

From Fat Shaming to Body Positivity: Resilience and Identity Transformation in R. Chaitanya's *The Cursed Curves*

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary society, self-perceptions, bodily appearances, and beauty norms, resulting from the external and authentic identity, have defined selfhood. Societal standards have a notable impact on one's emotions, identity, experiences, and perceptions. The pursuit of thinness has influenced the minds of society, particularly among women who face discontentment with their body colour, size, and shape. This societal pressure has followed a harmful pattern, leading to women's suffering over time. Society propagates violence in the form of bullying, body shaming, and verbal discrimination. This paper attempts to illuminate the protagonist Naina's resilient journey towards body positivity in the novel "The Cursed Curves" by R. Chaitanya. This descriptive analysis articulates the profound struggle of a young woman who is experiencing body shaming and fat discrimination, presenting an intense emotional journey of self-doubt and isolation. The protagonist's journey of self-transformation highlights her resilient agency, evolving from a victim of fatphobia to the founder of a body positivity centre. By employing psychosocial resilience theory, this paper illustrates the literary depictions of body image and how self-worth and emotional resilience can be restored by reshaping the personal trauma into a space of acceptance and healing. It also highlights the psychological consequences, the journey from criticism to self-acceptance, and the empowerment of advocating for self-worth and body positivity.

Keywords: body shame; beauty standards; resilience; body positivity; self-acceptance

INTRODUCTION

Beauty standards in contemporary society perform as socially formed standards that control bodies through ideals of youth, thinness, and physical discipline. From traditional to modern society, beauty ideals and aesthetic norms are not fixed; they are shaped and have undergone drastic changes, such as thinness, fair skin, youth, and being able-bodied. These norms come under a dominative world where individuals pressure their cognition level to fit into certain beauty standards for gaining social acceptance. Literature may not be able to depict with any degree of sophistication the development of intricate social systems, but it does provide light on how these systems function and how individuals react to them (Bashir, 2024). Literary texts play a crucial role in revealing and probing such dominant perceptual approaches by emphasising embodied resonances that are often marginalised in public discourse. Literature offers the profound

reimagining of self-acceptance, expression, self-realisation, self-determination, and intrinsic cognition of humankind. Focusing on the exposure of psychological, emotional, and sociological aspects of beauty standards and body shaming, which is socially constructed, literature functions as a site of critique that challenges normative premises about bodies and worth. This helps to create an enlarged space for resistance, transformation, and compassion. Apart from the stereotypical aspects, themes like beauty norms, domestic oppression, violence, and bodily autonomy are also portrayed from the traditional context. From the traditional to contemporary literature, the bodily autonomy of women is regarded as a site of efficacy, resistance, and restraints. In today's world, body shame and beauty standards shape the young individual's emotional well-being, identity, quality of life, and perceptions. Those forms from the traditional notions interrogate the political struggle, devastating effects, beauty norms, and also personal growth. Young minds are impaired by facing judgments from peers and society, which leads to long-term consequences. Body shame negotiates the authenticity, sense of freedom, and judgment-free life, and also silences individuals to fit into unrealistic beauty standards. Women's bodies, in general, have historically been subjected to profound control and domination through culturally decreed beauty standards. Their social value and life prospects are commonly negotiated by compliance with authoritative beauty aesthetics, where physical appearance acts as a form of denotative resource shaping societal consequences and personal dynamics. Body size is both objective and subjective. It is objective because it can be quantified and stated, but subjective because different people have different ideas about what is "acceptable" or "desirable" (Gruys, 2012). Murray (2020) examines how the representation of fat female embodiment is extensively gender-based and radically political.

Fatness is consistently framed as a structure of personal deficiency. It is often linked to the idea of neutral failure, but it is also seen as an indication of laziness, weakness, obesity, prejudice, undesirable views, and many other things. The focus on feminine beauty standards represents diverse effects that increase the risk of mental health problems. This neoliberal emphasis on one's self attributes both physical and health responsibility entirely to the person and neglects the structural and institutional factors that may restrict access to resources necessary for being both overweight and healthy (Felkins, 2019). Regardless of the prevailing ideals of thin bodies in recent years, knowledge of the parallel growth of fat-stigmatising concepts remains inadequate (Brewis et al., 2011). Historically, women were objectified and forced into many ideal constructions of being white, thin, curvy, passive, disciplined, healthy, and so on.

