INVESTIGATING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE THROUGH LINGUISTIC CHOICES IN *SLUM CHILD*: A GENDER-BASED STUDY

Tarim Masood[*]
Tazanfal Tehseem[**]

Abstract

This study investigates how domestic violence and abuse have been portrayed in Bina Shah's Slum Child.[1] The study analyzes how women's portrayal construes domestic violence, abuse, marginalization, and victimization. The study employs Thematic Roles given by Andrew and Radford, as cited in Saeed[2] to explore the linguistic choices which are significant in reflecting the underlying ideology of the author. Research shows that the beats, mourns, screams, and shouts of the female characters as portrayed in the novel represent the distress, restraint, and implicit horrendous recollections. This study has contended that the selected novel features the complex relationship of females with space and researched how the female characters swaying among private and public spaces find the metropolitan space afraid for them. This study suggests that the academia through literature must commend voice following the troubles of the declined women whosoever are tragically collided together by the perpetrators.

***Keywords**:* Domestic violence, abuse, women's portrayal

Introduction

In Pakistan, the Islamic Country, women have proven themselves as skilled and masters by taking part in every genre of life. They have also received awards and Nobel prizes at the international level. Despite this, the ruling class of society has targeted females and destruct their status. Women in Pakistan are presented in a very typical way. Many kinds of violence such as domestic, sexual, psychological, and physical, etc. occur in Pakistani society including child marriage, sexual abuse of a female child, rape, dowry, genital violence, violence at educational institutions, and many other kinds of violence which are harmful to females. All these kinds of violence are socially constructed and are based on patriarchal power structures in which men have control over the sexual lives of women.[3] Women are unfortunate in Pakistan because of their conservative minds and male dominance.

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[*] Tarim Masood, Research Scholar, Department of English, University of Sargodha - Pakistan
[**] Tazanfal Tehseem, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Sargodha – Pakistan

[1] Bina Shah, *Slum child* (Tranquebar Press, 2010).
[2] John, Saeed, I., *Semantics* Fourth Edition (Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2016).
[3] Cate Buchanan, Vanessa Farr, Michael Flood, and Jessica Galeria, "Women, Men, and Gun Violence: Options for Action," *Missing Pieces: Directions for reducing gun violence through the UN process on small arms control*, (2005): 68-78.

Gender objectification and sex offense, according to Tabassum, Ifzal, and Murtaza, may have been the major issues in an Asian nation, nonetheless for a few odd reasons have become taboo and can't be spoken about. Each lady should signify her justice and live her life, not as a victim but as a survivor. Our society leaves no option to such people that don't have a wealth of connections and wealthy families on their backs. A massive number of girls don't seem to be allowed to dream big in Asian countries and they are brought down by society.[4] In this regard, the Pakistani author Bina Shah inconspicuously portrays her country. Notwithstanding the undeniable signs like language and religion, character emergency is by all accounts a shared factor all through Pakistan's political history.[5] Novelists who criticize this tumultuous setting are counteracting the Pakistani character emergency. As such, dangerous and disruptive political terrific plans without a dream, as cited in Rushdie's *Shame* have been demonstrated to serve the abstract creative mind.[6]

In analyzing discourse, one has to focus on the purpose of different kinds of languages (such as constitutes, record, and label) and their effects, the rules and conventions of culture and society in communication, and how language use relates itself to subjects like taboos, gender discrimination, injustice, abuse, inequality, etc. The doing of gender in our society is constituted in people located in and are reflexively prepared for categorization practices, which is fruitfully explored through the use of this explicitly articulated equipment to grasp how the gender order is constituted as an ongoing reality. Keeping in mind this scenario and its relation to the present research, the notions of abuse, marginalization, oppression, violence, victimization, and their portrayal through linguistic choices are considered independent variables. On the other hand, the language used and the actions of the males affect the attitudes and the behaviors of the female characters in a way that they bound themselves to do whatsoever have asked of them. So, the effect of independent variables on the attitudes and behaviors of the female characters portrayed is regarded as the dependent variable.

The linguistic choices assigned to the participants include *agent, patient, theme, goal, source, experiencer, beneficiary, instrument, and location*. These participants depict *culprits, perpetrators, rapists, abusers, prostitutes, victims, abused, oppressed, and sufferers*. The sufferers are allocated the adjectives such as *innocent, young, simple*, and many more. As the selected text is Asian and belongs to a patriarchal society, the writer has used the language accordingly. The researchers consider it important to highlight the linguistic choices made by the writer in the selected text.

Research Objective

Slum Child is the poignant story of memory, marginalization, poverty, the power of forgiveness, and the strength of the human spirit, so with this lies the interest of the researchers. This research aims at exploring the portrayal of domestic violence, abuse,

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[4] Nida Tabassum, Muhammad Owais Ifzal, and Ghulam Murtaza, "Socio-Cultural Trauma and Gender Objectification in Haider's How It Happened: A Cultural Feminist Study," *Global Social Sciences Review* VI, no. 2 (Spring 2021): 37.
[5] *Ibid.*, 2010
[6] Rushdie, Salman, *Shame* (Alfred a Knopf, 1983).

victimization, and marginalization through linguistic choices in *Slum Child* [7]in the light of *Thematic Roles.*[8] The purpose of the researcher is to highlight the hidden realities behind the linguistic choices by analyzing the roles of the participants.

