

CONCLUSION

Having examined various nuances of disability, it is found that disability doesn't have any universal and commonly accepted definition other than the one propounded by various acts and reports, like Persons with Disabilities Act (PWD) 1995, World Health Organisation Report (WHO Report), Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) and many other popularly referred sources. Most of the acts and reports employ a Medical Model perspective in defining disability without taking into cognizance Social Model perspective. International Classification of Impaired, Disabled and Handicap (ICIDH) defines disability as "any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being". The PWD Act, 1995 defines disability as the condition of a person suffering from not less than 40 per cent of any disability as certified by a medical authority. Disability emanates from impairment as gender emerges from sex. Since disability is different from impairment and handicap, therefore, these terms cannot be substituted for one another.

Examining the closely intertwined concepts of disability, impairment and handicap, it has been found that disability works at an individual level, impairment occurs at the organ level and handicap is situational in nature. It is mainly rooted in a society where the recognition of individual limitation is followed by respective labellization which precincts working options and career choices of people with disability. Disability emerged as an interdisciplinary discipline called Disability Studies which borrows insights from all other related disciplines. Michael Berube said that Disability Study has emerged as an independent subject that promotes the idea that disability is a socially constructed phenomenon. It problematizes the age-old concept of disability and disability-related stigmas. Historically, the subject is rooted

in Paul Hunt's book *Stigma: The Experiences of Disability*. Simi Linton gives it further impetus through her book, *Claiming Disability*, which states that "We have come out, not in those brown wool lap robes over our withered legs or dark glasses over our pale eyes, but in shorts and sandals...straightforward, unmasked, and unapologetic."

However, the status of Disability Studies as an independent discipline was proclaimed by Lennard J. Davis who said, "It is not as if Disability Studies has simply appeared out of someone's head at this historical moment. It would be more appropriate to say that Disability Studies have been in the making for many years". In terms of activism, disability was carried forward by the Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation (UPIAS), the Vietnam War of the 1960s and Architectural Barriers Act, 1968 in the United States. In terms of treatment, disabled people were looked upon as the wrath of God by Greeks and Romans. They were thought to be possessed and religious exorcism was believed to be its only treatment. Moreover, the relationship between disability and literature is found to be reciprocal in nature. If literature reinforces disability construct positively or negatively, the occurrence of disability informs the literary narratives. Michael Berube remarks that "disability demands a story" and Ato Quayson believes that disability suffuses literature to the extent that it has become a defining feature of literature.

Literature is instrumental in forming the positive or spoiled identity of the person because literature and language shape the opinion of the public. Although disability succeeded in emerging as an independent academic discipline in the West, the Indian disability movement is consistently struggling for its entry in Indian academic institutions. Mairian Corker and Tom Shakespeare argue that there is a theoretical deficit about disability because disability scholars couldn't utilize the

tenets of post-'isms' in projecting disability as a form of social oppression. Although theorization serves to understand, empower and emancipate disabled people, there is no unique way of understanding disability. Beginning with Medical Model of disability, it argues that disability is an individual deficit. The model medicalises disability, believing that it can be treated only medically. The differences are pathologised but not celebrated as per this model. In the light of Medical Model, disability and impairment are used interchangeably. In response to the Medical Model, the Social Model states that disability is not an individual deficit but it is social in nature because the outcome of social restrictions determine the level of disability.

According to the Social Model theory, disability, metaphorically, stands for deprivation of all opportunities. The model argues that though impairment and illness are medically treatable, there is no such medical treatment for a disability. Seeking no modification of human form, Social Model accepts people with disability as such and attempts to modify social arrangements for making it inclusive for all. However, the Bio-Psycho-Social Model of disability reacts against the social and Medical Model of disability. It theorizes that disability is not purely a medical or a social problem, rather it is the cumulative and simultaneous effect of the intricate interaction of biological factors (genetic), psychological factors (behaviour) and social factors (barriers). It gives a balanced approach to appreciate disability, without resorting to the extreme approaches of the social and Medical Model. Cultural Model understands disability in the light of cultural beliefs.

