

**RECREATING MUSLIM IDENTITY: A STUDY
OF SELF-COMPASSION AND SELF-
REASSURANCE IN THE SELECTED MUSLIM
YOUNG ADULT FICTION**

BY

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Recreating Muslim Identity: A Study of Self-Compassion and Self-Reassurance in the Selected Muslim Young Adult Fiction

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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **Recreating Muslim Identity: A Study of Self-Compassion and Self-Reassurance in the Selected Muslim Young Adult Fiction** submitted by me in partial fulfillment 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: Recreating Muslim Identity: A Study of Self-Compassion and Self-Reassurance in the Selected Muslim Young Adult Fiction

This research aims at exploring the identity recreation of Muslim community living in the West. The study deals with self-compassion and self-reassurance as part of human personality. The study deals with two significant works of literature i-e *Hana Khan Carries On* (2021) by Uzma Jalaluddin and *An Emotion Of Great Delight* (2021) by Tahereh Mafi. This research is based on the Social Mentality Theory (2016) put forward by Nicola Hermanto and David Charles Zuroff. The research investigates how Muslim protagonists navigate sociocultural marginalization, Islamophobia, and internalized conflict while fostering psychological resilience. The findings of the study reveal that both the protagonists demonstrate the use of self-compassion to navigate grief and societal pressure. This research is also based on another theoretical perspective based on the role of religion. In order to prove religious stance, researcher has selected an article “Muslim women negotiating their identity in the era of Muslim ban” (2021). It highlights that religion plays a role as a buffer against anxiety and stress. Both the protagonists carefully negotiate their Muslim identities, showing that self-compassion and self-reassurance often involve setting boundaries while maintaining familial and cultural connections. With respect to this study, the future researchers can analyze the impact of literature on readers’ minds. Also, interviews and surveys can be conducted to analyze that how literature like these selected novels support self-compassion and identity formation.

Keywords: Self-compassion, Self-reassurance, Identity recreation, Muslim Identity, Self-empowerment.

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DEDICATION

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The introductory chapter of this thesis deals with the introduction of the selected texts as well the theoretical concepts incorporated in this research. It provides the basic idea about this research, the selected texts, authors and the theoretical stance that has been incorporated throughout the research. It also highlights the research questions so that the readers should get to know about the issues highlighted in the research.

The study proposed through this thesis focuses on the characters of the selected novels and the competence and will power of the brave and competent self of those characters that manifests courage, valor and audacity instead of losing the self-confidence. This research highlights the ways through which Muslim characters in the context of selected novels further recreate their identities while facing racist attitudes of the locals of that specific country in which they are living. This research also conveys the efforts and bravery of the characters from selected literature during tough times and demonstrates the courage and fearlessness of the people in those situations that can make them weak. This research focuses on an in-depth study of two selected Muslim young adult novels named as *An Emotion of Great Delight* (2021) by Tahereh Mafi and *Hana Khan Carries on* (2021) by Uzma Jalaluddin through the theoretical framework of Social Mentality theory of Self-compassion and Self-Reassurance as proposed by Nicola Hermanto and David Charles Zuroff.

The key terms in the title of this thesis include “self compassion”. Human life revolves around happiness and sorrows side by side. Same happens with the characters in the selected novels. These characters have to face all the tragedies in life as well as the joyous moments. In this way, life goes forward in a steady way. However, in order to live a balanced life, the characters of the novels and people in general need to stay contented, confident and satisfied with life. One has to be aware of one’s own worth, dignity and needs to acknowledge oneself for tolerating the situation during the miseries and discomforts. In order to spread awareness among the people regarding self-acknowledgment, the Social Mentality theory of self-compassion and self-reassurance

has been put forth by Nicola Hermanto and David Charles Zuroff in 2016. Primarily, the term “self-compassion” (Neff 224) was coined and introduced by an associate professor of Educational Psychology named as Kristin Neff. She is considered as a pioneer in the field of self-compassion.

In an article, “The Development and Validation of a Scale to Measure Self-Compassion” (2003), Neff defines “self-compassion” as being sympathetic, admiring and warm towards one’s own self in a troublesome situation. According to Neff, one should deal self with compassion instead of criticizing and being harsh. Furthermore, Neff has presented three elements of self-compassion, which include “self-kindness vs. self-judgment”, “common humanity vs. isolation” and “mindfulness vs. over-identification” (Neff 224-225). This shows that being sympathetic towards self is one of the major ways to live a balanced life.

An article “Self-Compassion: Theory, Method, Research, and Intervention” (2003) is written by Kristin Neff. In this article, Neff elaborates the term self-compassion by focusing on the fact that it basically refers to being concerned, encouraging and protective towards one’s own self. She describes self-compassion as being productive for a person. She explains the element of productivity by adding that suffering through the miseries can bring out the internal passion of a person to deal with the stressed thoughts and situations. Self-compassion, according to her, forces a person to relate to the inner-self to come up with solutions to all the sufferings. In addition, she describes self-compassion as the feelings that can also emerge when a person observes another person in pain which in turn generates the desire to help the person in pain. She indicates that these feelings are generated to help and assist another person instead of harming that person. By describing the three elements of self-compassion including “self-kindness vs. self-judgment”, “common humanity vs. isolation” and “mindfulness vs. over-identification”, she posits that these elements have an impact over each other and this is how, “self-compassion” becomes a potent system in which all the elements function with mutual coordination in order to relieve the sufferings (Neff 194-196). This idea of self-compassion is incorporated in this research work to dig out the potential that humans possess to fight with the struggles of life and to strengthen their self as well. This point is incorporated in this research work by portraying the characters of both the

protagonists, Hana and Shadi and their ways of tackling their internal struggles.

Another key term besides Self compassion in the title of this research is “self-reassurance”. Joana Marta-Simões, Cláudia Ferreira, Ana Laura Mendes have written an article on self re-assurance titled as, “Shame and depression: the roles of self-reassurance and social safeness” (2017). In this article, it is stated that Self-reassurance is a positive factor of personality, which is based on “social-safety”. Social safeness is basically the feeling of being safe and secure. Being safe and secure in the social atmosphere without having any fear and being accepted by others is what the writers mean by term self-reassurance. Also, self-reassurance indicates association with the efforts of engaging with the social world without having any fear of being disregarded and dishonored. It also creates empathy towards others (Simoes et al. 241). Self-reassurance basically is another way to make the characters of Hana and Shadi reassure that have some identity that should never be forgotten. Also, it brings motivation for the characters to build up their voice and to make their self a stronger one amidst the difficulties of life. This is because identity reaffirmation makes a person confident and motivated to achieve other goals in life.

As quoted by Hermanto and Zurroff (2016) in an article, “The social mentality theory of self-compassion and self-reassurance: The interactive effect of care-seeking and caregiving”, Paul Gilbert expanded upon Neff’s theoretical views on “self-compassion” and “self-reassurance”. He has presented a theory titled as Social Mentality Theory in 1989. Gilbert is of the view that the social system in which we live, all individuals relate to one another in one way or the other. During their interaction, the elements of self-compassion and self-reassurance are activated by indulging in “care-seeking” and “care-giving” behaviors (Hermnato & Zuroff 2-3). While considering the selected novels, it is observed that Hana do have contact with Aydin. Despite the fact that she does not like him in the beginning but as she needs to have collaboration during multiple happenings regarding her restaurant, she has to cater him in one way or the other. This in turn, brings out the attitude of care-seeking and care-giving. Similarly, Shadi does have interaction with Zahra because they belong to the same community and it is the need of the hour to have communication despite of the issues that they are having in between them.

After that, Gilbert introduced rather an upgraded version of this theory in an article titled as, “Focused therapies and compassionate mind training for shame and self-attacking” (2005). Gilbert presented the argument that as the mentalities of “care-seeking” and “care-giving” get activated while relating to others, they can also get activated while relating to the self. Therefore, the mentality of self-compassion and self-reassurance are considered as another way of self-to-self interaction (Gilbert 275-278). With regards to the selected novels, care-seeking and care-giving attitudes help Hana and Shadi realize that they do need to focus on the development on their own self sometimes.

The current research project employs Hermanto and Zuroff’s work where they have modified ideas presented by Kristin Neff. The modified version of Neff’s work is presented in 2016 by Hermanto and Zuroff in an article, “The social mentality theory of self-compassion and self-reassurance: The interactive effect of care-seeking and caregiving”. They have renamed this theory as *Social Mentality Theory of Self-compassion and Self-reassurance*. According to this version of theory, self-compassion and self-reassurance are the forms of intrapersonal relating and in this relating, the interpersonal mentalities of “care giving” and “care seeking” also get activated. The theoretical concepts which prove helpful in substantiating the thesis of the study are “care-seeking”, “care-giving”, “maternal support”, “receiving and giving social support”, “compassionate self-image goals” and “distress disclosure” to study the selected texts (Hermanto & Zuroff 1-11). All these factors are incorporated in this research with reference to the selected novels in order to prove researcher’s point of view.

The topic of this thesis deals with another terminology i-e Muslim identity. In order to dig out the aspects of recreation of Muslim identity with respect to the characters and scenarios of both the novels, the researcher has selected another theoretical model. Considering an article, “Muslim Women negotiating their identity in era of Muslim ban” (2023), the writers Steele, Bengali, Richardson, Disbennet and Othman discuss that identity is the representative of culture. These theorists specifically discuss about the discrimination that the female gender faces on the basis of their Muslim identity. They are of the view that by facing such racial and religious oppression, women suffer through

mental trauma. During this situation, their Muslim identity serves as a buffer in dealing with all the negativity and hate. By seeking religious and social support, they re-emerge stronger (Steele et. al 707-709). This perspective is inculcated to dig out the fact that racial prejudice and oppression do not make Muslims forget their religion. Rather, it is the religion that plays a major role in strengthening the personalities no matter what the situation becomes.

Also, there is another significant terminology related to self-compassion and self-reassurance i-e trauma. In an article, “What is trauma and dissociation?” (2005), the writers, Sar and Ozturk discuss the idea of some other theorists. Accordingly, Fischer and Riedesser (1999) have defined trauma as the experience of vital discrepancy between threatening factors in a situation and individual coping abilities. Moreover, trauma is not merely a situational phenomenon, but a longitudinal socio-psychological process which develops in time and follows a course. Fischer and Riedesser (1999) even assert that, by definition, a traumatic situation is a condition where an adequate response is not possible despite existential threat. This inherent paradox, however, drives the trauma process (Sar & Ozturk 8).

1.1 Introduction to Selected Texts

The researcher has selected two novels in order to conduct this research. The first one is *An Emotion of Great Delight* (2021) written by Tahereh Mafi and the second novel is *Hana Khan Carries On* (2021) written by Uzma Jalaluddin. The novels are categorized under the genre of young adult fiction which targets adults and adolescents. This genre is popular due to its correlation with the age and experiences of the protagonists. Another reason of the popularity of this genre is that it highlights the challenges that are faced by youth in friendships, relationships and identity.

Tahereh Mafi is basically an American author and she is famous for her writings on young adult fiction. Before writing the very first novel, she has written at least five manuscripts for the better understanding. *An Emotion of Great Delight* is among the famous novels of Tahereh Mafi. The story of the novel deals with the sufferings of the innocent lives. The story is about a protagonist named Shadi, a Muslim girl. The life story of this girl shows the impact of 9/11 in which Muslim community was abused and targeted. Shadi fights with her internal conflicts during which she also suffers from the sorrows of the death of her brother, watches her father dying and her

mother's tough life. While facing all these miseries and seeing her family collapsing in front of her, she still hopes for the best and focuses on the positive aspects. She thinks that she can manage everything systematically. She sorts out everything by her will power but she has to go through a number of hurdles in order to achieve her goal.

The second selected novel is *Hana Khan Carries on* which is written by Uzma Jalaluddin. She is a Canadian writer and a high-school teacher. This novel deals with the rivalry between two competitors running halal restaurants. Basically, this novel is about the life of a young Muslim woman, Hana who thinks that her life is very much settled and running smoothly. She is unaware of the struggles and troubles she will be facing afterwards in her life. Hana works in a radio station but still she always gets worried about her future while her mother's restaurant starts getting criticized. Also, her father meets a car accident due to which he suffers through health issues. She is the only caretaker of her family in terms of their needs and financial support. She meets an unknown person named as Stanley on her podcast and later on, she develops an association with him. She handles the situation as best as she can, but still makes a few mistakes. This also increases her experiences and guides her about the key to live a life.

By taking into account the characters of both the selected novels and by applying the selected theoretical aspects, the researcher has observed the factors that make these Muslim women stronger and make them able to fight with all the stress and sufferings bravely.

1.2 Thesis Statement

The selected young adult fiction portrays diasporic Muslim characters confronting Western cultural dominance and undergoing internal struggles in which they reimagine set religious beliefs and recreate pluralist and inclusive Muslim identities for self-empowerment through the use of self-compassion and self-reassurance.

1.3 Problem Statement

Issues of identity, faith, and sense of belonging are part of today's cultural complexities of human society and have been consequently discussed in diverse genres of literature. These issues are increasingly being addressed in the genre of young adult

fiction, and therefore, some novels of young adult fiction are selected for this study. This research investigates how some diasporic Muslim characters navigate the complexities of Western cultural dominance while grappling with internal struggles related to identity, faith, and belonging. The research further explores how these characters are often caught between external pressures of assimilation and internal negotiations of religious and cultural beliefs. While some narratives depict resistance to Western hegemony, others explore how Muslim identities are reimagined in more pluralistic and inclusive ways. However, a critical gap remains in understanding how these characters assert agency through self-compassion and self-reassurance and whether these depictions challenge or conform to dominant Western discourses on identity and empowerment. This study examines how young adult fiction represents the negotiation of Muslim identity in diasporic contexts, the extent to which these narratives provide frameworks for self-empowerment, and the implications of this exposé for broader discussions on cultural hybridity, belonging, and religious pluralism.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What kind of identity crises do characters in the selected fiction
2. undergo as members of diasporic communities?
3. How do self-compassion and self-reassurance help these characters in the selected fiction in attaining self-empowerment?
4. How does the practice of Self-compassion and Self-reassurance play part in the recreation of the pluralistic and inclusive Muslim identity in the characters of the selected novels?

