

**EXPLORING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE:  
SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS AND  
TRAUMATIC IMPACT IN SELECTED  
SOUTH ASIAN TEXTS**

**BY  
SAFDAR ALI DANISH**



**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
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# **Exploring Child Sexual Abuse: Socio-Cultural Factors and Traumatic Impact in Selected South Asian Texts**

By

**SAFDAR ALI DANISH**

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FACULTY OF ARTS &amp; HUMANITIES

## THESIS AND DEFENSE APPROVAL FORM

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**Thesis Title:** Exploring Child Sexual Abuse: Socio-Cultural Factors and Traumatic Impact in Selected South Asian Texts

**Submitted By:** Safdar Ali Danish

**Registration #:** 19 MPhil/Eng Lit/Rwp/S21

Master of Philosophy  
Degree Name

English Literature  
Name of Discipline

Ms. Rabia Shamim  
Name of Research Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Research Supervisor

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan  
Name of Dean (FAH)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Dean (FAH)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I Safdar Ali Danish

Son of Muhammad Khalil Ahmad

Registration # 19 MPhil/Eng Lit/Rwp/S21

Discipline English Literature

Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **Exploring Child Sexual Abuse: Socio-Cultural Factors and Traumatic Impact in Selected South Asian Texts** submitted by me in partial fulfilment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

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## ABSTRACT

**Title: Exploring Child Sexual Abuse: Socio-Cultural Factors and Traumatic Impact in Selected South Asian Texts**

The present investigation delves into the significant themes of child abuse as mentioned in the selected South Asian contemporary texts, *Sleeping on Jupiter* (2015) and *Girls Burn Brighter* (2018), by Anuradha Roy and Shobha Rao. The central motive of this research is to shed light on the child abuse contributing factors, forms of abuse, emotional suffering and traumatic impact on the personalities of abused children. The existing framework originated from the “*Contemporary Trauma Theory*” (CSA) outlined by Jooste. Therefore, theoretical components are employed from “David Finkelhor’s Precondition Model”, which focuses on the socio-cultural factors adopted by perpetrators to motivate children to abuse. Further insight regarding forms of abuse has been extracted from “Child Abuse as an International Issue (1988)”, a collaborated work by David Finkelhor and Jill Korbin. This work further illustrates the categories of abuse: child sexual abuse, child emotional abuse, child physical abuse, child prostitution abuse and neglect. Therefore, the traumatic impact because of childhood abuse is explored as outlined in Cathy Caruth’s *Trauma: Exploration in Memory* (1995). For a more explicit approach, Catherine Belsey’s textual analysis method has been applied. The study emphasises the awareness of child abuse to bring it into the limelight, and this concern is associated with the well-being of children, as it is still considered a taboo in society. Therefore, this analysis recommended child abuse can be investigated through intersectional analysis between child abuse and other societal issues. Moreover, educational strategies can also be incorporated fiction into education for awareness. Through translation studies broader discussion can be generated. From these viewpoints, consequently, it is still an ignored aspect by researchers, as well an expected research gap for future concern.

**Keywords:** *Child Sexual Abuse (CSA), Contemporary Trauma Theory (CSA), Child Abuse contributing factors, Forms of abuse, Traumatic impact, South Asian texts.*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Child Sexual Abuse	CSA
Contemporary Trauma Theory	CTT
Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	CSEC



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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my late father, Khalil Ahmad, may his soul rest in peace. And my mother, whose love and unflinching support have sustained me throughout my journey, and whose prayers have brought me to this moment of joy. I also dedicate this to my wife, who has supported me through every hardship and is a never-ending source of inspiration and strength. This is also dedicated to my children, Arooma Danish and Mishkat Danish, whose fortitude in the face of separation and distance inspires me.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

South Asian contemporary writing has become an important forum for examining socio-cultural issues, especially children's welfare. Prominent writers who have written about the difficulties that children in the area face especially in relation to abuse include Anuradha Roy and Shobha Rao. In societies like India and Pakistan, child abuse is still a major issue despite growing awareness, with several cases being recorded yearly. The literature's depiction of these problems not only sheds light on the difficulties that children confront, but also sheds light on the socio-cultural settings that support this kind of abuse. The goal of this study is to advocate for the protection and wellbeing of children in these countries through examining how child abuse is portrayed in a few South Asian texts and to increase public awareness of the pervasiveness of abuse. Through a critical analysis of the existing literature, this research seeks to advance understanding of the fundamental causes of child abuse and to highlight the crucial requirement of intervention and support networks to protect children's welfare.

The selected South Asian literature reflects the socio-cultural aspects of children lives and includes the diversity of subject matters with the portrayal of the well-being of children, and this is the concern of present research. This research investigates the complexities of children's lives, seeking to explore the layers of dark shadows cast upon the children against their will. The selected text encompasses the pervasive problem of children belonging to South Asian countries, so for the present research is conducted to bring this serious issue into consideration and limelight. Remarkable and outstanding writers in contemporary South Asian literature include Anuradha Roy, and Shobha Rao, among others. These selected writers have drawn attention to significant social issues, such as the exploitation of children, cultural diversity, female empowerment and child abuse. This research encapsulates the subject of children and further delimitates the children abused by the perpetrators. Child maltreatment is the prime subject matter of selected texts from South Asian literature and awareness about child abuse and well-being, the existing study is conducted and selected.

The chosen texts are about the children who suffer various types of abuse inflicted upon them a chain of sufferings and mistreatments. Child abuse is prevailing in society, especially in South Asian countries like India and Pakistan, and both are neighbour countries, (Bano 3). Roy in her, “Acknowledgement” clearly speaks that child abuse is increasing with countless cases in India, “There are countless horrific cases of child abuse and sexual violence in India ...” (Roy 187). As she preferred to compose her novel regarding this issue, that’s why this study is conducted for awareness and to highlight the issue utmost and maximum. Therefore, both texts have been shortlisted to investigate the increasing child abuse contributing factors in the region. Children require due consideration, proper care and priority by the parents or caregivers and when they fail to manage this, child abuse occurs. Child abuse is the dangerous type of emotional and physical torture against them, where the well-being and welfare of children is affected badly. The seriousness of this malice is understood and estimated by analysing the local statistics reveal the horrific picture of maltreatment that hundreds and thousands of children are suffering the victimization of sexual abuse silently out of fear and shame. Because this child sexual abuse, their integrity and well-being are at stake, which needs to be explored and addressed on priority basis. Therefore, the existing study is exploring the literary domain that revolves around the selected fiction as well as expresses the mistreatment children suffer under the existing scenarios. The main concern of this research is related to the well-being of children, how children suffer maltreatment, and the socio-cultural circumstances that contribute child abuse. Moreover, classification of child abuse has been explored and investigated along with expected damages which deformed the personalities of victimized children at multifaceted levels through trauma-causing factors, are the hallmark features of present research. The welfare of children under eighteen years old is a significant concern in current research, as highlighted in Shobha Rao’s *Girls Burn Brighter* and *Sleeping on Jupiter*: “... came to Savitha, her eldest daughter, of seventeen or so ...” (Rao 15). Nomi is also a teenage child, “The year the war came closer I was six or seven ...” (Roy 9). The “United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC)” has defined “child” in the “Convention on the Rights of the Child” as any individual less than eighteen years of age. Article 34 of the charter defines that, “State Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse” (UNHRC 2, 10). Thus, child abuse is defined: “Child Abuse is the portion of harm to children that results from human action that is prescribed, proximate, and preventable” (Finkelhor and Korbin 4).

Therefore, this study aims to analyse how abuse is inflicted and portrayed in contemporary South Asian fiction. Abuse experienced during childhood can have lasting effects on an abused emotional well-being and mental health into adulthood. This is exploratory research; therefore, the plight of victim children will be explored. The goal of this research is to provide a foundation for researchers to investigate more in-depth and understand the problem of child abuse with greater strength as mentioned in the selected texts.

The present research involves the integration of two different texts written by two female novelists, both belonging to the contemporary era and Indian background and the same subject matter of child abuse, and this distinguishes this study. The selected multidisciplinary approach opens a new orientation to present research to delve into more profound insight to explore the complexities of socio-cultural factors and the traumatic impact that refers to child abuse. The selection of two different female novelists from single geographical boundaries, similarity in subject matter and themes of children's mistreatment are the hallmark features of this inquiry. The offenders mentioned in both texts belong to religious sanctuaries with the same names. Moreover, the victimization of only girls' children except a boy frame this work as unique and different owing to the similarity of events. The mentioned selected theorists encompass the relevance of the research problem that is most concerned with child abuse and research questions. The multiple theoretical components offered by male and female theorists put this research into the category of interdisciplinary research, combined with the works of two female Indian writers.

The works chosen for analysis are Anuradha Roy's *Sleeping on Jupiter* and Shobha Rao's *Girls Burn Brighter* published in 2015 and 2018, respectively. Both specific texts are selected because they highlight instances of child abuse. Children are tempted for abuse purpose, and this is the major concern of this study. Roy's female protagonist Nomi, six years old, narrates her childhood memories of sexual abuse by a religious clerk in a temple. The second text sheds light on the trials and tribulations of two young girls who face adverse circumstances in the form of economic crisis, social disparities, child abuse, and exploitation at every step. Both girls challenge the existing scenario and socio-cultural framework. Children are tempted to abuse, either by offering different gifts of their choice or using violence, and this is the primary concern of the present research as it is going to analyse the socio-cultural factors and psyche of

perpetrators. Moreover, it is crucial to explore the secondary objective of this research, which is various forms of abuse: physical, sexual, emotional, child prostitution and neglect, resulting in a negative impact on the child's mental health and well-being. It is important to consider that both the selected novels not only bring into consideration the prevalence of child abuse but also captivate attention to the issue of the victims' damaged personalities, and this is the third focus of this research. The motives: primary, secondary and third, are the research questions of this study. A comprehensive and detailed exploration is conducted to execute the research problem in concerned chapters with proper design. A straight alignment between selected texts and the research problem depicts the objectives of the present research. By applying the selected texts with the lens of textual analysis, as a research method, the present study aims to impart a better understanding of the socio-cultural circumstances that contribute to child abuse and the traumatic impact; it has on the children in the chosen literature.

The predominant consideration of both the selected Indian novels is limited to the well-being of children through the correlation of the research problem and research questions. The selected children's literature discusses the lives of deprived children who undergo different issues like child abuse, and how these children are affected by the devastating phenomenon of traumatic circumstances imposed on them by the perpetrators. Both the novels present different themes of sufferings but child abuse is given utmost importance in the perspective of South Asian region. The selected text has been analysed to find out the answers to the research questions. Society and culture both are interlinked phenomena, and both will be examined comprehensively to understand the nature of preconditions necessary to provide the atmosphere of perpetration. Moreover, this study will try to explore the welfare of innocent children against the adverse circumstances created by negative segments of society, and how various aspects of children undergo the trauma of abuse. The various forms of manifestation of childhood abuse are directly related to the devastation of adulthood and this is the key feature of the present dissertation refers to contemporary South Asian fiction.

The present study explores the deep-rooted pain and memories of traumatic events that embedded in the minds of victims. This exploratory research aims to examine the child abuse contributing factors associated with the mind-set of offenders, and circumstances of children who have been targeted as mentioned in both texts.

Therefore, to find the answers of this research problem, relevant theoretical components, defined by few theorists have been employed in selected texts. Concerned are aligned and investigated in the light of selected theoretical components. The most concerned preconditioned child abuse factors, types of abuse and traumatic impact have been investigated as outlined in *Contemporary Trauma Theory* (CTT) utilized by Ane Jooste (Jooste). For this purpose, a framework has been formulated by integrating the theoretical points of three well-known theorists: David Finkelhor, David Finkelhor and Jill Korbin and Cathy Caruth. Most relevant components to research problem have been utilized. Moreover, Finkelhor's *Precondition Model of Child Sexual Abuse: A Critique* (1984), illustrates four factors: factors predisposing to child victimization (295), overcoming internal inhibitors (295), and factors predisposing to overcoming external inhibitors (296), factor predisposing to overcoming child's resistance (297). Ward and Hudson, both are the critique of work. The existing contributing factors are related to the mind-set of perpetrators, who convinced the children through various mythologies. Besides, *Child Abuse as an International Issue* (1988), a joint venture by David Finkelhor and Jill Korbin, constitutes five categories of child abuse: sexual, physical, emotional, prostitution and neglect, have been employed in the text. The last concerned theoretical work to this research is, *Trauma: Exploration in Memory* (1995), theorized by Cathy Caruth. This theory elaborates the damage, emotional sufferings and trauma inflicted upon the children because of abuse (1984). The practical applicability of four preconditions, types of abuse and impact, has been discussed, explored and aligned with the mind set of offenders and children mentioned in both novels. The most significant goal of this research is to provide a foundation for researchers to investigate more in-depth and understand the problem of child abuse with greater strength. Children's well-being is the ultimate point of consideration for this research through child sex education and proper awareness to shelter the children from abuse.

## **1.2 Thesis Statement**

The consideration of this research is to delve into the devastating phenomenon of child abuse, as it is portrayed in two poignant and evocative South Asian literary works: *Sleeping on Jupiter* by Anuradha Roy and *Girls Burn Brighter* by Shobha Rao. The research uses a textual analysis approach to explore the themes of abuse, trauma, and their repercussions in these works of fiction. By incorporating the preconditions

of offenders and the traumatic effects on victim children mentioned in the novels, this study tries to encapsulate the aims and harsh realities of child abuse in society. Therefore, by utilizing theoretical components and elusive frameworks articulated by David Finkelhor, Jill Korbín, and Cathy Caruth, an effort has been made to meet the goals of the existing research problem.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

1. To investigate the factors contributing to the abuse in the chosen fictional works.
2. To explore the different forms of abuse as inflicted upon the children by the abuser in the chosen South Asian novels.
3. To examine the multifaceted damages and consequences of sexual abuse as depicted in *Sleeping on Jupiter* and *Girls Burn Brighter*.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. What are the various socio-cultural factors that lead to child sexual abuse subject to the selected works of texts in *Sleeping on Jupiter* and *Girls Burn Brighter*?
2. How does the depiction of abuse contribute to our understating of various forms of child victimization in contemporary South Asian fiction?
3. How does childhood abuse manifest itself in adulthood, with a distinctive focus on the impact in the selected works of fiction, *Sleeping on Jupiter* and *Girls Burn Brighter*?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The literary significance of conducting this research on child sexual abuse in South Asian novels is significant in several ways. Firstly, South Asian literature provides a unique lens through which to view the issue of child sexual abuse, as it is embedded within complex cultural and societal structures. Secondly, by examining how child sexual abuse is portrayed in South Asian novels, researchers can deepen their understanding of the emotional, psychological, and social impact of such abuse on individuals and communities. Moreover, the analysis of South Asian literature can provide valuable insights into how survivors of child sexual abuse navigate their trauma, as well as how social and cultural norms shape discussions around the topic. Overall, studying child sexual abuse in South Asian literature can help promote greater



awareness and understanding of this issue, while also providing important insights into the human experience. Therefore, this study tries to serve as the foundation for researchers to develop solutions and insight into this pervasive literary problem. For this purpose, this research analyses two contemporary South Asian novels: *Sleeping on Jupiter* and *Girls Burn Brighter* by Anuradha Roy and Shobha Rao, written in 2015 and 2018.

## 1.6 Delimitation of the Study

This research focuses on a close textual analysis of child abuse in *Sleeping on Jupiter* by Anuradha Roy and *Girls Burn Brighter* by Shobha Rao and consideration of child abuse. Theoretical components from the *Contemporary Trauma Theory* (CTT) proposed by Jooste and developed by Finkelhor and Cathy Caruth is utilized to analyse the socio-cultural factors that contribute to child abuse and the traumatic impact of child abuse in the selected novels (Jooste). This research is delimited to sexual, physical, and emotional, prostitution and neglect abuse as defined by David Finkelhor and Jill Korbins, with aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the representation of child abuse in literature (Finkelhor 44).

## 1.7 Organization of the Study

The present research is divided into six chapters: Introduction, Literature Review, Theoretical Framework, and data analysis of *Sleeping on Jupiter*, literary analysis of *Girls Burn Brighter*, and Conclusion. Chapter one encapsulates the complete introduction of the *present* research, statement of the problem, relevant theoretical components, and brief introduction of selected fiction, research objectives, questions, and significance of the study. The second chapter is about the literary works which already have been done; different approaches have been analysed to find the research gap. A valuable investigation related to present research has been conducted and a fruitful insight helped this study. Therefore, noteworthy previous works have been interconnected with the present research problem. The third chapter is associated with the theoretical framework and research methodologies (textual analysis), it offers a theoretical lens through which the problem and selected text are analysed. The fourth chapter is about the detailed description of selected literature through the application of David Finkelhor, Jill Korbins and David Finkelhor and Cathy Caruth's *Trauma*:

*Exploration in Memory*. By employing the textual analysis method, selected fiction is examined to meet the research problem, child abuse contributing factors, forms of abuse and impact of trauma due to childhood sexual abuse. The fourth chapter introduces Anuradha Roy's *Sleeping on Jupiter* published in 2015. The fifth chapter is also about the data analysis of the second text, *Girls Burn Brighter* (2018), with a brief introduction of Shobha Rao, her literary works and selected text. This novel shed light on the sufferings and devastation of two innocent girls who meet adverse circumstances at every step. The sixth chapter is the conclusion, and, in this section, the previous five chapters have briefly been summarised and concluded with findings and recommendations for future works. Therefore, it has narrated an overview of the research; the importance of this work, the thesis statement, objectives and research questions, selected frameworks, chosen texts, findings and suggestions for further study.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review marks the commencement of a thorough investigation into a wide range of academic materials, such as books, research papers, thesis, journals, articles, and other works of literature. To find out the current level of research and to highlight any gaps in the field of study, every source has been carefully chosen, reviewed, and critically examined. The goal of this comprehensive research is to develop a thorough understanding of the topic, especially about the current study issue being studied. Through an analysis of the chosen literary works, the review aims to extract insightful scholarly viewpoints and important insights that can help fill up the identified knowledge gaps.

Furthermore, by highlighting how the present research addresses and fills the identified gaps in understanding, the literature review aims to highlight the special contribution of the current investigation. With a particular focus on the problem of child abuse in the context of South Asian texts, the review aims to explore if previous studies have sufficiently investigated this subject and to pinpoint any unexplored areas or missed details that demand for more research. Therefore, this review hopes to highlight the new insights and contributions to the field of the current study while also placing it within the broader scholarly context.

#### 2.1 Child Abuse Works

In N. Velmani's paper titled "Sexual Violence in the Religious Sanctuary: A Study of Anuradha Roy's *Sleeping on Jupiter*" the author explores the objectification of women's bodies within religious contexts, framing it as a form of colonization where women are doubly subjugated by both nature and man, "Woman is doubly colonized both by Nature and Man" (1). Velmani employs the theoretical frameworks of colonization, drawing on perspectives from David Finkelhor and Cathy Caruth to analyze the dynamics of sexual violence in sacred spaces, "sacred places on the earth" (7). Velmani's research provides insightful information about the gendered dynamics of abuse in religious settings. Its limits, however, come from its narrow focus on female victims and its restriction to religious guidelines. On the other hand, the larger child abuse research under evaluation looks at causes of abuse as well as its consequences

without regard to gender or location. A comparison of the two studies' theoretical stances and victim demographic inclusion shows disparities. Notably, although the child abuse study includes both genders, Velmani's work focuses mostly on female victims. This discrepancy highlights a weakness in Velmani's argument, which ignores the experiences of men who have been victims in religious settings. For example, Raghu, who experienced similar harassment in a religious setting, is not included in the study. Although Velmani's study sheds light on the exploitation of female victims in religious environments, it ignores the larger background of child abuse outside of these contexts. On the other hand, the study on child abuse investigates different types of maltreatment independent of context or gender, providing a more thorough grasp of child victimization. The theoretical frameworks, scope, and inclusion of victim demographics vary between the two research, even though both add to our understanding of abuse dynamics. Velmani's investigation of sexual violence in religious contexts has flaws, as evidenced by a critical analysis, which focuses only on holy spaces and ignores male victims. Understanding these differences can help academics create more all-encompassing plans to combat child abuse and protect those who are at risk.