In the Indian cultural system, disability is taken as a sort of retribution for one's past sins. The belief system is rooted in the *Karma Theory* which states that there is corresponding karmic compensation for every action either in this life or

future life. It implies that one's present status is because of the past and his present action will decide his future status, accordingly. Charity Model believes that disability is a condition to be pitied. The model believes that the disabled are dependent, weak and helpless beings, and are incapable to lead an independent life. They are thought to be at the mercy of non-disabled people for help, sympathy and charity. Rehabilitation is an offshoot of the Medical Model that believes in normalising disability through rehabilitation professionals.

Human Rights Model takes disability as a human rights issue. They do not accept charity but demand equal rights for people with disability. Contemporary theories like postmodernism reject the meta-narratives of the social and medical approach to disability which make totalising statements about the location and causation of disability. The postmodern theories accept heterogeneity and differences of disabled people without classifying them as diseased. Postmodern concept of identity fits and applies well to disabled people because their identity is also fluid and unstable. Postmodern perspective believes that disability is a socially constructed condition, and it is the problem of representation where positional intellectuals misrepresent disabled people. Disabled people are represented as docile, dependent and deviant by non-disabled writers. Non-disabled writers produce a lot of discourse about disabled people to reinstate and reinforce their stereotypes. The process of stereotyping of disabled people is followed by their stigmatization. The disabled are later understood in the light of the same discourse produced by positional intellectuals who misrepresent them like colonisers. The disabled bodies are just taken as passive texts to be written upon. Postcolonialism rejects the unitary models of identity and challenges the colonial malpractice of speaking for the subject, instead of letting him speak for himself. Disabled people are hardly given the chance to speak for

themselves. Their guardians and parents assume the self-proclaimed authority to address their issues and concerns. Their biographies are written in a way that their representation holds untrue for disabled people.

Critical post-humanism is based upon the idea that human beings co-evolve with other life forms, calling into question his independent evolution. It believes that technology is not a mere adjunct to a human being but it is integral to him. It believes that human identity is multifarious in nature. It involves rethinking of human subjectivity which is seen as an assemblage that evolves with life and technology. According to the posthuman concept, the identity of a person is not fixed, rather it is flexible and shifting in nature. It cannot be framed on the basis of impairment and dependence on technology, because postmodern man has emerged into a cyborg i.e. combination of a machine and human. It is inferred that an individual's identity is openly questionable. The emergence of the concept of cyborg reveals the imperfection of all human beings and lays emphasis on their relative dependence. In view of the post-human approach, the disabled person may not be rendered as imperfect despite his/her impairment or prosthesis. Therefore, a disabled person is no longer imperfect despite being impaired or undergone prosthesis in the spirit of posthuman theory.

Besides, feminist disability theory lays emphasis on gender and disability. It argues that femininity and disability are constructed notions locating their roots in society, rather than in the body. Both gender and disability are the products of social inequality and power politics where a disabled woman is in a real sense doubly marginalized. It appears strange that a woman with visual impairment is often thought unworthy for marriage. Even after marriage, she is denied of motherhood. Thus, a disabled woman who has the biological capacity to materialise the role of a life partner is considered unworthy of becoming a wife or a mother.

