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Genocidal Violence in Ishmael Beah *A Long Way Gone*

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Approval Letter

This thesis is submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mr Suresh Subedi entitled “Genocidal Violence in Ishmael Beah’s *A Long Way Gone*” has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

*This thesis analyzes genocidal violence and trauma in Ishmael Beah's *A Long Way Gone* and further explores the way genocidal violence becomes the main reason of a person's traumatic sufferings. The researcher investigates a life of child soldier who is victim and the perpetrator at the same time. This paper is all about capturing the traumatic experiences of Beah which is the result of war and genocidal violence and the way he deals with the trauma to cope up. The research paper explores genocidal violence and trauma in relating to one another. To support the research claim, the researcher borrows trauma theory forwarded by Dominick LaCapra and Cathy Caruth. This paper works under LaCapra's denial, acting out and working through in order to describe Ishmael Beah's traumatic experiences.*

Keywords: War, Genocide, Trauma, History, Child Soldier, Memoir

A Long Way Gone, written by Ishmael Beah, is a memoir that foregrounds the traumatic experiences and genocidal violence experienced by a child soldier, who lost his precious childhood in the war and get traumatized. Beah describes the civil war between the rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and government soldiers. The war destroys his mother country Sierra Leone between 1991 and 2002 and affects the village and Beah's life in various ways. This memoir represents the genocide, mass killing of people which lead an author into traumatic experiences. To write or rewrite a memoir is often the process of telling the real things happened in the war such as sufferings, pains, killings, surviving and mostly the traumatic experiences of an author. This paper critically examines the way the author deals with trauma through narrativization. This researcher borrows the theoretical insights from Cathy Caruth and Dominic LaCapra to justify the research claim.

The research work explores Beah's perusal for self-consolation from the traumatic pain he endures during the civil war. The journey of war simply begins from the very first stage of this memoir. The author touched by the war in his early twelfth in 1993 while he is away performing in a rap group with his friends, "Gibrilla explained that the teachers had told them that the rebels had attacked Mogbwemo, our home" (14). The history of trauma is punctuated by an author while he first endeavors a mother rocking her baby who has been shot dead. "The last casualty that we saw that evening was a woman who carried her baby on her back. Blood was running down her dress and dripping behind her, making a trail. Her child had been shot dead as she ran for her life" (17). Beah is traumatized by all the terrible things he sees and the story he hears.

Cathy Caruth in "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History" describes trauma as "an overwhelming experience of sudden, or catastrophic events, in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, and controlled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (2). Caruth defines trauma as a psychological wound that is repetitive and haunts a trauma victim more often. Caruth introduces trauma with two different genres: Individual trauma and Collective or Cultural trauma. The researcher diagnoses *A Long Way Gone* from Caruth's Individual trauma. The memoir is based on the psychological state of a child soldier who is protagonist and the perpetrator at the same time.

Similarly, Genocide refers to the murder of a large people from a particular nation or ethnic group, with the aim of destroying that nation or group. Trauma and genocide mean to be different: have different meanings but are interrelated to each other. Genocide is the major reason of trauma whereas trauma is the result of genocide. Genocidal violence affects a person mentally and psychologically. It

wrenches a person into several sufferings. Genocide plays pivotal role to have people with traumatize experiences. Here, in this research paper, the researcher tries to introduce trauma as a result of genocidal violence. The author presents the various moments where he killed rebels and the group of villagers mercilessly during the war. Also, Beah has seen the brutal death, looted and burned villages, mother carrying her daughter on her arm who has been shot dead, people panicking in pain n fear, bloodsheds and many more. The killing of people in this memoir represents the genocide that takes place in Sierra Leone. Thus, this research paper underlines genocidal violence to focus on Beah's traumatic experiences.

A Long Way Gone has received multi-engagements since its publication in 2007. Some critics have analyzed the text from psychoanalytical perspective, children's literature of atrocity, and through deconstructive reading. The memoir has been adapted in 3D video representations and documentaries. And also as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, Beah is advocating for the goodwill of children and young people around the world. A number of critics such as Maureen Moynagh, David Mastey, Allison Mackey, Mark Sanders, David Allan Harris, Jeremy Prestholdt, Irina Kyulanova, Mary H. Moran, and so on have analyzed *A Long Way Gone* from the various perspectives. This research paper also analyzes the varieties of arguments that different authors or critics have brought.

A literary work depicts the social, cultural and historical life of the certain time. Ishmael Beah's memoir depicts the historical life a child soldier i.e. Beah himself. The memoir is the representation of history of war, suffering of a boy who has lost his family, childhood and village. The history of Beah is traumatic, fearful and terrible. Based on the history and trauma, Dominick LaCarpa's *Writing History, Writing Trauma* addresses the difficulty to represent a traumatic experience or history.

According to LaCapra, a person reacts to a traumatic event in three different forms: denial, acting out and working through. Beah denies the traumatic effect of the war experiences that have on him. Along with the mentioned forms the trauma theory Similarly, the researcher applies LaCapra's trauma theory notion of empathic unsettlement, veracious experiences, objectification, denial, acting out and working through, narration and many more.

An important concept in LaCapra's trauma theory is the notion of empathic unsettlement. He argues:

Trauma is a disruptive experience that disarticulates the self and creates holes in existence; it has belated effects that are controlled only with difficulty and perhaps never fully mastered. The study of traumatic events poses especially difficult problems in representation and writing both for research and for any dialogue exchange with the past which acknowledges the claims it makes on people and relates it to the present and future. Being responsive to the traumatic experiences of others, notably of victims, implies not the appropriation of their experience but what would I call empathic unsettlement. (41)

While talking about this notion, it promotes the virtual experience on the part of the reader: he or she affectively feels for the trauma but this empathy does not turn into over-identification. Beah is identified with dual identification. His identification as the protagonist is ambiguous since he is presented as a child soldier who is both victim and perpetrator. Beah is dealing with pain as well receiving and experiencing. The ambiguity destroys the notion that there are good guys and bad guys in war. It is not designated only to become humane or good in the war. War forces a person to do inhumane things. The same thing applies to Beah, after joining the war he became

inhumane. The war dehumanizes other people in order to kill them and also dehumanize them. Thus, empathic unsettlement justifies Beah's journey of war which thoroughly deals with trauma.

Acting out and working through are two psychological dimension which are used to overcome a trauma victim from trauma. These two dimensions help a trauma victim to cope up or deal with trauma. Acting out and working through never help the victims to overcoming from the trauma completely. But somehow, they both are used in order to console the victims for their better mental health.