1.5 Rationale/Significance of the Study

This study is significant in multiple ways. It basically throws light on the ways through which Muslim identity gets challenged and reshaped while living in a non-Muslim country. It provides the ways to the readers through which the marginalized communities voice their opinions and re-emerge themselves stronger than before. This study is significant with respect to the psychological well-being of a person as well. Through this study, the readers get to know about the influence of self-compassion and

self-reassurance on the personality development, their influence on resilience and the coping mechanism as well. It also promotes self-empowerment initially being a human and then being a Muslim as well.

1.6 Delimitation

This research is delimited to the two selected novels i-e *An Emotion of Great Delight* (2021) and *Hana Khan Carries on* (2021). Furthermore, it is delimited to the aspects and happenings that occur with the characters in the selected novels. These aspects include the attitude of care-seeking, care-giving, maternal support, receiving and giving social support, compassionate self-image goals and distress disclosure.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

As the introductory chapter deals with the basic introduction, this chapter of literature review highlights the existing research gap in the field of research through the discussion on the earlier researches and works based on the concept of self-compassion and self-reassurance. It also highlights similar themes along with the variety of theoretical analysis on the selected novels.

2.1 Discussion on Theoretical Perspectives

This section presents a discussion on the theoretical key concepts of this research project which include Self compassion, self-reassurance and the sub-elements that these theoretical terminologies hold.

2.1.1 Self-Compassion and Self-Reassurance

The researcher adds in another article which is published based on the various aspects of self-compassion, trauma and also regarding the posttraumatic stress disorder highlighted by Winders, Murphy, Looney and O'Reilly. The title of the article, "Self-Compassion, trauma, and posttraumatic stress disorder: A systematic review" published in 2020 itself is symbolizing the fact that in order to undergo the traumatic situation, self-compassion is mandatory. In order to conduct this research, the researchers gathered the data through various sources and deduce the fact that posttraumatic stress disorder i.e PTSD gets reduced when the self-compassion gets up to the mark and start playing its role. Researchers also added the fact that there exists an element of interpersonal competence which is also related to self-compassion. Interpersonal competence also plays a major role in order to generate a balanced relationship between self-compassion and PTSD. This factor encourages social support, encourages people towards motivational factors and as a result developing the care-seeking and care-giving ideologies. It decreases the factor of self-blame as well (Winders et.al 300-321). These are the facts that the researcher has highlighted in this article and by highlighting these aspects, researcher has evaluated the life stories of both the protagonists and then the ways through which these protagonists handle the traumas and the posttraumatic

stressed out situations are evaluated and highlighted.

Also, in another article, “Mindfulness, Self-Compassion, and Empathy Among Health Care Professionals: A Review of the Literature” that is written by Kelley Raab in 2014 on the fruitful impacts of self-compassion, explores the element of the involvement of self-compassion among health care professionals because they are habitual of managing stress at different times. Kelley Rabb is of the view that the elements of self-care, self-compassion and mindfulness promote the carefree attitude, non-judgmental mindset and mindful interventions towards others. This also generates the feelings of sympathy and empathy towards others (Raab 95-105). By considering the key elements from this research, the researcher has pointed out the healthy attitude of the protagonists of the novels amidst the hard times and then the researcher has found out the reasons and logics behind the approach towards life.

There is another research conducted titled as "A Review of Self-Compassion as an Active Ingredient in the Prevention and Treatment of Anxiety and Depression in Young People" (2022). This comprehensive review examines the role of self-compassion in mitigating anxiety and depression among youth aged 14–24. The study includes a systematic review of 50 studies and qualitative consultations with young individuals and self-compassion researchers. Findings indicate that higher levels of self-compassion are associated with lower symptoms of anxiety and depression. The article also discusses the importance of tailoring self-compassion interventions to address diversity and the unique needs of young people, emphasizing the reduction of self-criticism as a key mechanism for the effectiveness of these interventions. This article offers empirical evidence on the efficacy of self-compassion as a therapeutic tool for young individuals facing psychological challenges. It provides valuable insights into how self-compassion can be fostered among youth, which can inform your analysis of young adult fiction characters dealing with identity-related struggles (Lawrence et. al 385-403).

There is another article “Beliefs About Self-Compassion: Implications for Coping and Self-Improvement” (2021) written on the specified topic. This study investigates how individuals' beliefs about self-compassion influence their coping

strategies and intentions for self-improvement. The researchers found that negative beliefs about self-compassion such as viewing it as a form of weakness or self-indulgence are associated with lower levels of self-compassionate behavior. Conversely, educating individuals about the benefits of self-compassion can enhance their willingness to engage in self-compassionate practices, leading to better coping mechanisms and increased motivation for self-improvement. This article provides empirical evidence on the psychological barriers to practicing self-compassion and highlights the importance of addressing misconceptions. Understanding these dynamics can inform your analysis of characters in young adult fiction who struggle with self-acceptance and identity formation (Chwyl et. al 721-725).

While conducting this research, the researcher has used the Social Mentality Theory of Self-compassion and Self-reassurance put forward by Hermanto and Zuroff in 2016. By analyzing theory deeply, it becomes evident that Self-compassion and self-reassurance are the key concepts of this research work. The term self-compassion is introduced and coined initially by an associate professor of Educational Psychology named as Kristin Neff some years ago. She is considered as a pioneer in the field of self-compassion. Neff, in an article written in 2003, “The Development and Validation of a Scale to Measure Self-Compassion” defines self-compassion as being sympathetic, admiring and warm towards one’s own self when suffers through any kind of mistreatment, failure or having a bad time. According to Neff, one should deal oneself softly with compassion instead of being criticizing and harsh. Furthermore, Neff has presented three elements of self-compassion that include self-kindness vs. self-judgment, common humanity vs. isolation and mindfulness vs. over-identification (Neff 224- 225). This idea of self-treatment further provokes self-empowerment and this realization brings ease in the lives of people.

After Neff’s introduction of this term, Gilbert has presented a theory titled as “Social Mentality Theory” in 1989. Gilbert is of the view that in the social system in which we live, all individuals do relate with one another in one way or the other. During their interaction, the elements of self-compassion and self-reassurance are activated by indulging in care-seeking and care-giving behaviors (Hermanto & Zuroff 2-3). Also, care-seeking and care-giving behaviors are the factors that can make a person spend his

life positively.

After that, a modern version of this theory has been introduced in 2005 by Gilbert. He has presented the argument that as the mentalities of care-seeking and care-giving get activated while relating to others, they can also get activated while relating to the self (Gilbert 275-278). In this way, it is concluded that the mentality of self-compassion and self-reassurance are considered as another way of self-to-self interaction.

While discussing the theoretical perspectives, it is observed that the presence of self-compassion and self-reassurance in the personality of human make him stronger. Also, self-compassion and self-reassurance make a person able to go through all the challenges, fight for self and then come back stronger.

2.2 Discussion on Selected Texts

An article *Books 13-16 | Fiction and Poetry* (2021) written by Angela Dyson states that various point of views of different researchers are indicated regarding different novels including *An Emotion of Great Delight* written by Tahereh Mafi in 2021. Angela Dyson shares that the background of this novel is based on the aftereffects of 9/11. 9/11 is considered as one of the most crucial happenings of history. The writer is of the view that Mafi has set this novel in the post 9/11 era and discusses the plight of Muslim community living there at that time. Through this novel, it is revealed that the community of Muslims is being judged even when Muslims follow their own Islamic culture and tradition. Those women who dress up according to Islamic culture and tradition are targeted specially and killed brutally. The writer exemplifies the character of Shadi from the novel as the victim of racism and suffering as a whole. The novel explores the familial and social tensions of Shadi's life. By portraying the life struggles of the protagonist Shadi, the novel clearly portrays the picture of the inhuman behavior that Muslims have to face after the incident of 9/11. The novel displays a clear picture of the Muslims as a victimized minority under the biased dominance of Americans (Dyson 62). This research highlights the plight and sufferings that Muslims being in minority have to face. In comparison to this, the researcher in this thesis intends to bring the solution to sort out these issues so that no community faces discrimination on the

basis of their identity as well as no one gets attacked on the basis of belief.

As Angela Dyson talks about the Islamic stereotypes that have been built up by the colonizers and the brutality that Muslims as a community have to face, Elizabeth Bush reviews the novel *An Emotion of Great Delight* in 2021 as expression of capitalistic dominance over a minority nation. In the review, she talks about the sufferings that Shadi, the protagonist of the novel goes through in her life. In the initial section of the review, she discusses all the issues that Shadi faces one by one. The time period in which Shadi is living is of 2003. The writer links the situation with the racist attitude of capitalist society and its people with the minority groups living in the capitalist society. Basically, the capitalists are so brutal and they commit all inhumane acts to enforce their power over the weaker community. Shadi hides her feelings from Ali because she believes no Muslim girl is allowed to do so especially the one who has to retain peace within her family. The writer also points out some incidents of domestic chaos and portrays Ali as one of the heroes of the novels. The writer is of the view that Shadi believes that if the strategy that is to be followed by the community is good and peaceful and everyone acts upon it then there is no danger of anti-Muslim aggression. The major point that is highlighted in the novel, as per Bush's review, is the racist attitude, the discrimination that Muslims have to face on the basis of their religion and the chaos that is prevailed ultimately in the society due to all these issues. In the novel, there is also a focus on peace that if the society is indulged in all these issues then it becomes very much difficult to prevail a peaceful environment (Bush 430-431). So, in order to create a peaceful environment in the society, this element of discrimination has to be demolished.

While mentioning the hidden aspects of the novel, the researcher specifies the settings of the novel and links the internal conflicts with the settings of the novel. Basically, the researcher highlights the connection of setting of the novel with the internal conflicts between the characters and the society. In doing so, the researcher overviews a book review on social media that is presented by Ambika in 2023 on the blog *Ambi_Reads* on Instagram. In that blog, she talks about the novel *An Emotion of Great Delight* in detail. Just like Elizabeth Bush, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, Ambika introduces the setting of the novel in 2003 in USA and the

protagonist of the novel as a Muslim girl. Ambika talks about the hardships that Shadi faces during her life. By identifying all these aspect, Ambika renames this novel as *An Emotion of anything but a great delight*. She highlights the universality of the victimization of the Muslim community irrespective of their connection to whichever country. Furthermore, she highlights various themes that include fake friendship vs real friendship, the relationships of imperfect families, sense of pride in religion, Islamophobia, grief of loved ones and many more. Shadi with her determination, remains strong and faces every situation bravely and thus makes the readers fall in love with her character (Ambika). This shows that the element of strength present in her personality makes her readers fall in love with her.

While discussing the aspects of one of the selected novels i-e *An Emotion Of Great Delight*, researcher turns the point of discussion towards another selected novel i-e *Hana Khan Carries On*. On this novel, a book review is written by a blogger Fatima Y Ali bhai on her blog Tima_Reads in 2021 on Instagram. She considers this novel by Uzma Jalaluddin as a surprise for the audience. She describes Hana's dream of working in a radio station through which she shares her real life stories with the whole world. She discusses about Hana's passion for journalism and the circumstances she faces being a journalist whereas side by side she also deals with her mother's stumbling restaurant. She is of the view that the writer builds a very strong character of Hana by portraying her daring nature. She explains that ending of the novel is not a surprise for the readers but the way the characters of Hana and mother are built is remarkable (Alibhai). This is how the character building is appreciated because this character building further motivates the readers to cope up with the complexities of life.

By analyzing the characters of Hana and her mother, the researcher indulges into another book review that is written on the same novel *Hana Khan Carries on* by Sophia Rose on her blog Caffeinated Reviewer in 2021. In this review, she discusses deeply about the prominent as well as the hidden realities of the life of the protagonist of the novel. By considering this novel as a part of women fiction as well as a RomCom, she tries to dig in the ultimate cruelties life has thrown Hana in but side by side, she tries to figure the ways Hana adopts in order to get herself out of all the scenarios. Sophia is of the view that this novels consists of multi layers and each of the layers gives readers a

different views when it comes to the perception. This quality actually makes this novel unique from the other pieces of literature. Sophia considers that the life of Hana goes in different direction at the same time but she thinks that she has good grasp over it. This makes the character of Hana a very confident and a motivated character that can inspire the readers. As the readers follow up, they observe that there is a lot going on in the life of Hana. She handles her mother's business, takes care of her father, does her job and while doing that, she suffers through identity crisis as well. That phase can be considered as a dark phase of the life of Hana. While struggling, she makes few mistakes, falls down but still carries it all so well. Another point that Sophia brings in by thorough reading of the novel is that Hana belongs to the family of immigrants and her experiences are tragic yet dreadful. This makes the readers believe that the idea of immigration is a difficult one as well as deadly and one has to stay strong if one wants to survive during the tough scenarios of immigration. This is because people have to face diverse communities when they migrate from one place to another and in this way, they have to settle themselves down sometimes by agreeing on their terms and conditions and sometimes on making them agree on their own terms and conditions. Moreover, tackling this whole scenario needs a strong determination and a thorough understanding of the process (Rose). This is how it becomes prominent that strong determination is the key point of survival in an entirely new country because if a person loses determination and starts having self-doubts then the survival becomes difficult in these rough and tough situations.