Research Question

The approach is data-driven; however, it is pertinent to start with a broad question in light of *Thematic Roles:*

- What linguistic choices have been employed in Shah's *Slum Child* that portrays domestic violence, abuse, victimization, and marginalization?

Literature Review

Gender and language are interconnected subjects that hourly burdens together as the point of convergence in research as some related subjects to these topics are males, females, and language that are examined by Coates[9], discipline assessment by Sunderland and Litosseliti,[10] some other works on language and gender by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet,[11] and women's activist stylistics by Sarah Mills.[12] The analysts and experts are entranced in investigating the ideas concerning language and gender orientations because gender orientation is strange from sex, as gender orientation is a socially fabricated term rather than an organic cluster, according to Coates.[13] It is known about gender that in particular and traditional developments, the convictions about its spread are innately inside, that are stilled using entire angles of our friendly presence as said by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet.[14] This predisposition is made in such a way that the world is depicted as male-centric or in the favor of patriarchy.

When it comes to women's literature, *Marxist feminist theory* accurately explains the class differences that are the basic reason for the exploitation of women in society. According to this theory, women are suppressed by the ruling class because there is a complete hold of men in the society as they are considered socially, culturally, and religiously strong, due to which women are deprived of their basic human rights.[15] This patriarchy is the primary source of deprivation of women and is responsible for the inferiority of females in society. They are kept under the second or lower class in society and men impose power

[7] *Ibid*., 2010
[8] *Ibid*., 2016
[9] Jennifer Coates, "Women, men, and language," *A sociolinguistic account of gender differences in language*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2015).
[10] Jane Sunderland, and Lia Litosseliti, "Gender identity and discourse analysis," ed. (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2002).
[11] Penelope Eckert, and Sally McConnell-Ginet, *Language and gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
[12] Sarah Mills, *Feminist stylistics* (London: Routledge, 2004).
[13] *Ibid*., 2016
[14] *Ibid*., 2013
[15] Judith Lorber, *Gender inequality* (Los Angeles: Roxbury, 2001).

in society because they build so-called standards of their own. This concept of patriarchy gives complete independence to males.[16]

In addition, Lorber in explaining *Marxist feminism*, further states that capitalism is also responsible for the oppression of women as they consider women their private property. From a Marxist feminist point of view, the concept of the housewife supports capitalism as women are not paid for their duties as they control their anger in front of males. They are restricted to a household only and such issues must have to be raised or highlighted in a public forum to bring positivity and awareness to people, in this regard, television is now playing a positive role by portraying women as strong who liberate themselves from the injustices of society.[17]

Further, in literature, among authors, Shah sets up the custom of male incomparability and shows how this practice has been made in modern times. Shah's *Slum Child* stresses the force of men over women and sets up society as a general public dependent on male-centric power. Given this idea, she examines the chance of reliance on a spouse who can't live without him. However, women also ought to be unobtrusively accommodating to their husband's desires and wants. In depicting the encounters of these ladies, Shah focuses on the entirety that occurred inside the social scene and that ladies needed to cling to track down the equilibrium of conjugal connections. She calls attention to the job of the agreeable/compliant spouse who has entered even the littlest pieces of a lady's life. In this social scene, she needs attention to the fact that was not hitched and the job of a family man was appointed to him.[18] Her peculiarity lies in raising her voice about the double-dealing of the bourgeoisie that does not allow common people an opportunity to escape from their pathetic position. *Slum Child* is an impression of Pakistan's battle and it reflects how the occupants of Issa Colony and the House of Ansari address their class. In contrast to Ansari, the novel portrays the predicament of *Laila* and her family, who has a place with the lower average workers and deal with issues, appreciate limitless abundance, cutting-edge offices, and notoriety both in Pakistan and abroad. Shah has added to Pakistani writing, numerous books, brief tales, and articles. Her work reflects different parts of human culture, issues of the more youthful age, issues of private enterprise, issues of outsiders in Pakistan, and the issues of ladies because of gender differences in Pakistan.[19]

In gender discrimination, patriarchy, according to Tyson, is the kind of sexism that promotes a belief that young ladies are substandard to males and this correspondence makes the picture of women as weak characters. He noticed that in a male-centric society, the entire part that male gives typically suggests something (generally bad) corresponding to ladies which is known as patriarchy.[20] Hooks in his study "Understanding Patriarchy" expresses that it is a political correspondence and an excess of demand that males are

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[16] Kim Sumi, "Feminist discourse and the hegemonic role of mass media: Newspaper discourse about two South Korean television dramas," *Feminist Media Studies* 8, no. 4 (2008): 406.
[17] *Ibid.,* 2001
[18] Sadaf Mehmood, "03 Shaking Silhouette: Gendered Spaces in Bina Shah's Slum Child," *Journal of Gender and Social Issues* 18, no. 1 (2019): 50.
[19] Bina Shah, "Literature: The antidote to the Pakistani identity crisis," *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 49, no. 1 (2014): 10.
[20] Lois Tyson, Critical Theory Today: *A User-Friendly Guide* (New York: Garland Pub, 2006).