Similarly, acting out and working through trauma are more essential while talking about trauma. There are variety of methods to address acting out and working through. LaCarpa addresses that a person or a trauma victim acts out when a victim gone through terrible things, hallucinations, unwanted situations, flashbacks and nightmares. Acting out is a modernist concept that can healed a trauma completely. But, if trauma does not heal through it, a trauma turns into fatal death or suicide. In acting out, trauma victim often pretends that they are forgetting the traumatic memories. But hallucination of the past experiences always haunts them, creates confusion between past and present and threatens the future if it is not cured or healed. LaCapra defines acting out:

In acting out, one is haunted or possessed by the past and performatively caught up in the compulsive repetition of traumatic scenes- scenes in which the past returns and the future blocked or fatalistically caught up in a melancholic feedback loop. In acting out, tenses implode and it is as if one were back there in the past reliving the traumatic scene. (55)

Whereas working through is a post-modernist concept. Working through works on healing trauma but trauma can never be healed completely. LaCapra defines working through as:

Working through is an articulatory practice: to the extent one works through trauma (as well as transference relations in general), one is able to distinguish between past and present to recall in memory that something happened to one (or one's people) back then while realizing that one is living here and now with openings to the future. (55-56)

Working through often helps a victim to make a distance from the traumatic events. Working through creates a lapse or hole between past traumatic experiences and present situation. It helps the trauma victim to create a gap or distance from the traumatic experiences. Working through makes it easier to understand and helps to realize the traumatic events are happened in the past. Working through convinces the trauma victim to realize that trauma will not be the part of his life. Trauma is just a lapse of moment that a person needs to be patient and calm to tackle those nightmares.

Beah's traumatic events are distinguished by LaCapra's notion of acting out and working through. During the war scenario, Beah is unknown about his traumatic events. Hypothetically, Beah feels like he is not a trauma victim unless he was admitted in the rehabilitation center.

Allison Mackey examines that LaCapra's working through is subordinated with the healing process of trauma. Mackey's "Troubling Humanitarian Consumption: Reframing Relationality in African Child Soldier Narratives" more focuses on the assets of narratives and delivering the truth. Mackey writes:

What the scandal of truth surrounding these narratives makes clear is both the violence in the demand for, and the impossibility of delivering on the expectation of, “truth” when it comes to relating individual traumatic experiences to others. These narratives operate uneasily within the logic of fact and experience, exposing the burden of memoir, where the imperative is to “work through” individual trauma by making sense of it, by creatively shaping it and making it intelligible to (and easily consumable by) others. (103)

Mackey admires the voice of voiceless. The voiceless are here the one who participate in the war destroying their beautiful childhood. Along with various child soldiers’ stories, Mackey admits narrative often comes with truth which is vulnerable to accept and is the replica of their sufferings. Trauma victim has to be strong enough for working through their trauma. By relying the facts and truth through narratives, they are putting down the burden of painful memoir.

Beah always denies the fact that the traumatic events strike him often.

According to LaCapra, the process of refusing or denying the facts that a person is going through is the stage of denial. Throughout the memoir, Beah denies his harsh experiences, fear and sufferings.

It is quite hard for Beah to express the things as the signs of trauma because he is unaware of the ongoing things. Beah is surrounded by the traumatic events since he firstly encounters the war personally. Beah is traumatized after he heard the war took place in his village, lost his family, junior and friends. Beah loses every person who is very attached and dear to him. Specially, Beah is in complete denial of his trauma during his time in the war. Beah refuses the signs and gestures such as, migraines and intolerable headaches. Migraine can be considered as a prompt to acting out in this

memoir. The most traumatic experience Beah describes in his memoir is his first interaction with combat when he is recruited as a soldier. Things are going very hard for Beah as he has to do unexpected things. Beah refuses to believe that he is in the trauma all the time when he was in army.

Most of the war and trauma survivors write memoir in order to describe their personal traumatic experiences. Trauma survivors often claim that it is very difficult to describe traumatic experiences. To make people understand about the terrible experiences of war and trauma, an author needs to make a memoir more comprehensible. LaCarpa promotes narration as a way of expressing act out and working through. Through narration, Beah expresses his traumatic experiences and haunting nightmares of war. In *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, LaCarpa writes:

Various modes of signification provide relatively safe havens for exploring the complex relations between acting out and working through trauma. Some of the most powerful forms of modern art and writing, as well as some of the most compelling forms of criticism (including forms of deconstruction), often seem to be traumatic writing or post-traumatic writing in closest proximity to. (57)

It is very difficult to deal with any sort of trauma when there is a lack of individual guidance and counseling. A variety of reactions and disorders can develop depending on how an individual reacts to the problem. While talking about Beah's traumatic experiences, those are unbearable and unimaginable. Beah struggles through post-traumatic symptoms and individuals have their own way to cope up with them.

Talking about Beah, he prefers writing memoir, sharing his pre-post traumatic symptoms. Memoir writing itself is the restoration of a sense of continuity that was disrupted by trauma. Writing Beah's memoir was thus also a part of his working

through process. Revisiting Beah's past was not an easy process for him because sometimes he had to rewrite and re-traumatize over and over. Thus, writing the book also became a form of therapy for Beah. The memoir is often considered as a therapy for healing from trauma and anxiety. Writing or rewriting is a medium of expressing feelings. Beah has gone through several traumatic situations. LaCarpa writes, "Writing is subordinated to content in the form of facts, their narration, or their analysis (37)".

Maureen Moynagh also celebrates Beah's memoir is a form of narrative. Here, Beah uses narration as a tool to explore his traumatic experiences and to justify Beah's work. Moynagh writes in her article "Making and Unmaking: Child-Soldier Memoirs and Human Rights Readers":

This is a narrative of unmaking that works quite clearly to uphold the vision of the child-as-human laid out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and indeed Beah's narrative clearly endorses human rights discourse. His "recovery" is dependent on it. Yet it is worth distinguishing the discourse of savages, victims, and saviors in evidence here from Beah's active claiming of rights for himself and his fellow child soldiers. (545)

Beah narrates his past and post war traumatic memories thoroughly in order to introduce the real situation of child soldiers in front of the readers. Narration and traumatic experiences are correspondence to one another. Narration becomes the medium of healing and coping to the severe traumatic experiences and hallucinations.