By mentioning the strengths of the character of Hana, the researcher mentions another blogger Bindra who reviews this novel *Hana Khan Carries on* on her blog bohemian.bibliophile in 2021 by comparing it with Uzma Jalaluddin's other novels. She points out her struggles in order to get her viewpoints and her voice recognized at her workplace. She compares the protagonist Hana with another main character of the novel whose name is Aydin. While Hana struggles to build up her personality as well as to make her perspectives prominent in front of the whole world, Aydin struggles to become someone in the eyes of his father. By portraying this fact, Bindra suggests that none of the lead roles is perfect either. Both of them have their own insecurities and both of them struggle in their lives in one way or the other. Moreover, Bindra is of the view that most of the characters in South Asian novel have the rebelling aspects in their personalities but

here in this novel, Hana is not one of them. She doesn't have the rebelling characteristics in her personality. Other than that, her parents are super supportive in every way possible. As the story proceeds, they support her in all the decisions she makes in her life. There isn't any restriction put forwards by Hana's parents. This is also the opposite of what the other South Asian writers portray in their works. Other than these aspects, Bindra highlights that the novel deals with the issues of Islamophobia, racial discrimination as well as Xenophobia. She criticizes the fact that people do have a stereotypical thinking regarding the immigrants and these stereotypes in turn indulge people in Islamophobic hate and racial discrimination. All these facts make the lives of immigrants much more difficult. One of the main reasons of this cause is that these immigrants belong to the marginalized community and this marginalization play an important role in degrading their personalities. After that, she brings in the role of social media in the marginalization of a community. Bindra tries to clarify the misconception people have regarding social media. She states that social media does not always promote positivity; instead, social media propagates and spreads negativity and hate everywhere. This becomes one of reasons of the difficulties the marginalized community usually face in one way or the other. Bindra criticizes social media that it should become a cause for the better lifestyle of people (Bindra). Basically, the focus is to strengthen positivity instead of negativity and hatred which become the cause of a stressful life.

As social media plays a major role in the character development of Hana because she relies heavily on her anonymous friend she met online, researcher brings out another aspect of romance in the novel by mentioning another review about the novel *Hana Khan Carries On* and the review is written by another blogger Sheila on the website Top 10 Romance Books in 2023. Sheila focuses on the fact that Hana actually carries herself with her integrity along with all the aspects of her life. Basically, Sheila talks about the abrupt romance hidden in the novel. She declares that the romantic elements are created in a way that they are not enough when it comes to the happenings and romance in between Hana and Aydin, the two leading characters of the novel. Sheila is of the view that the writer should have added some more instances in the novel that deal with the romance in between the two characters. In this way, Sheila is somehow not impressed by this masterpiece. Other than that, she explains that she actually enjoys the kind of

relationship that Hana and Aydin share with each other despite the circumstances they face. Despite the fact that they do have some reservations when it comes to their businesses, their personal life, their thorough interactions, the chaos and drama they suffer through and their unmatched circumstances, they do respect each other. The level of respect and humbleness they have for each other never gets decreased no matter what scenarios they go through. This level of respect becomes one of the factors due to which things start getting easier between them and they start understanding each other. After that, this understanding pushes them to resolve all the conflicts they have with each other. Aydin always listens to Hana's arguments, her issues and her concerns and always try to calm her down. This becomes another reason in resolving all the conflicts between them. By highlighting all the issues, Sheila further explains that this novel and the storyline basically have multiple elements hidden inside. At one point, it deals with racism, discrimination and the issues of the marginalized community. Following up, it deals with religion at another point. The novel connects all these issues by indulging in the fact that the marginalized communities do face the issues regarding their religious beliefs and religious rituals. This is because they belong to the marginalized community and the dominant group does not allow them to live their life freely according to their own will. Furthermore, Sheila highlights gender discrimination in the novel because Hana, her sister and her mother do face number of hurdles just because they are females and the restaurant that opens up by their side actually run by the rich males of the society. This brings in the point of discrimination between the elite class and the poor class of the society which in turn molds the novel towards the aspect of class division. Also, Sheila highlights the strong character of Hana as she fights with everything all alone with bravery and without losing hope (Sheila). In this way, it becomes prominent that the character of Hana is a motivational character for all the members of the marginalized communities as well as for all the women who go through the same issues in their lives.

As Sheila talks about the hidden romance of the novel, Teresa brings in some more viewpoints regarding the romance and loyalty between the two major characters of the novel. While she opens up about the novel *Hana Khan Carries On* on her blog *About Romance Readers* in 2021, she considers this masterpiece as a treat to read as it gives immense pleasure and delight for the readers. This is the point where here viewpoints are

exactly opposite to the viewpoints of the previously discussed blogger Sheila who finds out that these romantic elements are not enough for the readers. Regardless of the fact, Teresa finds out the aspect of loyalty hidden in the novel. She finds out Hana as an epitome of love and loyalty but the hurdles she faces in her life dominate the soft hearted and loyal nature of Hana. By deeply analyzing the character traits of the personality of protagonist Hana, Teresa manages to find out these hidden aspects in Hana's personality and considers Hana as a loyal daughter, sister as well as a loyal friend who thinks about the well-being of everyone around her. She considers that these factors do play a major role in maintaining a strong character of Hana amidst the cruel and harsh circumstances. Moreover, Teresa praises Uzma Jalaluddin's art of writing and developing a character into her writings in a very unique way. She exclaims that Jalaluddin's way of writing invites the reader to live in the world of Hana and readers start considering them to be a part of novel when they read it (Teresa). Basically the above discussion shows that this novel invites readers to associate themselves with Hana's little world.

While dealing with multiple societies, genders and ethnicities, researcher inserts another review posted by Eshaan Mani on the website PBS Newshour Classroom in 2022 regarding the critical analysis of another novel, "An Emotion of Great Delight" by Tahereh Mafi. Mani starts his discussion by contemplating the fact that spending a life in between multiple cultures can never be easy. He says that this idea seems fascinating to many people because people think when they live with the people belonging to multiple ethnicities; they get a greater chance to interact with them. Then when they interact, they can have multiple dimensions regarding various perspectives and they can analyze different cultures as well. But this fascination is actually very time limited. This is because coping up with one's internal struggles and dealing with multiple ethnicities is a huge task both physically and emotionally. Mani analyzes the character of Shadi, the protagonist of the novel by explaining the struggles she faces in her life. There is already a lot going on in Shadi's personal life and then havoc happens over there. People of all the other communities start blaming Muslims for the terrorism, violence and barbarism spreading in the country. All these happenings make Shadi a skeptic girl who starts questioning the value of her cultures and traditions with which she grew up. This habit of hers leads to certain contradictions. Also, Mani depicts that the name "Shadi" is itself

ironic in a way that Shadi means joy and on a serious note, there is no joy in Shadi's life. In this age, she suffers through mental health issues, observing her father's accident, her brother's death and the attitude of her friend "Zahra". Moreover, Mani is of the view that this story can be written in the present era as well. He says that the events that happened with Shadi at the time of 9/11 are happening with other girls of the society even now. They also face criticism on the belief, have to go through the racist attitude of the society, suffer through identity crisis and all these struggles affect their personality development. Nothing has been changed in these past years and this is a point to ponder. We as humans are standing at the same place where we were a decade or two decades ago (Mani). This is how the reality is depicted in a very profound way that ultimately forces the readers to feel grief and sorrow for Shadi and may be then there comes a chance to change the mindset of today's generation.

By considering the previously discussed elements, the researcher digs in another review posted by Mimi Koehler on the blog "NerdDaily" regarding the novel, "An Emotion of Great Delight" in 2021 in which initially she discusses the miseries Shadi has to face in her life. Koehler expresses her mixed emotions while reading this novel. At some points, she gets amazed while some parts of the novel make her frustrated. The plot of this novel deals with certain misconceptions either in between Ali and Shadi or in between Shadi and Zahra. Basically Koehler is of the view that Shadi hides the truth not only from herself but from the readers as well. According to Koehler, this novel does not have a proper ending. It relies upon the readers and their perceptions that to which angle they want to turn the story out. This also brings a different element in this novel. Koehler believes that there should be introduced some healthy family relationships, the relationship of Shadi with her brother and everyone's relationship with their father. There should be more family scenes depicted in the novel before everything falls apart. In this way, readers could've sense more grief and sorrow for the character of Shadi and could've understood the real situation Shadi goes through. She says that only the plot related to romance is sorted out. Whereas, all the other issues are left behind and left open for the interpretation by the readers. This makes the novel looks like a sequel. Other than that, Koehler praises Mafi by saying that her writing is basically a lyrical writing and that this element makes her writings more beautiful, unique and provides pleasure to the

readers. These lyrics always draw the attention of the readers back to the story. This point adds balance in the reviews (Koehler). This shows that no matter how hard the life of Shadi gets and how much hurdles she gets to face in life, there is always a ray of hope in her life and this makes this writing more authentic that at least at the end, she must have been rewarded with something but then again there comes a point that this is an open ended novel.

By observing all the discussion with respect to the articles discussed above, the researcher finds a gap that the individual problems are highlighted but the solutions are not yet found out. The factors that play their role in making a person strong are not yet discussed by any of the researchers. So, this research is significant in a way that it does not only highlight the issues but also dig out the factors that play their role in motivating a person to come back to life amidst all the problems of life. The researcher portrays that self-compassion and self-reassurance play their role as the control factors in human life. Also, the researcher has found out that the intergenerational trauma is one of the major factors that shape the identity formation. Other than that, resistance is another major element that helps Muslim women to resist the negative stereotypes regarding their religion. This is the gap that the researcher has highlighted as well the contribution that researcher has made in this study. Also, this research is not only beneficial on academic level, but it also provides a thorough understanding of tackling the issues of self and others to the general readers. In this way, this research is beneficial for all types of readers.

All these previous researches have explained multifaceted dimensions to the literary texts but the specific angle that the researcher has dug out is still unexplored. This study adds a new interpretation with respect to the selected genre of literature. Highlighting the issues and miseries faced by the fictional characters in a literary writings is not what is required of the researchers, rather, the researchers should make an effort to find a solution to problems that they are highlighting, thus leaving their readers with food for thought. This is what this study intends to do by bringing out the positive approach of not just surviving with the help of self-compassion and self-reassurance but recreating one's identity as a new in the midst of troubling times.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter deals with the researches conducted on the selected works of literature. Out of those researches, the researcher found out some gap. In order to fill the gap, the researcher has selected a theoretical framework in order to make her stance powerful. This part of the research thesis deals with the methods and the theory incorporated in this research so that a pathway can be made clear for the readers. The selected research methodologies include the close reading put forward by Snow and Connor (2016) as well as the concept of bildungsroman put forward by Wilhelm Dilthey (2006). By using these methods and the theoretical framework, the researcher analyzes in the next chapter the selected text thoroughly by considering the growth that the characters of the novels have gone through.

3.1 Close Reading

This research is qualitative in nature which shows that qualitative method has used in order to analyze the selected texts. The primary method for analysis is the close reading of both of the selected novels. Close reading is a method of the literary analysis of a text in order to extract the deeper meanings of a text. The meanings that are derived through the close reading are basically the interpretation of the selected text made by the readers. The technique of close reading is presented by I.A Richards (2013) but the updated version of this technique is presented by Catherine Snow and Catherine O' Connor in 2016 in an article "Close Reading and Far-Reaching Classroom Discussion: Fostering a Vital Connection". Snow and Connor suggest that the model of close reading tries to engage and captivate the readers who are able to dig out, evaluate and comprehend the complexity hidden inside the texts in the most thoughtful and critical way. They suggest that the idea of close reading needs to be embedded within the extraordinary motivational context of the deeper clarification and understanding of the text. According to Snow and Connor, close reading is basically a thorough examination and explanation of a selected text and it also involves the analysis of multiple other factors such as the hidden themes, use of language, style of text, structure and the content

as well as they have mentioned, “Close reading is an excellent technique for probing sentence structure, nuances of word meaning, subtleties of text organization and the structure of textual arguments” (Snow & Connor 3). Snow and Connor are of the views that by adopting the strategy of close reading, readers actually engage themselves in in-depth reading by analyzing the hidden structures and elements of text and in this way, they interpret the text in multiple ways. Moreover, the interpretations that readers make also depend upon the past experiences they went through once in their lives. While discussing the advantages of close reading, Snow and Connor suggest that this method is one of the ways through which the skills of critical thinking are introduced and promoted as well. They are of the view that “Close reading will be deployed as a tool in achieving purposes other than simply learning to do close reading. The purpose of instruction is to build knowledge and critical thinking skills, specific literacy skills such as close reading is a crucial tool in achieving the larger purpose” (Snow & Connor 6). They explain that by adopting the method close reading, readers evaluate and dig out the evidence of the particular aspect they are searching for. Also, close reading makes the readers able to relate the experiences of their real life with the material that they are reading. In this way, they are more likely to remember the comparison and that will be fruitful for their real life experiences as well. They state that close reading provides the opportunity of multiple readings to the readers as well as the opportunity to discuss and dig out multiple meanings out of a single text (Snow & Connor 1-7). Moreover, it is shown that close reading does not only provide a detailed analysis of the contents of the text but it also provides an insight to the process the writer has adopted in order to construct that text.

3.2 Bildungsroman

Moreover, the researcher has conducted the analysis by keeping in mind the idea of bildungsroman novel. An article “Modernist Studies and the Bildungsroman: A Historical Survey of Critical Trends” (2006) is written by Tobias Boes regarding the concept of Bildungsroman novels. In this article, Boes refers to a theorist Wilhelm Dilthey. According to Dilthey, bildungsroman novels are characterized by a plot that follows the protagonist's journey from youth to adulthood, in which they encounter various challenges and obstacles that shape their character and help them develop a sense

of self-awareness. This journey is often depicted as a process of self-discovery and growth, in which the protagonist gradually comes to understand his place in the world and his relationship to society. Boes discusses that Dilthey considers bildungsroman as a poetic expression and refers it as an organic as well as the technological growth. Dilthey further argues that in the bildungsroman novels, a regular growth and development is detected in an individual's life. Also, each stage of growth and development carries its own intrinsic value. Boes (2006) refers Dilthey who describes Bildungsroman "as a process of organic growth in the manner of a seed that develops into a mature plant. In Bildungsroman, a regular development is observed in the life of the individual: each of the stage has its own intrinsic value and at the same time is a basis of higher stage" (Boes 232). This point of development is necessary in human beings as well so that they become able to survive in the difficult situations of life.