intrinsically ruling, brilliant, and everything feeble, especially young ladies, blessed to manage the system and hold up to assumption authority through several assortments in regards to mental psychological oppression and brutality.[21] The societal structures collaborate with the ideologies of individuals and in this way produce the context of discourse. The subalterns lack socio-cultural and socio-political security in Pakistan against the experience and the violence they go through in their lives. For such circumstances, Spivak demands the need concerning delineation after sound-specific hushes, as per praise of the untold and normal stories. Spivak sees the inferior class as ignored and can be voiced through literary writings. Literature is best in regards to giving voices to the inferiors.[22] *Slum Child* by Bina Shah and *God of Small Thing*s by Roy are a few tremendous examples of featuring the socio-political or financially ignored characterization of the inferior.[23] Hamid in *Moth Smoke* viciously outlines the complexities of intercourse vocation and commodification in regards to whores.[24]

Methodology and Framework

The study is discourse-based and planned within the broader paradigm of discourse analytical studies which endeavors to showcase the portrayal of domestic violence, abuse, victimization, and marginalization through linguistic choices in *Slum Child.*[25] Other secondary sources are used to associate the thoughts with the work previously done on the selected novel. The study employs *Thematic Roles*[26] which analyze the linguistic choices made by the writer that portray domestic violence, abuse, victimization, and marginalization in the data collected as the theoretical framework.

Critical Linguistics emerges in the late 1970s and is based on *Systemic Functional Linguistics* by Halliday and Hasan. Since it ignores the interpretations of the audience, Critical Discourse Analysis emerges which aims at focusing on the dominance, abuse, and inequality prevailing in society.[27] Its models, for example, Fairclough's *three-dimensional model*,[28] and Van Dijk's *socio-cognitive model*,[29] aimed at exploring the linguistic choices and the lexical items which showcase the portrayal of power, dominance, and inequality.

Examination of the text includes linguistic assessment in terms of jargon, syntax, semantics, sound framework, and attachment association over the judgment stage. Following SFL, Fairclough sees text-based content according to a multifunctional point of view. Agreeing in congruity with Fairclough, each sentence in a literary substance is analyzable in terms of the explanation of these capacities, which Fairclough has relabeled

[21] Bell Hooks, "Dig deep: Beyond lean in," *The Feminist Wire* 115, (2013).
[22] Gayatri C. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
[23] Arundhati Roy, *The god of small things* (Penguin Books India, 2002).
[24] Mohsin Hamid, *Moth Smoke* (Penguin, 2012).
[25] *Ibid*., 2010
[26] *Ibid*., 2016
[27] Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, *Language, context, and text: aspects of language in a social semiotic perspective* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1989).
[28] Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995).
[29] Teen Van Dijk, *Handbook of Discourse Analysis: Discourse Analysis in Society* (Academic Press, 1997).

portrayals, relations, and characters. These aspects analyze only the ideational functions, personal aspects of an individual's identity, the demonstration of power structures between languages, and the relationship between reader and writer; whether it is close or distant, or formal or informal. It analyzes the object which undergoes the process of evaluation but fails to define the role of other participants; who is being affected, who is the beneficiary, what instruments are used and many more. Additionally, it examines the abuse, violence, inequality, and dominance but fails to examine how these aspects contribute positively to the upbringing of the oppressed one.[30]

Discourse analysis uses real language, in real situations by real speakers. Dijk's socio-cognitive model creates a link between society and text with the help of cognition. He named individuals' mental representation (during their actions and interactions in society) as Models. Models portray how individuals act in society and how much they can understand the social practices of others and how they speak or write something. It includes production, reception, and comprehension. For him, discourse analysis is referred to as ideology analysis because it is an abstract mental system that controls the attitudes of individuals shared in a society. These ideologies indirectly affect the personal cognition of individuals when they understand discourse during their social actions and interactions.[31]

Language reflects our comprehension and gives an outline of our discernment, cognition, and judgments. It is considered a bud vase for comprehension and a focal point that can coordinate (or mutilate) that discernment. Contrasts in how ideas and items are characterized between dialects, in this manner, lead to contrasts in the way they are seen by every speaker. Different linguists have played an important part in giving roles to the words according to the task there are performing in a sentence. In this regard, Andrews and Radford in Saeed have given the idea of *Thematic Roles*[32] which assign different roles to different words in a sentence according to the task they perform. Thematic roles mean that the participants have different roles in a sentence and these roles are viewed as thematic. In literature, the association between action words and their contentions is known as thematic roles. The linguistic choices assigned to the participants include *agent, patient, theme, goal, source, experiencer, beneficiary, instrument, and location*. They occur in writing and in this situation, the discussion happens between the reader and the writer. The author moves his/her idea around the judgment or assault of the composing structure. It is important to understand the true meaning of a sentence by analyzing the roles of the participants. In this regard, the researchers have used thematic roles to explore the portrayal of linguistic choices in the selected text that depict domestic violence, abuse, victimization, and marginalization.