Ward, Jess article published in "The Free Press" with the title, "Book Talk: *Girls Burn Brighter*, a Powerful Story about Hardship" (12). He has given merely an overview of the novel, a story of two women and their sufferings in the context of marriage. This report merely presents an introduction or outline of the novel in a general way: *Girls Burn Brighter* attests to the unique hardships faced by women, specifically in the context of arranged marriage (14). On the other hand, the present research focuses on the elements of child abuse suffered by these girls. That's why; there is no similarity in subject matter between the report presented by Ward and the research explored by the researcher. This research chooses abuse- causing factors and damages faced by Poornima and Savitha and quite contrary to it. This report merely presents summary and salient features of the novel, and researcher highlights the three aspects delimited to child abuse from the perspective of selected theorists. Both the girls face "challenges, arranged marriages, exploitations, and molestation" (16) and these differences illustrate a gap between both the explorations. Ward's report focuses "Poornima's father rapes her one night", and this study focuses on Savitha as well Poornima in the context of child abuse. Both the girls "escape to avoid forced marriage" (Ward) and present

research has no link with escaping plans except to highlight the molestation faced by both friends. The researcher has only been concerned with focusing on “children who suffer abuse” throughout the selected text, apart from the given themes: rise and fall, curiosity and separation, reunion, misogyny, colour and creed, and women as a third citizen.

Chattopadhyay, Sayan in “Planting the weathervane: Neo- liberalism, international charity, and the premodern in Anuradha Roy’s *Sleeping on Jupiter*” (2015), explores the most complicated ties between the international charity and the neo-liberal capitalism. This topic is quite different to child abuse in terms of subject matter and selection of theoretical framework. This article explores the layers of links between Neo-liberalism and the international organizations that give funds and donations to religious sanctuaries (1). This is the main difference between both explorations as the researcher investigates the well-being of the children who undergo the malpractice of molestation, and this abuse is not limited to the boundaries of religious schools and worship places. Mistreatment against the children is above the limitation of certain places as have been shown in both the selected novels. He has criticised the hypocrisy of clergies and the negative role of temples like Ashram run by a Guru (3) who receives huge amounts of money from devotees across the globe and especially from North. This is what the subject of child abuse revolves around the few molesters who make schemes to captivate the attention of children for sexual ties and this is the main clash of subjects between both the studies. He mentions this scenario in the geography of southern countries, especially India. Child abuse practice is not associated with the premises of demographic limitation rather it can occur at the railway station, at the seashore where Raghu is sexually harassed by a molester and few clergies on public a road. Moreover, he has applied the concept of “Premodern” by Gayatri Spivak (12), because of its relativity and concern with existing topics. This concept talks about the moral values before the industrial revolution and the contemporary age is full of hypocrisy and corruption in the novel and it is quite opposite to the topic: child abuse. The article focuses on the corruption of religious places and the role of the international community which gives “charity and alms to them” (13), and these funds are misused often. Besides, the researcher uses the framework of David Finkelhor and Cathy Caruth to prove the problem of the research which is child abuse committed by religious people. This is the basic research gap between both the research, and it has no relation

with the themes and ideas related to the concept of premodernity, new liberalism and international charity that comes from the North (15).

Patrick, Bethanne in his review “Women tend the flames of their ambition” in Shobha Rao’s *Girls Burn Brighter*, published in Los Angeles Time in 2018, portrays the “physicality of economic deprivation” (5). While the opening lines vividly portray the challenges faced by women in the novel, it is apparent that Patrick’s focus diverges significantly from the researcher’s exploration of child abuse. Rather than delving into the complexities of molestation and its impact on the protagonists, Patrick primarily highlights the domestic hardships endured by the girls, emphasizing their struggles with poverty and food scarcity as depicted in *Girls Burn Brighter*. This narrow focus neglects the broader issue of child abuse, both within the home and in the context of the brothel complex. Furthermore, Patrick’s review fails to critically analyse the trauma experienced by the protagonists and its implications for their well-being. Instead, it merely mentions Poornima’s decision to escape her adverse circumstances after facing familial turmoil, as evidenced by her flight from her husband’s house with minimal possessions (7). This surface-level examination overlooks the deeper psychological and emotional ramifications of the characters’ experiences, particularly in the context of child abuse. A striking disparity emerges between Patrick’s review and the researcher’s study on child abuse. While Patrick’s article addresses the general plight of women depicted in *Girls Burn Brighter* and highlights broader themes of injustice, it neglects to engage with the specific instances of child abuse explored by the researcher. This gap underscores the need for a more vivid analysis that encompasses both the broader societal issues depicted in the novel and the specific dynamics of child abuse and its repercussions on victims. In short, Patrick’s review provides valuable insights into the economic challenges faced by women in *Girls Burn Brighter* but falls short of offering a critical analysis of the deeper issues at play, particularly regarding child abuse. By expanding the scope of analysis to include a more thorough examination of the characters’ experiences and the broader societal implications, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the intersecting dynamics of gender, poverty, and abuse depicted in the novel.

The review of “Violence Within the Most Unexpected Walls: Nomi Representative of Rape Victims in India in Anuradha Roy’s *Sleeping on Jupiter* published in 2021, by Jerina S, Jove, and G. K. Chithra raises pertinent points about the

representation of child abuse within religious institutions, “ashram” (1) particularly focusing on the character Nomi and her victimization by Guruji. While the review commendably highlights the significance of the topic, it also critically examines the limitations and gaps within the analysed paper. One notable critique pertains to the narrow focus on Nomi as the sole victim of abuse, neglecting the experiences of other characters like Raghu, Piku, and Champa. By broadening the scope to encompass the varied forms of victimization suffered by multiple children, the review argues for a more comprehensive understanding of the pervasive issue of child abuse within the narrative. Furthermore, the review identifies a lack of critical analysis regarding the factors contributing to abuse and its impact on victims. This article ignores the sexual victimisation of other children as mentioned previously, therefore this thesis highlights the children irrespective of any discrimination, whether they are inside the “most unexpected walls” (7) or at the tea stall or railway station. While the abstract promises insights into protective measures and the consequences of abuse, the actual content falls short of delivering substantive recommendations or thorough examination of the psychological and social ramifications. This deficiency underscores the need for deeper engagement with the root causes and consequences of child abuse within the context of the novel. Moreover, the review astutely points out the discrepancy between the stated intentions of the paper and its execution. Despite claims to address protective measures and the effects on children, the paper ultimately fails to fulfil these promises, revealing a gap between intention and outcome. This disparity underscores the importance of rigorous scholarly research that follows through on its proposed objectives. In this regard, “Violence Within the Most Unexpected Walls” provides valuable insights into the representation of child abuse in Anuradha Roy’s work, it falls short in its scope, critical analysis, and fulfilment of stated objectives. By addressing these shortcomings and expanding the analytical framework, future research can contribute more substantially to the understanding of child abuse within literary narratives.

Zahro Khoirun Nisa’s thesis, “Child Abuse in Khalid Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*” (2014) provides a valuable framework for understanding the complex issue of child abuse within the context of Afghan society. By applying the “Social Theory of Child Abuse” and categorizing abuse into four distinct forms, Nisa offers a comprehensive analysis that sheds light on the various manifestations of abuse experienced by the protagonist of *The Kite Runner*. While Nisa’s research differs from

the current thesis in terms of chosen fiction and theoretical underpinnings, it nonetheless offers valuable insights into the nature of the problem. One notable distinction between Nisa's work and the selected thesis is the classification of child abuse. While Nisa identifies four forms of abuse (20), the current thesis expands this classification to include child prostitution as a fifth category. This nuanced approach highlights the multifaceted nature of child abuse and underscores the importance of considering all its manifestations when examining literary representations of the issue. The researcher has selected the mutual work, "Child Abuse as an International Issue (1988), by David Finkelhor and Jill Korbin. *The Kite Runner* (20) is a story of an innocent boy who was betrayed and molested by the local offenders in Afghan society while the researcher has selected South Asian fiction from Indian background female novelists. Furthermore, while Nisa's research focuses on *The Kite Runner* and explores the effects and causes of abuse within the novel (21), the current thesis examines similar themes in different South Asian fiction *Sleeping on Jupiter* and *Girls Burn Brighter*, by female Indian novelists. This divergence in focus and selection of literature reflects the diversity of narratives surrounding child abuse and molestation in different cultural contexts. Despite these differences, both Nisa's thesis and the current research endeavour to uncover the various forms, effects, and causes of child abuse depicted within literary works. By engaging with different novels, theorists, and approaches, both studies contribute to a richer understanding of the complexities surrounding this pervasive issue. Nisa's research serves as a valuable foundation for exploring the nature of abuse and its impact on children's lives, thereby complementing the current thesis's examination of similar themes within a distinct literary and cultural framework.

Bidesh Kumar Sur Roy's article, "Who Could See into Me through My Tunic and My Skin and Bones, right inside Child Sexual Abuse in Anuradha Roy's *Sleeping on Jupiter*" sheds light on the grave consequences of child sexual abuse. The author explores the article with a statement about the problem: "How a hypocritical society in modern India lends a lingering and devastating traumatic effect upon a child's psyche" (2). In search of this, he explores the history of child sexual abuse, but this thesis focuses emotional sufferings of the children because of child abuse rather than dig out the history. He has utilised the concepts of trauma defined by Anne Whitehead in the words, "memory boom" (5) and quite contrary to it, the researcher is also exploring the impact of childhood trauma because of child abuse, but in the perspective of Cathy Caruth, a



well-known trauma theorist. In the light of under discussion article, it is evident that, both approaches are similar in exploring the layers of trauma but with differences in the selection of trauma theorists. Bidesh focuses; on “mania for memory, a frequent after-effect of trauma” (5) and the researcher investigates the sufferings and damages with the perspective of emotional suffering and load of painful memories. Bidesh presents a detailed analysis of, the “hypocrisy of Indian society and the mistreatment of children” and “Nomi’s traumatic experiences of witnessing her parents’ slaughter and being sexually abused have a lasting impact on her personality, ultimately leading her to attack a friend” (6-7). Similarly, another character, Raghu, is exploited and sexually harassed by abusers at the hotel where he works, but he is ignored by the writer. Child sexual abuse affects children of all genders. This article reviews the specific case of a female child, but the research aims to address the issue of child abuse beyond gender discrimination.

Ward, Tony, a well-known critique of the work is titled, “A Critique of Hall and Hirschman’s Quadripartite Model of Child Sexual Abuse”, published in 2008. This work is comprised of four factors related to child abuse. These factors are narrated into two categories: the first three are known as State factors, and the fourth is called the Trait factor (20-22), as highlighted by the critique. This work doesn’t speak about the conditions of an offender as the requirements of the selected texts: *Sleeping on Jupiter* and *Girls Burn Brighter* but like Preconditioned of Abuse as stated by David Finkelhor. The State factors are associated with physical sexual erection, which is related to biological traits in which one is unable to control his or her emotions (24). The second part of the first point is distorted cognition in which lack of harmony in the brain causes the factor to have relations with children (25). The third factor linked with the first is the affective decontrol which contributes to molestation and child seduction. The last factor is related to personality, as mentioned trait factor (27). He feels his personality is incomplete. Every environmental factor plays a role in contributing to child abuse. However, opposite to Finkelhor’s “four preconditions, the Quadripartite Model” does not address the various forms of child abuse and their impacts, nor does it tell any way out to prevent this alarming situation of abuse or extenuate this issue.

In his article, “Reconceptualization of Gender Relations in Saeed’s *Amal* “Unbound” and Rao’s *Girls Burn Brighter*”, Asif, et al highlights the male-dominated society of “postmodern times that how women are mistreated and sexually tortured” (1)

by comparing the two texts. Through this academic inquiry, he intends to get deeper insight into the “conscious and unconscious” (1) causes of “girls’ objectification within the cultural and patriarchal contexts of Pakistan and India” (2). His investigation encompasses both the selected novels in the perspective of “patriarchal and modern feministic” framework and our study explores the instances of child abuse in the perspective of David Finkelhor and Cathy Caruth, in the background of two texts, *Girls Burn Brighter* and *Sleeping on Jupiter*. Muhammad Asif, et al employ Butler’s feminist theory of self, subject, and gender (Judith Butler 3) to strengthen his argument about women and exploitation, and this thesis employs the theories of child abuse contributing factors and impact of trauma. The novel portrays girls who are sufferers of child molestation and prostitution at the hands of the opposite gender like the research topic. The article concludes by offering an ultimate way for women to stand against this dominance or rebel against patriarchy, and this is the research gap between both studies because this investigation doesn’t carry out the considerations in the background of patriarchal or feministic motives. The selected framework for South Asian texts highlights situations in which an offender approaches children and how children’s well-being, is damaged with the specific aim of bringing this issue into the limelight. This article is devoid of any particular concern with the specific person rather it is a generalized description of women’s sexual harassment and victimization.

Devanesam and Manimozhi (261) focused on psychoanalysis and on the protagonist’s experiences, whereas “Trauma Resides in the Nervous System: Nomi Fredrickson in Anuradha Roy’s *Sleeping on Jupiter*” (2021) discusses trauma inside the brain even after 25 years of age. This article discusses the special form of trauma that is: “Nomi the protagonist range under below 18 years of age attacked by Gynophobia” (261). But this research is not limited and fixed to merely gynophobia rather it encapsulates the mental and emotional suffering of the protagonist throughout the text. We have used the outlook of Cathy Caruth regarding trauma application in the selected texts. According to her, “Trauma is a remembering and recalling process in form of flashbacks and this process creates abnormality and disruption in the lives of trauma victims” (Caruth). Therefore, every remembering process which disturbs the children because past painful memories is relevant to this study. She is forced to confront the “chain of trauma and brutal events since her childhood” (260) that she has endured. Similar layers of trauma and flashbacks are also shown by the current

research, although it examines a wider range of issues rather than just gynophobic ones: “Phobia arouses the physical or psychological fear of sexual intercourse” (260). She witnesses the murder of her father, mother and then brother. She was kidnapped by invisible forces and taken to the place of worship; there she remained for several years along with other girls. She was raped time and again by her father like Guruji in that religious and sacred place. Although she escaped from the prison cell of the temple, but after 25 years of age, she still faces flashbacks of her ghostly past. Throughout this entire episode of age, she suffers mental damage in the form of haunting memories and trauma. This article paid attention only to Nomi, the victim child, but this research tries to give attention to other children as well. Therefore, the present research explores the suffering of children and provides a thought-provoking insight into the perspective on the subject matter.

Rizky in his dissertation, “Oppression towards main female characters in Rao’s *Girls Burn Brighter*”, published in May 2023, reveals the women suffering in general and then limited to the main figures of the novel, Poornima and Savitha. This dissertation was published in May 2023 and the thesis on this subject matter and novel has already been conducted and is still under consideration. The researcher of this dissertation has selected a vast topic, and this thesis is delimited to the topic of child abuse rather plight of women. The main objectives of the researcher are to highlight the oppression against women in the theoretical background, “feminist literary criticism” (10) by utilizing a few theorists: Iris Young’s “theory of oppression” (10), and Kimberly Crenshaw’s “theory of intersectionality” (10). However, present research sheds light on the plight of children who undergo the trajectories of child abuse, and their vulnerabilities at stake, for these motives, a framework has been formulated to encapsulate the issue, accordingly. That’s how; the subject matter of this dissertation is quite different to this investigation done by the researcher and theoretical angles have been employed: “Contemporary Trauma Theory” (CTT) outlined by David Finkelhor and Cathy Caruth, and “Child Abuse as an International Issue” (1988), a joint venture by David Finkelhor and Jill Korbin. The clash of choice, subject and theorists, between both researches, illustrates that nothing is common between both the works except the selection of the text that is, *Girl Burn Brighter*. Furthermore, he investigates the different themes related to both the girls: “Poornima and Savitha, experience oppression in the forms of marginalization, exploitation, powerlessness, cultural

imperialism, and violence” (70). It is evident that the researcher has an interest in unmasking the multiple layers of child abuse from different aspects, and this develops a research gap for the present exploration.

Agarwal, Beena in her research article, Shobha Rao’s *Girls Burn Brighter*: “A Psycho Analysis of Women’s Inner World”, highlights the adverse conditions of women in the background of Shobha Rao’s novel that how women are subjugated in the “patriarchal society” (5). This study has been conducted in the context of a patriarchal society, quite contrary to it, the present research has been conducted in the context of power structure, that how weak children are exploited and sexually abused. For this purpose, socio-cultural abuse contributing factors theory has been used, outlined by David Finkelhor. In the present period, discourse about women in literature has captivated the attention of all literary writers, especially in the context of South Asian fiction. He depicted the plight of women in third world countries, “physical and psychological damages” and “sexual harassment” (16). Shobha Rao portrays that conventional and brutal norm of society lead to degradation and social injustice for women. Poornima and Savitha undergo and face social injustice at every step. This description makes both the works done by the article writer and the researcher different: first investigate the adversities of women psychologically and second explore the areas of children in the domain of abuse and traumatic impact. The concern of the article is to analyse the elements of the male-dominated society and patriarchal suppression of the mind and psyche of female characters. She uses the framework of, the “feminine psyche of the oppressive mechanism of patriarchy” (12), which explore the miseries of women throughout the novel, India to the United States of America. However, this theory illustrates, “Postmodern feminists are so profoundly feminist that they transcend the boundaries of feminism and offer to women freedom from oppressive thought” (Prabhakar: 19). It is clear that both approaches are different subject to the context of the research problem in the light of these descriptions.

Raj Gaurav, in his article, Literature and Gender Anuradha Roy’s *Sleeping on Jupiter*, throws light on the overall events of the novel (1). The researcher divided this novel structurally and character-wise: the life of Nomi India, her childhood sufferings, abduction, rape and escape, then she goes to Oslo with her adopted parents, and after 25 years, she is back in India, once again. The first and foremost research gap between both the studies is the difference: present research is devoid of any structural or

character-wise division rather it focuses on the characters who undergo the victimization of child abuse with certain classifications of abuse and damages in the form of trauma. According to the article, the character has been divided into Guruji, Bhola, and Guruji's trusted man. Jugnu, Gardener. Champa, who was Guruji's favourite. Piku was the only close friend of Nomi in the ashram. Nomi's life without her parents in the ashram was hell. She spent time in the company of Guruji, like Satan. He "raped her many times" (3). But this study sheds light on all the events in a general synopsis form rather than fix the most concerned events of the novel. All to events have been written in the form of a summary, and this research points out the children who suffer the abuse. Then he talks about the different themes of the novel: family, friends, home, dislocation, sexual violence, and molestation (5). This research doesn't provide the theoretical base and selected theorists as a framework. As for the title is concerned, he shares his views that *Sleeping on Jupiter* is a desire to escape from the harsh realities of life and take shelter at Jupiter. Moreover, this research has no concern regarding the explanation of the titles of both the selected texts, except to target the main problem of the study which is child abuse. This issue of child molestation has been discussed in a general sense devoid of gender discrimination.