Irina Kyulanova, in her journal, "From Soldiers to Children: Undoing the Rite of Passage in Ishmael Beah's "A Long Way Gone" And Bernard Ashley's "Little Soldier" addresses the use of music as a strategy to cope up with trauma. She writes:

The third element in the adults' strategy for rehabilitation is the use of music to relate to the boys and help them overcome their trauma.

Music is one of the many threads that weave through Bean's narrative, simultaneously providing narrative consistency and moving the story forward. After being symbolically deprived of his rap cassettes and of his childhood status during the military initiation, Ishmael is again given cassettes of reggae and rap music as part of the rehabilitation process. The cassettes are associated with his pre-war peaceful existence and help him overcome the barrier of haunting war memories and recover some of his pre-war identity. (35)

According to Kyulanova, music plays pivotal role to deal with the war and its traumatic experiences. In order to get back the normal life along with peace and without haunting nightmares, Beah needs something special that is attached with his life. Kyulanova's journal provokes that a person is attached with something or has strong attachment with something. Similar to this, Beah is closely attached and associated with music in his childhood. She opines the fact that Beah is associated with music, cassette, rap and dance in his life before war. Whilst Beah believes memorizing lyrics helps him to think less about his past, "Memorizing lyrics left me little time to think about what had happened in the war (133)." Beah also mentions the cassette, rap music and song from the very beginning of the memoir. Beah's musical journey ends as soon as the journey of war begins. Music is used as the metaphor or symbol by Kyulanova. During the rehabilitation Beah is not able to retrieve his pre-war life. Beah is devastated and affected badly because the war experiences hit him so badly. Music is used to recall Beah's peaceful childhood memories and the musical

life. Thus, music becomes the only medium or strategy to tackle the traumatic experiences for Beah.

Joshua Pederson, in his article “Speak, Trauma: Toward a Revised Understanding of Literary Trauma Theory” argues that literary trauma theory is established as “literature may not be the only way of speaking trauma, it remains a valuable tool in the struggle to reclaim our most painful experiences (350).” Trauma is covering a lot of space in literature. Literature is not only the mode of expressing trauma but also it helps to reduce the pains and sufferings of a trauma victim.

Traumatic memories are painful and more haunted. Literature provides space to share those painful traumatic experiences and makes them reliable to the readers. Usually trauma victim doesn't feel comfortable to share their experiences. It is very difficult for them to share the war stories, makes other believable. Literature, hence, becomes an easy access to showcase the reality of trauma that makes traumatic experiences more detailed and powerful than the normal experiences.

Traumatic memories, then, are not elusive or absent; they are potentially more detailed and more powerful than normal ones. This fact should leave literary critics open to the possibility that authors may record trauma with excessive detail and vibrant intensity. Indeed, we may need more words—not fewer—to accurately represent its effects in text. Thus, readers looking for representations of trauma may turn not to textual absence but to textual overflow, to event descriptions replete with detail. Further, as the readings below demonstrate, traumatic memory is often multi sensory; victims may record not only visual cues, but aural, olfactory, tactile, and gustatory ones as well. (339)

Similarly, Mary H. Moran in her journal, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* by Ishmael Beah; *Black Man's Grave: Letters from Sierra Leone* by Gary Stewart and John Amman, defines about writing and telling a tale about the traumatic experiences let other children to know about the facts and reality of the child soldier. Moran writes, "Beah is an eloquent writer. While his experience as a child soldier may indeed have been typical, it is clear that his postwar life has not been so; most young men and boys in the Guinea Coast region have had little in the way of trauma counseling and drug rehabilitation" (199).

According to Moran, the readers should recognize Beah's recovery from trauma is uncommon. Also the child soldiers face an uncertain future. The numbers of young people who participate in war, directly or indirectly, lessen but the former child soldier's future is ended with uncertainty. The hardships that the child soldiers face are abnormal, and while they are fundamental to dramatic tension in genre, readers should not misinterpret the circumstances as representative of what the child soldiers experience as they mature into adulthood. Thus, Beah narrates his and other child soldier's story to build a trust among the readers. Being a writer, Beah gets a space to cope up with his traumatic experiences and healings whereas many more child soldiers are not able to open up with their traumatic feelings. Beah attempts to introduce the traumatic experiences to heal himself and also to show the reality of the war.

Multiple critics have multiple opinions about child soldiers and their traumatic experiences. Opposite to this research paper, some of the critics raises question about Beah's whereabouts during war, authenticity, sense of time and also about his traumatic experiences. There are several questionnaires about the narration of the memoir. Critiques doubts on the narration of Beah as they claim how a twelve years

traumatic boy remembers every incidents and dates in detail. Doubting and questioning creates hole in Beah's originality and authenticity. And on the same way it also challenges LaCarpa's notion of narration. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson in "Witness or False Witness?: Metrics of Authenticity, Collective I-Formations, And The Ethic of Verification in First-Person Testimony", address about the suspicion of the readers, advocate narration of a child soldier and their real traumatic experiences. Smith and Watson write:

What is at stake in challenges to the veracity of *A Long Way Gone* is not simply a dispute about the dates and extent of Beah's conscription and similar unverified or incorrect details within the narrative that provoked suspicious readers. One could easily argue that the trauma of forced soldiering can account for warping and compressing a vulnerable child's sense of time. The more serious implication of challenging Beah's age at the time of his conscription is that it would undercut his claim to the identity of child soldier as a victim. We noted earlier that certain kinds of victim identities gain cultural saliency and political force, as stories about particular rights violations circulating transnationally are documented by activists, and the discourse of an authenticated rights identity travels through rights organizations. (610-611)

The children in the war zone are forced to join the battle field. Either they have to fight for the government or the rebels. The most important key that attach trauma with the children is participating in the war. Noëlle Quénivet focuses on prohibiting or allowing lawful and suitable prosecution in his article, "Does and Should International Law Prohibit the Prosecution of Children for War Crimes?" Quénivet writes:

Very few prosecutions are mounted because it is in the best interests of society to deal with these children (and adults alike) via a restorative justice mechanism. The best interests of the child often coincide with the best interests of society. The only children likely to find themselves in court are those who refuse to take part in the process or who are most responsible or those who have committed the most egregious crimes. These are the children who need to fully understand that their acts were reprehensible and thus be prosecuted. (455)

The prosecution here deals with accusation for the criminal act. The child soldiers are forced to join the battle field either in search of food or fear. Necessarily, the prosecution mostly leads with sentenced which is against the children law. Instead of prosecution, the child soldiers must let to rehabilitation, raise their voices, and living happily. It is necessary to identify the crime first whether it is heinous or not. While foregrounding Beah's memoir, the child soldiers need to be rehabilitated and restored with the normal and peaceful life to overcome with the traumatic experiences. The child soldiers are used in the war by making them addicted to cocaine, marijuana and other drugs. Instead of prosecution, restoration in the society is merely important for them.