Discussion and Analysis

The extracts which are given below analyze the portrayal of domestic violence, abuse, victimization, and marginalization through linguistic choices in the selected novel. The female characters have been depicted as an object which is used by everybody for their

[30] *Ibid.*, 1995
[31] *Ibid.*, 1997
[32] *Ibid.*, 2016

benefit. They are always ready to give themselves to males to satisfy their whims. The honorable and respected woman is the one who is weak and lives according to the norms and values of the patriarchal society.

Extract 01: Slum Child, Part 1, Chap 3

"I paid no attention […] shouts and whoops […] smaller boys […] liked to follow me […] pull at my hair and kick the back of my calves […] full of energy and needed amusement […] mosquitoes […] Insects […] rotting garbage to another"[33]

In this extract, the author has portrayed the men as the authoritative ones who are ready to attack women (such as pull…hair…kick…), while on the other hand, women are as weak as creeping insects. The world made by Shah in this extract mirrors the class battle and portrays the children of the Slum thusly; they resemble mosquitoes that are conceived each midyear in stale downpour puddles and portals from the morsels of caterpillars drifting on the sloped surface. They all hummed in multitudes of bugs flying starting with one heap of decaying trash and then onto the next.

Table - 1
Participants and their respective roles

Bar	Role	Interpretation
1	Agent	*Laila, the protagonist,* has been portrayed as a victim and marginalized because *the boys (perpetrators/agents)* tend to follow her, pull at her hair, and kick her back for no reason just because they are authoritative.
2	Patient	As *Laila (the victim)* is weak and marginalized, she is not afraid, rather she thinks that she is like an insect who flew from one heap of putrid waste to another.
3	Theme	*Laila (the victim)* has to accept the entire situation because she is weak while the *boys (perpetrators)* are full of energy and are always ready to ponder upon the marginalized ones.
4	Experiencer	The author has portrayed how *Laila (victim)* has accepted the ridiculous behavior of *boys (perpetrators)* and considers herself as weak as creeping insects.
5	Goal	The *victim (protagonist)* is talking to herself about her loss and suffering after the attack by *the boys (perpetrators)* who kicks her and laughs at her.
6	Source	The author has depicted the *smaller boys (perpetrators)* as mosquitoes who were born in stagnant water and ready to float

[33] *Ibid.,* 51

		on scummy surfaces. They tend to follow *Laila (the victim)*, pull at her hair, and kick her back just because they are full of energy.

Extract 02: Slum Child, Part 1, Chap 4

"The men gave us no room […] men should have the priority […] the ones going to earn a living […] women traveling […] only up to mischief […] someone's hands rubbing against my backside […] Amma took my place […] the mysterious molester […] his hands would crawl […] down her body […] with horror"[34]

In the given extract, the author has depicted a bus scene in which men and women are traveling together. Men do not give any place to females because they are authoritative while women do not deserve it because they are lower in status. Additionally, men are harassing women for no reason just because they did not consider it shameful to harass a female openly and they consider women their private property (such as mischief…rubbing…backside…).

Table - 2
Participants and Their Respective Roles

Bar	Role	Interpretation
1	Agent	The author has described that there is no room for the *women (the victims)* at any place as it is considered that they travel out only up to the mischief, while the *men (perpetrators/agents)* consider that they should have the first right on all modes of life.
2	Patient	The *men (perpetrators)* do not give any comfort to the *women (the victims/patients)* as they are portrayed as weak, and do not deserve anything.
3	Theme	After *the man (perpetrator)* harasses *Laila*, the protagonist (*victim*), on the bus, she accepts the moment hard as she has to crave the entire situation because she is a girl, though she shudders with horror.
4	Experiencer	The author has shown how *Laila*, the *protagonist*, and her *Amma*, experience harassment, because a *man (perpetrator)* first touched *Laila*, and then his hands would crawl on *Amma's* body.
5	Goal	The *victim (protagonist)* is talking to herself about her suffering from harassment and at once shudders with horror.

[34] *Ibid.*, 67-68

6	Source	The author has described that *men (the perpetrators)* consider themselves superior and authoritative and they do not feel any shame while harassing females in public.
7	Instrument	On a pragmatic level, the *hands of man (perpetrator)* have been employed as scary tools as they crawl up and down *Laila* and *Amma*'s bodies and they shudder with horror.
8	Location	The author has shown the whole scene of *the bus* where the action is performed, where *the man (perpetrator)* was harassing females.

Extract 03: Slum Child, Part 1, Chap 6

"What did Salim […] let him touch me […] I were […] animal […] life in the slum […] men liked to touch girls […] girl had fallen pregnant […] back-alley midwife […] pouring saltwater into her womb […] the monster in his eyes […] my budding breasts"[35]

In this extract, *Laila*, the protagonist, has employed the sufferings of the people living in the slum. The slums of the Issa province feel poor, dismissed by the state, disregarded by society, denied of their essential freedoms, defective, and disgraceful. The women of the slums are considered disrespectful, weak, puppets, and the men are always ready to attack them, to touch them (budding breast), even if they belong to their own families.