Reeta in her article, "Reflection on Women's Body and Appetite: A Study of Ismat Chughtai's" *The Rock* (60) offers a scholarly analysis of how the female body and male desire are portrayed in the novel. Although this discourse is beyond the area of concern as we have selected different texts, however, it is useless to deny the utility of this article as it undergoes the subject matter of the research which is child abuse. The article examines how, "women's bodies are influenced by psychological, patriarchal perspectives" and "female body started to be seen as sites for disciplinary control" (60), by the men. According to her, since the inception of history women's bodies have been portrayed as a "sight of sexual gratification" (61), and both the texts revolve around the theme of abuse, except a male, all the female characters have used a toy of sexual gratification. But this is also important to note that the subject matter of our research is limited to child abuse irrespective of gender discrimination and fixed to under eighteen years of children. Reeta applies the theory of "body" in the novel, *The Rock*, and it "challenges the notion of patriarchal power and strictures of agency put upon female's bodies" (61). She presents contextual background about the tribulation of women and how female bodies are exhibited to attract the attention of males for sexual gratification.

But the present thesis has the least concern with the bodies of women as a sight of sexual pleasure rather it focuses on the child abuse contributing factors, precondition of abuse and traumatic impact of abuse on the brains and personalities of the children. This article highlights the circumstances and expected reaction of women presented in the story; they oppose the brutal role of males. This research is a reaction by the males when they see the “bodies of women” (62) and are eager to control them. The selected thesis subject is different to her scholastic approach, which explores the psychological perspective presented in the novel and how it shapes the character’s attitudes towards their bodies.

Prakash and Chandran, in the essay, “The World of Child Sexual Abuse Victims in Mahesh Dattani’s” *Thirty Days in September*, (169) both scholars shed light on the issue of child abuse through their analysis of Mahesh Dattani’s film, *Thirty Days in September*. The film portrays the sexual abuse experiences of two children, “Mala and Shanta” (170) and “horror of incest” (170), who become targets of illicit relationships. The overall main theme of this article is child abuse related to researchers’ concern to the topic. The authors depict the long-lasting effects of child abuse, as the victims are burdened with a “sense of shame and stigma” (171) that haunts them frequently. Child abuse put negative and traumatic impact on the victim children as have been portrayed in the selected South Asian texts. The only research gap is the choices of texts with different theoretical perspectives. They argue that preventive measures must be taken to protect the abused children. This is the finding of the article which is aligned to our research. According to them, “her life becomes a hell and the memories of the past disillusioned her often and induced her to become a pervert” (172). Therefore, lives of the abused children become tragic and traumatic as depicted in the selected Indian texts and it is articulated by the article writers. The director’s bold portrayal of this issue serves to draw attention to the plight of child abuse victims, who often rejected and made fun in later lives. Mala and Shanta are not a single incident of our society, but a reflection of the broader issue of child sexual abuse in the subcontinent. Therefore, we have selected texts from Indian background as this is the emerging issue of subcontinent and we are the inhabitants of this area. This story is the story of every individual in the society. Both the abused girls are rejected by society, including Shanta’s husband, who “abandons and ostracised her for another woman” (173). These outcome and results don’t match and seen in the selected fiction.

Denney, Andrew S., et al investigate in the article, “Child Sexual Abuse in Protestant Christian Congregations: A Descriptive Analysis of Offence and Offender Characteristics” (10) published in 2018, that, “326 alleged cases of child sexual abuse in Protestant congregations” and “religious sanctuaries in the United States” have been committed (2). Religious sanctuaries are not the primary or secondary concern of our research, although the main events of child abuse occur throughout the selected texts inside the temple. The research article brings issues considering the demographic and contextual characteristics of the abuse and addresses questions regarding the types of abuse that occur often. Child abuse is not fixed to a specific place, it can be occurred devoid of demographic locations. However, in the selected texts, it occurred frequently inside the temples and the maximum offenders were clergies. This article talks about the locations where the incidents take place. And they expose the truth that most of the perpetrators are male religious clergies who are involved in this malpractice (7). He, furthermore, suggests that strict policies be implemented to prevent such abuse. It is important to note that child sexual abuse is not limited to Christian churches. But it is also found in mosques, temples, and other religious institutions. This issue is also present in the two selected novels where religious and other than-religious offenders are involved in the practice of child abuse.

A research article titled, “The Case for Using Mainstream Media for Social Advocacy: Impact Assessment Findings from KASHF’s Media Campaign” *Udaari*, was jointly written by Areej and Saeed. The article focuses on the Pakistani drama series, *Udaari*, televised in 2016 by the *KASH Foundation* to “create a social awareness program to draw attention to child abuse and women’s empowerment” (2). The main objectives of both the works closely resembled reference to awareness in the society. This research-based article highlights the results of a survey conducted in major cities of Pakistan, aimed at determining the impact of this “drama on people’s opinions about child abuse” (4) practices in the country. This important study utilized both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. The research on the topic of child abuse also highlights the impact of abuse referring to Cathy Caruth’s work: *Trauma: Exploration in Memory* (1995), they conducted interviews with 800 people and a group discussion with 14 people to obtain their findings. The results showed that *Udaari* had a significant impact on people’s lives, motivating them to talk about child abuse without hesitation, although it is considered a taboo subject. In the beginning, such kinds of talks were

considered against social norms and religion. But this drama proves a successful drama because of its powerful theme and social issue. The drama successfully advocates for “child sex education and awareness among the population” (4). This study revealed that television is a powerful medium for spreading awareness, which can captivate the attention of parents, children, and policymakers to adopt precautionary measures for the protection of children. This thesis on child maltreatment also highlights the necessity for children's literature to receive an increasing amount of attention. The article concludes by stating that *Udaari* has paved the way for other dramatists, scriptwriters, and producers to give utmost importance to child abuse issues and make them a matter of common interest. This article focuses on female children and “women’s economic independence” (5). On the other hands, this research aims to address child abuse issues in general, affecting both male and female children, and this is the research gap of the present study.

Vashishth, Surbhi in this article published in June 2023, “Bouncing Back: Battling Disruption and Reconditioning Self in Anuradha Roy’s” *Sleeping on Jupiter* (76), points out that women are victimized by power masculinity, and they lost their identities. The self and selfhood of women are lost because the “patriarchal game” (77) because the male is powerful, and she is weak. This research has been conducted in the domain of feminism and masculinity, quite different to child abuse, where the psychology of the offender has been explored. According to this article, the idea of patriarchy makes a male powerful, exploits females and sexually tortures and it leads towards the damage of psychology of the abused person as has been shown in *Sleeping on Jupiter*. This article also highlights the restoration process of self, selfhood, pride and dignity of the victim girl who suffered a lot during the events. The victim girl wins her “psychological freedom and bouncing back against the enemies” (74). This article is dissimilar to the research which has been conducted by the researcher as it simply sheds light on the abused children and how their personalities are ruined. The writer of the article uses different references to strengthen her point against the mentioned malaise. She cites Erik H. Erickson, in his book, *Identity: Youth and Crises*, that human identity is based on two perceptions (50) and this identity is lost due to adverse circumstances met by a woman as Nomi, the protagonist of the novel suffers. She uses references from the book by Lisa S. Price, “Feminist Frameworks: Building Theory on Violence Against Women”, subject to male power dominance (80). The tone of the



article is very encouraging as it encourages women against the tyrant class of male supremacy. This is quite different from present research, and it has no similarity owing to the factor of different domains reference to subject matter and selection of specific theoretical framework. She presents that the chain of past events affects the memory of Nomi, and it haunts her in her sleeps and dreams as reference is given by, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. It further explains “The dream process consequently enters on a regressive path, which lies open to it precisely owing to the peculiar nature of the state of sleep, and it is led along that path by the attraction exercised on it by groups of memories; some of these memories themselves exist only in the form of visual catches and not as translations into the terminology of the later systems.” (572). Nomi has been portrayed as a super girl, a victorious; however, this research explores the sufferings of children regardless of victory or defeat of a single girl.

Dhar, Shakti in “Delusion, Deceit and Pain: A Psychoanalytic Approach in Shakespeare’s” *King Lear* and Anuradha Roy’s *Sleeping on Jupiter* (123), explores the certain traumatic impact on the personalities of both the prime characters mentioned in *King Lear* and *sleeping on Jupiter* by William Shakespeare and Anuradha Roy, respectively. The first difference between the texts is evident that the researcher selected texts: *Sleeping on Jupiter* and *Girls Burn Brighter* and Dhar Shakti applies Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, to the selected texts and finds the impact of trauma which creates a disturbance inside the cognition and damages the condition of the thinking process. The researcher of South Asian texts, however, prefers to formulate the combination of three theorists: Finkelhor, Jill Korb and Cathy Caruth and apply it to different texts. The article writer conducted a comparative analysis between good and bad characters as presented in *King Lear*: Edmund, Regan, Goneril, and Cornwall represent the Evil side whereas Cordelia, Edgar, Albany, Kent, represents the good side...” (124), and this research is devoid of any comparison among the characters or both the texts. Trauma hurts victims such as King Lear and Nomi and, in our research, it has a traumatic impact on the abused children. *King Lear* faces mental damage out of hamartia (128), and it leads him towards downfall. His well-being is injured by his daughters and vice versa, abused children in selected South Asian texts suffer trauma by offenders. The under-discussed research article merely talks about the limited and traumatic impact on Nomi and *King Lear* while on-going research is different and highlights the plight of children in South Asian fiction.

“Entrenched Evil Against Women: Corporeal and Spiritual Violence in Anuradha Roy’s” *Sleeping on Jupiter* (106) is an article by Sanchez, Jorge D. In Chapter Seven argues, “Anuradha denounces atrocities against women by male” at every level, and this research has the concern to bring child abuse issue into the limelight. She disapproves of, “Sexual and gender abuse against women as well as social oppression by people who misuse social and religious power” (Balakrishnan 2015). The story of the novel is about the return of the protagonist from Norway to Jermuli, after 25 years, to face the challenge of memories and expose the faces of culprits whom Kandasamy calls, the “flawed democracy of India (2016. 66). It is about the “patriarchal rules which dominate the religious affairs, politics and society” (107) but this research encapsulates the examples of child abuse rather discuss from the perspectives of patriarchal dominance. Indian postcolonial and feminism lens has been used by the scholar to show the local colonialism as well as Sara Ahamd’s point of concern (2014) ‘cultural and political implications emotions against the poor females. This article has been conducted in such a way that touches all the aspects of the novel comprehensively. However contrary to this article, the present research uses a framework done by Finkelhor and Cathy Caruth, to bring the issue of children’s mistreatment into due consideration. Through this theoretical lens, an effort is made to reveal the causes of molestation and explore the children suffered throughout the selected text.

According to Bano, Manizeh’s study, “Sahil Six Months Cruel Numbers study January – June 2023” (1), there was a rise in the number of child abuse reports in Pakistan between January and June of 2023. As previously mentioned, the researcher selected South Asian literature since she is from the area and wants to learn more about this topic to raise awareness of the ongoing problem of child abuse in the nation. “A total of 2227 cases of child abuse reported during the first six months of 2023,” (Bano 3). The fact that there have been more abuses than in the 2022 report indicates that Pakistan is seeing an increase in the number of child abuse instances. The goal of this research is to raise awareness and disseminate knowledge to reduce the occurrence of child abuse. The report states that “593 boys and 457 girls were abused in age bracket 6–15” (3). This raises concerns about the current research, which suggests that youngsters need to be made aware of the difference between good and bad contact. Unfortunately, this topic has received the least attention and is still socially taboo in

Pakistan and the subcontinent, where child abuse occurrences occur, and such families are viewed as outcasts.

## 2.2 Research Gap

A detailed and meticulous review of multifaceted scholarly works about inquiry has been carried out to delve into the complexities of child abuse employing the specific frameworks outlined by three theorists. Therefore, the present profound exploration on the subject matter has explored the research gap within the realm of selected South Asian literature: *Sleeping on Jupiter* and *Girls Burn Brighter*, by Anuradha Roy and Shobha Rao, this topic is still unexplored. Moreover, it is evident that both the texts have been investigated individually and separately but none of the scholastic endeavours by any researcher investigated the selected fiction through the lens of David Finkelhor, David Finkelhor Jill Korbin and Cathy Caruth. The most relevant and concerned theoretical points have been extracted from “Contemporary Trauma Theory” (CTT) employed by Anne Jooste in her dissertation: “Childhood Sexual Abuse and Contemporary Trauma Theory: A Visual Exploration in Selected South African Artworks”. Moreover, a collaborative work by David Finkelhor and Jill Korbin has been employed that categorises child abuse: as sexual, physical, emotional, prostitution and neglect.

The research gap has been ventured and investigated through the exploration of both texts using the textual analysis method delineated by Catherine Belsey, a literary critic. The entire study has been explored in the context of the selected texts to unfold the precondition of abuse, forms of abuse and their impact on the affected children in an inclusive manner, contributing to the existing body of research on the subject.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The kids that are referenced in these modern writings endure the hardships of being abused as children, as well as the traumatic and detrimental effects that follow. Observations that lead to a descriptive account of a certain situation have been used to examine the current study. It belongs to the qualitative research category as a result. To explore and understand the complexity of human experiences and behaviour of individuals, a close and careful reading of the text is undertaken. Investigating a phenomenon in-depth is the foundation of this study; in contrast, quantitative research focuses on examining numerical data. In-depth analyses, sophisticated views, and subjective elements of a certain subject are all explored in this study. As a result, evaluating and rating the meanings that readers have created greatly interests qualitative researchers. It provides an explanation for the how and why of common people's construction of their own epistemology and experiences in the world (Merriam 13). According to Merriam, the goal of qualitative research is to comprehend the meaning that individuals have created—that is, how they interpret the world and the experiences they have had in it (14). The researcher takes a subjective approach, interpreting the data according to his own interpretations.

Therefore, qualitative data analysis has been utilised to explore the queries of the thesis statement as it involves close textual analysis, interpreting the selected texts, concerned themes and affected children. Qualitative research is associated with text-based analysis and it highlights the common matters and events. Therefore, close attention is paid to the text of both the selected novels to collect relevant material for further exploration. The existing framework is very relevant to this study, and it encapsulates the under mentioned research concern.

Research method is a strategy to open new avenues and see the things with new perspectives about a particular topic. Textual analysis is most common technique especially in literature. This strategy of method discloses ways to explore the study in contextual, social and cultural ways through proper interpretation of the selected text. Textual analysis is a prime method that is applied to explore the multiple layers of meanings, and most concerned interpretations are constructed. The primary objective of a textual analysis is not to assess merely the body of the concerned text but rather to

find out the original meanings of it. She defines, “a textual analysis is all about making sense of a text” (Belsey, Catherine). She argues that “the process of textual analysis brings upon the multiplicity of possible meanings” (163). Textual analysis is being utilized as a research method employed by Catherine Belsey. Through the proper application of this method, the selected text is going to be analysed and understood in its cultural and social context. Research problem is being explored by applying textual analysis method to comprehend the child abuse contributing factors, types of abuse and as a result, traumatic damages on the personalities of victim child. The experiences of abused and suffering children serve as the foundation for this study. Textual analysis talks about methods including what the text is about, who it is meant for, why it is said, and the impact it has (164). Additionally, textual analysis entails talking about strategies like the text’s objective, target audience, and impact on the lives of the victims (164).

The two separate domains of literature and psychology theory notions are combined in this research, which is multidisciplinary. The term “interdisciplinary insight” thus refers to the way in which many theoretical elements have been blended with literary works to investigate the socio-cultural elements that fuel the animosity and malice of those who abuse others. Therefore, as the various South Asian scriptures and theoretical components both emphasise, children suffered from various harms caused by the criminals. Due to this reason, a theoretical framework has been developed that makes use of pertinent theoretical ideas from the writings of David Finkelhor, Jill Korbin and Cathy Caruth. The socio-cultural causes of child abuse, the different forms of abuse, and the devastating effects on children’s later lives are all examined in these theoretical parts. Therefore, selected texts are aligned to analyse in accordance with the suggested research methodology to explore the research problem.

The selected South Asian texts for the present problem, *Sleeping on Jupiter* and *Girls Burn Brighter* hold significant relevance within the context of existing research that is child abuse. The chosen novels directly address the research problem and objectives, aligning closely with the selected theoretical framework. This is the most concerned theory based on relevant points related to research problem and research questions as portrayed in the selected south Asian texts. The selected theoretical components shed light on the multiple approaches of different mind sets of offenders as have been highlighted in both the selected novels from South Asian background. Moreover, an offender uses different methods and strategies to capture and captivate

the attention of abused children as mentioned both in the chosen framework and the selected texts.

### **3.1 Application of Theoretical Framework**

For this research, a comprehensive theoretical framework has been designed by employing the most relevant theoretical components from the *Contemporary Trauma Theory* (CTT) outlined by Jooste (Jooste). The shortlisted framework provides a clear insight regarding on-going research problem e.g., factors involved in contributing to child sexual abuse, types of abuse, how personalities of victim children are damaged, inflicted upon them by the offenders. The current framework covers the research topic that is being discussed and is highly pertinent to this study. It incorporates theoretical viewpoints from David Finkelhor's *Precondition Model of Child Sexual Abuse: A Critique* (1984), David Finkelhor and Jill Korbin's joint work on *Child Abuse as an International Issue* (1988) and Cathy Caruth's *Trauma: Exploration in Memory* (1995). The purpose of this study is to investigate the causes that lead to child abuse as well as the certain types of abuse that occur, child sexual abuse, physical, emotional, prostitute and neglect. The research attempts to investigate the traumatic impact on victimised teenage children as shown in the chosen South Asian novels by utilising mentioned theoretical notions.

### **3.2 Finkelhor's Precondition Model of Child Sexual Abuse: A Critique**

The most relevant theoretical socio-cultural component, emotional congruence related to selected texts, is applied and analysed here. Emotional congruence is a child-sexual contributing factor that motivates offenders toward abuse. This theoretical element is concerned with the psychology and emotional tactics of offenders as revealed, "emotional congruence involves a fit between an adult's emotional needs and the characteristics of a child" (Finkelhor 295). It refers to a condition in which the sentiments of children are sexually exploited by the offenders. In this way, molesters made efforts to win the trust of the victim's children. Sex with children always pacifies the sentiments of the molesters, and it gives them a sense of power and control with teenagers. It is a sexual and emotional accord in the mind of molesters as they think they are superior, stronger and dominant, vice versa children are smaller, younger and

weaker. This condition is available in both novels where molesters out of power and emotional congruence seduce the children. Poornima, Savitha, Nomi and Piku are the victims of emotional congruence in texts.

The next precondition highlights the mental stresses of offenders in which they lose the ability to control their ethics and moral values. Besides mental stress, the death of a very close person to abusers motivates them to have sexual ties with the children. In that condition, their ability to think is ceased. The internal resistance of children is reduced by the perpetrators to trap the children as revealed in the texts. According to David Finkelhor, overcoming internal inhibitors reveals that after having control over his internal inhibition about sex with children, he is unable to stop his sexual desires. The offenders manipulate their target by reducing the rate of sensation from their minds that sexual relation is necessary, and this way help them to reduce the sense of guilt. The presence of serious mental stress and death of close one is the factors which, “erodes offenders’ ability to control deviant wishes to have sexual relationship with children” (296). In *Girls Burnt Brighter*, Poornima’s father, after the death of his wife, and due to continuous stress abused the innocent girl.

