

## *Chapter III*

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### **Transformation for Progression**

A childhood that is built with strong foundations of trust and encouragement cultivates confidence in a child to be successful in all the endeavours that he/she partakes. The appreciation that they receive while interacting with people helps them during their developmental stages. Human development is an interesting transformational journey that covers the transitional stages in the life of an individual from infancy to adulthood. Developmental psychology predicts and analyses the behavioural patterns and actions that are influenced by the social and environmental settings in which an individual resides. It paves way to understand the nature of development that a person undergoes during the various stages of lifespan. Different fields of scientific studies have emerged to analyse human minds and behaviour. Theorists state that family and society play a vital role in the developmental process of an individual and psychoanalytical perspective on understanding human development also shares the idea on how even an unconscious mind has the power to control one's behaviour and emotions.

Children who have undergone phases of trauma or pain are likely to be affected by the same throughout their life. Raising a child in an unhealthy setting can adversely affect their thoughts, emotions, and actions. Introduction of developmental psychology has brought new dimensions to the study of human minds. The study analyses one's life based on their age in correspondence with their social, environmental, political, and financial background. It also focuses on the physical development along with the cognitive and emotional phase of an individual. Various theories and theorists have debated on how to give proper training and attention to a

child as what is provided and taught to them in childhood will stay with them forever. Some of the major proponents who have made contributions and advancements in this field are Sigmund Freud, Erik H. Erikson, Arnold Gesell, Konrad Lorenz, John Bowlby, Mary D.S. Ainsworth, Ivan Pavlov, B. F. Skinner, Albert Bandura, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Urie Bronfenbrenner. Each theorist has added various ideas on what are the important aspects to be noted while raising a child.

This chapter analyses the developmental behavioural patterns, difficulties, and psychological issues experienced by children with physical impairments and their parents from the novels *A Time to Dance* by Padma Venkatraman, *Family Life* by Akhil Sharma, *Simply Nanju* by Zainab Sulaiman, and *Trying to Grow* by Firdaus Kanga. It also attempts on providing a solution by identifying the external factors that affect the child along with the family to which the child belongs. Psychosocial theory propounded by the American psychologist Erik H. Erikson is used as the theoretical framework for getting a clear notion regarding the basic amenities and requirements that are essential for the successful development of a child. His findings have brought new possibilities in analysing the developmental behaviour from infancy to adulthood. Divided into eight stages, the theory analyses the basic necessities an individual requires at each stages of their life.

Erikson in his book *Childhood and Society* published in 1950 has pointed out that a child's mind is filled with exuberant thoughts and imaginations and it is the duty of the parents and society to give them clear instructions to find possibilities among the adversities and complexities of life. Young minds get confused and perplexed easily when society treats them inappropriately. This confusion increases when a child is a victim to any sort of physical impairment. There is a gradual stereotypical approach by the society towards the family who has a physically or

mentally impaired member. Social acceptance is the prime notion to be focused rather than showering them with pity and sympathy. Segregation and distancing is another visible criterion that is evident among the human race.

In the chapter 'Eight Ages of Man' published in his book *Childhood and Society*; Erikson defines the basic needs and requirements that an individual should be getting at various stages of their development. Right from birth, a child's life is dependent on his/her caretakers. Erikson analyses the role of family, friends, relatives, school, and neighbours who have the ability to create an impact over the development of a child. Human development is also studied based on the cultural background, financial stability, and the geographical location in which an individual resides. He also defines the transformations that occur based on the environmental changes and social settings during the process of development. Unexpected incidents place an individual at a vulnerable and confused state which exposes them to an existential crisis. Psychosocial theory aims at tackling such situations by providing the right guidance towards survival. The main idea of Erikson's findings is to convey the significant influence of the society on an individual during his/her infancy, adolescence, and adulthood. Divided into eight stages, the psychosocial theory is a survival guide that provides importance to childhood training as it benefits the successful well-being of an individual. Among the eight stages as defined by Erikson, this chapter focuses on the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh stages of psychosocial development.

The fourth stage, 'Industry vs. Inferiority' is categorised for the age group of children of five to twelve. Children become socially active during this stage as they begin their journey of education at school. This can subsequently bring changes in the growth and developmental pattern of a child. Erikson states, "Thus the inner stage

seems all set for “entrance into life,” except that life must first be school life, whether school is field or jungle or classroom” (258). Environmental settings have the power to influence and dissuade a child’s actions. According to Erikson, children will attain the ‘industry’ stage when they become capable of handling the basic fundamentals of life that were hitherto unfamiliar to them. Attaining the power to initiate and take part in school activities efficiently is a sign of healthy development. Danger that resides during this time is when the child feels inferior which is caused due to unhealthy experiences. It makes a child anticipate that his/her future actions can produce negative consequences. This can make children restrict themselves from involving in activities confidently. Hence, the child should never be left unmotivated or unnoticed.

Ten year old Nanju as defined by Sulaiman in her novel *Simply Nanju* was never bothered about his looks and condition. The definition of beauty laid by the society bothered him the least. Children are epitomes of innocence and they are unaware of the corrupted and deceiving nature of adult minds. Erikson believes a child can be active and industrious if he/she has the privilege to grow in a healthy developmental environment. This potential should be enhanced with great support by the caregivers. Children should be motivated to explore their interests early in life through which they might gain knowledge and experience. A negative impact can affect a child adversely breaking the parameters of their talents. This produces an alienated effect in adolescents, slowing down their psychological development. This feeling is intensified when a child has to go through negative comments, criticism, or disapproval from people who are closely associated with him/her. Children must be protected from such hazardous occasions and anxieties as it has the power to disturb their young minds.

Nanju was often threatened by his father when he scored less during examinations. He says, “If you score badly this year, I’m going to send you to Kolar, I promise you!” (Sulaiman 3). Nanju always dreaded going to Kolar where his uncle was running an orphanage for boys. The inmates lacked discipline and were frequently found fighting with each other. Nanju felt startled when his father mentioned that he wanted to send him to a hostel. This resulted in separation anxiety as such comments have the capability to evoke nervousness or fear in a child, later affecting his/her studies and life at school. Nanju pleaded to his father, “I’ll study, Appa! Really! Please don’t send me to the hostel!’ Nanju continued to weep, the tears cutting grimy tracks down his round face. If only Amma was here, he thought, she would never allow Appa to send him away” (Sulaiman 23). The sudden demise of his mother was a traumatic experience that Nanju was unable to handle. A child becomes vulnerable while trying to cope up with such distressing situations. Here, Nanju was more scared after his mother’s loss as he was uncertain about his future and was worried of the fact that his mother is no more with him to safeguard him. He expected his father to love him unconditionally, protecting him from all the unpleasant realities of life. To lose a parent as a child is very hard but if children are blessed with a strong support system that helps them to handle their grief, they will be able to overcome their pain to a great extent.

Subjects suffering from emotional pain occupy their time evaluating their failures which can affect their future endeavours. A child of ten like Nanju who is growing in an unpleasant atmosphere is likely to doubt their self worth and individuality. Each child is unique and may exhibit signs of anxiety which can be related to numerous underlying factors. It is important to acknowledge their emotions until the child realises that it is not necessary to feel immobilised or helpless due to

fear. Parents and caregivers should try to eliminate the hostile behavioural patterns while they are around children. The child is supposed to learn the goodness in their parents or adults as they imitate and learn from their immediate surroundings.