This study addresses this gap by analysing the experiences of 'Naina', the obese female protagonist of the novel "The Cursed Curves". This underscores both the psychological and emotional representation of how society has imposed the prejudices and judgements based on her body size and shape that portray the struggles she faced from her childhood. It also focuses on analysing how resilience is apparent as a fierce exploration, which allows her to endure the personal transformation and empowerment despite her struggles, which is an existing gap. This paper highlights the novel's theme by elevating the negativity and internal ambiguity in pursuit of self-acceptance and personal betterment. There remains a notable gap in literary studies of how fat female protagonists foster emotional resilience and rebuild identity in response to persistent body shaming. Studies tend to draw attention to external perceptions and societal attributes rather than focusing on emotional resilience and psychological transformation. The novel's interpretation of a young obese woman enduring the difficulties of body image struggles, societal expectations, and fatphobia extends a unique perspective by analysing how emotional resilience and identity construction emerge from experiences of fat discrimination. This study aims to confront a crucial research gap by analysing the resilient journey of fat individuals in literature, which has been

largely underexplored by scholarly works. Presenting Naina's journey as a personalised resilience as an act of self-recovery, the narrative accentuates the importance of supportive relationships in encouraging reformation. Her inevitable transformation into a body positivity counsellor portrays that resilience is not solely an achievement but a socially mandated progress that reshapes the individual's social environment to encourage liberation for others facing similar oppression.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Feminist literature examines the difficulties faced by women in relation to patriarchal domination, the conditioning of gender roles, and structural inequality across both private and public spaces. Within this inclusive and diverse body of research, two major theoretical perspectives regarding the body and its relationship with society have materialised: the symbolic body and the agentic body (Reischer & Koo, 2004). Understanding beauty through the lens of gendered embodiment, therefore, depends on the recognition of the cultural and social structures that form perspectives that define ideological and aesthetic benefits (Havlin & Báez, 2018). Within this framework, fat studies and feminist literary criticism have gained prominence over the last decade; however, there is a notable lack of critical engagement with the novel "The Cursed Curves". Within dominant cultural discourses, the size and shape of an individual's body have progressively become symbolic indicators of moral integrity (Nichter & Bordo, 1995). However, an alternative feminist perspective challenges this assumption by arguing that in a culture where thinness is fundamental to the conventional definition of femininity. Fatness should not be interpreted as a lack of self-discipline but rather as a potential form of resistance to restrictive gender norms (Orbach, 1978). The work "The Beauty Myth" exposes how psychological and emotional manipulation through beauty standards functions as a form of patriarchal domination in contemporary society (Wolf, 1990). Existing scholarly articles, such as Murray (2015), examine how contemporary South African short stories depict women's experiences of embodiment, gendered oppression, and shame. These narratives underscore how female bodies become a site of cultural, social, and emotional expression, revealing the intersection between trauma, societal expectation, and identity. Averill's (2016) article explores fat-positive characters, societal fatphobia, thin-thinking norms, self-empowerment, and the resilience journey of fat characters; their coping mechanisms and transformation journey are not explored in depth. Mensinger et al. (2018) demonstrate how stigma and shame function as mechanisms linking weight-based discrimination to psychological distress and social disengagement. Pavicevic and Bulatović (2018) analytically interrogate resilience theory from a feminist perspective, critiquing its neoliberal emphasis on individual adaptability over structural reform. This critique reveals how narratives of personal growth may conceal ongoing gendered oppression and structural injustice. Murray (2020) examines literary representations of fat female bodies from the perspective of fat studies, emphasising the intersection of identity, gender, and body politics. Owens (2021) explores the intersection of identity, social stigma, and body image.

Gerend et al. (2022) identify the pattern of negative health consequences associated with weight discrimination while revealing resilience factors such as self-esteem, positive body perception, and social support. Warnqvist and Österlund (2022) analyse the dominance of weight-loss discourse and bridge girlhood studies and fat studies by exploring body-positive depictions of fat female characters. By challenging normative beauty standards and redefining girlhood from the perspective of body politics. Farid et al. (2023) demonstrate how female characters in selected

novels of Toni Morrison and Khaled Hosseini evolve resilience against patriarchal oppression. Saelens and Larsen (2023) examines the resilience journey in young adult literature, emphasising how characters adapt to adversity and retrieve agency. D'Adamo et al. (2024) underscore that positive body construction and resilience are attainable when individuals are offered structured psychological support. Darshan and Kausalya's (2024) paper explores resilience as a transformational force that allows survival and challenges injustice. This highlights the need for narratives that reinforce the cultural and societal stereotypes that represent empowerment and fat embodiment.