The selected novels are related to child abuse and how power dynamics is the chosen texts discuss child abuse and the use of power dynamics in child abuse. Most powerful characters in the novels, especially those who are religious, like Guruji in *Sleeping on Jupiter* and another Guru in *Girls Burn Brighter*, have been demonstrated to seduce and trap young readers. In addition to Badal, Poornim’s father and other offenders, they abuse the victim children by taking advantage of their presence and isolation. The external barriers that these offenders avoid, and bypass include fear of caregivers, the law, and social norms. When an abuser is motivated to overcome external inhibition, it is necessary for him to have certain conditions in place. Once he does, he can easily trap the youngster for abusive purposes. According to Finkelhor, if the victim children are not receiving the appropriate care and supervision, or if the mother or carer is not in close contact to them, it gives perpetrators and victims a chance to interact, and as a result, they sexually molested these alone children (297). Although mothers play a crucial part in the welfare of their kid’s protection and security, certain youngsters stated in both texts lack carers or their mothers are too weak to provide adequate social support. If we read the text more carefully, we can see that mothers are only given small, supporting roles in both fictions. The scenario in

question in which the perpetrators mistreat the victim children can be clearly identified in both publications.

The last precondition, factors predisposing to overcoming child's resistance, is about the offenders as they use different methodologies to control the children: through gifts, frightening, using threats and physical violation against them. Another point that contributes child sexual abuse is the blind relationship of trust between offenders and abused as presented in the texts. This whole scenario is called "disinhibition" as per the expertise of Finkelhor (297). He further says that "The unavailability of sex education for children and the social powerlessness of children are socio-cultural factors that contribute to sexual abuse" (297). All these conditions exist in both the texts and going to be analysed through textual analyses. Furthermore, the given instances mentioned in the texts and theoretical components are aligned to each other that it administered the thesis statement of existing research.

### **3.3 Child Abuse as an International Issue**

The relevant theoretical components of this work are being applied on the selected literature. These texts are about the sufferings of children as they face mental and physical damages because of child abuse. Child Abuse as an International Issue, is an important article and jointly ventured by David Finkelhor and Jill Korbin published in 1988. This article categorises five different types of child abuse: child sexual abuse, child physical abuse, child emotional abuse, child prostitution abuse and neglect. Moreover, above the mentioned types are being applied on the selected text in the context of child abuse as mentioned in the research questions and research objectives. The five types of child abuse present a theoretical framework to understand the different avenues, where one can become familiar with the maltreatment and victimization of children. This classification of child abuse is a foundation stone for understanding the types of abuse suffered by the children in the text of Anuradha Roy and Shobha Rao.

Child sexual abuse is defined as, "any sexual contact between an adult and a sexually immature child for the purposes of adult's sexual gratification or any sexual contact to a child by the use of force, threat, or deceit to secure the child's participation..." (Finkelhor and Korbin 6). Children are raped and sexually abused by the offenders. Their private parts are touched, kissed and harassed by applying different



methods. Sexual abuse has been explored in both the novels as Nomi, Raghu, Poornima and Savitha, all these children suffer the sexual abuse.

The children mentioned in both the novels, face the maltreatment in form of Physical abuse at different occasions. The physical abuse is an intentional act that is very fatal and life threatening committed by the perpetrator against the children. It damages the physical parts of victim. This kind of physically torture administers an act of aggressive behaviour, violent approach or corporal punishment that is very harmful for the child. Even sometimes an acid is also thrown away on the faces of children as depicted in the *Girls Burn Brighter*. Physical abuse is defined as, “violence and other non-accidental, proscribed human actions that inflict pain on a child and are capable of causing injury or permanent impairment to development or functioning” (6). The perpetrators mentioned in both texts, committed inhuman behaviour against the children. Poornima’s face is burnt, Savitha is made handicapped, and Nomi, Piku and Raghu are inflicted targets of torture. Because sexual and physical abuse, children suffer from emotional or psychological abuse and it is linked to state of mind of abused children, it put very negative impact on the personality of the victim children. It undermines the psychological development and self-esteem of the children. It is defined as, “the wilful destruction or significant impairment of a child’s competence through such acts as the punishment of attachment behaviour, punishment of self-esteem, and punishment of behaviours needed for normal social interaction” (6). This is most dangerous for the worth and well-being of the children. Nomi is the most affected child of this abuse as it haunts her memory throughout the journey of her life, childhood to youth.

Another relevant type of child abuse is child prostitution in which children are forced to adopt the prostitution profession for economic gains as defined, “children who have run away from home are lured or forced into prostitution by economic exigency” (9). Children are betrayed, forced or motivated into prostitution through cunning schemes by the administration of the brothel complexes. This type of abuse comes in a specific category as per the international perspective of economic gains. This scenario is depicted in the text, *Girls Burn Brighter* where both the girls, run away from their homes and are trapped for prostitution purposes.

Neglect is also considered a form of abuse; it occurs when parents or caregivers fail to fulfil the responsibilities of their children. They fail to provide them shelter,

protection, food, money, security and necessities of life. Children are neglected and ignored; therefore, it is defined, “the deprivation of access to social contact and resources necessary for normal development as a member of one’s culture” (7). Children face adverse circumstances because neglect by their parents and caregivers. The detailed description of the abused children depicts the sufferings of children and the neglectful attitude by the parents highlighted in the texts.

### 3.4 Cathy Caruth Theory of Trauma

Trauma is a rapid reaction to the level of severity and type of the perpetrators’ assault, and its effects go beyond bodily disruption to have a profoundly detrimental influence on the victim’s psyche. It grows and thrives within the brain, continuing to develop like to a wound. Trauma, as defined by Atkinson and Richardson:

Trauma is inescapable. Inevitable. It is not rare, but common. The word “trauma” comes with innumerable connotations: hysteria, suffering, damage, and catastrophe, to name a few. What is catastrophic or exceptional for some—rape, war, torture, sexual harassment—might constitute the everyday for others (Atkinson and Richardson 2).

An unpleasant event might be unsettling, but long-term emotional suffering and distressing recollections make traumatic flashbacks and memories more deadly. Nearly every significant kid described in both texts experiences this mental trauma in the form of flashbacks. Sigmund Freud’s early research also supports the idea that trauma grows and intensifies as a reaction to past, suppressed instances of sexual abuse and harassment. The initial experience was not as painful as its recall, according to Freud and Breuer’s book in *Studies in Hysteria* (1895). The well-known book, *Trauma: Exploration in Memory* by Cathy Caruth (1995) has been used as a source of supporting material. This piece discusses how trauma is closely linked to memory and thought processes. The focus of this research, as seen through the lens of textual analysis as presented in South Asian texts, is the effects of trauma and how individuals’ psyches are altered. Trauma is the process through which victims of trauma remember and recall events from the past or present as flashbacks. This process causes abnormalities and disruptions in the lives of persons who have experienced trauma.

The 1990s saw the development of trauma studies, which were based on Freudian theories of trauma (Balaev 360/1/12). Trauma is a person's reaction to an overpowering, repressing incident or series of unfavourable occurrences. According to this definition, trauma is an unconscious occurrence that splits the ego or creates dissociation and is associated with the memory process (360/2/12). A series of painful experiences, including bullying, child abuse, sexual assault, emotional abuse, and caretaker neglect, are also contributing factors to trauma. Trauma resulting from abuse, accident, or conflict is associated with both individual and collective memory. The victims' personalities are impacted by trauma that lives in their brains, as Nomi, Svitha, Poornima, and other characters in both works illustrate by their differing responses. Both trauma and memory are intricately linked and related phenomena.

According to Caruth (2005), trauma is perceived as an occurrence that impairs the victims' perceptual and cognitive abilities. According to this idea, Nomi attacks Suraj, her assistance, since trauma is so serious and destroys the mentality. Children who have experienced sexual trauma suffer from memory flashbacks because trauma is a profoundly ingrained condition that is anchored in both history and memory. Even though a traumatic experience or event may not be remembered or identified precisely, it nonetheless affects the victim's personality and psyche (363/4/12). She asserts that the recollection of a traumatic event—rather than the event itself—causes trauma (Jooste 22/140). In addition, Caruth's (1996:7) concept of traumatic memories, aspects of trauma, the unconscious, and how a traumatized person endures psychological pain is cited.

### **3.5 Summing Up**

The methodology of this study, which explores various aspects of child abuse and its effects, well matches the research problem. This study, which has its roots in qualitative research, aims to comprehend human experiences, especially as they relate to trauma and abuse. By closely examining the literary works of Roy and Rao, it explores into the experiences of abused children and illuminates the socio-cultural elements that contribute to their agony.

The textual analysis of Catherine Belsey is a crucial tool for revealing hidden meanings and themes in the chosen texts. It provides understanding of the mechanics of child abuse. The combined analysis of psychological theory and literature, with

contributions from Cathy Caruth, David Finkelhor and Jill Korbin, offers an in-depth examination of the socio-cultural foundations of abuse.

This study is made richer by the inclusion of South Asian literary works, which offer moving accounts of child abuse and its effects. Readers are forced to face the realities of abuse and its effects on young lives through the deft storytelling of Roy and the evocative prose of Rao. These stories combine themes of trauma and child abuse, providing priceless insights into the lives of affected children and advancing our awareness of the complexity of abuse.

Because this, theorists and literary works have been carefully selected, with consideration given to their applicability to the study objectives and their capacity to provide theoretical frameworks that consider the intricacies of child abuse. Through the alignment of texts with the chosen technique, this study sheds light on the research problem from different perspectives, enhancing our comprehension of the effects of abuse on children's lives.

## CHAPTER 4

### A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF *SLEEPING ON JUPITER*

Anuradha Roy, a prominent Indian novelist, has crafted a compelling body of work spanning five novels. With a keen focus on social issues, her writing delves into the complexities of women's struggles, child labour, and mistreatment of children. Among her notable works are *An Atlas of Impossible Longing* (2008), *The Folded Earth* (2011), *Sleeping on Jupiter* (2015), *All the Lives We Never Lived* (2018), and her latest publication, *The Earthspinner*, released in 2021. For the purposes of this study, *sleeping on Jupiter* has been chosen as it addresses the theme of child abuse. Through a method of textual analysis, this magnum opus novel has been thoroughly examined. The selected text is scrutinized in alignment with the research problem, questions, and objectives of the investigation. As an exploratory endeavour, this research aims to delve into the portrayal of child abuse, socio-cultural factors contributing to it, and the psychological profiles of offenders as depicted within the novel's narrative.

This study delves into the devastating impact of child sexual abuse, with a particular focus on the novel *Sleeping on Jupiter*. This narrative, rooted in children's fiction, follows the poignant journey of Nomi, a young girl whose innocence is shattered when her parents are brutally murdered at the age of seven. Subsequently abducted, she finds herself ensnared in the confines of a religious sanctuary in Indian city Jermuli, where she endures unspeakable horrors, subjected to sexual, physical, and emotional abuse alongside other vulnerable girls. Later, she escaped and adopted by a Norwegian family. At the age of 25, being associated with production house, she goes back to same town and makes a documentary. The selected novel has multiple themes; however, the researcher selected the theme of child abuse as a research problem.

The precondition framework serves as the foundation for addressing the initial research problem, encompassing various facets of abusers' motivations to engage children in sexual relationships. This analysis delves into the psychological underpinnings and strategies employed by perpetrators, drawing from both the chosen literature and theoretical perspectives. Notably, David Finkelhor's theoretical constructs resonate with the psychological profiles of offenders delineated within the narrative.

Both David Finkelhor and Anuradha Roy highlight striking similarities in their portrayal of methods used to ensnare children, paralleling the tactics employed by offenders such as Guruji, Badal, and monks. This study canters on addressing the researcher's initial inquiry: how perpetrators manipulate children into sexual abuse. Thus, the discussion delves into the contributing factors of child abuse, examining them through the lens of Roy's selected text for greater insight and context.

#### **4.1 Child Abuse Contributing Factors: Emotional Congruence**

Offenders like Guruji and Badal perpetrate emotional congruence, exploiting and mistreating children, as outlined in Finkelhor's Precondition Model of Child Sexual Abuse (1984). This concept, derived from Finkelhor's work, explains how offenders' emotional needs align with the vulnerabilities of children, driving them towards sexual relationships. From a socio-cultural standpoint, offenders seek dominance and power over younger, smaller, or weaker children to fulfil their emotional satisfaction. As Finkelhor articulates, "emotional congruence involves a fit between an adult's emotional needs and the characteristics of a child" (295). This factor is prevalent among abusers, including those depicted in the text, such as Guruji, Badal, and certain monks who engage in sexual relationships with teenagers like Raghu and attempt to exploit Nomita.

First, an effort is going to be carried out to establish an alignment between the emotional congruence and offenders as mentioned in the text. The victim children are less age, easy to be trapped, smaller and weaker as compared to an offender. The opening lines of text reveal that the protagonist is also six or seven years old at the time of sexual victimisation, "The year the war came closer I was six or seven" (Roy 9). Nomi was not the only girl who was abducted for sexual abuse, even there were other girls "...some smaller than me, some bigger" (11).

As mentioned above, a perpetrator considers him as superior, dominant and powerful from the socio-cultural perspective, in sexual relationships with young children or those who are weaker and smaller than him (Finkelhor 295). During her journey towards the temple town, a perpetrator tried to sexually harass her by touching her body "... he brushed an arm against her breasts" (Roy 24). The tale of sufferings and sexual abuse is further, going to be explored as per the perspectives of David Finkelhor.

## 4.2 Factors Predisposing to Overcoming External Inhibitors

The factors predisposing to overcoming external inhibitors and overcoming child resistance, both prove very devastating for the wellbeing of children as presented in the texts. In this regard, a perpetrator takes advantage of the isolation of a family whose child is alone and without a caregiver (296). If a child is not supervised and given proper care and security by the parents, becomes easy prey to abusers. In some cases, a mother is absent, or she is no more, an isolated child is unable to protect him or her from the clutches of abusers. “Your mother and your father and your brother have become stars, a woman had said once ... look up at the sky and there they are” (185). This quotation reveals the isolation of Nomi. In some other cases, there is an opportunity for perpetrators to be together with the abused child, and this company provides a golden chance for the offender to mistreat the child either using force, torture or by providing gifts as depicted in fourth factor (297). As far as the fourth precondition, children’s resistance is concerned; it explains how children are motivated to sexual abuse. Moreover, children’s resistance to sexual abuse is controlled and overcome by providing different gifts and vice versa, sometimes using threats and violence. However, the most important point is that when a particular child is unaware of sex education, perpetrators motivate the children for sexual abuse. In this regard, an amalgamation of both the factors, third and fourth, is applicable and most relevant to the chosen text. Nomi, along with minor female characters, are sexually abused because they had no caregivers; they were living in the company of abusers like Guruji. That’s why teenage immature children were tempted through gifts and threatening as depicted in the selected novel.

At the age of six or seven, Nomita Frederiksen’s parents were killed in her childhood as revealed in the third theoretical component of Finkelhor: absence of caregivers or parents<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, she was abducted and taken to the temple of Guruji and poisoned for a long time. There, she suffers trials and tribulations of sexual and mental suffering along with other teenage girls. Being an orphan and single in the world, without proper care and caregivers, in the company of offenders like Guruji, she was

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<sup>1</sup>David Finkelhor, in his third precondition, says (296) that when caregivers or parents are missing, child abuse can happen. Perpetrators exploit the isolation of children, leading to sexual abuse, as shown in the novel.

abused time and again. Guruji, a religious figure, employed psychological schemes to instigate her emotions for sexual relationship. He offers her gifts in the form of pomegranate and on other occasions; he uses third-degree and physical violence against her. The novel is based on the memories of childhood being abducted and raped by a religious personality as she often feels in her dream that: “There is a dream ... I am a baby in it ... he is holding me high above him ... his hands are under my arms, and he is rocking on his back until ... I want to beg him to stop, but my voice has died ... I wake up soaked in sweat” (Roy 26).

This passage shows the helplessness and miserable condition of Nomi, that how she was tortured and abused by a father-like figure in a religious sanctuary. At the age of 25<sup>th</sup>, she is back to the place where she was abused in her childhood. At an early age, she was kidnapped: “My first milk tooth fell out ... were twelve” girls. She said, “girls in their underclothes ... the twelve of us were shown into a cottage” (26). Being a teenage of seven years, she was overwhelmed and hypnotized by the influential personality of Guruji as depicted, “I thought he could see into me, through the tunic and my skin and bones, right inside” (27).

Guruji wins her trust by exploiting her emotions and by creating an atmosphere of emotional dependence that he is the sole well-wisher of her in the entire world (Finkelhor 297). He assures her being caretaker, caregiver and trustworthy supervisor and most importantly, if illustrated in Finkelhor’s words, an “opportunity for abuser and child to be together” (297). That’s how she was in the access of Guruji: an abuser and abused. He motivates her to sit in his lap and she could feel his chest “was warm and bare ... and heartbeat”. He wins her trust and emotions through magical words that she is not alone in the world “You think you have nobody” and then hugs her so tightly that she could feel the sound “vibration” that entered in her body. He, moreover, assures her that: I am your father ... mother ... country ... teacher ... God (28).

He also uses smile policy although he was a dry in temperament, “His smile was kind” and then he put “finger into my mouth”. He observed the gap inside the mouth and asked: “When did that fall out?” He mesmerised the girl by murmuring an incantation, and said, in case she is “frightened, think of my face. I will keep you safe. You have come to my ashram now. This is your refuge. Nobody will harm you. There is food ... clothes and you have friends to play with and you will go to school” (28).



The gesture of offering a laddu as a gift serves as a prime example of Guruji's manipulative tactics, exploiting children's innocent fondness for sweets to establish a sense of superiority and exclusivity. By inserting the laddu into her mouth and instructing not to share with others, Guruji subtly initiates her into a dynamic where she feels special while also being subjected to strict boundaries and implicit threats. His words, "This is your initiation. You are born again," (28) further reinforce this manipulation by imbuing her with a false sense of privilege. Similarly, the incident involving the stolen pomegranate highlights Guruji's control tactics as he assumes a paternalistic role in addressing her minor injury instead of meting out punishment. This blurring of boundaries between caregiver and perpetrator is exemplified when instead of punishment; Guruji takes her to his cottage and comforts her, causing her body to tremble with fear. Through calculated actions, Guruji not only cultivates trust but also instils a belief in his divine authority, solidifying his hold over her psyche. The moment when she perceives him as God, "...he was God" (61), after witnessing him produce a pomegranate further underscores the depth of his manipulation and her vulnerability to his influence.

During the entire course of prison years, Nomi had gone under the spell of Guruji and was ready to accept his instructions. One day he called her inside the room and passed an order to sit in his lap "where he had first seated me on his lap all those years ago" (68). He had won her trust very cunningly and trapped her for sexual abuse, by showing sympathy and realizing that he was her father. She "climbed on to his lap" as had done this act "before and he settled me there" and once again warned her not to try to escape otherwise she would be "taken away and locked" and follow his rules otherwise "God will be angry, and you'll get into trouble" (68). Guruji, then "pressed me back against his chest" and realises that he saved her life and provided her shelter, food and parents "starving on the streets without your parents?" (69). He, then, started his obnoxious plan to sexually abuse Nomi as she was psychologically pressed by him that was not an ordinary girl, among all the girls. It was a very tricky game between the abuser and the abused and of course, he was the winner of the play. She was motivated for sexual relationship with the sense that was alone, orphan, socially powerless, devoid of a caregiver and unaware of sex education as outlined by Finkelhor. She was now an easy prey in the hands of cunning perpetrator Guruji. His hands forwarded:

... under the skirt of my tunic and began to stroke the part between my legs. His hand went up my thighs and down...slipped down my knickers and put his hand right between my legs. He lifted his own robes, and he pulled my hand towards himself and said, "Hold this, it is magic." It stuck out from between his legs like a stump (69). Then he said, "Your hand is much too small, hold it with both." Suddenly, he said, "Enough." My hands had become wet and slimy... He picked me off his lap and told me to wipe my hands on a towel..." (70).

