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Trauma and Nightmare: Exploring the Impact of War on Refugee Children of Syria through Select Novels

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Abstract:

Arab Spring, spreading through Middle East and North Africa, reached Syria early 2011. It projected a threat on the authoritarian regime of Bashar Al-Assad. To subside the pro-democratic protests, Assad sent Syrian Army in cities where major protests were going on. The Syrian Army killed and tortured whoever they suspected of being involved in the protests without any trial. This led to a major discontent in the Syrian people and the violence between the Syrian Army and protesters of pro-democratic group turned into an ugly Civil War in Syria. The war has resulted in disastrous outcomes. Massacres have claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, and both ancient and contemporary cities have been reduced to rubble. There has been a significant loss in terms of property damage and human deaths. A huge influx of refugees has resulted from the war. The conflict has driven millions of Syrians from their homes. This research paper will be dealing with the different dimensions and hindrances of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) which the common people, struck in war zones have faced since 2011. The focus will be on how violence, separation and grief impacted the refugee children of war-torn Syria and in what ways these refugee children cope with the traumatic situations of war zones, through detailed study and analysis of two novels, (i) Melissa Fleming's *A Hope More Powerful Than the Sea: One Refugee's Incredible Story of Love, Loss, and Survival*, and (ii) Nujeen Mustafa's biography, *The Girl from Aleppo*.

Keywords: Arab Spring, Syrian Civil War, Refugee, Violence, PTSD.

Introduction

Syria is a country in the southwestern Asia, located on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The capital of Syria is Damascus. It shares its borders with Turkey in the north; Lebanon, and Israel in the southwest; Iraq in the east and Jordan in the south. It was one of the Arab world countries [suspended on November 12, 2011 (Batty and Shanker)].

Syria got its independence from the French rule on October 24th, 1945. In 1970, after a long political unrest, Hafiz al-Assad overthrew Salah al-Jadid and seized the power. Hafiz al-Assad ruled the country till 2000. Numerous human rights violations, including the frequent executions of citizens and political prisoners and extensive censorship, have been criticized and condemned throughout Assad's rule. When Bashar al-Assad became president in 2000, he had a reputation for modernizing and reforming the country. However, most of the hopes that were raised by Assad's presidency were not fulfilled.

With the onset of Arab Spring in December, 2010, a series of pro-democracy protests and uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa began which challenged some of the region's firmly established authoritarian regimes (Safi et al.). Energized by protesters' quick accomplishments in Tunisia and Egypt, protest developments grabbed hold in Yemen, Bahrain, Libya, and Syria in late January, February, and March 2011.

Protests against the regime quickly spread from Deraa to major cities like Damascus, Hama, and Homs. Deraa's events served as a foretaste of what was to come elsewhere: human rights monitors reported that the Syrian army targeted dissidents and indiscriminately swept up men and boys during its mass arrests and firing on unarmed protesters. At detention facilities, there were numerous reports of torture and extrajudicial executions (Suwayda). The Syrian army then brought in tanks and put Deraa under siege at the end of April 2011. Residents were cut off from food, water, medicine, telephones, and electricity for eleven days as the civilian death toll grew. The regime made some concessions in the face of international condemnation. However, it also repeated the Deraa response in other places where protests were taking place, at a much greater length and at a much higher cost, which led some regime opponents to take up arms (Reuters). Villages and urban areas developed their own local coordinating committees. Many of these committees, which were initially established to organize resistance to the regime, would later assume responsibility for public administration and service delivery.

As the non-Islamist groups faltered due to exhaustion and infighting, Islamist militants began to take centre stage in 2013. The Nusra Front, an al-Qaeda affiliate in Syria, was generally regarded as one of the most effective fighting forces because it collaborated with a variety of other opposition groups. But a new group soon took its place: Al-Qaeda in Iraq's Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced in April 2013 that he would form the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) by combining his forces in Syria and Iraq also referred to as ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria). Evidently, he wanted the Nusra Front to be a part of the new group under his command. However, the Nusra Front did not like the idea of merging, so the two groups ended up fighting.

ISIL took control of an area in the Euphrates Valley near the city of Al-Raqqah in eastern Syria. ISIL expanded to control a large portion of the land bordering Iraq and Syria from that point on, carrying out a series of successful operations in Syria and Iraq. Russia began to become more active in the conflict in the summer of 2015, deploying troops and military equipment to an air base near Latakia. Russia carried out its first air strikes against targets in Syria in September. At first, Russian officials claimed that the air strikes were directed at ISIL. However, it quickly became clear that, in order to support their ally, they were primarily targeting rebels fighting against Assad (Glenn, et al).