Beah as a protagonist and the perpetrator is unaware of his heinous act during the battle. There are several other child soldiers who are taken into the war zone messing their innocent childhood. It is necessary to give them back the childhood and life they have missed because of the war. The child soldiers have haunted traumatic events.

David Alan Harris advocates accountability and acceptance for the child soldiers in his journal "When Child Soldiers Reconcile: Accountability, Restorative

Justice, and the Renewal of Empathy.” Harries believes that the child soldiers must be recognized in the society and accepted with their past life. It is more important for the trauma victims to be accepted and accounted by the people. The only way of healing from trauma is recognition, acceptance and accountability. Harries writes:

In Beah’s straightforward narrative readers found a compelling, heartrending emblem – the war orphan boy hero who suffered mightily, fell to unfathomed depths, yet ultimately transcended the terror in part by the telling of it. His prose relates in painful, mesmerizing detail what it was like to join in senseless slaughter, to lose all but the last shred of selfhood in the process, and still somehow to re-emerge as a full human being.(334)

Harries, furthermore, describes that the narration made by Beah is compelling and heartrending for the readers. The details narratives are subjective for the child soldiers in order to accept by the world. A trauma victim has to emerge and re-emerge as a human being. *A Long Way Gone* is an evidence of a trauma victim healing from severe trauma.

Mark Sanders, in “Culpability and Guilt: Child Soldiers in Fiction and Memoir”, argues that culpability must be replaced by guilt in order to understand the narratives and sufferings of the child soldier. Culpability refers to the responsibility for a fault or wrong. During the rehabilitation, the child soldiers feel guilty by their act in war. It lessens them to rehabilitate positively. Sanders argues about the rehabilitation as the repressive one in some fiction and autobiography. Sanders writes:

These phantasies have their own structure, which must be understood and analyzed before telling a former combatant, as some therapeutic programs have, and as the law implies, that what he or she did was

“not your fault.” Fiction and autobiography begin to tell us that the platitudes of law and rehabilitation are repressive: that they may hide the problem of manipulating violent phantasy into acts of violence, but they do not make it go away. (199)

While talking about the rehabilitation process in *A Long Way Gone*, Beah's rehabilitation process does not let him feel guilt by his deeds. Beah feels guilty several times but gradually it turns into culpability that becomes easy for him to cope with trauma later. Sanders justifies Beah's memoir and his narratives are the real one because Beah does not hide his rigorous and violent war act. The acceptance of being perpetrator makes Beah's memoir reliable to the readers and Sanders as well. It is less fantasized and consists of bitter reality of war and the existence of the child soldier.

In *A Long Way Gone*, Ishmael Beah writes about living in fear and fighting mentally. Beah, along with junior, Talloi, Kaloko, Gibrilla and Khalilou, makes a long journey from one village to another to remain alive. They encounter and face the war several times. Every time death passes by the door. But all of the boys manage to escape and remain alive. There is no choice left for the young boys, either they have to manage to run away or take part in the war. It is so terrifying that village young boys have to take part in the war forcefully and villagers have to stay in the village just to become the shield for the rebels. Running away from the rebels, civilians or the militants is so risky. It is just like asking for death. The people have no choices rather than living with the fear and terror. Or to join the war and become the rebel. Beah writes:

Young boys were immediately recruited, and the initials RUF were carved wherever it pleased the rebels, with a hot bayonet. This not only meant that you were scarred for life but that you could never escape

from them, because escaping with the carving of the rebels' initials was asking for death, as soldiers would kill you without any questions and militant civilians would do the same. (25)

Beah encounters with mental issues while he was roaming around the forest to save his life. War apart Beah with his brother junior and friends. Wandering for a several months, in the hope of reuniting with their family Beah and his friends travel from one village to another. It is not just they are searching their family members, but also they are looking forward to be alive. They are running and moving just to be alive. This is the beginning of trauma for Beah. When Beah, Junior and their friends are in the village, the village is attacked by the rebels. That attack shatters everything, ruins the peaceful night and Beah is apart from Junior and his friends. Beah writes, "There wasn't a sign of life anywhere. We looked in the thick forest for Junior and our friends, but they weren't anywhere to be found (40)." Beah and Kaloko lost their other friends. Beah parts with his brother; his one and only family member till that date. "I was losing everyone, my family, my friends (40)." Beah is devastated and frustrated. But, to be alive and to search a peaceful life, he decides to move alone. "I became frustrated with living in fear. I felt as if I was always waiting for death to come to me, so I decided to go somewhere where as least there was some peace" (41). Beah talks about fear, frustration, and mental instability.

Beah encounters with many horrendous war scenes. Those horrendous scenarios haunt him more often. They are the worst nightmares which keep popping up in flashbacks. Beah fails miserably because he cannot control his flashbacks and nightmares. Beah is not able to forget traumatic scenes though he tries a lot to stop thinking them. Beah keeps busy himself with other things. But Beah cannot resist thinking the traumatic scenes. When Beah is passing through the village, he sees the

most terrifying things. The tremendous scenario represents an example of genocide.

Beah writes:

I had passed through burnt villages where dead bodies of men, women, and children of all ages were scattered like leaves on the ground after a storm. . . . I had seen heads cut off by machetes, smashed by cement bricks, and rivers filled with so much blood that the water had ceased flowing. Each time my mind replayed these scenes, I increased my pace. Sometimes I closed my eyes hard to avoid thinking, but the eye of my mind refused to be closed and continued to plague me with images. (44)

Beah's *A Long Way Gone* represents the genocidal violence of Sierra Leone. The war between the rebels of the RUF and government soldier crosses the boundary of peace and humanity. Thousands of civilians, rebels and soldiers loss their life in this war. Civilians have to run away from their home leaving everything behind. War is the cruelest phenomenon with no any boundaries. It is the most insane and inhumane act. The inhumane act terrifies reader subtle mind. Later on, Beah also becomes the part of war. Beah fights from the side of soldiers and becomes the part in genocidal act. Beah forgets the before scenario of war. Beah, along with so many children have to join the army. The child soldiers are trained with hunger of avenge and killing people. The hunger of killing and avenging rebels lead Beah in merciless path towards massacre. Beah kills innocent civilians, loots and burns their houses and this act doesn't panic him anymore.