From the first day of her abduction till the time of the abuse, she narrates minute details of her sufferings along with other teen-age girls. She expressed a chain of events and sufferings that she was trained, both mentally and physically, for practical sexual abuse since the time of her abduction. However, she was forced to keep a sexual relationship through motivation, temptations, threats and gifts. At the time of need, she was frightened by inflicting torture and physical abuse upon the other girls. She remembered the time "Guruj locked the door" and "stroked my legs" and told her that "I was nun in the service of God" and "chosen one" (129). He was doing an oral sex with her because he knew that "...I was seventeen; he had been training me for this day". He reassured her that "... he was God on earth" and through sexual ties "she would be purified..." (129). Guruji, then, preceded next process of sexual abuse ... his greasy lips on my lips, pushed his tongue in. It felt like a wet snake "... then his hands went under them ... My body felt as if it would tear into two when he forced my legs apart, then wider apart ... blood... between my legs" (129). That's how, Nomita was kidnapped and abused by a cruel priest who portrayed him father like figure.

### **4.3 Factors Predisposing to Overcoming Child's Resistance**

David Finkelhor discusses the multifaceted factors contributing to the overcoming of a child's resistance to sexual abuse, emphasizing both theoretical and practical dimensions. Offenders employ a range of manipulative tactics, including bribery with money or gifts, intimidation through threats, and enticing with temptations, to subdue a child's potential resistance and coerce them into compliance (297). By exploiting the vulnerability of children and subjecting them to threats and torture, perpetrators effectively undermine their ability to resist, thus achieving their sinister objectives. Furthermore, Finkelhor highlights the significant role of social powerlessness in facilitating child abuse. Children who come from disadvantaged

backgrounds, such as those who are impoverished, orphaned, or homeless, are particularly vulnerable targets for exploitation due to their marginalized status in society (19). These socio-cultural dynamics, elucidated by Finkelhor, are prominently evident in the selected texts, illustrating the pervasive nature of child abuse across diverse societal contexts.

Badal, a temple guide and involved in the malpractice of child abuse as depicted in the text, *Sleeping on Jupiter*. Unlike to previously mentioned abusers, he is interested in boys. He has no interest in girls despite the fact his business commitments with female characters have been discussed in the novel. Therefore, his intense feelings of infatuation and passionate love for a teenage boy, Raghu have been shown thorough the novel. He uses different tactics to seduce the boy, who is homeless, socially powerless and unaware of sex education. He works at the tea-stall of Jhony Toppo at seashore. He offers him money and mobile phone to get his attention as other monks in the town are also interested in that teenage boy. Early in the morning, before going to work, he wanted to see the face of Raghu, “he would turn the corner, he would see Raghu ...” (Roy 37). At last, he traced the boy in morning exercise, and “had taken off his T-shirt for the morning’s exercises” and he observed that “the boy had no hair on his body” (38). After feeling the sensational charm and face of Raghu, he goes to workplace. The glimpse of his beloved Raghu, early in the morning, had made his day romantic and good omen for business. Badal, was a temple guide to Vishnu temple and waiting for clients. He gets an opportunity of work when his colleague says, “Bhai, Badal. I need to leave –something urgent – and I’ve two people waiting for me. You take them to the temple, give them a quick round” (39). Badal gives credit and associates this opportunity as a sign of good omen due to first “glimpse of shirtless Raghu, he was certain” (39).

At work, Badal’s decision to purchase a gift for Raghu reveals his predatory intent and manipulative tactics in grooming the boy for exploitation. Initially contemplating various gift options, “... shirt, maybe a watch” (47). Badal’s choice of a mobile phone signifies a calculated move to exert influence and maintain control over Raghu, highlighting his opportunistic nature. His prolonged indecision during the selection process underscores the calculated nature of his actions and his internal conflict, ultimately settling on the mobile phone as a tool to impress and manipulate Raghu. Furthermore, Badal’s observation of Raghu’s chapped lips serves as a

disturbing reminder of the physical toll of their relationship, hinting at the violent and predatory dynamics at play (47). Overall, this passage illuminates the insidious nature of Badal's behaviour and his calculated efforts to groom and exploit Raghu for his own gratification, perpetuating a cycle of abuse and manipulation. "He saw that the boy had gnawed at the skin on his chapping lips until the lower one – the fuller, fleshier, darker one..." Badal remembered from somewhere: your lips, bitten when kissed, burst open like a ripe fig (47).

Badal's upbringing, fraught with parental loss and relentless abuse from his uncle, resonates with Finkelhor's theory on the relationship between traumatic life events and sexual gratification<sup>2</sup> seeking. The pattern of abuse he endured after his father's death exemplifies how individuals may turn to exploitation as a coping mechanism in times of extreme stress or loss. Badal's fixation on Raghu as an escape from his troubled past underscores the complex interplay between personal trauma and psychological vulnerability. Despite initially seeking solace, Badal's inability to control his intense emotions and burgeoning lust ultimately leads him down a path of exploitation. His story highlights the urgent need for comprehensive support systems and interventions to address the underlying causes of such behaviour and prevent further harm to vulnerable individuals like Raghu.

Badal found his lips on Raghu's, his hand roaming his smooth bare chest, following the line of the fine hair down into his shorts ... sucked the grainy tobacco off Raghu's tongue and felt it going straight to his head, making him dizzy, sending his hand deeper down (49).

In his relentless pursuit of Raghu, Badal strategically employs gifts as tools of temptation, recognizing their potential to exert influence and manipulate. His curiosity about Raghu's past and family background underscores his intent to exploit the boy's vulnerabilities for his own gain. Anticipating their next encounter, Badal eagerly plans to exchange a bottle of cola for Raghu's secrets, demonstrating his calculated approach to grooming the boy. Even in Raghu's absence, Badal's obsession persists, as he imagines experiencing the boy's touch and scent, indicative of his deep-seated infatuation. Eventually, his obsession leads him to get a cell phone, which he believes

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<sup>2</sup>Badal's orphaned childhood, harsh poverty, and abusive uncle made his life unbearable. David Finkelhor also notes in "Precondition: 2 (296)" that perpetrators constantly seek children for sexual exploitation.

will further solidify his control over Raghu and facilitate his own sexual gratification. However, his hopes are shattered when he discovers Raghu in the company of few temple monks. They were enjoying the company of an attractive boy and were touching the private parts of his body. Raghu was begging for a few sips of beer. It revealed that he was unaware of the harms of beer and negative consequences. “Coming closer, he saw that one of the men had dark, curly hair. The second man ... and held a cigarette in one hand while his other hand kneaded a boy’s buttocks” (77). This scene made him sad as he was overwhelmed by the feeling of obsessions that Raghu was his own property, and no one could share him. “The boy was Raghu ... was begging for a swig of beer ... Go on, just a few sips” (77). By seeing the faces of monks, his heart broken, and he cried a lot. He was getting crazy by seeing the Raghu in the company of those lusty monks. It was a fire of jealousy in his heart that he felt “The Ocean was inside him”, and “...It had frozen solid, it had exploded into a thousand icy pieces and each individual shard pierced him, made him cry out aloud” (77).

Badal’s profound infatuation with Raghu is glaringly evident in his profound disorientation when Raghu disappears momentarily from the tea-stall. He adamantly pledges unwavering allegiance to Raghu, vowing never to abandon him regardless of circumstances “never abandon Raghu, whatever happened” (113). Despite encountering puzzling scenes, including the presence of a monk and a beer bottle, “the monk, the beer bottle, and the tight black jeans”. Then he decided to compromise what he had seen and forget that Badal consciously disregards these anomalies in his pursuit of Raghu. When Raghu goes missing, Badal’s desperation to reconnect with him escalates, leading him to employ a manipulative tactic of presenting a cell phone as a token of affection “he would not ask any questions”. All he needed was to hold Raghu so close that he would not be able to tell their heartbeats apart (113). He strategically leverages the device’s potential for constant communication to solidify their bond, viewing it as a solution to any uncertainties in their relationship. So, he persuaded him for cell phone, “You can see as well as I can what has happened between us. That’s why I bought you that phone” (150). Moreover, Raghu’s vulnerability and economic hardship are starkly evident, particularly in the disdainful taunts directed at him by Johnny Toppo, an authority figure “Johnny Toppo hobbled towards them. “I’ve had enough of you, you punk. I told you I was sacking you,” he said. “You begged to stay. You work ...I haven’t signed a bond to feed you for free” (150). Toppo’s derogatory

remarks highlight Raghu's marginalized status and his reliance on precarious job opportunities for survival. Badal's single-minded focus on Raghu blinds him to Raghu's agency, failing to consider his perspective regarding the cell phone gift, "He wanted to ask him, did you like the phone? Did you notice I fed my own number into it? Do you know what that means? Do you understand the full force of what that means?" (150). This dynamic reflects the manipulative tactics often employed by perpetrators of abuse, exploiting power differentials to ensnare vulnerable individuals like Raghu. Through the clear analysis of Badal's actions and Raghu's circumstances, it becomes apparent how exploitative behaviour can pretend as affection, perpetuating cycles of exploitation and victimization.

#### **4.4 Forms of Child Abuse**

The selected text has been analysed within the framework of child abuse, delineated into four distinct categories. Theoretical underpinnings have been drawn from Finkelhor and Korbin's joint work *Child Abuse as an International Issue* (1988), which extensively examines various forms of abuse, specifically child sexual abuse, child physical abuse, child emotional abuse, and neglect (Finkelhor and Korbin<sup>2</sup>). Each category is meticulously scrutinized and elucidated through pertinent examples gleaned from prescribed fictional narratives. These narratives vividly illustrate instances wherein children are subjected to sexual, physical, psychological, and neglectful maltreatment, thereby imperilling their overall well-being. Through this theoretical lens, the multifaceted nature of child abuse is comprehensively explored, shedding light on its pervasive impact on vulnerable individuals within society.

#### **4.5 Child Sexual Abuse**

Child sexual abuse is illustrated, as a sexual ties between an offender and the victim and generally, if the abused is a child; he is easy to be trapped and motivated for a sexual relationship. In Finkelhor and Korbin's words, "any sexual contact between an adult and a sexually immature child for the purposes of adult's sexual gratification or any sexual contact to a child by the use of force, threat, or deceit to secure the child's participation..." (6). Furthermore, the application of chosen novel about child sexual abuse (CSA), has been explored as mentioned below.

Several children are made victims of sexual abuse in the selected text, *Sleeping on Jupiter*. Most importantly, the children, such as Nomi and Raghu, are highlighted. These children suffer sexual abuse, and this is going to be analysed in the following lines. Guruji, a father-like figure, made a cunning scheme to desecrate the rights of innocent girls in his possession. However, it is mentioned in the text, and how he convinced an innocent girl and sexually abused her. He tried to impress the seven years old Nomi by showing her so called miracles, when “put his hand into a steel box and brought out a laddu” and this discovery surprised her (Roy 28). Guruji touches the private parts of Nomi and his hands “went under the skirt of my tunic” and he started to touch, “part between my legs” (69). Guruji touches her, “thighs ... slipped down my knickers and put his hand right between my legs ... Hold this, it is magic” (69). Through the events of the novel, it reveals that how the innocence of a teenage girl is exploited by the offender like Guruji. Nomi was unable to understand the purpose to “sitting there holding a stump” and had no idea “why he was making me do something so stupid ... Suddenly, he groaned” and told her, “Enough”. Nomi’s hands “had become wet” She then came down from “lap and told me to wipe my hands on a towel” (70), and then she went for lunch.

On another occasion, Nomi was called by the spiritual lord of the religious sanctuary in his private room. He “stuck his greasy lips on my lips” and “pushed his tongue” inside her mouth. Her feelings were so scary that she “felt like a wet snake” in her mouth. Guruji was a powerful person who had spells bound influence over his devotees and how Nomi could dare to refuse him. Finally, Guruji started to sexually abuse her by uncovering her body from “clothes” and she tried “to run ... reaching the door” and then he pressed her “against the wall”. She felt that her body had been pierced “into two ... when he forced my legs apart, then wider apart...There was blood...between my legs...my body was being split open ... (129).

Badal himself was beaten by his cruel uncle many times during his orphan hood and childhood days. Therefore, he wanted to release his anxiety in the company of a teenage boy. That’s why he started to enjoy the company of most beautiful boy Raghu, who worked at the tea-stall of Johnny Toppo. He purchased a mobile phone for him to tighten the relationship with Raghu. Through gift policy he wanted to get the close attention and physical warmth of Raghu. He started to visit Raghu at tea- stall to eradicate his mental stress, as sight of Raghu was a source of eternal bliss for him. One

fine morning, Badal looked the “dimple in his left cheek ... annoyance had dissolved into euphoria” (48). Badal was much impressed by the drizzling and spell-bound beauty of Raghu that he often thoughts:

What beauty – how could such beauty possibly exist? Badal found his lips on Raghu’s, his hand roaming his smooth bare chest, following the line of the fine hair down into his shorts ... He sucked the grainy tobacco off Raghu’s tongue and felt ... dizzy, sending his hand deeper down ... And (49).

#### **4.6 Child Physical Abuse**

Child physical abuse refers to the use of forceful torture and corporal punishment against children, resulting in injuries to the kids caused by the perpetrators. Children who experience this kind of maltreatment have been affected in numerous ways. A child’s regular routine is negatively impacted, and the psychological well-being of the victims is severely damaged by the inhumane treatment and malpractice committed against helpless youngsters. These acts can be extremely deadly. Because of this, it can depend on the circumstances; as novel makes clear, children are tortured. Physical abuse is defined as “violence and other non-accidental, proscribed human actions that inflict pain on a child and are capable of causing injury or permanent impairment to development or functioning” (6). The mind-sets of offenders are discussed, and how they damage the physical partsthrough different methodologies is the concern of this research. Nomi, Piku and Raghu inflicted punishment and violent torture throughout the text, and this is one of the aspects of this study.

The author uses the characters of her children to illustrate a horrific story in the novel. When Nomi suddenly came to pass and popped the pomegranate to Piku, Gurujji grabbed her by the red hands. She knew “punishments at the ashram were terrible, sometimes the girls could not walk for days after a beating” (Roy 59). This quotation depicts the plight of children and physical punishments inflicted upon them by the offenders. Moreover, their teacher came in the class after few days but in abnormal condition. She was tortured and injured by the guards of Ashram as she tried to do something unpleasant. As “Didi’s eyes were wrapped in a bandage... rib boned plaits were missing... lips were like two swollen rubber chillies”. All went silent by seeing the poor physical condition of their teacher and all “hush” (31). Didi told her students that she “had sixteen stitches in my head” (32). The teacher told them that “eye had a



cut...Blood was caked over the cut". She said slowly that her "hair had to be shaved off...plaits had to be cut off" (32).

Another girl named Champa, was subjected to torture because she was unable to flee from the holy sanctuary. As Nomita was apprehended by Ashram's carer Bhola, she heard Champa's screams. Consequently, Bhola set fire to everything she owned. She heard "grunting sounds, whimpering sounds, screaming ... the sound of something banging and thumping" (65). Once, the protagonist of the text, Nomi made an escape plan along with Piku, as she tried to escape from the Ashram but in vain. She was handed over to Guruji, who threatened her "I can catch any bird I want to" and later, she was raped by him (68). Nomi remembered the time when Champa tried to "ran away the second time" and "... She was dragged in by her plaits and locked up in a cottage". She narrated the scene of brutal torture "There were banging and thumping sounds. Shouts, and then the screams for help" and when "Bhola came out of the cottage his white lungi was flecked red" (127). Moreover, through her painful memories, Nomita recalled the days of torture and violence against the children due to minor or major mistakes. Once she was "locked up ...stomach ... back ...thighs, everything hurt". In her prison cell, she felt "... smell of smoke" and "girls told me later ...Jugnu had been beaten half to death ...tied him to a tree ... kicked and punched him". Nomi narrated "I could tell that they were using rods, stones, feet, belts, and fists" (128). Then she recalled another painful memory about the Piku when she refused to visit Guruji's room:

They tied a big bag of dung to one of her ankles and she had to drag it with her wherever she went ... I was punished for trying to untie her: three days in the kennel shed no food ... The dogs growled at first ... they licked my face ... One of the dogs ...slept against me in the afternoons, his rear wedged into my stomach (130).

The only sexually and physically abused boy in the novel is Raghu, tortured by his employer Johnny. Badal went closer and observed that his body had been "gnawed at the skin" and his lower lips " ...darker one – had bled" (48). Badal wanted to ask many questions regarding physical torture and his family background, "Who had beaten him, parents ... where he had come from, where he was headed" (50). Raghu pulled up his shirt to show Badal a welt on his back, "Yesterday", and said, "nothing more" (49). Johnny Toppo blamed Raghu that he had stolen the mobile phone from his pocket of

Suraj, and started beating him, “Raghu! You little prick. Are you deaf? I swear today’s your last day...Johnny Toppo picked up his iron ladle from the pan steaming with tea”. He tortured Raghu by calling him names:

An old donkey ... lazy scum. Where did you get the money for a phone?” He slammed the ladle into the boy’s back. “Did you steal the money from me, or the phone from him?” My shop’s got no place for thieves.” The boy howled with pain...I haven’t taken it” (136).

Furthermore, it was the turn of Minoti and Champa; both the girls were given the heaviest physical torture by the Bhola, in the presence of all the girls. Bhola “smashed her head against the wall ...bled and he laughed ...He threw her down to the dining room floor, in front of all of us. He pulled her skirt up and pulled her knickers down”. Minoti “was screaming her lungs out” and after this, “he pushed a big spoon into her...” and all witnessed that “She was bleeding” (Roy 174). Above the mentioned heartrending stories have been extracted from both the selected texts in a sequence.

#### **4.7 Child Emotional Abuse**

The selected children have been given concern from the perspective of emotional abuse in the context of relevant literary work. The well-being of children is damaged by emotional pain, and their personality is deformed. The affected children outlined by David Finkelhor and Jill Korbin, are aligned with the children mentioned in the novel. Apart from sexual and physical abuse, their self-esteem and self-respect are violated. They are mistreated inhumanely, abused and rebuked with sarcastic comments, frequently. Child emotional abuse is defined as “the wilful destruction or significant impairment of a child’s competence through such acts as the punishment of attachment behaviour, punishment of self-esteem, and punishment of behaviours needed for normal social interaction” (6). Children are mistreated, and they are abused, mentally tortured and degraded both in isolation and publicly. Nomi and Raghu are the affected, who have been given psychological and mental torture throughout the thread of the chosen texts. Nomi is the prominent female character, who is inflicted worst form of emotional torture by the opponents, and it haunts her memory throughout the journey of her life, from childhood to youth. Raghu’s self-esteem and dignity was also destroyed by his employer on different occasions publicly and personally. Johnny Toppo runs a tea stall at the shore of a temple town. Raghu was a teenage and careless, who often

tries to avoid tasks, deliberately. He spent a maximum amount of time in the company of offenders like Badal and lusty monks, who revolved around him out of sexual hunger. Because sexual activities, he received money and different gifts, and all this made him lethargic in tea-stall assignments. He uses certain delaying tactics, and it was unbearable to his employer. Johnny Toppo abused him and remarked tauntingly: I've had enough of you, you punk. I told you I was sacking you ... You begged to stay. Either you work or I get someone else. I haven't signed a bond to feed you for free. (150).

Suraj, an assistant to Nomita, once visited the shore and took a cup of tea at the stall. During this, he lost his cell phone and dropped it somewhere else. Coincidentally, Badal brings a China-made mobile phone for Raghu, and he receives. Later, Johnny Toppo searched his pockets and discovered the mobile by getting that it was stolen from a customer. Out of fury and aggression, he burst upon and abused the Raghu. He said, you are "... old donkey ... you lazy scum". He asked him to be an ordinary and poor working boy, how it was possible that he could afford "... the money for a phone?" Then he started beaten and "... slammed the ladle" on the back part of the body. He further blamed him that he was a thief who had stolen "the money" or "... phone from him". Then he yelled at him "My shop's got no place for thieves" and the innocent Raghu cried with "pain" that "... I haven't taken it" (136), but he did not trust him and proved a futile act.