After a short truce between Russian and Syrian government powers and Western-upheld rebels fell in September 2016, Russia and the Syrian government powers turned their concentration to the renegade-held eastern piece of Aleppo, releasing a savage bombarding effort. In their efforts to subdue the rebels, Russian and Syrian forces made no effort to spare civilian lives; cluster bombs and incendiary bombs were dropped indiscriminately by warplanes on medical facilities, search and rescue teams, and aid workers. Human rights groups condemned those actions, but they did not stop until the rebels in Aleppo fell in December (Polyakova).

ISIS earned worldwide respect directly following the Middle Easterner Spring when it exploited political and partisan turmoil to hold onto power across Iraq and Syria and lay out an Islamic state, known as a caliphate. Around 40,000 foreign fighters from the Middle East and North Africa, Western Europe, and the United States had travelled to the region as of 2017 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime).

ISIS placed a strong emphasis on recruiting women as the extremist group expanded. According to an analysis conducted by The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation,

this was particularly true for Muslim women who found Western society to be oppressive and unwelcoming of their religion. As of 2018, as many as 13% of ISIS foreign recruits were women (Chatzitheodorou), many of whom were enticed by the promise of a new society. ISIS's recruiting strategies also emphasized children: according to a King's College London report, between 2013 and 2018, 12% of those who travelled abroad to fight for ISIS were minors.

Even though some of these recruits have since returned to their home countries, thousands are currently being held in refugee camps in northeast Syria, including up to 3,000 children who were born to ISIS members.

The ascent of the Islamic Province of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) carried with it another rush of kid warriors. This was typified by the media and propaganda that circulated, claiming that children as young as four were exposed to detonators and rifles and committed violent acts (Brooks, et al). However, as ISIS has been destroyed, many of these children are now returning home to countries like Australia, the UK, and Europe; having been exposed to radical Islamic ideology, psychological and physical abuse, and radicalization.

Up to 100,000 people, including 11,000 children, had been killed by June 2013, according to various sources, including the United Nations (Black). 4.9 million Syrian refugees have fled to neighbouring Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Turkey to escape the violence. About 450,000 Christians from Syria have fled their homes (The Algemeiner). The United Nations estimated that the war had resulted in the deaths of 400,000 people by October 2017 (Library, CNN).

Syria was positioned to keep going on the Worldwide Happiness Index from 2016 to 2018, making it the most ridiculously brutal country on the planet because of the conflict. Since the conflict has resulted in more than 570,000 deaths, 7.6 million internally displaced people (estimated by UNHCR in July 2015), and over 5 million refugees (registered by UNHCR in July 2017), it has been challenging to estimate the population in recent years.

Following a thorough evaluation and statistical analysis of the available data on civilian casualties, the UN Human Rights Office released a report on June 28, 2022, estimating that 306,887 civilians were killed in Syria due to the conflict between March 1, 2011, and March 31, 2021. This is the most recent estimate of the number of civilian deaths caused by the Syrian conflict (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights).

Ms. Bachelet informed the Council in the first official update on the death toll since 2014 that more than one in 13 of those who died due to conflict were women (26,727 in total) and almost one in 13 were children (27,126 young lives lost) (UN News).

The first novel under study is Melissa Fleming's *A Hope More Powerful Than the Sea: One Refugee's Incredible Story of Love, Loss, and Survival*. It is the remarkable tale of a Syrian refugee. The central character Doaa Al Zamel is both mundane enough to compel sympathy and amazing enough to be unforgettable. Publisher's Weekly writes, "Fleming should be congratulated for bringing Al Zamel's inspiring and illuminating story to the page."

Adrift in a frigid sea, with no land in sight, only particles from the ship's wreckage and floating corpses all around—nineteen-year-old Doaa Al Zamel floats with a small inflatable water ring around her waist and with two babies in her arms. The kids have been thrust into Doaa's hands by their relatives who were drowning in the sea. For days, Doaa floats, prays, and sings to the toddlers with her fingers. She must live alive for those kids. She has to now no longer lose hope

A Hope More Powerful Than the Sea is an emotionally charged, eye-opening genuine story that represents the millions of unheard voices of deportees who risk everything in a hopeless hunt for the pledge of a safe future. Melissa Fleming sheds light on the most burning philanthropic extremity of our time and paints a pictorial, indelible portrayal of the triumph of moral spirit.