Negative perceptions create complex thoughts that they cannot understand nor handle during their age. This will be reflected in their lifestyle, exhibiting actions of powerlessness due to the fear that is generated within them. The surroundings in which children grow up should safeguard them from being victims of unscrupulous pressures.

The school authorities are also responsible for their indifferent or unenthusiastic attitude towards their students. As Nanju had issues of incontinence, his concerns were always linked with hiding his soiled shorts at school. He always checked his diapers to make sure that they are clean to escape from the humiliation imposed on him by the school maids. Sulaiman has highlighted issues where children including Nanju had to face instances of embarrassment because of the unfair gestures which society impose on them due to their physical impairment.

As if on cue, Bhavani Amma walked past them, pushing the wheelchair of a small boy wearing a strained expression on his face. She was muttering under her breath about how one couldn't sit down for five minutes without someone or the other wanting to go to the toilet. (Sulaiman 28)

Bhavani Amma makes the students in wheelchairs to wait outside the comfort station without letting them in on time. This often led to the children soiling their shorts and later they were also verbally abused for their actions. Such hindrances pull them back from interacting with people which eventually leads to isolation.

According to Erikson, developmental activities in a child will be reflected based on the inspiration gained from successful interaction with their parents, teachers, and friends. He emphasises the importance of early childhood educators and associates in providing constant and supportive care to promote a child's development. "He is eager and able to make things cooperatively, to combine with other children for the purpose of constructing and planning, and he is willing to profit from teachers and to emulate ideal prototypes" (Erikson 258). The immediate environmental setting will be observed keenly and sustained appraisal and attention gained from teachers, parents, or caregivers motivates a child to move forward with faith and confidence. Educational institutions can persuade children to function accordingly by recognising their potentials and desires. Erikson mentions the importance of providing systematic instructions which has the capability to guide a child to handle any pressures or situations. Learning and development is interconnected as it affects the child's characteristics by motivating his/her personal growth.

The novel also revolves around an investigation that was carried out by Nanju and his friends. "The class topper's books had been vanishing and reappearing ever since the start of the term and was a source of great sorrow for her and a joyful distraction for everybody else" (Sulaiman 7). Aradhana who always excelled in academics was really depressed because of this situation. The plot explores on how Nanju and his friends plan a secret mission to find the culprit behind these actions. He began his investigation by enquiring about Aradhana's rivals at school. Eventually Nanju and Mahesh finalised that it might be Sangeetha who was stealing her books out of jealousy. Erikson defines, "He can become an eager and absorbed unit of a productive situation. To bring a productive situation to completion is an aim which



gradually supersedes the whims and wishes of play” (Erikson 259). During this stage, children usually become industrious and productive by aiming to be successful in each task that they participate.

As part of their new mission, Nanju along with his friends decided to make a chart of events that happens in and around the classroom. They doubted many and came to a conclusion that it was Pratik who was stealing Aradhana’s notebooks. They based their doubts on the fact that books never went missing on the days that he was absent. The children informed their findings to their class tutor, Miss Theresa who later found out the real reason behind the robbery. Pratik’s father was a drunkard and often beat him that worsened his physical condition. After consuming alcohol, he demanded for Pratik’s notebook to check his grades. As Pratik never scored well, he decided to steal the topper’s notebooks to escape from his father’s brutal behaviour and punishments. Corporal punishments or abuse can have a considerable impact by negatively affecting a child’s well-being.

When he got caught, “Pratik’s father had made his son take off his shoes and kneel down, and then caned him on the soles of his feet with a long, thin stick” (Sulaiman 111). All the children who were part of this investigation were shocked when they heard about this sad reality. Sometimes the humiliation faced by the child at home, persuades him/her to find an alternative solution to escape from their problems. Children become reluctant to socialise as they feel inferior due to the complex behavioural attitude of their parents. A child initially deserves some support and encouragement which naturally enhances their ability to face any hardships. They must be taught how to be self-efficient as it reduces their fear and eventually provides them success. As anticipated by Erikson, “Many a child’s development is disrupted when family life has failed to prepare him for school life, or when school life fails to sustain the

promises of earlier stages” (260). Additional support with careful treatment, guided with the care of parents eliminates unnecessary inhibitions and fears.

Clinical and developmental psychologist, Diana Blumberg Baumrind is known for her research on parenting styles. Authoritarian parenting, a style of parenting initiated by Baumrind is a form of fear-based parenting. Not every authoritarian parent is abusive but there are lots of parents who use harsh and offensive methods to control their children according to their wish. They are highly ambitious yet contribute little to their child’s growth and development. They tend to punish their children ruthlessly for their minute mistakes. Corporal punishments are a commonly seen factor in such parenting techniques. Each parent has a set of rules and uses different techniques to exert control over their offspring. They rarely approve of their child’s opinions and are rather impatient towards his/her misbehaviour. Children of such parents are mostly seen to be fearful as they are afraid of their parent’s unpredictable nature. This can result in anxiety or depression just like in the case of Pratik.

Young minds find it difficult to understand and handle the negative social pressures levied upon them due to their physical condition. When Nanju and his friends were taken for an excursion from their school, the whole team had to struggle due to the architectural barriers at their destination. Some kids had to be carried and pushed while another set of children hobbled through their way with the motivation of their tutor. To distract her students from this tiresome task, the tutor decided to sing songs for creating a pleasant atmosphere. ““You should have told us about the wheelchairs,’ the lady complained to Theresa Miss for the tenth time” (Sulaiman 53). The staff members of the museum to which the children had gone were very rude and did not cooperate with the struggling students. Erikson defines, “The child’s danger, at this stage, lies in a sense of inadequacy and inferiority” (260) which discourages

them from being industrial. Incidents that cause them trauma, confuses their mind in trusting people while they step into the outer world.

“But Nanju’s motto was why worry about tomorrow when today was so wonderful, and he didn’t let these kinds of things bother him” (Sulaiman 115). Nanju believed in trusting the world in which he lives. When children of Nanju’s age entrust their life to their caregivers, adults should be responsible and careful never to break their trust. As Erikson mentions, the growth of an individual is always interdependent with their personal and social life. Proper nurturing and support widens their horizon to fight against the challenges that their life gives them. If children are left alone or unattended they may have a tendency to isolate themselves from the social life without having the confidence to engage or involve in any activities. Fear induced in young minds can adversely affect their self-belief in accomplishing their dreams or goals. Hence, a child should be motivated to stay industrious without slipping into isolation.

The fifth stage titled as ‘Identity vs. Role confusion’ demonstrates the developmental patterns in children between the age group of thirteen and nineteen. A young adult hopes to establish an identity where they wish to be known and recognised by others. During this stage, children have a tendency to get worried about the opinions of people they are surrounded by. This thought makes them work hard and be recognised among his/her peers, officials, family, and friends. Lacking proper recognition that they seek can trouble their minds eventually resulting in ‘role confusion’. They can be affected due to this dejection and redefining their identity in this competitive world is essential. This process may give hope to an individual without creating stagnant thoughts or feelings. Developing self-confidence is

important to perceive the idea of independence. Failing to do so affects their well-being due to the confusions that they develop during the period.

