itself on the census report. Even though Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code deals with those who commit marital cruelty, instances are on the rise or are not being reported on time. Currently, the Dowry Prohibition act treats the taking and offering of dowry as a criminal offense. However, it has been established that the majority of states do not have Dowry Prohibition Officers or have it mandatory to keep track of what is given and received.

Domestic violence is a result of the patriarchal character of Indian society, which encourages such violence at home. Aside from that, an alcoholic spouse or the desire for a male child over a female child are two more variables that contribute to domestic violence in India. Domestic violence against women has taken the form of physical and psychological abuse, such as striking, slapping, public humiliation, and so on. However, there is a statute called the Domestic Abuse Act that protects women against domestic violence, which is still a serious problem. Domestic abuse is the most common violence against women in India. The number of rape cases in India has increased dramatically during the span of the last 10 years. Every third day, around 25000 rape cases were recorded in states. In rural India, especially in Northern India, higher caste individuals utilize mass rapes as a technique to gain control over members of lower caste groups. The gruesome gang rape case in Delhi promoted the enactment of a more stringent law, the criminal law (Amendment) Act 2013, to address rape crimes in India.

Through A. Revathi's novel, we saw the denial she received from the hands of society in the name of gender. Her autobiography aims to speak for herself, her sorrows, her pain, and the loss she suffered to stand where she is now. Her will to break the cultural and patriarchal norms to lead the life she wants, to be who she wants was questioned and thrashed by family and society. The spotlight will always be on the main gender, who does their best in the economy.

If we closely look into the academic forms, there is not any space for a gender that comes after male and female. Education is a basic right for every human who comes under the Indian constitution yet they are being denied this. Let's look into more economic matters now. Have we seen any Hijra teachers or a doctor? Or even a government employee? It's a big No. The world is changing day by day with its innovation and technologies, but its adapting capacity is poor and lacking. Rape cases are filed, and murder cases are taken in, but what's next? Nothing happens. Nobody cares. Revathi with her brave heart and strong will leaped to the life she wanted to live in, but how many are brave like her? How many are suppressed in the walls and suffocating to come out? In the end, she rises to fight every struggle and live her true nature.

The feminine aspect is not born with us, rather it is formed and made by the culture and society. We live with it thinking it's okay. We live with this toxicity thinking it's our nature, but unlike Revathi, nobody goes looking for what's right and wrong. The faces of Meera, Shilpa, Maya, and Mansi tell the tale of every Indian's daughter who is not screaming, but silently suffering. The truth about me, honest to its title, gives the readers an insight into the horrific details of society. This is not an easy read, neither is appropriate for somebody who is not seeking answers. A. Revathi and Dr. Deepa Narayan document the struggle a woman has to undergo every day and night to conquer her rights and power.

This research perceives the transition of cultural toxicity to that of a society, where every gender, sex, and race is accepted and respected. Power is now considered a dirty term in one's life. The overpowering will always try to dominate and oppress the powerless. In this male-dominated patriarchal society, the male overpowers women in every manner. We are considered nothing but weak. Our capabilities are limited or made limited for the well and mighty to live. But it doesn't always have to be a war between men and women. Seeing power as motivation and creativity will help to see each other more equally. The relevance of breaking the old cultural toxicity is important enough to move on from them as well. We are the new generation, the new culture. We build code, new cultural values, and compassionate ethical codes for men and women where we can thrive together with equality and acceptability.

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