In *Clear Light of Day*, Baba is textually excluded, that is, he is not privileged with a role as enjoyed by other characters in the plot. Distancing him from prominent roles hinders his self-actualization and social interaction. At the centre of the plot are non-disabled characters, and Baba is positioned at its margins, that is, he is not involved and engaged actively. His traces are scattered all over the novel, indicating his broken image. Being representative of the disabled community, Baba faces both textual exclusion in the novel and social exclusion in society. His harmonious tuning with gramophone noise is exceptionally good. Shown as obsessed with gramophone indicates his being of an autistic savant, that is, his extraordinary talent in one specialised area like music. Symbolically, the act of fetching the only gramophone from Khan's house indicates his latent potential of music. His autistic identity is not directly addressed, rather it is conceptualized through symptoms like communication deficit, repetitive behaviour and hypersensitiveness. These symptoms are exclusively authenticated by the Medical Model of disability, leaving no scope for neurodiversity proposed by Social Model. Baba's autism appears constructed because his untrained sisters and his Aunt Mira spread the news. Its constructed part comes to the fore when Baba wins a game. The purpose of construction seems just to bully him. He is oppressed because of his behaviour dictated by others. He is described as an uncaring and irresponsible burden on the family. It is quite strange that his family doesn't allow his subjectivity to come on the surface. Baba's subjectivity, in terms of taste for music, doesn't come to the fore due to the fear of his siblings. His subjectivity is presented as a site of tragedy and it is robbed of the agency by the family and conservative structure of society. Therefore, fondness for gramophone is highly objected by his family and the neighbours who brand it irritating noise. Baba's subjective perception of gramophone is outshined by the positional attitude of his

family. He is identified as an unnatural being based on his somatic differences, tastes and static nature. Somatic differences are there to celebrate, but Baba's outward and inward difference is described as gruesome. He is stigmatised with the repulsive imagery like 'thirsty like a dog' and 'ghostly look' used to portray his identity. He is not socialized due to lack of family care, leaving him all alone with the gramophone. Language seems to have an important role in modifying the opinion of the public with regard to disabled people. The misplaced and stereotypical vocabulary blights their image and thinking as well. For instance, Baba is presented as a fearful person through phrases like 'ghostly look'. Further, assigning the responsibility of Baba's upbringing to Aunt Mira appears a blunder because she is not well-versed in teaching and training any special child. Baba is projected as a shadowy figure susceptible to outside painful happenings, noise and chirping, sensitively. Suffering at the hands of a cyclist and in the bus highlights the lack of developmental processes required for the inclusion of the disabled. The treatments meted to him in the bus and during road crossing, raise the issue of accessibility of transport for the disabled population. Paradoxically, his sister, Bimla requires him only for signing documents, denying his essential subjectivity. She thinks herself superior to Baba. He is not involved in any decision-making process at the pretext of being non-communicative. Although Baba is thought senseless, Bimla needs him to compensate for the deficiency of Raja and Tara. Moreover, his accomplishments are not acknowledged on grounds of his disability. His winning of bagatelle game against his nieces is not believed by his siblings. Although his representation is a medley of good and bad both, it is lopsided more towards misrepresentation.

Similarly, Salman Rushdie's *Shame* represents Sufiya Zenobia's character with off-putting linguistic terms such as 'mental-case'. Bariamma's brother is also

described as a mental-case fool. She is delineated as childish, immature and a foolish being. According to Benjamin L. Whorf's linguistic relativity hypothesis, "the particular language people use determines how they see the world" (Morgan 230). It implies that the offensive usage of terminology for the description of disabled people definitely affects the disabled lives in general and the character of SufiyaZinobia in particular. Although the use of 'handicap' is out of use, it has been employed time and again to describe the personality of disabled characters in the novel in terms of death, stone-like lifelessness, circumcise and at times in terms of Raza Hyder's stillbirth baby. At times, it has also been used interchangeably with impairment, ignoring the difference between two terms. Although Rushdie has described Sufiya Zinobia's negatively, he gives her central textual space and depicts her as the protagonist of the novel, thereby, deviating from the tradition of using non-disabled characters as central. The character with crooked teeth, pot-bellied stomach, bulky in size and blemished skin often occupy the secondary roles. However, the inclusion of Sufiya Zinobia as a protagonist is highly political because Sufiya Zinobia fits well in the scheme of the novel for the role to invoke fear and unease. According to the author's perception, she can fit well both in the role of beast and human to carry forward the plot of the novel. The novelist has shrunk the space of other disabled characters such as Gulbaba who is mentioned only once or twice in the entire novel resulting, in his textual exclusion. Gulbaba's identity is restricted to his deafness and blindness. Sufiya Zinobia is represented as intellectually disabled which is communicated through words like 'twelve-year-old girl with three-year-old mind' and 'simpleton girl', 'stunted intelligence', 'nitwit' and 'broken mind'. She is called an idiotic figure because of her intellectual disability. Sufiya Zinobia is termed as an individual of idiotic stature because of her dwarfism. Sufiya Zinobia has been marked