Veda, according to Venkatraman in her novel *A Time to Dance* had to experience numerous hurdles while trying to establish her identity. She always dreamt of being recognised by others as a renowned dancer. The novel opens by picturing young Veda keenly observing the posture of Lord Shiva which was carved on the granite walls of the temple. When the temple priest saw her gazing at the wall, he asked Veda to place her hand on her chest to feel the feet movements of Lord Shiva inside her. Veda does as the priest suggests and feels her heart beat as the steps of dance. Later her compassion towards dance is portrayed as,

My head is bursting

with images

of stone dancers come alive, the tips of their bare toes twirling,

with sounds

of the tiny bells on their anklets twinkling

with music. (Venkatraman 4)

Venkatraman has gracefully depicted the image of Veda's passion towards dance in the mind of the readers. The words of the priest took her to a whole new world where her imaginations had no barriers. This projects the intense fascination of Veda towards dance and its forms. Erikson believes that a child strives to establish an identity and remould his/her life according to the requirements needed to attain the highest term of progression. Their ideal aim is to stay unique in their actions where

they are admired with respect by others. If they gain the deserved appreciation and acceptance, it increases their confidence level in fulfilling their aims.

Veda's mother showed no interest in her daughter's happiness while she got selected into the final round of bharatanatyam dance competition for which she has been dreaming for months. Her mother also believes, "Dancing is no career for a / middle-class girl" (Venkatraman 8). She considers that excelling in mathematics and science subjects can provide a promising career. But Veda still hopes and waits for the day that her mother will recognise and appreciate her love towards dance; the only field she believes in which she excels. Erikson describes that children who are discouraged have a tendency to hold back and isolate themselves from others. Conflicting thoughts drives their mind to imagine that they are unfit or weak. This makes them feel inferior thus creating a hindrance to the successful development of a child.

Veda's grandmother was her only source of support and she never failed to stay with her at times of her happiness and difficulties. She used to narrate stories on how Veda was born with the art of dance as if she has acquired it from her previous life. According to Erikson an adolescent mind is a moratorium between childhood and adulthood, where the child desires to be recognised by his/her family and peers. The primary caregivers such as parents, grandparents, friends, siblings, and teachers hold a strong space in the growth of a developing child. The major phenomenon of development is interconnected with the external support provided by the family as well as society. Erikson states that when a child feels excluded from a common space which they yearn for, it could turn them into an extremely disconsolate and dejected state of mind.

Veda has dedicated her life to dance and finds happiness in pursuing it as her future career. There is no other joy that could replace her love towards dance.

Nothing else fills me with as much elation

as chasing down soaring music,

catching and pinning rhythms to the ground with my feet,

proud as a hunter rejoicing in his skill. (Venkatraman 12)

She was always enthusiastic during her practice sessions and tried hard to maintain perfect and elegant postures. She believes that the pain she experienced in her muscles indicated the proof of her hard work. Veda at all times expected her dance to appear graceful in front of her grandmother. She wanted her act to look as effortless as how her grandmother cooks, helps with the homework and massages her leg until the pain fades away. Support and guidance from loved ones is a powerful aspect in shaping the psychological development of a child. It resolves their doubts and boosts the self-confidence to trust in their ability in achieving goals.

On the day of competition, Veda was able to perform in the best possible way and the judges were impressed with her flawless techniques and skilful way of presenting each dance postures. Veda was congratulated and appreciated by many after the victorious announcement. Despite the love showered by the judges, audience, friends, grandmother, and her father; all she wanted was her mother's recognition and approval. All her joy faded as she was not appreciated by her mother for her efforts. Failing to understand a child is equal to neglecting his/her emotional needs. Though Veda's mother emotionally neglected her dreams, she was still providing for her basic needs. It was her mother's expectation to stop Veda

from pursuing her passion that infuriated her. Disturbing events that one experiences from their immediate surroundings can affect their growth. Admirable environment that supports the calibre of children helps them to successfully perform and grow as an individual. Lack of appropriate guidance eventually affects their life by triggering anxiety or fear. The efficiency in performing a task that one has mastered through their hard work demands proper appraisal and support.

Venkatraman in the first half of the novel instils a deep image of young Veda and her devotion for dance so wonderfully to create an impact in the readers on what follows in the latter half of the novel. The accident that resulted in amputating her right leg can be considered as a turning point in Veda's life. The pain and trauma experienced by a dancing prodigy who loses her leg is beyond description.

Under the sheets my hands reach

like a tongue that can't stop playing with a loose tooth.

Over and over the rough bandages my finger run,

trying to smooth over

reality. (Venkatraman 43)

She wanted to rewrite history by erasing the bad moments of the accident that wiped away her happiness. It required time, space, and strong will power to accept the reality that she never wanted to happen. She became weak as the days passed by and stated, "I feel like a corpse someone started to mummify / and abandoned halfway" (Venkatraman 48). Erikson expresses his opinion on reconciling with one's past experience by ignoring or neglecting the hostile settings that the individual had to live through. Fear and anxiety are two indistinguishable realities that a child may not

understand without the guidance of adults. Fear is a mental state where the mind recognises the dangers and tries to stay away from them. Here, Veda's fear of losing her ability to dance again becomes associated with the anxiety aroused by the thought of imagining a future where none of her dreams may come true.

“To be able to aware of fear, then, without giving in to anxiety; to train our fear in the face of anxiety to remain an accurate measure and warning of that which man must fear—this is a necessary condition for a judicious frame of mind” (Erikson 407). The adults or caregivers must equip their children to master the fears that they are scared of. Their guidance should allow these children to plot against their fears and anxieties. Veda, while trying to fly high with determination by resolving her issues had to experience certain factors that worsened her condition. The primary concern that affected her the most was the absence of her dance tutor who never visited when she was admitted in the hospital. “Tomorrow he'll come, I keep thinking. / Tomorrows come and go” (Venkatraman 59), but he never came. Erikson explains that children might feel startled due to accidents or sudden changes that they have to deal with at certain point of their life. They might feel lonely and confused of not being able to handle incidents that cause them pain. Fear of depending on others for help or losing autonomy produces anxiety in children. Here, individuals are advised to spend their time alone to focus on their needs and reach their targeted aim.

“We concluded that only a gradually accruing sense of identity, based on the experience of social health and cultural solidarity at the end of each major childhood crisis, promises that periodical balance in human life which—in integration of the ego stages—makes for a sense of humanity” (Erikson 412). When children lose their ability to establish their identity, this could eventually lead to isolation, role confusion, or stagnation. Veda's neighbour's attitude towards her arrival from the hospital was,



“They make me feel as if / I’m the star attraction / at a freak show” (Venkatraman 73). This is the stage where children might feel insecure due to the inappropriate attitude of the people with whom they interact with. Losing their sense of identity which they strived to establish can shatter their equilibrium of hope. One should try to fix their confusions by taking a break to realise and work on their strengths. Offensive terminologies that are used to address an individual can also disturb their young minds. Veda states, “. . . ugly words are always around: / stump, lame, handicap” (Venkatraman 86). Respectful language should be used while addressing people and terms that highlight discrimination should be eliminated. The listeners may find it offensive when they are addressed using derogatory terms. Proper curriculum based on disability studies provided at school level can help the learners gain more information regarding disability and the issues faced by people with physical impairments.