Table - 3
Participants and Their Respective Roles

Bar	Role	Interpretation
1	Agent	*Salim*, one of the characters in the text, has been deployed as a *perpetrator* who first tries to attack *Laila*, *the protagonist*, and later, her *Amma*, which arouses a danger in *Laila (the victim)*.
2	Patient	The author has portrayed *Laila* and her *Amma* as victims upon whom *Salim (agent/perpetrator)* attacked. Women in slums are portrayed as animals upon whom men pawed and they are full of lust for a quick feel of women's bodies.
3	Theme	*Girls in slums* have been deployed as animals and *men (perpetrators)* liked to touch them for no reason. One of the girls had fallen pregnant because of her uncle's wrong intentions,

[35] *Ibid.,* 105-106

		while the other had taken care of herself by driving saline into her womb so that she might not get pregnant.
4	Experiencer	The author has shown how the *girls (victims) in the slum* experience the sexual abuse, violence, and torture given to them by *males (perpetrators)*. They are always ready and available to men all the time to satisfy their whims and many more.
5	Goal	*Men (agents/perpetrators)* have been portrayed as authoritative oppressors, who aimlessly watch *females (goal/victims)* very hungrily because of their monstrous nature. Still, *females (victims)* are crumpled but strong-minded to rise over again even amid torments.
6	Source	The author has shown that the *girls of the slum (patient)* experience torment, oppression, violence, and sexual abuse because of the *monster in men's eyes* and their *slack-jawed mouths*, and they are full of lust for a quick feel of women's bodies.

Extract 04: Slum Child, Part 1, Chap 7

"I tell the broker […] a girl […] beautiful, young, and a virgin […] he has clients […] an item […] a Sheikh from Saudi Arabia […] in town […] needs a plaything […] a young flesh […] make him feel young and strong […] take her to the broker […] you're richer"[36]

In the given extract, there is an exchange of talk between *Irfan*, the protagonist's father, and his friend *Salim*, about the selling of beautiful, young, and virgin *Laila*, the protagonist, to a *Saudi Sheikh*, who was looking for young blood (plaything) and who will make him feel strong and young once again. *Salim* is convincing *Irfan* that if he agrees to sell *Laila* to *Saudi Sheikh*, the broker, he will be richer and will be able to fulfill his dream of buying a car.

Table - 4
Participants and their respective roles

Bar	Role	Interpretation
1	Agent	*Salim*, one of the characters, has been deployed as the monstrous creature as he is convincing *Irfan*, the protagonist's father to sell *Laila*, the protagonist *(victim)*, to *Saudi sheikh*, the broker, who was in the search of young blood.

[36] *Ibid.*, 127

2	Patient	*Laila*, the protagonist, has been portrayed as the *victim/patient* for she is about to sell by her father, *Irfan*, at the request of his friend *Salim* to the broker, *Saudi Sheikh (perpetrator)*, who is now getting old, and in the need of young flesh who will make him strong once again.
3	Theme	The author has shown *Laila*, the protagonist, as the *weak slum* for her virginity is about to be sold to a *Saudi Sheikh*, and she does not have any choice but to escape from such a harsh reality.
4	Experiencer	*Laila*, the protagonist, has been portrayed as an experiencer for her stepfather, *Irfan*, who is ready to sell her to *Saudi Sheikh*, the broker, after being convinced by *Salim*, his friend.
5	Goal	*Laila*, the protagonist, has been shown as *a passive element, as a sexual object*, and she is praying for a miracle, for her father would reject *Salim*'s offer, or would find it vulgar to sell her virginity to a *Saudi Sheikh*.
6	Source	The characters like *Saudi Sheikh*, *Irfan*, and *Salim* have been deployed as perpetrators who are always ready to pounce upon females as shown in the given extract (*Salim* and *Irfan* are going to sell virgin *Laila* to the broker, *Saudi Sheikh*).
7	Beneficiary	The author has portrayed *Saudi Sheikh (perpetrator)* as a beneficiary, for he is in search of a young, beautiful, and virgin girl who will make him feel strong, fresh, and young once again.
8	Instrument	On a pragmatic level, *Laila*, the protagonist, has been depicted as a tool for the perpetrators like *Salim*, who is convincing *Irfan*, Laila's father, to sell her to the Saudi *Sheikh*, to make him feel fresh, strong, and young again.

Extract 5, Slum Child, Part 2, Chap 4

"I had [...] friendship [...] between girls in the slum [...] boys who pursued them [...] always denied [...] saying, he is my brother [...] she is like my sister [...] prompt vulgar chants [...] subha mein bhai, shaam mein charpai [...] brother in the morning, to bed in the evening [...] how Najeeb had called me sister [...] enough problems [...] deal with as well"[37]

In the given extract, *Laila*, the protagonist, is talking about the exchange of communication and love affairs between boys and girls in the slum. They usually prompt vulgar chats in the name of friendship and call it a brother-sister relationship (subha mein

[37] *Ibid.*, 207

bhai, shaam mein charpai). Usually, males in the slum area force women to be in such illegal relationships and end up when the benefits stop. One of the characters, *Najeeb*, also calls *Laila*, a sister, but she cannot afford it as she had quite enough suffering and problems in her life.