On offering an insightful study, the academic works mentioned above focus on themes such as societal administration of beauty standards, representations of fat bodies, and fatness as a marginalised identity in literature and media. These perspectives are essential; beauty standards and body shame have materialised from a sociological perspective and quantitative study, examining statistical shifts related to societal perception, body shaming, and mental health impacts. Women are socially conditioned to demonstrate submissiveness and servitude through the internalisation of beauty standards as perceived feminine qualities that are distinct from male autonomy, which is progressively defined by moral reliability and cultural acceptance. The prevalent beauty standards objectify women by focusing on emotional control, apathy, and physical conformity as desirable traits, thereby perpetuating gender-specific expectations of submissiveness and self-surveillance. Despite these contributions, there remain limited literary studies that examine narratives of self-transformation and emotional resilience in response to fat-shaming. It does not engage with a literary perspective that expresses the emotional repercussions of individuals directing such discrimination.

This study addresses this gap by offering a thematic interpretation of the novel “The Cursed Curves”, focusing on the protagonist Naina’s journey of psychological and emotional resilience reformation, challenging idealised beauty standards, and extending the narrative surrounding fat embodiment in contemporary literature. This study focuses on how Naina, the protagonist, navigates societal judgements, internalised discrimination, and the toxic impacts of her interpersonal relationships. The journey from vulnerability to empowerment: the novel emphasises emotional and psychological resilience. Illuminating Naina’s transformation, she constructs her identity as a body-positivity counsellor regardless of normative beauty ideals. This contributes a fresh perspective for discussing fat embodiment in literary works. The novel explores themes such as body positivity journeys, bullying, self-empowerment, and body shaming through Naina's evolving relationship, where she is increasingly influenced by societal beauty standards. Additionally, she fails to recognise the false motivation from her boyfriend, Aarav, who pressured her to lose weight by taking prescription-free tablets and participating in weight-loss programs, which ultimately led to severe health consequences. In the aftermath, she embarks on a journey of resilience, learning to accept her body's nature and starts a body positivity centre for the young generation, thereby addressing a critical gap in the existing literature.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Resilience is defined as a dynamic, socially driven process by which people adapt, cope, and positively evolve while facing stigma or tragedies (Herrman et al., 2011; Masten, 2001; Ungar, 2008). A resilience framework serves as an efficient tool to accomplish the desired outcomes of psychological wellness in challenging circumstances (Yates et al., 2015). By employing the

resilience theory by Ungar (2011), his perspective shifted to a socio-ecological lens, which suggests that resilience is not fully reliant on individuals' attributes and actions but rather focuses on individuals' ability to mediate access to support systems, such as social acceptance, community prospects, and emotional well-being. Resilience as a psychological and interdisciplinary framework should be understood as individuals who undergo discrimination or oppression are rooted in cultural expectations and societal standards. The core arguments involve recognising shame, understanding the cultural and societal construction of shame, developing emotional strength, breaking the silence around the prejudices and shame, and fostering self-empowerment, empathy, and resilience.

From the context of the novel, the discussion is more about psychological endurance and how the protagonist has been centred around body shaming, bullying, and identity formation. The primary focus of how the protagonist transforms from self-doubt and hatred to acceptance and self-empowerment is directed by her resilient journey. This paper explains how people undergo trauma, emotional struggle, and pain. It focuses on how individuals are capable of recovering, adapting, and transforming through trials and tribulations, and a distinct framework within the context of psychology and social work, focusing on how individuals recover from shame and respond to it. The act of self-reclamation is achieved by transforming the pain and anguish into a survival resilience journey. Additionally, the study explores the pivotal role of literature in facilitating healing and transformation, with a particular focus on how obese individuals navigate socially constructed beauty standards.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The primary data for this study is a contemporary novel – “The Cursed Curves” by R Chaitanya. The study relies on textual analysis of the novel to explore how body shame, bullying, and obesity conditions shape the life of a young woman as she undergoes this weight discrimination from her childhood to adult life. This research adopts a qualitative analytical approach to examine concepts such as effects of body shame, bullying, body positivity, and self-empowerment in the novel “The Cursed Curves”. Using the textual analysis to interpret the protagonist’s life progression from childhood trauma to a body positivity counsellor, prioritising how resilience is elevated in response to recited oppression due to body weight, this highlights the factors like emotional growth, self-empowerment, and mental breakdown that shaped the protagonist's instinct to navigate the toxic social community. This resilience framework helps to understand how fat discrimination in literature nurtures emotional healing, resistance, and acceptance. It also underscores the reflective space for the subjugated people to retrieve identity and reckon with socially constructed beauty ideals.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