Veda decided to make a revolutionary change by proving to the world that she is no lesser than her old self. She believed that amputation is just a process that she had to undergo and it should not affect her life which is now clouded with confusion. She proudly proclaimed that being the granddaughter of a strong woman, she should fight against the corruptive thoughts and attitudes that are imposed upon her. She gradually mastered the ability to walk gracefully with her artificial limb. Despite the fact that her dance tutor denied her request to pursue dance, she moved forward ignoring the comments which he made. According to the wish of Veda’s grandmother, she visited Dr. Dhanam, a renowned dancer who was willing to accept Veda as her student. She never considered disability as an obstacle to chase behind one’s passion. “Dr. Dhanam enters. / Her eyes take me in / without comment or pity (Venkatraman 133). There are thousands of people who are physically impaired who

expect the society to view them as normal like how Dr. Dhanam accepted Veda. There are no individuals who wish to live under the shadow of pity and sympathy. Being physically impaired does not mean that they require special attention or consideration. Individuals who have any sort of difficulties only seek for equal recognition and acceptance.

Joining Dr. Dhanam's dance institution embarked Veda on her journey towards achieving the identity which she had dreamt for years. Her new mentor Govinda glorified her determination and willpower by never doubting her ability to dance. His compliments evoked a desire in her to prove to the world that she is not disabled or incapable. When Veda realised that there is a vacancy in the dance drama hosted by Dr. Dhanam, she wanted to take this as an opportunity to prove herself. She gathered her courage to ask for a chance and she was granted the permission to do the role. The strength to initiate and ask for an opportunity to prove their potential can help an individual to overcome their stage of self-doubt. Though her role on stage was only for three minutes, she was satisfied and happy to have people around her who welcomed and appreciated her. Proper acceptance and validation guides one to defeat their insecurities and fear. On the day of her performance she felt pain in such a way that her body and life were ripped apart.

My back hunched, I play the woman

overcome by age and illness.

In the scrape of the cane I hold,

I hear the echo of my crutches.

In my second role, as Gautami, I hold

not the body of my lost child,

but my severed limb. (Venkatraman 243-244)

Emotions were well expressed by Veda and the pain of the characters she played was related to her own personal struggles and experiences. She was congratulated and well appreciated by all including her mentors. Through this incident she was able to regain her lost happiness and confidence. The novel concludes by taking the readers to the same place where the story began; the temple of the dancing God was revisited by Veda as she was honoured with an invitation to perform on their dais. Memories flashed through her recollecting the hardships she endured from the young Veda who glanced with eagerness at the postures of Lord Shiva to a well acclaimed dancer who is now invited to famous platforms with great respect and admiration.

To triumph over situations which cause panic or anxiety, proper childhood training and an environment that makes an individual feel comfortable the way they are is imperative. Infantile anxieties due to negative social influences have the power to magnify the existing fears which drives the child to feel aimless. As suggested by Erikson, "A child has a right, then, to develop anxiety when he is afraid, even as he has a right to have "childish" fears until guidance has helped him, step for step, to develop judgment and mastery" (408). Veda was able to attain her identity with the help of her grandmother who gave her the right guidance at the hour of need. She was able to overcome her crisis that pulled her to the depths of ocean. Role confusion and identity crisis is a major phenomenon experienced by many but sources that direct them towards the right path can help them achieve their goals quickly.

Birju and Ajay, as portrayed in the novel *Family Life* by Sharma were enjoying their best days of childhood until the accident that changed their lives

occurred. Birju always excelled in every activity that he participated and Ajay mentions, “My brother had another thing that gave him an air of authority. He was ranked first in his class, and as happens in such cases, everybody in our neighborhood treated him as special. Because of his good grades, he appeared to be somebody who had a destiny” (Sharma 10). During adolescence, children will try to foresee their future and attempt to strengthen their ability in establishing identity to attain acceptance. Successful children outlive their fears and organise their lives to meet the expectations that they build for themselves. Failing to do so results in role confusion and it has the ability to affect their later life.

Birju was ambitious and worked hard for days to attain the results for which he yearned. With systematic and methodical learning he was able to gain admission in Bronx High School of Science. He always emphasised on his priorities and stayed focused until he achieved his goals. Birju was interested in swimming and regularly went to a nearby swimming pool but on one afternoon in the month of August, the family got a phone call conveying the message that Birju had had an accident. When Ajay visited the hospital in which Birju was admitted, “Birju was lying on a bed with railings. The railings reminded me of a crib. There were poles on wheels all around the bed. The poles had bags hanging from them and also machines that were attached with clamps” (Sharma 44). Ajay felt like removing the mask attached to Birju’s nose in a belief that he would start speaking. As a result to the damage occurred in brain, Birju had become paralysed and had lost his vision. He dedicated most of his time praying for his brother to recover from his current situation. Ajay narrates,

I didn’t cry at home or at the hospital because I didn’t want to add to my parents’ problems. On the way to school, though, I would. Strange things made me cry. The weight of my book bag, how it pushed me down would set

me crying. Sometimes some thought of Birju would brush against me. My mother had written to the Bronx High School of Science and obtained a year's deferment. As I sobbed, I would be amazed at how much I loved my brother. I had not known he mattered so much to me. (Sharma 48)

Ajay felt dejected because of his brother's condition and sought for salvation. Dealing with the feeling of abandonment affects each individual differently according to the age group to which they belong. Circumstances that affect the inner stability in young minds generate anxiety that causes panic. Apart from his social insecurities, Ajay was persistent to do all the brotherly duties that were assigned to him. He took good care of his brother and also helped his parents in giving Birju a bath, dressing, feeding, and taking him out on his wheelchair to experience the warmth of nature. This part of Ajay's life made him feel industrious. Erikson suggests that adults should interact with children to facilitate them with the revelation of their apprehensions. Proper training provided to children to tackle situations that scares them can act as a defence mechanism at times of handling difficulties. Hence, equipping children with guidance towards survival will reflect its benefits in their behavioural patterns. It makes them feel less isolated in the absence of their loved ones.

The Mishra family was struggling to manage the medical expenses to bring Birju back to his normal life. Ajay felt ashamed when his parents spent money for his leisure time activities as he was well aware about the struggles that his family was undergoing. "I did not normally spend money on vending machines in school. Spending money made me anxious" (Sharma 164). Childhood days are supposed to gift an individual with the most memorable days of one's life. It helps to constitute new expectations in children as they look forward in life with an optimistic attitude. But Ajay states, "AND I KNEW things were getting worse. My parents fought with

such anger that it was as if they hated each other” (Sharma 58). Financial instability gave rise to arguments between his parents which later shattered the stability of the family. An unfavourable living circumstance is a decisive stage where a child feels frustrated or neglected. A child may develop a sense of distrust if his/her providers ignore them. Children who are deprived of parental care and attention have a tendency to stay aloof from their surroundings.

Ajay started gaining sympathy by narrating his brother’s condition to his classmates. “I sat back in my chair. I had decided to tell Jeff because I was so unhappy, because everything was terrible, and because I had thought that if I told him about Birju, he would pity me and become my friend” (Sharma 92). He was not sure how to handle his loneliness and sought for an opportunity to gain attention. Later, he started to fantasise instances where he pictures his brother to be a superhero who was extremely talented and strong until the accident. Although Ajay felt anxious of getting caught for his lies, he started each day by imagining a new story to be narrated to his friends. Unfortunately, after few days his friends started to reflect their dislike openly. This affected his little mind and he was unable to concentrate in his school life.

A child may feel autonomous and confident through the special care that they receive from his/her parents, adults, or peers. Their limitations should be turned into opportunities that make them feel special and included. Equipping children with responsibilities can induce in them a sense of initiative that has the capability to set aside their fears. Infantile doubts and worries should be clarified and they must be motivated to rival against their anxieties.