The second novel under study, Nujeen Mustafa's biography, *The Girl from Aleppo*, was published in 2017 and co-authored with Christina Lamb. She is on a difficult path to escape the Syrian war, having already faced challenges due to her disability and ethnicity.

The book is 247 pages long and is divided into 21 chapters. It is written in the first person by the teenager who names the book. It also includes photos of the journey and important situations in Syria, as well as an appendix with journey details (distances, modes of transportation, and amounts spent).

The narrative is divided into three sections: "The loss of a country" (comments on the Kurdish ethnicity, the Arab Spring, the Syrian war, and the reasons for the escape); "The journey" (reports on the dangers, fears, and how the arrival in Europe went); and "A normal life" (about life as a refugee in Germany and the challenges she still faces).

The teenager's memories and perceptions give the inhumane events of the Syrian war and the forced migration diaspora an even more striking and sensitive meaning. Her story demonstrates a lot of bravery and hope from someone so young, but who never stopped dreaming.

Aims and Objectives

The main objective of this project is to study the adverse effects of war on children's mental state and their condition through the detailed reading of select Novels.

This Project will help us understand how literature gives an insight into the traumatic effects of war and shape our understanding in taking into consideration how children are affected by it. War literature outlines a disturbing but necessary reality which questions the relevance of war.

Hypothesis

We propose that the conflicts between different militant outfits ending up in violence and war and the consequent personal damage in the lives of the people result in a long-lasting traumatic impact on the minds of the children.

Methodology

The methodology adopted for this research is a close reading and analysis of the content, form, narrative technique etc. of Nujeen Mustafa's biography, *The Girl from Aleppo* and *A Hope More Powerful Than the Sea: One Refugee's Incredible Story of Love, Loss, and Survival* by Melissa Fleming as primary sources. Trauma Studies, war literature, literature of forced migration, Xenophobia, researches, and studies related to the psychological impact of war will be used as secondary resources for the research project. Further, Reports, Journals, Non-fictional works, Articles on war etc. will also be taken into consideration

Research Plan

This project focuses on two novels. Both the works capture the crisis in Syria through a refugee's perspective. They deal with death, injury, poverty, displacement, anxiety, war-trauma and the subsequent impact on children.

The Girl From Aleppo is a memoir by Nujeen Mustafa, a young Syrian woman with cerebral palsy who fled the Syrian Civil War with her family in 2013. Despite her physical disability, Nujeen determinedly pursued education, and eventually made the journey to Europe

on a wheelchair. Along the way, she encountered numerous challenges and dangers, including harsh weather, treacherous borders, and unscrupulous smugglers. Despite these obstacles, Nujeen remained determined and hopeful, using her wit and determination to overcome adversity and find a better life for herself and her family. Ultimately, she was able to reach Germany, where she was granted asylum and received the medical treatment she needed. She found safety and a new home in Germany, where she continues to advocate for the rights of refugees and people with disabilities.

In *A Hope More Powerful Than the Sea: One Refugee's Incredible Story of Love, Loss, and Survival*, Melissa Fleming shares the harrowing journey of Doaa Al Zamel, a teenage Syrian refugee in search of a better life. Doaa and her family leave war-torn Syria for Egypt where the climate is becoming politically unstable and increasingly dangerous.

Melissa Fleming paints a vivid, unforgettable portrait of the triumph of the human spirit and the trauma brought on her teen mind and the toddlers who went through the most pressing international humanitarian crisis of our time. In this work, we will be analysing the traumatic experiences of death, separation, violence that the characters went through with emphasis on children.

This project is broadly divided into five Sections:

1. Introduction
2. Trauma of Violence
3. Trauma of Separation
4. Trauma of Grief
5. Conclusion

Trauma of Violence

Description of Trauma and Violence

According to APA Dictionary of Psychology, Trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape, or natural disaster. Individuals, families, and communities all bear a significant burden as a result of the effects of traumatic events. Albeit many individuals who experience a horrible mishap will happen with their lives without enduring adverse consequences, others will experience issues and experience horrendous pressure responses.

According to WHO (World Health Organisation) Violence is the “intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group

or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.”

Universally, violence brought about passings of an expected 1.28 million individuals in 2013 up from 1.13 million out of 1990. Nonetheless, worldwide populace became by generally 1.9 billion during those years, showing an emotional decrease in violence per capita. Of the passings in 2013, about 842,000 were ascribed to self-hurt (self-destruction), 405,000 to relational violence, and 31,000 to aggregate viciousness (war) and legitimate mediation. For each single demise because of hatred, there are many hospitalizations, many crises division visits, and huge number of regular check-ups. Moreover, cruelty frequently has deep rooted ramifications for physical and emotional wellness and social working and can slow monetary and social turn of events.