THE CURSED CURVES: ANALYSE THE BODY SHAME AND INTERNALISED OPPRESSION

Body shame represents a critical form of psychosocial adversity in contemporary society, processed through social regulation of bodies and internalised psychological distress. Exposure to aesthetic surveillance and beauty standards judgment functions as a holistic risk, shaping self-perception, identity formation, and emotional well-being. Within the psychosocial resilience

framework, reconceptualised by Michael Rutter. He challenged limitations-based approaches to trauma by foregrounding resilience as a developmental and interactive phenomenon, and also a critical analysis of how adversity produces psychological vulnerability while also embracing resilience mechanisms, resistance, and recovery. The title, "From Fat Shaming to Body Positivity: Resilience and Identity Transformation in R. Chaitanya's *The Cursed Curves*," examines the social construction of idealised beauty standards and explores body shaming as a psychosocial risk aspect that produces emotional suffering through bullying, verbal discrimination, and body-based judgements. In contemporary society, body-based judgements have become a normalised collective habit that contributes to psychosocial stress. This analysis draws on "The Cursed Curves" (2023) by R Chaitanya, a contemporary Indian novelist and English lecturer. Her academic background shapes her nuanced engagement with issues of body politics, identity, social marginalisation, and gendered embodiment. In contemporary social construction, women continue to experience converging forms of psychological oppression. Psychological distress emerges from both cultural and social norms that marginalise bodies and cause individuals' emotional distress; these norms act as mechanisms of psychological regulation that control marginalised identities through patriarchal beauty norms. Within this context, body positivity is understood as a resistant response that sets back stereotypical appearance norms. This promotes inclusivity and equity by supporting bodies that exist outside dominant beauty standards. Psychological integrity and resistance agency can be reclaimed through reflections from radical acceptance, social justice, and bodily autonomy.

From a very young age, Naina had been struggling with extreme obesity, which had resulted in various mental, physical, and emotional challenges for her. Naina felt distressed due to her weight. She used to face societal stigma, discrimination, and judgment from others, which took a toll on her mental well-being. She often also had low self-esteem, body image issues, and struggled with depression, anxiety, or other mental health conditions.

(Chaitanya, 2023, p. 2)

Naina's childhood days were shaped by prolonged exposure to weight-related discrimination and social surveillance, which features as an early psychosocial burden. Continuous internalisation of bullying and biased judgements directed at her body results in perpetual shame, weakened self-worth, and diminished self-determination. Saxena et al. (2020) observe that body-based discrimination emerges as corporeal, leading to psychological consequences. So the fear of rejection and experiences of body shaming cultivate a defensive psychological direction marked by emotional isolation and social detachment. This early-age adversity builds the fundamental circumstances for psychological vulnerability and challenges to psychosocial well-being (Rutter, 1987), thereby embedding Naina's childhood experiences within a progression of accumulated vulnerability.

As the years went by, Naina became more and more obsessed with her weight and body measurements. She would spend hours in front of the mirror, would see herself from innumerable angles, pinching at her thighs and stomach, feeling as if her worth was tied to the number on the scale. Her obsession with weight and inches began to consume her entire identity. She stopped going out with friends, stopped pursuing hobbies she enjoyed, and stopped feeling confident in herself. Naina was lost in a world where her identity was defined by kgs and inches.

(Chaitanya, 2023, p. 3)

Naina's psychological crisis strengthens her identity, intertwining with bodily surveillance and weight measures. Her obsession with self-monitoring, mirror-gazing, and pinching of skin reflects the internalisation of toxic beauty standards that equate thinness with esteem, power, and

prosperity. These behaviours demonstrate attributes consistent with body image disturbances wherein self-determination is excessively rooted in perceived embodied vulnerabilities. These distorted self-perceptions broke her relational world, isolating her from friendships and peer relationships and also dispersing opportunities for identity construction. The constant self-criticism and emotional detachment expose how surveillance acts not merely as a social condition but as a form of psychological dissonance.

Being overweight increases the risk of health problems such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, joint pain, and sleep apnea. These conditions affected Naina's overall health and well-being. Chocolates, pastries, cakes, and cold drinks were a dream come true for the poor child.

Naina always felt self-conscious about her weight, which would lead her to social isolation or bullying from her peers. This affected her mental health and academic performance negatively. Naina's weight affected her self-esteem and confidence, which made it harder for her to participate in classroom activities or engage with her peers.