Sharma has portrayed the difficulties that the Mishra family had to endure due to the unexpected incident that made their son slip into the state of paralysis. Lack of financial and psychological support affected each member of the family in a different

manner. A parent who makes contributions to enhance the self-esteem of children by recognising their talents is an effective way to influence them to step into their future endeavours without doubts or anxiety. Their issues might not be completely resolved until the parents directly communicate and participate in their tiny tasks. “A growing boy has trouble in mastering his gangling body as well as his divided mind. He wants to be good, if only out of expediency, and always finds he has been bad” (Erikson 211). Assisting children during their developmental stages can help them explore their own body, self, and identity. School life can act like a channel that makes children to set their goals and it later motivates them to manage their victories and disappointments. A child should be taught to handle both the negative and positive stages of life as one may not always be successful in every task that they partake.

*Trying to Grow* by Kanga is a novel that talks of the societal pressures that a child with impairment has to face during their developmental stages. Childhood and society are interdependent elements during the growth of an individual. As a child born with brittle bones, Brit had a childhood where he had to visit many doctors and other medical practitioners in a hope to find a cure for his condition. While visiting Wagh Baba, who claimed to be as a magical healer, Brit states “‘I’m not going in there,’ I whimpered, my heart lurching at the thought of the Wagh Baba and his merciless tortures” (Kanga 4). He was tired of visiting such people who did not provide him with any results. Children are always afraid of visiting hospitals and Brit gets terrified by the appearance of certain healers. Parents who protect their children from incidents that evoke fear in them through narrating the seriousness of the issues act as a consolation to their worries.

Brit’s parents were willing to try any experiment that is suggested as a method to cure brittle bones. Feeding him with powdered pearls, bone-marrow of a goat,

applying almond oil on his legs were few among the interesting practices seen in the Kotwal family.

Nobody believed me when I told them that bone-marrow had nothing to do with brittle bones; it produced blood cells. I read that in the *Reader's Digest* when I was ten. I went on strike. I refused to swallow another mouthful of the spit-worthy stuff. Then Father saw a winking light bulb in a bubble over his head. He began rubbing the marrow into my bones. 'They'll absorb it better that way,' he said. (Kanga 34)

His parents were determined and desperate to see Brit walk. This was the main motive behind all these customary practices forced upon their child. Erikson explains that during the maturational stage of children, they can develop a tendency to restrain and be intolerant to the activities which they are compelled to do without leaving a choice. Activities done against their will, makes them vulnerable as they create boundaries to distance themselves from their parents.

Brit had promised himself not to reveal his pain until he could manage it. "It was simple. I didn't speak about pain as long as I could take it; that way I didn't have to admit something broken inside me. When my secret was out a cyclone hit my life raining tears, grief, guilt, defeat" (Kanga 52-53). Being overprotective can sometimes be intrusive for children whose overall development can be affected. His idea of becoming self-dependent was curtailed due to such unnecessary interferences. It is the affection of his parents that make them feel more cautious and concerned of his pain and sufferings. Being overprotective on such occasions can hinder the thoughts of children who may feel that they can never lead an independent life without the



support of elders. At this stage of life, children are more likely to be industrious and any factor that disturbs this achievement makes them feel inferior.

The growing and developing youths, faced with this physiological revolution within them, and with tangible adult tasks ahead of them are now primarily concerned with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are, and with the question of how to connect the roles and skills cultivated earlier with the occupational prototypes of the day. (Erikson 261)

There are times when children prefer to battle through their journey without parental assistance or guidance. They desire to establish their identity by the efforts they render to accomplish their daily tasks of life through perfectly planned and organised strategies. The danger that resides during this stage is categorised by Erikson as 'role confusion'. Incidents that disapprove their talents can disturb their minds by developing thoughts that consider them as failures. Kanga pictures, how Brit was gaining awards for something that he has not laid his hands on. "I won prizes all the time for everything from moral science to general science. Once I even won a prize for nothing" (57). The physical difficulties that children like Brit had to endure should not influence the ranking system by the school authorities while analysing the calibre of the students. Children with impairments prefer to gain achievements with their own hard-work and labour. They do not wish to be applauded for activities that they have not done. Such incidents pave way to make a child feel less worthy and independent. Shades of sympathy while handling children with physical impairments devalue their talents and existence.

As a wheelchair user the next disturbing factor that annoyed Brit was the arrangement of home appliances and other needed resources in a way that is

inaccessible for him. His father commented, ““But, Brit, you just have to ask. We’re always here to help.’ Which made me mad. I didn’t want someone always to be there” (Kanga 62). Brit had also felt anxious when his parents denied him things on time of his need. Such incidents made him believe that he is a burden to his family. A child may feel agitated when their growth is hindered by conflicting actions. The surrounding in which children live influences their identity and instances that defame their activities are detrimental to their development. Childhood can be made better when they are provided with a life where their little fantasies and imaginations have a place of importance among their family members. Restraining them from their freedom might result in aggressive reactions.

Brit was not allowed to go out alone or with his friends as his parents was concerned about his safety. Such actions infuriated him as it reflects his incapability of handling his own life. Brit was envious when his sister Dolly got all the liberty to lead her life the way she choose it to be. He felt weakened by the comments, ““You’re delicate, you’ve got to be careful” (Kanga 135). For Brit, reminding him about the well evident facts of his condition was equal to degrading and doubting his ability to lead a life successfully. If children develop anxiety or doubt regarding their skills, they will not be able to identify their actual strength or weakness. Unpleasant statements that are used in public to refer to the inability of a child will create a sense of humiliation in him/her. Children during this stage experience an identity moratorium which can make them emotionally delicate and weak. A child needs time to achieve identity and it can be attained easily with the support and appreciation rendered primarily by the family members as well as by the people with whom the child is closely associated with.

Brit expressed his wish of becoming a psychiatrist to his tutor so that he can understand and read the minds of other people. The way how his tutor Madame Manekshaw responded to his dream made him to doubt the significance of his existence.

‘I don’t think you can do it, Brit. People are going to find it very difficult to trust you to solve their problems.’

‘Why? Do I look stupid?’ I said indignantly.

‘To a lot of people you seem stupid because you are so short and, I know it’s absurd, because you can’t walk.’ (Kanga 67-68)

Derogatory statements have the capability to affect the confidence in a child. While assessing the talents and potential in children, physical impairments should not stand as an obstruction. Their budding dreams should be nurtured with care and affection. If children lack the support that they need to pursue their ambitions then they will have a tendency to move towards the stage of stagnation. They might experience dejection which can eventually lead to disappointment. Erikson remarks, “In most instances, however, it is the inability to settle on an occupational identity which disturbs individual young people” (262). Apparently this feeling instils in a child the fear of losing his/her identity. To a certain extent, this can be solved by the love and support provided by their parents or caregivers. Maintaining a good relationship and a stable emotional attachment ensures that children have a systematic life that promotes their psychological growth.