In 2013, of the assessed 405,000 passings because of relational violence around the world, attack by gun was the reason in 180,000 deaths, attack by sharp item was the reason in 114,000 deaths, and the leftover 110,000 deaths from different causes.

People's physical and mental health can suffer as a result of war. This is associated with direct exposure to interpersonal violence (murder, torture, or other life-threatening situations), as well as adversities resulting from people losing their homes and being displaced or being an indirect consequence of destroyed infrastructure. In studies with war trauma victims, high rates of mental distress, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) have been documented. PTSD sufferers are more likely to have mental and physical comorbidities, such as an increased risk of suicide. Even though the prevalence reported by various studies varies significantly, these findings appear to be consistent across studies involving the civilian population and war veterans. Additionally, the prognosis for PTSD varies, with some patients making a full recovery while others suffer from a more chronic course (Liu).

As a result of violence in the Syrian Civil War, Syrian child refugees frequently experience grief over the loss of their homes, significant relationships, and support systems. A study of 1,000 adolescents and children from Syria found that 45.6% of them had PTSD symptoms, with a high rate of comorbidity with emotion dysregulation. Anxiety and depression were found to be significantly associated with PTSD in another study involving 1115 Syrian children who had been displaced in Turkey. In a sample of 8000 displaced Syrian children, 15.1% mentioned having persistent fears, and 26% mentioned having suicidal thoughts.

On the other hand, it has been observed that children who have been the victims of war or extreme violence also exhibit resilience and strategies for coping. Indeed, children can demonstrate substantial resources and adaptability to wartime hardship. Various meanings of versatility have been embraced, assisting with developing a complex image of how the youngster opposes the weights of war and military viciousness.

Violence in many structures can be preventable. There are areas of strength for a between levels of violence and modifiable elements in a country, for example, a concentrated (local) destitution, pay and orientation imbalance, the hurtful utilization of liquor, and the shortfall of protected, stable, and sustaining connections among kids and guardians. Methodologies tending to the fundamental reasons for violence can be moderately successful in forestalling viciousness, albeit mental and actual wellbeing and individual reactions, characters, and so on have forever been unequivocal elements in the arrangement of these ways of behaving.

Evidences of Trauma of Violence in War-Literature

Encouraged by the rallying cries that had dominated the Arab Spring, some school boys spray-painted graffiti on their school wall, *Ejak Al Door ya Duktur* (You are next, Doctor), alluding to Bashar al-Assad's training as an ophthalmologist. This leads to the arrest and torture of three immature boys. The locals are outraged and stage peaceful protests throughout the municipality. On March 18, in a coordinated action, people in Damascus, Homs, and Baniyas also took to the through fares along with the people of Daraa to demand their release of Darra's children while chanting, " God, Syria, freedom" (Fleming, 32).

Doaa stood outside her house and watched as protesters marched via way of means of shouting, " End the emergency law," and stressful the discharge of political captures, such as the boys of Daraa. Suddenly, to her surprise, the police started to blast them with high-strain tear gas water cannons from advancing huge exchanges. Her pleasure turned to horror as protesters ran screaming in all instructions or fell helpless to the ground (Fleming).

Sana published a story on March 21st, Mother's Day in Syria, citing an Assad administration source who stated that a committee had been established to investigate the violent clashes in Daraa and that they had decided to release several "young men" (Fleming, 34). The boys had cigarette burns on their faces, and a few had fingernails missing. Word of the boys' condition fuelled even more anger. Even in a regime acknowledged for suppressing

dissent, the torture of youngsters turned into unthinkable. The boys of Daraa have become icons of the budding revolution, and the protests grew (Fleming, 34).

That Mother's Day, Doaa's world was changed forever. As a ritual, her family would visit their grandfather for lunch and visit the cemetery to read the al-Fatiha, the first chapter of the Quran, over her grandmother's grave. Although the ride was fifteen minutes, but as soon as they neared the city centre, Doaa noticed darkish grey smoke growing a block away and noticed a police station on fire. Flames bloomed over its roof and shot violently out of its windows, and the scent of smoke began to fill the taxi, burning Doaa's throat. Police officials ran from the constructing to get away the flames, and the driver slammed at the brakes forcefully. "The protesters set it on fire," he shouted as the automobile screeched to a halt. With the crackling sound of gunfire erupting nearby, Hanaa and her family ran with their heads down, to the nearest building. Feeling exposed, they pressed in opposition to the wall as bullets ricocheted above their heads. They could not see in which the bullets have been coming from and were not positive a way to keep away from them. As soon as they reached the house, Doaa ran up the stairs to the roof from where she could clearly see the demonstrations.