out by identities like simpleton and goof. Rushdie observes, “Rani, a simpleton, a goof!” (101). She is described as brainless in words like ‘birdbrain’ and has been dehumanized by her comparison with the mouse. She is regarded as a symbol of shame on account of her gender and disability.

Sufiya Zinobia is described as the devil and a sleepwalker with the capacity of infecting anyone she passes by. Sufiya Zinobia’s subjectivity is confined to blushing which is exaggerated by its comparison with wildfires. Bariamma states that Sufiya gives burning sensation even on kissing. Miss Shahbanou overstates that Sufiya Zinobia’s reddishness has boiled water. Sufiya’s blushing is not described as an extrinsic phenomenon, though it is equally caused by gazing which must be subsumed under ‘gaze harassment’. Her subjectivity is restricted to her oversensitivity to humiliation she faces on various occasions. Sufiya is time and again reminded by Bilquis and Shahbanou that she cannot be a mother. Therefore, she has been de-womanized, de-sexualised and de-motherised, simultaneously. Sufiya Zinobia is discriminated both on the basis of gender and disability. Her birth as a female child disappoints her parents. Raza Hyder falsifies every claim of the hospital staff made about his daughter’s female sex. She is marked as a mistake on account of her disability. Unlike Sufiya Zinobia, Naveed is neither criticized nor is she ignored. On the other hand, Sufiya Zinobia is blamed for both her gender and disability. She is treated with utter indifference by her parents, Bilquis and Raza Hyder. She is often shouted at and her non-disabled sister Naveed becomes the centre of their love. Sufiya Zinobia’s disability has been exploited for the successful execution of the magic realism technique which turns her into spectre and then into an idiot, and eventually showing her as possessed with the spirit of an Asian girl. Last but not least, she is shown as possessed by the soul of a boy who has been burned to death. The issues to

be highlighted include usage of negative phraseology such as ‘turn a deaf ear’ and ‘turn a blind eye’ which confirm the status of disabled as partially grown beings.

Firdous Kanga’s autobiography *Trying to Grow* describes Brit’s personal characteristics like a gap in his teeth which is compared to a window. The argument of his father about his age, affects Brit, psychologically. His friend, Ruby, finds his outward appearance very hilarious and mocking. It is basically a postcolonial act of description where disabled are described negatively by non-disabled. As regards Brit’s treatment, he is taken to *Wagh Baba, Dargahs*, shrines and temples for spiritual healing in the face of his resistance. Therefore, a belief system like the chanting of mantras is preferred over medical advice which can prove more effective in treating problems like osteogenesis imperfecta and the pain arising out of it. However, doctors even threaten Brit with the chances of growing toothless, which emerges out of mere ignorance of a doctor.