Beah also mentions about the loneliness as the most difficult part, "The most difficult part being in the forest was the loneliness" (46). It becomes so difficult to survive alone in the forest for Beah. There is none to talk, nothing to eat and no place

to sleep. Beah has to fight alone mentally to remain alive and it is going to be more difficult. Beah tries to avoid thinking about the war scenes, bloodshed, dead bodies, dogs sniffing blood and dead bodies, and many more. The more a person lives alone, the more he or she has to deal with mental issues and suffers alone. Beah realizes how frustrating it is to be alone living with fear and anxiety. Beah narrates about how he survives in the forest for a long month:

I spent most of my time fighting myself mentally in order to avoid thinking about what I had seen or wondering where my life was going, where my family and friends were. The more I resisted thinking, the longer the days became, and I felt as if my head was becoming heavier each passing day. I became restless and was afraid to sleep for fear that my suppressed thoughts would appear in my dreams. (46)

Beah acts like nothing has happened. But, he is badly traumatized since the war takes place in his mother country. Beah alone fights with his traumatic symptoms. Even, he does not realize his severe headache, dreadful nightmares, haunting war scenarios, hallucinations and recurring dreams are the major symptoms of trauma. LaCarpa mentions that Beah's traumatic experiences, nightmares and hallucinations can be read under the dimension of denial, acting out and working through. The narrator presents his memory in the following manner:

I quietly sat in the corner of the room clenching my teeth, as I didn't want to show my friends the pain I felt from my headache. In my mind's eye I would see sparks of flame, flashes of scenes I had witnessed, and the agonizing voices of children and women would come alive in my head. I cried quietly as my head beat like the clapper of a bell. Sometimes after the migraine had stopped, I was able to fall

asleep briefly, only to be awoken by nightmares. One night I dreamt that I was shot in the head. I was lying in my blood as people hurriedly walked past me. A dog came by and began licking my blood ferociously. The dog bared its teeth as my blood sweetened its mouth. I wanted to scare it away, but I was unable to move. I woke up before it started what I was afraid it was going to do to me. I was sweating and couldn't sleep for the rest of the night. (85)

When Beah interacts with these symptoms, he pretends as if nothing has happened to him. Beah hides about his ongoing situation from his friends. Beah, himself, tries to cope with the nightmares and traumatic events. Beah keeps engaged almost all the time by doing the chores, even tries not to think about the migraine. But, no any efforts help him to tackle with the pains and nightmares. In the present, all these things seem as they are not going to harm Beah's future. But, all these nightmares and experiences affect harshly in the future when he is in rehabilitation center.

Beah is shattered when he first encountered war as a soldier. This is his first contact with actual combat. During this scene, Beah unconsciously turns into numbing as a defense mechanism. Beah describes his first ever mission as a soldier and its effects. There are no limitations and boundaries for the soldiers to shoot and kill the rebels. Tackling war as a normal phenomenon is very difficult for Beah for the first time. Beah describes:

I lay there with my gun pointed in front of me, unable to shoot. My index finger had become numb. The forest had begun to spin. I felt as if the ground had turned upside down and I was going to fall off, so I clutched the base of a tree with one hand. I couldn't think, but I could hear the sounds of the guns far away in the distance and the cries of

people dying in pain. I had begun to fall into some sort of nightmare. . . . The gunshots faded in my head, and it was as if my heart had stopped and the whole world had come to a standstill. I covered [Josiah's] eyes with my fingers and pulled him from the tree stump. His backbone had been shattered. I placed him flat on the ground and picked up my gun. I did not realize that I had stood up to take Josiah off the tree stump. I felt someone tugging at my foot. It was the corporal; he was saying something that I couldn't understand. His mouth moved and he looked terrified. He pulled me down, and as I hit the ground, I felt my brain shaking in my skull again and my deafness disappeared. (96-97)

As a child soldier, Beah takes part in the war for the first time. The burden of frustration, pains and sufferings come through the shooting. Each bullet holds Beah's anger. Those repressed anger and frustration come across Beah's subtle mind. Beah pulls the trigger and points towards the rebel. Each time Beah sees his dead friends, he becomes furious in anger and more people. The actual journey of soldier begins here. Beah realizes from onwards he needs to kill more rebels and is going to kill. Beah already knows that how war affects person's life. Later on, killing people turns into his favorite act during war. Beah narrates:

My face, my hands, my shirt and gun were covered with blood. I raised my gun and pulled the trigger, and I killed a man. Suddenly, as if someone was shooting them inside my brain, all the massacres I had seen since the day I was touched by war began flashing in my head. Every time I stopped shooting to change magazines and saw my two young lifeless friends, I angrily pointed my gun into the swamp and

killed more people. I shot everything that moved, until we were ordered to retreat because we needed another strategy. (97)

The cruelty of genocide gets an easy access into Beah's life. Beah doesn't feel for the death and killing. Taking other's life for the sake of revenge is just a cup of tea for him. Similarly, Beah addresses killing people is as an easy task. Beah writes, "The idea of death didn't cross my mind at all and killing had become as easy as drinking water (100)." It is so pathetic that a twelve year old child is drowning himself into the war. Beah is a part of genocide or massacre and he does not regret for killing people. An innocent child here turns into an aggressive addicted child soldier. Beah is addicted for massacring people even if they are innocent civilians. Beah cannot control his addiction for several things. War Movies, White tablet, Cocaine, Marijuana, AK-47, 3G, Machine Guns, RPGs and many more are the things that Beah is habituated and addicted.

In training, the corporal instructs Beah and other child soldier by saying, "*Visualize the enemy, the rebels who killed your parents, your family, and those who are responsible for everything that has happened to you*"(92). The army superiors try to indoctrinate the child soldiers and try to install hatred for the rebels into them by constantly repeating the same sentence. The Corporal is well known about the fact that the children are affected and shattered by losing their family. They often repeat the same sentence: "The rebels are responsible for everything that has happened to you" (93). Thus, Corporal uses the scene of death, murder, rape and bloodshed to encourage children for war. These things easily turn boys into anger and blow off them. The more anger raises, the more boys are ready for war. Thus, Corporal plays with the innocence and psychology of all children. During the army training, Beah turns into a regressive avenging soldier.

