Summary of Chapters
Chapter 1: Child Maltreatment and Psychopathology in a Cross-Cultural Context: General Introduction

This thesis opens with a brief history of the emergence of research in the field of child abuse and neglect. The section goes on to provide an overview of research studies on the prevalence of child abuse and neglect worldwide and highlights the lack of research from low-and-middle income countries, including India. Studies related to the factor structure of the CTQ, the role of gender, family structure, and parental levels of education are discussed vis-à-vis childhood maltreatment. The chapter then enumerates studies highlighting different paradigms in the maltreatment literature for assessing maltreatment experiences: the cumulative effect of different types of assault, the co-occurrence of different types of maltreatment, and the severity within each type of maltreatment in relation to various psychopathological constructs. The two main objectives of the present thesis were, first to answer the repetitive calls for more empirical studies based on maltreatment in children and adolescents from developing countries such as India. The second was to identify classes/profiles of the co-occurring maltreatment based on types and severity for a comprehensive understanding of the association between maltreatment and psychopathology. The studies reported in this thesis were based on data from two nations, namely, India and the US.

Chapter 2: Abuse and Neglect in Adolescents of Jammu, India: The Role of Gender, Family Structure, and Parental Education

This chapter attempts to fill the void in research studies from developing nations by assessing child maltreatment in a sample of adolescents ($N = 702; 41.5\%$ female) from Jammu, India. In the absence of a legal definition pertaining to child abuse and neglect and the absence of any measure/tool to assess the same, a popular measure, namely, the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ; Bernstein et al., 2003), often used in western countries was employed. Confirmatory factor analyses indicated that a four-factor structure fit the data well. These factors were emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect (including items from emotional neglect and two items from physical neglect). The addition of four covariates, namely, gender, family structure, maternal level of education, and paternal level of education, did not lead to any change in the factor structure of the CTQ. Furthermore, males reported higher on all types of abuse when compared to females, lower level of mothers’ education was associated with higher rates of abuse and neglect, and sexual
abuse was reported more often by adolescents from a joint family set-up, a family structure wherein generations and extended families live together. Prevalence rates of abuse and neglect were higher in Indian adolescents when compared with other CTQ-based studies of adolescents/youth from Germany, Canada, and the US. The findings presented in this chapter highlight the high rates of child abuse and neglect in a developing nation such as India, when compared with studies based on the CTQ from the west, and underscores the need for interventions and legislations to curb the problem.

Chapter 3: Severity of Maltreatment and Personality Pathology in Adolescents of Jammu, India: A Latent Class Approach

The aim of the third chapter was to assess patterns of different types of maltreatment reported by adolescents (N = 702; 41.5% female) from India. For this an interactive approach was taken wherein five types of abuse and neglect and their level of severity was assessed, forming multiple discrete classes. The obtained four classes of maltreatment were termed as “Moderate-severe abuse and physical neglect,” “Moderate-severe physical abuse and sexual abuse,” “Moderate-severe neglect,” and “Minimal abuse or neglect,” and were compared on levels of 17 lower-order dimensions of personality pathology. In addition, the role of gender on the relationship between patterns or classes of maltreatment and personality pathology was investigated. In line with cumulative risk theory, adolescents in the more severe maltreatment classes “Moderate-severe abuse and physical neglect” and “Moderate-severe physical abuse and sexual abuse” were found to have higher scores on personality pathology than those in the less severe maltreatment classes, after controlling for age. Gender differences were found on certain dimensions of personality pathology (e.g., conduct problems, affect lability) after controlling for age. However, gender did not moderate the relation between classes of maltreatment and personality pathology. Results found in this chapter highlight the presence of multiple patterns or co-occurrence of child abuse and neglect, and their differential relations with dimensions of personality pathology.

Chapter 4: Unique versus Cumulative Effects of Physical and Sexual Assault on Patterns of Adolescent Substance Use

The aim of the fourth chapter was to assess the relation between unique versus cumulative experiences of physical and sexual assault on patterns of substance use in maltreated adolescents (N = 918; 49.6% female) from the United States. First, using information on alcohol use, cigarette smoking, chewing tobacco, non-prescribed use of
medicine, and drug use, latent class analysis indicated a three class solution for substance use, namely, “Least polysubstance use,” “Alcohol with heavy drinking, and single drug use,” and “Heavy polysubstance use.” Multinomial logistic regression indicated that, as compared to adolescents exposed to a single type of assault, those exposed to both physical and sexual assault were two-to-three times more likely to be a member of the heavy polysubstance use as class compared to the other two classes of substance use. Females were more likely to be members of the “Heavy polysubstance use” class than the “Least polysubstance use” class. No significant moderations by gender of the associations of maltreatment class with substance use were found. Assessing single type or co-occurring assault/maltreatment at the outset can facilitate clinicians in identifying adolescents at elevated risk for heavy polysubstance use.

Chapter 5: Child Maltreatment and Psychopathology in a Cross-Cultural Context: General Discussion

The closing chapter discusses findings on the first objective aimed at providing a detailed understanding of the nature of child abuse and neglect adolescents from Jammu, India. Aspects addressed in this evaluation regard the factor structure of the CTQ, the role of demographic covariates including gender, family structure (joint vs. nuclear), mothers’ level of education, and fathers’ level of education, vis-à-vis child abuse and neglect, the prevalence of abuse and neglect in Indian adolescents, and comparison with previous studies from the west using the same questionnaire for the assessment of maltreatment. Based on confirmatory factor analyses, four latent factors based on items of abuse and neglect were found among adolescents from India. Results highlight the role of gender and maternal education on scores of maltreatment. Furthermore, comparison of rates of abuse and neglect with studies from the west indicated higher rates of maltreatment rates among Indian adolescents.

In view of the second objective, the hypothesis that maltreatment types co-occur and that multiple patterns or groups individuals exposed to maltreatment can be identified, was established in the Indian sample of adolescents. In addition, support was found for the cumulative risk theory of maltreatment. In the present thesis, experiencing multiple types of abuse and neglect and a higher level of severity within each type of maltreatment was associated with increased levels of personality pathology, and heavy polysubstance use across adolescents from India, and the US. Gender did not moderate the relation between patterns of
maltreatment/assault and psychopathology suggestive of no difference in psychological outcomes among males and females based on their experiences of maltreatment/assault.