#### **4.8 Neglect Abuse**

Children experience deprivation and neglect across various facets of life, often due to complex socio-cultural factors. However, this study focuses explicitly on neglect and abuse as inflicted upon them. Neglect forces children into unconventional professions as they struggle to survive. Neglect abuse manifests as the failure to provide essential necessities such as food, shelter, and protection from harm. Drawing from Finkelhor and Korbin's conceptualization, neglect is defined as "the deprivation of access to social contact and resources necessary for normal development as a member of one's culture" (7). This deprivation renders children vulnerable to mistreatment by offenders who exploit their precarious situation, knowing there is no one to protect them. The analysis delves into the plight of these children, as depicted in the selected text *Sleeping on Jupiter* within a theoretical framework. Through this lens, we explore

the intricate interplay of neglect, vulnerability, and exploitation, shedding light on the pervasive impact of abuse on children's lives as depicted in the text.

The text vividly portrays children as bereft of parental figures and caregivers, thrust into a world of an adversity. Nomi, an orphan, tragically loses her parents at a tender age, left to navigate the challenges of life alone. Similarly, Raghu is depicted as powerless and homeless, lacking the support of a caregiver as he toils away at a tea stall. Piku, a companion of Nomi, along with the twelve abducted girls, are also portrayed as isolated figures, devoid of familial support or protection. Consequently, they find themselves susceptible to the horrors of child abuse. Nomi's profound sense of loneliness is underscored in the novel's opening lines, where we learn that her parents and brother were ruthlessly taken from her by unknown assailants when she was merely six or seven years old. With no parental guidance or male relatives to offer solace and protection, Nomi is left adrift in a world fraught with peril. In a poignant moment, Guruji attempts to fill the void in Nomi's life by assuming multiple roles, proclaiming himself as her father, mother, country, teacher, and even God. One day he told her "You think you have nobody ... That is not true ...I am your father...mother ...country...teacher ...God" (28). This illustrates the profound void left by the absence of nurturing figures in Nomi's life, highlighting the detrimental impact of parental and caregiver deprivation on children's well-being.

Raghu's story as a homeless boy labouring at a tea stall is a stark reflection of societal neglect and abandonment. Regularly subjected to verbal abuse from his employer, Raghu navigates a world devoid of familial support or guidance. In his profound isolation, he becomes an easy target for exploitation, preyed upon by individuals like Badal and religious figures who see him merely as a disposable object. Tempted with alcohol, gifts, and money, Raghu is coerced into acts of sexual gratification, his innocence brutally exploited for the perpetrators' pleasure. Under mentioned references regarding Raghu, that he is merely a boy, not a mature person, prove the stance of neglect both by the parents and the society. He had been sexually exploited, ignored, deprived from shelter, security, schooling and protection from child abuse. He had never been at school, unaware about the children's rights, no information about the sex education and these were the causes which contributed mental torments, sexual exploitation, besides neglect abuse.

## 4.9 Traumatic Impact

The final inquiry of this study pertains to children who endure the harrowing ordeal of parental deprivation and suffer sexual, physical, and psychological abuse, resulting in profound damage to their well-being. These experiences inflict deep seated traumatic wounds upon them, causing enduring pain and anguish. Deprived of sanctuary, they are propelled towards inhuman behaviour, exacerbating their trauma. Indeed, trauma poses a grave threat, exacting a devastating toll on both the personality and the brain. Like a dangerous poison, it insidiously infiltrates the neural pathways, corroding the very essence of one's being. Embedded within the recesses of the mind since childhood, trauma is inextricably linked to painful memories and emotional distress from bygone days. Its insidious grip renders the trauma victim vulnerable to profound suffering, especially when they are children. Early emotional injuries, as Freud and Breuer contend in *Studies in Hysteria* (1895), serve as ominous harbingers of future peril, for it is not the original incident but its haunting recollection that inflicts the greatest trauma, that the "original incident was not as traumatic rather its remembrance". Thus, trauma, entrenched within the psyche, wreaks havoc upon the victim, perpetuating a cycle of pain and abnormality that persists throughout their lifetime unless mitigated through medication or comprehensive counselling.

Hence, Cathy Caruth's important work *Trauma: Exploration in Memory* (1995) serves as a foundational framework, elucidating the intricate dynamics of trauma and its impact on the victim. While trauma can stem from various contributing factors, this study focuses specifically on child abuse, including sexual and emotional abuse, as well as child prostitution, as depicted in *Sleeping on Jupiter*. Trauma emerges a physiological reaction to the heinous acts perpetrated by abusers, inflicting profound damage upon the victim's perception and personality, irreversibly disrupting their entire life trajectory. The person who has experienced trauma struggles with hysteria and an intense urge to act out because the continual bombardment of distressing memories. Caruth says that trauma disrupts the very fabric of "cognition and perception", shattering the victim's understanding of reality (Caruth 5). Moreover, trauma is intricately intertwined with memory, as a chain of distressing events moulds the personality of the children ensnared in abuse. Through examples drawn from the experiences of abuse victims depicted in the referenced texts, the deleterious impact of trauma on the psyche and identity of children is laid bare, underscoring the urgent need

for comprehensive intervention and support mechanisms to mitigate their suffering and facilitate healing.

Moreover, trauma is a recalling activity, and it occurs because of childhood suffering, as depicted in Roy's novel and in the selected theory. In the selected text, the repetition of "I remember, I remember" is a fact that argues that trauma is a remembering process. Each paragraph is attached, with the bitter memories of childhood abuse and the trauma suffered by Nomi. On different occasions, she is sexually abused by the abuser, and her mental condition is shown, "I remember how night after night I would run to a tap and sit under it ... to wash it away: the smells, the touch, the bad taste in my mouth..." (129). It shows the traumatic wounds through painful memories and her personality and well-being destroyed.

After escaping from a religious sanctuary, Nomi was adopted by a Norwegian couple, and they often observed her in a strange meditative condition. Post-abuse impact is evident in her personality as she started to stare at things for hours and hours with vacant eyes, a sign of past painful memories. Even her school administration reported to her parents about her strange behaviour. The school administration surprisingly asked, "Doesn't she talk at home?" (Roy 33). This report depicts the plight of Nomi that even after years of tragic captivity; she still was suffering and facing the painful memories associated with Ashram and Guru. Even after school, she used to spend time in isolation and her mother asked, "How long will you stare at your cereal and keep muttering to yourself, Nomi?" She asked about the dirty condition of her room "Look what a mess you've made with all that torn up tissue." Nomi had become careless about herself and her surroundings as an impact of childhood trauma. Her foster mother was in trouble because she had perpetually been receiving news from her school that, even in her drawing notebooks, she was making unpleasant and mysterious drawings as mentioned. Her mother discovered that "I had filled drawing books with dead birds, broken weathervanes and barbed wire", and she was stunned at "why I didn't draw some happy pictures..." and natural sceneries. (33). Nomi had seen a tragic past since the age of seven, she had witnessed sexual and physical torture throughout the years, and it was not easy to forget all those sufferings.

Nomi's mental condition and phobia can be observed when she hears the "... strange sound ... a hollow, scary, groaning sound." Voice from her hotel's window, and Suraj encourages her. He told her that it was the sound of "buffalo" and somebody

“... must have left it tied there” and need not be worried (81). Her painful past disturbed her, and she had become abnormal. Her memories of childhood were so painful and haunted her brain, and she had a solution to get rid of those pains. Her mental condition was full of traumatic signs, and she wanted to kick the head of a person who damaged her innocent days, who abused her and made a hell of her life during her prison days in the Ashram. She was turning into an avenging lady, and this was her reaction to her childhood trauma. The following textual quotations argued that she was not in her senses, and she felt a hallucination that “it was raining in the room” and rain always drops in open places, and this was not water but rather “falling blood”. She felt that she was becoming “blind” and “losing... mind”. Then she adopted the childhood technique to avoid the phobia, “whenever I was afraid”, she assumed that she “was dead” and “nothing could happen to me” and “there would be no pain” and an “iron rod in my head was on fire, but that wasn’t the worst of it, the rod twisted and turned”. Through this method, she could feel the maximum amount of imaginative danger, and as a result, she got rid of her phobia. Her phobia turned into hysteria when “I scoured myself with my nails... scratched my skin”, and she doesn’t know for how long she remained in that position “cold” and could not go back into the room” (90). She thought that “Nobody would cow me down” and she was so bold and confident that “I would kick a ball hard and cry with joy”. This shows her thirst for revenge and hates for the offender who abused her, and she wanted to hit it “a man’s head... it was that man I was kicking dead” and she had “half-killed” that thing in her imaginations (91). These dangers are self-created and don’t exist in the existing scenario, as she was safe and secure at her home. A traumatic victim feels the hallucinations and unknown fears due to intense strokes of past sufferings, which haunt the victim through the flight of memories, and Cathy Caruth called it a “remembering process” (Caruth 6).

Cathy Caruth’s theoretical framework elucidates the notion that trauma becomes ingrained within the brain, haunting the memories of its victims. This concept finds resonance in the experiences of Nomi as depicted in the novel, where she grapples with emotional anguish and fear. During her visit to the temple, Nomi becomes emotionally entangled with Suraj, only to be left waiting as he abruptly departs for the hotel room. Frustrated and distressed, Nomi confronts him, questioning his sudden departure and lack of communication: “Why did you rush off... the Sun Temple... how would I come back?” Suraj’s response, citing a stolen phone as the reason for his

unavailability, fails to assuage her concerns, prompting Nomi to retort, “So why didn’t you buy some more?” Despite his apology, Nomi persists in conveying her sense of vulnerability, recounting an encounter with an albino monk whom she perceived as a threat, despite lacking any concrete evidence to support her (169). In this exchange, the underlying trauma experienced by Nomi becomes evident claim as she engaged with feelings of abandonment and insecurity. Her heightened emotional response to seemingly trivial incidents underscores the enduring impact of past trauma on her psyche. Moreover, her unfounded fear of the albino monk serves as a poignant illustration of how trauma distorts perception, perpetuating a cycle of anxiety and paranoia. Through these instances, the novel vividly portrays the insidious nature of trauma, which continues to shape Nomi’s experiences and perceptions long after the initial traumatic events have occurred.

The culmination of post-traumatic stress had taken a toll on Nomi’s mental wellbeing, exacerbated by the anxiety induced by Suraj’s actions and her hallucinations of a monk attack. Her anxiety disorder stemmed from past traumatic incidents, evident in her claim that an albino monk intended to harm her. However, her distress escalated upon discovering Suraj’s breach of trust in her absence. He had violated her privacy by accessing her laptop and reading her personal writings, including a novel based on her harrowing experiences and the abuse suffered by girls at the Ashram. Suraj’s casual dismissal of her concerns as “wild” and his subsequent revelation about her novel, “The Gooroo and his Slave Girls,” further fuelled Nomi’s fury. His intrusive questioning about Piku and the contents of her laptop only added insult to injury, leading to a heated confrontation. Suraj’s aggressive behaviour, gripping her arm and forcibly pulling her towards the door, intensified Nomi’s distress, culminating in a physical altercation.

The altercation reached a devastating climax when Nomi fell into the bathtub, resulting in a severe head injury and a profuse fountain of blood. In her hysteria, she brandished an object, her demeanour transforming from that of a typical angry individual. Suraj, realizing the gravity of the situation, found himself trapped with a perceived threat, fearing for his safety in the presence of what he described as a “psycho” (172). This harrowing incident underscores the profound impact of post-traumatic stress disorder on Nomi’s behaviour and highlights the dangerous consequences of unresolved trauma. Her desperate attempt to defend herself against perceived threats further exemplifies the debilitating effects of trauma on an



individual's psyche, serving as a reminder of the urgent need for comprehensive support and intervention for those grappling with the enduring scars of abuse.

Nomi was not sure in her senses, and her face had been distorted with anger, hatred and revenge, and it was the result of years of suffering and sexual brutalities inflicted upon her by Guru. That's why she attacked "...his eyes...a fiery pain ... and he could ... smell anti-mosquito spray", he called her "bitch...and ... could barely see anything ... felt as if it had burnt away". Nomi warned him that no one could "scare" her anymore. It seemed "that it was not her voice" and he could feel "stabbing pain in his forearm" and saw the cleaned white linen "had splashes of red" and he looked down "his arm had a gash". There was reddish "blood... all over his arm, his hand, the bed". Now he could see that she was going to attack him "again with a knife". This time, she moved forward abruptly and "lunged for his eyes" and he tried to be "ducked... knife ripped open the skin on his cheek". He felt the taste "of his own blood" and "His shirt was soaking red" and she "... threw the whetstone ...splitting the skin on his forehead". He felt down but she kept throwing all "gouges and chisels at him" continuously. Suraj received "a ...vicious kick ...doubled up with a howl as her foot slammed into his crotch" (173). This was the post-traumatic impact which turned a girl into an abnormality, a broken personality, out of senses.

Nomita's horrific childhood experiences of sexual abuse and the associated traumatic memories serve as an important reminder of the serious emotional damage that was done to her. From the brutal captivity in a religious prison cell, at the age of seven, to her eventual escape, her journey is one marked by unspeakable suffering and resilience. Through the exploration of Anuradha Roy's novel, *Sleeping on Jupiter* Nomita's story emerges as a heartrending narrative of survival and the enduring impact of trauma. The selected text vividly portrays the post-traumatic events that Nomita must endure as she grapples with the physical, emotional, and psychological scars of her trials and tribulations. Her experiences are examined through the lens of prominent scholars such as Finkelhor, Jill Korb, and Cathy Caruth, providing valuable insights into the socio-cultural factors contributing to abuse, the various forms of abuse endured by victims like Nomita, and the lasting repercussions of childhood suffering.

The study focuses on important research issues, such as the socio-cultural elements that support abuse, the many forms of abuse that victims encounter, and the lasting effects of childhood trauma on the well-being of individuals. This study aims to

expand our understanding of the complex processes of child abuse and its far-reaching implications for individuals as well as society at large by placing Nomita's experiences within the framework of Roy's narrative.

## CHAPTER 5

### A TEXTUAL STUDY OF *GIRLS BURN BRIGHTER*

The chosen literary piece aligns closely with the objectives and research questions, systematically and accordingly. The fiction writer, Shobha Rao, provides valuable insight through her work, particularly *Girls Burn Brighter* (2018) serves as a pertinent focal point for this study. Rao's background, having emigrated from India to America at an early age, informs her depiction of themes such as abuse and children's suffering. Moreover, in *Girls Burn Brighter* Rao delves into sensitive topics including women's issues, domestic violence, human trafficking, and child sexual abuse. Hence, this study is limited to child abuse only. Through her narrative, she exposes the harsh realities of a society where children are often mistreated and exploited for sexual gratification. This text serves as a rich source for exploring the psychological motivations of perpetrators, the different forms of abuse endured by children, and the lasting impact of trauma. Through textual analysis research methodology, this study aims to investigate into the dynamics highlighted in the selected text, shedding light on the psychological explorations at play, the forms of abuse, and the profound effects experienced by the victims. The present research seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the complex and multifaceted nature of child abuse for well awareness.

In this narrative, a significant focus lies on the theme of child abuse, which serves as a catalyst for the route of the protagonists, Poornima and Savitha, 16 and 17. The author paints a clear picture of the risk of young girls in societies marked by systemic injustices. Savitha's experience of abuse at the hands of her employer, Poornima's father, highlights the dominance of exploitation and the profound impact it has on the lives of innocent children. The research highlights the urgent need for greater protection of vulnerable individuals, particularly children, from such abuses of power. Through the characters' portrayal, the story serves as an urgent call to action, urging society to confront and address the pervasive issue of child abuse and to enact meaningful measures for the safeguarding of children's rights and well-being. The present study not only sheds light on the protection of child abuse but also stresses the importance of collective efforts to protect the innocence and dignity of young individuals in society.

The analysis delves deeply into the psychology and methodologies employed by perpetrators of child abuse, drawing on theoretical concepts put forth by David Finkelhor. By examining the motivations behind the actions of abusers, the study sheds light on the factors that contribute to the victimization of children. The research identifies three primary areas of inquiry. Firstly, it explores the contributing factors to child abuse from the perspective of offenders, aiming to explore the factors that facilitate abusive behaviour. Secondly, the study categorizes different forms of child abuse as depicted in the selected text, providing a comprehensive understanding of the varied manifestations of this pervasive issue. Finally, the research investigates the impact of abuse on the personalities of the children involved, examining how their experiences shape their identities. Through an in-depth analysis of Shobha Rao's South Asian Fiction *Girls Burn Brighter* the study contextualizes these research problems within the framework of literary representation, offering clear insights into the complex interplay between abusing factors, forms and trauma as depicted throughout the study.

## 5.1 Emotional Congruence

First, an effort has been made to establish a smooth alignment between the emotional congruence and the text, focusing on the dynamics of power and control inherent in cases of child abuse. Through the selected theoretical framework, perpetrators are depicted as exerting dominance over teenage victims, exploiting their perceived weakness and lack of agency. This power dynamic is underscored by the portrayal of Poornima and Savitha, both hail from poor backgrounds, highlighting the correlation between socio-economic disadvantage and danger to exploitation. The under-discussion children are teenagers as presented, "Poornima was ten years old when she stood outside her family's hut, staring at the temple" (Rao 9). Similar circumstances are shown with another girl as mentioned in the novel, "Savitha, her eldest daughter, of seventeen or so ..." (17). This approach illustrates the factors of poverty and weak family backgrounds, often becoming easy prey for the victimizers.

As Savitha and Poornima trudged back from the well, their heads weighed down by the water pots they balanced, their peaceful routine shattered when a group of men aggressively approached them. It was a scene all too familiar in the town of Indravalli, where male dominance reigned supreme. The men's leering gazes and taunting words made it clear they felt entitled to harass the girls simply because they were girls. It was

a stark reminder of the injustices woven into the fabric of their society, where women were often seen as lesser beings, and easy targets for male aggression. Savitha and Poornima, just trying to go about their day, suddenly found them feeling small and vulnerable. It was a moment that spoke volumes about the urgent need for change, for a society where everyone could feel safe and respected, regardless of gender.

“Look at those hips ... Those curves ... examples of the Indian landscape”. One perpetrator asked, “Which one do you want, boys ... the yellow or the blue?” Poornima discovered he was talking about the colour of their saris. One offender selected the “blue” colour and second “... yellow ... I want to be the clay pot”, Poornima felt a rising panic; this was a common occurrence in the village ... (23).

The malpractice of emotional congruence committed even in America, when Savitha was trying to escape from her employer, at the gas station, she was sexually and physically abused by an American gangster. She encountered by three drunken and they tried to stop her: “Hey, where you going? Don’t go” (307). She felt the smellof, “alcohol...”, “Look at her, Sal. She’s a pretty little thing ...” (307). Charlie yanked on Savitha’s arm. Savitha tried to shout: opened her mouth to shout, but... he slapped his hand over her face. He... found the money, threw the knapsack into the cab of the truck. ...and said, “Come on” (308). It was a power game between a fragile girl and strong offenders; they attacked her, threatened and snatched her earring. The offender unzipped his pant and frightened her: “By now, the baby-faced one had unzipped his pants and ... She saw the movement of his hand” (310). The quotations encapsulate the relevance of texts as highlighted in the theoretical component. Emotional congruence illustrates that children who are weaker and haven’t caregivers, often become the target of abuse. Therefore, she recalled the saying of the crow, that one day she will suffer. Being alone, weak, powerless and without a caregiver, she remembers her past and the importance of the golden days when she was in Indravalli: “... You are a girl in a clearing” (311). The helplessness of a girl is shown in these lines “... shrieked with sorrow ... Savitha realized how lost she was. How misled. How all the beacons of the world, standing all in a row, couldn’t save her?” (313).