After Beah is rehabilitated, he gets a chance to join the conference. Beah is representing the whole trauma and sufferings of all Sierra Leone's child soldier. There, he learns that he is not the only one who suffers from the worst traumatic journey. By sharing and listening to one another traumatic journey, Beah feels more relieved and heals from his own trauma. Hence, Beah's sufferings turn into healing. Putting aside sufferings and traumatic events, Beah and others discuss about the problems and solutions. They talked intelligently about the issues of the children of various countries. Beah writes:

There we would cast our sufferings aside and intelligently discuss solutions to the problems facing children in our various countries. At the end of these long discussions, our faces and eyes glittered with hope and the promise of happiness. It seemed we were transforming our sufferings as we talked about ways to solve their causes and let them be known to the world. (159)

In the conference, Beah wants to speak by his own. Beah wants to share his emotions, traumatic experiences, the war scenario and life after rehabilitation with his own words. Beah thinks the words that come from his heart put more effect on people. "I decided to speak from my heart, instead. I talked briefly about my experience and my hope that the war would end—it was the only way that adults would stop recruiting children"(161). Beah feels immense pleasure to be in front of the people around the world. It is the proud moment for Beah whilst it is his first ever international conference. And Beah is introducing Sierra Leone to the world after recovered from the traumatic and fearful life. Beah's speech is the evidence of his trauma free life. Beah's speech in the conference resembles his peaceful life. Beah writes:

I began by saying, “I am from Sierra Leone, and the problem that is affecting us children is the war that forces us to run away from our homes, lose our families, and aimlessly roam the forests. As a result, we get involved in the conflict as soldiers, carriers of loads, and in many other difficult tasks. All this is because of starvation, the loss of our families, and the need to feel safe and be part of something when all else has broken down. I joined the army really because of the loss of my family and starvation. I wanted to avenge the deaths of my family. I also had to get some food to survive, and the only way to do that was to be part of the army. It was not easy being a soldier, but we just had to do it. I have been rehabilitated now, so don’t be afraid of me. I am not a soldier anymore; I am a child. We are all brothers and sisters. What I have learned from my experiences is that revenge is not good. I joined the army to avenge the deaths of my family and to survive, but I’ve come to learn that if I am going to take revenge, in that process I will kill another person whose family will want revenge; then revenge and revenge and revenge will never come to an end.

(161)

After the speech, Beah feels so relaxed and relieved. Beah completely comes out from his traumatic journey by sharing about his past life. Beah comes out from the pathetic life and begins to love his rehabilitated life. While returning back from New York, Beah turns into a happy person: a person with hope, living with positivity and trauma free. Beah has the best memory ever in this city. And it is the reason, “I still felt as if I was dreaming, a dream that I didn’t want to wake up from. I was sad to leave, but I was also pleased to have met people outside of Sierra Leone. Because if I was to get

killed upon my return, I knew that a memory of my existence was alive somewhere in the world”(162).

War is a destructive phenomenon whereas trauma affects person's psychological and mental health. The memoir revolves around the pathetic traumatic journey of Beah. The researcher points out some of the situations that described the traumatic journey of Beah. Beah does not realize that he was suffering from severe pain and suffering. Beah is shattered again because the war is again taking place in the city. Beah does not want to be the part of war again. To take part in the war again is not a personal choice anymore. He is afraid; afraid of going back to the war, killing innocents and being addicted to cocaine, marijuana and gunshots again. Beah is also terrified by the thought that rejoining and not joining the war both will harm his peaceful life.

Traumatic experiences are more pathetic than the war for Beah. The person does not realize or experience traumatic event as it happens, nor recall it. Beah is terrified to be killed by his own child soldier friends who join the war again by their own wishes. Beah plans to leave the city forever because he doesn't want to be the part of war again. Running away from the war and the then present scenario, he wants to go to New York for forever. Beah makes a call to Laura thinking as she is only one person where he will be safe and has not to suffer from war anymore. Beah finds runaway is the only option to get rid from the war. Beah writes:

I told her that “I would visualize it” and would call her when I was in Conakry, the capital of Guinea, the one neighboring country that was peaceful and the only way out of Sierra Leone at that time. I had to leave, because I was afraid that if I stayed in Freetown any longer, I was going to end up being a soldier again or my former army friends

would kill me if I refused. Some friends who had undergone rehabilitation with me had already rejoined the army. (169)

Beah introduces the difficulties during the journey of escaping from Sierra Leone.

While people are running away from their own motherland in order to save their life, some people are seeking advantage from their own people. Beah writes about the bribery that Sierra Leoneans have to pay for leaving the country. "It sickened me to see that Sierra Leoneans asked money from those who had come from the war. They were benefiting from people who were running for their lives. Why does one have to pay to leave his own country? I thought, but I couldn't argue. I had to pay the money" (172). People have to face several consequences while leaving the nation. People are looking for peace and they are running from one nation to another. Along with other people Beah have to pay to remain alive. In every pace of Beah's journey, he has to deal with dissatisfaction. People have to mentally prepare for every kind of situations that occurs while escaping. Beah is terrified by the soldier of his own nation. The journey becomes terrible and fearful for Beah. In each steps, he has to give money. Beah feels pathetic to pay for his safety and to be alive.

The process of rehabilitation is not easily acceptable for the boys both who fought for army and another for rebels. Both of the child soldiers are badly traumatized. They carry so much of hatred to one another. The rehabilitated child soldiers are aggressive, ruthless and unwilling one. The chaos and hatred turns into massive fighting. The child soldiers adapt their life as a soldier. Wherever they reach that becomes their house, squad becomes the family and the gun is a guardian, provider and the protector. Their life is set up their own rule. Killing becomes so easy for them and Beah enjoys his job. An innocent twelve years old child turns into the aggressive and ruthless soldier. Beah does not feel mercy and he realizes a sense of

meaning in his new army life. Beah feels proud holding AK47s and killing the rebels. Later on, it becomes his daily activity. Hence, Beah transforms into a cruel and merciless and child soldier. The soldiers listen only to their commander.