Protesters stood in strains and had been strolling slowly ahead throughout the rectangular whilst security forces commenced firing tear gas at them. The protestors were continuing marching and chanting, "No to the emergency law" and "The Syrian people won't be humiliated" (Fleming, 41). Many dropped to their knees, rubbing their stinging eyes because the tear gas choked their breathing. Then, to Doaa's horror, she noticed officials elevating their rifles and capturing stay ammunition without delay into the crowd.

She commenced to sense faint as she gripped the threshold of the wall and watched people fall to the floor, a few wounded, a few now no longer moving at all. Even from a distance, Doaa sensed that they had been dead, and she started sobbing at the Violence in their deaths.

After witnessing this incident, Doaa started taking part in demonstrations. The greater demonstrations she attended, the bolder she grew, and she found unique methods to make contributions to the cause. The protests sooner or later have become social activities where young Syrians could collect to proportion their hopes for the future. At night time Doaa spent her loose time questioning up inspiring rally cries and slogans to print on symptoms that she could convey to demonstrations for others to carry. She additionally started making bracelets

and rings out of beads that have been the colours of the progressive flag: red, black, and green (Fleming, 45).

Monday, April 25, 2011, started like any other bright spring day. But that day turned out to be life-changing for the people of Daraa. As they heard the news "Daraa is under siege, army has been sent to root out the terrorists who are trying to destroy the country" (Fleming, 61). One week passed with their only contact with the outside world being when armed guys in uniform and muddy boots banged and kicked at their door, annoying to be allow in to seek the house. This stressful and intrusive ritual was executed as regularly as three times in a day. But in those eleven days, even as Doaa and her own circle of relatives had remained locked inside their home, the arena had taken word of their plight, and information reviews started to launch information of the greater than hundred deaths and thousand arrests that had passed off during the siege, Doaa, too, was feeling the physical effects of stress. She lost her appetite and grew extremely thin. Hanaa suspected that Doaa was anemic. She also began to get regular sites in her eyes, and one morning she awoke to discover that her entire eyelid was completely swollen. Insomnia and panic attacks plagued the girls, and they were always anxious and anxious, constantly fighting over insignificant matters. Hamudi, her younger brother, would cry every time he heard a loud noise, and the sounds of bombs outside made him hysterical" (Fleming, 82).

The Arab Spring as they call it was a series of anti-government protests and uprisings against the regime in the Arab countries during the early 2010s. It was witnessed in countries like Yemen, Bahrain, Jordan, Libya, Algeria, Morocco and even Oman. Nujeen recalls how she wanted it to be Syria's turn. The initial hope and promise of a regime change was soon overshadowed by the violence it followed. Universities became the first hotspot of protests, "Girls and Boys who had only cared about music, clothes, and their friends now found themselves trying to bring down a dictator "(Mustafa, 45). Nujeen's helplessness has been expressed throughout the novel by her fear of being just 'numbers'." We will just be numbers, me and Nasrine and Bland, while the tyrant will be engraved in history"(Mustafa, 44). Her fear of being wiped out is not only personal but also transcends to her entire ethnic group which was already living on tip toes in Syria. Human identity is reduced to statistics and data during war. In such a situation being part of the revolution was a far-off cry, staying alive mattered.

Nujeen found her comfort in Television. It acted as her coping mechanism - as a substitute for her inability to lead a normal life. After the war started the same TV was used as

a tool to push the violence in the background and delay reality, "I watched Days of our Lives and tried not to think what would happen if a bomb struck and the floor crumbled..."(Mustafa, 48)

The last thing she did before leaving Aleppo forever was just watch TV. Watching Tv would keep her occupied and dim the voices of war going on outside. "...no TV, there was nothing to do but listen to the war"(Mustafa, 54)

The continuous bombing and shelling coupled with fear of death made Nujeen familiar with all the weapons just by the sounds of it. "We became experts on weapons"(Mustafa, 54). The exposure of children to war desensitizes them to violence. According to American psychological association " Many children, exposed to horrible acts of violence during key developmental years come to accept violent acts as a normal part of life" (Smith).

Concluding Remarks

Traumatic violence often exposed the children towards complex trauma. It is that trauma when the individual experienced repeated instances of the same type of incidents over a period. Children in Syria often witnessed the Violence of torture, death, and abuses that they started suffering from this trauma. This typically results in emotional dysregulation leading to increase the risk of traumatic experiences. Children mainly get irritated and they also suffer from hysteria, panic attacks, immediate stress response and biochemical imbalances.