Brit made sure that nothing that results in pain should affect his life. He was in a quest to establish his identity and did not want to be disturbed by other external

intrusions. He was oriented and remained focused on learning new activities during his leisure time. He dedicated his time in reading like a man who might lose his vision in six months and also tried his luck in learning chess and Spanish guitar. He eventually gave up on the guitar as the instrument was too big for him to handle. According to Erikson, adolescents of his age will fight hard to stay connected to the world that they are part of. They plan accordingly to find a space where their activities will be noticed. Adapting to an environment to showcase one's skills is due to the desire that they have to perform their actions and gain appreciation. Staying stagnant scares these children on the thought of being unproductive in fulfilling their goals. To avoid this, they engage in a constant pursuit towards achieving a life that they long for. While the children are willing to work for what they seek, disturbing thoughts and actions from their loved ones can affect their aim.

Erikson's ideologies on attaining identity and experiencing role confusions are a subject of concern that deserves proper understanding. The developmental conflicts that individuals experience in their lifetime should be resolved during the right moment as it may follow them as they grow older. Instances that affect the psychological growth of an individual should not be kept unresolved. While they seek to find new directions in life for achieving identity, it may become sources of distractions that hold them from becoming victorious. An individual focusing on priorities will improve skills without lending ears to the disparaging statements or attitudes that are made by their nemesis. They learn from their flaws and remain determined to rise from their mistakes. All these are features that could help in distancing oneself from the stage of 'role confusion'.

The sixth stage as proposed by Erikson is referred as the 'Intimacy vs. Isolation' stage. It addresses the individuals who belong to the age group of twenty to

thirty-nine. Erikson explains, “Thus, the young adult, emerging from the search for and the insistence on identity, is eager and willing to fuse his identity with that of others” (263). During this stage an individual is willing to get committed in a relationship through intimacy and the counterpart to this stage is isolation. ‘Intimacy’ is a stage where they try to seek a meaningful bond with their partner. An individual who enters into the stage of adulthood will often try to seek for an emotional involvement with another person for gaining a closely attached relationship. Intimacy demands for a mutual connection where the partners have a shared bond of trust, commitment, and understanding. They might also be willing to stay detached from their partners to lead an isolated life if they feel that the other person’s presence can be dangerous to their existence. A fear of isolation due to estrangement with their partner can also induce confusion in an individual to whether be ready to get committed. Children whose parents are separated or divorced can find it difficult to engage in a relationship as they have witnessed the intensity of pain suffered by their elders. ‘Isolation’ also arises out of the fear of commitment which can be a result of childhood trauma or the dreadful experiences from their past relationships.

As Brit grew up, his expectations to have a partner to share his worries and happiness also developed. He gets into an intimate relationship with Amy who was his friend, after realising the fact that she too was fond of him. Sera, mother of Brit was not happy with his decision to be in a relationship with Amy. He shared about his opinions to his mother by stating,

‘But, Sera, I’ve got to grow and get my heart broken if it must. You know that. You could have kept me safe in a soft bed all my life. But you didn’t. You let me go around and break my bones and become as much like other people as was possible. And you took the pain every time I broke my legs.’ (Kanga 248)

He wanted to enjoy all the pleasures of life by leading it normally as everyone else. Erikson mentions, “He is ready for intimacy, that is, the capacity to commit himself to concrete affiliations and partnerships and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such commitments, even though they may call for significant sacrifices and compromises” (263). Sexual desires of physically impaired individuals are generally considered as uncommon. Sera considered his relationship as inappropriate and believed Amy would leave him one day for a person who has a good physique and financial stability. Having a physical impairment does not affect an individual’s desire to get committed in a serious relationship. They certainly do have the right to make choices of their own. Brit wanted to be loved and accepted and was not expecting his impairment to be a barrier to his relationship status. It is sexual stigma that often disfavours opportunities for intimacy for individuals with physical impairments.

The novel *Trying to Grow* projects the negative connotations generated by the society linked with disability by categorising them asexual. Such stereotypes are equal to the violation of their basic human rights. Controversial statements can affect the confidence of an individual and it leads them to withdraw themselves from the presence of others. Isolation is due to the external factors that have affected an individual in the form of abuse, childhood trauma, deprecating social attitudes, or defaming statements. A physical impairment need not be always a restraint to their sexuality. The concept of normalcy should be inculcated to avoid segregation identified based on assumptions regarding an individual’s body. To overcome such defaming situations an individual should be surrounded with an environment that promotes their physical and emotional well-being.

The seventh stage, ‘Generativity vs. Stagnation’ defines the strategies followed by individuals who belong between the age group of forty and sixty-four

while guiding their younger generations. Generativity as articulated by Erikson highlights the mediums that an individual follows to guide their offspring. They will be extremely focused on being successful at their parenting skills. They also look forward to make contributions that are beneficial for the society's welfare. In such instances, an individual's productivity can radiate positivity. Failing to be helpful while mentoring others can lead to the stage of stagnation. If an individual cannot achieve the potential outcome as expected can experience difficulties to lead their life peacefully. Adults will feel dissatisfied with their ways of living when they recognise their mistakes which cannot be undone. It is never too late to seek for new opportunities where one's deeds can be of benefit for the growth of another person. These actions can relieve their existing pain of stagnation by producing thoughts of fulfilment.

In the novel *A Time to Dance*, Veda's mother had a difference of opinion towards Veda's passion for dancing. She always wanted Veda to become a doctor or engineer as they are professions that would help them gain profit. But Veda always desired to dedicate her life for dance. She used to get worried when her mother never congratulated or appreciated her for the awards and recognition that she had obtained from her dancing skills. After the accident that led to the amputation of Veda's leg, her mother regretted for not being supportive in her daughter's achievements. At the hospital when Veda regained her consciousness, her mother pleaded to her stating, "I'm sorry," she says. / "About / Everything" (Venkatraman 37). Veda was not willing to forgive her mother for the challenges that she was made to experience. According to Erikson, such situations can terrorise the minds of adults by making them feel guilty for their actions. Considering themselves as a failure in parenting can eventually lead them to the stage of stagnation. Staying aloof or disconnected is a common feature seen among individuals who feels that their life has not served its purpose.

During the time when Veda was practicing on her crutches, she found that her accident had affected her mother adversely.

Ma touches my shoulder, then draws back quickly,

as if she's scared I'll bite her hand off.

I don't like Ma acting so unsure of herself.

I almost prefer the old Ma, who'd argue with me. (Venkatraman 62)

As Veda's mother had failed to achieve her own goals, the consequences of stagnation could follow her for the rest of her life. It can affect the health of an individual because stagnation makes them stay detached from their loved ones. Here, Veda's mother was scared of interacting with her daughter due to the impacts of life events that had happened before the accident. It can be considered as a period of crisis where an individual might experience difficulties in maintaining relationships by regretting the missed opportunities that they did not utilise. Unable to make contributions at the right time is a mistake that needs rectification. An individual should never delay in expressing their feelings as one might not know of what the future holds for them. Seeking new possibilities to overcome their detached state can help them regain their confidence. Any crisis can be resolved if people are willing to find a remedy to fix the negative impacts of their actions.

Veda was unable to control her rage whenever she was reminded of her lost leg. She always vented out her anger on her mother. She once questioned her mother, whether she was happy that she could not dance anymore. Veda also considered her accident to be the result to her mother's prayers. Though the atmosphere was filled with silence, Veda was kissed by her mother who did not react to her accusations.



Instead Veda was reminded by her mother that her name has a significant connection with dance.

I remembered the four holy books called the Vedas.

I'd forgotten that dance is also called the fifth Veda.