(Chaitanya, 2023, p. 4)

Naina's obesity exposes her to both emotional and physical vulnerability. Peer bullying exhibits degrading comments that deepen her sense of isolation and restrict opportunities for social engagement and developmental adaptability. The fear of judgment made her avoid participating in and engaging in classroom activities, which affects the holistic improvement in social life. Her health conditions and constraining dietary habits produce stress, fear, and guilt, augmenting her emotional instability. This increases the feeling of being inferior, resulting in low self-esteem, anxiety, and a fragile sense of self-image. This prolonged exposure to such adversity during the developmental stage subverts self-esteem and increases vulnerability to negative self-identity and anxiety (Rutter, 1987).

Fortunately, the constant teasing and bullying built resilience and strength in Naina; she realised that bullying and teasing can never be acceptable or justified behaviours. No one deserves to be mistreated or harassed, and it's important to address and prevent such behaviour. Consequently, these realisations taught Naina to take her own defence.

(Chaitanya, 2023, p. 9)

From the above passage, Naina's mentality has shifted from developing a strong and positive state to focusing more on her resilience journey from childhood, as she recognises that her perception is influenced by constant bullying and negative comments, while individuals adapt positively to trauma and suffering. Rutter (2012) defines resilience not as invulnerability to adversity, but as the ability to achieve positive adaptation against notable stress. Her acceptance of past traumas and negativity and her effort to rebuild self-esteem marked the arrival of emotional regulation and self-empowerment. These adaptive processes, cultivated through distress, lay the framework for prolonged psychological recovery and reaffirm resilience as a dynamic and developmental evolution rather than a fixed trait.

"Mom, I just feel like killing myself. People make comments about my body, and it's really getting to me. Earlier, the problem was with others, but now I don't feel good about myself. Why am I not like other girls? Why can't I have even the clothes of my choice? Everything is a struggle for me. There are ordinary things which are quite normal for others but not for me."

(Chaitanya, 2023, p. 10)

This passage states the mentality of the young adult; she experiences a resonant sense of isolation, inferiority, and rejection, and is present in a state of exhaustion where bullying and body shaming during her school days felt like external discrimination. The struggle and negative

comments were caused by her peers and society, as she couldn't accept it, whereas now the shift focuses on how she perceives herself. The body image issues are highly distorted by the daily activities, like preferring the clothes she likes, which becomes alienating. The self-question that arises from her self-perception damages her self-worth. It can be clearly stated from "Why am I not like other girls?" and "other girls" that all these phrases directly create a breakdown explaining the significance of transition, illustrating how social discrimination becomes psychologically entrenched, perpetuating distress even in the lack of overt external hostility.

It's just hard when everyone seems to be obsessed with how I look. Mom, you know, no boy ever looks at me; nobody ever flirts with me as they do with other girls. They don't even treat me like a girl. My weight has eaten me up."

(Chaitanya, 2023, p. 11)

The protagonist's emotional state is controlled by feelings of being undesirable, unattractive, and excluded from social attention and romantic relationships. The concept of equating physical attractiveness in terms of self-worth and social validation emphasises that boys are not attracted to her and feel an emotional crisis in gender identity perception. The phrases that she uses to express her inner thoughts, metaphorically "my weight has eaten me up" and "they don't even treat me like a girl," emphasise how body perception and low self-esteem have devastated her confidence. Societal standards like thinness, desirability, toned bodies, etc., reinforce this distorted mentality. The cultural balance of physical attractiveness with feminine identity strengthens her identity crisis, as she perceives herself as a deviation from dominant ideals. Fortunately, criticisms typically tend to emphasise the physical features of an individual's body; the repercussions are often psychological (Saxena et al., 2020).

Naina: "Yes, I've been feeling really down lately because people have been making fun of my body. Nobody treats me like an ordinary girl. I have lost my identity as a human being.

Counsellor: I'm sorry to hear that, Naina. It's not okay for anyone to make fun of someone else's body. How has this been affecting you?

Naina: It's been really hard. I feel like I'm not good enough and that I need to change my body to make other people respect me. I've even started skipping meals because I don't want to gain weight.

(Chaitanya, 2023, p. 13)

Naina seeks help from the counsellor because of her poor self-perception. She makes statements such as "I have lost my identity as a human being" and "I even started skipping my meals because I don't want to gain weight." These two phrases reflect her feelings of worthlessness, and her intense concern about gaining weight indicates a deep psychological struggle. She doesn't feel like she belongs to the category of "Ordinary Girls" because she has created the standards of ordinary girls to look alike; she thinks that ordinary girls are always perfect in size and shape. Because she couldn't meet those ideal beauty standards, she feels disconnected and disrespected. Every human being around her is judging based on size and shape; all those self-worth conditions have driven her mind into profound emotional damage. Rutter's (2006) conceptualisation of resilience as a dynamic system shaped by coping strategies and cultural influences, counselling may be understood as a resilience support system that enables reflective narrative formation, challenges internalised discrimination, and encourages the reconstruction of self-determination beyond violating social norms. Within this structure, Naina's decision to seek counselling arises as a response to the sustained degradation of her certainty under societal expectations and conventional beauty standards, which have regulated her sense of restoring psychological agency and reassessing identity.