Trauma of Separation

Description of Separation

Evolutionarily speaking, children are hardwired to react to being separated from their parents as if it were a matter of life or death. In fact, the pain and fear that children clearly experience during times of separation are only one part of the story. The drastic spikes in stress hormones that occur within children's bodies following separation from their parents are invisible to the naked eye and essentially prepare them for fight or flight from this perceived danger.

While children typically recover quickly from the emotional and physiological effects of brief separations, prolonged separations have the potential to exhaust children's bodies and brains, leading to adverse developmental outcomes. In contrast to the routine separations that take place at preschool or day-care drop-offs, in which children are informed that their parents

will soon return to pick them up and do so, forced, and prolonged separations pose a threat to crucial attachment bonds and increase the likelihood of a variety of long-term effects on children's mental and physical health (Jerud).

“The crisis in Syria affects more than 12 million people—more than those who were affected by Hurricane Katrina, the earthquake in Haiti, and the Indian Ocean tsunami combined,” states World Vision (Faith to Action Initiative). Four million of the Syrians who have fled their homes and become refugees are children, all of whom have left school and their plans for further education behind. Among the 240,000 people killed in the conflict, over 12,000 were children, and a million were injured or disabled. Children have been coerced or forced to take part in the conflict.

Children in Syria experience a variety of forms of separation from their families. Many are separated from their parents, who have moved elsewhere, such as to Lebanon, Jordan, or Turkey, or to find work. Others have abandoned their children to relocate to a stable nation that can officially welcome and support them in Europe. According to the UNHCR, thousands of Syrian refugee children are separated from both parents, and over 70,000 Syrian refugee families do not have a father (UNHCR). This separation may result in a breakdown in the structure of the family and have an emotional and financial impact on children and families. Trauma to the physical and psychological well-being, interruptions in preventative care, injuries and illnesses, and impediments to spiritual growth have all affected a lot of children.

Evidences of Trauma of Separation in War-Literature

Through the autumn and lengthy wintry weather of violence and food, electricity, and water shortages, the Al Zamels, like all families, did what they might to get via way of means in a city that had become a struggle fare zone. Then one day in June 2012, when Shokri, Doaa's father, arrived at his salon he found that missiles had hit the roof, turning the back of his store into rubble. For over thirty years, Salon Al Fananeen has been his supply of earnings and a part of his identity, and now it lay in ruins. Doaa noticed a shift in him when he got home that night. “The shop...” was all he could say. The loss of his shop took his spirits away. As every day in Daraa became a lottery of life and death, the stresses of survival began to take their toll leading many Syrians to leave the country (Fleming, 81).

News of women being kidnapped and raped was spread through the community. Then one day, Hanaa and Shokri decided that it would be better to leave the country. Doaa did not want to leave and she had promised herself that she would never abandon the revolution but

her father did not listen to her and said that he wanted to protect his family from this warzone. Leaving one's country is like leaving one's own home and Doaa was very shattered with this decision and when they finally reached the Jordanian border, Doaa looked over her shoulder at her homeland, taking everything in. "I envy the mountains and the trees and the rocks because they will be able to breathe Daraa's air and I won't," she whispered, taking one last, longing look at her home (Fleming, 91).

Feeling disconnected and homesick, Doaa spent lots of time worrying about her family's future. She knew that she and her family had been now secure in Egypt and attempted to persuade herself that they had been higher off here. She attempted to awareness on the brand-new experience of protection and normalcy and revelled in listening to ordinary city-avenue sounds instead of shelling and bombs. But no matter all this, Doaa had trouble ignoring the numbness that overcame her. She did, at least, have a purpose in Daraa. She changed into an identified member of a supportive network that changed into status up for values that had been beneath attack. Here, she felt like a tolerated visitor living off sympathy: a refugee and one in every of a developing organization of helpless people (Fleming, 101).

Nujeen's family was internally displaced and later goes on to become a refugee as well, after being displaced from Manbij it is difficult for her to associate her identity with the place again. She is met with a lost sense of identity as the Kurds never had their own homeland to begin with, split in four countries "none of which Likes us(them)" (Mustafa,16). Having fathomed Aleppo as her true home and leaving that also behind, it leaves her with an identity crisis. Back then Nujeen did not know they were fleeing their homes forever. The fate of war refugees runs similar throughout the world. "The average length of time that refugees spend in camps is 17 years" (Devictor). This relocation coupled with Separation from family induces more trauma on children than being present in war-stricken area. Nujeen's family was separated to flee the country. Nujeen was devastated by the separation "I clung to Ayee. I had never been separated from her before"(Mustafa, 70-71). Even brief separation can lead to long lasting trauma and serious mental health issues including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety.