Table - 5
Participants and their respective roles

Bar	Role	Interpretation
1	Agent	The author has shown *men* as the cause of illegal relationships and affairs between girls and boys in the slum. They pursue girls to do vulgar chats with them by saying it is a brother-sister relationship.
2	Patient	The *female* characters in the text have been depicted as innocent as a lamb for they easily fall prey to love affairs with males.
3	Theme	The writer has shown how *men (perpetrators)* start a friendship with *girls (victims)* in the name of a sister-brother relationship, and ends in the bed, as the writer has said: *subha mein bhai, shaam mein charpai, brother in the morning, to bed in the evening (p. 207).*
4	Experiencer	After sharing a bed with the girls, *men (perpetrators*) left them on their own so *girls* suffer all alone and are then rejected by society.
5	Goal	In this extract, *men* have been deployed as the cause of a female's suffering for they force them to prompt illegal chats with them and to share the bed with them.
6	Source	The author has shown *men* as the source of guilt and shame for the *females* when they leave them after sharing a bed with them. They start their relations in the name of brother and sister and end them in bed.

7	Beneficiary	The author has portrayed how *men (perpetrators)* of the slum took advantage of *females* by fooling them in the name of love and ended their relationship in bed (where the benefit stops).
8	Instrument	On a pragmatic level, the *men* of the slum take *brother-sister relationships* as a scary tool to fool the *girls* and create extramarital relations with them.
9	Location	The writer has depicted the scene in the *slum area of Karachi* where *boys* and *girls* start their friendship in the name of brother-sister relations and exchange vulgar chats with each other and end up in bed.

Extract 6, Slum Child, Part 2, Chap 4

"Laila [...] what Jehan said? [...] a boyfriend [...] don't have to be embarrassed [...] trust me [...] I wanted to [...] slap her [...] how dare the both of them [...] talk about me like that [...] I was a good girl [...] what people said [...] Christians [...] fast, loose, would open our legs [...] for anyone for everyone for free [...] I was [...] virgin as Maryam was [...] hadn't been ignorant about sex [...] grown more [...] from childhood to [...] teen [...] tried to run away from the chore [...] I realized my body [...] more womanly [...] I locked myself [...] I stared at my budding breast [...] swallowing hips [...] prodded or stroked them [...] guilty fingertips"[38]

In the given extract, *Maryam*, the elite Ansari's daughter, is talking to *Laila*, the protagonist, about her love affair because *Jehan*, Maryam's brother (who himself has secret affairs and also tries to harass Laila), has told her that *Laila* has a boyfriend. Laila got furious after listening about herself and says that these are the Muslims who consider Christians fast, loose, and always ready to open their legs for the boys without any hesitation. The girls of the Christians are as virgins as the girls of the Muslims and they are aware of their growing bodies (such as swallowing hips…guilty fingertips…).

Table - 6
Participants and Their Respective Roles

Bar	Role	Interpretation
1	Agent	After being told by *Jehan* (*abuser*) that *Laila* has a boyfriend, *Maryam (agent)* asked *Laila* (*abused*) to tell her about her affair with complete trust and without any hesitation or embarrassment.

[38] *Ibid.,* 213-214

		Laila got angry and wanted to slap *Maryam* that how dare they both can talk about her like that.
2	Patient	The author has portrayed *Laila*, the protagonist, as a puppet in the hands of elite Ansari children who are accusing Laila of having a boyfriend. On the other hand, Laila is aware of her budding breast and swallowed hips, and knew how to protect her virginity.
3	Theme	The *girls* in the slum have been portrayed as *weak*, *loose*, *fast*, and always ready to open their legs for everyone to amuse themselves without any embarrassment. Instead, they are not considered virgins like the girls of the Muslims.
4	Experiencer	*Laila,* the protagonist, has been deployed as not a virgin in front of *Maryam* just because Maryam's brother, *Jehan*, has seen her with a boy. On the other way, Laila is not ignorant of sex and is aware of her growing body.
5	Goal	As *Laila,* the protagonist is a Christian, so she is labeled non-virgin by the Muslims (*Jehan and Maryam*) as they consider that Christians are always ready to be naked in front of others and open their legs for anyone for free.
6	Source	*Jehan*, the elite Ansari's son, has been depicted as the source of suffering for *Laila,* the protagonist, whom he sees with a boy and accuses her of having illegal relations with that boy and makes fun of her in front of his sister.
7	Beneficiary	The author has shown how *Jehan (the abuser)* took benefit of the situation (Laila met one of her friends) and accused *Laila* of having a boyfriend in front of *Maryam* and she started considering Laila, not a virgin.

Extract 7, Slum Child, Part 2, Chap 4

"It was a movie [...] late at night [...] my father was watching [...] saw a glimpse [...] women were walking [...] beach [...] wearing little panties and bras [...] in front of everyone [...] one woman [...] met a handsome man [...] shore [...] went home [...] lay down in bed together [...] kissed each other everywhere [...] Faiza lowered her voice [...] made strange faces [...] I looked down the place she indicated [...] blushed furiously"[39]

[39] *Ibid.*, 214-215

In this extract, there is an exchange of thoughts between *Laila*, the protagonist, and her friend, *Faiza*, in the movie *Laila's* father was watching late at night. It was a beach scene where women were walking wearing bras and panties in front of everyone and one of the women went home with the man and lay on the bed, looking at each other lustfully, kissing each other, and the man was moving his fingers from top to bottom inside her legs.