But how can I feel better about myself? I feel inferior when I see girls with excellent figures; their slim, trim and toned bodies tease me very badly. When I see girls of my age buying sexy dresses, high heels, and short dresses, I feel like crying aloud, why me???

(Chaitanya, 2023, p. 14)

Naina's intense emotional turmoil, rooted in a body image crisis, depends on fashionable dresses and toned bodies. It examines other girls' ability to wear revealing, sexy, trendy, and fashionable dresses. This condition arises from her belief that she lacks the ideal physical appearance, so this issue primarily revolves around conforming to societal expectations of feminine energy and desirability. It's an emotional trap that develops in the minds of the younger generations, leading them to internalise shame, frustration, and a sense of inadequacy if they don't fit ideal beauty standards.

NAINA'S REFLECTION OF INSECURITIES

Naina stood in front of the mirror again. Her eyes were scanning her, and suddenly the same old fear seized her tightly. As she looked at herself, she couldn't help but notice the layers of fat that seemed to be clinging to her body. She felt self-conscious and uncomfortable, and the more she looked at herself, the worse she felt. The world of love and romance fell apart. A bitter reality held her breath.
"Why would a handsome boy love a fat and ugly girl like me?"

(Chaitanya, 2023, p. 23,24)

Naina feels overwhelmed by the act of self-loathing, insecurity, and emotional vulnerability. Her thoughts about her body are based on the internalised society's discrimination rather than observing her physical body, as she equates her body with unworthiness, inferiority, and ugliness. As she experiences the fear of not being enough, how can a handsome, good-looking guy even love a fat, ugly, stupid person? It is her inner critic as a reflection of the body-shaming she faced from her school days until now. This also creates an emotional conflict in the relationship with her boyfriend, Arnav.

She has developed a distorted attitude towards her relationship because she doubts Arnav's affection and intentions. She doesn't feel comfortable with her body; she manipulates herself so that his intentions and love turn into a root of anxiety and double-mindedness. This can create an insecurity wall even in a healthy relationship. There is also a possibility for creating a state of body shame from a perceived inability to conform to societal expectations, and it can be shown to lead to refusing to engage in relationships and also sexual activity (Faith & Schare, 1993; Trapnell et al., 1997; Weinberg & Williams, 2010).

But as they soon realised, most of their classmates were happy for them and supportive of their relationship. In fact, many people saw them as a role model for what a healthy and loving relationship should look like. Of course, some people were sceptical and gossiped and spread rumours about the love story between a handsome hunk, Arnav, and fatty Naina. But Naina and Arnav tried not to let this get to them, focusing instead on their love for each other and their careers.

(Chaitanya, 2023, p. 26)

The relationship between Arnav and Naina is put forward to the public; now, she creates a battle in her mind with self-doubt and hope. She has always perceived her life with distrust, emotional breakdown, and inferiority, so now she is more collapsed with the mentality of her friends admiring the relationship. This insecurity is the reflection of her traumatised childhood, facing body shaming. Her thoughts are deeply ingrained with fatphobia. She is still confused that her friends are praising their relationship, or it's like how a handsome hunk chose Naina, a fat girl.

This distorted self-image ruined her relationship with friends and peers. These persistent insecurities rebound the everlasting impact of early psychosocial adversity, where conflicted vulnerability continues to shape social perspectives and emotional behaviour across the lifespan's later stages, consistent with Rutter's representation of cumulative risk and resilience (Rutter, 1987, 2006).

Arnav attempted to take Naina up in his arms, but the 90kg Naina found it difficult to turn. The biggest impediment in trying to hold Naina in his arms was the size of his waist. As Arnav's fingers were running over her back, she felt ashamed when Arnav was touching the thick layers of fat around her back and tummy. Naina felt really embarrassed and ashamed of herself after this encounter; she broke out loudly and rushed to her bicycle.