Concluding Remarks

Children being separated from their family or their home country directly effects the mental health and they get deprived from of a much-needed time for cognitive-emotional processing and self-healing. They do not live normal lives as their right to grow up in a safe

environment got crushed due to the consequences of war. As a result, they suffer from depression, anxiety disorders, depersonalization, and behavioural disorders.

90 (48.4%) of the 186 children had been compelled to seek refuge as a result of the war. Children in the SOS Children's Village were most likely to suffer from a family member's death, as well as the most other types of traumas. 51.6% of the 186 children had PTSD, with the SOS Children's Village children having the highest prevalence (39/48). Children who lost a parent but lived with the surviving parent had a higher prevalence of PTSD (29/50) than children who lived in an orphanage (15/38) or with both parents. 42 of the 186 children, or 22.6 percent, had depression, but there was no statistical difference between the groups. Boys and girls had similar rates of PTSD and depression. A higher rate of PTSD and depression was linked to the death of a parent. Depression was not associated with the loss of both parents, but PTSD was. Depression prevalence was positively correlated with PTSD prevalence.

Trauma of Grief : Description of Grief

Grief is a strong, sometimes overwhelming emotion for people, regardless of whether their sadness stems from the loss of a loved one or from a terminal diagnosis they or someone they love have received (Emoji Cut).

The term "traumatic grief" refers to a combination of traumatic experiences and grieving or grief responses. It is triggered by the death of a significant other and includes symptoms that are like PTSD but specifically focused on the lost person. These symptoms include an intrusive and distressing preoccupation with the deceased, hypervigilant scanning of the environment for cues of the deceased, the desire to be reunited with the deceased, features of separation anxiety, futility regarding the future, difficulty acknowledging the death, a shattered world view, anger, and impairments in social functioning (Bifulco).

Evidences of Trauma of Grief in War-Literature

In Egypt, Doaa got engaged with Bassem who was a member of the Free Syrian Army. " Bassem was twenty-eight years old and, up until the war, had a thriving downtown hairdressing salon that he had bought with his own savings. When the war started in Daraa and his business was shut down, he joined the opposition and began fighting for the FSA. Eventually, he was caught. He was imprisoned for two months and subjected to torture, handcuffs, forced sleeping, and deprivation of water. When he was finally released, he learned

that his brother, also a fighter for the FSA, had been killed while carrying Bassem's ID card in his wallet" (Fleming, 115).

"However, Egyptian attitudes toward the Syrian refugees begin to change. Many Egyptians begin to resent the Syrians' presence and the atmosphere becomes toxic. Many refugees begin receiving violent threats. To escape, Bassem suggests that he and Doaa flee to Europe." But they did not realize the danger which was awaiting them. Terrified and not able to swim, Doaa and her Bassem hand their existence financial savings to smugglers and board a dilapidated fishing vessel with five hundred different refugees, which includes one hundred children. After four frightening days at sea, every other ship, packed with indignant guys shouting insults, rams into Doaa's boat, sinking it and leaving the passengers to drown. "When the sun rose the next day, Doaa saw that the night had taken at least half of the survivors. Corpses were floating all around her, facedown, blue and bloated. Doaa recognized some of them, but not from the group of initial survivors. The people had drowned before her eyes and throughout the night had disappeared. Their bodies became heavy and began to sink as a result of their lungs taking in too much water rather than air. Doaa choked on the stench from the dead" (Fleming, 218).

Even Bassem was not feeling well as she saw his feverish eyes. Bassem took his last breath in Doaa's arms began floating away from her. Doaa tried to reach him but could not do so as she was carrying baby girl in her arms whose family had drowned. "The last Doaa saw of him was his thick black hair rising up as the dark water engulfed his head. Then he was gone. She screamed just once as she witnessed this, allowing herself a moment of anguish. At least two dozen people had died since the sun had come up that day. But to Doaa, it was the end of everything. She had lost the most precious person in her life and she wanted to die with him. She imagined letting herself slip through the inflatable ring and into the sea with Bassem. But then she felt Malak's tiny arms, the girl she was carrying, around her neck and realized that she alone was responsible for this child. Doaa knew that she had to try to keep her alive" (Fleming, 217).