The forests that we slept in became my home. My squad was my family, my gun was my provider and protector, and my rule was to kill or be killed. The extent of my thoughts didn't go much beyond that. We had been fighting for over two years, and killing had become a daily activity. I felt no pity for anyone. My childhood had gone by without my knowing, and it seemed as if my heart had frozen. (104)

In the book, Beah does not protect himself, but shows the reader his darkest innermost being. He could have lied by portraying himself as an unwilling child soldier who did not want to be part of the army. Instead, Beah describes his real thoughts and feelings and states that he enjoyed being part of his squad and that he did not want to leave this life behind. He does not only depict the atrocities, but also how he feels about them. An example of this is when Beah participates in a contest in which the winner is the one whose prisoner dies first, "I didn't feel a thing for him, didn't think that much about what I was doing. I just waited for the corporal's order. The prisoner was simply another rebel who was responsible for the death of my family, as I had come to truly believe. The corporal gave the signal with a pistol shot and I grabbed the man's head and slit his throat in one fluid motion"(102). Beah, thus, shows the reader that he really was a ruthless child soldier, and this makes it very hard for the readers to sympathize Beah.

Beah presents his real experiences of trauma including every detail. It helps reader to understand the real self of Beah. Beah does not generalize or overgeneralize his experiences but puts the readers into the frame work of truth. Beah is presented by

the both victim and the perpetrator in this memoir. The cruelty and the innocence of Beah are presented at the same time. The readers acknowledge the reality of war and the child soldier. Child soldier are often diverted by using Cocaine and Marijuana. The continuous use of drugs stops child soldiers to think and realize what is wrong and right. It is admirable that Beah does not spare himself in order to portray the real plight of the child soldiers. Even though the depiction of various atrocities and his feelings about the child soldiers might distress himself and the readers, it helps to understand the reality of the child soldiers and as such real solutions to this problem can be developed.

Beah's identification puts the readers into dilemma. It becomes so hard to understand or identify Beah and personality when he is in Benin home. Beah is very angry with everyone, especially to the naïve foreigners who transport him to the Benin home leaving the army squad. It is quite surprising to the readers that Beah does not want leave the journey of army. The fact is that Beah and other child soldiers even the rebels are so much addicted and habituated to the war, massacres and soldier life. They are entangled within the periphery of war zone, drugs and weapons for the two long years which is inexpressible and intolerable for the child soldiers to leave back and move on. Child soldiers are not happy and their aggressive nature turns into harming the staffs of Benin home. It becomes so hard to live without the things they are attached with. Their aggression and hatred turn into killing and harming each other.

There is a division of groups: the child soldiers form army and the rebels. The conflict between the rebels and the child soldiers emerges crossing the every boundary. The boys are traumatized by the war scene very badly. It destroys their childhood and they are brainwashed. The child soldiers believe that there is vast

difference between the rebels, civilians and the soldiers. Thus, the child soldiers choose to harm and kill each other rather than living together. Beah shares:

The rebel boys drew out the few bayonets they had and rushed toward us. It was war all over again. Perhaps the naïve foreigners thought that removing us from the war would lessen our hatred for the RUF. It hadn't crossed their minds that a change of environment wouldn't immediately make us normal boys; we were dangerous, and brainwashed to kill. (110)

The fight between the RUF and the soldiers continue for almost twenty minutes. The fight represents that how badly the boys were brainwashed to one another. The child soldiers are left with only one motif i.e. killing the enemies at any cost. "Six people were killed: two on our side and four on the rebel side; and several were wounded, including two of the men who had brought us" (111). The boys love to be dehumanized. It sounds so pathetic that they are brainwashed to kill.

The most disturbing part is when the boys throw bowls, spoons to the staff members. Their violence is beyond the expectation of the readers. The child soldiers do not want to be normal and go into the normal life. The boys just want violent chores in their daily life. The child soldiers are traumatized. And they even do not want to overcome those traumatic memories. This inhumane act of the child soldiers justify that they are no more a normal human beings. They are no more normal and their life is totally different from others. Their childhood is ruined by the war and addiction of drugs. The child soldiers enjoy violence and mistreat the Benin's home staff. Violence is the only medium of cheering and being happy for them. The boys do not to change themselves. They want to serve their life for army and the rebels boys want to join RUF again. The child soldiers feel humiliated to listen and obey the

orders of some civilians who do not even contribute for the nation. Thus, the child soldiers mistreat and misbehave the staff:

We would throw bowls, spoons, food, and benches at them. We would chase them out of the dining hall and beat them up. One afternoon, after we had chased off the nurses and staff members, we placed a bucket over the cook's head and pushed him around the kitchen until he burned his hand on a hot boiling pot and agreed to put more milk in our tea. (113)

During the soldier life, Beah is strongly attached with his weapon, shooting, marijuana and cocaine. These things become the part of his life that Beah cannot survive without them. AK47, RPGs, Cocaine and marijuana turns into medicine and healing form the wounds. They become so much important for the Beah that he couldn't notice his wounds. Beah narrates:

“Where is my weapon?” I asked them. The sergeant handed me the G3 that was on top of the mortar, and I began cleaning it. I shot a couple of rounds sitting against a wall, ignoring the bandage on my foot and everyone else. I smoked marijuana, ate, and snorted cocaine and *brown brown*. That was all I did for three days before we left for the new base we had captured. (129)

Beah is not only the child soldier who has a strong attachment with war and weapons, but also there are other child soldiers who are addicted to the weapons and drugs. Beah is addicted to kill and watch the rebels in pain. His enthusiasm of killing and interacting pain in the eyes of rebels make him feel relaxed and proud. Beah narrates:

I shot them on their feet and watched them suffer for an entire day before finally shooting them in the head so that they would stop crying.

Before I shot each man, I looked at him and saw how his eyes gave up hope and steadied before I pulled the trigger. I found their somber eyes irritating. (129-130)

Being a child soldier, Beah purchases hardships and hatred in his life. Beah does not realize that giving pains and killing rebels is the only result of his painful trauma of losing family, his brother Junior and his friends. Beah's suppressed desire of revenging turns into genocidal act.

Beah slowly learns to work through his trauma. To achieve this stage of working through Beah promotes narrative as a way of coping with trauma. Narrative helps a trauma victim to understand and realize with the actual happening to them. For Beah, sharing or telling his traumatic stories is most helpful to come out from trauma. The sentence proves that a trauma victim needs a listener who can listen their experiences and sufferings without passing any sorts of judgments. The nurse Esther is the one who listens to Beah's traumatic experiences and hardships. Esther becomes his first listener who creates friendly environment to share his past.