(Chaitanya, 2023, p. 36)

Naina felt discomfort in this intimate scene with her boyfriend, as she felt insecure that she was 90 kg and was self-conscious about her weight. When Arnav tried to lift her, Naina was more focused on the thick layers of her body fat and that she was unattractive and undesirable. She felt in a way that Arnav would also perceive her body as she thought, being an unattractive, big, and fat girlfriend. She felt scrutinised, but Arnav is not responsible for the incident. Arnav intended to love her, but her body image perceptions led her to diminish true love and intimacy, as she was always trapped in the cycle of self-criticism and isolation. The intrigue of the dilemma has raised in her mind that her boyfriend might feel discomfort with her body shape, so she planned to reduce her weight, and for that, she planned to join weight loss programmes.

When they had completed their search, Naina and Arnav compared the features and costs of different weight loss programmes. They looked at factors such as the type of diet plans offered, exercise programmes, level of support provided, and costs associated with memberships, meal plans, or supplements. They attended informational sessions, workshops, or webinars offered by some weight loss programmes to learn more about their approach and get a better understanding of the programme's structure and requirements.

(Chaitanya, 2023, pp. 42-43)

Naina and Arnav started to approach weight loss programs together to reduce Naina's fat and calories. This decision suddenly anticipates the need to procrastinate the interplay between societal pressure and personal desire. This prominently highlights the need to lose weight for her relationship status, but not as a means of regaining confidence and self-worth. Naina feels that her body weight and discomfort will affect her relationship, as he might feel embarrassed by choosing a fat girl as his partner. Arnav's engagement in supporting Naina in all her decisions reflects a companion motive and empathy. This indirectly helps Naina's insecurities. Naina and Arnav were approaching the weight loss programs based on the support systems, credibility, and affordability. This reveals the mindset for empowerment and health for both of them.

It had been 28 months since Naina had started taking the supplements. Things have changed. Now, she was in her last year of college. She was still the same, only 5-6 kg weight had been reduced. There had been incredible bodily changes. Weight loss training, which typically included a combination of cardiovascular exercise, resistance training, and proper nutrition, had several effects on her body.

(Chaitanya, 2023, p. 51)

The above passage describes the temporal journey of Naina. She is in her final year of college, and her transformation was crucial. There is no gradual reduction in weight like 5-6 kgs; the training she emphasises includes cardiovascular workouts, nutrition intake, and resistance training. She was dedicated to her weight loss journey; her efforts across these 28 months were her resilient and self-worth journey, but her internal thoughts reveal her emotional stability.

Some of the symptoms, such as headaches, nausea, high blood pressure, low blood pressure, high palpitations, restlessness, panic attacks, and elevated blood sugar levels, could have been caused by some risky medical conditions, but Naina was too afraid to talk about the problems, as she wanted to hide the secret of supplements. Things were only becoming worse.

(Chaitanya, 2023, p. 53)

The critical aspect of Naina's journey is a hidden consequence; she made her health worse by hiding the health symptoms like headache, nausea, high blood pressure, low blood pressure, high palpitations, restlessness, panic attacks, and high blood sugar level, which indicate the physical health consequences. She can't understand that these symptoms will lead to dangerous complications. She hides the use of supplements from her mother, Rakhi.

Her mother is trying to ease her problems by motivating her and offering counselling sessions, but Naina feels that, despite health consequences, she needs to lose weight. The reason for silencing her voice was the fear that delayed treatment for the health consequences would further risk her life in both emotional and physical needs.

Dr Matthew: - "Oh My God! I expected this. DNP is a dangerous substance that causes rapid weight loss but can also lead to hyperthermia, which can be fatal. In 2015, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a warning about weight loss pills containing the ingredient acacia rigidula. The FDA found that these pills contained an amphetamine-like compound that can cause heart attacks and other serious cardiovascular problems. I am sorry to say that these pills contain all the shit. Let me see more."

(Chaitanya, 2023, p. 84)

Dr Matthew references *Acacia rigidula*, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and weight loss pills, setting a serious and tense tone, specifically DNP, a dangerous substance used for rapid weight loss, which is a highly life-threatening aspect. Even the doctor is now frustrated, concerned about the urgency of Naina's life. This reveals a public awareness regarding health and medical realities. Matthew's narration is publicly spoken from secrecy to intervention, exposing the medical consequences of supplement choices.

Rakhi continued to comfort Naina, offering words of encouragement and understanding. She listened attentively as Naina poured out her frustrations and fears, offering her mother a glimpse into her inner world. Rakhi held her daughter close, letting her know that she was there to support her every step of the way.