According to Boes (2006), Dilthey believes that bildungsroman novels are an important reflection of the cultural and social context in which they are written. He argues that they provide a means for individuals to explore the complexities of modern life and to develop a sense of personal identity in a rapidly changing world. Overall, Dilthey's concept of bildungsroman highlights the importance of personal growth and development in human life and the role that literature can play in helping individuals navigate the challenges and complexities of modern society. Dilthey further believes that the bildungsroman novel should be seen as a reflection of the broader cultural and historical context in which it is written, and that it plays an important role in shaping individual's understanding of himself and his place in society (Boes 238-241). This is how literature produced in this way shape up the minds of the readers in a different way and they get to know the technicalities of life and the ways to sort them out.

The element of bildungsroman in these novels cultivates self-compassion and self-reassurance by providing readers with the relatable examples of characters who experience similar struggles and growth. In this way, the researcher has observed the growth and development in the characters of both the protagonists of the selected novels. This is because the protagonists of both of the selected novels i-e Hana and Shadi go through the hardest times of their lives but somehow manage to stay strong and motivated and never let their hopes die. These kinds of characters and their journey of life from

being the weak creatures to strengthening their personality in the hardest times actually play a part as the motivational factors in the lives of readers. This is how bildungsroman can be taken as a powerful tool for fostering self-compassion and self-reassurance.

By keeping in mind all the details of close reading put forward by Snow and Connor, the researcher has analyzed both the selected texts by examining the research questions. Most importantly, the researcher has studied her stance by keeping in mind the characters of the selected novels and specifically those characters that are linked with the highlighted aspects. Also, the research is conducted by keeping by thoroughly examining the character growth in the personalities of both the protagonists i-e the element of bildungsroman is also inculcated. These characters have clearly explained the hardships of the inhabitants with respect to the scenarios of that particular society at that time. The researcher has analyzed both the novels deeply, studied all the instances thoroughly and links the instances with the highlighted aspects of self-compassion and self-reassurance. These aspects include care-seeking, care-giving, maternal support, receiving and giving social support, compassionate self-image goals and distress disclosure. Moreover, the researcher has pointed out some characters from the novels and then the sufferings, hardships as well as growth of those characters have been explained as well. By doing this, the researcher has come up with the most basic instances that have helped the researcher to reach to the final conclusion. In this way, the characters of the novels have played a significant role in conducting this research. This is how the cause of the pointed out problem has been found out. Also, by doing the close analysis of both the texts with respect to the theoretical instances, the researcher has portrayed some solutions to tackle with problems and issues of human life.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

In this research, the researcher has used the updated version of this theory that has been presented in 2016 by Hermanto and Zuroff in an article “The Social mentality theory of self-compassion and self-reassurance: The interactive effect of care-seeking and care-giving”. Hermanto and Zuroff have renamed this theory as Social Mentality Theory of Self-compassion and Self-reassurance. According to this version of theory, self-compassion and self-reassurance are the forms of intrapersonal relating and in this

relating, the interpersonal mentalities of care-seeking and care-giving also get activated. Also, self-compassion is more specifically linked with the psychological functioning that includes the idea of having greater purpose in life and also with low stress level and high level of satisfaction as well. Moreover, social mentality theory portrays that people always relate to themselves and to the system that is relating to others. In accordance with the selected theoretical framework, the researcher has used the major elements of this theory put forward by Hermanto and Zuroff (2016) such as “care-seeking, care-giving, maternal support, receiving and giving social support, compassionate self-image goals and distress disclosure” (Hermanto & Zuroff 1-11). These six elements play their significant role in the development of self-compassion.

Then, Hermanto and Zuroff (2016) explain another terminology i.e maternal support. By the term maternal support, they try to comfort the readers by indulging them in the fact that they do have some kinds of motherly figures in their lives who become the source of comfort in the hour of need. Hermanto & Zuroff says, “maternal support was associated with higher levels of self-compassion while greater maternal criticism was linked with lower levels of self-compassion” (Hermanto & Zuroff 2). This shows that maternal support plays a significant role in developing self-compassion and self-reassurance in the personality of the characters whether they are the fictional characters or the real life human beings. The actions and words of maternal figure are actually the source of comfort for the people who are suffering in their lives (Hermanto & Zuroff 2). This is how the theorists inserted their stance by indulging the fact that people who are more likely to have maternal support around, they are more likely to develop the behavior of self-compassion and self-reassurance in their personalities.

Other than that, another major element included by Hermanto and Zuroff (2016) is the element of receiving and giving social support. This element is linked with the presence of maternal figures as human beings do need social support whenever they are having bad time or good time either and they themselves are ready too to assist others. This category is further divided into four sub-categories. These include receiving emotional support, receiving instrumental support, giving emotional support, giving instrumental support. By emotional support, they mean to have someone who consoles and makes a person relaxed whenever there is a difficult time in life. Whereas,

instrumental support portrays some kind of assistance or aid that one provides or get in the time of need (Hermanto and Zuroff 3-4). Basically, this type of support includes the practical implementation of assistance during the time of stress or crisis instead of just providing psychological support.

The next element discussed by Hermanto & Zuroff (2016) is compassionate and self-image goals. By including the term compassionate goals, theorists try to explain the motivation one has to support other fellow beings. Whereas, self-image goals are the motivational factors through which a person motivates himself to do better for self. Comparatively, compassionate goals are the ones that a person does willingly for others and self-image goals are the ones that a person does willingly for the betterment of his own life (Hermanto & Zuroff 4). Here, both the theorists have provided the sub-division of goals so that they can be categorized accordingly.

The last selected element explained by Hermanto & Zuroff (2016) is distress disclosure. This term basically signifies the act of personal sharing of negative thoughts and experiences with others just to make himself relaxed. This is one of the ways of developing the capabilities of self-compassion and self-reassurance because by sharing the negative experiences, energies and thoughts, a person is more likely to get an empathetic response from various people which in turn results in self-validation. In this way, a person receives emotional or instrumental support as well as understanding of other people present in the environment (Hermanto & Zuroff 4). This is considered as the primary theoretical framework in order to conduct this research.

In order to dig out the stance of self-empowerment, the researcher has worked upon the theory of self-compassion and self-reassurance. Whereas, to discuss about the recreation of Muslim identity and to find out the matters that Muslims face while living in some other country, the researcher has taken another theoretical perspective. Basically, the protagonists of the selected literature are females. So, the other selected theorists talk about the Muslim identity, its reformation in a completely different environment and the struggle Muslim women have to face while living abroad. In an article “Muslim Women negotiating their identity in the era of Muslim Ban” (2023) written by multiple theorists i.e R. Steele, Bengali, Richardson, Disbennet and Othman. These theorists are of the view

that women do face extreme hatred and Islamophobia because of their gender. They inculcate, “Islamophobia has been conceptualized as a new form of racism, as a manifestation of racial oppression because it propagates negative perception about Muslims and Islam” (Steele et. al 708). Also, their identity being Muslim gets questioned several times. This is one of the ways of telling them that they are actually the weak creatures and cannot cater any challenge in life. Moreover, the researchers further portray that this attitude of discrimination becomes a source of stress and then when this aspect continues, mental health deteriorates. While facing all such scenarios, religion i-e their Muslim identity becomes one of the ways through they get motivation to balance their life and to sort out various issues. In this article, Steele, Bengali, Richardson, Disbennet and Othman (2023) describe that “[I]n response to the cultural trauma and being the target of Islamophobia, Muslims often turn to their religious identity as a buffer against stress” (Steele et. al 709). For Muslims, Islam becomes one of the major sources through which they tackle Islamic extremist attitude. Furthermore, the researchers dig out this aspect of Islamophobia by portraying the fact that this is another kind of racial oppression because through this, they portray the negative perception of Muslims everywhere. In order to manage this kind of situations, Muslims do turn out towards their religion and it actually helps them in managing their stress (Steele et. al 707-709). This stance shows that the connection with religion in turn builds strong family ties which further help people in tackling the situation.

The Social Mentality Theory of Self-Compassion and Self-Reassurance, as developed by Nicola Hermanto and Charles Zuroff, is particularly apt for analyzing identity reconstruction in young adult fiction because it provides a nuanced psychological lens through which emotional resilience, inner dialogue, and self-perception can be explored. This framework extends the work of earlier self-compassion theorists such as Kristin Neff and Paul Gilbert by emphasizing the motivational and interpersonal origins of self-directed emotions. It posits that self-compassion and self-reassurance emerge from internalized social mentalities that is, the ways individuals relate to themselves based on early caregiving experiences and socio-cultural contexts. In the context of Muslim identity formation in contemporary young adult fiction, this theory is valuable because the protagonists are often situated in environments where they experience social

marginalization, religious stereotyping, and cultural dislocation. The inner struggle between self-criticism and self-reassurance becomes a defining feature of their emotional landscape. Hermanto and Zuroff's model allows for an exploration of how these young characters learn to emotionally support themselves amid external hostility and internalized self-doubt. Unlike more traditional self-esteem frameworks, which rely on achievement or social validation, the Social Mentality Theory focuses on compassion as an internal, emotionally regulating system that enables individuals to respond to failure, rejection, and distress with kindness and understanding rather than judgment or avoidance. This distinction is especially pertinent when studying young Muslim characters who are often forced to reconcile their private selves with public perceptions in multicultural societies. Their journey toward self-compassion and reassurance reflects not just personal growth but also a cultural and religious negotiation of identity. Moreover, Hermanto and Zuroff's emphasis on self-reassurance as distinct from self-compassion offers a more dynamic understanding of how individuals mobilize internal dialogue for healing. Self-reassurance entails actively encouraging oneself during failure, a recurring theme in narratives like *Hana Khan Carries On* and *An Emotion of Great Delight*, where protagonists must navigate the dual pressures of adolescence and cultural displacement. This theoretical model allows the researcher to decode these emotional negotiations as part of a broader social-psychological process, making it ideal for interdisciplinary literary analysis. Thus, the Social Mentality Theory serves as a robust and context-sensitive framework for this study. It not only enriches character analysis but also aligns well with the central theme of identity re-creation, providing insight into how compassion-based coping strategies help young Muslim protagonists reclaim agency, voice, and self-worth within and against the narratives of social adversity. Also, The Social Mentality Theory by Hermanto and Zuroff helps explain how characters process and respond to trauma internally. Rather than becoming trapped in cycles of self-criticism or emotional numbness, protagonists who develop self-compassion are able to shift from a threat-based mentality to a care-based mentality. This allows them to repair the emotional ruptures caused by trauma.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYZING THE DYNAMICS OF SELF-COMPASSION AND SELF-REASSURANCE

This chapter of research deals with the deep analysis of the selected novels in accordance with the selected theoretical framework as discussed in the previous chapter. The topic of this research is regarding the re-creation of the Muslim identity by highlighting the problems and issues that the characters of these novels face. The characters in both the novels are diasporic because they are immigrants. By considering the life stories of these characters, the issues and lifestyle of Muslim community living abroad can be accessed and highlighted. The researcher highlights how the characters tackle the difficulties of life by adopting self-compassion as well as self-reassurance in their behavior. This chapter also highlights that how the presence of these elements in their personality helps them in staying strong and motivated. Also, both the selected novels lie in the genre of Young Adult fiction. Basically, this research focuses on various issues that Muslim adults in both the selected novels face while living far away from their homeland.

4.1 Socio-Historical Context in consideration with Self-Compassion and Self-Reassurance

The research methodology section of this thesis explains that self-compassion and Self-reassurance are the most significant aspects of a person's psychological health and self-care. The presence of both of these elements in the personality of an individual makes him able to face the challenges of life with courage, strength, resilience as well as acceptance. The social mentality theory of self-compassion and self-reassurance provides some basic factors through which the qualities of self-compassion and self-reassurance can be achieved. These factors include care-seeking, care-giving, maternal support, receiving and giving social support, compassionate self-image goals and distress disclosure. These are the major factors that contribute in the development of self-compassion and self-reassurance in human's personality and perception leading them to live a better life (Hermanto & Zuroff 1-8).

4.1.1 Evolution of Care-Seeking and Care-Giving in Socio-Historical Context

Considering the selected literature, in the novel, *Hana Khan Carries On*, Hana is one of those characters who suffer through a lot in her life in multiple ways. Life throws a set of responsibilities on her shoulders and she has to cope up with all of them. In the beginning of the novel, Hana says in her podcast, “Though “work” is a bit of misnomer—neither position pays me actual money, and both positions have limited life expectancy. The former because our restaurant is in trouble and latter because my internship is coming to an end and I have no idea what comes next. I’m trying not to panic about either situation” (Jalaluddin 9). This shows her state of mind and problems she faces being a member of diasporic community and portrays exactly what she is facing in her life. Hana’s life is full of examples for the fact that while going through multiple issues including the identity crisis, sometimes a person needs to have someone in life from whom he gets to observe the affectionate behavior i-e care-seeking. Hermanto and Zuroff in an article, “The social mentality theory of self-compassion and self-reassurance: The interactive effect of care-seeking and caregiving” (2016) explain that the combination of care-seeking and care-giving is linked with the attachment theory and they are meant to be present in human personality. Care-seeking is basically seeking help and assistance just to go through the challenges of life whereas; care-giving is the idea opposite to care-seeking. Care-giving is basically “to provide protection and support” when someone is in need (Hermanto & Zuroff 2). This is a natural phenomenon that problems and difficulties are part of life and everyone has to go through them but the processes of care-seeking and care-giving make human life easy to live.

Care-seeking motivates a person to do better amidst all the difficulties he faces in his life. Hana posits the same behavior. She has a virtual friend named as StanleyP and instantly he becomes her go-to person for all the advices and concerns. She tells everything to him and this fact of narrating all the stories to StanleyP makes her relaxed. She says, “I was supposed to be cleaning in anticipation of customers, but instead I was texting StanleyP, my very first and most loyal listener” (Jalaluddin 9). Other than that, Hana’s father shows concerns towards his family members though he has been sick. His kind words and motivating gestures make Hana feel out of this world. In an article, “Under which conditions do Early Adolescents Need Maternal Support?” (2015), the

researchers explain that “parental support helps to cope with these normative demands and consequently, is seen as a resilience factor in the development of emotional problems” (Vandevivere et. al 2-8). In this way, this element of care-seeking from her father makes her more anxious in sorting out all the worries of her personal and family life. In the novel, when she tells her father that she will come back late as she is going to her job and then she will go to the restaurant to assist her mother, her father knows all the burden she is carrying on her shoulders. He says, “Things will get better Inshallah” (Jalaluddin 25). His comforting words actually make her believe that she is trying to do a lot for herself and for her family.