Death of Bassim made led Doaa into such situation that whenever someone mentioned about him, Doaa sternly replies that "Bassim is not dead and he is alive" (Fleming, 254). At the end of the book, there is a note from Doaa where she has expressed her emotion and said that "My fiancé, who was the love of my life, slipped out of my arms and drowned right in front of my eyes, and there was nothing I could do about it. Now, my life without him feels

like a painting without any colour. More than anything, I just wish he were still with me. When I was afloat in the sea, I did my best to keep Masa and Malak alive. Over those four horrific days, they became a part of me. When I learned that precious Malak took her last breath after we were rescued, I felt like someone tore my heart out of my chest. But I do find comfort in knowing that she has made her way to heaven. A heaven where she has at last found safety, and there is no fighting or wars” (Fleming, 272).

Fleming is leader spokesperson of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, so it’s no marvel that she paints Doaa’s revel in each as intensely non-public and as emblematic of the Syrian refugee revel in. This is truly powerful from one perspective: It each humanizes the refugees and heightens the significance of fixing the present-day crisis. Doaa’s tale tells us: This is a hassle related to actual people, and it cannot be ignored.

The second part of the book is distressing given the death, gruesome. Details and uncertainty of the situations presented. Families had died in attempt to cross the sea in overloaded dinghies. “Either you die from shelling in Syria or you die at sea” (Mustafa, 87). The fact that other people were referring to Nujeen as being lucky, it re-establishes how everything had boiled to mere survival. The apprehension of death at sea weighed less than dying in Syria. The episode of the five-year-old boy Aylan Kurdi being washed off at Turkish beach left her with numbness. This can lead to extremes of anxious avoidance in children because they might become emotionally unresponsive to stressful situations (Calder).

Enroute the children were being deceived by smugglers and for her, the journey was more tedious as she and her sister passed difficult paths pushing the wheelchair. Being a minor, the process of applying for Asylum was litigated. She is what is called as “unaccompanied children” who lose all adult protection in refugee situations.

Concluding Remarks

Traumatic grief experienced by children after losing their parents or any other family member is an incredibly stressful event. Losses are so painful for some individual that they alternately approach and avoid their emotions in front of others. These emotions may be expressed as misbehaviour rather than as sadness and they often prefer to be alone. Grieving children suffers from higher rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as compared to others.

Conclusion

In Syria, war is the only thing that many children are familiar with. They still live in constant fear of violence, landmines, and explosives and war debris. They struggle with war scars on their bodies and minds.

One of the most significant educational crises in recent memory has also resulted from the war, with a whole generation of Syrian children bearing the brunt of the conflict. Education facilities are overcrowded, and many schools cannot be used because they have been damaged, destroyed, used to house displaced families, or are being used by the military. By the end of 2022, only two-thirds of schools were fully operational, and 2.4 million children were not attending school or were at risk of dropping out.

Violence, threats to their health and safety, hunger, the risk of abuse, and the loss of education all fall on children with disabilities. Their difficulties have been made even more difficult by their lack of mobility and their difficulty escaping harm.

In Fleming's 'A Hope More Powerful Than the Sea,' we see how the protagonist, Doaa, although overcomes her fears but she never accepts the death of Bassem. She lives in denial. When the author asks her about Bassem, it appears that she had made walls her around and she remains emotionally unresponsive.

Nujeen, in 'The Girl from Aleppo' concludes her journey by talking about the various challenges and prejudices faced by the host country, including xenophobia and homesickness. In the face of adversity, she calls hope her most powerful weapon. There is a lack of adequate measure for children refugees. Although she made it alive to the other side but millions of refugees still await asylum.

According to the findings, most countries' internally displaced people, as well as those who were not displaced by the conflict, had a higher prevalence of mental illness. The most significant factors in the prevalence of PTSD, anxiety, and depression include the frequency with which people have relocated as a result of the war and experienced distress as a result of the noise of the war. PTSD and severe mental illness affected more than 60% of the population. Having a high school education was linked to PTSD and mental disorders that were less severe. Besides, a bigger number of times changing spots of living because of war, a lower instructive level, and being bothered from war commotion were related the most with cut off PTSD and mental pain. Participants from various governorates and occupations did not differ significantly

in terms of mental disorders or PTSD. The fact that numerous additional variables contributed to these overall findings suggests the need to address multiple issues. On the psychiatric side, female participants and young participants suffered more.

According to the instances taken from both the novels and the non-fictional data, we can conclude that the conflicts between different militant outfits ending up in violence and war and the consequent personal damage in the lives of the people result in a long-lasting traumatic impact on the minds of the children.

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