Until after the accident, I didn't want to accept

you'd chosen that fifth Veda

over any book. (Venkatraman 166)

Self-realisation to take responsibility for their actions can make an individual feel empowered. Accomplishing goals helps them to pass through the phase of stagnation as they step forward towards generativity, leaving behind their fears and mistakes. Engaging in activities that could satisfy their psychological needs has the ability to overcome the shades of stagnation which was acting as a hindrance to their growth.

The Mishra family in the novel *Family Life* experienced a radical change after the accident that happened in their son's life. The ability to adapt to an illness that is persistent and lifelong is undeniably painful. As the story depicts Birju's paralysed condition, the excruciating journey of his parents is revealed simultaneously. The accident placed a huge impact on Birju's father who was unable to accept the accursed fate of his son. Since the accident, he started accusing Birju with embarrassing comments for spoiling his life over a leisure time activity. He also started depending on the consumption of alcohol to ease his pain from the tragic realities of life. Incidents that have an effect on the idealised childhood that the parents had envisioned for their children can traumatise them. Treatments and other medical needs that children with impairments demands for their sustainability can separate them from their parent's

presence or attention. Such instances can be marked as crucial for the parents as they are unable to stay connected with their children during their hard times.

While visiting nursing homes, Shuba, mother of Birju and Ajay constantly enquired the medical practitioners regarding the survival status of her son. Ajay narrates, “My mother, sounding nervous, asked, ‘Have you ever had a patient like Birju start talking?’” (Sharma 83). Unfortunately their responses did not meet the expectations of their mother. Parenthood is certainly a dedicated service where they make sure to provide anything that is favourable for making their child’s life comfortable. Birju’s mother determinedly waited for him to wake up by trying every measure that could help him to achieve this goal. The Mishra family certainly encountered various troubles while nursing their son after the accident. Failing to find the accurate cure to save Birju had negatively affected his parents. As remarked by Erikson, an individual may end up in a state of despair if they fail to overcome or accept the transitions that have been taking its presence in their life. A psychological crisis due to unexpected incidents affects their ability to function normally or in a productive manner. The inability to perform their duties well forces them to question their existence.

The major effects of disability are the difficulties that the family have to experience while dealing with the financial constraints for medical needs. The insurance company denied support for their basic needs for medicines, disposable pads, and also rejected their requirement for an aide. Though his parents sought a way that could save Birju from his downfall; their needs were not satisfied due to the financial imbalances. This fear caused a breakdown in Birju’s father who was unable to process his life according to the changes that was resulted due to the accident. Ajay mentions,

MY FATHER'S DRINKING worsened. The disorder that had been restricted primarily to weekend mornings spread into the week. Sometimes my father was too hungover in the morning to bathe Birju. He would lie on his bed in his pajamas, one foot touching the floor to keep the room from spinning (Sharma 138).

He embraced alcoholism to forget his worries and Birju's mother always had to cover up his drinking habits to save their family from embarrassment. She wanted to efface this part of their family when they are surrounded by friends or relatives. While visitors arrived at their place to enquire about Birju's health, his mother hides Mr. Mishra to save themselves from humiliation.

Parents at this stage of life may experience a crisis when they are inefficient at arranging the basic necessities that their children require for survival. As Erikson mentions, an adult while becoming a parent set their primary concern on providing the best for their next generation. The ability to guide and establish a good relationship with one's child is the main motive of individuals at their stage of generativity. Parents will always love their children selflessly and are willing to sacrifice their life for the betterment of their children. Unfortunately, there are also parents who might not be in a situation to provide the best for their offspring. Such instilled insecurities make the parents feel helpless. During such occasions, an individual should try to stay motivated and engage in activities that are productive and useful. Active participation in household activities creates a pleasant atmosphere at home, which will also be reflected in their actions at their working place.

Birju's father being an addict of alcohol started receiving notification from his colleagues that there are chances for him to get terminated. He was usually late for work and would not take an initiative to leave the house early. Neither did he help

anyone at home nor was he worried about the consequences that the family had to undergo due to his inconsistent behaviour. With hopes and prayers, Birju's mother made him to promise on their son's life to quit the habit of consuming alcohol. Though Ajay felt this as a melodramatic act by their parents, Mr. Mishra stayed quite determined with his promise. Days and months passed without his father drinking alcohol and Ajay quotes, "FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, my father did not drink. In my memory, this period is wonderful" (Sharma 173). He was considerate and thoughtful in his actions during this period of staying sober. Self-realisation helped him understand his mistakes and he decided never to make excuses over Birju's condition. To regain the ability to overcome from a stagnated stage is an essential criterion for an individual to lead their life without regrets.

According to Erikson, if individuals stay reluctant towards achieving generativity, then there are possibilities for them to enter their next stage of life with total despair. One should be cautious and never procrastinate in following their passion as it could result in a path of never ending failures. To overcome the hurdles of pain at each stage of one's life is highly essential for the psychological well-being of an individual. Resolving the encountered conflicts at the appropriate time will help people to acquire a satisfied life. Birju's parents decided to fight forward without letting their breakdowns affect their future. Life may surprise an individual with unexpected pain or disappointments but nothing has the ability to defeat him/her if they are willing to move ahead by focusing on the positive aspects of life. This can be achieved with the support of family, relatives, or acquaintances through a proper channel of communication. Conveying one's pain or suffering is not a shameful act and rather it could help one receive certain ideas that can be inculcated to triumph over their struggles.

Unfortunately, their happiness did not survive long as Mr. Mishra was found consuming alcohol again. Shuba tried to pacify him by stating, ““This happens. Nobody can be perfect forever. Once or twice you make mistakes”” (Sharma 174). After this incident, everything was exactly the same as before and the house was filled with quarrels and confusions. He was often out of his senses and this reflected in his behavioural patterns. Shuba was uncertain about how to run their family without the physical or financial support of her husband. Periodically, the family had to face humiliations when Mr. Mishra misbehaved and shouted at them in the presence of visitors or aides. Parental conflicts affected Ajay as he did not receive any attention since the accident of Birju and was also scolded by his mother who vented out her anger towards Mr. Mishra on her son. The stability of the family was shattered as the parents did not have a healthy relationship.

After a few days, Mr. Mishra decided to check into a hospital to save himself from the clutches of addiction. This act of hospitalisation was done without the consent and knowledge of his family members. Shuba along with Ajay went in search of Mr. Mishra as they were worried that he would have got into some trouble. The next day they received a call from him revealing that he had admitted himself in a hospital. He seemed to be confident and consoled Shuba with the positive aspects of the treatment that he will be receiving from the hospital. He also conveyed the message that people who visited that hospital were benefitted and many had quit their habit of drinking. ““There were group counseling sessions for addicts and their families. . . Some of the patients were seated and were so medicated they appeared to be dozing. The family members looked tired, unhappy”” (Sharma 182-183). The counsellor highlighted the negative aspects of drinking and mentions how addiction can be a disease which cannot be cured completely. He stated that an individual

should stay focused to protect himself from the bondages of addiction. Mr. Mishra nodded for each and every word uttered by his therapist. A mind which is built strong enough is integral to face the challenges in life. This time Mr. Mishra was more focused on his decision to beat his addiction and decided to spend his time with the family in a more sensible manner.