(Chaitanya, 2023, p. 87)

The unwavering emotional support, compassion, and love towards her daughter, Naina, from her mother, Rakhi, created a strong trust and a safer life. The constant support becomes a pillar of uncertainty and strength. This resilience journey is initiated by her mother and self-realisation. Naina's journey towards this healing, transforming journey, starting with compassion, was a powerful tool despite all the fear, guilt, and secrecy. The emotional protection and comfort are needed for Naina because Naina is a sensitive, introspective teenager whose character and inner perceptions are shaped by society's discrimination about her body shape and size. Though she is quiet and reserved, her inner world is longing for love, compassion, and care. She is emotionally vulnerable but not weak and lacks in expressing her perspectives and thoughts. From a psychosocial resilience perspective, constant support systems mitigate psychological adversity, such as rejection and negative social assessments associated with marginalisation, by fostering a supportive environment (Rutter, 1987).

DR NAINA'S RESILIENCE JOURNEY

Dr Naina: "Body positivity is a movement that promotes self-love, acceptance, and respect for all bodies, regardless of shape, size, or appearance. It's about focusing on the things that your body can do rather than what it looks like and learning to appreciate and celebrate your unique qualities."

Rohit: "That sounds like something I could get behind. How do I start practising body positivity?"

Dr Naina: "There are many ways to practice body positivity, such as surrounding yourself with positive role models, challenging negative self-talk, and engaging in self-care activities that make you feel good about yourself." We can work together to develop a plan that works for you and helps you cultivate a positive body image. "

(Chaitanya, 2023, pp. 92-93)

The powerful transformation from personal to professional journey: as a young woman, she faced body shaming, bullying, and discrimination for her body shape and size. The battle of facing a hard life and turning it into a resilient journey, being a body positivity counsellor, reveals the lived experience; it was rooted in self-acceptance, awareness of medical intervention, harmful supplements, identity crises, emotional distress, romantic relationships that endured hardships, and made her grow stronger.

She transformed her pain and life experiences into a live example, reclaiming agency not only by healing both emotionally and physically but also by channelling the expertise to help and support human beings who face similar consequences, like body shaming, body image issues, and discrimination, which nurtured resilience.

Dr Naina, "It's a long story. Years will not suffice to tell everything. You can read my autobiography, "THE CURSED CURVES".

Naina gets out of her chair and walks up to the bookcase. She gives Rohit a copy of her autobiography that she is holding. He is overjoyed to accept it, he gives her a sincere thanks and walks away. After Rohit left, Naina requested a coffee and gave the receptionist a 15-minute no-entry order. Her entire life rushes before her eyes as she travels down memory lane; she recalls everything, from her years in school to her career as a successful author and counsellor.

(Chaitanya, 2023, p. 94)

A reflective journey and a moment of conquest in Dr Naina's resilience are discovered. Naina has transformed her painful past into a strong narrative, as in her autobiography, "THE CURSED CURVES". The moment she decides to narrate by remembering the past, she empowers her life to Rohit, her patient, as a form of self-validation and emotional empowerment. This marks a potential pause for every woman who survives the same pain as a sense of resilience, growth, and strength through storytelling.

CONCLUSION

From the introspection, self-expression, and empowered transformative work, "THE CURSED CURVES" acts as a narrative of the past but is more insightful in the symbol of reclaimed power. Naina's self-journey is a dynamic narrative of the human spirit's resilience in the face of body shaming, societal judgements, and psychological trauma. Naina's journey emphasises an individual teenager's life through the aspects of accepting, adapting, recovering, and growing stronger in the face of trauma and adversity. Her internalised perceptions about body size, shape, and weight have influenced her self-perceptions and emotional well-being. Her self-perception led to devastating circumstances that helped her on her resilience journey, which had a diverse

transition from self-loathing to self-empowerment, emphasising the individual's ability to evolve positively regardless of hardships. From her childhood, she was marked by bullying, mocking, fat discrimination, fatphobia, body shaming, romantic rejections, and weight-loss programmes. Navigating all the struggles emotionally, physically, and mentally to attain the resilience in the form of recovery and growth that led her to a better life as a body positivity counsellor reflects the core theme of resilience: adaptability, recovery, and growth. So the resilience theory lens provides protective factors in the form of a supportive environment, relationships, and personal strength to navigate and overcome the hurdles. Her determination to find strength independently, separate from her mother, counsellor, and Dr Matthew, by sharing her lived experiences as a source of hope for the future, demonstrates that anyone can transform shame and pain into strength and resilience. Her life is a lived testimony for redefining beauty, reclaiming agency, and transforming lived pain into a motivated journey of healing and empowerment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I want to express sincere gratitude to my supervisor for his valuable guidance, constructive feedback, and support throughout the development of this manuscript.

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