Fahim, Fazeela’s husband and Hana’s brother-in law is another character who shows affectionate behavior towards her. She seeks brotherly love from Fahim as she does not have a brother by blood. Amidst all the obstacles Hana is facing in her life, Fahim is present to support Hana and to make her believe that she is doing fine in her life and he is there to support her. Once in the novel, when he gets to know that some customers came after the working hours, he becomes more concerned and tells Hana, “You should be careful who you let in after hours. And always let me know first, Okay?” (Jalaluddin 59). Also, at another point in the novel, it is portrayed that Fahim is very much concerned about Hana as he doesn’t want her to suffer more in her life. This shows that though she and her family are struggling with the identity of their restaurant, she has a brotherly figure to get affection from. Fahim is more concerned of the fact that Hana should not be indulged in a bad company. This fact also portrays that identity crisis are somewhere present in the lives of diasporic people. No matter how contented life they try to live, this element of being diasporic involve them in various difficulties. Fahim says, “Hana, just promise me you’ll be careful with your heart, okay? You deserve someone who puts you first” (Jalaluddin 60). This affection and concern that she seeks from her brother-in-law makes her believe that she does not stand alone during this hard time and that her family is there to support her unconditionally.

In comparison to this, the second selected novel i-e *An Emotion of Great Delight* also portrays the difficulties faced by a female protagonist named as Shadi. Shadi suffers because her mind deals with multiple problems at a time. Being a Muslim, she suffers through identity crisis during the time of war. Her family suffers after the death of her

brother, Mehdi and she suffers in her friendship with Zahra as well. In the beginning of the novels, her problems are portrayed in a way that she says, “I forced myself to move, to shutter the windows in my mind as I went. Silence was too welcoming of unwanted thoughts” (Mafi 10). This shows how disturbed she is because life shows her the most difficult phases and she has to deal with them. Shadi’s life does not have more ways to deal with her anxieties. She says, “At least death, I thought, would be warm” (Mafi 25). This shows that she is just so stressed out because of all the chaos that is going on in her life and she cannot think of the ways to get herself out of all the troubles. She needs some identity to live a peaceful life but she is unable to do so somehow due to her diasporic identity and also because of war that is going on. Shadi has a best friend Zahra. Shadi and Zahra’s families live in the same area and they are in contact with each other as well. At that time, Zahra’s brother, Ali becomes her source of comfort as he knows her from the very beginning since they moved to America. Ali is there to protect her when she stumbles and soon, she starts becoming comfortable in his presence and instantly falls in love. Throughout the novel, it is shown that Ali is the only comfort zone in her life and there is no one else like him in her life. During one of their encounters, Ali asks her, “You Okay? And Shadi says, “He stared at me with an authority I found surprising, with a concern I’d not felt in a long time” (Mafi 63). This shows that Ali is the one who cares for her like no one else and this is one of the major reasons for their love story to begin.

The presence of the element of care-seeking in human’s personality is linked with another element which is care-giving. When it comes to the discussion of care-giving, the protagonist of *Hana Khan Carries On* (2021) i.e Hana is the epitome of this trait possessing in her personality. Hana herself goes through a lot in her life. May be, this becomes one of the reasons that she does not want others to suffer. She takes care of the needs of all the family members just to portray the fact that care-giving is as necessary as care-seeking. These elements do play their role in the recreation of their identity. This is because if one person seeks help from others, others also need love, assistance and affection and this is one of the ways to lead a balanced life. To put forward this stance, Hana thinks that narrating her life stories to her listeners can create a huge impact on the mindset of audience. As, she is working in a radio station as well as running her own blog so she thinks that these two platforms can help her bringing her stance to life and people

can get motivation from it. This factor can also be considered as a way of providing social support to others. In an article, “The influence of giving and receiving social support on the psychological outcomes of two trauma-exposed sample” (2019) written by Shakespeare, Jane, Obst, Trich, Rogers & Elizabeth, the researchers portray that, “social support is one factor that has been widely investigated, as it is thought to buffer against the effects of stressful life events” (Finch et. al 2-3). Moreover, this fact of telling her life stories can play a role in strengthening the identity she is having as a member of diasporic community. This way of retelling her stories tells the readers that she also involves herself in care-giving behaviors so that other people may feel at ease. This is because Hana does not want others to face the same scenarios that she herself is facing in her life. In the novel, Hana says, “I wanted to tell diverse stories that made a difference, that framed personal narratives in a way that allowed people to think about the world in a whole new light” (Jalaluddin 55). This shows a very soft and sympathetic nature of Hana as she thinks about her audience while facing various struggles in her own life. In this way, she becomes a character readers can get motivation from. While facing a lot of struggles in her life, Hana stumbles sometimes. But then her mother is there to lift her up. Throughout the novel, her mother is considered as one of the strongest characters who become one of the examples of the depiction of care-giving behavior. Out of all the chaos that is going on in her life, she remains steadfast just for the sake of her family. Also, she always motivates her children to do better in life and always tell them that this hard time shall pass one day. In the novel, when they get to know about the opening of new restaurant, she says, “They will attract attention first, but things will settle. You will see, Hana Jaan. It will all work out” (Jalaluddin 71). In comparison to this, same element is found out in the second novel *An Emotion Of Great Delight* (2021). In that novel, Shadi, the survivor out of all the chaos once falls down on the road while she is on the way to her institute. Her mind is full of thoughts and worries. She is not in her senses and falls down instantly. Ali suddenly appears and helps her at the spot. Shadi says, “The weight of the entire day, balanced between my shoulder blades I was freezing. Bleeding. Exhausted”. Suddenly Ali appears and says, “Hey, are you okay? Did something happen? I’m taking you home” (Mafi 33). This shows that she is extremely exhausted by everything she is facing in her life, facing troubles with her identity and her family life as

well. In this way, Ali portrays care-giving behavior through which their feelings for one another grow stronger.

4.1.2 Portrayal of the Behavior of Maternal Support

In the selected theory, Hermanto and Zurroff present another major factor that plays its role in the development of self-compassion and self-reassurance in the personality of human being and that factor is maternal support. Both of the theorists discuss the viewpoints of Neff and are of the view that maternal support is a significant factor that plays a huge role either in the personality development or in the personality deterioration. They portray the fact that the presence of maternal figures in human life is linked with the higher or lower level of self-compassion. By maternal figure, they mean to have a supportive family that supports a person in times of need. If a person is having maternal support in his life, he seems to be built up with stronger and “higher level of self-compassion” and self-re-assurance (Hermanto & Zuroff 2). Basically these elements play their major role in the development of self-compassion and self-reassurance. In comparison to this, if a person faces maternal criticism or he does not have any maternal support in his life, he seems to be grown up with the lower level of self-compassion and self-reassurance. This is how Hermanto and Zurroff presented the significance of the presence of maternal support in human life.

In the selected novels, both the protagonists i-e Hana and Shadi go through multiple issues including issues related to their own identity as well as the issues regarding the identity of their family. This is because both the protagonists belong to the diasporic community and are not living in their own country. They get stumbled various times but then restore their position, confidence and energy level too. One of the major reasons that they regain their confidence back whenever something bad happens in their lives is the presence of maternal figures as portrayed by Hermanto and Zurroff. The presence of maternal figures actually provides soothing effect in their lives, comfort to their heart and peace in their life no matter who those maternal figures are. Other than the protagonists, the minor characters in both the selected novels also show this need of having a maternal figure who can put their life back in order. The novel *Hana Khan Carries On* deals with the complexities of Hana’s life as well as it deals with the hidden

complexities of the lives of other characters Aydin, Hana's mother and sister. Hana being the powerhouse of their family is the one who helps everyone in need. She takes care of the needs of everyone in the family but her own life is actually falling apart. While dealing with multiple issues in her life like instability of her own job, the troubles of their restaurant, sickness of her father, pregnancy of her sister as well as her own love life. In this case, Hana also needs someone who can console her and can be considered as the motivational figure in her life. Hana's virtual friend, StanleyP plays this role of maternal figure in this novel. Hana gets so much comfortable with StanleyP that no matter what the problem is, she instantly discusses it with StanleyP. In return, StanleyP also proves to be a source of comfort for Hana. This is because he always listens her problems instead of judging her and helps her in reaching out to the solution. In the very beginning of the novel, Hana says, "I was supposed to be cleaning in the anticipation of customers, but instead I was texting StanleyP, my very first and most loyal listener (Jalaluddin 9). This shows that StanleyP is the one who provides maternal support to Hanna and Hanna gets super comfortable with him. As Hana's life is full of complexities no matter if these complexities are related to her personal life, her family or her professional life, she has to deal with them in one way or the other. Generally, parents are considered as the major support system in human life. When it comes to Hana, her father, the major support system is fighting with various medical issues and is unstable. Hana seems very much concerned about the health of her father and his sickness as she says, "It had been a long time since I had to explain about baba to a stranger. It used to be a daily occurrence as we navigated among hospitals, doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and personal support workers" (Jalaluddin 10). This shows that she gets so much disturbed while thinking about the backbone of her family i-e her father. While seeing one parent being sick, another one becomes her source of comfort. Though her father supports her no matter what the situation is but her mother becomes her source of motivation. She sees her mother doing daily house chores in every way possible, running a restaurant on her own, taking care of pregnant Fazeela, taking care of her sick husband and managing all the other family issues. In this way, Hana's mother is the epitome of possessing the strongest identity in the family. For Hana, there is no stronger woman other than her mother. She says, "My mother thought about everyone and everything, all the time. I wondered how

she managed it all” (Jalaluddin 17). At another point in the novel, Hana says, “I looked at my mother, so proud, so strong” (Jalaluddin 41). This shows that she acknowledges her mother’s efforts and gets motivation from her. This is how her mother plays a role of motherly figure in her life. While her father fights with all his sickness hovering all around, he manages to support and motivate Hana as much as he can. Though in the novel, he is always seen to be either lying in his bed or sitting down on chair but still he becomes a motivational character for Hana in the struggling times and helps her in her identity formation. Her father is so proud of her and so glad to see her daughter progressing day by day instead of stumbling due to all the scenarios. At one point in the novel, her father says, “My Hana is a gifted storyteller. Parents are happy when their children are happy. My Hana must tell stories. That is who she is” (Jalaluddin 155). This shows her close ties not only with mother but with her father too as he becomes her guiding light when there seem darkness all around. Moreover, this close affiliation with her mother and father makes a way towards the development of self-compassion and self-reassurance in her personality which in turn makes Hana a loving, caring and strong woman. The selected theorists i-e Hermanto and Zuroff (2016) mention Neff who portrays self-compassion and self-reassurance as “the ways of relating to oneself” and to other people with a positive approach, care and concern regardless of the failures, struggles and disappointments that a person go through in his life (Hermanto & Zuroff 1). By considering these approaches and by adopting them in the personalities, a person observes the difficulties and struggles of life as a part of humanity and social existence. So, a person becomes much more considerate and tries to bring a solution to all the problems instead of bringing oneself to isolation. Self-compassion and self-reassurance inculcate hope and confidence pushing a person towards an improved quality of life. This is what happens with Hana in the selected piece of literature.

In comparison to this, another novel *An Emotion Of Great Delight* shows similar attribute with respect to the protagonist Shadi. Shadi is all alone in the cruel world, suffering daily while nobody is present to support her. During the hard times, Zahra who is Shadi’s best friend leaves her and does not trust her but Zahra’s mother becomes a source of comfort for Shadi. Zahra and Shadi’s families are immigrants, settled in US since long. Zahra, Ali who is Zahra’s brother, Shadi, Shayda and Mehdi all study in the

same school. Most of the time, it happens that Zahra's mother comes to the school to pick them up. In this way, Shadi develops strong close ties with Zahra's mother. Zahra's mother actually loves her like her own daughter. In the later part of the novel, it is observed that circumstances change between Shadi and Zahra and their friendship bond gets weakened. Out of all the misunderstanding that prevail between Zahra and Shadi, Zahra's mother does not stop herself from meeting Shadi and keeps on loving her unconditionally. At the end of the novel, when the friendship between Zahra and Shadi gets over, Shadi gets fainted in the school. The management calls Zahra's mother to inform about Shadi. Zahra's parents appear at the spot and take Shadi home. In the novel, when Shadi reaches Zahra's home, she says, "I looked into her eyes-Zahra's mom's eyes-and my heart steadied on its own, my fears disappeared, my face blossomed into a familiar smile. I'd missed her, missed her face" (Maafi 178). This shows that Zahra's mother and father are the real maternal figures in Shadi's life and they do play their role in transforming the personality of Shadi into a stronger one.

4.1.3 Receiving and Giving Social Support

While discussing the elements of receiving and giving social support in the process of personality development, Hermanto and Zuroff mention two types of supports. One is receiving and giving emotional support and the second is receiving and giving instrumental support. Taking in consideration *Hana Khan Carries On*, Hana faces difficulties in her life one after the other. During the whole situation, it is a natural phenomenon that humans do need emotional support in order to feel better. Sometimes, it happens that the comforting words of fellow humans play a magical role in transforming the mood swings and the mindset of the targeted human. Same happens with Hana. When Hana is dealing with all the complexities, her online friend StanleyP is the one who becomes a way through whom Hana receives emotional support. When Hana has no one to talk to, she discusses her life issues with StanleyP and feels comfortable as Hana says, "A stranger I spoke with daily, one who knew my deepest hopes and fears, but not any details about my real, lived existence" (Jalaluddin 10). This shows that though Hana does not know who StanleyP is and does not know anything about his identity but still she gets herself relaxed by telling everything to him. This is the benefit a person receives if he has

an emotional support. Moreover, this is a human psyche that if he has someone around for the support, his mind and heart automatically get peaceful.