Table - 7
Participants and Their Respective Roles

Bar	Role	Interpretation
1	Agent	The author has shown *Laila's father* as the initiator of sexual talk between *Laila*, the protagonist, and her friend, *Faiza* because *Laila* had seen him watching a porn movie late at night.
2	Goal	To quench their lust for sex, *men* (*abusers*) use *women* as playgirls and appeal to themselves by seeing their nudes or laying with them in the bed, making strange faces, kissing them everywhere, and moving their fingers in between their legs.
3	Source	*Laila's father* has been shown as lustful for sex as he is watching a porn movie on the television late at night to seek pleasure and to quench his thirst for porn.
4	Beneficiary	The *males* have been portrayed as perpetrators as they are ready to fall upon women, to seek pleasure from them, by laying on the bed with them, and by making bodily unions with them.
5	Location	The author has shown a scene of the *beach* and *shore* where women are walking wearing half dresses, appealing to men by making sensual gestures and are willing to go with them.

Extract 8, Slum Child, Part 2, Chapter 4

"I knew [...] Julia had told Jumana [...] rich women [...] in her salon [...] full waxes between their legs [...] looked like smooth little girls to their husbands [...] Julia's husband [...] put his thing up her backside [...] she wouldn't fall pregnant [...] men [...] beat their wives [...] birth control [...] forcing them to have abortions [...] too many mouths to feed"[40]

In this extract, *Laila*, the protagonist as well as the narrator, is talking about the women who go to a salon to wax their bodies so that they might appear beautiful and appeal to men, especially to their husbands. She also describes how husbands domestically violate

[40] *Ibid.*, 217

their wives and physically abuse them by putting their things up their backsides so that they would not get pregnant. Additionally, they beat their wives for birth control and also force them to have abortions because they would not be able to feed many mouths at a time.

Table - 8
Participants and Their Respective Roles

Bar	Role	Interpretation
1	Agent	The author has portrayed *men/husbands* as the cause of *women's* sufferings, for they beat their wives for birth control, force them to have abortions, and are readily available to them all the time to have sex between them.
2	Patient	*Women* in this extract have been depicted as *marginalized, weak, abused, violated,* and *oppressed* for they have to bear the pain of union, beatings of their husbands, and the pain of abortions.
3	Theme	*Wives/women* have been shown as *sexual objects* and *play games* for they have to go beyond their wishes and desires to appeal to their husbands and to muse them with their beauty, especially the beauty of their genital organs.
4	Experiencer	In this extract, *women* have been deployed as *victims* and *abused* for they have to wax their bodies to appeal to their husbands and bear the pain of the sex, abortions, and beatings for using birth control.
5	Goal	*To quench their lust for sex, men (abusers) force women* to have a union with them, beat them for using birth control, and also force them to have abortions because they could not afford large families.
6	Source	With the help of their *things (penises*), *husbands* quench the thirst for sex by using *women's* bodies and they put their things inside their bodies in such a way that they should not fall pregnant.
7	Beneficiary	The writer has portrayed *men/husbands* as the ones who took benefit of *women's* bodies and quench their thirst for bodily pleasure, ignoring the pain *women* have had to suffer throughout the process.
8	Instrument	On a pragmatic level, the *things (genital organs)* of *men* have been depicted as scary tools for men physically abusing *women* by putting their things on their backsides and seeking the pleasure of sex ignoring the pain the *women* (*victims*) had to bear.

Extract 9, Slum Child, Part 2, Chapter 7

"We drew up to the bus stop [...] rough men jumping [...] only one or two women[...] prostitutes [...] no decent woman [...] alone at night [...] I steeled myself [...] the touching [...] the prospect of men approaching me [...] only one reason [...] a boy like Jehan would come [...] to buy drugs [...] looking for adventures [...] glared at us [...] muttered disapproval [...] head was uncovered [...] bring his sister to this place [...] reckless thing to do"[41]

In the given extract, the author has described the scene when *Laila*, the protagonist, was moving back to her home, late at night with *Jehan* and *Maryam*, the elite Ansari children. They drew up at the bus stop where men were walking and there were only one to two females who were prostitutes because the innocent woman would not stay outside late at night. This was the place where Laila protects herself from the prospect of men because boys like Jehan would come there for some pleasure, to buy drugs, and to utter the voices of women. But bringing his sister to this place was the worst thing he had ever done in his life (disapproval…uncovered head…).

Table - 9
Participants and Their Respective Roles

Bar	Role	Interpretation
1	Agent	The author has shown *men* as *perpetrators* for they gaze at *women* with wrong intentions, utter voices at them, and try to touch them, so because of this fear, *women* have to protect themselves from the men who are approaching them.
2	Patient	*Women* have been deployed as the *victims* for the *males* who are in the slum try to whisper and touch the *women* present there and mutter disapproval if they see any girl with her head uncovered.
3	Theme	The narrator has narrated how *women* protect themselves from the harm given to them by *males* during their stay at the bus stop. If a *woman* stays late at night at such a place, she is considered a *prostitute*.
4	Experiencer	The writer has shown the sufferings of *females* and how they protect themselves from the wrong intentions of the *men* who are trying to touch their bodies and mutter voices at them.
5	Goal	*To seek pleasure, to buy drugs, to look for some adventure, to irritate women*, boys like Jehan went to the slum area to quench their lust, and that hurt more deeply. But bringing his sister,