## 5.2 Factors Predisposing to Overcoming Internal Inhibitors

The second precondition explores how personal tragedies can push individuals to disregard ethical boundaries and commit abuse. The presence of mental stress and the death of a close one is the stimulating factors which: “erodes offenders’ ability to control deviant wishes to have sexual relationship with children” (296). In the novel, Poornima’s father exemplifies this phenomenon. After his wife’s death, “Poornima, I’m too tired. I’m so tired.” (13). He becomes overwhelmed with grief and stress, struggling to cope with the responsibilities of providing for his family. Poornima’s own struggles with poverty and societal discrimination add to his burden, leaving him feeling desperate and hopeless. Unable to find a suitable match for Poornima’s marriage and grappling with financial strain, he succumbs to temptation and abuses Savitha, who is vulnerable and alone. The narrative highlights the complex interplay between personal loss, economic hardship, and societal expectations, shedding light on the factor that can lead individuals to commit acts of abuse. Through Poornima’s father’s story, the novel underscores the importance of addressing underlying issues such as poverty and mental health in preventing abuse and protecting vulnerable individuals.

The following instances from the selected text are the promoting and leading abuse factors through certain stresses for the abuser like Poornima’s father. His deteriorated state of mind is evident when compares his daughter with an ox: “... Just look at her. Strong as an ox, she is an ox”, (15). Besides this, Savitha an abused girl, out of poverty received job opportunities offered by Poornima’s father: “... they had no food for that night’s dinner” (17). And he was so miser that forbade Poornima not to provide a meal more than her share: “You eat with her...sure she doesn’t take more than her share” (22). On another occasion, Poornima’s father receives very shocking news that the farmer has refused to accept the marriage proposal of his daughter being so ugly and black. The farmer sent word to Poornima’s father that he had heard his daughter was as dark as a tamarind. Poornima’s father was crestfallen. He asked Ramayya, who’d brought the news, with question after question: “Any chance he’ll change his mind? A tamarind? Really? She’s hardly as dark as a tamarind (35). It was a matter of great concern and a stroke of stress on the mind of a poor father. Stroke after stroke changed his mental condition, and it depressed him wholeheartedly. After a few days of struggle, they searched for another match from Rapalli village, but this time demand for dowry was more than previous: “... Double ... a set of gold bangles for

their daughter, the groom's younger sister ... Gold ... her father repeated, gold, gold, gold" (43).

The frustration and anxiety of the father were increasing after every moment. More especially, when they demanded to sing a song and Poornima could not sing, it was a matter of great embarrassment for Poornima's father. His frustration and anxiety can be observed through inhuman torture: "... Poornima's father slapped her hard. "... grabbed her by the hair", "... You see what you've done?" His grip on her hair tightened and he said, "The next time somebody asks you to sing, what're you going to do?" (47). Poornima's father's mental sufferings were increasing by leaps and bounds as no one was ready to accept his daughter as a bridal. During this time, Savitha began working late hours at night at looms. Poornima's father stared sexually assaulted the lonely girl with eyes gestures, and it was noted even by his daughter: "Sometimes, Savitha caught him eyeing her greedily" (52). The burden of work at the spinning wheel increased a lot, so Savitha asked Poornima for night stay at her home. "Do you mind if I spend the night sometimes? (57). Poornima asked from her father, and he permitted her: "Fine, fine". "And Savitha began spending nights" (57). It was a golden opportunity for perpetrator like Poornima's father that a young girl of seventeen was spending nights at his home.

The following textual lines show the climax of his frustration and eagerness for the company of Savitha, as he heard the news that Savitha had gone home even for a few hours. Poornima watched her father restlessness, "mood darkened" (60). She thought that it was due to the memory of her mother's death, or the dowry demands: "Doesn't she know we have worked to do?" (60). He told his daughter that he will pay her, "extra for staying longer ..." (60). A week before the departure of Poornima, he received unexpected news of dowry demand from his daughter's in-laws which shocked Poornima's father, "They want twenty thousand more" (69). This news disturbed and made him lunatic. Therefore, he started to put bad eyes on Savitha as she had started to spend nights at his home. After the death of his wife and, the cancellation of his daughter's marriage, all these circumstances made him a lunatic and he felt relieved by staring at the teen-age Savitha. However, he convinced her cunningly to stay nights at his home. One day Savitha told Poornima that her father wants her to stay longer and longer at her home to finish the burden of saris: "That sari isn't going to make itself. Besides, your father said I could make extra if I finished six by your wedding" (66).

Savitha was weaving a wedding sari for Poornima, late at night. Before going to sleep, she recalled the days of childhood with heavy eyes. Suddenly, Poornima's father, a frustrated perpetrator, enters the darkness of her room: "darkness fell over the lantern light" (72). His wife's death, failure to find a match for his daughter, and financial issues had disturbed him mentally and he wanted to find peace by having sex with a weak and poor girl. He was a monster of darkness and abused Savitha during the hot night of June. Savitha turned and recognized Poornima's father. That night he gave a mysterious smile though, "he's never smiled" (73), and then he said, "Come with me" (73). His sufferings and overwhelming anxiety of dowry demand made him a perpetrator who abused an innocent girl. Poornima was sleeping when she heard a loud shriek from nearby. She thought the cry: "might be an animal, a stray dog or a pig". Poornima heard it again and suddenly she got it: "Savitha?" she whispered. At the start, it was, "only silence" and, then "a low moan" (73). She saw: "...the bundle—she could see now that it was weeping, this bundle, sobbing so quietly, so achingly, that Poornima wondered if it was human" (74). Poornima touched her naked skin with her hands: "Hot, heat like sunburned earth...Like desert sand". It was then that she saw Savitha's "clothes, ripped...Some on, some off...around her like torn sails". "Savitha. What is it? What's happened?" (74). Poornima saw: "Her braid undone, her long hair in disarray...", "Waters pulsing through a mountain pass (75). Savitha was weeping bitterly because she had lost her virginity; she had been abused by an offender, who was the father of her best friend.

News of Savitha's abuse reached her home and as a result, her mother came like a storm and charged Poornima responsible for her daughter's rape. She lamented that her daughter, "would've never stayed here" because it was a house, "... of demons ... In this house ... You're a demon. Your house is demonic..." (79). Savitha's mother was sobbing and bitterly weeping with a list of charges. She blamed, "That sari ... That she was making for you...would've never happened otherwise" (74). She repeated: "My child. My child, you understand? No. No, you don't. You couldn't, you demon" (79).

As Finkelhor defined an offender motivated towards sexual abuse with children, because of alcohol: "may all erode the man's ability control his deviant desire to have sex with a child" (296). Besides, alcohol deprives a perpetrator of the senses and loses consciousness. It kills the thinking process and ceases man's ability to control his



internal dynamics of ethics and moral values. This scenario of offence is evident, when Suresh enters the room and abuses Savitha, unnaturally. She could feel the smell of beer from his mouth: “The smell of stale beer” (202). Furthermore, Suresh passed her command “to get on the bed” and she lay down backwards, he said, “No, you’ll do the other thing” (202). Savitha was surprised and followed his instruction in a state of bewilderment, “confused” and looked at him, and then he cleared her:

He had a bottle of something clear that he smeared over her stub ... told her to go in and out, and when she did, he said, Oh, yeah, like that, like that. A pain hit somewhere behind her eyes, and she turned away. But the pain was thunder, it broke, and it broke ... And she began to cry, willing it to end ... But he said, Keep going. And so, she did, and so it broke (203).

On another occasion, Suresh abused Savitha, as she was weak, and the offender was powerful. As a result, alcohol added fuel to the fire and overcame his sense of ethics and internal inhibitors. When both entered the room: “he kissed her roughly and then handed her the bottle of liquid. She rubbed it over her stub, and then she closed her eyes” (229). Throughout the narration of the text, Savitha is abused on different occasions; on the other hand, Poornima also faces the same types of abuse and domestic violence, additionally.

### **5.3 Forms of Child Abuse**

The selected text has been studied and explored in the context of child abuse along with various types. Theoretical components have been derived from the well-known article, *Child Abuse as an International Issue* (1988), jointly ventured by David Finkelhor and Jill Korbin. This article illustrates the different forms of abuse, but this study is limited to child sexual abuse, child physical abuse, child emotional abuse, child prostitution abuse and neglect abuse (Finkelhor and Korbin 2). Furthermore, each category has been discussed and explored through relevant instances employed in prescribed literature.

### **5.4 Child Sexual Abuse**

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is explained, as a sexual relationship between an abuser and the abused and generally, if the victim is a child, they are immature and easily to be trapped and motivated for sexual ties. In Finkelhor and Korbin words, “any

sexual contact between an adult and a sexually immature child for the purposes of adult's sexual gratification or any sexual contact to a child by the use of force, threat, or deceit to secure the child's participation..." (6). Moreover, the application of selected text against child sexual abuse (CSA), has been explored as under.

The children have been sexually abused in the selected text. Most importantly, the teenage girls such as Savitha and Poornima have been discussed. First, sexual abuse instances have been explored in the novel, where a teenage girl, Savitha has been shown. Savitha was associated with the business of weaving at Poornima's home. During her stay at Poornima's home, she starts to observe that Poornima's father has evil eyes on her and some different occasions, "Savitha caught him eyeing her greedily" (52). Then it is shown in the novel that one night, it was darkness in the room, and he comes inside the room where she was sleeping, and by taking advantage of her loneliness, raped her. Shobha Rao, although, has not written the details of sexual abuse throughout the novel as Anuradha Roy has given the panoramic detail of abuse each time. She has painted merely a cursory sketch of the maltreatment suffered by both the girls. Poornima was sleeping sound when, "A sound reached her" and "Cut through her dreams" (Rao 74). At the beginning she took the "sound might be an animal, a stray dog or a pig" because it was full of pain, and she received it, "again" a terrible, "...cries" (74). As stated earlier, Shobha Rao gives a piece of vague and incomplete information about the abuse. Therefore, there is no explicit detail about the mistreatment, but it is revealed through the discourse between Savitha and Poornima, that she was raped by her father.

Savitha was made the victim of child prostitution, the second time in the prostitution; therefore, it has been discussed separately.<sup>3</sup> In the novel, Savitha faces sexual abuse third time, and this time abused by the owner of the brothel, Guru. During her stay in the brothel, she suffers the molestation when Guru, "roses slowly and came around the desk". He reached near to her and said, "Let's start here" and then "led her to a cot in the corner of the room" and she "lay down on her back, but returned her over and took her that way" and said, "I don't like faces" (165). This reveals his state of

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<sup>3</sup>Though safe at home, self-made hazards still exist. Trauma sets victims up for hallucinations and phobias based on their past experience, which Cathy Caruth called the "remembering process" (Caruth 6).

mind that he did not like the faces, particularly those black faces. Guru has been painted as an abuser and associated with the human trafficking business, besides child prostitution.

The sufferings of mistreatment and child sexual abuse are a chain of events throughout the novel. Savitha has been shown, as a prime character who suffers maltreatment more than her friend, Poornima. As described earlier Guru was involved in human trafficking along with prostitution through the children. Late on, Savitha is shifted to America for financial benefits. During her stay in America, she is sexually exploited by her owner's son. Suresh, another offender in America, was a drunken and he called her in the room, where she could feel the, "... smell of stale beer" (202). Suresh passed her command, "to get on the bed" and as she, "...lay on her back", he stopped her, "No, you'll do the other thing". Therefore, Savitha followed his direction and turned her position but once again he refused, "No, no, that's not what I mean"

And she looked at him confused. At the end, finally he told her, "What to do" (202). He had wine in his bottle and, "smeared over her stub" then instructed her, "like this", "and then he got on the bed". Suresh explained to her, "to go in and out", and said, "Oh, yeah, like that, like that". Savitha suffers the heaviest amount of pain during the inhuman treatment:

A pain hit somewhere behind her eyes, and she turned away. But the pain was thunder, it broke and it broke. And he said, Yeah, oh yeah, yes, just like that. And she began to cry, willing it to end. Praying that it would. But he said, Keep going. And so she did, and so it broke (203).

## 5.5 Child Physical Abuse

Child physical abuse is a form of violent torture against the children, and they are injured. Physical abuse damages the parts of the victim. It is an inhuman process against weaker and smaller children. Moreover, sometimes, it depends upon the situation; the faces of children are burnt through acid as highlighted in the novel. Furthermore, physical abuse is "violence and other non-accidental, proscribed human actions that inflict pain on a child and are capable of causing injury or permanent impairment to development or functioning" (6). The offenders as discussed in both the selected South Asian texts executed inhuman behaviour against the children.

Poornima's face was burnt and Savitha was amputated, both were inflicted punishment and violent torture.

The text encapsulates the sufferings of children, as mentioned earlier in different chapters. The main female characters in the novel, as highlighted by the writer, face trials and tribulations, domestic violence and sexual torture throughout the text. A tale of atrocities against the victim girls is being illustrated here. Poornima, daughter of a weaver, engaged in nuptial ties with an accountant. After a few months of marriage, Kishore's behaviour started to change because Poornima's father was unable to fulfil his promise of dowry. As a result, her mother-in-law and husband both had been nourishing a secret grudge against her. They started sarcastic remarks against her that her father had not paid them the promised dowry and money. She was helpless and told her in-laws, "... I can't help it if my father doesn't have the money." On this, Kishore issued her warning that she will face consequences and "worse to come" he said, "Unless he pays up" (Rao 105). And worse started to appear when she was blamed for being barren by her mother-in-law even after the six months of her marriage. On this, she replied to her mother-in-law "How do you know your son isn't the one who's barren?" She received a "slap ... it knocked Poornima backward" and the hottest oil, which was on "the burner yet..." "A few drops flew onto Poornima's arm" and she could feel the worst kind of pain "hissing like snakes" (110). Hereafter, came the day of worse, finally, came like a burning hell when she was given the worst kind of punishment by her husband and mother-in-law. Her face was burnt with hot and boiled oil when she was working in the kitchen. Unexpectedly Kishore walked inside the kitchen because "never once, not once, had Kishore come into the kitchen" (119). In those moments of fury and revenge, both mother and son attacked her with burnt oil from the stove. All sudden "oil landed" and "it splattered across the left side of her face, down her neck, and caught her upper arm and shoulder". She "felt a fire, and then the fire..." and her sight blurred and she fell on the floor (119).

Finally, she escaped from her in-law's home with a burnt face and took shelter in a brothel complex run by Guruji. But first, he rejected her due to her ugly face but when she told him that she was an expert in accounting and could be a useful worker. She had got the clue that her best friend had been shifted to America and this was the only chance to go to America to trace her friend. So, she wanted to win the trust of Guruji by all means. As a result, she was given sexual, physical and mental torture by

the Guruji. This escape from her-in-law meant another chain of suffering was waiting for her and it had started as she took shelter in that brothel. She was sexually and later, physically tortured by the Guruji. Her goal was to find out her missing friend, Savitha, from an overpopulated country like America.

As far as an episode of suffering and physical abuse is concerned, Savitha was told, one day, by Guruji that she could go to America only if she was handicapped. Guru finally succeeded in convincing her that she could earn the largest amount of money if she was ready to give the sacrifice of her one limb. And then she would easily be given access to go to America, on a sympathy basis as physically handicapped are given preferences on human grounds. Guruji, a very cruel and barbaric offender of girls, was feeling hesitation by revealing to her that “The thing is ... hesitating” he told her that her new owner “... has interesting tastes”. She asked him “What kind of taste “He likes amputees ... Someone who’s missing a limb”. He explained, “No.” She laughed, chilled by the realization of what Guru was suggesting, “Never” (166). The operation was scheduled shortly, and she kept “cradling her left hand” and she was in a surprising agony that, “How can they take a hand?” She knew well the significance of her limbs and the beauty of perfection. She spent the whole night thinking, and her brain was working like a pendulum, whether they should be permitted to cut her limb or not. Then she thought “...warmth of bloodbeneath the skin”. Her mental pendulum reached on, “No, I won’t do this, I won’t let them” and then once again she thought about the process of “...amputee”, and then she thought about the deteriorated economic condition of her home, her poor siblings, “waiting sisters, their waiting dowries...” and she reached on a conclusion that for the sake of her family members and survival of her sisters, “She would let them buy it her hand; she had nothing left to sell” (167). Finally, her, “... left hand...clenched...drew phantom blood” (175).

Poornima’s in-laws wanted to hear a song from their expected daughter-in-law so that they would know the quality of sound and how melodious her daughter-in-law was. But she proved very shy and zero confident that couldn’t perform. After the departure of guests, Poornima’s father “slapped her...grabbed her by the hair” and said, “... You see what you’ve done?” After this, he “tightened” his grip on her hair and warns “The next time somebody asks you to sing...” (47). She felt the “pain” and “her face where he’d slapped her” and her “body swam” and she “wanted to cry” but in vain as “her body felt as dry as a coconut husk” (Rao 48).

## 5.6 Child Emotional Abuse

Children have been discussed in the category of emotional or psychological abuse in the context of selected South Asian literary pieces of work, further aligned with the theoretical concept outlined by David Finkelhor and Jill Korbin. They have defined emotional abuse as “the wilful destruction or significant impairment of a child’s competence through such acts as the punishment of attachment behaviour, punishment of self-esteem, and punishment of behaviours needed for normal social interaction” (6). Children are mistreated and they are abused, mentally tortured and degraded both in isolation and publicly. Their self-esteem is injured, and their well-being is exploited. They are insulted on different occasions by the offenders as has been highlighted in the text. Poornima and Savitha are the girls who have been given psychological and mental torture, throughout the thread of the chosen texts.

It was a drastic psychological trial for Poornima, as her best friend, Savitha, was raped by her rapist father has been mentioned in the novel. Savitha was under the stroke of trauma and tightly hugged Poornima, it seemed she wanted to get shelter in her chest. People on the spot tried to pull her away but in vain. She heard the taunting voices of people against her and Savitha. Poornima tightly “clung to her” in a state of “madness” and heard “These things always do”. Someone said it was the time of her marriage and at the time of “so close to her marriage” she had seen the rape of her friend by her father. They were blaming her, as this rape was committed according to her will. From the crowd, another spoke derogatively “A dung heap is a dung heap” (78). Savitha was shivering out of fear and insult, and someone loudly passed very derogatory remarks about her “What is there to see?” and Poornima heard “Spoiled fruit is spoiled fruit” (80). The villagers were spreading venom on the wounds of both and because disgrace, “The tears kept coming” (80).

One day, Poornima’s mother-in-law told her that her daughter is going to be married and her expected husband along with his parents is coming. She warned her strictly that she should vanish from the spot as her face was ugly and she was a sign of bad omen. Further, she cleared her, to avoid her ugly face as it could be a source of rejection for that expected match between couple. Besides, she was still barren even after the six months of marriage. Her mother-in-law insulted loudly “You’re not— well, we don’t want to bring Aruna’s status down...” Then she further went on, “six months,

seven months, and you're still not pregnant" I don't want you to rub off on my Aruna..." and she blasted that "Barren women... bad omen, and I don't want you down here" (110).