Other than that, Hana's aunt, Kawkab becomes a symbol of motivation in her life. When it comes to the emotional support, Hana receives this kind of support from Kawkab khala. She travels all the way from Delhi to Toronto with Rashid and gets to know about the life story of Hana. Kawkab never sympathizes Hana but she encourages her on whatever she is doing for the sake of her own life and for the betterment of her family. She also motivates her so that her moral values can never get down and she never gets stumbled out of the chaos she is facing in her life. It is very much evident in the novel that Hana seems much impressed by the personality of Kawkab khala. In the novel, when Kawkab khala starts telling her different stories from her life in order to motivate her, Hana looks surprised and amazed as Kawkab khala says, "I was thinking of something more relevant, such as 'Find your principles and see your story through to the end, no matter what'" (Jalaluddin 113). Further, Hana says, "She hadn't been afraid to make bold decisions and carry them out with little worry for the consequences. I wanted to live like that" (Jalaluddin 113). She narrates her observations and interpretations regarding the personality of Kawkab khala and it is portrayed here in the novel that she receives emotional and motivational support from Kawkab khala that plays a significant role in strengthening her personality. At this stage of her life when Hana is receiving emotional support and it is actually helping her to survive amidst the harsh circumstances, she is the symbol of giving emotional support as well. Also, it shows that the presence of Kawkab khala in Hana's life actually plays a major role in strengthening her identity. Belonging to the family of immigrants, she knows the struggles and hardships people have to face while living in another country. Other than that, being a part of the family that is stuck in crisis from so long, she knows the output that a motivational factor can have over the mindset of a sufferer. She wants to tell the world her own life stories so that other people can get motivation from her and get to know how to make the stumbled life a smoother one. Hana belongs to the profession of journalism and by pursuing this profession, she can easily fulfill her motives. In the novel, she says, "I wanted to tell diverse stories that made a difference, that framed personal narratives in a way that allowed people to think about the world in a whole new light" (Jalaluddin 55). This portrays that Hana tries to

make people believe that even if people are living a diasporic life, they do possess a right to enjoy their identity whosoever they are. This is another way to make the whole wide world believe that nobody has a right to criticize other person's identity. This also shows that she recognizes the hardships of a struggling family being a part of it and does not want others to suffer. This is why she is always ready to motivate others either through her podcasts or through her radio programs. Moreover, Hana and Aydin who is also StanleyP, Hana's virtual friend share love-hate relationship with each other throughout the novel. But, the fact is whenever they need emotional or instrumental support, they are always ready to provide that support to each other.

In the novel, when Hana, Aydin and Rashid travel to downtown Toronto, Aydin gets panic attack in the lift and Hana is present there to help him. She consoles him and tries to make his condition better. Similarly, when they get attacked by local Canadians and get harassed due to their Muslim identity, Aydin stands firm with Hana. This is the situation where they face criticism on their Muslim Identity. They are targeted just because they follow Islam and belong to Muslim community. During that situation, both of them realize the mistakes they committed and try to sort them out. Aydin says, "I'm sorry I ruined this for you. I'm sorry I criticized Three Sisters when we first met" (Jalaluddin 140). In return, Hana says, "I'm sorry I stepped in your shoe" (Jalaluddin 140). This is how both of them show love, kindness, sympathy and motivation towards each other. At this point of the novel, there happens the recreation of identities where Hana meets Aydin with a transformed perception about Hana and vice versa. This is because both of them start understanding each other and in turn start thinking softly about each other.

In comparison to this, the second novel *An Emotion Of Great Delight* is also embedded with these finest qualities of receiving and giving emotional support. Shadi is basically concerned with all the family members but does not show up much. This is why she does not have much stronger ties with her family. One of the major reasons of Shadi spending most of her time alone is that she is struggling with her own identity and is unable to comprehend her actual role she is playing in her family. While dealing with her family issues, her brother, Mehdi dies due to a car accident right after a fight with their father. Due to this, Shadi blames her father for her brother's death. While discussing

Mehdi's habit of smoking and drinking, Shadi says, "And yet I felt quite certain that, in the eyes of God, my brother was a better person" (Mafi 125). Further, she says, "I thought it was the job of the parents to be smarter than the child. It was the job of the parents to protect their child from harm" (Mafi 125). This shows that she is shattered by all the circumstances prevailing in her life and needs some support. Shadi being a shattered personality needs someone and Ali, Zahra's brother is there to make her feel at ease. Ali is the only person in her life who supports her throughout her journey no matter what the circumstances are. He never thinks of the aftereffects but he just helps her out whenever she needs love, care, companionship and assistance. Once in the novel, Shadi forgets her backpack in Ali's car. When she comes back to return it back to Shadi, he asks about the well-being of Shadi. Shadi being so indulged in her worries becomes surprised at this behavior. Shadi says, "He stared at me with an authority I found surprising, with a concern I'd not felt in a long time" (Mafi 63). This shows that she actually craves for love, care and affection that she does not get and it seems like ages. This behavior of receiving emotional support portrayed by Shadi is due to the fact that she is fed up of the worries of her family life and wants to get out of them to enjoy a beautiful satisfied life. Here, she realizes that there is a person who actually praises her and for whom, her presence actually matters. Moreover, when it comes to the presence of her best friend, Zahra in her life, that relationship is more like a toxic kind of relationship. In reality, Zahra is never Shadi's friend. When it becomes evident, it becomes so hard for Shadi to accept this reality. If the characters of Ali and Zahra are compared, Ali proves to be more sympathetic and loving towards Shadi instead of Zahra. She falls in love with love with Shadi but Shadi rejects his proposal just due to the fact that Zahra will not get agree for this relationship. She wants to stop her love life even before it begins because of her friendship. Shadi says, "May be we just shouldn't be in each other's lives anymore" (Mafi 152). This shows how much passionate she is towards her friendship and this is how the attitude of giving emotional support is portrayed in the novel. It happens because just for not letting Zahra get hurt, Shadi risks her own love life, her happiness.

Other than the emotional support, the other kind of support mentioned in the theoretical framework is receiving and giving instrumental support. Instrumental support is basically providing assistance by any means to help others physically. In the novel,

Hana Khan Carries On (2021), Hana is the one who is ready to sacrifice her career for the sake of her family. When she observes that something crazy is going on within her family and her mother tells her about the stumbling restaurant as well as the fact that Fazeela is not going to assist her anymore. This is because she is expecting her first child and she is facing issues regarding her health. Also, she cannot take risk in this condition. Following all the circumstances, Hana says, “Could I really sacrifice my internship now, just when I was getting somewhere” (Jalaluddin 41). This shows that she is ready to provide any sort of instrumental support to her family because if she leaves her internship, she is going to start working in her restaurant and starts helping her mother. The decision of leaving the internship or not is another thing. The thing that matters is her motives and sympathetic nature due to which she is ready to do anything for the sake of her family. In this way, she posits the behavior of giving instrumental support. Other than Hana, Aydin becomes the one through whom Hana receives the instrumental support in one way or the other. In the novel, when Hana, Aydin and Rashid visit Downtown Toronto. Over there, they face extreme hatred and violence on the basis of their identity. When three of them get attacked by the locals of Canada, Aydin helps Hana in getting stable. When that Canadian local pushes Aydin, Hana stumbles and falls down. In turn, Aydin helps her to get up and feel better. Hana says, “Aydin helped me up, hands grasping my elbows, I was dazed, blood pulsing in a drumbeat through my veins” (Jalaluddin 145). This is how Hana receives instrumental support from one of the significant figures of her life i.e Aydin. In comparison to this, the other novel *An Emotion Of Great Delight* employs this behavior of receiving instrumental support through the character of Shadi as she is the one who suffers multiple times in her life but manages to cope up with the situation. In the novel, while dealing with a lot of issues in her life, her health deteriorates in the institute. She denies contacting her parents because she knows her family situation well. In this way, she asks her instructor to contact Zahra’s parents. This shows the love, respect, affection and trust Shadi puts in Zahra’s parents. She says, “Zahra’s parents were in my file” (Mafi 168). This is how the characters seek support in multiple ways and this factor in turn plays a role in shaping their personality throughout their journey.

4.1.4 Compassionate Self-Image Goals

Discussing about the condition of becoming stable amidst various critical situations going on in life, Hermanto and Zurrof describe two categories related to the decided goals. One is compassionate goals and the other is self-image goals. Compassionate goals are the ones in which a person tries to help others whereas self-image goals are those motivational factors through which a person tries to make his life better and stable than before (Hermanto & Zurrof 4). These goals further help people in staying motivated.

Taking in consideration the novel *Hana Khan Carries On*, the protagonist Hana is surviving the most difficult yet the longest phase of her life. The sufferings of her life include various reasons including the fact that she belongs to a minority group living outside their own homeland. Hana is self-sorted woman who tries to get up to the solution of every problem by her own. While sorting out various hidden miseries of her life, she becomes sympathetic towards others as well. This is because she does not want others to suffer and struggle in their life the way she is suffering and struggling. This aspect makes her a kind-hearted strong ambitious woman who tries to assist others as much as she can. This fact is linked with the compassionate goals explained by Hermanto and Zurrof (2016) in a way that they “involve motivation towards supporting and benefitting others” (Hermanto & Zuroff 4). This is how she achieves her own goals by assisting others.

In the novel, *Hana Khan Carries On* (2021), Hana being a compassionate woman tries to sort out the biggest problem of Muslim community living in Toronto, Canada. Hana is a blogger and she has this way of raising her voice through her podcasts so that everyone can listen to the realistic facts and figures. Her colleague Thomas comes up with this brilliant idea and says, “Hana, you could be the person who changes people’s minds about Muslims!” (Jalaluddin 53). This fact uttered by Thomas is actually of great importance. It symbolizes that Hana has that power to change the mindset of others through her words. This powerful weapon that Hana possesses portrays that Hana has the capability to get herself out of all the crisis be it identity or all others. Also, through her blogs, she has that power to motivate other diasporic people suffering in the homeland that does not belong to them. In this way, she can play her role in making people realize

about the strength of their identity that they possess. Initially, Hana resists but in the later part of the novel when she faces discrimination with Aydin and Rashid in Downtown Toronto, she decides to raise her voice against the so-called bigots and racists. Basically, by agreeing upon this idea, she starts helping out the whole Muslim community living in Toronto. This is how she portrays the element of compassionate goals because she does not just help the Canadian Muslims but her voice has the power to help the Muslims living worldwide facing discrimination.

In comparison to compassionate goals, the second category is self-image goals. Hana being the most struggling character of the novel faces many phases of life all alone. Her father is sick, her sister is expecting, her mother is dealing with the stumbling restaurant. Seeing all her family members struggling to survive in one way or the other, Hana knows that she has to get herself stable and cannot lose hope as she is the only member of the family on whom her mother and father are depending. The basic reason to survive so strongly is her mother and father. She realizes the fact that if she falls down, no one in the family is in a position to help her getting up. Instead of falling down, she becomes the symbol of strength for her family. The other factor of self-image goals i-e the motivation to survive and do better is the character of Hana's father. When Hana sees her father lying down helplessly, her heart aches. She says, "He would greet me with a smile and make a joke about how we worried unnecessarily, and I could text Mom with enough assurances to wipe the strain from her face" (Jalaluddin 22). Further, she says, "I hated him seeing this way" (Jalaluddin 22). This shows how much she appreciates her father's presence in her life as his presence motivates her to stay strong in her life. Moreover, Hana adopts certain ways of tackling her life issues. Hana has a best friend, Lilly. She is also her go-to person whenever she gets stressed out. Instead of showing her anxiety to her family members who are already dealing with multiple issues, she goes to Lilly and gets herself relaxed. When there is the scenario of restaurant going on, Hana shares it with Lilly and says, "It would kill my mom. Baba isn't healthy enough to work full-time, and I'm just an intern. We'd lose the house" (Jalaluddin 46). This scenario of pouring her heart out in front of Lilly shows that there isn't only one issue that Hana's family is dealing. This diasporic family gets themselves indulged in worries one after the other. In response to this, Lilly says, "Your family will be fine, Inshallah" (Jalaluddin

46). This shows that Lilly is another motivational human in Hana's life who helps her in getting through the difficult times of her life. In comparison to this, another novel *An Emotion Of Great Delight* (2021) contains the similar aspect in the personality of protagonist Shadi. If Hanna and Shadi are compared, Hana has multiple people in her life through whom she gets motivated and energetic. Shadi, in comparison only has Ali. Ali is the only leading character in her life who makes sure his presence every time she needs. At one point in the novel, Shadi while dealing with her personal life issues and the racist attitude of Americans, Shadi says, "surreal, how different my life had become in his absence" (Mafi 57). This shows that Ali's presence in her life provides her comfort, ease and strength to deal with all the mess that has been created in her life. Zahra and Ali are siblings but Ali becomes her motivational factor i-e self-image goal whereas Zahra is unable to achieve this place in Shadi's life.

4.1.5 Distress Disclosure

The last selected theoretical element is distress disclosure which is sharing of negative thoughts to make oneself feel better. Sharing of negative thoughts is a really important factor because it helps in releasing negative energy and frustration and is a significant factor to get oneself at peace. Comparing both the novels, Hana has Lilly by her side whereas Shadi has Ali. When both of them go through something in their life, they simply go to their respective therapeutic person and tell that person everything. Both of the protagonists prove that even talking to your favorite people releases much stress and eventually helps in sorting out the matter. Lilly helps Hana with Fazeela's health as she is a doctor by profession. During the entire chaotic situation, Hana meets Lilly and tells her everything including Fazeela's condition. By listening Hana, Lilly calms her down and says, "Fazee is exhausted. She's worried about the restaurant and about being a mom, and she hasn't been taking care of herself. She needs some rest but she'll be back to normal soon. I promise" (Jalaluddin 45). In response to this, Hana says, "Lilly said with such calm assurance that I felt better immediately" (Jalaluddin 45). This shows that people do need re-assurance to make them feel at ease.