Depiction of Birju's parents explicitly projects the distressing situations that the family had to undergo due to the stagnated stage experienced by Mr. Mishra. It also exemplifies how a family can get affected by the psychological disturbances experienced by one member. The stage 'generativity' can be attained through active participation where an individual will have a positive connection with his/her acquaintances. Erikson suggests an individual should experience the stage of accomplishment by engaging in meaningful activities that encompasses the roots of generativity. It allows them to establish their identity through profitable inputs that they contribute for the well-being of their children. They could acquire a remarkable outcome and satisfaction as they fulfil their duties as parents. It also helps them to grow as an individual with better perspectives at handling situations. It is never too late for a transformation when individuals seek to improve their life style and actions.

*Trying to Grow* by Kanga reflects the hardships endured by a family while in search of a medical miracle that could save their son who is suffering from 'Osteogenesis imperfecta'. Sam and Sera, parents of Brit were in a constant quest towards finding a solution to make their son's life better. It caused them pain while realising the fact that they could not achieve their mission in finding a cure to heal Brit. From the time of his birth, Sera stood strong as a mother who decided to lead their life accustomed to this new condition. While the doctor narrated about how difficult it will be to take care of Brit, she stated,

‘Anything else, Doctor?’ said Sera with a mysterious smile.

‘This is no laughing matter, I assure you. Your son was born with a broken femur; his leg is in a tiny cast. In fact, the only silver lining is his disease will burn itself out by the time he’s in his late teens. But he’s never going to walk.’

‘Then he must use a wheelchair,’ said Sera.

‘Yes, yes, of course,’ said the doctor, terrified at the first signs of madness he saw in my mother. (Kanga 28)

Positive point of view while taking a decision which contains factors of high risks and responsibilities demands courage. Sera knew about the difficulties that she had to endure in the upcoming days while protecting Brit. According to Erikson, parents while helping their offspring will be highly cautious at safeguarding them from all harmful instances. They will act as a shield to protect their children and also teach them to lead their life confidently.

Sam was delicate and highly doubted his ability to take good care of Brit. To find a solution for brittle bones, he opted for measures that were unethical in the field of medical science. Sam believed that he can be a successful father only if he could save his son from his sufferings. He desperately approached every person who claimed to have a cure for brittle bones. Unfortunately, Brit had to be a part of his father’s experiments though none of them helped him. The Kotwal family made occasional visits with hopes of recovery at the healing institution of Wagh Baba but he was later arrested for his participation in illegal activities. The family also insisted Brit to consume food items prescribed by various magical healers. Every night, Sam applied almond oil on the legs of Brit which was another way of cure predicted by

some strangers. Additionally, he also welcomed people who were not doctors and who proclaimed to have treated various medical conditions to practice their methods of healing on their son. Though none of them provided any results, he decided to continue his hunt for recovery.

Sam decided to invest in educating Brit as he was worried of the life that his son has to go through after his demise. He wanted Brit to be well equipped and self-efficient to survive in a world where he might be alone. They preferred to ornate his knowledge for a life that he had to lead by himself. Sera could not imagine of the days when they will not be able to support or provide the assistance that Brit may require. He was not allowed to go out alone as she was worried that he might injure his bones. Sam explained to Sera, ““We must let him go, darling. We’re so scared for him we’re shutting out his air and light. School, college, friends, picnics. He’s hardly had any of those. Think what we got out of it all when we were his age”” (Kanga 135). Parents become anxious and worried due to the unconditional love they possess for their children. This serves as a reason for the parents to have a control over them which ultimately affects the autonomy of a child.

According to Erikson, a child deserves the liberty and motivation that helps them to grow as an individual. Restricting them from activities that they feel they could accomplish can induce fear in them thinking that they are incapable for the same. Brit was infuriated and felt lonely at the thought that he will not be able to enjoy the luxuries that other children of his age did. He expressed his dislike to his parents who had curtailed his freedom due to a physical impairment which he does not seem to care as an issue. “Sam sat with his head thrown back against the seat. His eyebrows trudged into his forehead and his eyes tried to focus on something. ‘I’m sorry,’ he said. ‘It’s been so difficult. Trying to know what we should do. You don’t



know what it was like, Brit, when you were born” (Kanga 145). Parents of children with impairments often experience stress as they are worried about their upbringing as well as financial constraints that limit them from providing everything that their child needs.

Erikson reveals how a parent can feel stagnated while considering themselves as a failure at parenting. A parent-child relationship is a mutual contract of understanding that is interconnected within all spheres of their activities. Situations changed as Sam’s demise ruined the normalcy of the Kotwal family. “. . . Sam is dead. Don’t worry. We’ll manage. I’m here to take care of you. And as usual, she smiled bravely, ‘I’m prepared’” (Kanga 194). The onlookers were concerned about Sera’s condition with a son who is ‘crippled’. She was becoming weak both physically and emotionally. Meanwhile, “Inflation was dying but she began stocking everything from Complian to toilet-paper. ‘So that Brit won’t have any problems for at least a year’” (Kanga 230). Sera did not wish Brit to be dependent on others for his personal needs. Appropriate training provided by the parents at the early developmental stages of a child will serve as an exposure to understand the basic skills of life.

Apart from the education that the children attain from school, parents should enhance their abilities to sustain and survive without their assistance. Raising a child by equipping them with the knowledge of survival should encompass the techniques of managing the emotional, economical, and environmental factors. This helps a child to understand about the responsibilities that they need for leading a contented life. Encouraging children to be independent enhances their ability to lead their life confidently. Sam and Sera wanted Brit to manage his personal needs that primarily involves healthcare and financial requirements. They were concerned about his physical impairment as it was a major factor that made his social life more difficult

and complicated. Leading a life with the support of a wheelchair often caused him trouble while travelling alone. As mentioned by Erikson, the primary aim of parents is to ensure that their children lead a life with no difficulties. Brit's parents were able to overcome their stage of stagnation and attained generativity by being successful at providing their children with knowledge and support with the best of their capability.

This chapter elucidates the importance of interaction, support, and understanding an individual needs at different stages of their development. Psychosocial theory summarises the entire life span into eight stages where Erikson highlights about the conflicts and developmental patterns that are commonly seen among humankind. Each stages focuses on the conflicts that can be resolved with proper guidance which eventually turns out to be the psychological strength that is attained during that stage. Successful accomplishment of each stages of life improves the competency in an individual to move forward in their life without fears. The novels selected for analysis projects the transformation that each character undergoes despite the difficult circumstances they were placed in. The theory functions as a survival guide as it predicts the traits, conflicts, and psychological strengths experienced by the people in correspondence to their age. It helps the readers to understand their personal conflicts and the alternate solution to transform victoriously from their failures or insecurities.

The characters while experiencing their conflicts learnt to balance their emotions which served as a foundation to overcome the struggles of physical impairments. Through the characters Nanju, Veda, and Daryus, the authors have projected their mode of survival where they did not allow their impairments to serve as an obstacle for accomplishing their dreams. The limitations and doubts that the society imposed on them by labelling them as disabled were never a matter of concern

to these children. They focused on working through their conflicts and attained their psychological strength as articulated by Erikson. Parents of these children had to face many challenging situations including financial and psychological imbalances as they were not prepared to live through these unexpected scenarios. Their confidence was shattered while realising that they could not manage to be successful in the field of parenting. Unable to provide the basic essentialities that their children deserve was the primary thought of concern that worried them. But the characters eventually perceive the seriousness of the situation and took initiatives to outshine their insecurities. Application of psychosocial theory to the text enables the readers to understand the need of transformation while experiencing a conflict as each developmental stages of life should be stepped in with self-assurance by forsaking the past miseries.