Moreover, Brit’s sexual identity is called into question on account of his disability, though his virility is normal as evidenced by his inclination towards males and females. His sexual identity is doubted by characters like Jeroo. Brit asserts that people around him equate his osteogenesis imperfecta with sexual neutrality, subjecting him to ‘spread effect’. It is an act of overshadowing all his abilities like sexual virility and potential to become a writer on the pretext of his one disability. The total worth of Brit is judged by his physical disability which affects his spectrum of opportunities. Such thinking like ‘disability of one ability means disability of all abilities’ is, therefore, an urgent issue that needs to be addressed through writings, media and movies in order to stop suppression of their self-actualization. His parents believe that Brit’s osteogenesis imperfecta can further pass to his upcoming progeny. Therefore, he is advised to stay a lifetime bachelor without taking into cognizance his

sexual need. Brit's sexual identity manifests itself when he comes into contact with two girls, Tina and Ruby. On showing his interest in Cyrus, he is called perverted, homosexual and sex maniac.

Paradoxically, his parents label him as a 'crippled' to ensure his admission in school. Tina, one more disabled character of the novel, is identified as deaf and dumb. She communicates well in sign language which is neither understood by non-disabled people nor is it taught and documented, which is absolutely a case of linguistic imperialism. She was even avoided by family while going to see Dolly's match. It has been found that Brit was gazed and stared at with inquisitive looks in school premises which harassed him substantially. Even his teachers didn't treat him well except Mrs De Souza. They shout at him which makes him vomit quite often. Even the use of reason by him is commented upon by others. Although he tops his class in exams and is conferred with an award, he is not appreciated and encouraged for the job. Also, Brit's mother Sera discouraged his love affair with Amy. She advises Brit that he cannot love anyone because of his disability. Therefore, the subjectivity of Brit is not permitted to express itself fully. He desires to love and be loved like others. His disability becomes more tormenting when he finds everything in his house inaccessible. It makes him more dependent on parents which hurt his ego. It affects his self-esteem and self-actualization in the spirit of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. He is used as the butt of frustration by characters like Dolly who pours out her anger at him. He is not thought fit for the job by his parents, though Brit himself feels confident about his fitness. His physical appearance is commented by Jerry who comments on him as a fearful being. Defarge also calls him crippled and a helpless son. Jerry's mother, Mrs Rati Auntie, names his outlook awkward as strange. While watching a movie in a cinema, he is delineated 'handicapped' by a fellow watcher. He

taunts Brit that he has not learnt a lesson from his birth. It is also found that Brit finds the books in his house beyond his reach, and the kitchen is inaccessible. He finds the transport cabs highly inaccessible, wherein he is hauled by force. However, Brit is offered the opportunity of education in schools and colleges which enables him to actualise himself by becoming a great writer. Amartya Sen's 'capability approach' fits well on Brit who converts his opportunity of education into functioning which contributes to his well-being.

Last but not the least, Arunima Sinha's *Born Again on the Mountain* incorporates the experience of being thrown out of running train for not yielding to chain snatchers. Miraculously, she loses blood and leg, but not her courage. She contacts journalists who make the news viral on news channels. Media support brings her instant help from politicians, activists and bureaucrats in the form of financial contribution and treatment in AIIMS, New Delhi. Arunima's life takes a new turn when important people start taking interest in her well-being. She is elevated as a star by the same society which was earlier insensitive to her. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of social capital seems to be quite relevant here because, in the case of Arunima, she rises high with coverage and confidence with the active support of social capital. These contacts encourage her to scale the Everest. She is taught beauty tips by Shahnaz Hussain while being on a bed in AIIMS. She is encouraged to establish an academy for disabled people for which she has been raising funds for many years. Before her accident, her father's and brother's death couldn't grab the attention of media in absence of sound social capital. Therefore, it may be rightly inferred that disability can be reduced through the application of social capital.

The present research captures various nuances of 'disability' with special reference to the literary texts under study. The research analyses the texts to find out

the strategies of the mainstream society to exclude the disabled population. It has been found that stereotypes, myths, taboos and misplaced vocabulary are the common tools that are in play while discriminating against the 'disabled people'. The rigid generalisations and prejudices against the disabled don't allow them to exercise free choice and individual space in the scheme of things. The research has also traced the signs of textual exclusion as one of the popular strategies, disallowing the 'disabled' to represent themselves, properly.