It takes a long to gain trust of Beah for Esther. Several times, Beah hesitates and does not feel comfortable to share with Esther. Gradually, Beah starts to believe Esther and talks to her. Beah begins to feel comfortable talking with Esther. Beah writes:

Nonetheless, it lightened my burdensome memories and gave me strength to think about things. The more I spoke about my experiences to Esther, the more I began to cringe at the gruesome details, even though I didn't let her know that. I didn't completely trust Esther. I only liked talking to her because I felt that she didn't judge me for

what I had been a part of; she looked at me with the same inviting eyes and welcoming smile that said I was a child. (134)

Esther helps to reduce the guilt by simply listening to him without blaming him for the occurrence of a traumatic experience. Esther does her best to make calm and listens to the atrocities Beah committed without blaming him. Because of Esther, Beah realizes that he is still a child and that the army did not destroy his childhood. Beah also realizes that his life as a child soldier was not normal. Beah feels pathetic and cringe at the gruesome detailing. Beah finally believes that it is not his fault and this alleviates part of his guilt and enhances the process of working through his trauma. Beah thus achieves a certain degree of working-through, but he realizes that he will never be completely healed and that his traumatic experiences will always be a part of him. He will never be able to leave his trauma behind because a traumatic experience.

Gradually, Beah is able to remember and rememorize his past: the memory of his childhood with his family, friends, junior and grandmother. For the first time during Beah's rehabilitation, he dreamt about Mattru Jong with his brother junior, family and home, "It was the first time I had dreamt of my family since I started running away from the war" (134). Beah is scattered by the nightmares, dreams of bloodsheds, war, genocidal violence and hallucinations several times. But at the pace of time, Beah becomes a person who learns to live handling and cooperating with past traumatic experiences.

Beah, in the memoir, also describes the trauma of his friend and nurse Esther. Beah describes several traumas i.e. about the trauma he was going through and the other Esther's. Beah suffers in the war, he only knows about his traumatic experiences. Throughout his traumatic journey, Beah is only concerned about himself and his sufferings. During Beah's recovering from his trauma, he realizes the pain of

Esther. The Nurse Esther everyday listens to the story of new traumatized children, their story of war or either of nightmares. Trauma often disturbs the life of survivor; also traumatic events disturb the listener as well. Esther listens to Beah patiently confronting him by saying that to be part of war and violence is not his fault. To understand about Esther's trauma or thinking about her pain symbolizes that Beah is coming out from the nightmares and traumatic experiences gradually. Beah writes:

She was wearing her white uniform and was on her way to take on other traumatized children. It must be tough living with so many war stories. I was just living with one, mine, and it was difficult, as the nightmares about what had happened continued to torment me. Why does she do it? Why do they all do it? I thought as we went our separate ways.(146)

Saidu, Beah's one of the friends during escaping and running away from the rebels, shares his painful traumatic story. Saidu lost his family in the war, his two sisters were raped over and over by the rebels and took away his three sisters with them. It is the most disturbing and heart wrenching scenario of war. "To this day, I carry the pain that my sisters and parents felt. When I climbed down after the rebels were gone, I couldn't stand and my tears froze in my eyes. I felt like my veins were being harshly pulled out of my body. I still feel like that all the time, as I can't stop thinking about that day. What did my sisters do to anyone?" (67). The memoir is full of criminal acts and violence. The memoir is full of traumatic events and most of the people in the memoir are traumatized by the war. Thus, the researcher can portrayed individual and communal trauma.

A Long Way Gone deals with the topic of child soldier, but the main approach of this memoir is to describe the real traumatic experiences and genocidal violence

of Ishmael Beah. The main purpose of this research paper is to describe trauma and genocidal violence in one frame. Genocidal violence is one of the main reasons for author's traumatic experiences. Including the different journals, it is proved that Beah is traumatized by the war and his experiences are pathetic. As such traumatic experiences shatter a person from the psychological base and result in a sort of crisis. But is writing an only way to heal oneself from the shattered psychology? There have been several methods to reconstruct oneself from such trauma such as counseling, rehabilitation, welfare, and writing is definitely one of them. Rehabilitation is one of the most important tools to help a trauma victim.

During in Benin home, Beah and his friends have to face a lot of hurdles to cope up with nightmares and hallucinations. But, in *A Long Way Gone*, Beah records numerous traumatic experiences, fear and emotions throughout the memoir. "We had not only lost our childhood in the war but our lives had been tainted by the same experiences that still caused us great pain and sadness" (163). In spite of all the traumatic memories, Beah is able to establish identification of the child soldiers through his memoir. Beah exposes his innermost being so the readers might begin to understand the reality of the child soldiers.

The research paper examines Beah's traumatic experiences based on Dominick LaCarpa's trauma theory. The researcher uses denial, acting out and working through as a means of healing from trauma. This researcher thoroughly points out the traumatic and genocidal events from the memoir. Along with Beah, many characters from the memoir are the victim of trauma and genocide. Based on the pre and post traumatic experiences of the different characters from the memoir, the researcher applies LaCarpa's trauma theory. The researcher's main motif is to explore the traumatic incidents of an author. Hence, the researcher examines those memories

one by one pointing out LaCarpa's trauma theory. Beah has to struggle throughout his journey from an innocent child to ruthless child soldier. Beah's traumatic experience is different as he enjoys his time in the army.

This paper not only looks after the traumatic experiences but also celebrates the succession of rehabilitating traumatic child soldiers. By connecting the African war history and experience of child soldiers, this research work tackles the burning issue of Beah's with denial, acting out and working through. Ishmael Beah plays a pivotal role to opine the traumatic experiences of the child soldier in his memoir *A Long Way Gone*. Beah's practice of writing and raising voices for the child victims is appreciated by the readers. Beah's solidarity to bring Child soldiers sufferings and traumatic experiences in the front gives justice for their sacrifice. Moreover, this research paper glorifies Beah's journey from suffering to the healing.

Beah chooses to narrate his time as a child soldier through a series of flashbacks illustrating how people afflicted by war are forever changed by it. The trauma never leaves them. Beah's occasional narrative forays into the present reflect the permanent influence of his past as a child soldier and as a victim of the war on his present. He is still haunted by nightmares and suspects he always will be. In *A Long Way Gone* illustrates lessons that apply to both the genocidal event and the traumatic situations in which modern readers might find themselves. The realistic, horror and sentimental traumatic experiences is a replica of the then situation of child soldiers.

In a nutshell, through the minute study of the primary text with the light of trauma and genocide, the researcher has concluded that Beah's *A Long Way Gone* is about how the discussion of existing movements like in the war period of Sierra Leone. It not only focuses on the general background of genocide but also portrays the ramification of terrible traumatic experiences of the child soldiers. This research

concludes that trauma can be overcome through various procedures. Acting out, Working through and narration not only heal the trauma of a victim but also releases the burden of memoir.

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