In comparison to Hana, Shadi has Ali with whom she can share everything. Even though no one is happy with the friendship of Ali and Shadi, not even Zahra and Shayda.

But no point of view can distract Ali from helping Shadi. At one point in the novel, when Shadi gets irritated by clarifying Zahra again and again about the misconception she has created in her mind regarding Ali and Shadi. Shadi shares it with Ali and the response of Ali shows that he is only concerned with the well-being of Shadi and not with the negative thoughts his sister is having about both of them. Ali says, “Then stop letting my sister dictate the terms of your life. Or mine, for that matter. Make your own choices” (Mafi 106). Further, when Shadi tells him that Zahra is her best friend and his sister and she has a right to interfere in this matter, Ali says, “What kind of best friend doesn’t want you to be happy? What kind of best friend doesn’t care if she hurts you?” (Mafi 106). These positive affirmations to Hanna and Shadi make them relaxed and prepare them for their future obstacles. This is what happens when a person drains out the negative energies and gets positive feedback in return.

This part of analysis shows the entire crisis including the identity crisis that those characters in the novels have gone through in their lives. It is further portrayed that the factors of self-compassion, self-reassurance and self-care actually play their part in building up the identities of all the characters. Also, self-compassion and self-reassurance are the ways through which the characters make their way through self-empowerment. Taking in consideration the novel *Hana Khan Carries On* (2021), the elements of self-compassionate including the attitude of care-seeking and care-giving, the presence of maternal figure, the attitudes of receiving and giving social support, compassionate self-image goals and distress disclosure make Hana survive during the critical situations she goes through in her life. In the initial part of the novel, Hana says, “Maybe I was the only one who would really get to choose anything and I had chosen to get out” (Jalaluddin 20). This shows the potential that Hana carries with her from the beginning of the novel and this potential helps her survive amidst all the harsh circumstances. It also shows Hana’s self-reassurance because she knows that she has the capability to survive no matter what the circumstances are. These factors also help her mother in staying strong for herself and her family and not to stumble in any situation. In comparison to Hana and her mother, her father also makes sure that he does not get weak in front of his family and becomes a symbol for motivation. In short, Hana’s father survives for his family and the family survives for their father. Meanwhile, the novel ends with all the positivity, peace and

happiness. The survival of Hana and her family is because of the resilience they show and the empowerment they build up throughout the journey. The novel ends with Hana's podcast in which she mentions her Kawkab khala as Kawkab khala says, "Intelligent women play long games" (Jalaluddin 271). This portrays that after facing a difficult phase of life, the characters turn out to be stronger than ever. This is how they get empowered with the passage of time. Similarly, taking in consideration the second novel *An Emotion Of Great Delight*, Shadi is considered as the most jumbled up character in the novel. If the characters of Hana and Shadi are compared, Hana does have the support of her family though she fights all the battles alone but still her family is present there to support her. Whereas, the aspect that makes the character of Shadi a complex character is that she does not have anyone by her side and has to fight with everything all alone. Shadi do have some interaction with her class fellows, friends but she is unable to create any bond with her family. Despite being under pressure for so many reasons, be it societal or related to identity, Shadi learns to grow with pain and suffering and to stand firm in her actions and identity. In the novel, Shadi says, "I'd thought, for so long, that this pain I clenched every day in my fist would be my sole possession, all I ever carried for the rest of my life" (Mafi 195). This shows that she learns to grow with pain. Shadi's reassurance and social support assist her in rebuilding her self-worth. Shadi's journey of self-compassion and self-reassurance helps her in reaching up to the point in her life where she accepts all the pain and suffering whole-heartedly and still hopes for the better future. Her rebuilding of her identity as well as self-compassion and self-reassurance are reflected through the fact that she accepts her situation the way it is, shows resilience and empowerment towards them and in turn becomes a symbol of motivation. This aspect of Shadi's character makes her a lonely yet strongest as she manages everything alone in this process of achieving self-empowerment.

This is how these characters go through all the difficulties in life and achieve self-empowerment. The above discussion shows that attaining self-empowerment is not an easy task. It requires continuous struggle, passion and motivation which the characters get through the elements of self-compassion and self-reassurance.

CHAPTER 5

RE-IMAGINING MUSLIM IDENTITY

The previous part of analysis deals with the life incidents of the characters of both the selected novels. By highlighting the personality traits and the aspects that ignite the behavior of self-compassion and self-reassurance, the researcher finds the fact that humans have the capacity to stay strong amidst all the harsh circumstances. The characters of the novels portray that every negative situation has something positive hidden inside it. While dealing with self-compassion and self-reassurance, another major significance that these novels hold is that the characters in both the novels belong to the Muslim community. They are Muslims but they are living in Non-Muslim countries. Hana's family lives in Toronto, Canada whereas Shadi's family lives in US. In this way, they become diasporic. Both the families face extreme discrimination, hatred and violence just because of their Muslim identity.

5.1 Analyzing and Re-creating Muslim Identity

While discussing about the lifestyle of both the families living in different countries and being diasporic, it becomes clear that they don't get equal human rights in the countries where they are living since ages. The first and foremost reason of this discrimination is their diasporic identity because they are not considered as the locals of those countries. Even though they are being settled in the respective countries for so many years but are unable to find their lost identity because they are immigrants. Other than their diasporic identity, religion becomes another major element due to which these families face discrimination. In an article, "Understanding agency differently: female youth's Muslim identities" (2020), Crossouard, Dunne and Durrani put forward their stance by saying that, "Islam gives obligation to Muslims to publically profess their religious faith" (Crossouard et.al 366). This theoretical perspective is hard to accept when it comes to western people to allow Muslims to act accordingly in regards to their religion. They are bullied, targeted and harassed due to their Muslim identity. Furthermore, they are being called by multiple names just because of their religion.

Here in these novels, religion becomes another factor of facing the discriminatory attitude from Non-Muslims. While facing Islamophobic violence, the characters go through certain transformations in their religious beliefs in a way that the belief gets stronger. In order to dig out this aspect of facing religious criticism and to observe the ways through which the characters cater religious challenges in their lives, the researcher uses another theoretical aspect. In an article, “Muslim Women negotiating their identity in the era of the Muslim Ban” (2023), Muslim women and the issues they face being diasporic are highlighted. The researcher has selected this theory because the major characters of both the selected novels are females. In this article, the theorists argue that, “Muslim women experience gendered Islamophobia because their Muslim identity is often more visible and comes to symbolize their culture” (R. Steele et al. 707). Furthermore, they are of the view that this religious discrimination actually increases the stress level and deteriorated mental health.

They further portray that while facing this situation, religion becomes a symbol of support and peace for the sufferers. The theorists conclude that in order to get rid of Islamophobic violence and discrimination, Muslims turn towards Islam and turning towards their religion provides peace to their minds and heart (R. Steele et al. 707-709). By considering this theoretical perspective and by analyzing the texts thoroughly, some incidents in the lives of Hana and Shadi make them think about the brutality that Muslims have to face while living in some other community. If Muslim community and their religion i-e Islam is considered, one of the mandatory elements according to Islamic perspective is wearing Hijab for Muslim Women. This is the teaching of Islamic religion and so, it needs to be a part of Muslim woman’s personality. This aspect of wearing hijab is neither accepted nor appreciated in western culture. In the novel *Hana Khan Caries On*, Fazeela who is Hana’s sister wears hijab and is a well-trained football player. She is considered as a very passionate athlete but cannot pursue her carrier in the respective field due to the fact that she wears hijab. In the novel, it shows that Fazeela being a passionate athlete is very much into her field but suddenly Canadian International authority of football makes a policy in which they ban all the head bands. This rule is being made specifically for Muslim women and due to this policy; they are unable to include hijab in their get up. This becomes a source of humiliation for Fazeela and she

instantly stops herself from playing football. In the novel, it is said that, “Then FIFA had enacted a new dress code that banned all headgear” (Jalaluddin 20). Here, Self-compassion is the major element in Fazeela’s personality that helps her in taking this decision and to stand by it and own it. Moreover, the presence of self-reassurance in her personality makes her feel that this difficult phase will pass soon. There is another reason for it. In an article, “Muslim Women, self and identity” (1997), Edross talks about identity as “something that is tangible, fixed or unitary” (Edross 28). This is why Fazeela does not want to continue her career because she does not want to ruin her identity. It is explained in the novel that “The rule was unsubtly aimed at hijab-wearing Muslim female athletes. Fazeela had decided to stop playing soon afterwards” (Jalaluddin 20). This decision of Fazeela signifies that for her, this gaming career is nothing in front of her religion. Basically, she changes her self-image goals and takes this powerful decision of not continuing her career anymore. This further develops self-compassion into her personality because instead of creating problems in her life, she changes her attitude as well as her identity. Transforming oneself from being an athlete to a housewife is a significant decision she takes in order to live a peaceful life.

Preceding more into the novel, when Hana is having some discussion with Thomas, her colleague regarding his girlfriend, Marisa her boss tells them that she was planning to involve Thomas and Hana with each other. In response to this, Hana tells her that she has no plans of getting married without pursuing her career. In argument to this, Marisa says, “I didn’t know that was an option in your culture” (Jalaluddin 29). This comment by Marisa is basically a critique on Muslim culture and religion. By portraying in this discussion, Uzma Jaluddin tries to dig out the thinking that western people have regarding Muslims and their religion. They think that people get married in Islam by force and they don’t have any option to negate it. This shows the stereotypical thinking that western people are having regarding Muslims. Most of the times it happens that Hana ignores such critical comments as this is one of the best possible ways to keep oneself calm. This is how she presents the attitude of distress disclosure and develops self-compassion and self-reassurance in her personality.

In comparison to Hana, Thomas is also an immigrant and an Indian Christian by religion. Both of them belong to the minority and face similar situations. She seeks social

supports from him at times when she faces Islamic extremism. Though they both are of opposite religion but being a member of minority group, he understands her situation. In the novel, Thomas says, “Hanna, you could be the person who changes people’s mindset about Muslims!” (Jalaluddin 53). This is how Thomas motivates whenever she feels down facing criticism on her religion and identity. This proves the theoretical fact put forward by Steele, Bengali, Richardson, Disbennett and Othman in the article discussed above that Muslims go through these situation and tackle them by creating strong ties with the people of same ethnicity, religion or identity (R. Steele et al. 707). Both of them share different religious identity but try to sort out each other’s problems just because they understand how one feels when he belongs to the minority group. Amidst these difficulties that Hana faces on the basis of her religion, she portrays stronger faith every time. According to the theoretical perspective, in Steele, Bengali, Richardson, Disbennett and Othman (2023) claim that Muslim identity can also be considered as “a source of coping” as well as a “source of support” whenever Islamophobia is considered (Steele et. al 707). This theoretical perspective becomes prominent in Hana’s behavior. Her faith never stumbles and never gets herself in doubt. In one of her podcasts, she starts discussing the issues of brown Muslims living away from their homeland. She says, “As a Muslim, I have faith that things will work out the ways they were meant to. But I also know I will be tested in this life, and I worry about those tests’ (Jalaluddin 73). Now, this is where the strongest Hana comes out. While facing multiple issues in her personal life, she turns towards religion to find solace and peace. Her identity becomes strengthened as she shows a stronger belief in her maker and on the Day of Judgment. This is how religion shapes a person’s identity and thoughts and helps a person grow up.

There is another incident happened in the novel when Aydin, Hana and Rashid visit Downtown, Toronto. Over there, Rashid starts making videos and gets caught by a Canadian Local. He calls Rashid, “Hey, terrorist! You are living in my country” (Jalaluddin 144). This shows the extremist attitude of Canadian people towards the Muslim community. That local Canadian attacks three of them. Hana says, “We had been attacked on the streets of downtown Toronto. Those men had tried to assault both Aydin and Rashid, yet somehow I had been the one who ended up sprawled on the ground” (Jalaluddin 145). Further, Hanna says, “I touched my hijab again, wishing I had chosen a

color that blended in better. The thought made me want to laugh and cry, and I realized I must be in shock” (Jalaluddin 145). This racial oppression makes her feel down at times but then she motivates her instantly through her religious belief and by realizing self-compassion she possesses and that is enough to tackle the Islamic extremists. This fact of the blending color of hijab shows that she tries to hide her tears and pain with the help of her hijab. This signifies that she considers her religion as a way that can console her and bring her mind back at peace. According to the selected theoretical perspectives, Steele and other researchers portray that women do face Islamophobia in a different way just “because of the gendered nature of this form of oppression” (Steele et. al 707). Also, the aspect related to her hijab also refers to the selected theoretical framework in which Steele and other theorists are of the view that “Muslim women experience gendered Islamophobia because their Muslim identity is more visible and comes to symbolize their culture” (Steele et. al 707). This aspect is valid in case of Hana’s as well. This is because Hana lives as immigrant in Canada and her hijab symbolizes her Muslim identity in a non-Muslim country. This becomes a major reason due to which she gets criticized. In response to this incident, Hana’s Kawkab khala replies, “We will show those cowards we are not intimidated by their clumsy fear tactics” (Jalaluddin 190). In this way, this gendered Islamophobia strengthen women like Hana and Kawkab because they find peace and solace in religion.

