
I Have Nothing to Say...

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Abstract

I Have Nothing to Say... is a poetic feminist discourse analysis that explores the feelings of an Indian woman who has been subjected to, and now struggles against, the constant familial and societal obligations of womanhood. Despite her talents, she has been repeatedly denied what she deserves – what she is owed. After having, not only her self-worth, but the very meaning of her existence repeatedly challenged by her loved ones, she eventually chooses the path of silence and unspoken words. But deep within her, she continues to fight the rising tide of emotions. The poem paints a picture of the many people who stirred these emotions – who sought to prevent the woman from pursuing her dreams, from society writ large to those who have tried to kill her, to her very family.

Keywords

Prose poem, society, self, feminist, discourse analysis

Oh Baba!

I was a medical aspirant... so happy; I cleared the entrance after graduation...

You said not to continue MBBS as it would take a long time...

I protested hard but in vain... You all said No!

My teachers and friends were so shocked...

They asked again and again... I had nothing to say...

Oh my dear Family!

You said I should do my master's instead...

I agreed and joined...

But after the second semester as I came home for vacation, you decided to marry me to the groom of your choice, I knew nothing...

I could not return to hostel...

When my lecturers and friends asked why... I had nothing to say... You blocked my sim...

Oh In Laws!

You promised to allow me to study but never kept...

I could not finish masters, as you didn't allow...

I read at night, doing all the overburdened work you give to stop me...you inviting guests, at least five each day in addition...You told me to put the lights off in my room... As your son was sleeping... I had nothing to say...

Oh Baba!

You knew everything... But told me to go with the flow... Everything gonna be fine...

When I decided to do my masters again... In laws, said only via distance... I agreed and joined... They started torturing more...

When I called you crying, they burnt my hand with boiling water while I was kneading flour for morning roti, saying it should be softer...

You said it might be a mistake, and to ignore... After that when they started abuse everyday... You always supported them and not me... I had nothing to say...

Oh husband!

You never uttered to the cruelties... You knew everything... You shush me down as I wanted to explain... I had nothing to say...

Oh Brother in law!

You never be free with me... Always supported your family...I tried hard to make you all happy and like me but in vain... It was always me who was trying but you all didn't wanted it... I have nothing to say...

Oh in Laws!

When father in law and brother in law grabbed me hard from back... One pressing my neck hard... Mother in law, burnt my thigh and belly with a hot iron rod and plastic... I shouted and fainted...I opened my eyes at the hospital...

You all standing outside in fear... I thought you changed and care...

You explained all fake... I saved you from jail... Before the police, I had nothing to say...

Oh Baba and my family!

When I returned, you took good care of me... I started healing fast... You all supported me... But after few weeks, you suggested and decided to send me back... They also agreed... You forced me to go... I asked why??? Do I have to die to get rid of them... You said they have changed and would not repeat... Do I have to put my life in danger to have the proof?

I denied... You said what would the society say... They also explained the same... What about my life and feelings? I said I would live very far from you all, where no one knows me... You said you all have relatives all over... I found one place where is none... I decided to go... Thanks grand paa, to give me property and money... I could not able to make the decision otherwise...

Oh Baba and Mr. husband!

You two are the gems of my life! You always supported me, Baba... This time you were confused but agreed at last... You took me to the new place and stayed with me, until your son in law, had the courage to leave his place and stay with me... I had seen the tensions on your face with each passing day...

Finally, Dear husband, you arrived... You supported me... I didn't want to leave your parents but... But I know each time you go to visit them, you wish, I would also go...

You are free to leave me if you wish...but I could not go...I won't stop you... You know better... I have nothing to say... I am happy you stayed and supported me...

Oh baba, my family in laws!

Now, more than a year, I haven't seen you... I am fine but lonely without you... Trying to find a closed one among the strangers...People love me so much here, though I am a stranger to them... Close bonds are built with some... When I was severely ill... Many people came...But my husband and I had to manage it all... Without you all, life is... I have nothing to say...

Oh Experts!

When I was late to do my tasks and asked you for an extension due to health issues... You granted me... Thank you wholeheartedly... Though, I am unable to explain my feelings to you fully... But you are the only extended family of me now...I like and respect each and everyone of you so much... You are the only support of my life now... I enjoy each and every moment with you...

I have sacrificed all for the sake of study... If I leave my studies and do the marital household tasks, everyone in my family would be happy, besides me... Only my baba (half heartedly) and my husband supports me...

But I never let these things impact my studies... But I couldn't help it when I was severely ill for two months... I had done all the given tasks with sincerity and full priority... Your decision could decide my future... I have nothing to say...

Oh myself!

You have done and tried to do everything in life perfectly... But some things are not in your hand... When suffering happened and people asked, why me? Instead, they should ask why them. No need to worry anymore... Be strong... Continue to live... Relax... You can survive... I have many things to say...

With all the hiding scars and smiling face... I have nothing but many things to say...

Author Biography

Mautushi Dutta is a Sociology Research Scholar who is currently studying Leisure and Gender in India. They have attended, and presented at, numerous seminars and, in March 2023, they completed the Master of Philosophy in Sociology. The title of their dissertation is “Leisure and gender during Covid-19 outbreak among the working women of Assam”. Dutta is also an artist, storyteller, and lover of arts and crafts, as well as cooking, nature, and birds. They enjoy travelling and adventure, but education is their top priority. Dutta believes that leisure is essential for maintaining a high quality of life and a healthy work-life balance. They wish for a more beautiful future.