[41] *Ibid.*, 260-62

		Maryam, this time at such a place was the most reckless of all the things *Jehan* had done so far.
6	Source	The *male characters* have been depicted as the source of *women's* hesitation and fear for they create hurdles and try to irritate them during their stay at the bus stop.
7	Beneficiary	The author has portrayed how *boys like Jehan* took advantage of the places like the slum to grasp the attention of females, to look for some adventure, and to buy some drugs.
8	Location	The writer has depicted the scene of a *bus stop* where rough *men* jump, gazing at women, and trying to touch them to crave their attention, and only one to two *females* sitting who were considered prostitutes.

Extract 10, Slum Child, Part 2, Chapter 7

"Who are you? [...] we're his friends, said Jehan [...] he turned back [...] acting as if he were a king [...] were you very friendly with him, Laila? [...] treat him well? [...] make him feel extra welcome? [...] other friends like him [...] he leaned forward [...] took my arm [...] this house belongs to me [...] everything [...] includes you [...] I can do anything [...] get the deal going again [...] you haven't been the filthy little bitch [...] you're a virgin [...] Jehan [...] not have touched you [...] I was leashed to him like a dog [...] powerless to escape [...] he reached underneath [...] you're my investment [...] forced his hips against me [...] hand over my mouth"[42]

In this extract, *Laila*, the protagonist as well as the narrator, has depicted the scene when she returns to her home with *Jehan* and *Maryam*, the elite Ansari children. Her step-father, *Irfan*, had gone and her mother was left to the mercy of Salim, Irfan's friend. When *Jehan* told *Salim* that he is her friend, he acts like *Jehan* is the buyer of *Laila* and started labeling her as a *prostitute* who gives extra pleasure to *Jehan* and the other boys. He treats *Laila* as if she were his *investment* and *private property*, and touches her everywhere from top to bottom and *Laila* was powerless to escape from the hands of that animal.

[42] *Ibid.*, 270-271

Table - 10
Participants and their respective roles

Bar	Role	Interpretation
1	Agent	*Salim*, one of the villainous characters, has been deployed as the *wild animal* for he surrounds *Laila*, the protagonist, touches her everywhere from top to bottom, and labels her a *call girl* or a *whore* who amuses other and give them extra pleasure.
2	Patient	*Laila*, the protagonist, has been portrayed as a *victim* who has been *abused* and *molested* by *Salim* who touches her underneath and enforced his hips against her and calls her a *filthy little bitch*, a *maiden* who is still not touched by anyone, not even her friend, *Jehan*.
3	Theme	*Laila*, the heroine of the text, has been shown as the *puppet* in the hands of *Salim* who bullies her and brutally *rapes* her openly without any guilt and shame, taking her his property and investment and treating her like a *whore*.
4	Experiencer	The author has showcased the bitter experiences *Laila*, the protagonist, undergoes because of *Salim* when he took her arm around him, touched her underneath, and enforced his hips against her. She has been portrayed as a *dog* who is *powerless* to escape from the hands of the *rapist, Salim*.
5	Goal	*Irfan*, Laila's father, once makes a deal with *Salim* to sell *Laila* to a *broker*. Considering her a *prostitute*, *Salim* first calls her *maiden no more* and then calls her a *filthy little bitch* who is not touched by anyone and is still a *virgin*, trying to rape her as if she were his investment.
6	Source	*Salim* has been depicted as the cause of *Laila's* suffering for he *assaults Laila* in front of her *Amma* and friends. She was begging for mercy, leashed to him like an animal, and was powerless to escape from her arms.
7	Beneficiary	On seeing *Laila*, the protagonist, *hopeless* and *powerless*, *Salim* took benefit of the situation and *brutally assault Laila*, by calling her his investment as her house now belongs to him and that includes its people too.
8	Location	The writer has depicted a scene from the *house of Laila*, the protagonist, where *Amma* is living all alone at the mercy of *Salim* because *Laila's father* had left her. Considering the house as well

		as its people his property and investment, *Salim* tries to *rape Laila* in front of *Amma, Jehan,* and *Maryam.*

Conclusion

To conclude, this study has explored the portrayal of domestic violence, abuse, marginalization, and victimization through linguistic choices in *Slum Child*. The researchers have applied *Thematic Roles* which analyze the linguistic choices made by the writer in the data collected as the theoretical framework. The analysis of the selected text depicts the issues of abuse, violence, etc. that have already been raised by different writers over the last few decades. In *Slum* Child, these issues have given rise to patriarchy which has made society uncivilized, hypocritical, cruel, violent, and exotic. With the portrayal of female and male characters, the author represents the hidden identities of people who are corrupt, vile, and evil. From this novel, we can state that the tragic downfall of the female characters gives rise to marginalization, colonialism, victimization, violence, and abuse. As in the novel, *Laila* is abused and victimized for making space for herself as well as for her mother who disregards settling her little girls from abuse and violence. In the hypothetical edge of gendered space, this study features how ladies are rejected from the sexualized and manly space because of their bodies.

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