While facing all the hatred on her religious beliefs, Hana uploads a podcast in which she speaks her heart out. Hana says, “As a Muslim, I was taught to be grateful for so many gifts. This experience is just a part of regular, everyday life of a brown Muslim girl. If you see someone struggling, don’t be afraid to reach out, to show them some compassion and may be even empathy” (Jalaluddin 193). This shows that after facing all the hardships in her life, facing criticism on her beliefs and getting assaulted on her identity, she decides to stay strong. Hana does not leave her religion, does not compromise on her identity but starts ignoring the racist attitude. By ignoring the hate, she starts taking her Canadian identity and her Muslim identity side by side. She never compromises on her faith and yet follows certain rules of Canadian lifestyle by keeping a balance between both of them. This is how her identity is reimagined, recreated and re-emerged as a brave and a stronger one. The second novel under consideration i-e *An*

Emotion Of Great Delight also talks about the Islamic extremism as Shadi lives in US and it is era of post 9/11. In that era, Muslims are brutally killed, targeted and harassed. In the similar way, such confusion prevails throughout the society because Muslims are being bullied everywhere and they are being called as terrorists. Shadi holds a newspaper in which there is a statement put forward by Muslim community as it says, “There’s no such thing as Islamic terrorist” (Mafi 30). After reading this, Shadi says, “When I read the newspaper I saw myself, my family and my faith reflected back at me if in a fun-house mirror” (Mafi 30). This portrays the humiliation that Muslims face in the post 9/11 era. Moreover, Shadi says, “It haunted me, tormented me, terror, terrifying, terrorist, terrorism, these were my definitions” (Mafi 65). While facing all the discrimination, Shadi realizes that her institution forms student council for Muslim kids in which all the queries are answered. Shadi becomes a part of that debating society as she says, “The MSU president flagged me down a few times, generously inviting me to their events, and I never had the heart to say no to her” (Mafi 78). Over here, Shadi, instead of getting rid of such kinds of societies, she gets ready to become a part of it. This shows the development of self-compassion in her attitude and it feels like she is getting stable in her life and again religion becomes a symbol of solace for her. When she realizes that nothing can stay permanent whatever is going on between Ali and Shadi, instead of stumbling, she says, “When I found the moon, I found God, when I saw the stars I saw God, when I let myself be inhaled by the vast, expanding universe, I understood God the way Seneca once did-God is everything one sees and everything one does not see” (Mafi 190). In this way, she re-establishes and regains her identity as a diasporic Muslim living far away from her own homeland.

The above discussion regarding Muslim identity shows that while living in another country, religion becomes a source of facing racial oppression and discrimination just like the characters in the selected novels. Muslims characters get harassed; abused and targeted multiple times that shows that hate is inculcated in the minds of Non-Muslims for Muslims. This is why; they are not ready to accept the Muslim community. Moreover, the fact that both the protagonists and all the other characters do not de-track themselves and come out stronger when it comes to religion show that religion becomes a

source through which they get motivation. Also, religion helps them in strengthening their belief and to come back stronger than before.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study basically deals with the vocalization of marginalized communities on the basis of discrimination that they face. This study also focuses upon the recreation of Muslim identity by using the theoretical perspectives of self-compassion and self-reassurance put forth by Hermanto and Zuroff in the novels *Hana Khan Carries on* by Uzma Jalaluddin and *An Emotion Of Great Delight* by Tahereh Mafi. This fact portrays the evolutionary power of literature in molding and bouncing back to the subtle experiences of Muslim communities spending their lives in the western countries.

The selected theorists i-e Hermanto and Zuroff build in the fact that the presence of self-compassion and self-reassurance encourage humans towards well-being of their own self as well as the well-being of others. I have selected the six underlying factors put forward by Hermanto and Zuroff in the social mentality theory of self-compassion and self-reassurance that include care-seeking, care-giving, maternal support, receiving and giving social support, compassionate self-image goals and distress disclosure. The theorists presented that the presence of these factors in the personality of human being makes them stronger and in turn ignite self-compassion and self-reassurance in their personality.

In accordance with this theoretical framework, my contribution that with these six elements of self-compassion, intergenerational dynamics is another factor that plays its part in strengthening the self. When a person faces hardships in his life and it looks like they are passing on from generation to generation, a person gets motivated by the parental experiences of migration. That fact is portrayed in a way that Hana shapes her care-giving mentality by observing the struggles of her parents. Similarly, the situation of grief that Shadi's family goes through basically shapes her care-giving behavior. The theory could also be expanded to consider how family histories, cultural legacies and generational expectations contribute to an individual's internalized care-giving and care-seeking scripts. This addition would enrich our understanding of how characters like

Hana and Shadi navigate self-compassion within the context of their family dynamics and cultural narratives.

Other than self-compassion and self-reassurance, I have selected another theoretical perspective based on the recreation of Muslim identity and the role that religion plays in it portrayed by Steele, Bengali, Richardson, Disbennet and Othman. These theorists portray that religion i-e Muslim identity becomes a coping mechanism while dealing with the discrimination and hatred. Muslim Women basically adapt and assert their identities in response to sociopolitical challenges. Also, it becomes a stress reliever for Muslim communities amidst all the chaos that they face. This theoretical approach examines how overlapping social identities such as race, gender, religion, and immigration status interact to create unique experiences of discrimination and privilege for Muslim women, particularly in the context of policies like the Muslim Ban.

With respect to this theoretical framework, my contribution is that this theory also includes the element of resistance, suggesting that Muslim women not only adapt to external pressures but also resist negative stereotypes and reclaim their narratives. The Muslim Ban and similar policies create an environment of othering which influences both public identity (how Muslim women present themselves) and private identity (how they perceive themselves).

Both the selected novelists are more interested in the Young Adult Fiction. The selected novelists have written literature based on the issues and miseries that adults face in their life. Both the novels elucidate the complicated challenges including the identity crisis and various other hurdles faced by adults while living in the West.

There are multiple researches done in this specific field that I have selected. Some of the researches deal with racism and discrimination. Few other researches are incorporated with the impacts of racism and hatred on the mindset of people. Among all those researches, my research highlights the ways of social discrimination as well the negative perception of diasporic people in the minds of the people of Western countries. My research is similar to the previous researches in a way that it highlights the miseries that the diasporic people face as well as the battles they fight over there for their identity. While considering the similarities, my research is different in a way that it does not only

highlight the problems but it provides the solutions as well. While considering the miserable life that the protagonists are living in West, I have come up with the basic elements of self-compassion and self-reassurance that further lead the ways towards a balanced life and self-empowerment.

I have divided the research questions into three categories. The first two questions are interlinked out of which the first question deals with the challenges that the diasporic characters in the selected literature face while living in the West. The challenges that these diasporic characters face include the social discrimination, Islamophobia and other internal conflicts based on the identity.

Taking under consideration *Hana Khan Carries On*, all the characters suffer in their lives in one way or the other. While doing analysis, I have highlighted various challenges that the characters in the novels face in their personal as well as professional lives. Hanna's family is at the verge of downfall because her father is sick and her mother becomes the soul earner of the family. During this whole situation, another havoc they face is that another halal restaurant sets to get opened by the side of Hana's restaurant. Due to this factor, Hana's restaurant gets in danger. Moreover, Hana's family starts worrying about the fact that from now onwards, more customers will be attracted to the newly established restaurant named as The Wholistic Grill. Among this major reason of stress and anxiety prevailing through Hana's household, Hana is also worried about her job. She is just an intern and needs to put in more efforts to establish her career but her mother needs her in the restaurant as well. Hana also faces discrimination due to her Muslim identity. Other than her podcasts, she wants to make her own channel to conduct the interviews of Muslim immigrants so that people can hear more diverse stories and can get inspiration from them. For the fact that she is a Muslim and working under Canadian community, her boss Marisa does not allow her to fulfill her wish. Other than this, Hana faces criticism multiple times at her workplace due to her Muslim identity. By portraying this fact, Uzma Jalaluddin highlights the mindset that Non-Muslims have regarding Muslim community. Also, Hana's sister, Fazeela also faces criticism just because she wears scarf while pursuing her career as athlete side by side. Moreover, when Hana, her cousin Rashid and the owner of wholistic grill, Aydin visit downtown Toronto, they face hatred just because Rashid is having beard and beard is the representation of Muslim

community. All of them are being called as terrorists. This shows the stereotypical thinking of western people regarding Muslim identity. Basically, identity is the real factor due to which these diasporic people suffer in their lives.

Following the first novel, the second selected novel *An Emotion Of Great Delight* also highlights the difficult scenarios that the Muslim community faces being diasporic living in post 9/11 era. Shadi, the protagonist of the novel is the major character who is particularly confused about her identity. Being a Muslim, she faces criticism in her institution as well. Her family is indulged in multiple issues and no one appreciates her personality in the whole household. This fact indulges Shadi in identity crisis. Due to multiple miseries she faces in her life, she starts hating herself. Furthermore, the deep analysis of the novel shows that Shadi's life is not easy to live. Her father is sick, her brother dies in a car accident and her sister and her mother keep on criticizing her as much as they can. Moreover, she faces problems in her friendship with Zahra. The presence of these multiple issues makes Shadi a feeble character whose life is the most complicated to live.

Discussing about the miseries in the life of Hana and Shadi, it becomes clear that their life get affected due to many reasons but one reason is that intergenerational dynamics. Hana observes the pathetic life situation of her parents and now she herself is facing all the same scenarios. Nothing gets changed when it comes to the diasporic people living in the West. Similarly, Shadi observes the situation of post 9-11 era. The hatred she and her family used to get before never changes. Western people never accepted them and they continue living their life like they used to live before.

Following the first question, the second question deals with analyzing the factors that play their role in achieving self-empowerment. Furthermore, by applying the above mentioned theoretical perspectives i-e the social mentality theory by Hermanto and Zuroff on the selected literature and by taking close reading as the research method, this research has hunted through the delicate processes of cultural competence, self-perception as well as personal resilience.

By comparing both the protagonists, it is observed that Hana faces multiple troubles in her professional as well as personal life. She struggles for her identity while

taking care of her sick father, tries to comfort her mother, whose restaurant is at the verge of downfall, assists her sister going through pregnancy, manages her podcast life, official issues as well as her love life. Hana tries harder to create a balance between her cultural values and the western dominated culture. Her journey is the representation of the presence of self-compassion as a major factor in her personality. Self-compassion helps her in managing the stress level and recreating a positive identity amidst the most difficult situations. The analysis shows that the presence of self-compassion in her personality makes her emerge stronger as well as makes her retaliate for herself and her family. All the factors told by Hermanto and Zurrof in social mentality theory of self-compassion and self-reassurance i-e care-seeking, care-giving, maternal support, receiving and giving social support, compassionate self-image goals and distress disclosure help Hana is managing the stress level. Moreover, self-reassurance helps her in reassuring that whatever she is doing, she is doing for the sake for her family and she will definitely get the reward.

Similarly, the other protagonist i-e Shadi goes through the social alienation, grief and identity crisis. Watching her brother dying, her father lying in the hospital as well as her mother retaliating for her life give her strength and courage to fight with everything and to make her identity a stronger one. By applying the social mentality theory of self-compassion and self-reassurance presented by Hermanto and Zuroff and by applying the underlying factors i-e care-seeking, care-giving, maternal support, receiving and giving social support, compassionate self-image goals and distress disclosure it becomes evident that the journey of Shadi is itself a thorough representation of the importance of self-reassurance in acquiring resilience. The selected theoretical factors help her in recreating her identity as a stronger character of her family. Instead of taking the decision to die, she sets herself back towards the journey and this time; this comeback is done in a powerful way. This shows the significance of the presence of self-compassion and self-reassurance in human's personality.

By analyzing both the novels, it becomes clear that self-compassion and self-reassurance become the coping mechanism in dealing with stressful situations. According to the theoretical framework, self-compassion is basically treating one's ownself with love, care and kindness. In the similar way, Hana recognizes that these issues are part of

her whole community and that she is not the only one who is going through them. This recognition further inculcates the development of empathy, self-love and self-affirmation in her personality. Other than Hana, self-compassion and self-reassurance play their role in transforming the personality of Hana's father, Rashid, Shayda and Hana's mother and in turn make them strong. The ending of the novel shows that all the family members get stable in their lives and they have accepted all the scenarios. This is because they develop strong determination and resilience with the help of self-compassion and self-reassurance to tackle the calamities and this actually makes them stronger. This identity transformation in turn makes their lives easy to live. This shows that the development of self-compassion and self-reassurance are the necessary factors in recreating the identities. Moreover, for Shadi, self-compassion is more like a thorough realization of the power she has. Throughout the novel, her self-kindness is of much importance because she has this only way to survive. Amidst the hardest circumstances, if she had collapsed by then, she wouldn't have survived later in her life. This presence of self-compassion and self-reassurance assists her in rebuilding and recreating her identity, confidence as well as self-esteem.

As both the novels contain Muslim characters and the aspects related to the lives of Muslims so, the third research question deals with recreation of Muslim identity with the help of self-compassion and self-reassurance. As explained by selected theorists i-e Steele, Bengali, Richardson, Disbennet and Othman, religion serves as a bridge for Hana in tackling anxiety and stress. Islam becomes a motivational factor as well as a source of comfort while dealing with the discrimination by living in a broader Muslim community in Toronto, Canada. It motivates Hana to reconcile her depression with her cultural and religious roots. This is why Hana builds self-compassion and self-reassurance and she is never ready to sacrifice her roots for anything. Same is the case with Shadi. She faces post 9/11 hatred being a Muslim living in US but takes religion as a symbol of motivation to grow stronger in her life. Shadi believes that religious forces help her and her family in their survival and actually make them stronger instead of making them weak. This paves way towards her self-empowerment. This also proves the point that religion becomes a source of resistance to deal with the negative energy and external pressure.

By considering these facts discussed above and the examples discussed in the analysis section, it is concluded that self-compassion and self-reassurance are the most significant factors that need to be built up in the personality of human beings. These factors help people in tackling various difficulties with strong determination and as a result, develop self-empowerment in their personalities. Moreover, identity is considered to be a significant part of self. Also, identity does not need to be compromised when a person faces criticism on it. Considering the Muslim identity, it is also concluded that Muslims do face hatred and discrimination because of their religion. This discrimination paves way towards self-doubt and social alienation. Amidst this situation, self-compassion and self-reassurance play their role in inculcating confidence in the minds of Muslims. In this way, Muslim identity becomes stronger and Muslims are never ready to sacrifice their religion and identity.

6.1 Recommendations

My study deals with the problems faced by Muslims living in the western countries. Dealing with the highlighted topic, I have some recommendation for the upcoming research scholars. Future researchers can conduct a comparative study in which they can compare the literature containing Muslim characters living in West with the literature containing Muslim characters living in their homeland. Furthermore, multiple psychological studies can also be conducted in which the mental health of characters can be considered and analyzed.

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