The match between the couple was cancelled, because of ostentatious and snobbish behaviour. Because that cancellation, Poornima was charged by her mother-in-law. She was given mental and physical torture time and again until her face was burnt by them. "Get out!" her mother-in-law shouted. She puts the whole burden on Poornima's head by considering her sole responsibility of that unmatched tie "Get out of this house...because of you... they cancelled the wedding". She called "a curse on this family" and Poornima asked the question, "Am I a curse?" She "wondered vaguely" and left the... the second floor" (117).

Therefore, Poornima took shelter in the brothel complex as she left the home of her husband, Kishor. After seeing the burnt face of Poornima, Guru passed very derogatory remarks against her. He penetrated his staring gaze at her face, scornfully observing her face "You know I've seen monkeys more attractive than you" (141). On another occasion, after seeing her dark and burnt face closely, Guru out of hate and contempt, spat on her face and left the room. He had lusty urge to violate her sexually and for that purpose, tries to unfold "her sari; her blouse fell away" then "traced the edge...breasts". He found himself on the brink of disappointment "Not much to them, is there" and told her by examining the lower parts of her body, looking down, and then he said peacefully, "You'll listen" and all sudden he "spit in her face" and it went "in the midst of her grogginess". She tried to avoid the phlegm but it "landed at the edge of her mouth and on her cheek". He, out of hate "rubbed it over more of her face" and without shouting at her, he left the room and went away (158). This was the height of contempt against a powerless, homeless and poor girl, who suffered and was mistreated by the inhuman role of society.

## **5.7 Child Prostitution Abuse**

Child prostitution is the next infliction, the worst kind of desolation against the well-being of these children, and it let down them badly. This kind of malpractice destroys the personalities of children and damages them inwardly. Moreover, child prostitution devastates the self-esteem, ego, pride and selfhood of these children. Therefore, child prostitution is delineated as "children who have run away from home

are lured or forced into prostitution by economic exigency” (9). Child prostitution comes in the category of a particular process as stated by Finkelhor and Jill Korbin in their article.<sup>4</sup> The specific scenario of child prostitution is illustrated in the novel *Girls Burn Brighter* by Shobha Rao, where both the girls take shelter in a brothel after escaping from their homes. Through the course of events in the novel, the chains of tragic incidents of children’s prostitution have been depicted. Poornima once counted the girls who were brought there for prostitution purpose and they “were thirteen” in number. The most important question which came in her mind was about the virginity of these girls when she thought “were they girls?” She further thought that no doubt these were “girls” because none among them was “older than sixteen”. She was thinking from another perspective that something special was “missing in them” an “essence of girlhood”. She kept observing this point “first few weeks at the brothel” and then she realised it “innocence, certainly”. It was very clear that during the prostitution process these girls “were damaged” (146).

The main source of income was not merely a brothel and prostitution, additionally, a human trafficking business as well. Poornima had the questions in her mind, which was popping into her mind. She finally asked the question to him, “You think all we have are these shitty brothels?” He informed her further “... main income is from selling girls... To rich men ... Saudi...Dubai” (148). Guru was involved in the children trafficking business, and this was the reason her friend, Savitha was sold to a man in America. His business was associated with children’s prostitution and children trafficking, and girls were supplied to rich people for economic gains. Savitha was sexually abused second time in the brothel complex run by Guru. There, she was forced to adopt prostitution as a profession. Her first customer was a middle-aged man, maybe forty or forty-five. He had “shirt... gold watch” which shows his strong economic background. He, first, demanded “...a kiss” and she asked him “I don’t know how” and then he trained her with practical “let me show you...” so this became a routine for her, “the mechanics of it all became routine: the five to six customers she had per day” (159).

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<sup>4</sup>Child Prostitution comes in the category of Specific Types of Child Abuse in International Perspective (7). According to Finkelhor and Jill Korbin, economically devastated children are taken to western countries and used in prostitution (10).



## 5.8 Neglect Abuse

Children are neglected and badly ignored by their parents, owing to poor economic factors. These parents are, both poor and unable to provide the necessities of life or they pass away. That's how neglect is considered a form of abuse, and it is associated with the failure to provide them food, shelter, and protection from harm. Children are neglected by their parents, as defined "the deprivation of access to social contact and resources necessary for normal development as a member of one's culture" (7). The children deprived of parents and ignored often face tormented situations highlighted in the novel. A detailed analysis is necessary to check the plight of deprived children.

In the selected text children are highlighted as deprived of parents and caregivers. Moreover, Savitha and Poornima belong to downtrodden families, powerless girls, whose parents are shown so poor that unable to support and provide them with proper food and shelter. As they result, they face the suffering of child abuse.

The economic condition of children, mentioned in the novel, can be observed in the following instances. The children were deprived of even the necessities of life by their parents. For example, Savitha was badly ignored by her parents even though she was fond of bananas and rice but could not afford it. One day Poornima made plans to visit Savitha's home and observed the worst condition of her home. She got the situation and devastated the economic condition of Savitha's home. She further compared the domestic condition of Savitha with her own home and found she "...couldn't even afford palm fronds for the roof of their hut; it was a discarded sheet of corrugated tin" (32). Neglect is the worst type of abuse by the parents and children often adopt the malpractice of prostitution as it is shown in the present novel. Savitha went to a brothel and was involved in prostitution. Furthermore, she was deprived of her limb amputated by Guru, and later, she moved to America.

## 5.9 Traumatic Impact

Trauma is always very dangerous and has a drastic impact on personality or brain or both, as it resides inside the brain and like slow poison damages the victim. Trauma appears in the form of flashbacks because past painful memories due to mental or physical torture or constant and frequent abuse. Major and prime trauma- causing

factors are associated with physical torture, sexual harassment, and sexual, physical, emotional and neglect abuse. It is catastrophic for the victim, especially if they are children and suffer it from the early ages of childhood. As early ages wounds are more fatal rather than adulthood. Freud and Breuer claims in *Studies in Hysteria* (1895), that the “original incident was not as traumatic rather its remembrance”. This is the grave reality that traumatic incident occurs once, generally, while associated sufferings in form of memories have a lasting impact. The traumatic victim suffers pain and disturbance throughout the entire life unless the victim is not recovered through medication or healing process.

*Trauma: Exploration in Memory* (1995) by Cathy Caruth, a well-known researcher, has been used for this study since it highlights the various facets of trauma victims and trauma-causing variables. While there are numerous elements that contribute to trauma, the scope of this study is limited to the following: child prostitution, emotional abuse, sexual assault, and mistreatment of children, as mentioned in the chosen text, *Girls Burn Brighter*. Trauma is the body’s response to an unpleasant act perpetrated by a criminal. It disrupts life as a whole and harms the victim’s viewpoint and personality. The traumatised individual has hysteria and a strong impulse to attack because continuously remembering and reliving horrific experiences. Cathy Caruth asserts that trauma is described as an event that breaks the “cognition and perception” of the victim (Caruth 5). Moreover, trauma is associated with memory and a chain of disturbing events moulded the personality of the children as examples have been employed on the abuse victim children in the mentioned texts.

The post-traumatic impact of the novel’s portrayals of Savitha and Poornima’s characters are examined in relation to the text. The next victim of abuse is Savitha, who was abused and left unconscious, almost like she was in a coma. She spent a considerable amount of time unable to move, speak, or react. Then, suddenly, she cried out. She wept hysterically, and the situation was extremely uncertain. She had been broken into pieces; she had contracted as Shobha Rao argued “... Savitha had shrunk...like wounded animal”. She had lost herself and devoid of conscious that “...her blouse fell from her shoulders” and people assembled there were staying at her (Rao 75). She is portrayed as a corpse, dead body, motionless, and speechless. “didn’t move ... didn’t even seem to be awake, though her eyes were open” (75).

Savitha remained still ... She'd simply pulled the sheet up to her neck, blinked once, and then stayed sitting, stone like, exactly as she was. Poornima ... held her fingers under her nose for a moment to make sure she was still breathing. The dewy warmth of her exhalation, its delicacy, countered all the voices, the noise, the endless people (78). Poornima tried to call her, but Savitha was motionless like a statue after that horrific incident. She called her "Savitha?" but "Nothing" once again she called her "Savitha?" but in vain. She had become a living corpse with "Not the slightest movement... Not a witch...breathe...blink". She requested he to speak even a slightest sound "Say something" but nothing happened (80).

Savitha's personality was damaged because forced abuse by the father of Poornima. She couldn't talk or walk for many days until she escaped. It was a custom in the village, as a sign of punishment; the abuser had to marry the girl with whom he had committed adultery or rape. That's how she "left" the village in the early hours of the "morning" to avoid the nuptial ties with a rapist. She was "hurt" and she had "crouched in the corner of the weaving hut for three days". The most alarming situation was this she forgot to "wept ...hadn't blinked" and she was hopeless, therefore, neither "prayed or felt pain, nor ...had a single thought ...Not one" (150).

The novel portrays the terrifying experiences of weak children in a way that is both heartbreaking and insightful, examining the post-traumatic events that these children must live with. These events include a range of forms of abuse, such as amputation, domestic violence, and sexual assault, all of which have a lasting psychological impact. By means of a critical examination guided by the theoretical frameworks of Finkelhor, Korbin, and Caruth, this study explores the intense emotional distress that these kids experience. Through investigating the root causes of child abuse, outlining the various forms of abuse that children experience, and clarifying the long-term effects, this study aims to improve our understanding of this widespread social problem.

Finkelhor, Jill Korbin, and Cathy Caruth's extensive examinations of the complex dynamics underlying child abuse and trauma support the decision to apply their theoretical frameworks. Finkelhor's research sheds light on the complex interplay between personal vulnerabilities and larger societal variables that contribute to the occurrence of child abuse, providing a comprehensive understanding of its complex nature. Korbin's research offers significant contributions to our understanding of the

various forms of child abuse, placing these experiences in social and cultural contexts to clarify their unique characteristics and intersections. Furthermore, Caruth explores the long-lasting psychological effects of abuse in his ground-breaking work on trauma, highlighting the necessity of identifying and treating the severe emotional pain that survivors experience. This research aims to enhance our understanding of the complexities involved in the occurrence of child abuse and its distressing consequences by incorporating many theoretical viewpoints. The South Asian text, *Girls Burn Brighter* offers an exploration of child abuse within a cultural and societal context. This research aims to explore the hidden factors contributing to child abuse; various categorizations of abuse endured by children and explore the profound emotional effects of trauma. Moreover, theoretical insights with a close examination of literary representations, this research seeks to shed light on this critical issue and advocate for the safety and well-being of children.

### **5.10 Findings**

This study adds to the conversation about child sexual abuse in South Asian contexts by presenting several important findings. Above all, it is a catalyst for bringing attention to and igniting conversation about the widespread problem of child sexual abuse in the area. The study attempts to break the silence and taboos that are frequently connected to these kinds of crimes by bringing attention to this delicate subject. Furthermore, it explores the nuances of child abuse within cultural and socioeconomic contexts, acknowledging the complex interactions between public views towards offenders and victims as well as cultural norms and household relationships. Furthermore, the research provides significant understanding of the psychology of perpetrators by distinguishing between different categories of maltreatment and explaining the complex effects of its traumatic effects on victims. Additionally, it delves into the complex path taken by survivors as they work through the fallout from abuse in many cultural contexts, highlighting the difficulties they encounter in pursuing justice, recovery, and social acceptance. The study advocates for a more compassionate and informed response to child sexual abuse by highlighting the urgent need for specific interventions and support systems to address the severe psychological and emotional scars caused by the abuse. This is achieved through the study's thorough analysis.

## 5.11 Implications

By examining the complex and varied treatment of child abuse in South Asian literature, especially as seen through the prism of a few chosen literatures such as *Sleeping on Jupiter* and *Girls Burn Brighter* a number of conclusions can be drawn. First, the study highlights how vital it is to educate the public on the frequency and consequences of child abuse. Reading about abuse in literature helps people understand the intricate dynamics and long-term effects of these tragic events. This increased consciousness can work as a spark for activism and civic engagement, encouraging a shared commitment to safeguarding children's rights and ensuring their safety.

Furthermore, the results show how urgently legislative changes and lobbying campaigns are needed to address the structural problems that lead to child abuse. To safeguard the rights and welfare of kids, academics, activists, and policymakers can use these insights to press for changes to laws, the distribution of resources, and reforms in institutions. As researchers include theoretical frameworks from psychology, sociology, and literary studies to create complete approaches that take into consideration the complex nature of abuse and its impacts, interdisciplinary collaboration emerges as a crucial tactic in this respect.

The study also highlights how critical it is to implement trauma-informed approaches in a variety of contexts, such as social services, healthcare, and education. Understanding the distinct requirements and experiences of those who have experienced abuse allows professionals to offer more efficient assistance and interventions that foster recovery and adaptability. Furthermore, cultural sensitivity is critical since the research emphasises how important cultural context is in influencing people's beliefs and reactions to child abuse. It emphasises the necessity of adopting culturally aware strategies that uphold a range of views, values, and customs while defending the rights and welfare of children.

### 5.11.1 Measures to Eradicate Child Abuse

In the context of South Asian literature, particularly in Pakistan, certain measures are recommended to effectively address this pervasive issue, based on a detailed examination of child abuse in South Asia. Pakistan needs to take a careful approach to reform as it faces the tragic reality of child abuse, which is reflected in the

moving stories of South Asian literature. Society must traverse the complexity of abuse; just as fictional heroes must navigate the mazes of their narrative. Communities become empowered agents capable of identifying and confronting the darkness that exists within them when information on child rights and the subtle sign of abuse is disseminated. Then, legal reforms appear as the final act, the crucial turning point where laws become more than simply words on paper and become swords of justice that pierce the barrier of impunity.

Law-making may also be reached into the core of communities, where participation turns into the spurring movement that ushers in change. In this instance, voices rise in unison, repeating the appeal for advocacy and protection amid the fabric of cultural traditions and societal standards. The joint efforts of many stakeholders, Pakistani writers should focus on this issue more in depth, for a future free from the nightmare of abuse. Children's literature becomes a vital thread in which writers and novelists spin narratives of strength and perseverance, providing young readers with windows to empathy and mirrors to their own experiences. The concept of good and bad touch is incorporated throughout the curriculum to give children the vocabulary and agency to navigate their own safety narratives. Education, too, plays out as a crucial story twist. Well-integrated sex education breaks down taboos and gives kids the confidence to set limits and ask for assistance when they need it. The media can play a constructive and vital role to eradicate the child abuse from the society. Here, social media and the mainstream emerge as potent allies that help hold offenders accountable, raise awareness, and amplify voices. By means of deliberate storytelling and lobbying, they transform cultural norms and narratives related to child safety, acting as agents of social change. Authors can craft a future where every child's tale is one of safety, dignity, and hope in this cooperative narrative of community effort.

### **5.11.2 Recommendations of the Study**

The present study summed up with recommendation for future research and literary investigation. Therefore, a serious consideration of the ongoing issue of child abuse will prove beneficial, and it will open scholastic avenues for researchers in the present literary domain of South Asian literature. This issue may be explored from diverse perspectives, and it opens multifaceted insights for further investigation. In this regard, child abuse can be examined by utilizing different psychological and

sociological theoretical lenses to have a deeper understanding of the impact and implications of child abuse. Moreover, investigation can also be conducted on the ways in which South Asian literature addresses the intersections of child abuse with various social problems, including caste, gender, class, and religion. Furthermore, pedagogical strategies and materials can be developed to incorporate South Asian literature on child abuse into educational settings, promoting empathy and awareness. Additionally, South Asian literature on child abuse can be made more accessible by translating works into multiple languages and exploring digital platforms for more discussion, promotion and awareness.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 Summing Up

The present research delineates the child abuse issues and investigates the instances of child maltreatment inflicted upon them by the offenders. This study focuses on and encapsulates certain factors that have been mentioned in the selected South Asian texts. The researcher has significant aims to explore the factors behind the mistreatment of children. For this, a recently published literary work has been considered for the present study since it is selected from South Asian literature, rather than Western fiction. Although there could be focused on other research problems, as there are plenty of them, this study has been delimited to child abuse, because it is emerging and escalating very fast, especially in the Indian sub-continent. That's why, contemporary South Asian texts, *Sleeping on Jupiter* and *Girls Burn Brighter* by Anuradha Roy and Shobha Rao, have been selected to address the aforementioned research problem. The prime objective of the under-discussion study is related to finding out the answers to three research questions: child abuse contributing factors, forms of abuse and impact of abuse on the well-being of affected children.

Exploring the psychological strategies used by those who commit sexual assault on children, the first study topic explores the socio-cultural elements that contribute to this crime. This investigation aims to comprehend the mentality underlying such abuse as well as the theoretical underpinnings of these behaviors. The actions and conduct of the offenders are examined using theoretical components derived from *Contemporary Trauma Theory*, namely the insights delineated by Jooste. Studies by David Finkelhor that are pertinent to the topic shed light on offenders' strategies and give a contextual knowledge of the chosen works. This inquiry tries to clarify the psychological representations of criminals as they are portrayed in the literature under examination, using a few chosen preconditions as a lens.

The second research question, which is based on the works of Jill Korb and David Finkelhor, is about classifying different forms of child abuse. These academics make the case for many classifications of abuse, including emotional, physical, sexual, and neglect abuse. By examining the distinctive traits and dynamics of every category,



this inquiry aims to offer a thorough grasp of the numerous forms of child abuse. Using an analysis that the classification schemes put forward by Finkelhor and Korbins, the present study seeks to elucidate the various kinds of abuse identified in the literature as well as the effects they have on affected children.

The third and ultimate study topic, which draws inspiration from Cathy Caruth's work on *Trauma: Exploration in Memory*, focuses on the devastating impacts of child abuse, particularly on the emotional well-being of damaged children. This inquiry explores the examination of the long-lasting, severe injuries inflicted on the recollections of children who have experienced abuse. It examines the ways in which emotional pain experienced as a kid might linger into adulthood and impact an individual's general and mental health. This inquiry seeks to expand knowledge of the long-term effects of childhood abuse on survivors by integrating ideas from Caruth's investigation of trauma and memory.

As interdisciplinary research, this investigation bridges the realms of literature, psychology, and socio-cultural factors to offer a holistic understanding of child abuse within South Asian contexts. By amalgamating theoretical frameworks with literary analyses, the study enriches the discourse on child protection and welfare, advocating for greater awareness and advocacy initiatives. Through its exploration of themes, characters, and narratives, this research serves as a testament to the transformative power of literature in illuminating social issues and fostering empathy and understanding.

The present investigation has undertaken qualitative research. This research rotates around the children who are sexual victims from the socio-cultural perspective. As this dissertation confuses different theoretical viewpoints and establishes a straight alignment with the literary works of two contemporary Indian female authors with the same subject matter, draws this study into the category of interdisciplinary research.

This work illuminates important results and consequences and makes a substantial contribution to the conversation around child sexual abuse in South Asian cultures. It acts as a catalyst to break the taboo and secrecy surrounding such crimes by bringing attention to the widespread problem of child sexual abuse in the area and fostering conversation about it. To clarify the complicated connections between public perceptions, cultural norms, and familial relationships, the research explores the

intricacies of child abuse within cultural and socioeconomic frameworks. It also provides insightful information about the psychology of abusers and the difficult path survivors take to deal with the fallout. To address the severe psychological and emotional effects on victims, the study emphasises the need for specific therapies and support networks. It also highlights how crucial it is to address this widespread issue through education, legislative changes, interdisciplinary cooperation, trauma-informed strategies, and cultural sensitivity.

Recommendations for future research highlight the need for continued scholarly inquiry from diverse perspectives, including psychological, sociological, and literary lenses, to deepen our understanding of the complexities and intersections of child abuse with various social issues. Furthermore, pedagogical strategies to incorporate South Asian literature on child abuse into educational settings are proposed, along with efforts to enhance accessibility through translation and digital platforms for broader discussion and awareness.

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